

Special Issue
June 2025

Your guide to the latest in data & AI

thread
by Valtech ✱

The Cannes Issue

Accelerate. Grow. Lead.

- Reshaping the experience loop
- Update CX without changing a thing
- Rethink productivity in the blink of an eye
- Cut costs and reinvent the customer experience



By
Olivier Padiou,
CEO, Valtech

Letter from the CEO

We are navigating volatile times.

Every leader across every category is bracing for uncertainty. Contributing to this volatility are two seemingly opposing imperatives: Drastically curb spending while innovating like never before. It seems like an irreconcilable conflict.

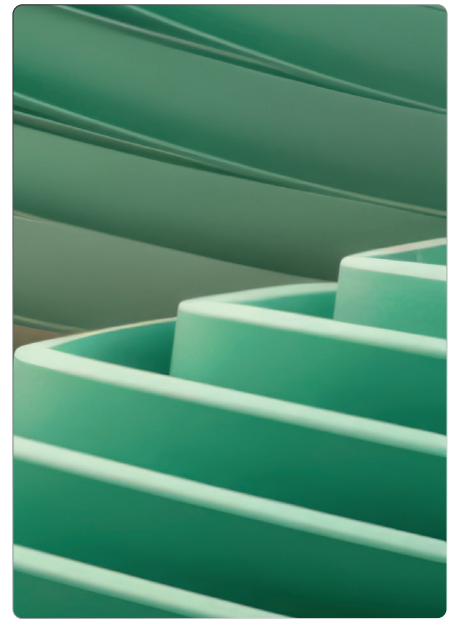
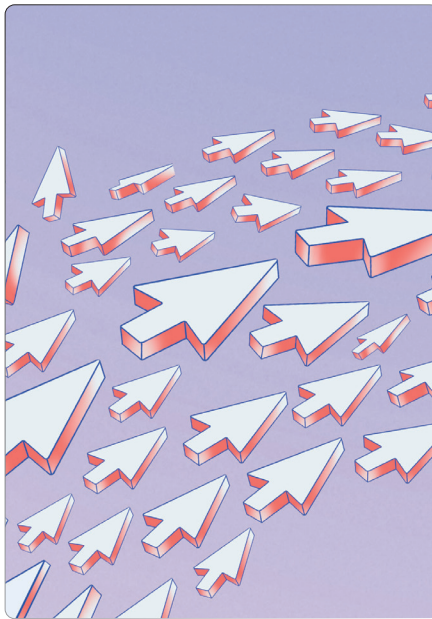
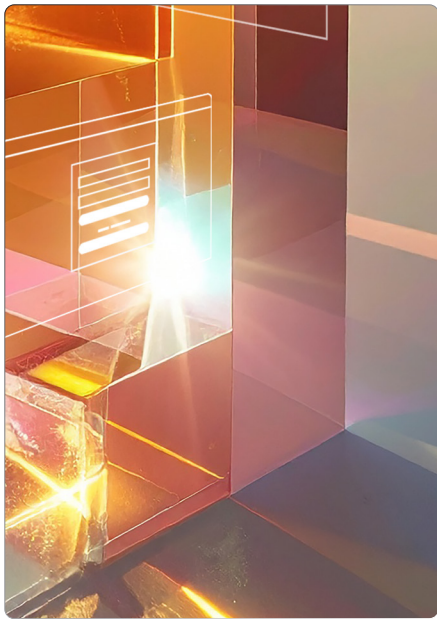
No one feels that pressure more than CMOs. Top marketers need to find ways to significantly reduce the cost of running their digital estates, content platforms, commerce engines and campaign management. At the same time, they need to innovate. They must create better experiences to get more engagement from their customers, drive more loyalty and position their business for sustainable growth. By strategically leveraging AI and GenAI, we at Valtech make those two opposing notions work together.

We see the power of AI, and we are building GenAI accelerators that can substantially diminish the cost of maintenance, bug fixing and evolution for any digital platform, while at the same time giving marketing teams tools to operate their digital platforms at scale. We are helping marketing teams accelerate content production, optimize for better reach, and reduce churn and returns.

Ultimately, by pairing GenAI and composable components we will create unique user journeys that transcend the website and drive the next generation of omnichannel experience. All this while extending the lifespans of existing digital platforms. We know that unlocking the true business value of GenAI comes from uniting experience elevation and incremental cost savings, not doing them in silos. We are seeing the results in real time.

Come on this journey with us.

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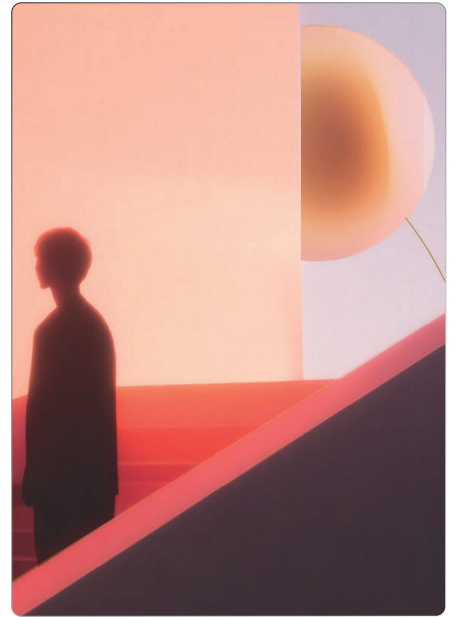
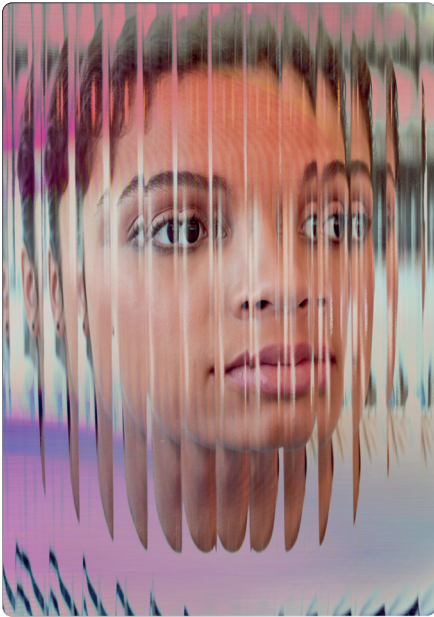
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Innovation vs optimization

What if you could deliver growth and leadership with your customer experience—and cut costs?

By

Gabriel Laliberté, Head of Strategy, Valtech

Across industries, leaders face a stark paradox. The urgent need to innovate and meet rising customer expectations is colliding with economic pressure and unprecedented uncertainty forcing massive optimizations.

Customer expectations are accelerating. But internal teams are slowing down, and rising maintenance costs and fragmented workflows are creating costly drag. To stay competitive, brands must shift their focus from building better websites, apps, and tools to orchestrating smarter, more connected and unified digital systems for their end-users. These are the necessary costs of digital that are critical for businesses to deliver an elevated customer experience to drive growth. AI gives brands the power to grow and lead by automating digital overhead and maintenance—while simultaneously elevating customer experience on top of their existing tech and data stack—all at reduced cost.



Enter AI

As the pressure mounts on C-suite leaders to do more with less, three transformational pillars are emerging—and at the center of them is AI. First, AI-Powered Managed Services are redefining maintenance itself, shifting from reactive support to proactive orchestration and continuous optimization to curb spending and to ultimately drive a more elevated customer experience. Then, Operational Intelligence at Scale is enabling marketing, service, and content teams to break free from repetitive tasks, unlocking speed and precision through intelligent automation. Finally, Generative Experience Design is reshaping how brands connect with customers by creating dynamic, AI-powered experiences that adapt in real time to user intent. Together, these three pillars don't just ease the burden—they unlock a smarter, faster, and more resilient path forward.

And it's already happening. The most forward-looking organizations are embracing these pillars to move beyond stability and toward AI-driven transformation—driving continuous improvement, operational efficiency, and experience innovation without starting from scratch. But they need visionary strategic partners to help them achieve tangible outcomes and implement these changes.

From cost center to value creation

Pillar 1: AI-powered managed services can transform operations into engines of performance, velocity, and cost-efficiency. Managed services are the costs of digital ecosystems that are critical for leaders to deliver elevated experiences and growth. They have usually been seen as merely the price of complex omnichannel environments. They must be seen as a strategic layer. When you infuse managed services with automation and AI, you are not only reducing cost but improving performance, stability, and velocity across the stack.

Managed services are no longer a holding pattern. They're the runway. By embedding AI and orchestrating automation at scale, you can transform your support infrastructure into an engine of operational efficiency, one that delivers measurable ROI from day one, while protecting the knowledge layer that fuels your business velocity.

Take support: it isn't just technical, it's human. Attrition costs knowledge. Hiring costs momentum. To solve this, business must deploy AI-powered assistants that move past tickets, docs, and workflows into a smart, searchable knowledge layer—speeding up onboarding, reducing knowledge gaps, and helping teams work faster.

Organizations need more than tools—they need strategic partners who can design the vision and integrate the systems to make it happen. When executed well, the impact is clear: faster onboarding, stronger knowledge retention, improved performance, protected margins—and a better experience for end-users. Rather than reacting to problems, Valtech embeds AI agents that proactively monitor, resolve, and learn—creating a self-healing support layer. Our AI accelerators take this further, enabling real-time anomaly detection, predictive fixes, and automated resolution. We have seen up to 40% less support workload, significantly lower costs, faster response times, and more resilient, intelligent operations.

