

A photograph of two young men standing side-by-side against a vibrant, abstract background of overlapping circles in yellow, orange, pink, and purple. Both men are wearing bright pink hoodies and matching pink baseball caps with a white logo. The man on the left has his hands clasped in front of him and visible tattoos on his arms. The man on the right has his arms crossed and also shows tattooed arms.

2024

Creative Tech Trends Report

Strategies top brands use to skyrocket their revenue and market share in 2024.

TOGETHER. BREAKING DIGITAL BOUNDARIES.
yondr

Why this trends report is for you

In the fast-paced digital arena, brands are constantly grappling with how to stand out. They face a digital-native audience that's always a step ahead. This is where our report steps in. We're looking at the pressing challenges these brands face – from blending into the digital noise to truly connecting with tech-savvy, virtual-native consumers.

But this report isn't just about trends. It's about solutions.

It dives deep into how AI, Spatial Computing, and Virtual Worlds are more than just buzzwords – they are keys to unlocking new realms of customer engagement.

We're here to guide you through these uncharted waters, showing you how to leverage these technologies to craft experiences that don't just reach your audience but resonate with them.

Meet the Innovators

What does innovation look like? Look no further than the brands and experts featured in this report. They are the ones paving the way out there across multiple industries.

In this report, we spotlight trailblazers across four key industries – Gaming, Tech, Corporate, and Marketing/Branding. Each sector offers its unique perspective on the transformative power of technology.

We feature brands that exemplify innovation, such as Microsoft, Media.Monks, KPMG, Roblox, and Tomorrowland. These names are synonymous with pushing boundaries in their respective fields, from creative storytelling to redefining audience engagement.

Their stories are about breaking barriers and setting new standards. It's about real-world applications of cutting-edge tech that are transforming marketing and corporate communication. Through their insights, we're giving you a front-row seat to the future of brand storytelling and customer engagement.

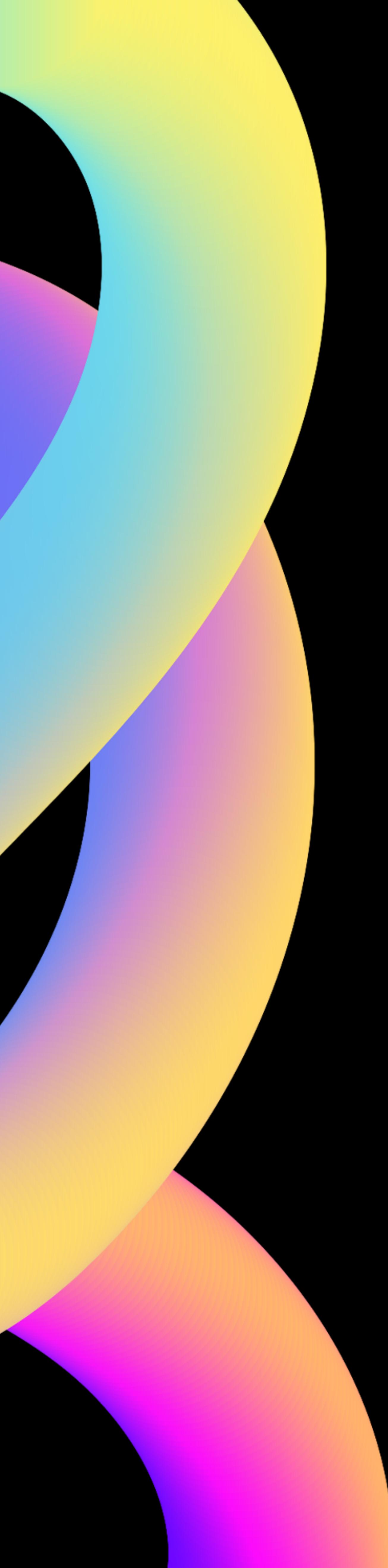
1 Gaming

2 Tech

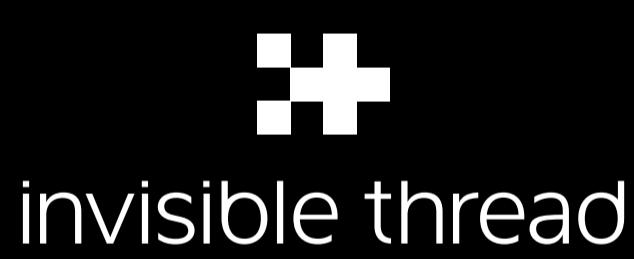
3 Corporate

4 Marketing/ Branding





This report came to fruition with the invaluable expertise and support from industry leaders from an impressive list of forward-looking brands:



What's this report about?

Some (of many) key takeaways that you will learn from our 2024 Creative Tech Trends Report.

→ Immersive Platforms like Roblox & Fortnite:

These are not just games, but gateways for brands to engage younger, tech-savvy audiences. They offer interactive, community-driven experiences that resonate with digital natives.

→ Tech Convergence:

The fusion of AI, Mixed Reality, and blockchain is transforming gaming and shopping experiences, making them more immersive and personalized. Imagine virtual shopping zones where every item is a unique digital collectible!

→ Hyper-Personalized AI Agents:

The future is about AI that knows you almost as well as you know yourself, offering personalized interactions and brand experiences that truly resonate.

But don't take our word for it, read what the experts themselves have to say about it.

Learn and implement with this report:

1

Creative ways to integrate tech into your marketing

2

What strategies others used to boost revenue

3

Emerging trends to stay ahead of the curve

Pieter Van Leughenhagen

Co-founder,
yondr

What companies need to focus on in 2024

2023 was a rollercoaster, defined by economic uncertainty and technological breakthroughs. Initially shadowed by fears of recession, the world managed to navigate toward stability. In Belgium, the impact was profound with a significant rise in labor costs due to an 11% automatic indexation.

At Yondr, we turned these challenges into opportunities, culminating in our most successful year since starting our journey in immersive media production in 2015.

This year also brought into sharp focus the changing landscape of artificial intelligence (AI). The longstanding fear that AI would displace blue-collar jobs evolved, with a clear indication in 2023 that white-collar jobs are now also at risk. The rise of generative AI in the creative sector marked a significant shift, moving from gradual evolution to a more revolutionary phase.

Moore's Law, a principle from 1965 predicting the exponential growth of computing capabilities, has consistently fueled technological progress. Meanwhile, evolutionary biology, with its gradual change and natural selection, offers a stark contrast.

AI merges these concepts. It embraces the rapid development in computing and insights from biology, leading to its accelerated growth; a phenomenon Tim Sweeney describes as Stacked Exponential Acceleration.

Looking towards 2024, GenAI is set to peak, raising questions about the longevity of certain tools in this space. While platforms like Chat GPT have reached maturity, especially when customized with specific content, other GenAI applications are still in their infancy, hinting at future potential.

