

## Spotlight conversation: Rules of digital engagement

By: Mary Elizabeth Hurn  
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Engauge Digital's Hilimire talks about the evolving digital agency  
By Mary Elizabeth Hurn

**Q: You were the founder of Spunlogic, which was acquired by Engauge a few weeks ago. Since the acquisition, what has been your strategy going forward?**

**A:** The exciting thing for us when we joined Engauge was that we wanted to maintain our culture and provide the same services for our clients that we had been. But Engauge Digital is a new agency model. We get a chance to extend our reach and add services that we didn't have before, while at the same time still focusing passionately on the digital space.

**Q: What would you say is unique about Engauge Digital?**

**A:** Our focus is on understanding the way people behave online. Over the past few years we've added a lot of research capabilities to our firm, to really understand what's motivating people to take action on the web. We get to leverage a bigger base of talent across Engauge and we're doing studies to increase that side of the business. Our biggest goal is to get across to clients that nothing's really changed [post-acquisition]. They're still working with same people. This isn't a move to start pushing new services to clients, it's a way for us to continue working in a new fashion.

**Q: What is different about Engauge's business model?**

**A:** We're trying not to be an integrated agency. It's a new concept. Stan Rapp came up with this after being with [an] agency for decades. Essentially, it allows agencies that have something different to offer to continue to push the envelope in a particular area while still being part of a bigger group. It's a new model and I'm excited to see where it will go.

### Jeff Hilimire

**Job:** President, Engauge Digital

**Previous roles:** Founding Spunlogic during his last year at UNC Charlotte

**Words of wisdom:** "To start a company, jump in — just do it and give it everything you've got."

**Q: How is digital marketing evolving?**

**A:** The interesting thing is that we're already starting to see a blur between what is digital marketing and what is not. Every pitch and every new initiative on the marketing side has one or several digital components. So I think over time, digital marketing is not going to be a separate entity, but part of all marketing initiatives — that's what I'm excited to figure out. How does digital unfold over the next couple years? Large digital shops win overall AOR accounts, which is really great and really exciting. Digital is becoming more and more a part of every conversation and it's certainly going to be the future of marketing in my opinion.

**Q: With so many companies taking on digital marketing, how can one stand out among the crowd?**

**A:** One thing I've noticed in the digital space is that clients really get it. They understand that you have to have a conversation with the customer — learn from them and listen to them. I think on the client side, companies that are really going to stand out really understand the delicate balance of how to interact with their customers and give them what they want while still being genuine. Those are the companies that are really going to be winning in the digital space.

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