

# perpendicular angel design

organizing and simplifying, one illumination at a time

## **AN EVENT APART 2017: PRACTICAL BRANDING BY SARAH PARMENTER**

Sarah Parmenter's talk was about branding and how, because so many of our sites look almost indistinguishable, brands aren't as strong on the web as they once were.

The work that I do is more form and app related, but Sarah's talk made me really think about the ways that I might be able to enforce the brand from within a form/app related website. So that's a good thing. Plus, I have other project sites where a strong brand would probably be a really good thing :)

### **An Event Apart 2017 Practical Branding by Sarah Parmenter** (pdf)



**Anne Gibson**

@perpendicularme

Time for @sazzy's Practical Branding and I cannot get a quality pic of the cool pink/grey of her opening slide which gives me a sad #AEASEA

1:16 PM - Apr 3, 2017

[See Anne Gibson's other Tweets](#)



**Anne Gibson**

@perpendicularme

Before responsive design, we have lots of very character-heavy creative brands... while converting to responsive we lost that [#AEASEA](#)

1:19 PM - Apr 3, 2017

[See Anne Gibson's other Tweets](#)



**Anne Gibson**

@perpendicularme

We're still designing our sites as if they're big boxes with more little boxes in them. (Guilty!) [#AEASEA](#)

1:19 PM - Apr 3, 2017

1 [See Anne Gibson's other Tweets](#)



**Anne Gibson**

@perpendicularme

Every company is now a media company [#AEASEA](#)

1:20 PM - Apr 3, 2017

[See Anne Gibson's other Tweets](#)



**Stephanie seaotta Drescher**

@seaotta

As responsive design came along, we lost the uniqueness around different brands and visual design. [#aeasea](#)

1:20 PM - Apr 3, 2017

1 [See !\[\]\(aceb1790ece33f2eac474d4a9431c6d6\_img.jpg\) Stephanie seaotta Drescher's other Tweets](#)



**Anne Gibson**

@perpendicularme

Websites have become homogenous thanks to frameworks like bootstrap and patterns [#AEASEA](#)

1:21 PM - Apr 3, 2017

1 [See Anne Gibson's other Tweets](#)



**Erin Walker (Joyce)**

@E3Writing

The web is a primary artistic medium. We should treat it as such. - [@zeldman](#) in [@sazzy](#)'s talk at [#aeasea](#)

1:21 PM - Apr 3, 2017

[See Erin Walker \(Joyce\)'s other Tweets](#)



**Anne Gibson**

@perpendicularme

It's time to start bringing design back into the foreground [#aeasea](#)

1:22 PM - Apr 3, 2017

[See Anne Gibson's other Tweets](#)



**Anne Gibson**

@perpendicularme

Everyone is looking at what everyone else is already doing. There's no need for the skins of what we do to look the same [#AEASEA](#)

1:22 PM - Apr 3, 2017

[See Anne Gibson's other Tweets](#)

**Anne Gibson**

@perpendicularme

We tend to be self-indulgent: how can we use X in our next project? Instead of is this right for the brand I'm working on?

#AEASEA

1:23 PM - Apr 3, 2017

1 [See Anne Gibson's other Tweets](#)**jared bishop**

@bishopart

Waiting for permission stifles innovation. @sazzy #aeasea

1:24 PM - Apr 3, 2017

1 [See jared bishop's other Tweets](#)**Anne Gibson**

@perpendicularme

People are on "flat" design because "this is what google's doing" - we have to bring gradients in because apple did - #AEASEA

1:24 PM - Apr 3, 2017

[See Anne Gibson's other Tweets](#)**Anne Gibson**

@perpendicularme

There's no logic to trying to apply someone else's brand to our own. Don't apply Apple's branding to your projects! #AEASEA

1:25 PM - Apr 3, 2017

[See Anne Gibson's other Tweets](#)



**Anne Gibson**

@perpendicularme

If you're buying someone else's design elements, that's a red flag for branding. Do your own brand [#AEASEA](#)

1:26 PM - Apr 3, 2017

[See Anne Gibson's other Tweets](#)



**Rebecca Watson**

@RVivusArtDesign

Find inspiration beyond the boundaries of your profession to put design back in the drivers seat. [#backseatdriverframework](#) [#aeasea](#)

1:26 PM - Apr 3, 2017

[See Rebecca Watson's other Tweets](#)



