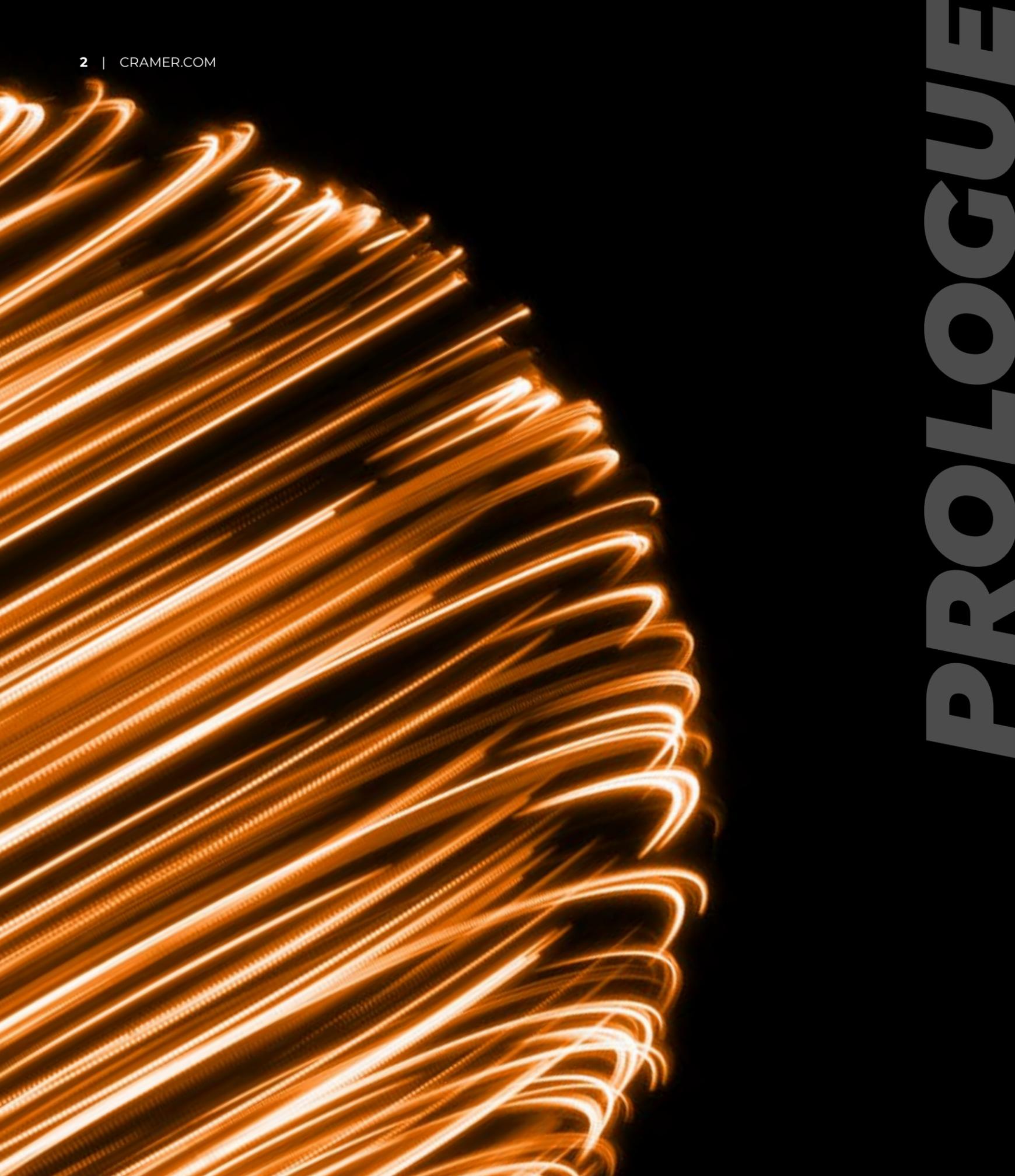




YOUR EVENT AND CONTENT ROADMAP

***A WINNING STRATEGY FOR
EXPERIENTIAL MARKETING***

CRAMER



PROLOGUE

2020 has been called a lot of things (some of which can't be printed in a family-friendly strategy report). But perhaps the most lasting will be The Great Accelerator. As Microsoft CEO Satya Nadella noted "we've seen two years' worth of digital transformation in two months."

For corporations, the future of work arrived early when remote for the masses was unleashed and here to stay. That is having a ripple effect on everything from talent acquisition to real estate prices. Look deeper and you'll see companies spending more on digital marketing and expanding virtual experiences.

