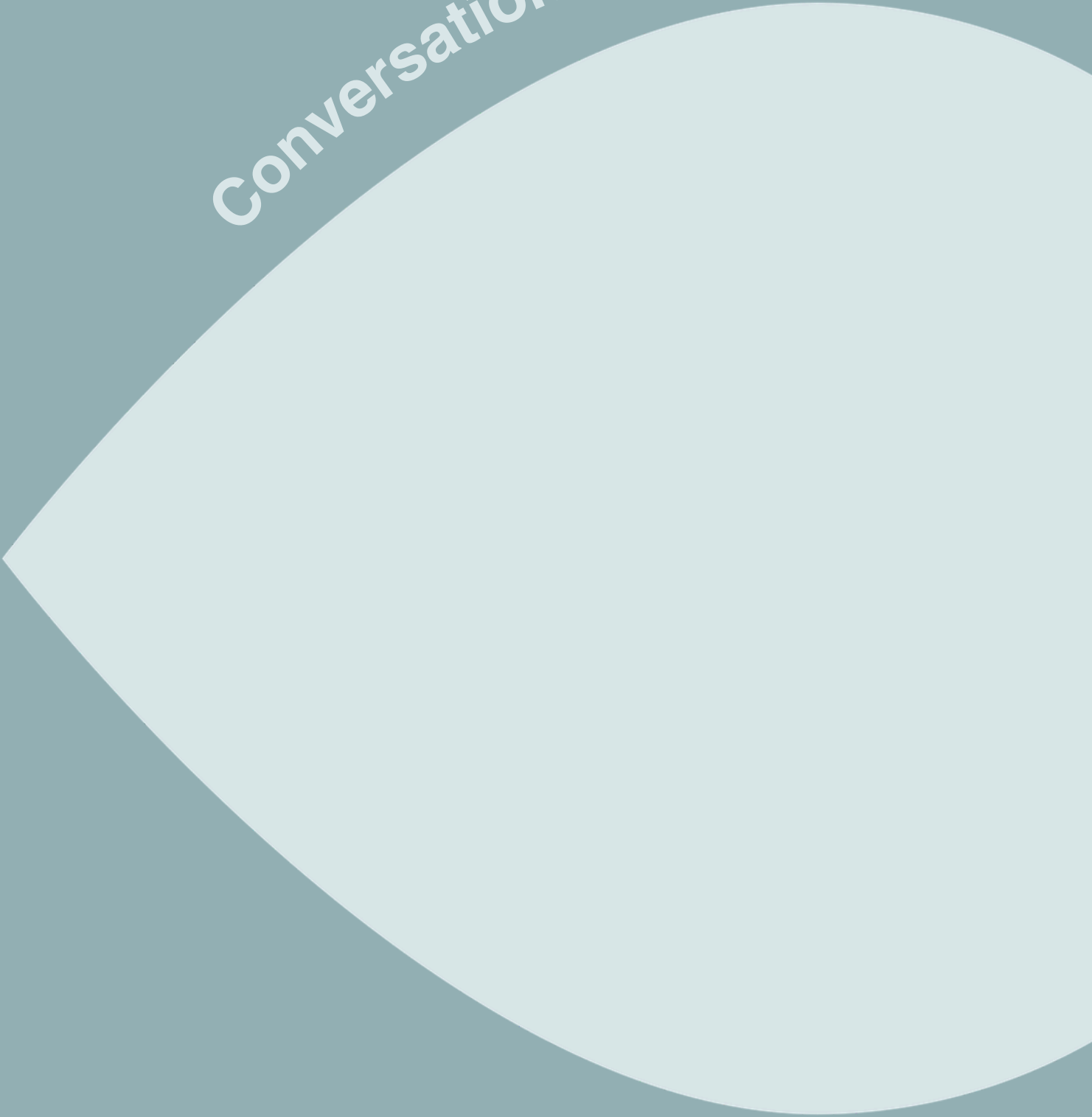


Conversations with Blondefish



**Global Consistency: Event experiences
that travel across markets**

Opening the conversation...

.... Balkiz Sumerler, Head of Events - International Region, Philips

With more than three decades of international experience, Balkiz leads a global team shaping how Philips shows up across major healthcare congresses and exhibitions worldwide.

Her work sits at the intersection of brand, strategy and execution, translating enterprise objectives into consistent, experience-led engagement on the ground.

Through a series of focused questions, we explored what global consistency really means beyond visual identity. Also how event experiences become a strategic differentiator for Philips in competitive healthcare environments while remaining scalable and relevant across local markets.



Q: When you think about Philips showing up consistently around the world, what does that mean to you, beyond brand guidelines and visual identity?

Of course, consistency starts with the fundamentals: the colour blue, the logo, the visual identity, but it has to go much further than that. At our core, we are a people-centric company, driven by a very clear purpose: 'Better care for more people'. We need to consistently deliver that purpose and promise in a professional way, everywhere we operate and at every show we exhibit at.

When you truly prioritise people and customers, consistency becomes about behaviour, not just how we look. It's about proving to our audiences that we are listening, that we clearly communicate our value and that we are confident in what we stand for.

The most effective way to do this is through creating visitor experiences at events. Experiences that are crafted moments, built around a well-defined customer journey and designed to bring our purpose to life in a clear, simple and human way.

Q: Why do experiences play such a critical role in helping a premium global brand like Philips stand out consistently across markets?

Brand and visual identity are important because they're visible and they set the foundation. But experience is what creates the emotional and memorable layer of how we represent ourselves. Through an experience, audiences can actually feel our brand and it's that emotional connection that makes something memorable and meaningful.