Case in point: A global retailer transitioned from reactive tickets to agent-driven support. The impact? Ticket volume dropped, resolution time was halved, and millions were reallocated to innovation—while onboarding time fell from weeks to days, without the need for a training deck. Ultimately delivering on more value to the end-consumer.

Unlocking AI value beyond the platform

Pillar 2: operational intelligence at scale unlocks the true potential for AI-driven efficiency. The real optimization lies within day-to-day operations—marketing, customer service, content production, and post-purchase experiences. These functions drive business value, yet are often weighed down by manual, repetitive workflows.

Internal teams, especially CMOs, are being asked to do more with less. More personalization. More platforms to support. And they're operating in a production model that is arduous, not the generative, adaptive, intelligence-based environment being developed today.

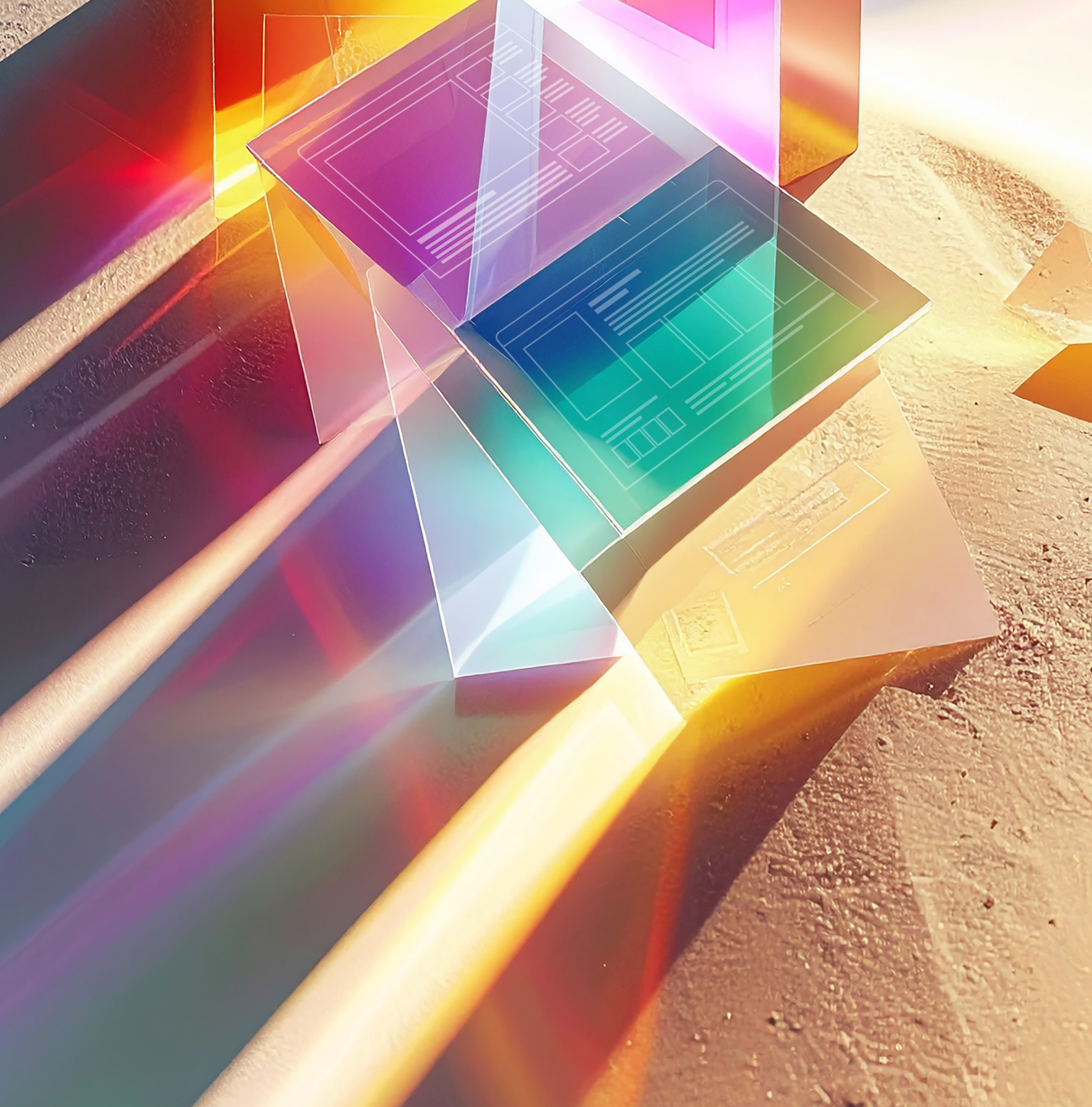
Companies must seek out partner's whose approach goes beyond intelligence-based automation. At Valtech, we embed agentic AI into operational loops, turning slow, error-prone tasks into autonomous, orchestrated flows. This

“We have seen up to 40% less support workload, significantly lower costs, faster response times, and more resilient, intelligent operations.

results in scalable operational intelligence—where humans engage only where they add strategic value.

Our AI agent networks generate and localize marketing content at scale—and on brand. Our accelerators let teams create and publish product descriptions instantly, analyze campaign performance to deliver insights, forecast demand and recommend pricing changes, and orchestrate order decisions using logistics data. These agents operate as coordinated squads, embedded across systems, continuously learning and optimizing.

This orchestration leads to exponential results: Faster execution, higher content output, and stronger business outcomes. Our clients report millions in savings while boosting personalization and scale. Ultimately, operations are where digital investments prove their ROI. By integrating AI across marketing, service, and commerce, Valtech unlocks growth, empowers teams, and paves the way for the next generation of experience innovation.



Smart experiences: the end of static UX

Pillar 3: Generative experience design is about helping businesses meet the consumer where they are.

Reimagining the interface means treating the end-user interaction as a living canvas shaped by context, intent, and generative orchestration.

It's about rethinking digital journeys to feel as seamless, personal, and adaptive as conversations. Consumers aren't looking for more channels or navigation. They're looking for clarity. Relevance. They want systems to recognize context and respond accordingly, not another place to navigate linearly.

These modern journeys no longer begin at a homepage. Users arrive mid-flow—through search, social, voice, or embedded channels. Platforms must now respond with precision, not guide with structure. At Valtech, we embrace this shift with an AI-first model that generates experiences dynamically, responding to user behavior and context.

We reimagine UX as prompt-based and generative. Interfaces adapt in real time. Layouts, messaging, and product discovery are generated dynamically. AI agents serve content, recommendations, and support, orchestrated via APIs rather than static frontend logic. This has eliminated the need for costly replatforming and gives brands the agility to evolve without rebuilding. We have decoupled backend content and commerce from rigid templates, empowering AI to reassemble experiences in the moment.

We've launched generative concierge experiences that adapt entirely to user intent, location, and behavior. Layouts, copy, and navigation adjust dynamically, turning every interaction into a conversation. Results include increased engagement, faster test-and-learn cycles, and higher conversions.

Unlike traditional personalization, generative experiences deliver unique, real-time outputs built by AI—not just pre-selected variants. This shift is already live, and Valtech is

helping clients lead the way toward smarter, adaptive digital experiences. It is not a homepage. It is not a single chatbot. It is the connective tissue linking intent and value.

Building what's next, together

In a world of rising complexity and shrinking attention, businesses can no longer afford to separate platform stability, operational efficiency, and experience innovation. The leaders of tomorrow will be those who master all three simultaneously.

We don't believe in choosing between cost savings and creativity, or between maintaining what works and building what's next. Instead, we architect for both. Our end-to-end approach creates space for reinvention by transforming the very systems that once limited innovation. Brands are no longer managing just digital platforms. They are orchestrating intelligent experience ecosystems that learn, adapt, and evolve in real time to meet evolving customer needs—all powered by AI.

And most importantly, this isn't a vision for the future. It's already happening

Visit valtech.com to download our Whitepaper "From Maintenance to Experience Evolution. Valtech's End-to-End Approach, Powered by AI" to learn how you can apply this methodology to your business challenges.

