

VERSA

THE FUTURE

A new digital frontier

Digital is changing the world around us.

10 Tenets: Leading the way to a new digital frontier

Being at the forefront of the digital revolution, I know innovation, transformation and change are not easy. Change means challenging ourselves to move on from the comfort of what we already know and how we already do things. But change is coming. And we're excited about it.

User interfaces are about to take a dramatic step forward. We have become used to websites and apps where we look for menus, search boxes or hunt to find a window into the information we are looking for. All that's missing is a piece of cheese at the end of the maze.

We are entering a new frontier in technology that will change the way we bring together voice, conversational AI and platforms like websites and apps to make it easier for everyone to get the information they need - regardless of language, ability or literacy levels. This new level of human-centred design will make lives better.

Some organisations will embrace change and be successful in delighting their customers by using new technologies to be better. Others will wait until they are dragged kicking and screaming into the new world by customers constantly demanding it.

VERSA will be there to help everyone on their journey towards this new frontier in digital design and technology. These 10 Tenets are our starting points. By writing down our shared beliefs about what the near future looks like - and our commitment to leading the way there - we will find our people. Those we work with, and for. The like-minded who want to make life easier for everyone, including the most vulnerable.

Our future starts now.
Jump on board and get in touch.
Everyone is welcome.

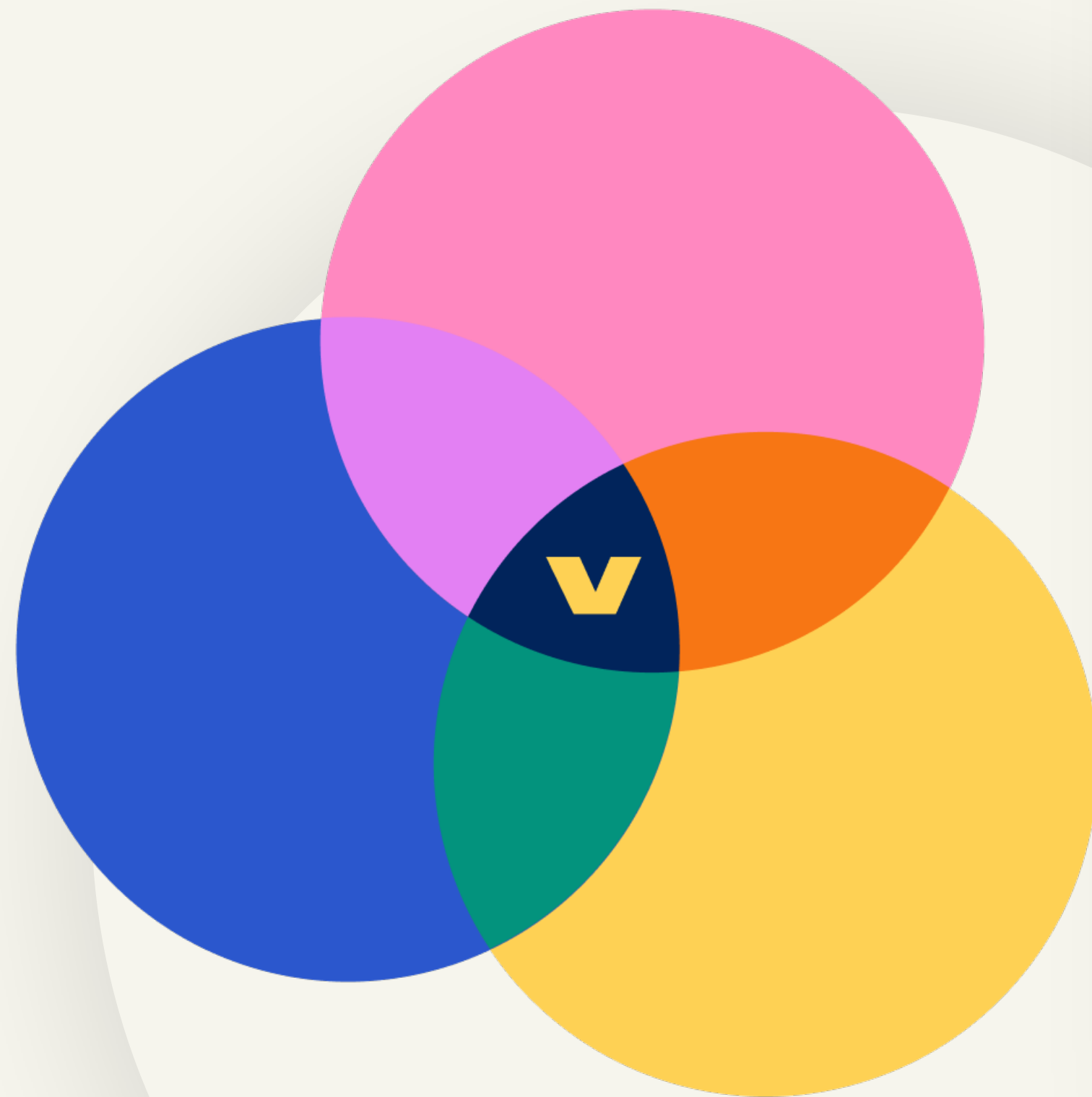
Kath Blackham

VERSA CEO



#1

A paradigm shift: Digital goes next-level as voice, conversational AI and platform development merge



Technology has reached a point that requires a paradigm shift in our approach to digital design. Three big concepts will come together in new ways to take digital, and what digital platforms are capable of, to the next level:

- voice technology – think smart speaker technology and voice assistants
- conversational AI – think bots and workforce automation
- platform development – think the way we build websites and apps

Two years ago, voice and bot technology weren't there yet. Now they are. It doesn't mean all interactions are going to be voice-enabled. And it doesn't mean we're only going to interact with brands and organisations through bots. But it does mean we'll be doing things differently as we enter a new age of true accessibility and customer service.

It's going to be a big step for a relatively young digital industry that is still in its teen years. It's going to be hard for people used to doing things a certain way – because it's going to be done differently now.

Technology is no longer holding us back. People are.