Healthcare is an increasingly competitive environment and the experiences we deliver at events are a key differentiator. It allows us to stand out while giving us clear, measurable signals of success: longer dwell times, deeper engagement and more meaningful conversations. Experiences also help simplify complexity. Even with highly intellectual healthcare audiences, portraying their challenges in a simple, human way and presenting our value propositions with clear methods can often lead to faster understanding and stronger connection than deep, purely scientific discussion alone.

Q: How do you strike the balance between global consistency and local relevance when it comes to experiences, without losing the essence of the brand or becoming overly prescriptive?

It always starts with a clear objective. If the objective is well defined, then the experience can be shaped around it. From there, it's about putting the customer first: listening to them, understanding their challenges and designing experiences that genuinely address those needs. That foundation should remain consistent everywhere. The relevance for different markets or regions can be adapted, but the core purpose and intent should stay the same, aligned to the enterprise or business objective rather than a purely regional one.

Consistency also comes from thinking strategically about scale and reuse. We often start with a larger, flagship experience and then adapt it into smaller formats for different markets. That scalability allows us to balance global consistency with local relevance, while making the most of what we create. The North Star never changes it's always the enterprise objective, then how it comes to life can flex to suit different audiences and environments.

Q: What principles or guardrails help teams make the right experience decisions locally, while still protecting the global brand?

Guardrails work best when experiences are designed in a modular and scalable way. Templates can be helpful, but what really matters is being very clear and directional about the objective and the message we want the experience to reflect. If teams stay true to that core intent, the rest can be adapted locally without losing the essence of what we're trying to deliver.

As mentioned, the key principle is customer first, always. Alongside that, tone of voice, visual identity, quality and compliance with standards are non-negotiable. When those elements are clear, they naturally guide decision-making and protect the global brand, while still giving local teams the freedom to shape experiences in a way that feels relevant and authentic to their audience.

Q: How do you know when an experience has truly delivered on the Philips brand, especially when you're operating at global scale?

It starts with outcomes. An experience has to be measurable and clearly deliver against the objectives that were set. Then we check if the story has been understood and if the message is simple and clear for the audience. Beyond that, success is about the quality of engagement, not just volume. Strong engagement where people truly connect with the content is a key indicator that the experience is working.

Of course, metrics matter, especially at global scale, but they're only part of the picture. What really matters is how people engage: the conversations that happen, the questions that are asked, how long audiences stay and whether they come back and even bring their colleagues with them.

A very clear signal of success for me is when an experience resonates beyond its original market. When something launched for one audience is then requested and reused globally. Like an experience we first launched at a show in Vienna, it was reused in Chicago and is now being adopted in Japan. It shows that it's addressing shared global challenges and genuinely delivering on the Philips brand.

Q: Final thoughts?

Ultimately, it all comes back to our core value of Better care for more people. We are a customer-centric and patient-centric company and that should be reflected in how we show up everywhere. It's why our messaging can't live in isolation, it needs to be brought to life in a way that feels emotional, human and memorable.

For our worldwide exhibit programme, that means going beyond demos, meetings, or products alone. It's about adding that emotional engagement layer that connects people to our purpose. When experiences do that and when they reflect who we are and what we stand for, that's when they truly represent Philips.

Closing the conversation...

This conversation makes one thing clear: the experiences Philips creates aren't extras, they're a core part of how the brand shows up. They help build trust with its audience and clearly demonstrate what Philips stands for.

Balkiz's answers point to five clear principles behind the experiences that truly work for Philips:

- 1 Objective comes first**
Clarity of purpose sets everything else in motion.
- 2 Emotion is the driver**
People remember how an experience made them feel, not what it told them.
- 3 Simplicity creates impact**
Even expert audiences respond to clarity. Simple, human storytelling cuts through complexity, creates faster, deeper connection and remains memorable.
- 4 Engagement is the real metric**
Busy isn't success. Time spent, conversations started and people returning is.
- 5 Design for life beyond the event**
Great experiences are built to live on, scalable, travel and remain relevant wherever they go.

Our thanks to Balkiz Sumerler for sharing her perspective and offering a behind-the-scenes view of the role experience plays in building the Philips brand globally.

About Balkiz Sumerler

Balkiz is a seasoned global event leader with over 30 years of experience designing and delivering high-impact brand experiences at major international trade shows and industry congresses. In her current role she leads a global team delivering over 600 events annually, shaping how Philips engages customers through strategic, experience-led events.

With expertise spanning exhibition strategy, booth design, experience creation, communications and PR, Balkiz brings a holistic understanding of the event ecosystem, from concept development to on-site execution.

Having lived and worked across Europe, North America and the Middle East, Balkiz applies a culturally nuanced, globally informed perspective to creating meaningful audience engagements.

Known for combining strategic thinking with operational excellence, Balkiz aligns event programmes with business objectives while strengthening stakeholder partnerships and elevating brand presence in competitive environments.

Based in Zurich, Switzerland, Balkiz balances a global leadership role with being a proud mother of two.

About Blondefish

Blondefish is a boutique event experience agency helping brands create bold, story-led experiences across live events and customer experience centres.

We spend a lot of time exploring what really works, sharing ideas, learning from others and helping brands think differently about how they engage their audiences.

If you ever want to swap thoughts, explore what's possible or see examples of ideas that have worked elsewhere, we're always happy to chat. No pitch, no pressure, just practical, creative thinking and a fresh perspective.

Let's Talk!

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