The Experience Loop

How AI is reshaping CX from conversion to continuous connection

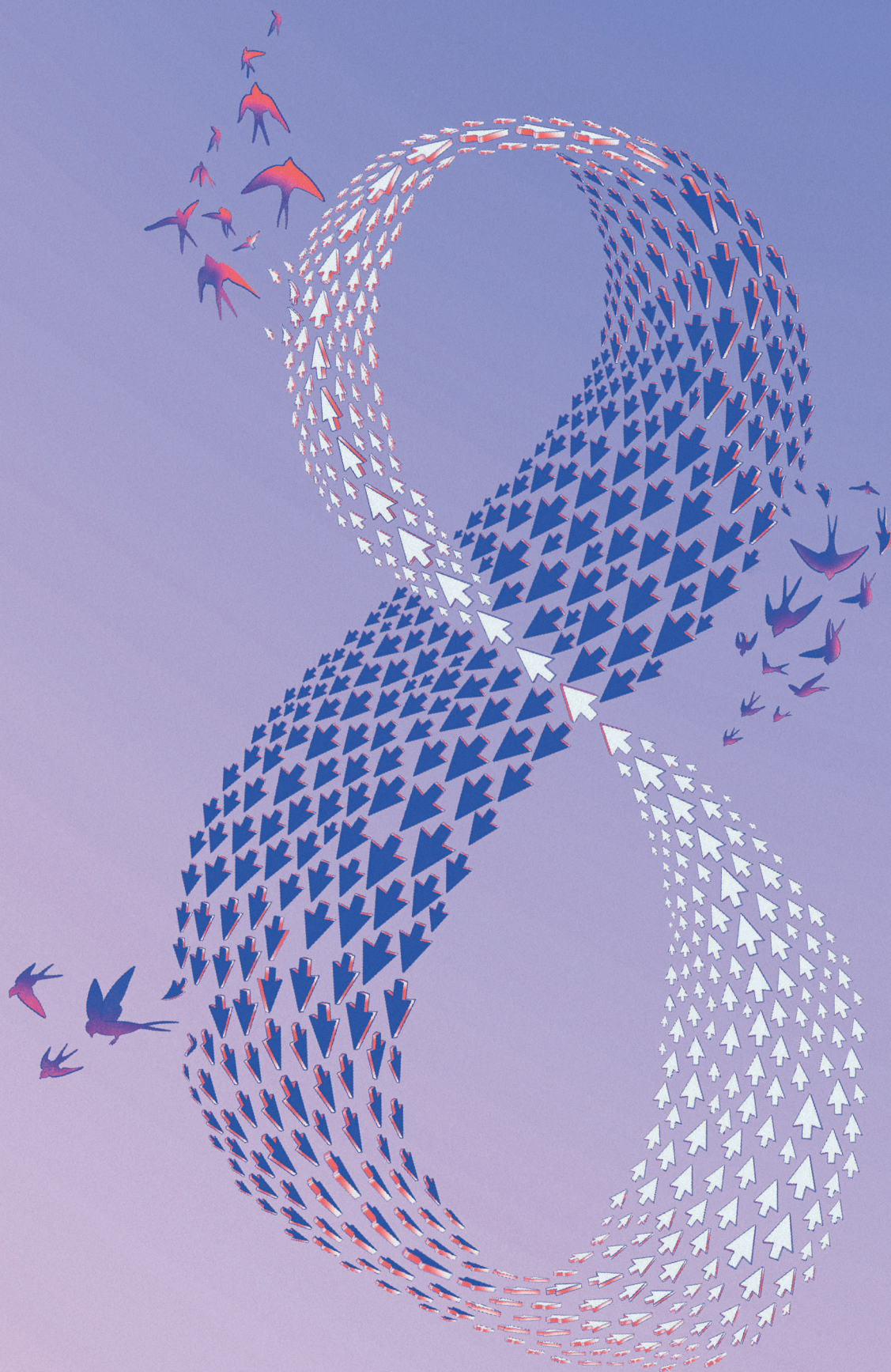
For decades, brands have focused on customer conversions as the ultimate goal, treating each interaction as a step toward a single transaction. But this linear journey never reflected reality. It was a device marketers used to bring order to the chaos of human decision-making.

Today, the most successful brands aren't optimizing for one-time purchases. They are building continuous, immersive experiences that foster long-term relationships.

This is the key to differentiation, higher profits and greater market share. It's leveraging AI to design experiences that accurately reflect the reality of human decision-making — not by predicting the perfect path but by enabling a continuous loop of engagement.

Instead of treating customer interactions as a sequence of touchpoints leading to conversion, AI empowers brands to create an Experience Loop — a dynamic, self-reinforcing relationship where every interaction refines and enhances the next.

This is the future of CX. It's about building systems that understand, enhance and innovate in real time, strengthening customer connections at every touchpoint.



From preset options to real-time understanding

Customers expect experiences that adapt to them, not the other way around. AI makes this possible by recognizing intent, responding in real time and evolving interactions as the relationship deepens.

“It’s not about a single, perfect path — it’s about growing relationships through AI-driven, iterative engagement,” says Paul Carysforth, Experience Analytics Director at Valtech.

This shift is particularly important when it comes to personalization.

Too often, brands still treat it as a one-time optimization focused on making better recommendations.

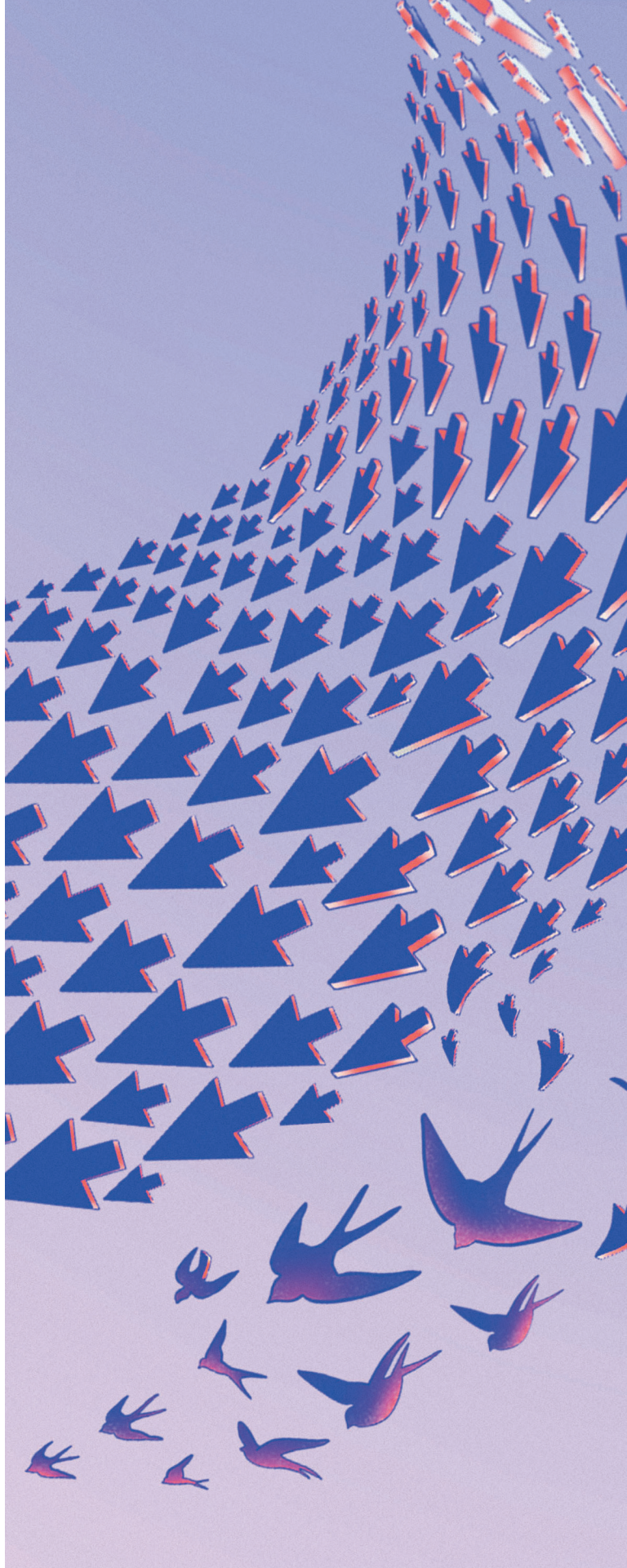
But personalization should be much more than that. “All we want is to be seen as individuals. AI has the potential to finally make that happen — not by pushing products, but by designing experiences that actually reflect who we are and what we care about,” says Helle Jensen, Nordic Executive Director, Experience Design at Valtech.

Lexus has embraced this shift by applying the philosophy of Omotenashi, the Japanese art of hospitality, to digital experiences. Known for anticipating customer needs and delivering seamless, deeply personal service, Lexus is now extending that same approach into its strategy with agentic AI.

“We are obsessed with the customer,” says Loïc Charlon, Senior Manager, Lexus & Kinto Digital Experience at Toyota Motor Europe. “We try to treat them as if they are guests in our own home, anticipating their needs and answering exactly what they are looking for. And there is no better way to achieve this than having an AI agent search our entire database of Lexus information to craft responses that precisely meet their needs.”

By deploying agentic AI, Lexus ensures that every interaction refines and enhances the next — just like a conversation with a trusted advisor.

“Our vision is to make luxury personal,” Charlon explains. “We wanted to offer a more personalized experience on the website. Unlike a standard page, where everything is predefined and customers must find their own way to the information they need, our AI agents guide the customer more intuitively, creating less friction.”



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Loïc Charlon, Senior Manager, Lexus & Kinto Digital Experience at Toyota Motor Europe

This is the Experience Loop in action. Lexus is using AI to ensure every moment of engagement strengthens the long-term connection with customers.

From borrowed spaces to owned experiences

While AI-powered personalization has traditionally focused on improving efficiency, real differentiation comes from building ecosystems that sustain long-term engagement. Brands that fail to take control of this shift risk becoming interchangeable, losing customer relationships to AI-powered aggregators and search engines.

“The way these technologies are built is to provide the most pleasing response to the largest number of people. But if you’re tailoring for the masses, you end up with a perfectly average experience — which is ironic, because customer experience is supposed to feel highly personal,” says Joe Sutherland, Director of the Emory University Center for AI Learning.

That’s why leading brands are shifting their focus from transactional optimization to AI-driven Experience Loops that they own. “Brands have an opportunity to craft specialized AI-driven experiences that set them apart from AI search engines like Perplexity or ChatGPT,” says Karl Hampson, Valtech’s Data & AI CTO. “The ones that don’t will get disintermediated out of relevance.”