**Conor Meagher** 

@conrmahr

"Branding is the product of deliberate conception." - [@sazzy](#)  
[#aeasea](#)

1:27 PM - Apr 3, 2017

1 [See Conor Meagher !\[\]\(179f167ede0522ebb4ea025b3ad78ca7\_img.jpg\)s other Tweets](#)



**Conor Meagher** 

@conrmahr

"Branding is not a pattern library or mood board." - [@sazzy](#)  
[#aeasea](#)

1:28 PM - Apr 3, 2017

8 [See Conor Meagher !\[\]\(fb9e809951d718d0a8038dca8a708d54\_img.jpg\)s other Tweets](#)

**Anne Gibson**

@perpendicularme

Pattern libraries should have the design decisions around the spacing, typography elements, etc in them. [#AEASEA](#)

1:28 PM - Apr 3, 2017

2 [See Anne Gibson's other Tweets](#)**Anne Gibson**

@perpendicularme

Lots of designs happen as a happy accident - ooh! I like that! That's perfect! Crap, that only took 5 minutes. How to explain? [#AEASEA](#)

1:30 PM - Apr 3, 2017

2 [See Anne Gibson's other Tweets](#)**Anne Gibson**

@perpendicularme

Pure design research (pitting brand elements up against each other) isn't generally useful. [#AEASEA](#)

1:34 PM - Apr 3, 2017

[See Anne Gibson's other Tweets](#)

Sara made a point here that we fall back on tools like The Golden Ratio to explain our design decisions, but we have to be honest about the fact that those tools aren't the be-all and end-all of the decisions. (But I missed it in the tweets.)



**Anne Gibson**

@perpendicularme

This is also the golden ratio. It's not a silver bullet [#aeasea](#)

1:34 PM - Apr 3, 2017

3 [See Anne Gibson's other Tweets](#)



**Anne Gibson**

@perpendicularme

A lot is happening by gut instinct especially if the designer's been in the business a long time. [#AEASEA](#)

1:34 PM - Apr 3, 2017

[See Anne Gibson's other Tweets](#)



**Anne Gibson**

@perpendicularme

Design research is like jury duty, it only takes one dominant person to throw everything out. [#AEASEA](#)

1:35 PM - Apr 3, 2017

[See Anne Gibson's other Tweets](#)



**Anne Gibson**

@perpendicularme

Note though that competitive research and accessible research still need to be done, they're not the same as design research [#AEASEA](#)

1:35 PM - Apr 3, 2017

[See Anne Gibson's other Tweets](#)



*Create tension by playing  
with contradictions.*



**A Brave New**

@abravenew

a good reminder from @sazzy that contradiction isn't something to run away from #aeasea

2:16 PM - Apr 3, 2017

[See A Brave New's other Tweets](#)



**Anne Gibson**

@perpendicularme

Hamilton - a rap about the founding fathers. AEA at Disneyland. Contradictions can create interesting elements #AEASEA

1:36 PM - Apr 3, 2017

2 [See Anne Gibson's other Tweets](#)



**Anne Gibson**

@perpendicularme

Facebook audience insights (free tool) can give really great deep dives in where competitors lie in the marketplace [#AEASEA](#)

1:36 PM - Apr 3, 2017

[See Anne Gibson's other Tweets](#)



**Anne Gibson**

@perpendicularme

Where do customers also go if they're going to this brand? Can show unexpected connections [#AEASEA](#)

1:36 PM - Apr 3, 2017

[See Anne Gibson's other Tweets](#)



**Anne Gibson**

@perpendicularme

Work with a copywriter! They have the most important pieces of information about the company [#AEASEA](#)

1:37 PM - Apr 3, 2017

[See Anne Gibson's other Tweets](#)



**Anne Gibson**

@perpendicularme

Copywriters can talk to people on your behalf when you need distance from the client [#AEASEA](#)

1:37 PM - Apr 3, 2017

[See Anne Gibson's other Tweets](#)



**Anne Gibson**

@perpendicularme

Refreshing a brand: it's really throwing out the old meaning of a company and creating a new one [#AEASEA](#)

1:38 PM - Apr 3, 2017

[See Anne Gibson's other Tweets](#)



**Anne Gibson**

@perpendicularme

Most companies do great things with 3-4 spokes of this brand wheel [#AEASEA](#)

