



ERICH JOACHIMSTHALER, PH.D.

Founder & CEO, Vivaldi Group

Erich is a rare combination of consultant, entrepreneur, academic, researcher, author, and positive contrarian. He is one of the leading thinkers in modern brand strategy, marketing, innovation, technology and business growth. He practices and develops his expertise inside companies working with portfolios and brands, has helped shape real portfolio strategies, turnarounds, innovation platforms and new operating models, often in the context of categories or industries facing structural uncertainty, deep disruption and transformation.

Over the last 20 years, Erich has helped built several companies and started up ventures that form today the Vivaldi Group. The Group helps companies to build strong brands, identify their innovation and growth opportunities, and fully realize their potential and future demand growth. A few core themes emerge from his work and contribution:

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1. Brand strategy redefined. He helped shift branding from communication and positioning toward something deeper: brand as system, brand as economic value or economic profit, brand as interaction field, not a message machine.

His earlier book *Hidden in Plain Sight* explored how growth comes from uncovering the unmet, often unspoken emerging needs of people. His later book *The Interaction Field* pushed further, arguing that brands create value by enabling interactions, not pushing messages.

2. Demand-led and future-back growth. He is one of the few strategists who merged consumer psychology, category dynamics, foresight, and economics. His frameworks — Demand Landscaping, Demand Spaces, Future-Back, Demand Architecture, the Holistic Brand Model — help organizations understand the episodes and moments of life, not just segments or demographics.

3. Brand + business architecture as one system. A key idea in his work is that brand portfolio, product architecture, experience, and economic profit form one system. Growth happens when these layers align and interact — not when departments operate in silos.

4. Reinvention for the Intent Economy. He has been one of the early voices arguing that the internet is shifting from attention to intent, and that brands must compete on episodes, interactions, and value creation in this new architecture.

Prior to his work at Vivaldi Group, Erich has held academic faculty positions at The Darden School at the University of Virginia, the University of Southern California, and the Instituto Estudios Superiores de la Empresa (IESE) in Barcelona — which he first joined as a full-time professor in 1989 and, time permitting, he still serves as a Visiting Adjunct Professor of Business Administration as time permits. He has guest lectured at over 25 business schools.

Throughout his career, Erich has published over 100 articles in highly respected academic journals and in best-selling, award-winning books. Together with David A. Aaker, he wrote some of the most seminal articles on brand strategy and brand architecture in the Harvard Business Review and the California Management Review. His book [Brand Leadership](#), co-authored with David A. Aaker, was first published by The Free Press in January 2000 and republished in 2009 by Pocket Books London. It describes the new leadership paradigm of building strong brands and has been translated into 14 languages.

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His book on innovation and growth strategies from a consumer-centric perspective, [Hidden in Plain Sight: How to Find and Execute Your Company's Next Growth Strategy](#), was published by the Harvard Business School Press, has been translated in 10 languages, and won the AMA-Berry Best Marketing Book of the Year Award. His work on strategy, business models, and innovation have informed his latest book, [The Interaction Field: The Revolutionary New Way to Create Shared Value for Businesses, Customers and Society](#), which describes the emergence of what the next generation of successful companies and brands will look like. In it, Erich presents “a thrilling new way of looking at a successful business model for the future,” predicting that successful companies will shift from a world of attention, and transaction facilitated by impressions to a world of participation, engagement through interactions. This new model goes further than solely extracting value for the benefit of investors or shareholders — it creates value for all participants engaged in the Interaction Field, as well as society at large. It was published by Public Affairs/Hachette Group in 2020 and won the Bronze medal of the prestigious Axiom Business Book Awards.

Erich has received numerous awards of distinction for his work. He won the Best Dissertation Award for his pioneering work on solving the mathematical classification problem. In 2017, he was inducted as an ISBM Fellow, recognizing him as a senior scholar/thought leader, having made significant contributions to the advancement of the theory and practice of B2B marketing. There are only 27 academics and scholars exist worldwide who have been awarded this distinction. Erich also was voted to the Top 50 Chief Digital Officer CDO Influencer list, which is a ranking of global superstars in the fields of digital technology and in the adoption of data-driven culture.

Erich is an internationally recognized authority on the impact of technology on strategy, the digitalization of industries and categories, and the role of innovation and branding, and is quoted regularly in major media. He is one of the most in-demand keynote speakers in industry conferences and company meetings in Europe, Asia, and the U.S. He conducts conferences, speeches and workshops in English, German, and Spanish.

Erich holds degrees in economics, statistics, and business administration, with minors in computer science from both German and U.S. universities, having received a Master of Science degree in quantitative methods and marketing and a Ph.D. in Business Administration, with an emphasis in statistics and consumer behavior from the University of Kansas. He then joined the Harvard Business School as a Post-doctoral Fellow.