Bill Gates envisions a future where AI-powered personal assistants become ubiquitous, transforming our daily lives. These advanced assistants, likely to be more anticipatory and intelligent, will facilitate tasks and interactions, possibly taking various forms, from human-like avatars to voice-enabled algorithms. Jarvis anyone? It's not Stark Industries, but the Georgia Institute of Technology that's at the forefront of this research, exploring the personalization of AI Virtual Assistants and their representation.

2024 is expected to be pivotal for AI, especially in content creation and dissemination. Brands adopting a transparent approach to AI will likely gain a competitive edge, fostering trust with their audience.

At Yondr, we're focused on leveraging AI for brand activation and creating AI-powered virtual avatars, helping brands rapidly adopt these technologies for enhanced customer engagement.

The concept of the metaverse, though still developing, was significantly influenced by GenAI in 2023. However, two essential elements—artificial intelligence and spatial computing—emerged as key to realizing this digital-physical world convergence. Spatial computing, which facilitates natural human-computer interaction in a 3D environment, is becoming increasingly significant, especially with technologies like AR, VR, and MR bridging the physical and digital realms.

The rise of Large Language Models like ChatGPT in 2023 marked a shift in focus towards Large Vision Models and AI-enabled spatial computing. This upcoming year we'll witness the launch of Vision Pro, marking Apple's foray into spatial computing. This development, alongside Samsung's and Meta's ventures, highlights the importance of spatial computing in shaping the future of technology.

In the gaming world, Fortnite and Roblox have emerged as pioneers in engaging the Gen Z and Gen Alpha demographics. Fortnite's evolution into a game creation platform opens up new avenues for brand engagement. Roblox's focus on e-commerce and community loyalty highlights the need for brands to develop metaverse-specific strategies.

As the internet becomes more immersive, aligning with platforms like Roblox becomes crucial for brands to connect with customers, consumers, and fans of the future.

So, all that said, it's clear to see that 2023 was a year of transformation. It set the stage for further advancements in AI, spatial computing, and virtual world engagements in 2024. These developments represent a blend of challenges and opportunities, shaping the future of technology and its impact on society and business.

The question for you: is your brand looking forward today to build the future of tomorrow?



Gaming

1

— “When AI, mixed reality, and NFTs/Blockchain converge, gaming will forever be transformed. Picture a fashion brand entering a world like Roblox or Fortnite, creating a smart virtual shopping zone that tailors to each player’s fashion sense. This high-tech space offers a unique shopping experience, adjusting to individual style preferences. It’s more than just browsing – it’s personalizing fashion in a virtual world.”

Sasha Sadri – Head of marketing at yondr

Sasha Sadri

Head of Marketing,
yondr

What specific technology or platform do you believe will break through in 2024, and what should brands particularly pay attention to stay ahead in the realm of immersive and interactive experiences?

I believe platforms like Roblox and Fortnite will break through. Not for gamers (because Roblox has been a massive success for years), but specifically for brands aiming to engage younger audiences.

These platforms offer brands 2 major benefits:

1. Build community, engage, offer value in a “virtual native” way, to a demographic that no longer “vibes” with traditional social media branding.

2. Immersive, interactive experiences that are increasingly aligning with the digital lifestyles of Gen Z. Up to 90% of them identify as gamers. That’s a massive goldmine for forward-looking brands out there that understand and know how to tap into it.

Yes, there’s been a lot of talk about Roblox and Fortnite in 2023, but I believe that we’ll see the vast majority of big brands jump on the virtual worlds bandwagon.

What are some examples of successful brand activations using gaming worlds?

BMW partnered with Fortnite to create a virtual city called Hypnopolis, where players can explore and customize their own BMW iX2 electric car, using Fortnite’s first car creator.

Why was this a success imho? It allowed BMW to reach a new generation of potential customers and showcase its vision (commitment to innovation and personalization). It also demonstrated BMW’s willingness to go where their (future) consumers are. NOT where they want consumers to go.

That probably has to be my favorite example of 2023.

How can new creative technologies (AI, MR, Blockchain) transform traditional gaming experiences into interactive and engaging platforms for brands?

When AI, mixed reality, and NFTs/Blockchain converge gaming will forever be transformed.

Picture a fashion brand entering a world like Roblox or Fortnite, creating a smart virtual shopping zone that tailors to each player’s fashion sense. This high-tech space offers

a unique shopping experience, adjusting to individual style preferences. It’s more than just browsing – it’s personalizing fashion in a virtual world.

Players can try on these digital outfits in an immersive way, thanks to mixed reality technology that brings the virtual fashion to life in their own living rooms. These outfits aren’t just for show in the game; they’re collectibles, much like rare real-world items, made possible through blockchain technology. They are uniquely tied to your online identity, immutable, and incorruptible.

This novel approach not only spices up the gaming experience but also opens new doors for the brand to connect with a younger, tech-savvy audience who values their virtual avatar’s appearance.

The brand essentially turns a traditional gaming platform into an exciting space where gaming meets fashion, appealing to both gamers and style aficionados

I don’t know when exactly, obviously.
It is likely not next year. But it will be here, very soon.

What’s one hobby you’d love to get into if you had more time?

Full-time gamer, Twitch/Youtube streamer. Either that or pro-weightlifter.

What was your dream job as a child, and how does it compare to what you do now?

Growing up I always thought I’d become a diplomat haha. As head of marketing at yondr, I’m negotiating and crafting alliances daily... but it’s with pixels instead of politicians.

Raffaella Camera

Former Head of Brands,
Epic Games Unreal Engine

What specific technology or platform do you believe will break through in 2024, and what should brands particularly pay attention to stay ahead in the realm of immersive and interactive experiences?

I think we will see an expansion in features, commerce and gameplay from the main gaming platforms – Fortnite and Roblox.

On the commerce side we will see an increase in purchases of virtual fashion, collectibles, dance moves and emotes. I believe we will also start seeing the first meaningful examples of physical-virtual commerce – physical items purchased from a gaming platform.

On the gameplay side, we will keep seeing new types of gameplays and stand-alone games launched within gaming platforms – like the recently announced launch of LEGO and Festival within Fortnite.

What are the indicators of a successful brand activation in virtual worlds?

Total visits, number of daily active users, total playtime and per-session playtime, number of virtual goods sold, collectible downloads, like ratio, impressions, sharing on other digital or gaming channels, earned media, time spent interacting with other players in the experience. Finally, monetization.

How can brands use immersive tech to cater to the unique preferences of Gen Z consumers?

Immersive tech and gaming experiences, allow brands to deliver authentic and meaningful interactions with consumers. They can deliver a message where the consumers are, while they are socializing and getting entertained with their friends.

What's the most adventurous thing you've ever done?

Probably too many to count. Leaving aside the usual skydiving or playing with wild animals examples... I came to the United States for a year, by myself, as an exchange student, when I was 15. I left Italy and came back to Los Angeles after college with a full scholarship, but knowing no one, with no job, no work visa and only \$2,000.