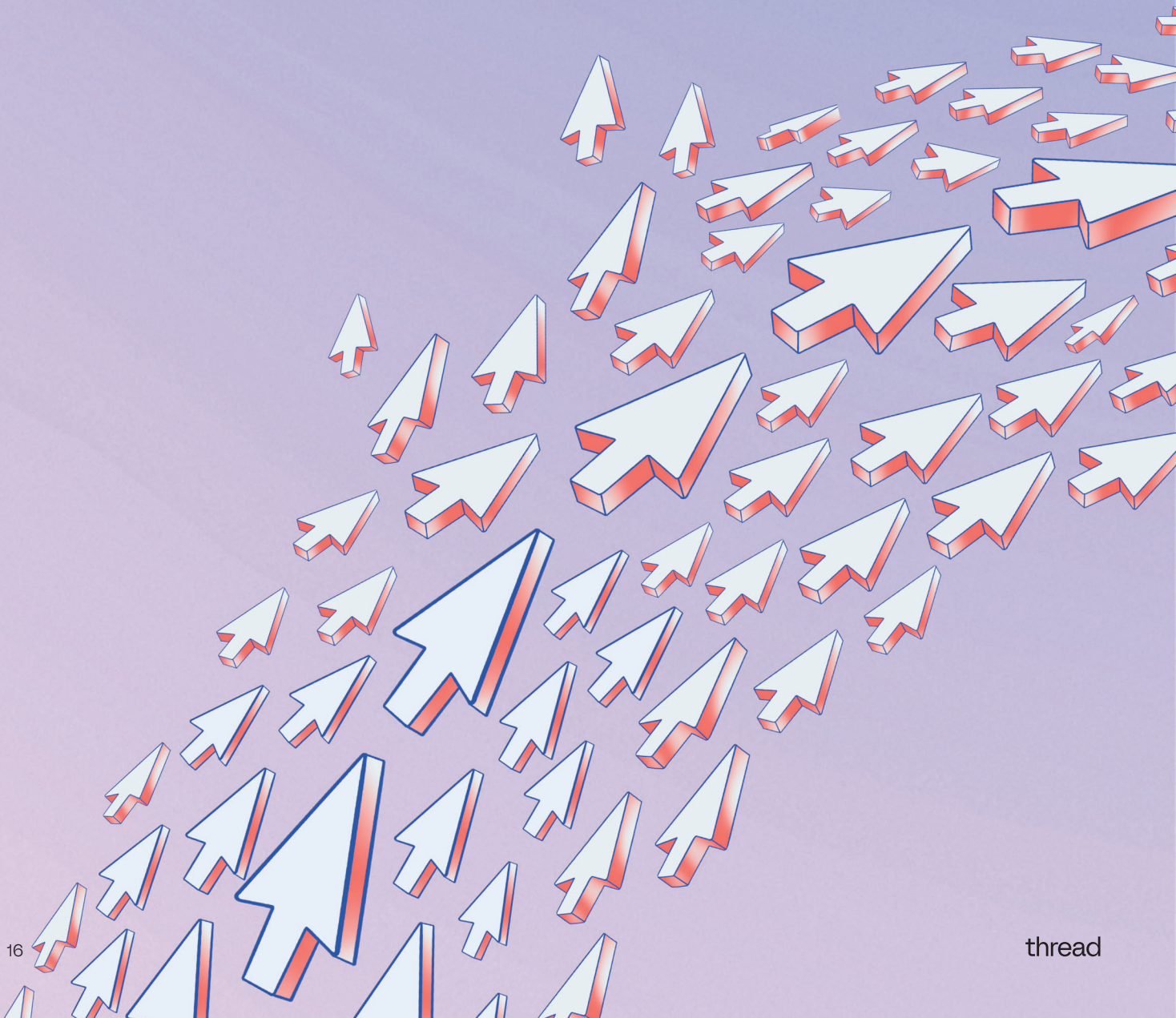
Not On The High Street (NOTHS), a curated online marketplace featuring over 5,500 small creative UK businesses, is doing just that. Faced with the challenge of surfacing more than 350,000 unique products without overwhelming or underwhelming their audience, NOTHS implemented Google Cloud’s Vertex AI Search for retail.

The results were transformative. Within just 12 weeks, a production-ready AI search tool was live. Search conversion rates increased by 10% year-over-year, and revenue per user rose by 2.2%

But what makes the NOTHS transformation especially powerful is the strategic intent behind it: Rather than

“It’s not about a single, perfect path — it’s about growing relationships through AI-driven, iterative engagement.

Paul Carysforth, Experience Analytics Director



relying on borrowed digital spaces to grow, NOTHS built an owned Experience Loop, one that turns every search query into a smarter, more personalized discovery, and strengthens the bond between the customer and the brand with each interaction.

From omnichannel ubiquity to multimodal immersion

Omnichannel has been the gold standard for digital experience for years. But today's customers expect more than just compatibility across devices. They want connection across every mode of interaction.

AI plays a critical role in helping businesses meet that expectation. Gartner predicts that by 2027 40% of generative AI solutions will be multimodal, encompassing text, image, audio and video.¹ Google's Project Astra and GPT-4o's latest advancements illustrate how AI is now capable of interpreting and responding to multimodal inputs in real time. They understand images, video and voice all at once. This shift transforms how brands communicate, moving from static interactions to fully immersive, adaptive engagement.

"Multimodal is replacing omnichannel," says Jensen. "Omnichannel was about making sure you had a desktop and mobile-friendly experience. Multimodal is about how all your devices, all your senses and all your contexts interact in a seamless way."

Wayfair is applying multimodal AI to improve how its customers search and shop. By blending text, image and preference-based inputs, the company is making it easier to navigate categories in which products are often unbranded or hard to describe. This approach enables more visual and intuitive discovery than basic keyword search, which is especially helpful in home décor and furniture, where style and context matter as much as specifications.

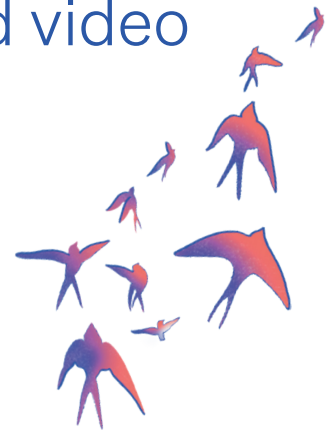
From isolated projects to intelligent ecosystems

The most forward-thinking brands are using AI to build dynamic ecosystems that continuously learn, adapt and improve — not just for customers, but for employees, too.

Take John Deere. The agricultural equipment manufacturer has reimagined how internal teams engage with data and AI

40%

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audio and video
by 2027.



through its Unified Data Platform (UDP). Rather than running disconnected AI projects, Deere has built a centralized system that encourages continuous exploration and innovation across the company.

"Transformation comes through collective adoption and transparency," says Jamie Hallstrom, Group Product Manager, Data Enablement Platforms at John Deere. "From a platform perspective, we have a centralized system — what we call our AI gateway — that allows users to access AI capabilities in one place. The beauty behind the gateway is that we provide all the responsible AI governance in a single, centralized hub."

The UDP is a personalized workspace that turns every employee into both a consumer and a producer of AI-powered tools. Employees can explore a wide range of internal data products

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Helle Jensen, Nordic Executive Director, Experience Design

and applications, register and connect their own datasets, and see how their contributions power other parts of the business. The personalized “My UDP” dashboard shows each worker the applications they manage and use, making their data-driven work more visible and more impactful.

This internal Experience Loop empowers teams to move faster, collaborate more effectively and deliver better results. By embedding intelligence into its core operations, John Deere is creating a culture of innovation where AI is a shared capability that grows stronger with every interaction.

Closing the loop

Winning brands build systems for continuous connection. The Experience Loop is how they do it: a self-reinforcing cycle where every interaction feeds intelligence back into the ecosystem, improving the next touchpoint automatically.

Creating that kind of loop doesn't require a massive overhaul from day one. It starts with a few key moves:

- Start small and iterate. Launch focused AI pilots. Test, learn and scale what delivers real value.
- Invest in your data foundation. But not at the cost of productivity. Deliver just enough data foundations to support each use case whilst incrementally following a strategic approach.
- Design for feedback. Make every interaction (internal or external) an opportunity to learn and improve.
- Stay flexible. Choose tools and platforms that allow your systems to evolve as customer expectations and business needs shift.

The result? A smarter, more responsive brand that deepens trust, sharpens personalization and strengthens customer relationships over time.

The brands that win will build loyalty and growth through continuous connection, powered by AI and fueled by every meaningful interaction across the experience ecosystem.



Driving Precision: Inside Lexus's AI-Powered Shift to Hyperpersonalization

While The Experience Loop explores how AI transforms relationships from conversion to connection, the Lexus AI Concierge highlights the operational intelligence driving this evolution. It's not just enhancing user experience — it's building smart infrastructure that adapts and improves with every interaction.

A Smarter System, Seamlessly Integrated

The Lexus AI Concierge adds a generative AI layer to the brand's digital experience, working with existing technologies to modernize without replacing. This reflects Valtech One: evolve smarter, not heavier. And our ethos that generative AI is additive and not subtractive to existing or legacy tech.

Unlike traditional chatbots that focus on text responses only, the Concierge generates full-page responses from the user's context and natural language requests, guiding users intuitively to the next best action. Powered by a vectorized knowledge base, it connects users with the most relevant content — from brochures and specs to contextual imagery — with speed and precision, delivering pages and experiences as individual as the people who interact with it.

Under the hood

The Concierge is engineered for performance and governance:

- Prompt engineering structures and localizes responses by template.
- Post-processing logic filters tone, restricts cross-brand comparisons, and ensures no personal data is stored.
- Usage tracking and exit surveys inform continuous improvements.

The endgame is clear: AI-powered assistants have the potential to reinvent the traditional website experience — breaking free from decades of conservative design to finally deliver true hyperpersonalization at scale.

