

Boldly advancing into the digital technology future

By [Lebo Madiba](#)

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As we embark on 2018, the future seems even more unsure than it did at this time last year. Donald Trump's first year in office has brought a new level of uncertainty to global affairs while, at home, the debate about whether Jacob Zuma will be recalled before his term of office is up has everyone on tenterhooks.



Lebo Madiba, chief marketing officer, Ansys Limited

This sense of confusion in the macro environment finds a localised parallel in the very real concern at both business and individual level about how rapidly the digital technology environment is changing.

Marketers and customers alike seem to have to deal with an alphabet soup of new terms just about every day. It's unsettling. The upside is that IT, AI, VR, bots and the like are actually taking us back to the roots of marketing: direct contact with the customer, only with many more bells and whistles than we've ever had.

Direct contact with customers

As recently as 25 years ago, marketers had to try and reach customers by speaking over and around them rather than to them. The advent of digital technology and, later, social networking, changed all that. It created a two-way stream between marketers and their customers, and also gave customers far greater power over brands. Not only that, but the choice of whether to engage a brand or simply dismiss it became much easier too.

Intelligent technologies

Now, as the fourth industrial revolution blurs the lines between the physical, digital and biological spheres, it's a different ballgame altogether. Digital technology is developing so rapidly that solutions we couldn't even have imagined five years ago are a reality today.

Within this constantly changing context, one of the most significant developments is the move towards the use of intelligent technologies in business. And, in the area of marketing, AI, augmented reality, virtual reality, voice-enabled interfaces, bots, facial recognition software and machine-learning technologies are all adding an entirely new dimension to the interchange between marketer and customer.

Most importantly, perhaps, is the fact that these new technologies are enabling companies across all sectors to engage with their customers in such a way that they can use their feedback to develop the products customers really want. This not only results in greater levels of satisfaction, but also in improved loyalty, trust and engagement. Critically, this new level of engagement is enabling companies to accurately map out the customer journey and to align it with any and all product and solutions roadmaps.

A new level of engagement into the practice of marketing

On the flip side, the so-called 'rise of the machines' in recent years has often been met with great trepidation, and has been seen as something that could potentially destroy the relationship between provider and customer. In practice, the opposite is proving to be true as technology is now facilitating a better and more in-depth understanding of both customer groups and individual customers, bringing a new level of engagement into the practice of marketing.

There can be no escaping the fact that digital technology is fundamentally changing the way in which we live, work, connect and create, as well as redefining our perceptions of limitations in terms of time, space, access and quality. Like the people who develop and use it, it is always evolving to meet changing needs and aspirations. In this state of flux, the constant is that it is now an essential aspect of our everyday lives and of the way in which we do business.

Design barrier-breaking solutions

At this level, the challenge of the moment is to think ahead of the curve and to design barrier-breaking solutions intended to continuously enhance every dimension of operations, from productivity and connectivity, to ideation, design and manufacturing; from real-world safety and security to cyber security.

At Ansys, we believe in boldly navigating this new territory in order to enable humanity to live better, work better, play better and be better. We believe in digital technology's potential to change the world and human destiny, and our constant as a group is to use that technology to change the world.

Lebo Madiba is Chief Marketing Officer, Ansys Limited. Ansys Limited is a diversified digital technology group. It develops, produces, distributes and integrates niche technology-driven engineering solutions for harsh environments in a number of strategic segments. Its focus is on using digital technology to offer solutions that enhance safety, productivity, connectivity, digital security and cyber security.

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