1:39 PM - Apr 3, 2017

1 [See Anne Gibson's other Tweets](#)



**Anne Gibson**

@perpendicularme

Just deciding which spokes you're going after is an activity around shaping the brand. What's important? What's not? #AEASEA

1:40 PM - Apr 3, 2017

[See Anne Gibson's other Tweets](#)



**Anne Gibson**

@perpendicularme

A logo should be simple enough you can draw it in the sand with your toes #AEASEA

1:40 PM - Apr 3, 2017

[See Anne Gibson's other Tweets](#)



**Anne Gibson**

@perpendicularme

An app icon (or logo) should be a single defined silhouette of what your brand represents #AEASEA

1:41 PM - Apr 3, 2017

1 [See Anne Gibson's other Tweets](#)



**Anne Gibson**

@perpendicularme

Spotify has simplified their logo, Vox, airbnb, all simplified a logo #AEASEA

1:42 PM - Apr 3, 2017

[See Anne Gibson's other Tweets](#)



**Anne Gibson**

@perpendicularme

Sometimes interviewing a CEO and one of the lowest paid employees gives insight faster and under budget #AEASEA

1:44 PM - Apr 3, 2017

9 [See Anne Gibson's other Tweets](#)



**Anne Gibson**

@perpendicularme

TOTALLY NSFW: google “airbnb logo parody” and wow, the research didn’t quite work the way they wanted #AEASEA

1:45 PM - Apr 3, 2017

2 [See Anne Gibson's other Tweets](#)



**Stephanie seaotta Drescher**

@seaotta

Companies are afraid of simplifying their logomark, feeling that without the wordmark, their company is not identifiable. #aeasea

1:47 PM - Apr 3, 2017

2 [See !\[\]\(179f167ede0522ebb4ea025b3ad78ca7\_img.jpg\) Stephanie seaotta Drescher's other Tweets](#)



**Stephanie seaotta Drescher**

@seaotta

The color Tiffany Blue was a happy accident. IMO probably one of the most recognizable brand colors in existence. #aeasea

1:48 PM - Apr 3, 2017

3 [See !\[\]\(fb9e809951d718d0a8038dca8a708d54\_img.jpg\) Stephanie seaotta Drescher's other Tweets](#)



**Anne Gibson**

@perpendicularme

When Airbnb did their redesign they created their own color (it's a bit salmoney orangey warm red) [#AEASEA](#)

1:47 PM - Apr 3, 2017

[See Anne Gibson's other Tweets](#)



**David Watson, CPWA**

@caughtexception

"They just created a new color... which is, interesting, because I just used the, um, color dropper and created it, too." -[@sazzy](#) at [#aeasea](#)

1:48 PM - Apr 3, 2017

3 [See David Watson, CPWA's other Tweets](#)



**Anne Gibson**

@perpendicularme

Spotify is using some unusual color mixes for their gradients. Gradients can hide terrible quality photos [#AEASEA](#)

1:48 PM - Apr 3, 2017

1 [See Anne Gibson's other Tweets](#)

(Una tells us later that the gradients can also be a great way to save on file size too. Notes to come!)



**Anne Gibson**

@perpendicularme

Pantone postcards can be found on amazon for like \$14 and you can pin them to the wall [#AEASEA](#)

1:49 PM - Apr 3, 2017

[See Anne Gibson's other Tweets](#)



**Jacob Wayne Smith**

@j8ke

Here's a link to those pantone postcards [#aeasea](#)  
[amzn.to/2ouiGwJ](https://amzn.to/2ouiGwJ)

1:50 PM - Apr 3, 2017

12 [See Jacob Wayne Smith's other Tweets](#)



**Anne Gibson**

@perpendicularme

You don't need to work with a copy writer to set a tone. Define, then work with them to refine. (Get them involved early...) [#AEASEA](#)

1:49 PM - Apr 3, 2017

[See Anne Gibson's other Tweets](#)



**Stephanie seaotta Drescher**

@seaotta

Voice & tone of voice for your brand needs to be defined by you, and then refined by a copywriter. [#aeasea](#)

1:50 PM - Apr 3, 2017

7 [See !\[\]\(6b6d798a1e19654494a6892c667d44da\_img.jpg\) Stephanie seaotta Drescher's other Tweets](#)

