Converging Forces: The Next Frontier in Experience Design

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Introduction

Frontier technologies, including generative AI (GenAI), spatial computing, 5G, and augmented reality, are rapidly transforming our world. But these innovations are not just gaining ground individually. They’re amplifying one another—and this technological convergence is powering a revolution in customer experience (CX). The impact of these converging forces cannot be overstated, because a multiplier effect causes the technologies’ disruptive potential to become exponentially higher as they operate collectively. What’s more, as customer demands intensify, it will be critical for companies to understand how users embrace these evolving technologies.

Five Radical Trends Are Transforming CX
To gain maximum value from these rapidly emerging technologies, leaders must push themselves to reimagine how their organizations will engage and interact with customers going forward.

We have identified five converging technology trends that are poised to transform CX—and noted specific actions that companies can take now to create value and become a leader in this space.
**EQ-X**

Emotional intelligence (also known as emotional quotient, or EQ) refers to the ability to perceive, predict, and understand people’s emotional states and then use that information to empathize, communicate effectively, and guide behavior. With GenAI, companies have the tools to interact with users in ways that convincingly simulate EQ. When combined with predictive AI, which offers deep insights into individual customers’ idiosyncratic traits, the potential impact is far-reaching. We call this EQ-X.

By delivering automated empathy at a high level of sophistication, EQ-X will be able to detect when a customer is in the right emotional mindset or circumstance to make decisions.

This capability will enable organizations to better gauge and respond to a customer’s state of mind in ways that address specific needs and build an emotional connection. This technology has the potential to transform many foundational customer experiences, but it will be especially important for guiding customers through emotionally complex topics such as health care, financial services, and legal services, where empathetic support could unlock new customer segments and drive market growth.

EQ-X will dramatically enhance customers’ emotional engagement, loyalty, and ultimately spending, by enabling organizations to offer more precisely tailored products and services to meet individuals’ needs—in the optimal moment, channel, and tone of voice.
Agent-to-Agent CX

Powered by GenAI technologies, a new wave of AI agents will interact with one another autonomously to facilitate goal-based experiences between a brand’s agents and its customers. Over time, as the technology learns a user’s unique preferences, it will deliver more and more comprehensive and personalized products, services, and experiences. When planning a family vacation, for example, users will not have to sort through and manage the multitude of individual steps that currently go into planning a trip. Instead, on the basis of each user’s unique interests and preferences, their autonomous agent will suggest destinations; find itineraries; map out routes; and recommend flights, hotels, restaurants, and activities.

Agent-to-agent CX has the potential to alleviate what, for users, can sometimes be a dizzying overabundance of choices and achieve a superior standard of convenience and service.
A generative user interface (GenUI) harnesses the power of GenAI to dynamically create a customer interface in real time in response to each user’s unique and specific requests. The resulting interface continuously adapts over time to account for the user’s navigation choices, behaviors, preferences, and context. In practical terms, this capability means that companies will no longer have to design a string of user interfaces. Instead, they will design automated systems that dynamically generate services, recommendations, and experiences in real time and become increasingly customized to suit users’ unique interests and characteristics. In short, GenUI will enable a real-time internet to go mainstream.

For designers, GenUI could transform the digital landscape by reducing manual design work, increasing sales, and democratizing design at scale.
In much the same way that GenUI promises to deliver digital interactions dynamically and in real time, XR+AI will deliver physical interactions dynamically and in real time. It will achieve this by overlaying digital elements on the real-world environment, enabling companies to deliver contextually pertinent just-in-time data, support, and information to people who are navigating complex experiences. Surgeons can see an overlay of an x-ray, MRI, blood pressure reading, or other data on top of a patient without having to look away from their work. A technician can consult step-by-step instructions overlaid on a machine that needs to be repaired. A factory manager can check a machine on the factory floor with an overlay that indicates whether anything is operating out of the norm that may lead to equipment failure.

Companies can use XR+AI to virtually design and test new products and experiences much faster and at a fraction of the cost, to train employees without undue risk or consequences, and to deliver immersive and personalized entertainment experiences that can’t be replicated in the real world.
**Screenless CX**

Screens serve as the dominant user interface today, but the combination of EQ-X, GenAI, and interface advances will decouple us from screens as we enter a more intuitive era of voice, gestures, and motion. Startups and tech giants are racing to deliver wearables and other devices designed to replace screens. Examples include a wearable pin that uses a hand or a nearby surface in place of a dedicated screen; a pendant worn around the neck that captures what the wearer says and hears, and transfers that data to a smartphone; smart glasses that allow the wearer to communicate with an AI chatbot; and a necklace that records all of the wearer’s interactions and functions as a personal assistant. These technologies are not merely Siri or Alexa on steroids.

They are game-changing innovations that will propel us into a screenless future that permits more natural and unobtrusive digital interactions.
Top Priorities for Business Leaders

As we move into an age of unparalleled innovation, leaders need to think big and be bold. But we are also entering a period of unprecedented unknowns, as technological advances converge to create entirely new ways to serve customers’ needs, deliver business impact, and benefit society as a whole.

Companies can take action on several fronts now to build a competitive advantage:

**Think big.**
Establish a bold vision to transform the customer experience, knowing that today’s converging technologies will only become more powerful over time.

**Start building.**
Set up a sandbox to experiment with EQ-X, GenUI, and other disruptive capabilities. Encourage a culture of innovation, establish an R&D test-and-learn mindset, and work in short, iterative launch cycles to build incrementally toward a vision for the future.

**Embrace the unknown.**
Use speculative design, futurecasting, and other tools to explore the potential consequences of converging technologies and to game out ways that emerging social trends may impact your business.

**Be mindful.**
Set a bold ambition but temper it with a degree of measured control by putting in place internal guardrails, gate checks, and ethical principles to ensure alignment, quality, adoption, and business impact at scale.

**Follow the frictions.**
Understand and solve customer needs in real time and within each customer’s unique context. Target the most immediate sources of friction for customers in the market, and gradually expand capabilities to create the greatest business impact.

The past 10 to 15 years have seen an incredible level of digital disruption, but those effects pale in comparison to the changes that will occur over the next decade.

Now is the time to experiment with evolving technologies, embrace an experimental mindset, and create emotionally intelligent systems that intuitively and empathetically respond to users’ wants and needs. A convergence of advanced technologies will transform business innovation and human-centered design—and it’s coming much faster than you think.