



## CES 2017: Top Five Takeaways for Leaders

Walking the floor at the Consumer Electronics Show (CES) can be an inspiring and, at times, overwhelming experience. The sheer level of innovation is astounding and deciding what “next big thing” your organization should focus on can be challenging. Throughout CES 2017 and at our exclusive reception with a wide range of senior executives — from CEOs and investors to CTOs and marketing leaders spanning industries including technology, media, automotive and consumer — we had in-depth discussions about which specific trends will have the biggest impact on their organizations and leadership in the year ahead.

### **Technology is fundamentally changing how people consume and live — and how companies need to look at leadership.**

Water bottles that remind you to hydrate. Trackers that find your belongings. Robots that babysit your kids. Technology is ubiquitous and touches nearly every industry. Organizations need leaders who understand how technology is transforming daily life and the new business ecosystem that is arising. Alexa, Amazon’s virtual personal assistant, is powering a range of products from refrigerators and cars to baby monitors and smartphones. Unconventional partnerships will

continue to emerge to meet the demand for truly connected customer experiences. Success in this landscape requires leaders who recognize best-in-class technology, can form partnerships early and collaborate, as well as an organizational culture that encourages the risk-taking necessary for innovation. These new avenues of collaboration also mean that leaders can think about their careers more broadly, with increased mobility between industries.

## China is a key player, requiring leaders who understand the market.

Chinese companies had a significant presence at CES 2017, dispelling any notion that they are only manufacturers by showing their end-to-end product creations. Whether focused on drones or robotics, these companies are rising innovators. Organizations not currently

operating in the country need to educate themselves on this growing market and be prepared to work with Chinese companies if they are to tap the country's opportunities for growth and talent.

## Data monetization demands more than technical talent.

With IoT and connected devices, companies have access to unprecedented amounts of data, but monetizing it is still a challenge for many, according to our conversations at CES. As data becomes an increasingly valuable asset, we are seeing growing demand for leaders who not only understand the technical aspect (i.e., designing the process to gather the data), but can connect data to the strategy and translate it into actions across multiple business units. However, there is no one-size-fits-all approach to data leadership. Organizations need to understand

their strategic opportunities and current capabilities before deciding on the right type of leadership. In addition, risk is implicit in the collection and use of data, and many of the leaders we spoke with are concerned that privacy measures cannot keep up with the deluge of data being captured each day. Cybersecurity leadership will become even more critical. The issue also requires ownership at the top, with a CEO and board that are educated about potential risks and how to protect the organization.

## Content is integral to the customer experience and defies traditional boundaries.

Conventional content delivery methods are being challenged with the growing popularity of “skinny bundles” and the high volume of on-demand, quality programming from providers like Hulu and DirecTV Now. Leaders will need to be more in tune with the consumer than ever before and possess the agility to quickly adapt to rapidly shifting preferences. Additionally, traditional

media players and emerging players outside the industry are realizing the strategic power of content. Television networks are collaborating with smart home innovators. Automotive companies are looking to content creators as the self-driving car's windshield becomes the new TV screen. This evolution requires visionary leaders across industries who recognize the content opportunity.

## Automakers will go beyond designing cars to designing the journey.

With autonomous cars on the horizon, occupying drivers during the ride could be the next big business opportunity. In addition to content options, automotive OEMs need executives who can partner well with tech companies like Google and Amazon to bring in a higher level of connectivity to reflect customers' desired lifestyles. It's no longer about a connected car and features within the vehicle. It's about connecting the person's

entire ecosystem, i.e., turning on the lights and controlling home temperature from the car. As technology and automotive companies come together in bold new ways, marketing executives have to consider how they evolve their brands and connect with millennial consumers, who approach transportation much differently (e.g., avid ride-sharing) than previous generations.

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