

aircon

airwiggles audio conference #aircon23

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Essence of Sound Design for IPs and Brands

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 airwiggles



A SOUND EFFECT

aircon

About me

My name is Prashant and
I'm listening

About me

Audiophile

Worked as Audio Director for educational games & videos with brands such as [Disney](#) on IPs such as Frozen, Lion King, Toy Story and many more

Set up audio teams and scaled startups

About me

Building products at [Soundly](#)

Scaling up games & interactive audio community
at [School of Video Game Audio](#)

Creating an ecosystem for audio in India via
[gameaudio.in](#)

Wwise Certified Instructor, helping build a game
audio mindset

Disclaimer

I'm as much a learner as you are

Some of the ideas I share today could seem subjective

This talk is the beginning, and not a conclusion of the topics I will cover

Disclaimer

I will be quoting a few legends who I look up to

They don't know about this 😊

I hope they will be okay with it

Disclaimer

In this talk, I will not be using any audio application

I will not play back any audio files

BYOI - Bring Your Own Imagination

Disclaimer

We will talk philosophy

And life

And things beyond sound

Make the best use of this talk by

Getting yourself a pencil or pen, and a notebook

Or just any note taking device

Make the best use of this talk by

Active listening

Participating in the chat section (or writing in your notes if you're watching the recorded version)

Make the best use of this talk by

Thinking outside of the constraints of technicalities

Living the moment!

Enough about me!

Let's get to know you.

What is your favorite sound?

Story time

Revisiting childhood – learning to learn

It's important to remember, that the pencil /
pen is just a tool

What one has to say is what matters

Quotes

"Art isn't in the tools, material, equipment you use. It's in the way you see the world."

-Rick Rubin

Quotes

"Art isn't in the tools, material, equipment you use. **It's in the way you see the world.**"

-Rick Rubin

Sound, an old friend

What is Sound?

Physical Characteristics

Frequency is perceived as _____ and

Amplitude is perceived as _____

Congratulations!

Sound, an old friend

Sound, a living organism

Can notify us

Instil an emotion

Tell a story, even in its absence

Help us in survival

Understanding Essence

Cannot really be defined explicitly

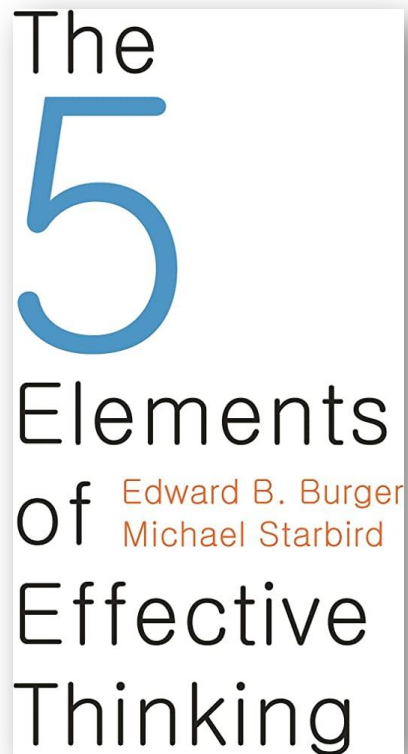
Let's attempt to, by doing some observations

Understanding Essence

The Mirage Philosophy

Understanding Essence

Finding essence can
be a challenge



Understanding Essence

Clear the clutter—seek the essential

During most of history, when people thought of flight, they thought it was for the birds. And when we visualize flying birds, we see flapping wings. But, as anyone who has flown on an airplane will attest, flapping is not the essence of flight. It's the gentle curve of the top of the wing that matters—the air traveling faster over that curved top creates lift. That curve is the essential feature that generates the lift for birds and the lift for planes. Ignoring the flapping is incredibly difficult, because it's the most conspicuous, loudest, and

Source: [The 5 Elements of Effective Thinking](#)
Book by Edward Burger and Michael Starbird

Understanding Essence

What's up with the 'fade to black'
transitions?

Essence in Sound – Observations

So what have we heard in life that we can extract an essence of sound from?

Listen to the lock / unlock SFX in your devices

Essence in Sound – Observations

Think of a sound, and draw it with |||||

Essence in Sound – Observations

Rhythm / Dynamics (ADSR etc)

Time & Frequency Content (weight etc)

Texture – Soundscape

Bass

Emotions / Relation

Many more (write your own)

Essence in Sound – Observations

Relative character of emotions, and thus,
sounds – Contrasts

Consistent noise is no noise

IPs & Brands

They are all just **stories**

IPs & Brands

Define the story

Understand it, in case YOU didn't define it

Define \neq Constraints, rather opportunities

IPs & Brands

Ask questions

What does it represent?

Victory, truth, revenge, excitement, thrill etc

Adjectives help

IPs & Brands

Create mood boards

Learn from good examples

Think beyond sonic branding

Actionable Items

Consider journaling

Listen beyond the sound

Discuss in words

Which sound's absence takes away the
essence of where you are?

Actionable Items

Review, and review again

Record, listen and edit FOR emotion - a happy sound today, a tensed one tomorrow, a sad the day after

User testing - you're not your audience!

Actionable Items

Know more than audio – Bézier curve

Visual keywords – Ease In, Fade In etc

Break the rules! (Pleasant sound? Why?)

Quote

“A sound with character, minimally processed, beats a characterless sound twisted crazily to try to make it cool. Find good sounds. That’s SD!”

- Randy Thom

Good Practices

Document! Document! Document!

Get out of the bubble of audio departments

Talk, express and share ideas with every stakeholder

Let yourself free

Food for Thought

Traffic! Traffic! Traffic!

Sounds have life beyond the visuals

Objectivity is nothing but subjectivity
accepted by the majority

0.5 seconds is enough to tell a story

Food for Thought

Do you still have the pencil / pen?

Write something

That's your personality, curated over years

Your sound is your IP, polish it and tell a story you want to

What next?

AI, Apple Vision Pro and more

Conclusion

It's your turn.

Thank You!

Slides and other resources are available at:

prashantmishra.xyz/aircon23