



Indies Are Not Sitting Still

Over the past month, AMIN agencies gathered in Pittsburgh and Bali to tackle the biggest pressures facing independent agencies right now: AI disruption, operational strain, client expectations, staffing, and the accelerating pace of change.

But the dominant mood wasn't uncertainty. It was adaptability.

From breakout sessions to late-night conversations, one message kept surfacing: Independent agencies may actually be better positioned for this moment because they can move faster, collaborate quicker, and evolve without layers of bureaucracy slowing them down.

Why This Matters:

AMIN agencies are not trying to survive the future. We are actively shaping it.

Integrated Conference | Pittsburgh All Grit. No Quit.



Hosted by Gatesman, this year's conference focused heavily on what modern agency adaptability actually looks like in practice.

Key themes included:

- AI disruption and workflow transformation
- Proving value beyond outputs
- Staffing and operational pressure
- Speed-to-market expectations
- Creativity under increasing automation



As Gatesman's John Gatesman noted:

"People were very candid about the challenges they're facing right now... there wasn't much posturing."

The result? Less agency theatre. More real operational conversations.

Key Takeaway:

Progress matters more than perfection.

[Read The Full Conference Reflection](#)



APAC Retreat | Bali Stronger Relationships. Smarter Collaboration.

Reinforced another AMIN strength: relationships that move beyond networking and become genuine operational advantage.

Agencies from across the region gathered to strengthen partnerships, exchange ideas, and explore how independent agencies can collaborate more effectively across increasingly connected markets.

This was especially important given the recent growth of the AMIN APAC region. For many attendees, this was their first in-person meeting. As is often the case, we were amazed at the quality of the agencies that have joined us in the region.

Key Takeaway:

Trusted independent partnerships create real operational advantage



[Explore the APAC Retreat](#)

NEWS



Indianapolis agency CVR unveiled a new brand identity and positioning centered around "All In Your Business", a commitment to go deeper on client insights to unlock smarter strategy and bolder creative

The repositioning reflects a broader industry shift: agencies are increasingly differentiating through judgement, storytelling, and strategic partnership, not just production.

Why This Matters:

As AI commoditizes execution, agencies are doubling down on strategic thinking and human insight as competitive advantages.

[Watch The New Brand Video](#)



Stone Ward Launches New Baptist Health Campaign

Stone Ward recently launched the latest evolution of its Baptist Health campaign, connecting healthcare messaging with Arkansas culture through standout student-athlete partnerships.

The fully integrated campaign spans Meta, YouTube, streaming audio, TV, and outdoor - blending community identity with digital-first storytelling.

Why This Matters:

Healthcare brands are increasingly looking for campaigns that feel culturally connected, locally authentic, and platform-native rather than traditionally corporate.

[View The Campaign](#)



IO Wins AI Agency of the Year IO Named AI Pioneer Agency of the Year

AMIN agency IO was recognized as AI Pioneer Agency of the Year for its work integrating AI into meaningful client growth strategies.

Rather than treating AI as a novelty, the agency has focused on practical applications that improve performance, efficiency, and decision-making while preserving strategic and creative thinking.

Why This Matters:

The agencies creating the most value with AI are not replacing creativity - they're using AI to scale smarter strategy, stronger insights, and faster execution.

[Read The Announcement](#)

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AGENCY SPOTLIGHT

GATESMAN+

This month's spotlight features Pittsburgh-based Gatesman, host agency for the Integrated Conference.

Operating under a single profit center, Gatesman combines strategy, creative, media, PR, social, and experiential into one integrated model built for speed, agility, and accountability.

Its positioning - "Prove You Were Here" - reflects the agency's belief that great work should leave measurable impact behind.

The agency also recently earned Ad Age Best Places To Work recognition.



As John Gatesman explains:

The freedom to move quickly, make bold decisions, and put people before process.

Why This Matters:

As clients demand faster collaboration and clearer accountability, integrated agency structures are becoming a competitive advantage.

[Meet Gatesman](#)



AMIN AMBASSADOR SPOTLIGHT

Chris Canadeo On PR Built For The Algorithm Era

EGC Group recently launched persuade, a performance PR agency designed for an AI- and algorithm-driven media landscape. The premise is simple: **Visibility alone is no longer enough.**

Modern PR increasingly requires discoverability, measurable engagement, affiliate influence, and cultural relevance across fragmented platforms.

As Chris Canadeo explains:

"Visibility means very little if it does not drive measurable impact."

Why This Matters:

As search, social, and AI reshape media consumption, communications strategies are shifting from awareness metrics toward performance-driven visibility.

[Learn More About persuade](#)



AMIN PEER GROUP SPOTLIGHT



Some Of The Best Conversations Happened After The Sessions Ended

One of the recurring themes from Pittsburgh was how quickly conversations moved from identifying challenges to collectively solving them.

Peer group dinners created space for agencies across disciplines to speak more openly about operational pressure, client expectations, talent, AI integration, and the realities agencies are navigating right now.

For peers like Lathi De Silva from Signal Theory and Tara Linton from Cronin, the value came from something increasingly rare in agency life: honest conversations without posturing.

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