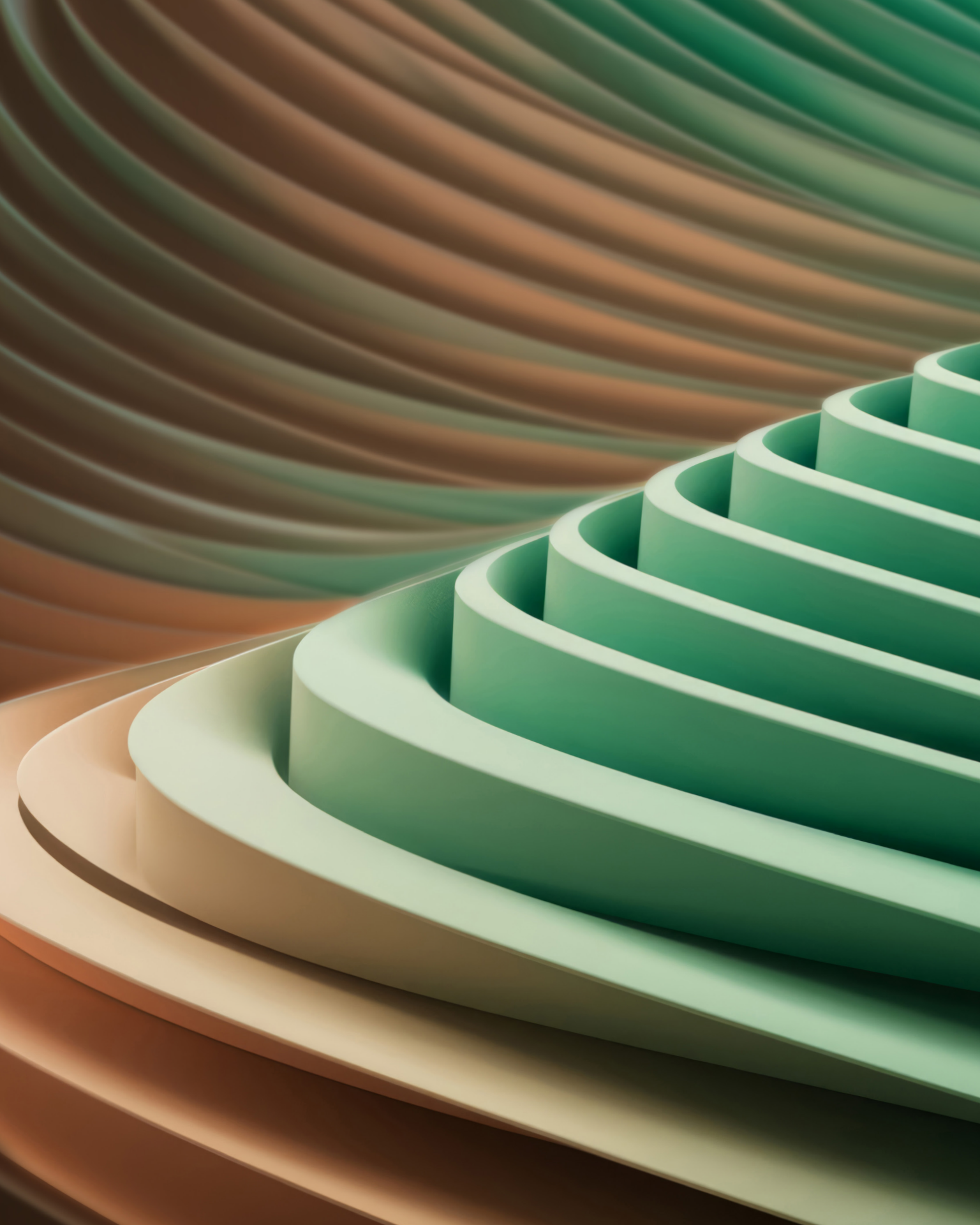
The next creative wave

GenAI as a growth imperative

By
Matt Redman, SVP Strategy, Valtech

We've been handed the most powerful growth tool since the introduction of the internet. So, why is it that most conversations about GenAI are all about efficiency and killing jobs?

This narrow lens misses the real story: AI's capacity to spark an era of creativity and innovation on an unprecedented scale. GenAI has the potential to redefine entire industries, open new markets and expand what we thought was possible.



From IT cost center to everybody's business

For too long, technology has been siloed within the IT department, evaluated primarily as a cost center that needs to prove its value through savings.

However, GenAI is now seen as a business asset, aligned closely with strategy, growth and innovation. Seen through this lens, GenAI is no longer just about running more efficient operations — it's about reimagining entire business models.

Take L'Oréal, for example. Through its AI-driven platforms, the company uses customer data and skin analysis to develop highly personalized skincare products, going so far as to create beauty regimens tailored to unique skin concerns. GenAI is integral to their ability to scale these personalized experiences and build customer loyalty. This isn't just cost-saving; it's a forward-looking approach that places customer needs at the core, driving loyalty and engagement on a massive scale.

Start asking bigger questions

Real innovation rarely comes from limiting ourselves to optimizing what already exists. Imagine, for instance, if we only thought about how AI could make assembly lines faster — what a waste of potential that would be. The real breakthroughs come when we're bold enough to ask bigger questions.

Consider the Earth Species Project. This team of AI engineers aims to decode the languages of the 8 million species we share the planet with. Their goal? Capture and translate animal languages using generative AI to make interspecies communication possible. Imagine being able to chat with your cat or dog — what would that be worth?

In business, this kind of bold curiosity drives meaningful innovation. Unilever, for instance, uses GenAI to develop new, sustainable products by simulating consumer preferences and testing variations virtually. In food, this approach helps them find alternatives to traditional ingredients, cutting waste and reducing environmental

impact. And this type of innovation is already impacting behaviors in the home — chatbots can now scan the ingredients inside your fridge and come up with meal ideas that reduce waste in seconds.

Proprietary data as competitive advantage

Once AI no longer relies on public information for training, companies with proprietary data will become the new powerhouses of innovation. Big brands with loyal customer bases and rich data sets will be able to deliver unique experiences and highly customized products that startups will struggle to replicate.

Nike exemplifies this competitive edge. By leveraging customer data, Nike has been able to design personalized footwear tailored to individual preferences and physical activities, creating products that speak directly to each consumer's unique needs. This approach not only sets them apart in the market but reinforces brand loyalty, proving that GenAI can do much more than just reduce costs. It can create high-value, personalized experiences that drive new revenue streams.

Proprietary data is also a powerful driver of competitive advantage at Nissan, where predictive analytics help forecast market trends, while personalization tailors customer experiences. "The fact that we have so much proprietary data from the vehicles, from our ecosystem — that is the thing that will be the game-changer, the difference [between us and] anyone else doing generative AI-type work," Viv Yuen, Nissan's Head of Global Digital Product and Implementation, shared on an episode of Valtech Cafe.

Similarly, IKEA's AI-driven interior design app enables customers to visualize how furniture will look in their homes, designing layouts based on their preferences. This goes beyond simple product placements, letting users create spaces that feel truly personal. Here, AI supports a unique customer experience, bridging the gap between imagination and reality — a true embodiment of what it means to use technology to add value.



Get ready for generative business

Efficiency gains are valuable, but they're backward-looking. To unlock generative AI's full potential, we need to see it as more than an operational tool. GenAI invites us to rethink growth strategies and reshape products and experiences from the ground up.

This shift toward “generative business” emphasizes experience-driven innovation and real-time learning. Now is the time for leaders to use GenAI as a growth engine, embracing its ability to redefine the future — not just optimize the past.

Divide and conquer

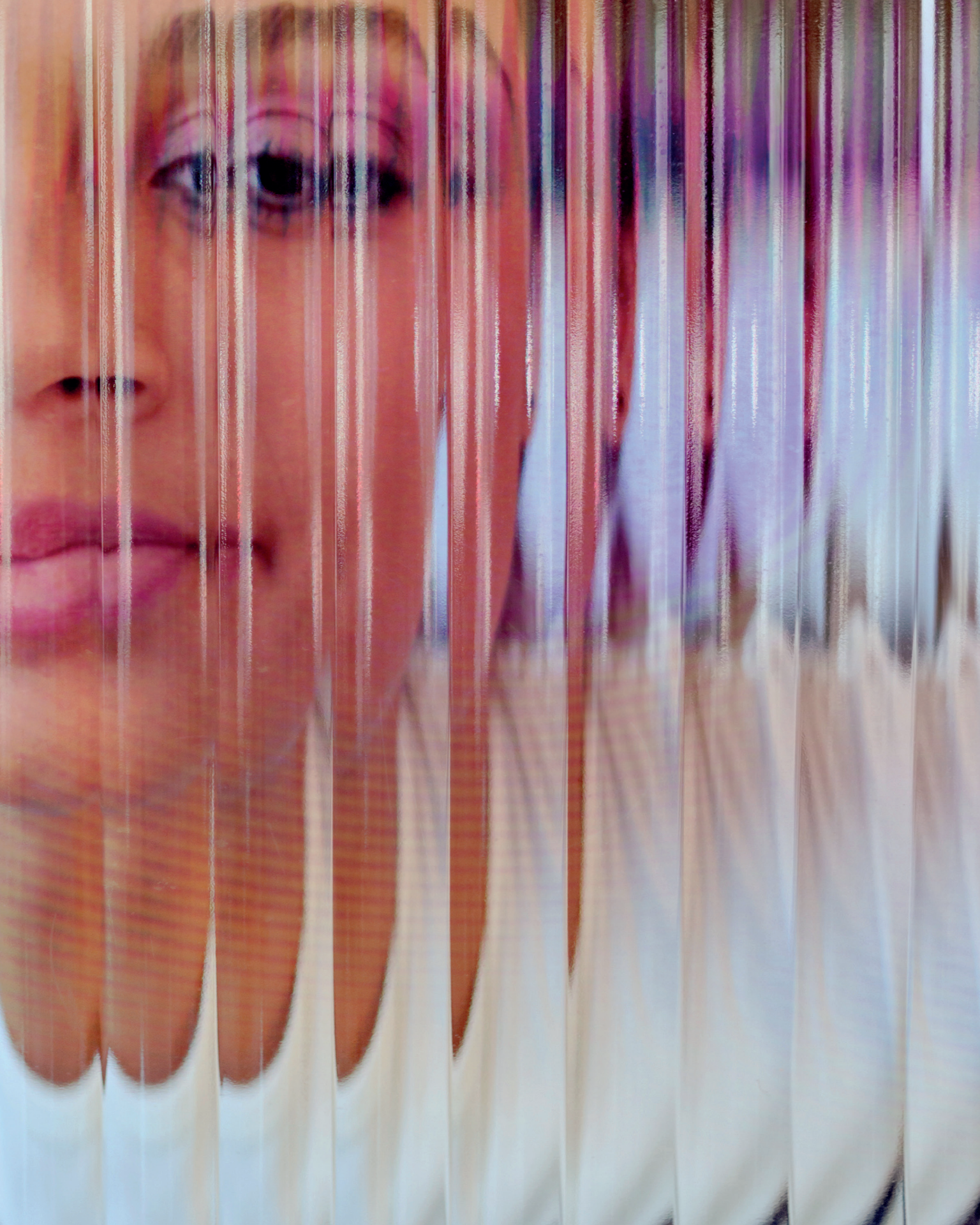
How digital twins are becoming
our AI teammates

