

SOFTWARE AND TECHNOLOGY

## Empowered by AI, IoT, marketers are 21st-century industrialists

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Marketers can leverage AI, IoT to reframe relationships. Image credit: Farfetch

By JEN KING

NEW YORK As the intelligence revolution wages on, marketers should be viewed as industrialists standing at a historic inflection point as artificial intelligence and the Internet of Things increasingly connects the world.

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With technology rapidly advancing, it is easy to see the world from a "best of times and worst of times" perspective, due to fears of being replaced by robots paired with the excitement of tech and how it will change business. During Ad:tech New York 2017's "The Intelligence Revolution: Designing smart experiences for the AI era" session on Nov. 1, ThinxMachine's global chief experience officer discussed how the future must be approached through the theory of internal recurrence, meaning that although history does not repeat itself, it certainly does rhyme.

"When we start to think about the era that is in front of us, it is an era that will be defined by intelligence," said Joanna Pena-Bickley, global chief experience officer at **ThinxMachine**. "It will be defined by the way we are able to be more enlightened as opposed to being replaced by it.

"[The era is front of us] is about augmenting our intelligence, as opposed to being completely distracted by too much information," she said.

Historic rhymes

Ms. Pena-Bickley set the stage by asking Ad:tech attendees to image a scene at the dawn of the industrial age, where ideas and creativity flourished and brought forth societal, progressive change.

That scene of new thought, economic philosophies and new business methods is no different than the point the technology sector is at today. Essentially, technologists and marketers are 21st century industrialists.

When an industrial revolution is mapped, there are three forces of change in communications, mobility and energy.

For example, during the first Industrial Revolution these forces were defined by steam-powered printers, locomotives and coal while telephones, combustible engines and oil marked the second.

Now, those forces of change are IoT, autonomous automobiles and drones and data.

While there are loads of challenges, Ms. Pena-Bickley is optimistic that the current, third Industrial Revolution will present opportunities to imagine and create products and solutions that have never existed.

Despite the friction felt, the Industrial Revolution's third wave has already democratized technology and platforms, as well as transformed material science, healthcare and transportation. Above all, people are reconsidering what it means to be human.

To this point, Ms. Pena-Bickley noted that while consumers will remain as the acquisition point, brand solutions must be reframed to solve problems, not just spur conversions.



*Autonomous automobiles are one force of change sparking the third Industrial Revolution. Image credit: Mercedes*

This is where artificial intelligence can help. AI-powered hardware such as Amazon's Alexa and Apple's Siri is just the tip of the AI iceberg.

Artificial intelligence includes 10 primary solutions such as natural language processing, pattern recognition, data mining, decision management and virtual agents.

Together these AI solutions, when used to create an intelligent connection alongside consistent, ongoing campaigning, will build a meaningful relationship between brand and consumers.

As such, the relationship built will become more profitable because a consumer's problem is being solved.

Reframing time is also of importance, as the marketing metric has changed from "Can I reach you?" to "Of course, we can reach you, but can we solve problems and deliver value?"

Marketers will pay dividends for a consumer's time, but if customer experience is poorly executed a brand may be avoided.

Likewise, creating magical moments with AI reflects this "currency of time" since brands need to capture time well spent, rather than just selling a product. Above all, an ecosystem of services must be in place.

Dare to design the future

A simple example of artificial intelligence and IoT coming to life is currently seen in the automotive sector.

Drivers have a sense of FOMO, or fear of missing out, when behind the wheel since it is unsafe to juggle a mobile device while on the road. Artificial intelligence has emerged as a cure for this anxiety through the development of autonomous vehicles.

For example, German automaker Mercedes-Benz is anticipating the future shift to autonomous driving with a trip around the world while gaining insights on intelligence technology along the way.

In what the brand is calling the first-ever automated test drive around the world, Mercedes' "Intelligent World Drive" visits five continents. A series of video installments will document the travels online ([see story](#)).

But, while autonomous vehicles are emerging and being embraced by automakers, there are consumers who remain a bit wary ([see story](#)).

Despite concerns and fears, Ms. Pena-Bickley encourages marketers to approach solutions as industrialists and dare to design the future.

"So many of us often talk a good buzz word, but don't get our hands dirty," said ThinkMachine's Ms. Pena-Bickley.

"The reality is, the marketers that are successful today, know they are in the business of making things.

"This is a maker culture, and this maker culture is survival of the fittest," she said. "It's really important to know that the technology that exists today is really extraordinary, but it never replaces the intelligence of what you bring to the table, the human creativity that you are able to bring forth."

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