#2

Access all areas: Voice makes accessibility and multiple language capabilities easier, everywhere



The technology now exists to deliver voice messaging and information in multiple languages on any platform. In. Real. Time.

Multi-lingual capabilities give us two massive game-changers. The ability to: use voice technology to reach people in a language they understand, and speak to people on their preferred platform, without the need to read.

True accessibility means accessing information and speaking to an organisation that speaks back in your language. Yet too many departments and organisations still only deliver in one language – English, and in one main form – written. What happens to that message if you don't understand English? If you can't read?

The onus should not be on building platforms to an acceptable level, but to the very best level of accessibility we can deliver. Every time.

#3

In their own words: Digital users navigate simply by asking for what they want.



Agencies and brands have spent years focusing on user-centred design and still wonder why people aren't finding what they need on their website. The answer is search navigation – and how we will do it differently moving forward.

Search engines created an expectation when the likes of Google blew our minds, answering questions in a nanosecond. People won't trawl through a site or app to find a phone number or answer anymore. They will expect a search engine experience from websites, apps and products. They will expect to navigate simply by asking for what they want in their own words.

We will be their digital concierge, immediately creating a two-way conversation and making it easy for them to find what they want. When you understand what your audience needs, you can tailor content and offerings to meet their needs. Let's take out the guesswork, all they have to do is ask.

#4

Hello customer service automation: Goodbye IVR



Woolly mammoth. Dodo. Sabre-toothed tiger. IVR. Standard IVR - Interactive Voice Response - will go the way of the dodo and co.

We've all been there. Press 1 for this, 2 for that. You get to option five and forget what the first four were. Even worse – what to press when what you're calling about doesn't fit any of the options? Not a great start to a customer experience.

But it doesn't have to be like that. We are moving our clients from IVR so their customers can ask for the information they want in their own words to get the information they need.

You ask people, 'Why are you here, today?'. They tell you, you put them through to the right people and navigate them through it. No more 'press and pray'. And it's done in a truly omni-channel way. It doesn't matter whether they are using chat on the website, or phoning in, they should always be able to say what they want and get the answer they need. Human-centred design is all about listening and responding to customers' needs. There is no going back.