By
Karl Hampson, Data & AI CTO

People have long speculated about the idea of digital twins that mirror our personalities, preferences and behaviors — dynamic replicas that could work, think and act on our behalf. But for most of that history, the idea has been more fiction than fact. The technology simply wasn't there. What we do have are digital twins of systems we can measure and model. A digital twin of a Rolls-Royce engine makes perfect sense: the system is deterministic, governed by physics and responds predictably.

But people aren't engines. We're emotional, unpredictable and deeply contextual. We're stochastic. And modeling that kind of variability introduces a whole new level of complexity.

A digital twin of water? Easy. We know when it freezes and when it boils. A digital twin of me making a complex decision after two coffees and a bad night of sleep? Good luck with that.





The opportunity ahead isn't about building copycats of ourselves. It's about practical, contextual augmentation. It's about building smarter agents that work for us — not just on our behalf, but for us.

But thanks to recent advances in AI, we're starting to see credible efforts to replicate aspects of human decision-making. We're not talking about full-body doubles but slivers of you, trained on context and tuned for specific tasks. That's where things get interesting.

Sliced, not copied: the age of mini twins

This shift in thinking opens up a more practical, if fragmented, possibility: What if the digital twin of the future isn't a complete replica of a person, but dozens of mini ones?

In the Apple TV series *Severance*, a psychological sci-fi drama where employees undergo a procedure to split their work and personal memories, the character Gemma is fragmented into multiple AI-like simulations. Each room she enters contains a version of her that exists solely to respond to one specific fear or scenario: turbulence on a flight, writing a thank-you note, being stuck in traffic. These aren't master replicas; they're contextual slices of personality.

That's a much more realistic view of where AI is headed.

In enterprise settings, agentic AI is already creating functional proxies of people performing narrowly defined roles. Want an agent to schedule meetings? Write a followup email? Draft code snippets? That's all possible today and improving quickly. These agents aren't true twins. They don't "think" like you. But they can act like you. At least well enough to pass.

And here's where things get even more nuanced: humans don't disappear from these workflows. Instead, they sit in the loop — guiding, correcting and injecting judgment where rules alone won't suffice. The most effective agentic systems aren't replacements for people. They're teammates. Digital twins that complement, not clone, our contributions.

You could argue that a GPT answering emails in my tone or generating summaries from my notes is a digital twin. Or maybe it's just really good tooling. Either way, we're building fragments of ourselves into systems that can carry out tasks with increasingly little oversight.

When your twin works for someone else

The most advanced digital twins of people might not be the ones we design for our own use — but the ones built by brands to predict our behavior. Every click, scroll and pause feeds a model. The result is a behavioral simulation of you.

When designed with care, these digital twins create value on both sides, helping companies meet their goals while genuinely enhancing your experience.

And as AI gets better, those behavioral models will get increasingly accurate. The challenge — and the opportunity — is to design these systems for mutual benefit. Not just to optimize conversion rates, but to build trust, deepen relevance and respect autonomy.

Where we go from here

Taken together, these developments suggest a future filled not with one perfect replica of a person, but many context-specific ones — scattered across platforms, optimized for different purposes, serving us in different ways.

We may never create a single, complete digital twin of a person. But we are already deploying fragments of ourselves across digital systems — in the workplace, in consumer tech and in every brand interaction we have.

The opportunity ahead isn't about building copycats of ourselves. It's about practical, contextual augmentation. It's about building smarter agents that work with us — not just on our behalf, but for us.

As we enter this new phase, the most responsible, and exciting, thing we can do is shape a future where digital twins are designed with intention, powered by insight and aligned with human outcomes. In the age of AI, the question isn't whether digital twins are coming. It's who's building them, and how they are serving us.

GenAI's next frontier

Scaling for lasting impact

By
Mary Ellen Slayter

Within two months of launch, ChatGPT had 100 million active monthly users, making it the fastest-growing consumer application in history. Today, more than 2 million developers use Open AI's technology, and more than 92% of Fortune 500 companies have integrated it into their operations¹.

The response from business users, from delivery to the boardroom, was immediate and enthusiastic. Many people rushed to adopt it for simple tasks — rewriting emails, drafting customer service responses and automating repetitive communications — hailing it as a welcome productivity booster.



However, as the initial novelty wore off, it became clear that people were only scratching the surface of what generative AI could do. Individuals quickly embraced chatbots like ChatGPT, Google Bard (now Gemini) and Microsoft Bing Chat (now Copilot) to save time, but individual adoption wasn't translating into strategic efforts. Organizations were slow to integrate this technology into broader strategy and operations.

In fact, employees were often concealing their use of the tools. "People were using it, but they were hiding it from their executives," says Paul Varlet, Strategy Partner at Valtech. "Now that companies are officially adopting GenAI, the challenge is getting people to use it strategically, not just for simple tasks."

This shift from individual experimentation to organizational adoption is crucial for unlocking the full potential of AI to revolutionize customer experiences, optimize operations and ultimately foster greater human-AI collaboration across industries.

Proprietary data: Essential fuel for the journey

Scaling GenAI for true impact requires more than just enthusiasm. It needs data, and lots of it.

"If you don't have any data to build out the thing, it's going to go nowhere," says Richard Bownes, Lead Data Architect at Valtech. "It's like the petrol for your car. You've just got an empty Ferrari without your data source."

LS Eleven, an ambitious digital initiative launched by UK supermarket chain Asda, provides a great example of this principle in action. LS Eleven, powered by data from the Asda Rewards loyalty program, empowers brands to unlock more focused media planning and seamless omnichannel experiences.

"A lot of retail organizations have heaps of data, but it's fragmented and disconnected," says Qaiser Mazhar, Chief Technical Officer of LS Eleven. "Our major initiative is about consolidating all of that data, normalizing it so we can get the value from it and ultimately provide immense value to our customers."

AI-driven insights enable Asda to offer tailored promotions, product recommendations and cohesive purchasing

journeys that are highly relevant to individual customers. The future of retail is about "what we used to have," suggests Mazhar, with AI acting like "a local store owner who knows you, but now digitally and at scale."

David DeCheser, Global Chief Creative Officer at Valtech, predicts GenAI's dependence on data could turn the traditional innovator's dilemma on its head, arguing that GenAI's dependence on data hands an early advantage to industry giants over more-nimble newcomers. Those large and traditionally slow-moving enterprises own the most valuable, specialized data — the critical asset that startups lack.

But that advantage isn't guaranteed to last, and managing all that data also presents its own challenges. Without the right infrastructure and data governance, even large organizations can find it difficult to harness AI effectively. "Legacy organizations need to correct their data foundations to properly leverage it — never mind putting in all of the governance needed to ensure it's used in the right way," DeCheser adds.

Although data is a critical piece of the GenAI puzzle, DeCheser warns against the pursuit of "perfect data" which can lead to analysis paralysis. "While a solid data foundation is crucial, it's not the be-all and end-all — nor should it be a roadblock. GenAI's iterative nature lets you start small, learn improve data as you go and stay agile."

Blazing new trails in AI-powered customer journeys

Delivering a truly personalized, data-driven customer experience at scale requires a new level of intelligence. By fine-tuning each interaction, AI is empowering companies to shape customer journeys that anticipate needs, including complex searches.

For companies with vast product inventories, providing an efficient and intuitive search experience is critical. CPC Farnell, a global distributor of electronic components and part of the Avnet group, faced the challenge of helping customers navigate an inventory of more than 100,000 products.

To address this, CPC Farnell implemented an AI-powered search solution using Google Vertex AI.

“AI doesn’t replace experience or taste. You still need human intuition to differentiate between what’s mediocre and what’s great.

David DeCheser, Global Chief Creative Officer at Valtech



“Ultimately, it’s really trying to guide the customer and do the heavy lifting for them to make sure they get the right product,” says Nick Townend, Director of Product – eCommerce at CPC Farnell, part of the Avnet Group, describing how AI transformed their search functionality. “With over 100,000 products in the CPC group and over a million in Farnell, it’s like trying to find a needle in a haystack. AI can reference previous applications, look at associated products and marry two products together or ensure compatibility.”

