

## Dispatch from the Near Future: Thoughts on CES 2016

By Calvin Yee, Lindsay Trout and Martha Josephson



A good way to start debate in the consumer technology world is to ask if CES is still relevant. There is a vocal cohort of naysayers who claim it has become an overstuffed rehash of trends sharper eyes can spot earlier elsewhere. But in our view, this misses the mark. **The beauty of CES isn't that it shows you what is new, but rather provides a revealing vantage point from which to chart how innovation is making its way from the lab to the home.**



CES 2016 showed that within that pipeline, a tsunami of forces is now converging for the digital transformation of daily life. Consider:



- In many ways, **CES out-motors the annual Auto Show** held the following week in Detroit. While the Detroit show gives us next year's colors and options, at CES Toyota announced an AI organization staffed with talent from DARPA and MIT, while virtually every OEM unveiled an increased commitment to driverless vehicles (which is becoming a proxy for overall innovation).
- **The global supply chain that has perfected itself** over the last decade in the process of making cell phones ubiquitous is in the early stages of being harnessed for everything from flyables to wearables—which means that developing consumer technologies will be adopted rapidly and globally. The force with which those products will be designed and distributed could be seen by the truly global array of companies in attendance. More than a quarter of the exhibitors were from China.
- The rise of sensor-based technologies and virtual reality/augmented reality shows how **the input/output barrier will continue to fall**, unleashing successive waves of innovation in everything from education to tourism.

From the talent perspective, we came away with a number of observations. First, **legacy consumer companies are growing increasingly comfortable integrating innovation**—and innovative culture—into their organizations. Yes, there will still be bumps along the way. But the overall trend is clear and has bigger long-term implications than any technological breakthrough. Second, the competition for

---

# EgonZehnder

## digital snacks

talent will only become more global and more intense. When Toyota and DARPA are fishing from the same stream, **the demand for visionaries has shifted into an even higher gear.** Finally, while consumer enterprises overall have undergone tremendous transformation in the last decade, that was just the preamble. Now is when the ride starts to get really interesting.

Contact Calvin at:

[calvin.yee@egonzehnder.com](mailto:calvin.yee@egonzehnder.com)

+ 1 212 519 6042

Contact Lindsay at:

[Lindsay.trout@egonzehnder.com](mailto:Lindsay.trout@egonzehnder.com)

+1 714 679 9269

Contact Martha at:

[martha.josephson@egonzehnder.com](mailto:martha.josephson@egonzehnder.com)

+1 650 847 3055

+1 714 679 9269