Capgemini

dedication
independence
connection
excitement
movement
journey

feel the **future**

adventure
gratitude
emotion
impact
freedom
wonder
power
vision
collaboration
creativity
moment
convenience
joy

Immersive
Experiences

the future of experiences is **immersive**

The right experience can give your customers superpowers

Customer Experience (CX) has been a boardroom staple over the years. Organizations have spent time and money investing in developing new and impressive customer experiences. But, today, it's all a bit the same. Forrester's Customer Experience Index (CX Index™), an annual survey of how well a brand's experience strengthens loyalty, compared key CX aspects in the years 2020-2021 and 2019-2021 and found infinitesimal changes to the scores over that time.[1]

This begs a number of questions. In our pursuit of CX excellence and differentiation, have we just standardized the experiences for all? Is ubiquity surpassing differentiation? If so, how do we stand out? How do we make a connection that drives the much sought-after loyalty and, critically, helps us deliver the best CX to outperform competitors? If everyone is raising the bar and closing the gap between the weaker proponents and the exemplars, how can you really drive devoted relationships?

Say hello to the immersive customer experience

One route is to create immersive customer experiences. These are contextually relevant, multi-sensory experiences enabled by the right combination of flat, natural, and extended-reality interfaces and sensor technologies that create emotional and intuitive value for people, giving them superpowers. Generally, these superpowers augment or extend people's

capabilities or help them escape the limitations of their current realities.

In this context, superpowers are use cases that fill the blanks in the following statement. I wish I could do _____ with your brand so I can feel _____. For example:

> "I wish I could reach a real human when I have an issue so I can feel like I'm being listened to." Or
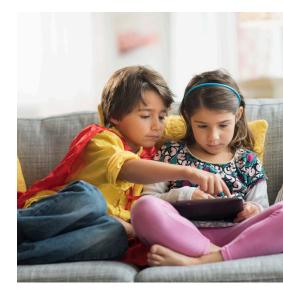
> "I wish I could configure and customize my bike without visiting the bicycle store, so I can feel empowered."

By understanding your customer or employee wishes and the superpowers they believe will achieve them, leaders have the opportunity to break free from stagnation and develop experiences that strengthen emotional bonds and loyalty.

There are two kinds of superpowers: extended capabilities and escapes.

Superpower #1

Extended capability: This is about immersive experiences that give customers the superpower to do something they simply cannot do effectively. How? By extending or augmenting the user's capability.

Creating solutions that allow users to fully immerse themselves in an artificial environment (VR) or that augments reality (AR) as a companion to actual experiences requires a skillset grounded in a human-centered approach. This will bring context, clarity, and a sensory balance to
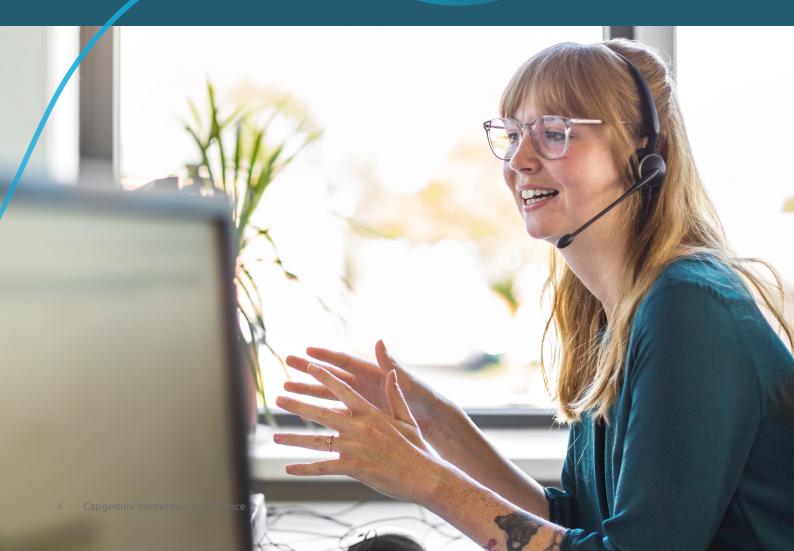
interfaces that enhance an individual's capabilities in the environment. It's how you drive higher efficiency and effectiveness in work environments. It's a way to delight and engage consumers through participatory encounters and infuse environmental intelligence to create platforms that feel natural, are invaluable, and that foster deeper connections between the user and their setting.

