To Our Community:

Techweek is what we call a "big tent," gathering local communities and shining a national spotlight on them. Our goal is to create new engagement events that connect the community in various ways. We learn from them. Sometimes things work, and sometimes they don't.

Our latest, the "Black Tie Rave" is a tongue-in-cheek branded event that has a serious mission: Giving back. Our inaugural event in Miami in March of 2014 was a success, both in raising money for a deserving cause and in gathering many of the local tech leaders. Ultimately, our aim is to create a multitude of ways to engage with those who have a vested interest in – and a passion for – technology.

The last thing we want to do is alienate anyone in the community and **we sincerely apologize** if this event or imagery is offensive to you. The photo in question was taken from a series of photos of event attendees that were posted on our Facebook page in March. These photos were taken at a photo booth featuring top hats, bow-ties, and other fun black-tie related props. It was used with the intent to promote and encourage attendance at the inaugural event here in Chicago. The goal was not to offend or upset, but we understand and recognize the criticism that the photo was poorly selected. We take full responsibility.

We recognize the seriousness of this situation, and as a result, we will be taking immediate action:

1) Techweek Chicago will be hosting a round table on Wednesday, June 4 with key influencers in the tech community in Chicago to have a candid discussion about the messaging of our Black Tie Rave and how we can better communicate positive and exciting events in the future. For more information, please contact **devon@techweek.com**.

2) Techweek Chicago has always included multiple open forum sessions and speaker panels focused on addressing the broader issues involved with diversity in technology as a whole. We have spent considerable time developing additional forums in 2014 which address these topics which will be announced in coming weeks. These forums serve our mission of showcasing the underappreciated contributors in technology- whether based on geography, gender, or anything else. We continue to encourage everyone to visit our site and submit suggestions for speakers and specific topics as it relates to the support and advancement of both diversity and women in technology, particularly in Chicago.

3) Techweek Chicago has already begun engaging with senior leaders who want to participate in an open conversation about real, actionable issues in the both the local and broader tech communities. It is our intent to open a clearer line of communication to make necessary changes to our approach to programming. We recognize the need to understand the perspective of those impacted to better align ourselves with the needs and challenges faced by those within the local community.

Techweek's overarching goal is to be as inclusive of the Chicago technology community as possible. We sincerely apologize if our messaging and actions have in any way made people feel unwelcome at our celebration of Chicago's tech community.

We recognize the need to be sensitive to all needs and concerns within the tech community, and again want to emphasize that we regret any offense that has resulted. We're thankful for the support we've received over the years here in Chicago, and we welcome feedback and want to hear all voices.

Please see our policies here — they reflect our thinking, and we continue to strive to continue to break new ground and provide an open forum for the greater community.

As always, we welcome any and all feedback.

Best,

Iain Shovlin [Chairman] and the Techweek Team