Partner Spotlight: SXSW

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South by Southwest is an annual conglomerate of film, interactive media, and music festivals and conferences that take place in mid-March in Austin, Texas, United States. It began in 1987, and has continued to grow in both scope and size every year. Read more in this spotlight with Hugh Forrest, chief programming officer for SXSW.

Why is it important for businesses from the San Francisco Bay Area to be involved in SXSW?
Many of the largest companies and hottest startups from the Bay Area such as Salesforce, Eventbrite, Google and more have been participating in SXSW for years. Many diverse industries come to SXSW to find new business opportunities; they also like SXSW as a way to discover new ideas, connect with existing clients, hire new talent, seek investment, launch new products, have a good time, and more.

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Patent Owner Ginko

Former President of the United States Barack Obama speaks during the 2016 SXSW Music, Film + Interactive Festival at Long Center on March 11, 2016 in Austin, Texas. (Photo by Neilson Barnard/Getty Images for SXSW)

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How has the San Francisco community helped support SXSW?
The Bay Area has one of the largest contingents of SXSW registrants in the world. Additionally, a large number of speakers, companies, and topics have landed here from San Francisco over years. With the Bay Area being such an influential startup ecosystem, we've had a number of young companies benefit from the spotlight that SXSW creates. Examples include Twitter, Foursquare, and The 4-Hour Workweek author, Tim Ferriss, who resides in San Francisco.

What are some examples of technology or innovations created at SXSW that have boomed in San Francisco?
The most high profile success is of course Twitter in 2007. At the time, Twitter won the Blog Category at the 2007 SXSW Web Awards and throughout the event registrants became addicted to the app and the rest is history. SXSW 2008 witnessed the launch of AirBNB with two customers, one of which was CEO Brian Chesky.

And in 2009 the idea for Uber, the first rideshare service, was hatched during the event. In our Accelerator Pitch Event, we've had many startups from San Francisco and the Bay Area reach success following SXSW. Some success stories include Tubemogul, Hipmunk, Siri (acquired by Apple), Wildfire, Tango, Foodspotting, and Klout. Over the last 6 years, we've had 353 startups appear in the Accelerator Pitch Event, with 71% of those companies gained funding and 14% were acquired.

Virtual reality headsets tested during the 2016 SXSW Music, Film + Interactive Festival on March 12, 2016 in Austin, Texas.

How does SXSW impact everyday people both in San Francisco and worldwide?
While it's fun to talk about high-profile SXSW launches like Twitter, their experience is really the exception to the rule. Most of the connections made

at SXSW don't generate huge headlines. But, these connections nonetheless lead to new opportunities that help creative people advance their career to the next level.

← Navigation Centers, Sanctuary City and Greater Housing Density Gain Broad Support in 2017 Poll (https://sfchamber.com/navigation-centers-sanctuary-city-greater-housing-density-gain-broad-support-2017-poll/)

Partner Spotlight: OUM & Co. LLP → (https://sfchamber.com/partner-spotlight-oum-co-llp/)

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