



SMPTE Spotlight:

Andy Beach

BY RUSSELL POOLE

CURRENT POSITION:

- Co-Founder, Alchemy Creations
www.thinkalchemy.xyz
- Publisher and Author, Engines of Change
www.enginesofchange.ai

PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS:

- SMPTE
- The Alliance for Media Arts + Culture
- The Advanced Image Society (AIS)
- IEEE

DEGREES:

- BFA, Film and Video
Savannah College of Art & Design
- Certificate, Artificial Intelligence
MIT Sloan School of Management

As AI continues to dominate the conversation, the media tech industry is seeking knowledgeable leaders to implement what works, see through the hype, and teach professionals how to navigate these tremendous changes. Andy Beach is one such leader, navigating a ship through the seas of change and carrying the future of media technology with him.

“I’ve spent my career at the intersection of media and technology,” said Beach. “I joined Microsoft a bit over a decade ago, first helping launch media apps on Xbox 360 and Xbox One, and later serving as CTO for Media and Entertainment. In January 2025, I left Microsoft and co-founded Alchemy Creations, a media technology consultancy. I also write *Engines of Change*, a Substack publication about AI, media infrastructure, and the systems that sit behind what audiences see on screen.”

Beach’s focus is on how AI reshapes media workflows, how it lands in real operations, and how to evolve stacks without breaking the business. However, AI is hardly his only skill. As a man who believes you never stop learning, Beach has been behind several major industry innovations, including the creation of a server-side ad insertion system for

adaptive streaming that ultimately won a Technology & Engineering Emmy.

“The project I think about most often, though, is the NBA’s direct-to-consumer OTT platform that we built while I was at Microsoft,” said Beach when asked about his proudest career moments. “The contract got signed in March 2020, just as the world shut down. Instead of sitting in war rooms together, we launched a major global service from our homes on endless video calls. Seeing that platform go live and seeing how seriously the NBA treated the fan experience during a chaotic time was one of those ‘this is why we do this’ moments.”

Among his plethora of responsibilities and commitments, Andy Beach is also deeply involved in SMPTE’s educational initiatives. He has hosted the popular webinar “Future Frames: Where AI and Media Converge” and designs workshops, talks, and advisory work on AI and IP-based workflows. But before he created SMPTE courses, he took them. In fact, he’s been part of the SMPTE family for a long time.

“I knew about SMPTE long before I had a membership card, but I really started leaning on SMPTE standards when I moved into product roles around 2006–2007,” said Beach. “What I’ve always appreciated is that SMPTE’s work is not about

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making one company ‘win.’ The goal is a healthier industry: common language, common expectations, and a place where vendors and operators can meet in the middle.”

Beach’s education initiatives began in New York, where he taught as an adjunct at the School of Visual Arts and later led production of technical training for creative software before moving fully into product management. “Continuing education, to me, is about building the muscles to keep up without chasing every shiny object,” said Beach. “It’s learning enough to know when a technology is mature enough for production, and when it belongs in R&D for a while longer.”

Outside of his professional life, Beach has a passion for rusty old cars. They don’t have to be collectible. In fact, he likes that they’re simpler than modern vehicles and that he can make them move again. It’s an attitude that affects how he sees the future of the industry. He doesn’t have a grandiose vision for the future. He wants to make sure the future he creates works.

“Right now, everyone is focused on AI. In ten years, it will be something else,” said Beach. “My hope is that the frameworks I’m building with clients, students, and readers help them ask the right questions, regardless of the buzzword: What problem are we really solving? What is hype and what is genuinely new capability? How does this fit the systems and people we already have? If I can leave behind a clear, repeatable way to evaluate and adopt new technology without breaking the organization around it, that’s the impact I’d like to have.”

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