#5

Drive time:

Car becomes productivity powerhouse via voice capability



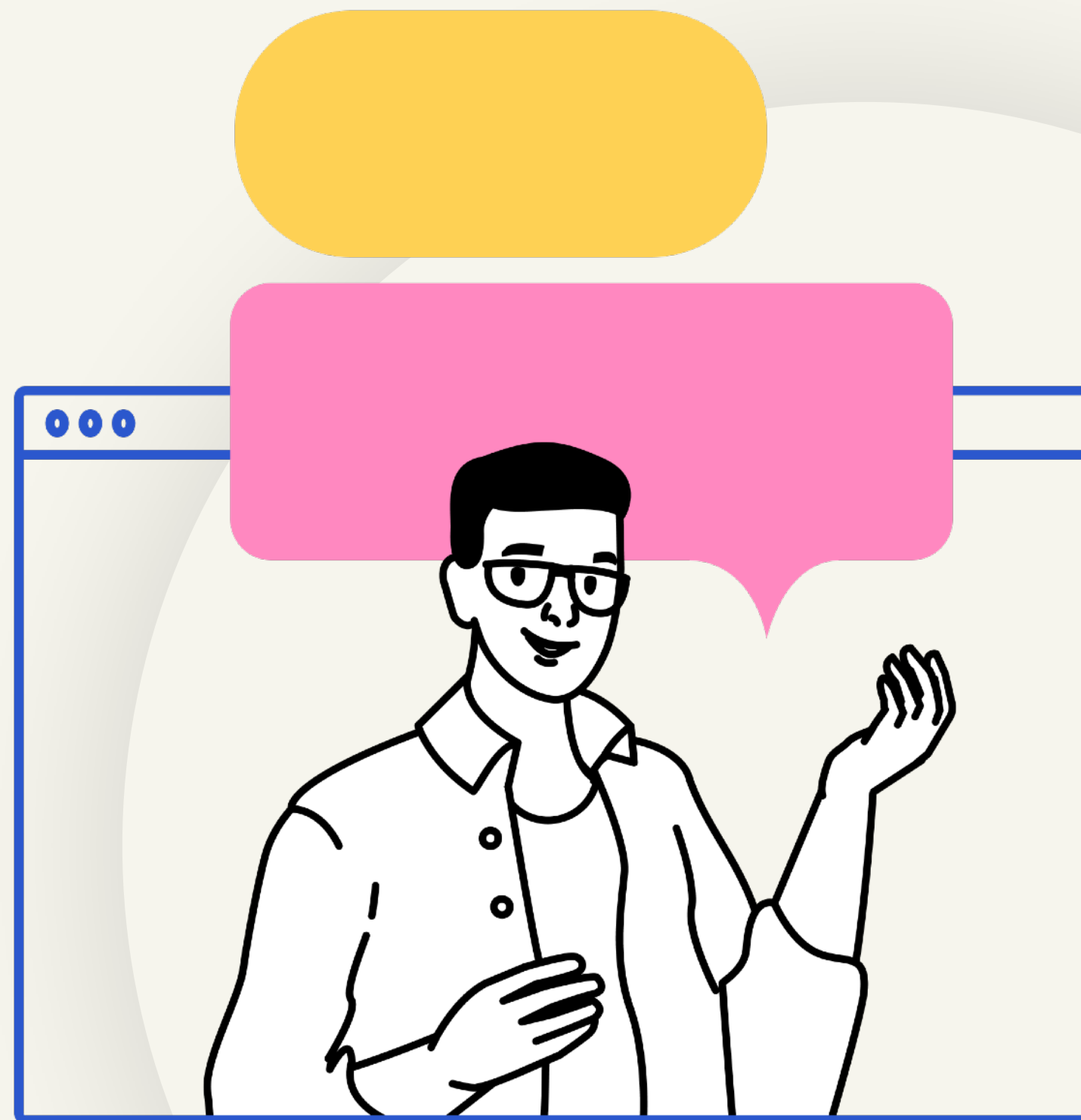
The car is moving from a place of listening to a place of doing – a productivity powerhouse, driven by the ability to use voice to access – and act on – information while you are in the car. In-car conversational assistants and voice-activated smart speakers are putting automotive voice recognition smart systems in the fast lane.