If you could switch places with anyone in your company for a day, who would it be and why?

Tim Sweeney. I'd love to experience thinking like him and seeing the world as he does.



Tech



— “The breakthrough might be in the combination of two developments that I feel could really reinforce each other. Better mixed reality hardware and the democratization of 3D (environments) through AI. The key is to not try and replicate what works in the physical world but really start from behavior that comes natural in the digital world or has true value as an added layer on top of the physical one.”

Jochen Sablon - Director of Digital Development Universal Music

Canaan Rubin

**Creative Executive,
Amazon Studios & Prime Videos**

What specific technology or platform do you believe will break through in 2024, and what should brands particularly pay attention to stay ahead in the realm of immersive and interactive experiences?

As a creative producer who's spent the past 8 years working globally and deploying cutting edge immersive technologies (AR/VR/XR) against marketing initiatives on major distribution platforms, I'm always watching for innovative ways fans can create fast and easy - and at the same time deep and meaningful - connections with their favorite brands, artists, titles, and IP. Where TikTok's pioneered viral world-wide 'challenges' to stoke and engage fandoms, Instagram and Snap have led the charge into fun filters and ID generators. Disney fans recently hacked a way to take photos of their pets and transform them into their favorite Disney characters. The studio caught wind, and attempted to moderate the party after fans had started it. Beauty businesses are a sector which is proactively leaning into conversations with their fans early on, and as a result they've been finding exceptional success. CeraVe (10B+ TikTok views) and Beauty Pie (remember the name of the world's former #1 YouTube channel?) are listening closely to their fan bases and fan-to-fan conversations happening on-line in order to better tailor and target their offerings with things they hear their fans craving; like subscriptions, and multiple versions of their product lines based on geographical and demographic tastes.

How will the evolution of immersive tech impact the storytelling capabilities of brands?

Personally, I feel that immersive technologies will always be playing catch-up to the storytelling 'capabilities' of brands. That's because our imaginations and global cultural moments develop infinitely faster today than we can develop the immersive production tools, services and distribution channels we need to amplify them. Also, who's to say that the new immersive tech and storytelling capabilities are always better than the simpler, older ones? If you think about the juggernaut that was Barbie in the summer of 2023, the storytelling was a compelling combination of old school, giant cardboard Barbie 'photobooth boxes' inside theater lobbies that fans of all ages could step into for a socially shareable (or old-school printable!) selfie; all the way up to a blockbuster Roblox experience in the metaverse. I love to see campaigns deploy a mix of old-school and high-tech options for fans of all ages to engage with.

What advancements in AI do you foresee that could enhance virtual and augmented reality experiences?

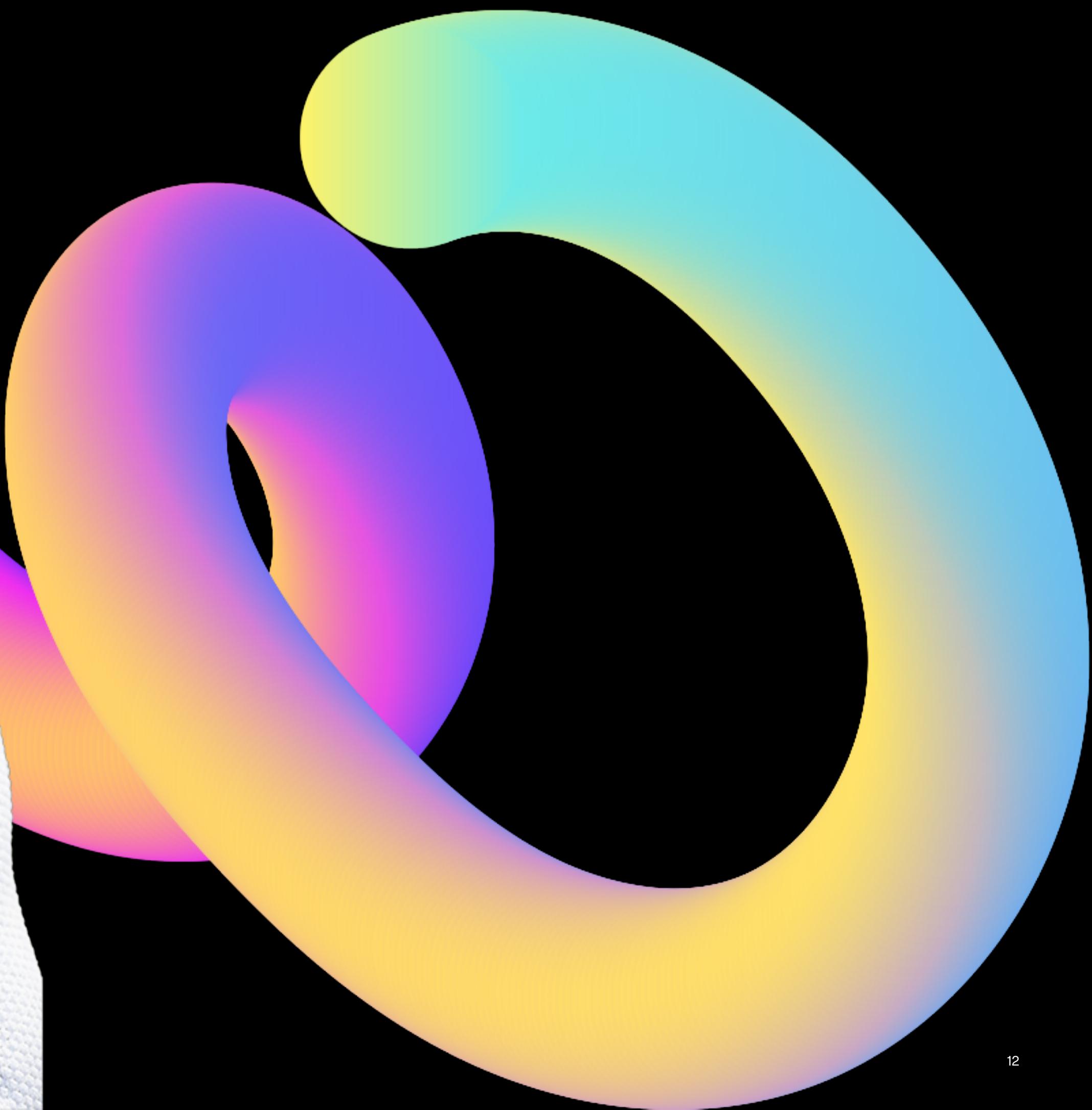
AI will make the processing of data faster and the accuracy of its output will grow consistently more accurate – but that doesn't mean perfect. If you're looking to scale something fast and cast a wide net of engagement, AI's can be a great companion and tool. If you're looking to connect with audiences in an organic, nuanced and thoughtfully intuitive way to engage critical thinking with fans, go low-fi until AI suits your needs.

