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# Gus Balbontin



The people who are crazy enough to think they can change the world are the ones who do. Former Executive Director and CTO of Lonely Planet Gus Balbontin is one of them. He's an investor, entrepreneur, founder and explorer who has spent two decades helping businesses adjust strategies, products, services, culture and individuals to better deal with rapid and regular changing markets.

As the former Executive Director and CTO of Lonely Planet, Gus led one of the most loved brands in the world through significant disruption. Easier said than done, trust me. Gus remains heavily involved with the startup scene around the world as a founder, investor and advisor. In his spare time, he's the Entrepreneur in Residence at Victoria University.

Gus will delve deep into the digital transformation of the past two decades, sharing stories of how so many companies mishandled this seismic shift and how today's business leaders can capitalise on the disruption that's still occurring today.

Born and bred in wild Patagonia, Gus Balbontin never allowed his small town and humble beginnings get in the way of his big dreams. A healthy disrespect for authority and a severe case of fomo (fear of missing out) landed him in Australia at the young age of 17.

By the age of 22 he had dropped out of uni, hitchhiked South America, set up his first business and landed his dream job at Lonely Planet. Fast forward a few more years and he was leading the company globally, working with companies such as Google X, Nokia and Amazon on the latest technology, creative cultures and high performing teams.

Seeking a change from corporate life, he hung up his boots as the Executive Director and CTO of Lonely Planet and decided to move back to his entrepreneurial roots, becoming an investor, founder and mentor across the startup ecosystem in Melbourne. He loves sharing a story, but loves even more, knowing those stories make a difference to people, helping them in their own business and life.

Over the last 3 years Gus has presented to audiences of 10 across regional Australia and New Zealand, to audiences of 10,000 across North America, Europe, South America and Asia. To him there's no difference. Small, large, private, public, board room to mail room, his lessons hit a chord, his simplicity disarms you, his energy infects you and his counterintuitive way of looking at the world will motivate you to do things different.

Often thought as futurist, not because he predicts the future, but instead because he helps you focus on what you

can control to deal with any future. Still want to talk trends? Sure! He loves as much as the next person trying to imagine a world run by AI, but he warns that getting too distracted with future guesses will only take time away from you and your company to actually do something about the future.

He will blow you away with energy and insights into the transformation, struggles and successes of one of the most loved brands in the world.