Our focus will be on building out voice-enabled smart speaker opportunities from work-related tasks like checking email, to taking care of other business – like ordering school lunches while driving the kids to school because you forgot.

The car has traditionally been a one-way marketing opportunity - a place of listening, to radio or podcasts. The new ability to have a two-way conversation with consumers in the car will create an interactive advertising opportunity the likes of which we haven't seen before.

#6

A new face for your brand: Digital humans build empathy at scale



We're getting real with digital humans, as they help brands build empathy at scale where humans can't.

By humanising AI, brands bring empathy to the table. Digital beings contextualise and adapt in real time to situations in the same way a real person would react and interact – a furrowed brow and a head nod that says 'I understand' to a frustrated customer; a smile to create human-like connections.

A digital human will respond to customers with a consistent voice and tone – and stick to the script. Your brand message will no longer be derailed because a human customer service team member is tired or having a bad day.

The powerful combination of incredible renderings and skilled conversational design delivers an engaging brand experience by putting a face to an otherwise faceless brand on a website or platform.

#7

Augmentation over automation:

AI does what we don't want
to do; augments what
we do



We won't all be replaced by bots – but we will use them to our advantage. Human augmentation will be much more important than the human replacement for Artificial Intelligence in the future.

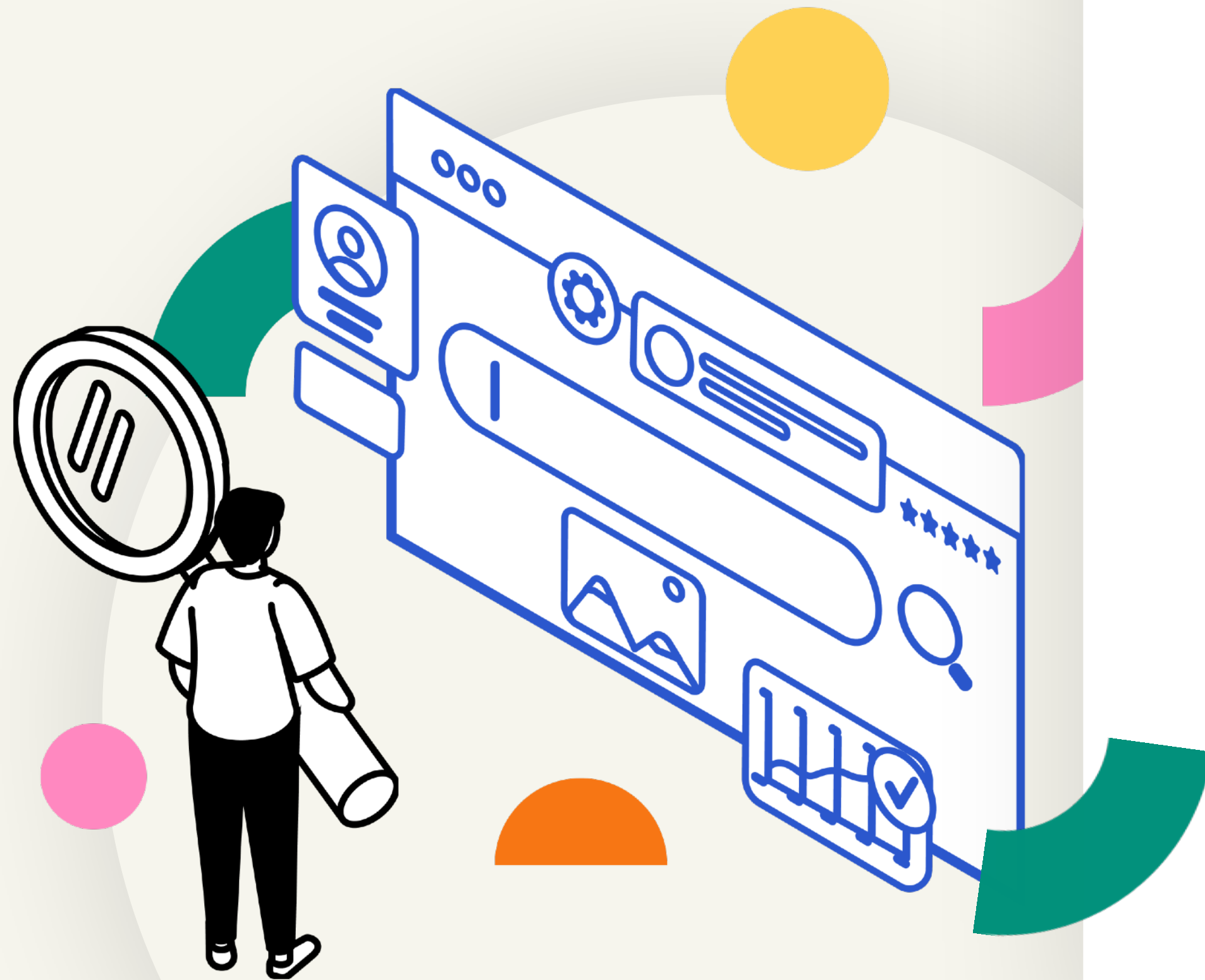
Call it cherry-picking AI: We will replace what we don't like to do by happily handing over tasks to the machine. (Think monotonous, repetitive, non-stimulating work.) And we will use augmentation to support and add value to the higher-level, more satisfying and profitable tasks we do enjoy.