What's the most adventurous thing you've ever done?

Jumping on a cross-country train from American University in Washington D.C. to Hollywood for a summer internship at Entertainment Tonight, filmed on location at Paramount Studios. I was 20, and that one snap decision (I tore a phone number off a paper flier posted on a bulletin board inside AU's Film School) led to an incredible 20 year run inside Hollywood's original and best marketing machine. As a journalist and talent director I covered 16 Oscars and Emmy Award shows; 12 Sundance Film Festivals; 10 Cannes Film Festivals; 8 Super Bowls; shot the last photographs of Anna Nicole Smith days before she died in the Bahamas; was arrested in Namibia (long story); and attended weddings from Tom Cruise's at a castle in Italy to Kevin Costner's at his Aspen ranch. I also spent a month in Abu Dhabi and Dubai launching ET in Arabic for the Middle-East Broadcast Corporation throughout the MENA territory.

If you could switch places with anyone in your company for a day, who would it be and why?

A test pilot/astronaut for Blue Origin. It's probably the only way I'd ever get to see this magical planet Earth we call home from space.



Lee Kebler

Creative Director & Business Development,
Invisible Thread & Co-host at Adweek's podcast 'Tech Magic'

What specific technology or platform do you believe will break through in 2024, and what should brands particularly pay attention to stay ahead in the realm of immersive and interactive experiences?

VRChat. With the recent entry into paid UGC, there will be an incentive commerce for people to grow into.

What role will mixed reality (MR) play in the future of experiential marketing?

Time will tell, but new systems like the Quest 3 augmented reality seen at Meta Connect and with hardware from Apple, the future is bright.

Do you foresee any groundbreaking changes in spatial computing that could revolutionize brand-customer interactions?

Integrated computer vision with the growing power of AI can let us build marketing tools that can align automatically with real world surroundings and the users location.

If your life was a movie, which actor would you want to play you?

Jake Gyllenhaal, we are about the same age and would be good for ticket sales.

You have to spend the rest of your days alone on an island, what two items would you bring (no internet)?

Assuming an unlimited supply of strings, a guitar and a desalination water purification system.



Jochen Sablon

Director of Digital Development,
Universal Music

What specific technology or platform do you believe will break through in 2024, and what should brands particularly pay attention to stay ahead in the realm of immersive and interactive experiences?

The breakthrough might be in the combination of two developments that I feel could really reinforce each other. Better mixed reality hardware and the democratization of 3D (environments) through AI.

On the one hand there is the Apple Vision Pro. I've always believed that adding a layer to enrich reality is the only valuable way forward for mixed reality, let's see if this will be an 'iphone moment' for MR indeed. On the other hand, AI is democratizing 3D at an insane speed. The threshold to create digital twins, avatars and digital worlds is lowering every day which could lead to giving more brands and creators access to the technology and to start experimenting with it. The 'big investment' excuse will soon be invalid so this really is the time to jump on the bandwagon and test out how your brand or product can be of value in a digital world to the new generation. The key is to not try and replicate what works in the physical world but really start from behavior that comes natural in the digital world or has true value as an added layer on top of the physical one.

What new forms of immersive experiences can we expect to emerge in the near future for marketing purposes?

Personally I think that mixed reality is the way forward. When you put together AR and VR, the distinction between 'real' and digital will blur and create blended mixed environments that really lift the experience beyond a gimmick or a boring digital copy of the real world. Live events, immersive retail (try on products like fashion and furniture) and customer experience are a few areas that could really benefit from this in the short term.

How do you see virtual worlds influencing the traditional marketing landscape in the coming years?

They will continue to get more intertwined. At the moment we see this already happening at a huge scale in gaming but I do think this will get adopted across the board. Brands will have to look for their place in the digital worlds that people spend time in. I strongly believe you should be where your audience is and generate real value there.

What's a recent trend that you just can't get behind?

Unethical AI. I am a huge fan of the potential but if we really want to adopt the technology, we will have to think of models where issues like IP infringement and biases are considered and regulated.

What's something you're personally and/or professionally looking forward to in the next year?

Professionally, I look forward to keep looking for the sweet spot between technology and creativity. To balance this out, I look forward to detaching more from technology and spending time with family and friends in the best reality there is, the great outdoors.



Anna Kjölstad Svedu

Exploration Lead & Business Innovation,
H&M Group

What specific technology or platform do you believe will break through in 2024, and what should brands particularly pay attention to stay ahead in the realm of immersive and interactive experiences?

I believe that we will continue to see social media and gaming merging, and as a result we will see more experiences where the social elements are at the core of the experience. Looking back at how influential social media platforms have been in the past, brands will likely strive to create meaningful presence and consistent relevance beyond sporadic campaigns. On another note, I hope that we will see more discussions around ethics and how we all could contribute to making these spaces safe and inclusive.

What new forms of immersive experiences can we expect to emerge in the near future for marketing purposes?

There are signals of large experience providers continuing to branch out to meet different customer segments with experiences that are more tailored to the needs, expectations and drivers of the target audience. This will create more opportunities to work with more specific content.

How do you see virtual worlds influencing the traditional marketing landscape in the coming years?

As new platforms arise, we do not necessarily see them replacing their predecessors. While video has been a dominating format for newer platforms in recent years we still see more "old-school" image-based and even text-based platforms thriving. Consequently, I see the landscape becoming more scattered and brands will need to consider how they could leverage different types of experiences to increase customer relevance.

If you could have dinner with any historical figure, who would it be and why?

As a Swede, I would have to say children's book author Astrid Lindgren. Would love to pick her brain on imagination and creativity!

What's a skill or talent you have that most people might not know about?

I can throw a pretty good bowl on a pottery wheel.



Corporate



— “The key for brands will be adapting to engage not only with human consumers but also with their AI agents, building a tailored ‘sense of belonging’ in clustered (virtual) communities, which have a strong mobilizing power. 2024 could be a pivotal year for immersive experiences, leveraging glasses, holograms, avatars, and new devices, all underpinned by AI.”

Öztürk Taspinar – Partner Innovation KPMG

Erwin Verstraelen

Chief Digital & Innovation Officer,
Port of Antwerp-Bruges

What specific technology or platform do you believe will break through in 2024, and what should brands particularly pay attention to stay ahead in the realm of immersive and interactive experiences?

The focus will still very much be on AI, generative AI to be specific. After a year of excitement and even hype, reality will start to sink in. We desperately need a governance framework to make sure these capabilities are used for good. It often seems to me like we are playing with a box of matches while standing in a bath of petrol. The recent event where all the power of OpenAI was shifted to a commercial player is not ok and the deafening silence from governments is very problematic. You just do not let loose disruptive technologies on society without some reflection on how to guide that process.

