



SPARK COMPASS™

BRIDGING THE DIGITAL AND PHYSICAL WORLD

DIGITAL REPORT 2022



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Formerly of NASA and Qualcomm, inventor **Erik Bjontegard** improves lives through Spark Compass, an augmented intelligence communications platform

Erik Bjontegard is a man on several missions. With countless patents to his name for his inventions, the former NASA Rocket Scientist has had involvement in creating and testing digital twins for rocket ships, sat around the table at Qualcomm when they were contributing to the roadmap of 5G, and now leads Total Communicator Solutions and its flagship, data-driven platform, Spark Compass.

In 2014, Bjontegard attended the White House to receive the silver award for its entry into the SmartAmerica Challenge with the White House Presidential Innovation Fellow project, where Spark Compass created a campaign around healthy eating and healthy behaviour for office workers.

ABI Research identified Spark Compass as the fourth most innovative beacon-tech company in the world in 2016 – ahead of Apple and Facebook. A beacon is a small, physical object that receives location data from nearby devices via Bluetooth, so they can engage with customers.

Bjontegard's gift with technology has led to some extraordinary 'activations', as he calls them, where some of the world's largest brands have used the Spark Compass capabilities to engage their customer in new, novel and useful ways to elevate the experience: be it at a sports stadium with the Dallas Mavericks for AR activation, Hollywood PR event with popstar Selena Gomez and Puma, working with Apple and Samsung at international airports and even







Spark Compass: bridging the digital and physical world

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in the quiet surroundings of an English care home in partnership with AWS and its Alexa speaker for NHS Digital; there are very few limits to what Spark Compass can achieve in an augmented or virtual realm.

The inventive company has the entire customer journey in mind with any product development and campaign, starting with end results, as Bjontegard explains: “We aggregate data from a variety of sources and deliver outcomes based on the data. But we have fun while we do it.” Inside the walls of the business, Total Communicator Solutions and its flagship communications platform, Spark Compass, are driven to help clients and partners act on real-world data and deliver outcomes that are measurable to the end-users.

Spark Compass enables integration of location and standard campaign management solutions, bringing the ability to understand the actions and the results generated.

“Many technical companies are enamoured by technology and how cool it is to get a 5% improvement in performance or 5% reduction in power consumption. But it really doesn't necessarily matter that much to the end-users. We always ask how results can be useful for them,” he said.



“THAT'S REALLY WHAT THE FANDOM IS ALL ABOUT. IT'S ABOUT RELATIONSHIPS”

ERIK BJONTEGARD
FOUNDER AND PRESIDENT,
SPARK COMPASS



ERIK BJONTEGARD



TITLE: FOUNDER AND PRESIDENT

LOCATION: SAN DIEGO, CALIFORNIA

» Erik Bjontegard is an entrepreneur, technology leader, innovator, former rocket scientist with NASA and technical lead for numerous FAA and international airworthiness certifications of critical commercial aircraft components.

A former R&D senior executive at Qualcomm and Rohr Aerospace, he is also a certified California real estate broker and a holder of multiple patents globally.

An established public speaker and advisor to governments, he's been awarded for his campaigns at the

White House and was named Top 20 Global Digitalization Leaders by CGI, Top IoT Inventor 2019 and Entrepreneur to Follow in 2019.

Spark Compass Data Driven eSports Fan Relationship P4P

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Spark Compass activating worldwide and driving results

Hollywood would come calling for Spark Compass when Puma wanted to announce a new line of shoes. Puma approached the company to help them engage with people locally while extending the engagement into social media: specifically Instagram.

So popstar Selena Gomez was drafted in, with her 135 million friends on Instagram, for a two-week period that anyone in Beverly Hills, could download the Puma Defy City app and engage at various physical locations, where posters with Gomez wearing the shoes were placed.

“If you had downloaded the app, you held the phone up against a poster you had discovered and she would come alive in an augmented reality (AR) experience. If you found all five, you would be entered into a contest. We filled the backlot at Paramount Studios. The lucky winner got to spend two hours with Selena. Myself included. The way she communicated with the fans and took time to talk to people, whether they were young or old, and let people take pictures, was very touching to see,” said Bjontegard.

IBM Watson and Wimbledon

Spark Compass is proudly a fully fledged partner of IBM Watson. Back in 2019, Bjontegard was asked to assist in activating the All England Lawn and Tennis Club (commonly known as “Wimbledon”).

“There were long queues to get in. The grounds have a lot of history. And so we engaged the people in the line by activating plaques containing memorable historical moments around the site. We also animated and activated the grandstand and a series of popup partner booths and tents for sponsors” he said.

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Bjontegard and his team had the user's journey through the iconic site in mind throughout, thinking of ways to enhance information in specific areas and at the right moments, so they could entertain fans and maximise the time, money and effort sponsors and partners give to be associated with the event.

“The ROI that we provide is what we call ‘Results of Implementation’. That's really what Spark Compass does. It is an implementation that activates and delivers results,” he said. Bjontegard has his own take on AI too, preferring to call the systems ‘augmented intelligence’, rather than artificial intelligence.

Ole Miss and Results of Implementation

In America, there's no problem selling out arenas at the college level. At the University of Mississippi, nicknamed ‘Ole Miss’, when the boys are playing football, they can attract over 64,000 into the arena. Plus, there are thousands of people outside watching the game at the local “Grove”.