That acceleration isn't just digital. An amplified social consciousness has emerged in which B2B customers are seeking brands that reflect their values. It's not just about products; it's also about personal affinity.

Along with the sea change comes the wave. Staying aware of the forces around us – the macro trends – will help marketers accelerate their own growth.

YOUR EVENT AND CONTENT ROADMAP

***A WINNING STRATEGY FOR
EXPERIENTIAL MARKETING***

CRAMER

WHAT'S INSIDE

01 Trends to Inform Your Playbook

02 The Connected Journey

03 The New Engagement Era

04 The Changing Audience

05 So What? Applying the Insights

A fad turns into a trend when it becomes persistent.

When it becomes pervasive, it **UPGRADES TO MACRO.**

CHAPTER ONE

***TRENDS TO INFORM
YOUR STRATEGY***

There are many trends to explore, but here are *three trends* impacting clients in very real ways.

Every consulting company puts out trends reports and they always cover big ideas. Sometimes a little too big.

Bain & Company cited Demographics, Automation, and Inequality. Gartner noted things like the Distributed Cloud, AI Engineering, and Intelligent Composable Business.*

That's great. But is it boots-on-the-ground actionable? We saw an opportunity to identify the trends impacting our clients, in both the near and far term, in actionable ways.

Much of marketing—events in particular—is tightly tied to technology. In fact, it's easy to see tech as the driver. But technology is a tool. In any interaction, the human experience comes first. Technology is the enabler. So we looked for forces that impact experience independent of platforms.

Being aware of these trends can spur creative ideas, help guide planning, justify the path you're already on, or all of the above. As we all move from pause to play to fast forward in 2021, let's remember that this an opportunity for new thinking. So much of what we took for granted was upended. Transformation was thrust upon us in 2020. But now we have the choice to keep innovating. Here are three trends that can help us do just that...

01

THE CONNECTED JOURNEY

The customer journey isn't a funnel. It's a meandering, always-on, distraction-littered, off-ramp-filled road trip of an experience.

If the ultimate destination is a strong relationship, you need to stay connected every step of the way. That means taking events out of silos, extending value beyond the product or service you sell, and creating a cohesive message no matter where that customer touchpoint may be.

02

THE NEW ENGAGEMENT ERA

Our collective short attention spans are a fact of life. Prevailing thought is that you have to get people to interact if you want to hold their attention. But interaction is a tactic that can lead to engagement.

Engagement is about creating encounters that turn into relationships. To truly engage audiences and customers, you have to imbue those interactions with moments that stimulate the senses, tug at the heart, and excite the mind. And in this era, the bar is set high.

03

THE CHANGING AUDIENCE

Audiences want to see themselves, their values, and their priorities reflected in the brands they partner with.

Brands that want to connect need to consider what's important to their customers, beyond their products. That includes topics like climate change, diversity, and how work is evolving. Audiences are demanding more accessible and inclusive engagements with brands.

Exploring these trends

Whether your focus is in events, sales, marketing, or all of the above, there is something actionable to be found in each trend.

*We had to look that one up. Turns out it's a company that can adapt and fundamentally rearrange itself based on a current situation. It's also a really wonky name for a pretty straight forward concept.

CHAPTER TWO

THE CONNECTED JOURNEY

B2B customers now touch up to six channels in their decision-making journey. **HOW DO YOU TIE IT ALL TOGETHER?**

CONTENT FOR EVERY CHANNEL:

THE MEANS TO CONNECT

Look up Gartner's revised B2B customer buying journey and the first thing that hits you is the complexity. The research giant declared that it is now "more of a maze than a linear path." To put a fine point on it, the illustration was titled A Long, Hard Slog. Slog, indeed. Not only do buyers use multiple channels along the way, they revisit those touchpoints multiple times.

The journey is then connected with content assets that complement each other, building on one another, and guide the customer to the next level of engagement.

START WITH YOUR BRAND VOICE

No matter where your audience is engaging with your brand, make sure it is distinctly you. A consistent brand voice is essential to tie together each interaction. Think like Disney, you are building a franchise. Building a recognizable tone and visual brand allows you to recycle and repurpose content to fit every channel.

CONTENT ATOMIZATION

Given the complexity of the customer journey, you need an efficient strategy to fill every channel with meaningful content. Atomization is a simple but powerful concept. Take one asset and break it down into many. This approach not only increases the utility, lifespan, and value of content, it also helps ensure brand continuity across channels. Each channel demands different media and style of content delivery. Make your content platform specific and your brand voice universal.