**Anne Gibson**

@perpendicularme

Nebulaskin was very corporate and hard to understand. Changed the tone to casual, normal conversation, easier to understand

#AEASEA

1:51 PM - Apr 3, 2017

[See Anne Gibson's other Tweets](#)**Stephanie seaotta Drescher**

@seaotta

There are 4 channels that make up the basic social ecosystem that a brand should have. #aeasea

1:54 PM - Apr 3, 2017

1 [See Stephanie seaotta Drescher's other Tweets](#)**Anne Gibson**

@perpendicularme

Social ecosystem: publishing channels, aspirational/inspirational channels, follow-up channels, support channels #AEASEA

1:52 PM - Apr 3, 2017

1 [See Anne Gibson's other Tweets](#)**Anne Gibson**

@perpendicularme

Main channel: blog, website, tumblr. Aspirational channel: where images get posted. Not everyone should! FDA, for example

#AEASEA

1:52 PM - Apr 3, 2017

1 [See Anne Gibson's other Tweets](#)



**Anne Gibson**

@perpendicularme

Support channels: users will pick a channel for you if you don't pick one: twitter, Facebook, etc. What will you do for support? [#AEASEA](#)

1:53 PM - Apr 3, 2017

2 [See Anne Gibson's other Tweets](#)**Anne Gibson**

@perpendicularme

Follow-up channel: content from 1st channel is republished for the sole purpose of driving traffic. Blog post rewritten for Facebook [#AEASEA](#)

1:54 PM - Apr 3, 2017

1 [See Anne Gibson's other Tweets](#)**Anne Gibson**

@perpendicularme

You don't need to be big on all the social channels. You can pick one and concentrate on it. Where does it make the most sense [#AEASEA](#)

1:55 PM - Apr 3, 2017

1 [See Anne Gibson's other Tweets](#)**Anne Gibson**

@perpendicularme

If you're in a meeting where someone says "we need to dominate everywhere" you need to ask if it's the right format [#AEASEA](#)

1:55 PM - Apr 3, 2017

[See Anne Gibson's other Tweets](#)



**jared bishop**

@bishopart

It's better to be master of one than jack of all social media. @sazzy  
#aeasea

1:56 PM - Apr 3, 2017

2 [See jared bishop's other Tweets](#)



**Anne Gibson**

@perpendicularme

Typeface equity: we need to look at what makes the most sense for our brand. Use the same font pairings across everything #AEASEA

1:56 PM - Apr 3, 2017

2 [See Anne Gibson's other Tweets](#)



**Anne Gibson**

@perpendicularme

Vox - Harriet Display & Balto, which they dominate. #AEASEA

1:57 PM - Apr 3, 2017

[See Anne Gibson's other Tweets](#)



**Anne Gibson**

@perpendicularme

A Book Apart: Titling Pro, FF Yoga are associated with them in this industry #AEASEA

1:57 PM - Apr 3, 2017

[See Anne Gibson's other Tweets](#)

