



SXSW ANNOUNCES INITIAL KEYNOTE AND SECOND ROUND OF FEATURED SPEAKERS

IBM Chairman and CEO Arvind Krishna Announced as Keynote

Featured Speakers Announced include Rohit Bhargva, Ghazi, Alex Haraus, Dr. Katharine Hayhoe, Lidiiane Jones, Amanda Nguyen, Candace Parker, Donald Passman, Rishad Tobaccowala, and more

Austin, Texas — December 10, 2024 — South by Southwest® (SXSW®) Conference and Festivals has announced its initial Keynote and the second round of Featured Speakers for the 39th edition of its annual Conference, which celebrates the convergence of technology, film, television, and music. SXSW takes place March 7-15, 2025 in Austin, Texas.

The Keynote Speaker announced today is IBM Chairman and CEO **Arvind Krishna**.

“Exploring the benefits of new advances in technology while addressing their potential challenges represents a core part of the SXSW experience we curate each year,” said Hugh Forrest, Co-President and Chief Programming Officer. “We are excited to announce Arvind Krishna as our first Keynote Speaker of the 2025 season. His session on the convergence of AI and quantum computing will cover what this monumental shift in technology will bring to humanity.”

The Featured Speakers announced today include founder and Chief Trend Curator at The Non-Obvious Company **Rohit Bhargva**, founder and CEO of EMPIRE **Ghazi**, director and social media strategist **Alex Haraus**, author, Chief Scientist for The Nature Conservancy, and a Horn Distinguished Professor and Endowed Professor of Public Policy and Public Law at Texas Tech University **Dr. Katharine Hayhoe**, CEO of Bumble **Lidiiane Jones**, activist and astronaut **Amanda Nguyen**, WNBA Champion, WNBA Finals MVP, 2x WNBA MVP, 2x Gold Medalist, WNBA Rookie of the Year, and broadcaster **Candace Parker**, author and music attorney at Gang, Tyre, Ramer, Brown & Passman **Donald Passman**, and author, speaker, teacher, advisor, podcast host, and futurist **Rishad Tobaccowala**.

The SXSW Conference is organized into 23 programming tracks presented in a variety of session formats. Tracks for 2025 include 2050, Advertising & Brand Experience, Artificial Intelligence, Climate & Sustainability, Creating Film & TV, Creator Economy, Culture, Design,

Energy, Fashion & Beauty, Film & TV Industry, Food, Game Industry, Government & Civic Engagement, Health & MedTech, Music & Tech, Music Industry, Psychedelics, Startups, Tech Industry, Transportation, Workplace, and XR. More information about SXSW programming tracks and formats can be found [here](#).

Announced SXSW 2025 Keynote:

- ***From Sci-Fi to Society: The Next Era of AI and Quantum Computing:*** When it comes to AI and quantum computing, it's time to move past the sci-fi hype and start building real-world applications that expand what is possible with technology. We have entered a new era in which computers can learn, generate and operate independently. At the same time, an entirely new computing paradigm is rapidly evolving that leverages quantum mechanics to solve seemingly impossible challenges. In this Keynote Session, IBM Chairman and CEO **Arvind Krishna** will discuss how business and society can benefit from the convergence of these next frontiers in technology.

Announced Featured Sessions include:

- ***7 Non-Obvious Secrets Of Understanding People To Predict the Future:*** For the last decade, founder and Chief Trend Curator at The Non-Obvious Company **Rohit Bhargava** has successfully predicted and explained some of the biggest shifts in culture and technology that affect all our lives. Now for the first time, he will reveal on the SXSW stage the unspoken side of trend curation and future thinking. Inspired by his latest bestselling book, Bhargava will debut a talk featuring his latest insights on what it takes to understand human behavior and predict trends. Attendees will walk away with not only new ideas for the future, but an immediately actionable roadmap for how to better understand the people around them. The people who understand people always win. Learn how to be one of them.
- ***10 Breakthrough Technologies of 2025:*** Each year, *MIT Technology Review* reporters and editors assemble a list of the top breakthrough technologies that will change the world. Join Executive Editor **Niall Firth** as he shares the publication's list of ten breakthrough technologies with the SXSW audience, explaining each one and how it will impact the way we live and work.
- ***All You Need to Know About the Music Business: Right Now:*** Why do artists today have more power than ever before in history? How have global streaming platforms and distribution reshaped business for artists in music? How have the million-dollar sales of artists' catalogs impacted the music business? This fireside chat featuring innovation and fan experience expert **David De Cristofaro** and author and music attorney at Gang, Tyre, Ramer, Brown & Passman **Donald Passman** will explore the current state of the business from traditional record and publishing deals to the cutting edge of AI.
- ***The Art and Science of Organic Trendbuilding For Climate Initiatives:*** Nearly everyone tries to use social media to further their cause nowadays. But what's actually working? In this conversation, co-anchor of *PBS News Hour* **Geoff Bennett** and director and social media strategist **Alex Haraus** will explore the art and science of organic trendbuilding. They'll reveal social media strategies you can use to convert online

viewership into offline impact and shatter the traditional assumptions holding back modern organizers. Hear inspiring stories that explain viewer psychology and how you can craft strong, inviting campaign narratives to recruit for your cause. This is an effective new perspective on how to build a movement.