Townend further elaborates on how AI enhances the search process through natural language understanding: “It stems back to natural language because customers can talk to us as if they were talking to a sales representative. So you can tell it, this is what I want to build, this is the purpose of the product. And then we can take a suggestion back from the AI engine and you can build the conversation there.”

The AI-driven search system improves product discovery and boosts conversion rates and revenue. By analyzing

“The challenge is to find a balance where AI enables and speeds up great work, while leaving space for innovation and creativity.

Lindsay Ratcliffe, MD UK and SVP Product,
Innovation and Data Services Europe at Valtech



customer queries and product attributes, the AI engine provides more relevant results, reducing the frustration of “no results” searches.

Charting a course for greater strategic impact

As companies continue scaling their AI efforts, the focus is shifting from routine tasks to high-value initiatives. This phase is where GenAI moves from support role to strategic powerhouse.

For example, Syngenta, a global leader in agricultural science, partnered with Valtech to embed agentic AI into its Golden Harvest Experience (GHX) app. This integration allows the app to deliver real-time, personalized farming recommendations, such as identifying the best seeds to plant under specific conditions. Central to this innovation is Cropwise AI, an advanced platform designed to support data-driven decision-making.

Zachary Marston, Digital Product Manager for Computational Agronomy at Syngenta, explains: “We use large language models as a natural language interface, allowing farmers to ask questions. Behind the scenes, these models act as agents, selecting the right tools and workflows to complete tasks based on user input.”

However, as with any cutting-edge technology, there were challenges. “Some early tools we tested didn’t meet our needs,” Marston notes. “We had to adapt both our strategies and the use cases to fully leverage the technology’s strengths.” This iterative process helped Syngenta refine how AI integrates with their app, allowing it to deliver more relevant, actionable insights to growers, agronomists and account professionals.

The AI platform within the GHX app offers detailed information on crop protection, seed performance and optimal growing conditions. This real-time guidance enables users to make more informed decisions, improving crop yields and promoting sustainable practices. Marston is quick to point out that the goal isn’t

to replace people but rather to enhance their expertise. “It’s about giving them better tools to make more effective decisions. We’re helping them do what they’ve always done, but in more informed, more efficient ways.”

This collaboration between human insight and AI’s data-driven power is critical, says Lindsay Ratcliffe, MD UK and SVP Product, Innovation and Data Services Europe at Valtech. “The challenge is to find a balance where AI enables and speeds up great work, while leaving space for innovation and creativity.”

Ultimately, AI serves as a powerful partner, amplifying human creativity and judgment. As DeCheser adds: “AI doesn’t replace experience or taste. You still need human intuition to differentiate between what’s mediocre and what’s great.”

Expanding horizons

As organizations evolve past the initial excitement of generative AI, the focus has shifted to unlocking its full potential by scaling it across all facets of operations.

GenAI is no longer just a tool for automating simple tasks but a strategic driver for industry transformation, enhancing customer experiences and fueling sustainable growth. To truly capitalize on this technology, companies must invest in robust data infrastructure, foster meaningful human-AI collaboration, and apply AI solutions that create tangible value for both customers and employees.

By approaching AI adoption strategically, organizations can stay ahead of the curve and lead the next wave of innovation.

The trust factor

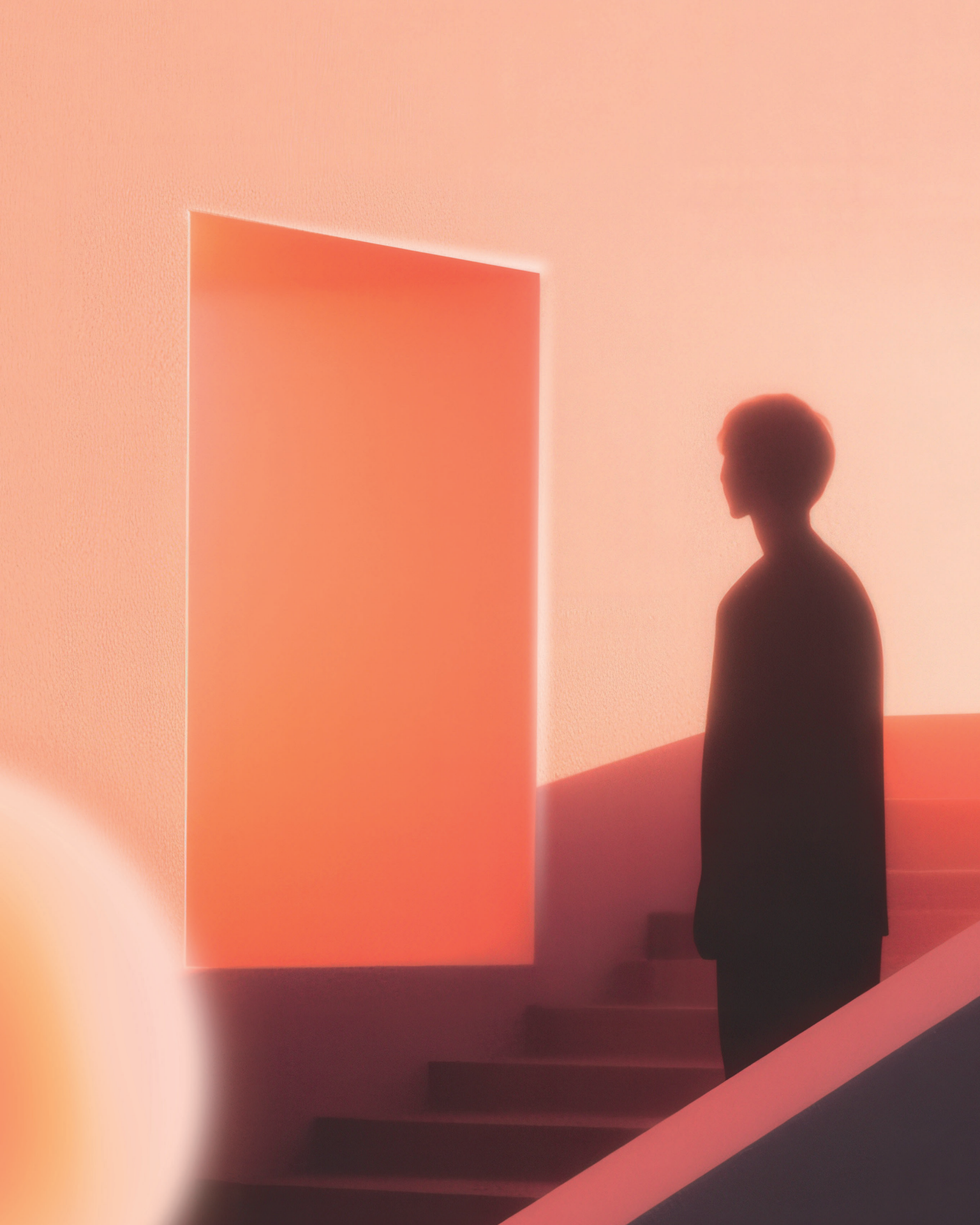
Why AI is making brand identity more important than ever in B2B

By
Kerry Penny

For years, B2B marketing has prioritized what's easy to measure: clicks, conversions, cost per lead. It made marketing look efficient — but also overly transactional. Brand was often treated as a nice-to-have, the “creative” layer you added once the performance engine was humming.

That mindset is outdated. B2B buyers are already 70% through their purchasing process before your sales team ever gets involved.³ Buyers are reading analyst reports, scanning peer reviews and watching product videos all before they reach out. In more than 80% of cases, it's the buyer who makes the first move.²

That means your brand needs to work harder, earlier — shaping the narrative long before your team gets a chance to pitch. But you don't just need to think about buyers when building your brand. You need to consider algorithms, too.



When AI joins the buyer group

AI isn't just shaping how buyers find vendors; it's influencing how they evaluate and select them.

GenAI tools now perform the work of a junior team member: scanning content, comparing solutions and summarizing brand narratives before a sales conversation ever happens. For younger buyers, this shift is already here: 48% of Gen Z and millennial B2B buyers say GenAI is their preferred first point of contact.³

In an AI-first world, the most effective capital-P Performance strategy is built on a brand that machines can interpret, buyers can trust and both are confident recommending. Your brand is a strategic signal both to buyers and the systems advising them. It influences whether a company is recognized, represented accurately and included in the conversation at all.

One company that's especially well positioned for the AI era is Gartner. Their research is widely cited. Their name is synonymous with credibility, and their language is consistent across formats — from analyst reports to earnings calls to how it's referenced in third-party content. When AI summarizes vendor landscapes or builds category shortlists, Gartner shows up because they are embedded in the channels and conversations buyers already trust.

Valtech research backs this up. Trustworthiness consistently ranks as the number one factor driving repeat purchases in B2B. That trust is no longer built through a handshake, however. It starts upstream, with how your brand shows up before the first touch.

If AI doesn't recognize you, do you even exist?

B2B buyers have gotten better at research, and AI has made them even more efficient. The search journey now mirrors the B2B buying cycle. It often starts broad: "best ABM tools." Then it narrows: "6Sense vs. DemandBase." By the time someone lands on your site, they're not browsing. They're validating.

Throughout this journey, AI prioritizes authoritative, high-trust sources — brands with clear, consistent narratives that show up across channels. It's no longer enough to produce good content. That content has to be distributed widely and aligned with a coherent identity, one that's easy for both people and machines to understand.

AI also depends on access. If your most valuable content is buried behind forms or paywalls, it might not be surfaced at all. Brands must ensure their best thinking is machine-readable, indexable and unambiguous.