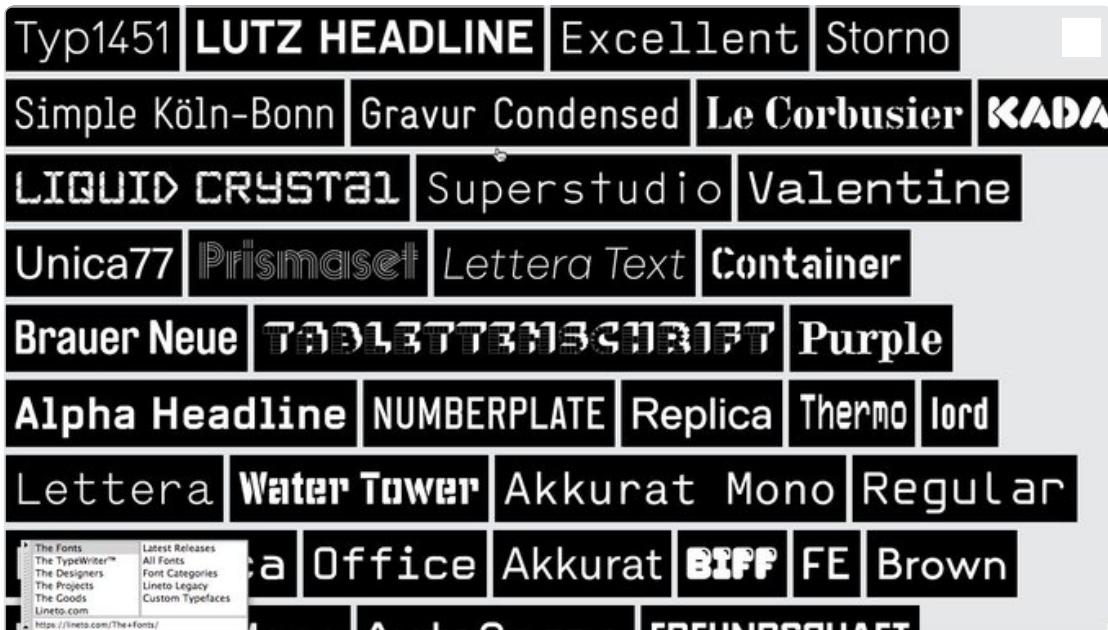


**Anne Gibson**  
@perpendicularme

Fonts In Use - [fontsinuse.com](http://fontsinuse.com) - to make sure you're not going head to head with someone else's typefaces #AEASEA

1:58 PM - Apr 3, 2017

[See Anne Gibson's other Tweets](#)



**zeldman**  
@zeldman

Hey, hey, it's the Fonts! [lineto.com/the+fonts](http://lineto.com/the+fonts) @sazzy #aeasea

1:59 PM - Apr 3, 2017

5 [See zeldman's other Tweets](#)



**Stephanie seaotta Drescher**  
@seaotta

Art direction is a huge part of our job but we don't necessarily allow ourselves to do that because it's not our title. #aeasea

1:59 PM - Apr 3, 2017

2 [See Stephanie seaotta Drescher's other Tweets](#)



**Anne Gibson**

@perpendicularme

Art Direction - there's no excuse for using stock photos when we're all carrying fantastic camera(phone)s in our pockets #AEASEA

1:59 PM - Apr 3, 2017

[See Anne Gibson's other Tweets](#)



**Anne Gibson**

@perpendicularme

Illustration is being used even on news websites #AEASEA

1:59 PM - Apr 3, 2017

1 [See Anne Gibson's other Tweets](#)



**Anne Gibson**

@perpendicularme

Airbnb made a critical decision to employ professional photographers in apartments. Looks very professional #AEASEA

2:01 PM - Apr 3, 2017

[See Anne Gibson's other Tweets](#)



**Anne Gibson**

@perpendicularme

Professional photos both build confidence with the customers and provide a professional look to the site #AEASEA

2:02 PM - Apr 3, 2017

1 [See Anne Gibson's other Tweets](#)



**Anne Gibson**

@perpendicularme

Company values will always be unique to your company. There's always something that can help inform the brand [#AEASEA](#)

2:02 PM - Apr 3, 2017

[See Anne Gibson's other Tweets](#)



**Anne Gibson**

@perpendicularme

Talk to the people who've been at the company the longest and ask them stories about the company [#AEASEA](#)

2:03 PM - Apr 3, 2017

[See Anne Gibson's other Tweets](#)

I don't think that it's coincidental that this is consistent advice between Jeffrey Zeldman and Sarah Parmenter. The people who have been at your company the longest are the ones that have most likely most internalized the beliefs, behaviors, goals, and culture of the organization. Their voice is authentic.



**Anne Gibson**

@perpendicularme

Authentic storytelling - value is less about brand attributes and more about brand meaning [#AEASEA](#)

2:03 PM - Apr 3, 2017

[See Anne Gibson's other Tweets](#)



**Chad**

@lingokid

Authentic Storytelling is so important for your brand. Own it and share it. Tell your story. [#aeasea](#)

2:04 PM - Apr 3, 2017

1 [See Chad's other Tweets](#)



**Anne Gibson**

@perpendicularme

Stubhub swaying toward authentic storytelling. Selling what you can't get online, getting out from behind a screen [#AEASEA](#)

2:04 PM - Apr 3, 2017

1 [See Anne Gibson's other Tweets](#)



**G Bernard**

@g\_dibo

[#aeasea](#) [#sarahparmenter](#) good talk on brand [instagram.com/p/BSbsRYKFDKI/](https://www.instagram.com/p/BSbsRYKFDKI/)