There is a clear upside to getting it right: Even a minor improvement to a brand's customer experience quality can boost revenue by tens of millions of dollars through reduced customer churn and increased share of wallet. When you add in other benefits of superior CX — like reduced service costs and low-cost customer acquisition through word of mouth — the ROI of even small-scale CX transformations can be jaw-dropping.[2]

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1 https://innovateenergynow.com/resources/new-report-shows-state-of-ar-for-field-service
2 Forrester's US 2021 Customer Experience Index, Forrester Research, Inc., June 2nd, 2021

"I wish I could reach a **real human** when I have an issue so I can **feel** like I'm being listened to."

AI ENABLED RECOMMENDATIONS

Think about buying furniture. We've all been there: we've found what we believe is the perfect new sofa for our recently redecorated living room, but will it fit? Immersive experience gives us the power to see what the sofa looks like in-real world settings before we make the big decision.

At Capgemini, we used AI to develop a personalized e-commerce experience for the customers of a leading home-office and furnishing retailer. This uses click data to establish what is most meaningful to them. It then serves up select products and product details that the algorithm thinks will most interest the customer, and thus are most likely to be purchased. We also built a configurator that enables consumers to explore looks, fabrics, and options.

Research by Apple has found customers are 11 times more likely to buy furniture if they can see it in a home environment via AR. [3] More immersive experiences also enable interplay and interaction, which increases session lengths and conversion rates. But perhaps one of the biggest benefits of immersive experiences for this modern furniture retailer is the reduction of costly returns and dissatisfied customers. There is no worse emotional outcome for an e-commerce shopper than feeling disappointed after opening the box.

MIRROR, MIRROR ON THE E-COMMERCE SITE

Then there is buying clothing. We love the convenience of e-commerce and the instant gratification of next- (or even same-) day delivery. But what we haven't had in the past is the superpower to touch the fabric or see how it fits our body type before we click "buy now".

We worked with a specialist denim retailer to create an experience that allowed people to choose a body type from a wide range of models who had been photographed from multiple angles. With their body type avatar, the customer could "try on" every item in the store and see how it looked before they made their purchase.

Once again, the benefits to the brand include fewer returns and deeper engagement on the site. Extended capability also reduces the design and photography costs for the retailer as the models were photographed just once – but each site updates based on user data that can be applied to the infinite inventory of styles.

Superpower #2

Escapes: This superpower makes it possible for people to escape the world they currently live in and experience an alternative world (or moment) of their choosing.

This use case is mostly associated with gaming (remember Pokémon GO?) and entertainment. However, the Covid-19 pandemic has stimulated demand for escapes in nearly every context, either as a substitute for being someplace physically or as a means of making a physical environment more enticing.

"Neuroscience confirms that a consumer buys on emotion and justifies with reason or logic. According to Harvard professor Gerald Zaltman, 95 percent of our purchase decision-making takes place subconsciously. Despite widespread agreement on this among scientists, most sales messages to buyers focus almost exclusively on facts and figures. Immersive is the best way to tap into and generate a strong emotional response."

Anthony Pannozzo, Chief Design Officer
North America & Asia, frog, Capgemini

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3 The State Of Augmented Reality In Consumer Experiences 2020, Forrester Research, Inc., May 5, 2020

86%

OF BUYERS ARE WILLING TO PAY MORE FOR A GREAT CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE

SAN FRANCISCO MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

In 2018, the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art (SFMOMA) decided to stage a special exhibition of the surrealist artist René Magritte. But SFMOMA had a problem. It knew that its long-time members and die-hard Magritte fans would show up but what would attract new visitors to the museum?

SFMOMA asked frog design – part of the Capgemini Group – to help figure out how to engage a broader audience. How could the museum create an experience that enabled interaction as well as a deeper understanding of both Magritte's work and his process?