- ***Building a Legacy: How Indies Create Long-Term Success:*** To mark both A2IM's 20th anniversary and the closing chapter of **Dr. Richard James Burgess'** tenure as A2IM's President and CEO, Dr. Burgess will lead a special panel featuring leading voices from pioneering independent labels such as co-founder of VP Records **Patricia 'Miss Pat' Chin**, founder and CEO of EMPIRE **Ghazi**, and US General Manager for Rough Trade Records **Melanie Sheehan**. Together, they'll explore their experiences and strategies for achieving long-term success in the ever-evolving independent music sector.
- ***Cleaning Up Our Atmosphere: Carbon Removal Prepares to Go Mainstream:*** Leading climate scientists agree carbon removal is vital for limiting global warming. While giant carbon-sucking vacuums may seem like sci-fi, the technology is real and in use today. However, the industry must scale considerably to reach its full potential. In this fireside chat, Chief Operating Officer of Climeworks **Douglas Chan** and author, Chief Scientist for The Nature Conservancy, and a Horn Distinguished Professor and Endowed Professor of Public Policy and Public Law at Texas Tech University **Dr. Katharine Hayhoe** will discuss the state of carbon removal and how we can reach a future where excess carbon is systematically removed much like other waste.
- ***The Future of Human Connection:*** In this session, Bumble CEO **Lidiane Jones** will take us through how she is working to reconstruct and redefine the tech industry by building platforms centered around women's experiences. Join Jones and *NBC News* anchor **Savannah Sellers** as they discuss the challenges and rewards of leadership, the importance of human connection during heightened loneliness, and building technology to create a more equitable future.
- ***The Great Rethinking: How to Navigate the Future of Work:*** Generational, technological, and cultural changes are challenging every traditional notion of work. Companies have two choices: reactively struggle to adjust or take control – reinventing work to align with the evolving environment. But how? In this session, author, speaker, teacher, advisor, podcast host, and futurist **Rishad Tobaccowala** will examine the five interwoven forces reshaping work as we know it. Drawing from his latest book, *Rethinking Work*, he will reveal where work will happen, how it will be done and what the work itself will look like. Discover strategies to prepare for these profound changes and get ahead of the “Great Rethinking.”
- ***Spill the Tea: A Strategic Guide to Office Gossip:*** Who hasn't gossiped at work?? We all do it, even though we're told we shouldn't. But what if some gossip is actually...good for us? Drawing from research and real-world examples, workplace expert, podcast host, author, and Contributing Editor at the *Harvard Business Review* **Amy Gallo** will share when water cooler talk helps build relationships and when it turns toxic. You'll learn how to navigate office gossip like a pro, whether you're sharing it or on the receiving end. Plus, you'll learn practical strategies for confronting harmful gossip head-on, turning destructive drama into productive dialogue, and building relationships that thrive on trust

rather than whispered takedowns. Skip the guilt and gain tools for using gossip to strengthen relationships and get ahead (while keeping your integrity intact).

- ***Today's Athlete is a Brand's Best Megaphone:*** Between the rise of F1, flag football, and pickleball, changes in the NIL landscape, and the growth of women's sport, the sporting universe now represents a larger and more diverse pool of fans. This equates to a big opportunity for brands who know how to play the game. To connect authentically, brands are working with athletes – cultural trendsetters with their own brands and media presence – to uncover creative new ways of working together. With anecdotes from Cannes Lions' buzziest event, Sport Beach, hear from WNBA Champion, WNBA Finals MVP, 2x WNBA MVP, 2x Gold Medalist, WNBA Rookie of the Year, and broadcaster **Candace Parker** and Chief Brand and Communications Officer at Stagwell **Beth Sidhu** as they discuss brands who have seized the power of sport, and the athletes helping them win.
- ***Unlock Your Creative Problem Solving Super Powers with Gen AI:*** In the well-known children's book *Harold and the Purple Crayon*, a boy named Harold can draw anything into existence using just his imagination and a magic crayon. So how can you turn Gen AI into your own magical purple crayon? Through common use cases and compelling examples, Head of Learning Design and Strategy at MasterClass at Work **Dr. John Scott** and author and creative technologist **Don Allen Stevenson III** will explore how lateral thinking skills can help you unlock the creative problem solving power of Gen AI.

Announced Featured Speaker:

- Activist and astronaut **Amanda Nguyen**

About SXSW

SXSW dedicates itself to helping creative people achieve their goals. Founded in 1987 in Austin, Texas, SXSW is best known for its conference and festivals that celebrate the convergence of tech, film and television, music, education, and culture. An essential destination for global professionals, the annual March event features sessions, music, and comedy showcases, film and television screenings, exhibitions, professional development, and a variety of opportunities to meet and connect with people. SXSW proves that the most unexpected discoveries happen when diverse topics and individuals come together. SXSW 2025 will take place March 7–15 in Austin. Learn more at sxsw.com. To register for the event, please visit sxsw.com/attend.

SXSW's expansion into the Asia Pacific region, with SXSW Sydney starting in 2023 and Europe with SXSW London in 2025, provides new possibilities at this iconic experience. These events, each with their own distinct flavor, make South By an indispensable three-stop tour for the global creative community.

SXSW 2025, Driven by Rivian

###

Editor's Note: Media Registration for SXSW is open until Friday, February 7, 2025. Please go to <https://www.sxsw.com/press-center/press-accreditation> to apply.

Press Contacts:

Benjamin Perez

Jody Arlington

Janessa Bowen

press@sxsw.com