Furthermore, it's not only breakthroughs in specific technologies that are important but also their combination, for example: smaller and smaller devices to interact with information and communication, combined with faster mobile connectivity combined with voice enabled AI interaction. It makes our interaction with compute power more and more embedded and invisible. What was once part of Star Trek is becoming reality.

How can immersive technologies like digital humans be utilized to enhance corporate training and onboarding?

Onboarding and training are very social interactions amongst human beings. Digital humans can be a part of it, but not to replace human interaction all together. There is already a significant push back in society against interaction with companies that are pushing customers towards apps, websites, call centers etc.

Do you see LLM-powered conversational AI chatbots replacing physical colleagues within the next few years in your industry?

Replacing no, complement yes. The blend of technology and human beings, aiming to support the latter in being effective and efficient is where I see the added value. Only in cases where labor is tedious (eg. service desk agent during the night) could it be useful to replace human beings altogether, over time. What might speed up this evolution is not the war on talent, but the war on people, for sure in the West. So let's keep humans for tasks where social interaction is needed or seen as an added value.

What's the most interesting thing you've seen or read this year?

Thanks to the horrible weather during my holidays, I've read a lot of books. One however stands out: The ministry for the future by Kim Stanley Robinson. Set in the near future, the novel follows a subsidiary body, established under the Paris Agreement, whose mission is to act as an advocate for the world's future generations of citizens as if their rights are as valid as the present generations.

Although the novel is fiction, for me it painted a convincing scenario of how the world starts to get their act together in battling climate change and in doing so, creates a more sustainable and inclusive world. It probably takes a science fiction writer to paint a positive yet realistic picture of the future, and we desperately need more of them.

If you could only eat one food for the rest of your life, what would it be?

Definitely sushi: healthy, tasteful and open for a lot of creativity in combining fish, meat, and vegetables. The process of making sushi gives me peace of mind.



Steven Van Bellegem

Global Public Speaker, Author on CX,
Partner at Nexxworks

What specific technology or platform do you believe will break through in 2024, and what should brands particularly pay attention to stay ahead in the realm of immersive and interactive experiences?

One of the most exciting events of early 2024 will without any doubt be the launch of Apple's Vision Pro, a mixed reality (Apple calls it "spatial reality") device capable of both virtual and augmented reality experiences. It will be pretty expensive - with a price tag of almost 3500 dollars – and therefore not a product for everyone. But that's the usual strategy for Apple: first build great hi-tech products, with excellent UX – and thus at high prices – and allow third parties to create great services for these devices. Then make it more affordable (but never really cheap, as we know).

What's interesting is that they are positioning the Vision Pro as a general computing device, much like the Mac or the iPhone: one that is built for facetime, entertainment, gaming, productivity and even mental wellbeing.

Once AR technology really takes off (and I think the Vision Pro could play an important role here), it will have a huge impact on all things CX. Not just in entertainment and gaming, which are the most obvious examples of course. The age of AR will usher in full transparency. Brands will no longer be able to hide badly constructed products or unsustainable practices. For instance, AR glasses in a shop will tell you that a certain "diet" cheese, is actually full of chemicals and sugar and thus very unhealthy. Or that that fabulous looking polyester dress you wanted to buy is made from petroleum, a non-renewable resource that's not biodegradable and can release microplastics into the environment. And customers will be able to very realistically "try on" shoes or a dress and it will become more difficult to persuade them to buy your products.

You could say that evolution is challenging for brands. But I see it as an opportunity to develop products that are both more qualitative and fair for people and planet and offer better and more useful CX. I love Sephora's Virtual Artist, for instance, which lets users get a virtual makeover, star in tutorials, and share interests with friends more easily. Or how Gucci allows its customers to virtually try-on eyewear, sneakers, masks, lipsticks, and hats. Just imagine the effect when AR becomes nearly indistinguishable from real life.

What role can these AI-powered digital humans play in CX?

As emerging technologies like OpenAI's ChatGPT are becoming increasingly skilled at adding a "human touch" to the conversation with customers, empathetic humans with high EQ (emotional intelligence) will become increasingly valuable to solve those customer problems, questions and frustrations that are still too complex for the smart systems to solve.

If you still think that empathy is the sole domain of humans, just remember that a recent study uncovered that ChatGPT scored higher than actual doctors on both quality and empathy in answering patient questions. On average, ChatGPT's responses scored a 4 on quality and a 4.67 on empathy. In comparison, the physician responses scored a 3.33 on quality and 2.33 on empathy. In total, ChatGPT had 3.6 times more high-quality responses and 9.8 times more empathetic responses than physicians.

But I believe that sensitive and compassionate human problem solvers will always remain essential to solve the emotional, complex and unique questions and needs of customers. The approach of the Atlantis The Palm in Dubai is one of my favorite examples in the matter. The day before we were due to travel home, Lufthansa let us know that our youngest son did need to be Covid tested after all to be allowed to transit in Germany. This was on December 31st at 3pm, and we were very worried about finding a place to test him just a few hours before New Year's Eve. However, when I called the front desk to explain my situation, a super-friendly lady took all of my worries away. Even though the official testing hours at the hotel had passed, she told me that they would send over a doctor to our room at 6:15pm so that we could still participate in the grand feast at 7pm. And at exactly 6:15pm, our son was tested and we were able to enjoy New Year's Eve without any worries. This is problem solving at its best and there's not a bot in the world – no matter how empathic – that could have helped us in that situation.

What are the potential applications of AI in streamlining internal business processes and decision-making for customer experience?

I like to look at changes that affect the external relation with customers. And of course, Gen AI has so many opportunities, but in the short run, my feeling is it will completely change the way we search for information on sites, apps and other corporate platforms. One of the most important evolutions of today and tomorrow has certainly been that of search. Search 1.0 – with search engines like Yahoo and AltaVista – consisted of simple human-edited directories of websites, like some sort of "yellow pages". They offered information but it was up to users to find and filter what they needed and scan through all the links and websites. In the next phase, Search 2.0, Google offered relevant information and links, through an algorithm called PageRank. Now, since the launch of ChatGPT in November 2023, we have arrived at the fascinating Search 3.0 phase. Where the former phase would show you relevant websites where you could go and look up what you wanted, you now get a relevant text, tailored to your question.

If you want a simple metaphor: if Yahoo gave you a library (where you had to find the right books) and Google selected the right books for you in that library, ChatGPT and other conversational bots write a text especially for you – based on all those relevant books – offering only the exact information you need. Yes, for the moment they still hallucinate from time to time, but the implications for the users are huge. This is ultra-personalized search, that is created based on a simple conversation between human and machine. Just think how this could change the game for all your customer facing teams if they are augmented with this technology. Just think of how much better and faster they could react to customer wants and needs, and in the language of the customer. In my opinion, every search box on the internet will be GenAI based in a few years. The era of Search 3.0 is just around the corner.