Frog envisioned an immersive experience and designed a series of artifacts based on Magritte's window motifs. As visitors passed each "window," their perception of reality was challenged. For example, they might see their own image in the painting, but observe it move in the opposite direction. Or after staring at the moon in one painting, that same moon seemed to follow them around the gallery.

The results were impressive: the Magritte Interpretive Gallery was open to the public from May to October 2018 and it experienced a 97 percent engagement rate from the thousands of visitors to the exhibit. Further, eight out of 10 visitors reported that the project enhanced their SFMOMA experience.

BURN THERAPY

Escapes from reality aren't exclusively motivated by recreational desires. Escapes can also serve to improve challenging realities, such as in therapeutic environments, which are often sterile, impersonal, and inhospitable.

In 2016, frog partnered with a burn ward in San Francisco to develop a new virtual reality (VR) enabled therapy for severe burn victims. The process of daily bandage changing is a necessary yet extremely painful ordeal. Distraction is often used to help patients endure the pain and take their minds off the procedure. As this is a common practice, it provided a clear use case for the distracting power of VR. The frog team designed a low-cost, light-weight VR headset and companion app. The app was designed to test multiple modes of distraction and be both an escape for the patient and a platform for further research.

Immersive Experience is Capgemini's latest Customer Experience (CX) portfolio offering. **We believe immersive experiences are one of the most powerful ways to transcend stagnation by delivering emotional outcomes through a differentiated experience.**

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"Emerging technologies can help businesses become fast, customer-led, insights-driven, and connected. That's why **96% of customer-obsessed firms** adopt new technologies before their competitors do, versus only 27% of customer-aware businesses."[7]

Building an immersive employee experience

While we've talked extensively about customer experience so far, the same approach and thinking applies to the world of employee experiences.

Just as delivering positive emotional outcomes drives loyalty with customers, it can also increase retention and engagement among employees. Work/life balance, empowerment, and confidence are all pleasures that an employee wants. And pain avoidance comes in the guise of faster learning, better retention, and better focus.

Employee experience (EX) fits the identified use-case categories (the two superpowers of escapes and extended capabilities).

Superpower #1 – Extended capability: When using an immersive approach in training, there's a retention rate of 75 percent in information with VR learning techniques – against 10 percent for reading, according to a report from Masie.com. [5] AR can train employees extremely effectively and quickly. Another recent study — focused on inclusive leadership training — found that VR/AR learners were 275 percent more confident acting on what they learned, 4x faster to train, 4x more focused than e-learners, and 4x more emotionally connected to the material. [6]

Superpower #2 – Escapes: An escape experience can be hugely effective in training and equipping employees for future work situations. Capgemini has worked with insurance organizations to recreate situations and environments using AR (instead of PowerPoint or video) in order to prepare insurance adjusters for what might be an overwhelming experience.

A building damaged by fire can be a harrowing sight, but if an insurance adjuster is able to see this kind of devastation – and even experience the smell – through mixed reality (MR) and natural interfaces ahead of time, when they come to a live situation, they can be more effective. This is a win-win – better CX and better EX.

A PERFECT COFFEE EXPERIENCE

Having that perfect morning coffee, often prepared at speed, is essential for many consumers. But that's not an easy feat and a barista in training needs knowledge and practice to get it right, to make the job easier, and to provide a better customer experience. Working with a leading coffee chain, Capgemini recognized that AR could be an enabler of a great CX. Together with our client, we built a training environment that not only replicates the machines and the store layouts but also creates hundreds of scenarios – even down to difficult (or, let's say, caffeine-starved) customers. Subsequently, the new baristas are able to learn their trade without the added pressure of live customers. Of course, this kind of training requires more upfront investment, but consider the long-term payback – an improved employee experience that will help build personal resilience, wellness, knowledge, self-efficacy, proactiveness, flexibility, and the ability to focus. This particular case study demonstrates that the use case can feature both escape and extended capability superpowers – they are not exclusive.