2:07 PM - Apr 3, 2017

[See G Bernard's other Tweets](#)



**Anne Gibson**

@perpendicularme

Layout: Vox breaks out of the grid, unlike most news websites that are very tight and boxy [#AEASEA](#)

2:05 PM - Apr 3, 2017

[See Anne Gibson's other Tweets](#)



**Stephanie seaotta Drescher**  
@seaotta

Spotify is nailing all areas of branding. Everything about their brand is strong. #aeasea

2:05 PM - Apr 3, 2017

See  Stephanie seaotta Drescher's other Tweets



**Anne Gibson**  
@perpendicularme

Slogans: @sazzy hates them. If you need one, it's a red flag that you're not telling the story in a better way #AEASEA

2:06 PM - Apr 3, 2017

See Anne Gibson's other Tweets



**Anne Gibson**  
@perpendicularme

Case study: Frank Body. selling coffee scrub. You could make it yourself except their branding is so strong you want to buy #AEASEA

2:08 PM - Apr 3, 2017

See Anne Gibson's other Tweets



**Anne Gibson**  
@perpendicularme

Tone of voice, art direction, social ecosystem. Instagram is their most successful social media channel. #AEASEA

2:08 PM - Apr 3, 2017

See Anne Gibson's other Tweets



**Anne Gibson**

@perpendicularme

Frank Body seeded their social accounts with the type of imagery they wanted to encourage others to add [#AEASEA](#)

2:09 PM - Apr 3, 2017

[See Anne Gibson's other Tweets](#)



**Anne Gibson**

@perpendicularme

Engaged a lot of bloggers and influences with a style guide for the bloggers [#AEASEA](#)

2:09 PM - Apr 3, 2017

[See Anne Gibson's other Tweets](#)



**Anne Gibson**

@perpendicularme

Created a male persona called Frank that is frank and honest in all communications. He's a bit abrasive, they're ok with that [#AEASEA](#)

2:10 PM - Apr 3, 2017

[See Anne Gibson's other Tweets](#)



**Anne Gibson**

@perpendicularme

Tried to move their communications to a PR agency but the agency couldn't emulate their tone of voice [#AEASEA](#)

2:11 PM - Apr 3, 2017

[See Anne Gibson's other Tweets](#)





**Anne Gibson**

@perpendicularme

Everywhere that frank body works they've converted things to their brand [#AEASEA](#)

2:12 PM - Apr 3, 2017

[See Anne Gibson's other Tweets](#)



**Anne Gibson**

@perpendicularme

Their website didn't work in the US at first because their video of almost-naked women looked naughty, had to be redesigned [#AEASEA](#)

2:13 PM - Apr 3, 2017

[See Anne Gibson's other Tweets](#)



**Anne Gibson**

@perpendicularme

Personal branding - authentic storytelling, art direction, and social ecosystems. [#AEASEA](#)

2:13 PM - Apr 3, 2017

[See Anne Gibson's other Tweets](#)



**Anne Gibson**

@perpendicularme

Super huge celebrities might dominate across platforms, but that's very very rare. Pick one channel (twitter, etc.) [#AEASEA](#)

2:14 PM - Apr 3, 2017

[See Anne Gibson's other Tweets](#)



**Anne Gibson**

@perpendicularme

Direct marketers are excellent at personal branding. @zeldman also has a great personal brand #AEASEA

2:14 PM - Apr 3, 2017

[See Anne Gibson's other Tweets](#)



**Anne Gibson**

@perpendicularme

Consistency is important and really high for personal branding #AEASEA

2:15 PM - Apr 3, 2017

1 [See Anne Gibson's other Tweets](#)



**Anne Gibson**

@perpendicularme

Find your authentic story within your company. Then look at using it to create other visual elements #AEASEA

2:15 PM - Apr 3, 2017

[See Anne Gibson's other Tweets](#)



**Stephanie seaotta Drescher**

@seaotta

Consistency is key to personal branding. Can your content be relied upon to be there? #aeasea

2:15 PM - Apr 3, 2017

1 [See !\[\]\(aceb1790ece33f2eac474d4a9431c6d6\_img.jpg\) Stephanie seaotta Drescher's other Tweets](#)



**Anne Gibson**

@perpendicularme

What equity can you create from typography, color, other elements?  
Can users make content for you via seeded content? #AEASEA