What's a TV show or movie you're embarrassed to admit you love?

Not embarrassed at all, my friend.... favorite of all time is Beverly Hills 90210!

What's the best vacation you've ever been on?

Roadtrip in the West Coast of the US.



Myriam Broeders

CTO Microsoft
Belgium-Luxembourg

What specific technology or platform do you believe will break through in 2024, and what should brands particularly pay attention to stay ahead in the realm of immersive and interactive experiences?

I am very confident that GenAI, Azure OpenAI and Microsoft Copilots will be major game changers in 2024, bringing AI capabilities in the hands of so many users of the Microsoft platforms. I like to refer to it as faster and smarter access to information and insights and having a Copilot assist you in your day to day job.

I would be absolutely thrilled to see platforms addressing climate change challenges make the market and connect organizations to achieve more together, lowering our footprint and us taking care of our planet.

How do you foresee AI-powered “metahumans” improving efficiency in the marketing department (and CX) in your company, say within the next 12-36 months?

The new AI capabilities will enable us to provide a next level of immersive experiences to both employees and customers. Both internal and external branding will be shifting to a new approach and will help in personalized and relevant interactions. New ways of using technology will lead to new habits, greater productivity and improved job satisfaction.

In what ways can immersive technologies be used to create more inclusive and accessible work environments for employees?

Technology opens doors and makes the impossible possible. Let's say you are not a good writer, AI will help you to write great notes and your communication will be far more effective. In another scenario where you might be visually impaired, being able to communicate in natural language conversation with tools will help boost your impact and efficiency. What if you are not creative? Copilot in Powerpoint will support you building impactful presentations. These are just a few examples that show how technology will be a game changer in enabling everyone to have personalized access to what they need to thrive.

What's your favorite gadget or app that you can't live without?

My most used apps are Microsoft Outlook and Teams. The apps where I get nice updates about the where-about of my friends & family are Messenger and WhatsApp. What I am discovering now as very valuable in connecting with colleagues is using Microsoft Viva Engage.

What fictional world or place would you like to visit?

A place where we have a ‘project manager’ taking care of our world and people, ensuring a sustainable and healthy environment for all. A place where we can live high quality lives and enjoy challenges and adventures and appreciate the value of human interactions, bringing the best out of each other.



Öztürk Taspinar

Partner Innovation,
KPMG

What specific technology or platform do you believe will break through in 2024, and what should brands particularly pay attention to stay ahead in the realm of immersive and interactive experiences?

In 2023, the public began to grasp the power of AI, yet the full extent of its capabilities remains largely unseen. Even though 2023 was the year that AI became the user and we humans became the tool, it will take time before this awareness becomes a common understanding. As we approach 2024, I foresee a breakthrough in 'hyper-personalized AI agents.' These agents will actively and proactively understand and interpret individual behaviors, preferences, values, and aspirations. The level of personalization will depend on the amount of data shared, enabling these agents to act and interact in ways uniquely tailored to each user.

This shift heralds a move away from generic, one-size-fits-all applications towards personalized platforms that can execute tasks across multiple applications, simplifying our digital interaction. The forthcoming Human.AI device exemplifies this trend.

The real question is how many such agents we will interact with – will there be specialized agents for different roles, or will a single, highly personalized agent manage all aspects? The more data you share the more personalized your agent will be. This opens the real question how much data are you willing to share, how much trust do you dare to put in the hands of which brand.

For brands, this shift poses both challenges and opportunities. The key will be in adapting to engage not only with human consumers but also with their AI agents. Building tailored "sense of belonging" in clustered (virtual) communities have a strong mobilizing power. Brands that successfully tap into this new dynamic, especially in virtual communities, will have a significant advantage (example communities around Patagonia brand). Retail, for example, could be transformed as AI agents guide customers through virtual stores, offering a level of personalization and convenience in a given moment previously unattainable.

The entrance of giants like Samsung and Apple into XR (AR/VR/MR) markets is particularly intriguing. Their involvement could elevate hyper-personalized, immersive experiences to unprecedented levels. AI and XR are mutually enforcing each other: our next reality will be XR and powered by AI.

2024 could be a pivotal year for immersive experiences, leveraging glasses, holograms, avatars, and new devices, all underpinned by AI. This convergence will be instrumental in the evolution of phygital (physical + digital) worlds within XR.

Moreover, 2024 might be the year when mass awareness about data and privacy as the cornerstone of this new era becomes prevalent. Trust in how companies manage our data and privacy will be critical. Ensuring that these AI agents align with our desires and values, both in physical and virtual realms, will be paramount.

How can virtual worlds be leveraged for effective remote collaboration and team building in corporate settings?

The current high school generation's preference for asynchronous communication: they do not like to answer classical phone calls, they rather leave voice messages, depending on the audience and across platforms, reflects a broader shift towards 'phygital' interactions. In the evolving landscape of future of work, we seem to be able to address one of the biggest collaboration questions since the corporate structures emerged is: how do we enhance collaboration while avoiding the trap of the time lost in explaining and reexplaining work already done elsewhere. There is a significant need to reduce redundant 'reporting meetings about meetings.' Studies indicate that professionals spend about 21.5 hours weekly in meetings, highlighting the need for more efficient collaboration methods.

The rise of asynchronous work, powered by AI technology, is set to transform corporate collaboration. Tools like MSFT Co-Pilot in Teams and MSFT Mesh are introducing the masses to this new way of working. These technologies enable easy recording and sharing of updates once and the relevant humans (and AI) can read / listen at their convenience. They also allow to step into an ongoing meeting and get a summary of what you have missed from these systems. This approach reduces redundant meetings, enhancing engagement and efficiency. My colleagues are surprising clients how much efficiency they can bring with future of work solutions, there is so much redundancy in our current way of work.

Furthermore, the growing use of virtual worlds and their integration with the physical realm offers new avenues for hybrid collaboration and team building. By leveraging these virtual environments, we can enhance quality in collaborations while maintaining the flexibility of remote work.

The key lies in minimizing repetitive reporting about work done elsewhere. By reducing time spent on unnecessary reporting in meetings to bring the participants up to speed, we can shift towards a culture of co-creation and productive collaboration, focusing more on innovation rather than mere reporting.

In what ways can augmented reality improve product design and prototyping in various industries?

Augmented Reality (AR) is revolutionizing product design and prototyping, particularly in industries where these processes are traditionally time-consuming and costly. In the automotive sector, engineers use AR to superimpose digital models onto physical prototypes, streamlining the fit and function evaluation of new components. This integration of AR and AI is also reducing the learning curve for maintenance skills by providing real-time, remote expert support.

In fashion, AR enables designers to virtually experiment with fabric drape and movement, fostering rapid iteration without the need for physical samples. In healthcare, AR aids in the design of complex medical devices, allowing for a more precise understanding of their interaction with the human body.