Taking an omnichannel approach to this complex journey makes sense. Filling those channels with attention-worthy content can be daunting. **These approaches can help...**

Start by identifying opportunities for content to recreate in a new media-style.

For example, a long-form white paper can be turned into a shorter series of blog posts; the headlines can become tweets; the concepts can be discussed in a video that can be edited to even shorter soundbites.

On a grander scale, event content can be **atomized** in dozens of ways. Presentations alone produce on-demand downloads, reusable images, transcripts, analysis of audience questions. The possibilities are endless but hinge on one important factor: pre-planning. Knowing how you can use an asset helps inform how it is built.

The flipside of content atomization is aggregation. You can take multiple small assets and combine them into a larger piece of content like a year-end review.

Events are the **new hero** of an omnichannel strategy.

No more stand-alone meetings or conferences—extending attendee engagement to turn events into tent posts in a connected strategy. Leveraging content before, during, and after the event not only feeds the channels, it also increases the event ROI. A true win-win.

BEFORE

Audience acquisition does double duty in creating awareness and affinity by upping the value of the content. Previewing presentations, leveraging keynote speakers on social media, co-creating content, recognizing the customer community -- all these tactics can be used to both promote an event and raise a brand profile.

DURING

From posting notable quotes and images on social media to making major announcements, the event itself is a treasure trove of timely and relevant content. Remember, everything shared on social media can also be placed on complementary channels such as your website, and in sales rep emails.

AFTER

Extending the event along the communications continuum starts with leveraging the content created. On-demand is the standard now. But extending the engagement doesn't stop there. Create a gated download summarizing the key learnings from the event to continue growing leads. Release poll data in an infographic. Be creative.





CHAPTER THREE

THE NEW ENGAGEMENT ERA

“How do we engage the audience?”
may be the number one event question.

The more accurate question would be
**“How do we engage the audience
after they’ve been to Disney, played
PS4, and watched Netflix?”**

HIGH EXPECTATIONS & SHORT ATTENTION SPANS

THE NEW ENGAGEMENT ERA IN B2B

The lines are blurring when it comes to B2B engagement. Customers are bringing the experiences they have with B2C brands and with them, similar expectations. As a result of The Great Accelerator, they are now experiencing both kinds of brands on the same platform—their computer or phone.

So what are the levers available to B2B marketers in this new era?

CONTENT AS CURRENCY

Take any touchpoint—website, social, event, email—and there is only one reason for your customer to engage. It’s the content. Period. Content is currency. It’s what you offer in exchange for your customer’s attention. To be of value, content must reflect the interests of the target audience. Make your content binge-worthy. Show a new way of looking at a problem. Validate their thinking. Educate them on new ideas. You need to add value.

TECHNOLOGY

It’s an enabler that reduces the friction in interactions, raises production values, surprises and delights, and amplifies the experience. Everything from polling apps to virtual reality can enhance the interaction between your audience and your brand, but be sure to identify a clear strategy, or else it quickly loses its impact. Remember interaction does not equal engagement.

CONNECTION

Juxtaposed with technology is the need for authenticity. And nothing is more authentic than showing the human side of your brand. People want to engage with people. That’s why broadcasting live from a studio during a virtual event is so effective. It makes the audience feel part of the experience. For content to connect with your audience, look to video and audio. It’s more human than the words you write.



Thought Leadership is the New Demand Generation.

LinkedIn and global public relations company Edelman teamed up to produce the 2020 B2B Thought Leadership Impact Study. Among the many fascinating statistics, their research on B2B decision-makers uncovered that:

88%

SAY THOUGHT LEADERSHIP CAN BE EFFECTIVE IN ENHANCING THEIR PERCEPTION OF AN ORGANIZATION

60%

ARE WILLING TO PAY A PREMIUM BECAUSE THOUGHT LEADERSHIP DEMONSTRATES DEEP THINKING AND OTHER VIRTUES IMPORTANT TO THEM

Now the question is, where does that thought leadership come from?

Content can be considered thought leadership if it matches one or more of the following:

- Delivers new information, insights, or data
- Provides a new perspective on an existing issue
- Connects the dots between trends or issue-to-solution
- Presents information in a new way to enhance understanding

Events are among the most prolific sources of new thinking. They're also one of the bigger investments a company might make in reaching customers.