When you are speaking to a digital human, it's like talking to the smartest person in the room. Humans just can't match a machine's ability to draw on a massive knowledge centre – from every conversation, purchase, interaction and more – to make recommendations and spit out needed information in a nanosecond. Let's leave the grunt work to AI – and give customer service teams more time to upsell and serve their customers.

#8

No more digital hide and seek:

Customers expect
brands to come to them



‘If you build it, they will come’, the classic line from the movie Field of Dreams, might have worked for Kevin Costner in the 1989 baseball flick, but not today. ‘Everyone will come to my website’ just doesn’t cut it any more.

Digital consumers are not going to seek you out. They expect brands to come to them – not the other way around. And we’re not just talking websites. Consumers want omnichannel experiences – and for you to find them. On their smart TVs, Play Stations, in-car smart speakers, any number of messaging apps and more. A teen isn’t going to go to your website. Their grandma won’t find you on TikTok. People choose where they want to go for content. You have to meet them where they are.

This is the challenge organisations face: They have one message - but many platforms to deliver it on. How do you have a consistent conversation across all of them? By building one conversation – and using it across all of them. Omni-channel experiences, delivering the same conversation – across many platforms.

#9

Work less, achieve more: Good for people, good for business



Sometimes less is more. Employees will demand a different way of working as mental health and work/life balance trumps everything else. The smart leaders of tomorrow will understand that people are more productive if they are working less – and do something about it.

When workplace mental health comes first, work/life balance is powerful – human and economic benefits flow and value grows, as we have proved at VERSA.

Just as there is a better way to allow all people to get the information they need easily, there is a better way to allow people to get the work/life balance they need too. The work less, achieve more approach is a triple win – it's good for business, good for people and good for society.

#10

A new intensive care unit for health: AI and voice transform patient management



Globally are facing a critical care crisis. Not in the provision of medical care – but in the systems surrounding it: 96% of patients’ health care complaints are about customer service and administration. When almost every patient complaint is about a particular system, it’s time to change the system.

Conversational AI in healthcare will play a crucial role in delivering a positive experience from the entry point of the care journey. Care bots and conversational technology will streamline administration, from appointment scheduling, sending test results to GP or arranging specialist appointment follow-ups.

Conversational AI, bots and voice technology will collect and time-stamp records with up-to-the-second accuracy, reducing human data entry errors. Digital medics will support tasks from recording observations and checking temperatures to administering medicine. Instantly cross-checking allergy, dosage and medication history to reduce the risk of errors.

As the population rapidly ages and more opt for in-home care, voice assistants will ease the burden on carers and improve independence and quality of life for the elderly and disabled. They will be able to turn on the TV without a remote control. Call family – or for emergency help - without touching a phone or pressing a button. Use voice-activated crosswords and memory games to support cognitive health. Voice will be their instant – and essential - connection to the outside world.

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