But when the girls would play soccer, nobody would watch. So Spark Compass built an ecosystem in 2014, where the results of implementation were to get more fans in to watch the women play. The activations increased attendance by over 21% driven by a custom-built loyalty reward and relationship platform called Rebel Rewards.



“We integrated the IoT system with hundreds of beacon sensors across campus with our blockchain. So we drove behaviour, verified it and recorded it on an event-based ecosystem – delivering reward points for the fans. We stored those interactions real-time on our blockchain. So now all of a sudden we have all over 140 million real-world data points stored on our blockchain to verify, prove, and authenticate behaviour; not digitally, but in the physical world,” said Bjontegard.

“That's really where this becomes exciting, when we connect the physical with the digital. Once we have the digital world with our metaverse, which we're

building right now, we can take the physical and replicate it with the digital twin to create an interactive metaverse, where interactions between fans and those that are playing can also parlay back into the physical world,” he added.

Digital fan activation moves from intrusive to immersive

While sports fan activations have played a major role in the rise of Spark Compass, the reality back in Bjontegard's days as Senior Director of Business Development at Qualcomm's Corporate R&D, there were healthy debates about such technologies as AR and how it may detract from what's happening on the field.

"The younger generation is already multi-screening like crazy. That's translated into sporting events. This led to our first activation of augmented reality, for the NBA team Dallas Mavericks," he said. When they first started,

WiFi or cell coverage was poor in the stadium. Now it's a prime component - and a bragging right - for a stadium to have 5G or a private 5G, according to Bjontegard.

These technological leaps have given Spark Compass the ability, on behalf of their clients, to reward fans for being present at the stadium. Not just by points, but via a non-fungible token (NFT) that is airdropped and memorises that moment in time, creating a digital pin. This can unlock memorabilia exclusive to those in attendance.

"We provide that communication between the team and the star players too. Imagine if a player is injured, but they



can communicate their daily actions on feed straight to fans. All of a sudden you can engage deeper, growing that relationship. That's really what the fandom is all about. It's about relationships. You want to support, you want to engage, you want to activate and feel involved," said Bjontegard.

Speed, agility and flexibility of deployment stretches beyond sport

Away from the glitz of Hollywood, Spark Compass has also activated various public sites across the UK too, including a collaboration with the University of Salford, Bjontegard's alma mater – where he is now

on the Advisory Board of Directors and an Honorary Fellow – to activate, engage and deliver information to visitors for the City of Science campaign. Bjontegard said at the time: "Our digital magic highlights the city's position today as a world-class leader through these technology-driven experiences."

"We unlock experiences. It was on the dockside, which is obviously now fantastic, but when I was there in the eighties, not so much! We were able to show the chequered past of the Docklands in the old days, adding a stark contrast to today's wonderful developments," he said.

Another area of innovation has emerged within international airports.

"You have a sports match once or maybe twice a week, with a massive amount of people in attendance for a few hours, but airports have an even greater cumulative amount of people every minute and hour they're open. Our work with the airports is all about delivering and enhancing the journey, from home to the moment passengers are in the seat, engaging and enhancing their transit from their homes to when they touch down and head to their accommodation on the other side. This includes making purchases easier, reducing payment friction for the travelers when they shop, dine and drink before departure" he said.

The data aggregator and partner integrator

At San Diego Airport, Spark Compass integrated with shuttle buses through an app, so passengers could see how far away it was from the taxi drop-off or car park.

The company helped to monitor the cleanliness of restrooms, as it is one of the metrics that airports are rated by, directly influencing the rates that are charged for the airlines.



Spark Compass Fan Engagement Platform for Platforms AR On Site Demo for NY Islanders w Platform Data

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“We're the aggregator, we're that third party, as middleware. So we can leverage the input and information from two parties that would not work directly,” said Bjontegard.

An example of this was an indoor navigation solution launched with Apple that combined with an enterprise-level wearable watch from Samsung. This helped IT staff members to be more responsive by reducing calls and emails, while the closest staff member could be identified by their watch, as it related to the Apple indoor navigation.

Spark Compass provides a single-pane dashboard, combining multiple separate vertical technology solutions into one single control dashboard. Their clients don't care about the individual components, according to Bjontegard, as they simply want a common dashboard where the data is seamlessly integrated into a complete picture of the facilities. The company's patented contextual understanding and contextual awareness, combined with knowledge, is infused into a platform that therefore is able to deliver the right message, to the right person, at the right time and in the right place – on the right device.

Invention as standard with each new customer

One of the distinguishing features of Spark Compass is that every time they do something with a new customer in a new vertical, it is an innovation. A passionate Bjontegard stated: “We build something that hasn't been done before, such as using a smart speaker with AWS to engage and understand a senior citizens' condition when they wake up in the morning, through to understanding dispatch problems for the care providers and care homeworker in North Somerset attending to the seniors.

“WE CAN INTEGRATE WITH ANY PARTNER”

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When the speakers weren't present anymore, the residents really missed them, which means we must be doing something right.”

Bjontegard continued: “We can integrate with any partner. We can aggregate the data and we can act on the data. Because we look at the ecosystem in its entirety. And then during the build, we plug in the different components to fit that whole journey. We look at the entire ecosystem – and we always start at the end with the end-users experiences.”



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