When done correctly, content is the key to an event's success. Think about it, when you watch Netflix or a TED talk it's not the interactive tech that keeps you captivated. You're not looking through the chat or answering polls, but you are fully engaged. The trick? High-value content.

See 'The Connected Journey' for tips and tricks on bringing your event content to life as thought leadership in your content marketing. No matter event or a content piece the audience's experience matters.



CHAPTER FOUR

THE CHANGING AUDIENCE

IT'S MORE THAN
WHAT YOU SELL. **IT'S
WHERE YOU STAND.**

IT'S MORE THAN
WHERE YOU STAND.
**IT'S WHETHER
YOU ACT.**

WHAT DO YOU STAND FOR? MORE THAN A BRAND

Brands have never lived in a vacuum. But, throughout The Great Accelerator, consumers are demanding more than 'performative allyship'. They are looking beyond words and expecting brands to support their stance with action.

A global study of the business value of Purpose revealed expectations have soared for corporate leadership in the pandemic, economic instability, and ongoing racial injustices.

DECIDING WHAT TO STAND FOR

The degree to which companies are vocal on any given issue varies dramatically, especially in the B2B space. But customers are watching on every level. Consider your company's values, not just what consumers may want to see. What you stand for must feel genuine to your team to have meaningful impact for the consumer.

FROM WORDS TO ACTION

So, you have decided to signal your brand's support of a social issue, but what now? Consumers are looking for authenticity. They are looking for you to back-up your words. If you signal support for racial issues, do your event speakers represent that stance? If you signal support for inclusion, do you provide subtitles and alt text for your videos and images? If your brand chooses to use your voice to support a cause, be sure to find ways to bring that support to life through your own actions.

Elevating the **social enterprise**

Every customer base is different, but here are three issues that stand out as important to many. Here are three areas to consider where your brand stands.

DIVERSITY & INCLUSION

Diversity refers to the traits and characteristics that make people unique while inclusion refers to the behaviors and social norms that ensure people feel welcome. People aren't just talking about it. They're holding companies accountable for it.

The trend for companies to use and publish "diversity scorecards" keeps brands accountable for improving diversity, equity & inclusion internally. Externally, pay attention to event registration, speaker representation, and making content more accessible.

CLIMATE CHANGE

Climate change is another area where consumers are holding brands accountable. Companies are expected to responsibly manage their carbon footprint and environmental impact.

The digital transformation of events has highlighted the value of virtual events to reduce carbon footprints. As in-person events return, expect a spotlight on the environmental implications. Marketing of hybrid and virtual options may highlight the environmental benefits.