"We are at a critical point for immersive experiences. Accelerated by months of unprecedented events, organizations are facing a huge rise in employee appetite for intuitive, emotional, and natural interfaces accessible everywhere through a widening range of channels. This is leading to the emergence of tangible use cases across industries where immersive technologies provide exactly what individuals want. This fuels new business value and operational efficiency while sustaining the employee's loyalty."

Alexandre Embry, CTIO, Global Head of Immersive Technologies, Capgemini

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5 Masie.com report: Virtual Reality: Opportunities for Learning. Jan 17, 2017
6 How virtual reality is redefining soft skills training, Scott Likens, Daniel L. Eckert. June 4, 2021.

REMOTE DESIGN ASSISTANCE

A leading European commercial vehicle manufacturer had its design center in one European country, while the manufacturing facilities were scattered across the continent. Its manufacturing operators often ran into problems when assembling vehicle parts and needed assistance from the design experts located elsewhere. With traditional phone or email modes of communication typically being slow and ineffective, Capgemini used its [Andy3D Remote](#) platform to help deliver more effective remote assistance and expertise.

Designers and manufacturing operators can view a problem via live video streaming. Equipped with Microsoft HoloLens AR headsets, the designers are able share documents, 3D views, or any other useful information to help guide the operator and dramatically reduce the average time to solve a problem. The use of immersive technologies in manufacturing processes is an emerging trend that will only gain in popularity as businesses discover how transformative they can be for production quality control, remote collaboration, and training. "Well, what superpower" did I hear you say? Being in two places at once … that's pretty special.

Immersive also plays an important role in the employee experience across the full product lifecycle: engineering, design and prototyping, simulation, assembly and quality control operations, maintenance remote expertise, after-sales, and customer services.

Brands increasingly recognize that they must arm their employees appropriately, as underlined in a report on the adoption of AR in the field service industry from Librestream and the Worldwide Business Research. Their findings tell us that of the 54 percent of enterprises planning an increase in their AR investments in the next year, 82 percent plan at least a 20 percent increase.[7]

In truth, we see that the notion of employee experience can still be anything from an afterthought to not really considered at all. Yet, it is a rich source of potential for many businesses, and even more so when considered in conjunction with customer experience. We believe that delivering emotion is still absolutely key and immersive employee experiences are something companies should build in the future.

Finding your north star

The foundation that is essential to any immersive experience is a clear understanding of who your customers are and what emotional outcomes they desire. In Forrester's US 2021 Customer Experience Index, the highest-scoring brands understood the key emotional needs of their customers and provided emotionally pleasing experiences.[8]

We believe it is essential the entire organization – from sales and marketing to business unit leadership and IT – is clearly aligned on this. At Capgemini and frog, we call this understanding an experience strategy. An experience strategy is the "how" to the "what" of your business strategy. It articulates who your customers are (personas), how they engage (behaviors), and what they are trying to accomplish (jobs to be done and emotional outcomes).

This understanding is used to envision a north star – the desired future state that delivers value for the customer and captures value for your business. It is this envisioning of the desired future state that helps us explore existing and emerging technologies that best enable the desired emotional outcomes.

54%
OF BUSINESSES ARE PLANNING TO INCREASE AR INVESTMENTS

7 https://innovateenergynow.com/resources/new-report-shows-state-of-ar-for-field-service
8 Forrester's US 2021 Customer Experience Index, Forrester Research, Inc., June 2nd, 2021

But visions of the future should not be without pressure testing. Now that you've taken the time and effort to create your experience strategy, are you ready to get building software? Well, no. It's a common mistake we see time and again; researching and testing of ideas (for example, using paper prototypes) to really hone in on and understand what's important gets sidelined in the race to build an app. Yet, time spent researching needs and wants that elaborate your experience strategy and north star is money and time well-spent.

Then, as evidence of successful new immersive experiences emerges, it will be time to shift your attention to building and deploying at scale. This is a critical moment, when confidence reaches a tipping point and speed to market becomes the driving product-development mantra. This is where Capgemini thrives. Our experience building products, integrating systems, and solving both today's business demands and the long-term objectives on the tech roadmap are without parallel.