The future of AR also includes products with embedded sensors, offering real-time user interaction data under actual conditions. This will be invaluable for next-gen product design, providing insights to better meet customer needs and improve both design and production processes.

Key advancements enabled by AR you might want to monitor for your industry in 2024:

- Fast idea deployment through prototyping, allowing early-stage concept validation.
- Digital twin technology for predictive testing in simulated environments.
- Inclusive and diverse feedback from virtual collaboration.
- Cost-effective design iterations, similar to the impact of 3D printing.
- Enhanced productivity in industrial settings through wearable AR devices, aiding in installation, monitoring, maintenance, and troubleshooting.

These developments signify AR's critical role in enhancing design efficiency, cost reduction, and product functionality across multiple industries.

What would the title of your autobiography be?

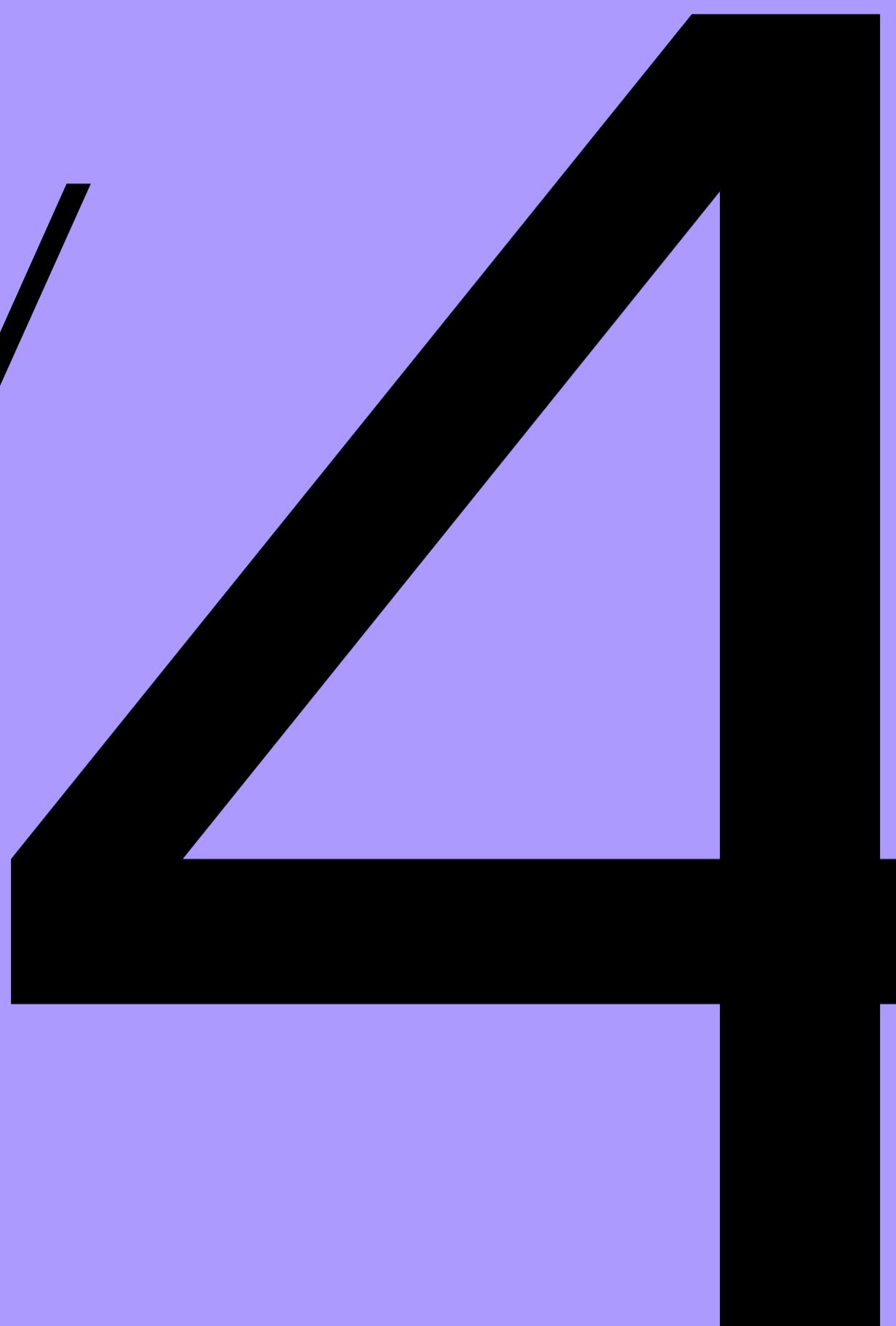
They told me it is impossible, we experimented (and learned that our imagination was the limiting factor).

If you had to delete all but three apps from your smartphone, which ones would you keep?

As a rebel, I will answer this question by explaining which apps I am planning to delete in 2024 : The BBC app, VRTmax app, and Facebook app, all of which have been long-standing fixtures on my device. The primary reason for this decision is a loss of trust in how these platforms handle data and privacy. They have not only underutilized my personal data for providing personalized services but have also faltered in maintaining the trust I placed in their information quality. Their repeated failures to curb the spread of fake news and half news have eroded my confidence in their commitment to responsible & quality information dissemination. This decision underscores a broader trend where organizations are increasingly scrutinized by customers regarding trust, with again data and privacy management playing a pivotal role. The awareness of the power locked in your personal data: something to monitor.



Marketing/
Branding
Vertical



— “Brands can future-proof themselves by embracing digital marketing strategies and engaging with emerging trends, while maintaining the balance between heritage and innovation. A successful strategy for targeting younger audiences involves a blend of influencer marketing for authenticity, a strong branding for identity, and gamification for interactive and engaging experiences.”

Anett Lörincz – CRM Campaign Manager, Global Customer Engagement at Hugo Boss

Dale Imerman

VP Immersive Technology & AI,
WPP

What specific technology or platform do you believe will break through in 2024, and what should brands particularly pay attention to stay ahead in the realm of immersive and interactive experiences?

In 2024, Extended Reality (XR), particularly Augmented Reality (AR), is expected to be the breakthrough technology for immersive and interactive experiences due to several reasons. Major social media platforms like TikTok, Snapchat, Facebook, and Instagram are offering AR media ad units, making it easier for brands to reach their target audience. The development of AR tools and software ecosystems has grown rapidly, enabling creators to produce high-quality content with ease.

As AR technology becomes more accessible, the number of skilled creators has also grown, providing brands with a diverse pool of talent. Furthermore, with over 80% of the world's population owning smartphones capable of delivering AR experiences, brands have an unprecedented opportunity to engage with a massive audience.

A key factor accelerating this growth is the integration of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in AR, as computer vision powered by AI enables seamless and accurate recognition of objects and environments, enhancing the overall user experience. By focusing on AR and leveraging AI advancements, brands can unlock growth opportunities and create unforgettable customer experiences that capitalize on the widespread accessibility and integration of AR technology in everyday life.