PREPARING FOR WHAT'S NEXT

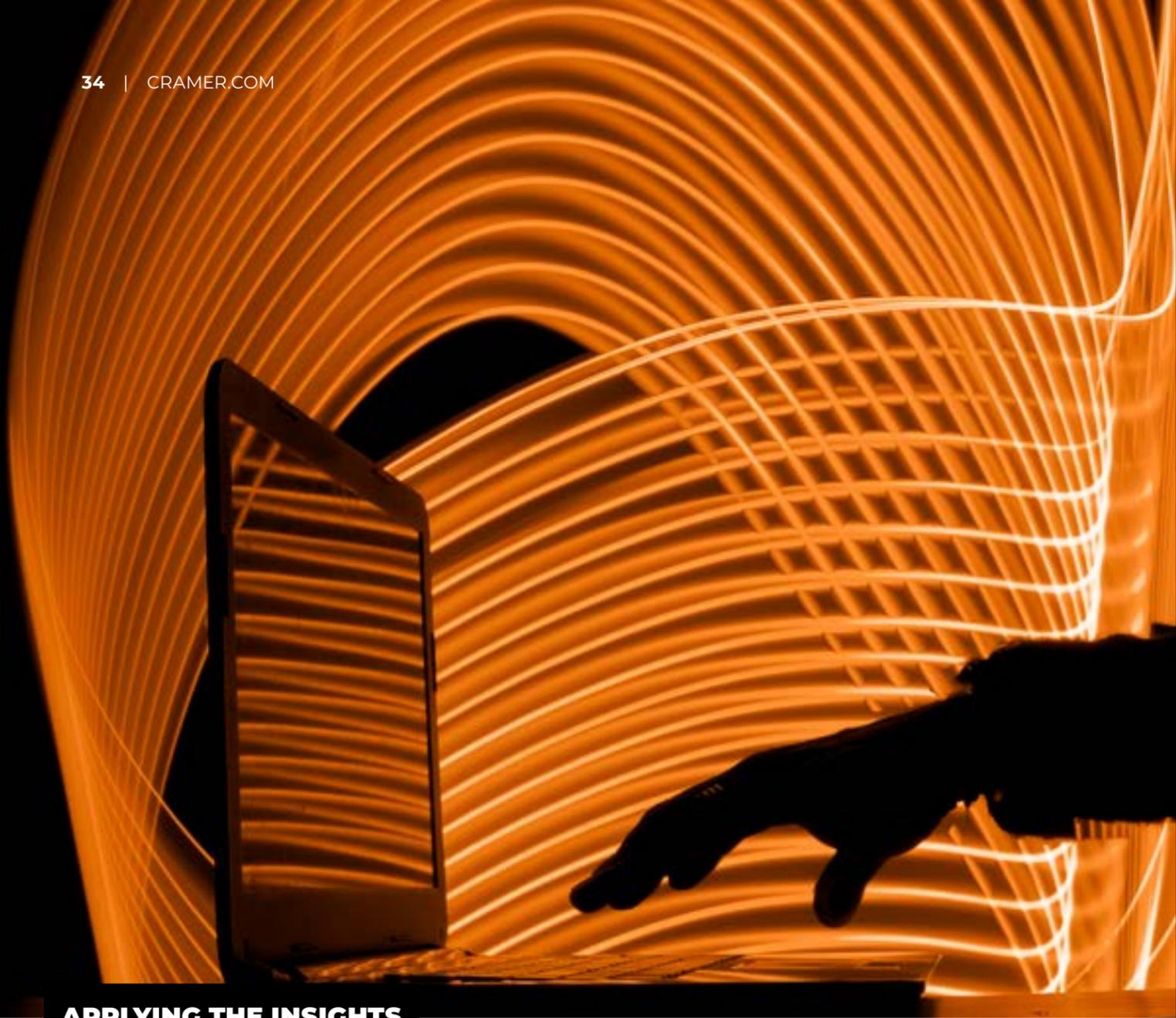
The Future of Work is a topic of great concern. As corporations evolve, many people feel vulnerable. Businesses will need to build a no-regrets skill set—a tool kit that will be useful no matter how an employee's specific role may evolve. At the same time, remote work has put focus on employee work/ life balance. Businesses are expected to support employee wellness and address mental health concerns. Consider how you signal a positive work culture for your brand.

*"Organizations can do better than 'well' by ensuring their enterprise purpose and ensuing CSR initiatives are focused on **making the world a better place.**"*

-Deloitte

CHAPTER FIVE

SO WHAT? APPLYING THE INSIGHTS



APPLYING THE INSIGHTS

In a fiercely competitive business environment, companies rely on the strength of their customer relationships. But those relationships are constantly challenged by outside forces. Some are more in our control than others, like the customer-brand experience. Issues like the economy and societal shifts are not. However, companies can stay in tune with those forces to understand their impact. Then the question becomes—what can we change?

Cramer has identified three trends, **The Connected Journey / The New Engagement Era / The Changing Audience**, that we see impacting our clients. It's a slice from a much bigger pie, without a doubt. But in 2021, coming out of a time of unprecedented uncertainty, we purposefully focused on actionable insights. A persistent theme is people — understanding their new preferences, frame of mind, and challenges.

THE CONNECTED JOURNEY

The most important take-away is optimizing your omnichannel presence. At the very minimum, compare the messaging on your website and sales presentations. It's amazing how often they are not in sync.

THE NEW ENGAGEMENT ERA

Remember engagement is more than interaction. Hone the content's relevance. Try creative ways to deliver.

THE CHANGING AUDIENCE

The best first step is to be clear about your company's purpose and values. Let customers know. Listen. And act to support your stance. Stay in tune with what your customers care about.

When it's time to roll up your sleeves, Cramer is here to help with strategy, creative, and production. Most of all, we're here to help you embrace change and act on it.



HOW CAN CRAMER HELP?

Trying to define your brand voice? Looking to atomize your content, but not sure where to start? Planning to up-level your virtual experiences? The experience experts here at Cramer are ready to partner with you to embrace your toughest challenges. We know experience matters and each touchpoint is an opportunity to build a relationship with your audience. You need the right content, strategy, and production elements to make your events and content stand out from the crowd.

We have full creative, strategy, and production teams dedicated to every element of your project. Let's solve your biggest challenges.

CRAMER

Have a project in mind? [Let's chat.](#)

781.278.2300 | [cramer.com](#) | theteam@cramer.com