Demystifying the tech speak

Typically, we advise our clients to stay away from the technology or platform as a starting point. It's important to create your experience strategy first.

Immersive experiences aren't about the coolness of the tech or platform, they are about finding the right tech for the job – which tech will enable the right emotional outcome?

Better engagement through natural and intuitive experiences

It is widely accepted that Customer Experience is a competitive differentiator for brands and businesses, and it will continue to be. Yet the definition of an excellent, memorable CX is evolving rapidly, fueled by a drastic shift in the way we buy and sell.

In this context, the adoption of artificial intelligence, 5G, cloud, and edge computing is driving the progressive shift to multi-experience interactions, supported by multiple digital touchpoints everywhere: mobiles, wearables, web, desktop/laptop, smart TVs, vehicles, and the metaverse. This brings new opportunities for organizations to reach a broad audience in fresh ways.

Thus, more brands are leveraging technology to create natural and intuitive experiences at various touchpoints – and the result is engagements that are not only personalized but also go above and beyond in terms of convenience and

sensory appeal. These immersive experiences are becoming a key differentiator for brands that want to stand out from the competition and strengthen customer and employee loyalty.

When brands creatively design experiences that use a combination of modalities (think flat UI, natural interfaces, and XR), they can create multisensory customer experiences that evoke a sense of wonder, freedom, and joy among customers and employees that lead to emotional connections. These experiences can help brands differentiate, retain, and energize. That's especially important in industries where products and services have become commoditized, such as travel, field service, and ecommerce. And immersive experiences can also increase engagement and conversion rates.

So, what about the Metaverse?

A perspective on Immersive is incomplete without addressing the metaverse, as it is expected to be nothing less than the next generation of the internet, deeply impacting our daily lives. This shared virtual and hybrid space; accessible by anyone, anytime, anywhere, on any device, reflects a huge improvement in online interaction – augmenting real life. This includes realistic embodiment, a sense of presence, and space. More than ever, borders are blurring between virtual and physical worlds for business, shopping, entertainment, and social interactions. Not bad, for a buzzword. Yet, accelerated by recent technology advancements, mainstream use requires the Metaverse ecosystem to collectively assess critical challenges, including interoperability, being hack-proof, privacy, ethics, and societal concerns. As brands race forward to figure out what the metaverse means to them, the same principles of defining your vision of the future and then deciding how to pressure test this strategy apply. With more unknowns, the more important these steps are.

"Immersive technologies have the potential to radically transform how customers and employees interact with brands, products, and systems. Recent technological advances are pushing the user experience (UX) to new heights as multisensory interactions are increasingly designed — and require us to effectively engage, stimulate, and retain our attention, to prompt an emotional connection, and drive loyalty and advocacy."

Charlton Monsanto, Immersive
Experiences Offer Leader, Capgemini

Conclusion

Delivering a great Customer Experience is a process, not a singular event. It is not simply plugging in an out-of the-box experience that new tools and platforms come bundled with.

Instead, immersive CX is an emotional bond that begins with strategy and focus, then drives to what your customers or employees truly want.

Personal moments that continue to matter.

Brand connections that continue to deepen.

Human and natural experiences that continue to drive us.

Your understanding of their true needs will be your North star.

As long as people, technology and current events keep changing customer demands will drive expectations higher and higher. Immersive Customer Experience will need to adapt and evolve, too, to make our lives at work and at play better and more productive.

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About Capgemini

Capgemini is a global leader in partnering with companies to transform and manage their business by harnessing the power of technology. The Group is guided everyday by its purpose of unleashing human energy through technology for an inclusive and sustainable future. It is a responsible and diverse organization of 325,000 team members in more than 50 countries. With its strong 55-year heritage and deep industry expertise, Capgemini is trusted by its clients to address the entire breadth of their business needs, from strategy and design to operations, fuelled by the fast evolving and innovative world of cloud, data, AI, connectivity, software, digital engineering and platforms. The Group reported in 2021 global revenues of €18 billion.

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Find out more

Get in touch with our experts to learn more about out Immersive Experiences solutions and services:

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