Put it all together and brands move from demanding attention to building trust. Valuable, consistent and accessible content helps brands appear throughout the buyer's journey, from ungated research to analyst reports to LinkedIn discussions. By the time buyers need a solution, they are already top of mind.

Multimodal branding: be recognizable everywhere, instantly

AI doesn't consume content as humans do. It processes everything — language, visuals, voice, video — all at once. It looks for patterns. That makes brand consistency not just a creative goal, but a technical necessity.

Multimodal branding is a modern spin on a timeless principle: Reinforce identity through distinct, repeatable cues.

Take Adobe. Whether you're watching a product demo, attending a summit keynote or interacting with generative features in Photoshop, it all reinforces the same brand voice: premium, creative, trustworthy.

Their Firefly and Sensei platforms don't just carry consistent names. They show up with unified language, visuals and messaging. That coherence makes them easy to interpret across formats, and easy to trust at scale.

Brand as the last moat in an AI world

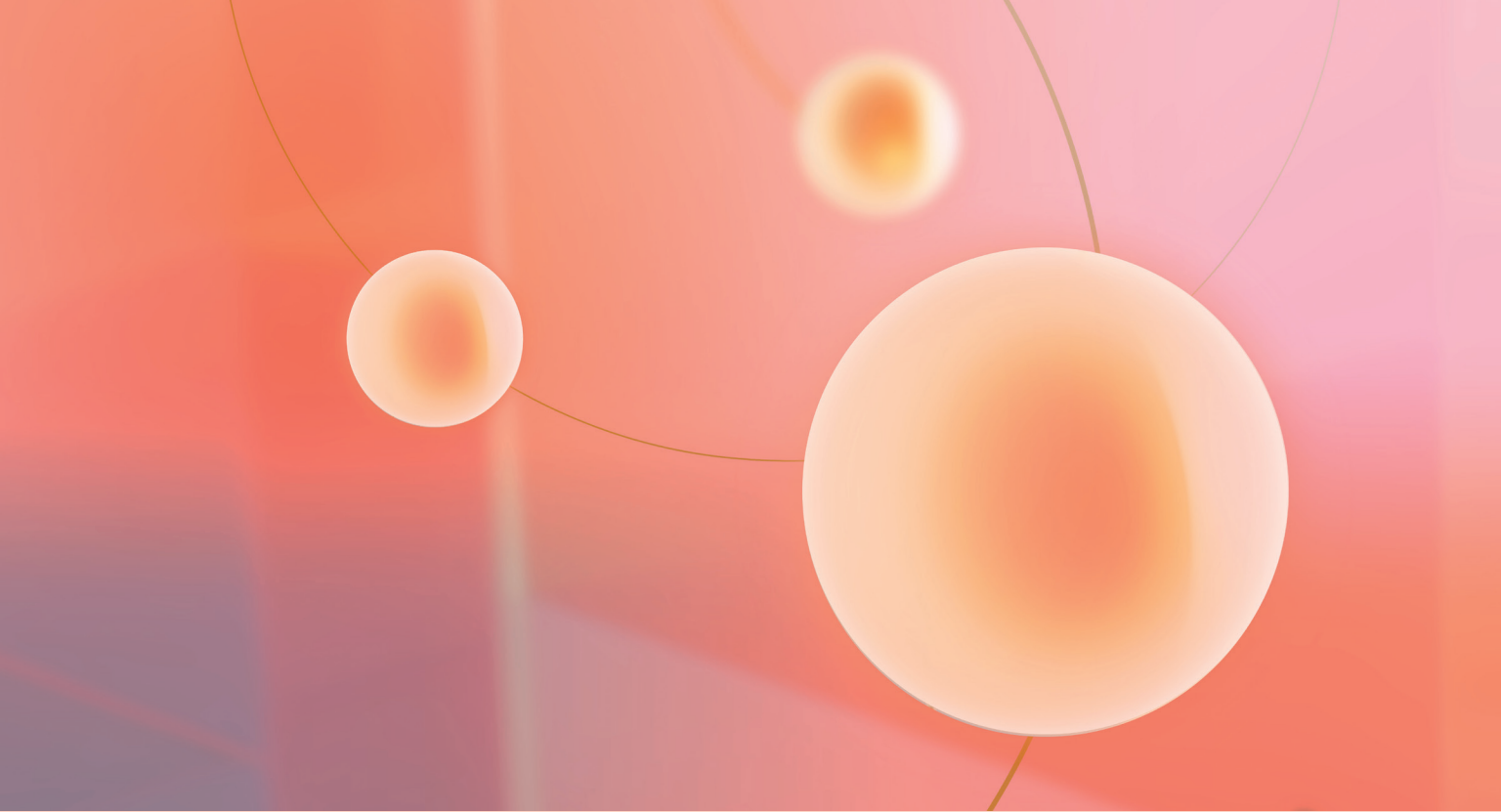
AI can amplify your message, but it can't define your purpose. It can distribute your voice, but it can't give it meaning.

Purpose remains the foundation of a strong brand. Companies that stay true to it will cut through the noise, building trust and credibility with both people and machines.

The real advantage isn't visibility. It's being sought out.

Recognition will matter more than reach. Trust more than clicks. And the brands that prioritize connection over short-term wins will be the ones that thrive.

Brand isn't in opposition to performance. It's what makes sustainable performance possible.



Purpose remains the foundation of a strong brand. Companies that stay true to it will cut through the noise, building trust and credibility with both people and machines.

Architecture of experience

CX decoded: expert takes on systems, signals and storytelling

Today's customer experiences are no longer designed around a single user, channel or moment. They're living systems — spanning human and AI users, shaped by real-time signals and built to scale without sacrificing brand integrity. Our experts unpack what it really takes to design experiences that are as intelligent as they are personal.

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To create magic,
we need rigor

You have to be rigorous
and deliberate to
keep enhancing
the experience. You
can't just skip to the
brilliant AI feature
that writes flowery
product descriptions
without lifting a finger.
Somewhere along the
line, there has to be data,
planning — rigor. Things
don't happen by magic.

Mike Davison, Lead Experience Analytics
& Optimization Consultant



Why self-serve isn't always the smartest option

Until recently, most experiences were built around self-serve — great usability, great content. But in some industries, offering a supported journey is a game changer. With the rise of DXPs and data-driven experiences, that kind of personalization has only really become possible in the last five years.

Paul Carysforth,
Experience Analytics Director



Designing for the human vs. agent

Right now, we design for one user — the human. But soon, we'll be designing for two: the human and their digital agent. We need to ask: What content does each need? What do we serve the human and what do we serve the agent that works on their behalf in the background?

Katerina Nishan,
Associate Creative Director



The new division of labor in CX

Customer experience will soon become AI-first. Humans still have a key role in orchestrating those experiences, but the heavy lifting — the work I started my career doing — will be handled more efficiently and effectively by machines.

Lindsay Ratcliffe, MD UK and SVP Product,
Innovation and Data Services Europe



The hidden cost of complexity

It's very tempting when we're talking AI and customer journeys to move toward greater complexity. We really have to fight it, because what we end up with is a monster — with a lot of content that everybody has to manage and update and that ultimately doesn't serve the real needs of the end users.

Jesper Lykke Nielsen,
EU Data and AI Director



The way forward

Co-creating the future with AI starts by letting go



By
Helle Jensen,
Nordic Executive Director,
Experience Design

We've spent years mapping the customer journey — sketching it on whiteboards, sticking it to walls, imagining a perfect path from first touch to final sale. But what happens when the customer doesn't follow the map?

AI has exposed the limits of our linear thinking. People drop into the middle of experiences. They loop back. They hand off parts of the journey to digital assistants. Often, they don't move through our carefully curated paths at all.

We're entering a new era, one in which customer experience is no longer something brands design in isolation, but something they co-create with individuals in real time. This means fewer rules, more logic. Less static segmentation, more responsive intelligence. Less control, more trust.

This is the power of AI. Not just to automate, but to liberate. To stop treating people like unruly inputs and start treating them like co-pilots in an ever-evolving Experience Loop.

Today, brands stand on the precipice. Staying in a world of structured journeys is safe. It's familiar. But only by diving into AI-powered CX can we truly deliver personalized, meaningful experiences.

Here's the opportunity: When we stop forcing people through fixed funnels, we get to truly see them. We stop asking, "How do we move them forward?" and start asking, "What do they need right now?"

The brands that thrive won't be the ones that guess right most often. They'll be the ones that can adapt instantly, empathetically and invisibly. It's human to want to be seen. But the way forward requires brands to sit back and let AI take the reins.

About Thread

Thread is published by Valtech — the experience innovation company that exists to unlock a better way to experience the world. With a focus on delivering exceptional business results, we empower brands to leap ahead of the competition and go beyond best practices.

By blending crafts, categories and cultures, our global team of 7,500 professionals in more than 80 offices worldwide help brands unlock value in a digitally accelerated world. It's at the intersection of insights and perspectives where we leverage the power of data, AI, creativity and technology to achieve experience innovation for many of the world's best-known brands, including L'Oréal, Mars, Audi, P&G, Volkswagen and Dolby.

See our work at [Valtech.com](https://valtech.com)

Valtech is the experience innovation company.

We exist to change the way people experience the world through advanced digital technologies, data and design.

We do this by bringing together a global network of engineers, designers, analysts, and CX professionals with a proven ability to accelerate business growth by transforming clients products, services and systems.

Our global footprint allows us to deliver impact at scale. While our nimble teams bring the agility and adaptability that allow us to create breakthrough innovation and speed-to-market.