2:16 PM - Apr 3, 2017

[See Anne Gibson's other Tweets](#)



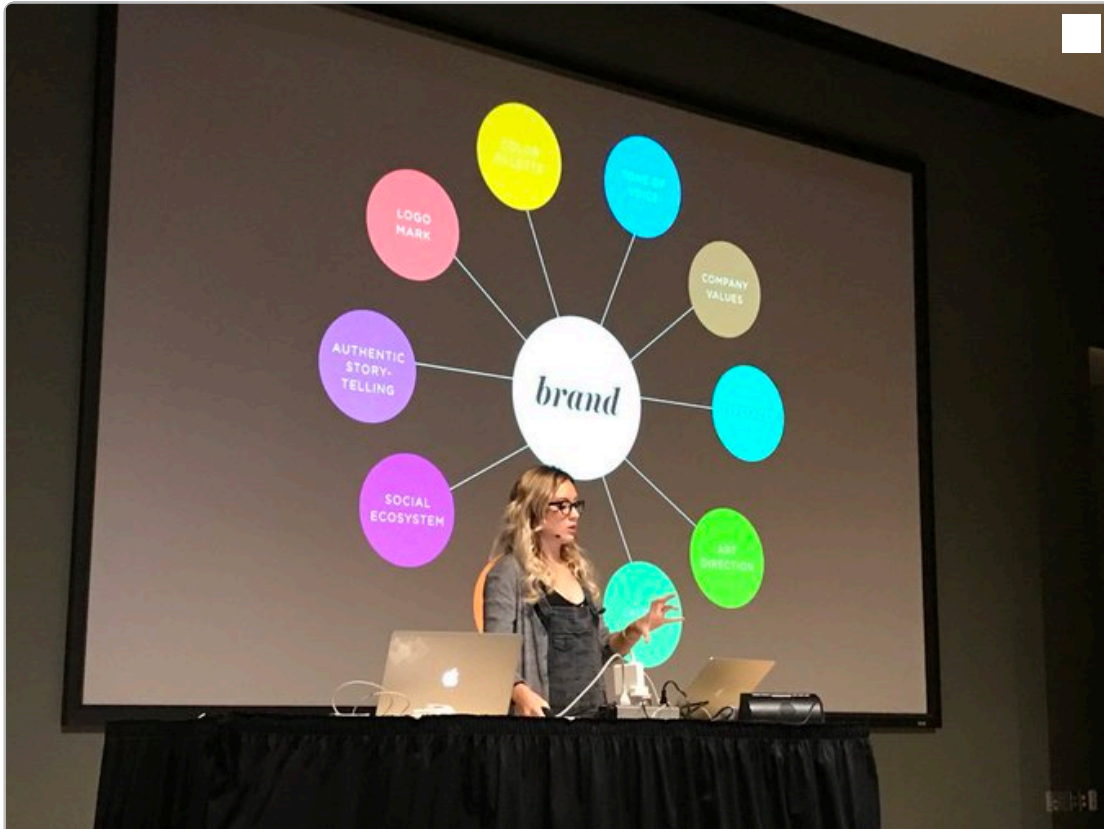
**Anne Gibson**

@perpendicularme

Create tension by playing with contradictions. Think about every  
single touch point of the business and design that experience  
#AEASEA

2:16 PM - Apr 3, 2017

1 [See Anne Gibson's other Tweets](#)



**christopher hincks**

@chincks

Deep research and cultural understanding enables designers to find and tell a company's unique brand story. [#aeasea](#)

2:21 PM - Apr 3, 2017 · Belltown, Seattle

[See christopher hincks's other Tweets](#)



**Rebecca Watson**

@RVivusArtDesign

Authentic stories, design element equity, user involvement, tension through use of contradictions. All strategies for image branding.

[#aeasea](#)

2:24 PM - Apr 3, 2017

1

[See Rebecca Watson's other Tweets](#)



**Danya Cosgrove**

@itsnotdayna

Data is only as good as the ppl who analyze it. There is no excuse for stock photography. 2 sessions in and my minds already blown.

[#aeasea](#)

2:27 PM - Apr 3, 2017

6

[See Danya Cosgrove's other Tweets](#)

Also check out **Krystal Higgins' sketch notes from the talk.**

**Notes by Luke Wroblewski**

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