What role do analytics play in understanding the impact of AI-driven marketing strategies?

Analytics play a critical role in elevating AI-driven marketing strategies by providing data-driven insights, measuring performance, and optimizing campaigns. They enable marketers to better understand customer behaviour, preferences, and trends, which leads to more targeted and effective marketing efforts.

Through personalization, customer segmentation, and tailored messaging, analytics ensure that marketing strategies resonate with specific audience segments. Additionally, predictive analytics, A/B testing, and attribution modelling empower marketers to stay ahead of the competition, refine their campaigns, and allocate resources efficiently.

In essence, analytics are the backbone of AI-driven marketing strategies, ensuring continuous improvement and success in connecting with customers.

How do you quantify user engagement and satisfaction in an immersive environment?

To measure user engagement and satisfaction in an immersive environment, there are several methods currently available. These include gathering user feedback through surveys or interviews, tracking the amount of time users spend in the experience, monitoring completion rates of specific goals or objectives, analyzing social sharing activity, collecting behavioural data such as user interactions and return frequency, using 3D heat maps to track where users are looking and interacting, and measuring dwell time to identify which parts of the experience are most engaging.

By utilizing these methods, it is possible to gain a relatively comprehensive understanding of user engagement and satisfaction levels within an immersive environment.

If you could instantly become an expert in something, what would it be?

Automated agriculture.

What's the best piece of advice you've ever received?

Understand what you're not good at and surround yourself with a team of people that can support your weaknesses.



Tom Ffiske

Editor,
Immersive Wire

What specific technology or platform do you believe will break through in 2024, and what should brands particularly pay attention to stay ahead in the realm of immersive and interactive experiences?

Web-based XR has made surprising strides in 2023, with more companies cluttering the area. I wonder how that may grow in 2024; will there be a network where worlds can connect to one another? I have seen hints of this in Arrival.Space, though I wonder if the concept will be expanded further.

How should brands measure the success of their immersive technology campaigns? What does success look like here?

KPIs are notoriously difficult, though I have found that dwell time is a useful indicator of success; if it is above three minutes, you're golden.

What new metrics of engagement emerge when in virtual worlds?

I suspect item use rate; how many people use an item post-launch, or traded.

If you could start a podcast, what would it be about?

My Beef with Beef: A Vegan's Vernacular. Not because I am Vegan, I am just surprised it doesn't already exist.

What's the most interesting or unique aspect of your local culture?

Bristol is quirky, similar to Austin in the USA. We have an annual hot air balloon festival, and a local animation studio that saved a cheese factory (Aardman, if you're curious).



Anett Lörincz

CRM Campaign Manager,
Global Customer Engagement at Hugo Boss

What specific technology or platform do you believe will break through in 2024, and what should brands particularly pay attention to stay ahead in the realm of immersive and interactive experiences?

Trend Forecasting. Fashion brands should leverage the cutting edge technology of AI and Trend Forecasting with the support of tools such as Heuritech. The technology can help not only to predict trends with precision, but can also provide valuable insights into consumer preferences. By utilizing AI powered trend analysis, brands can make informed decisions, ensuring their collections align with the evolving tastes of the market, staying ahead in the competitive landscape of the fashion industry.

How can creative (immersive) tech be leveraged to bridge the gap between online and offline experiences in luxury fashion retail?

Immersive technologies can elevate the luxury fashion retail experience by seamlessly bending the online and offline realities. Virtual showrooms, try on experiences and gamification can provide customers a tactile feel of products and enhance their shopping experience. Incorporating AR into physical stores can offer interactive and personalized engagement, creating a harmonious blend between the offline and online aspects of luxury fashion retail.

As brands try to connect with younger audiences, how do you see Hugo Boss future-proofing itself on that front these next couple of years?

Fashion brands can connect with younger audiences through various innovative strategies. HUGO BOSS will future proof itself by embracing digital marketing strategies and engaging with emerging trends, while maintaining the balance between heritage and innovation. Successful strategy for fashion brands targeting younger audiences involves a blend of influencer market for authenticity, a strong branding for identity, and gamification for interactive and engaging experiences.

Influencer marketing plays a pivotal role, with brands partnering with social media influencers to authentically showcase their products. This not only enhances brand visibility but also resonates with the influencer's engaged followers. In addition, a strong focus on branding is crucial. Establishing a unique and relatable brand identity helps forge a connection with the younger demographic. Consistent messaging, distinctive visuals, and a clear brand story contribute to brand loyalty among the youth. Furthermore, HUGO BOSS demonstrates adaptability to emerging trends by venturing into the gaming worlds, notably through recent collaboration with Fortnite. This innovative move not only expands their reach to the gaming community, but also positions the brand at the forefront of fashion's intersection with digital and virtual spaces. It showcases the forward thinking approach to marketing and brand expansion, complementing their successes in influencer marketing and strategic branding efforts.

What's something you're looking forward to in the next year?

I am looking forward to the integration of online and offline experiences along with the advancements of extended reality (XR) and artificial intelligence (AI) within the fashion industry. In fashion, it is not about what to expect next year, but how technology and style evolve day by day, much like an ever changing river. The constant interaction of digital and physical, combined with XR and AI, will bring ongoing innovation to the fashion world.

What's a recent trend that you just can't get behind?

One recent trend I find challenging to embrace is the rise of AI influencers. Beyond the authenticity concern, there are potential dangers associated with the unknown psychological influence they may exert on society. The seamless integration of AI influencers into our digital spaces raises questions about ethical considerations, data privacy, and the subtle impact on human behavior. It's crucial to navigate this trend with caution, considering its potential implications on our social and psychological well-being.



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2

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Our Creative Technologies Leadership Session is your gateway to a personalized plan to start boosting your brand towards progress.

3

Build the future with us

Turn vision into reality and embark on a project that not only sets you apart but also opens up new audiences and revenue opportunities.

Let's talk.

Let's future-proof your brand.

Let's talk



Free virtual summit by yondr

Creative Technologies Day

→ **Date:**

Thursday, March 7th
2024

→ **Time:**

3-6PM CET
9AM-12PM EST

Session 1

Redefining creative boundaries with hyperrealistic AI

Chris Ume
Co-founder,
Metaphysic.ai

Session 2

Connecting with Gen Z: the rise of virtual worlds

Raffaella Camera
Senior Executive & Strategic Advisor,
Epic Games

Session 3

How co-creation builds community and lowers risks

Anna Kjölstad Svedu
Exploration Lead & Business Innovation,
H&M Group

Session 4

Evolving from digital to spatial interactions

We will announce more special guests and speakers SOON.

Open office hour

30-minute AMA session with the brightest minds in creative technology. Engage in discussions on GenAI, virtual humans, spatial computing, the metaverse, and more.

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2024

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