

Beyond 2020

Rethinking Digital Experience
for the New Normal

aperto
An IBM Company

IBM **iX**

Beyond 2020: Into the new normal

We are witnessing a crisis that questions many aspects of life we took for granted. After weeks of lockdowns, grief and personal tragedies, disrupted supply chains, solidarity and the hoarding of toilet paper, one thing has become apparent:

The world will not be the same after the COVID-19 crisis. We are likely to witness profound shifts in the way we interact, work, play and create value.

Some adjustments will be tangible and will emerge rather quickly such as necessary adjustments in business and operating models. As organisations are rejigging their global supply chains and coming to grips with a new demand landscape, we are set to observe wide-ranging course corrections.

Other shifts will be more gradual and unfold over extended periods of time. New social norms and behaviour will trigger new

attitudes and cultural truths. Social distancing, a new focus on health and the psychological cost of insecurity due to an uncertain future will change what we value in businesses and brands. New preferences will create new opportunities.

This playbook outlines key imperatives we at Aperto foresee for the design and delivery of digital experiences in the post-crisis world.

It discusses winning strategies for addressing the challenges ahead. We hope to inspire your thinking around your recovery. And to start a conversation on what's in store for all of us in the new normal beyond 2020.

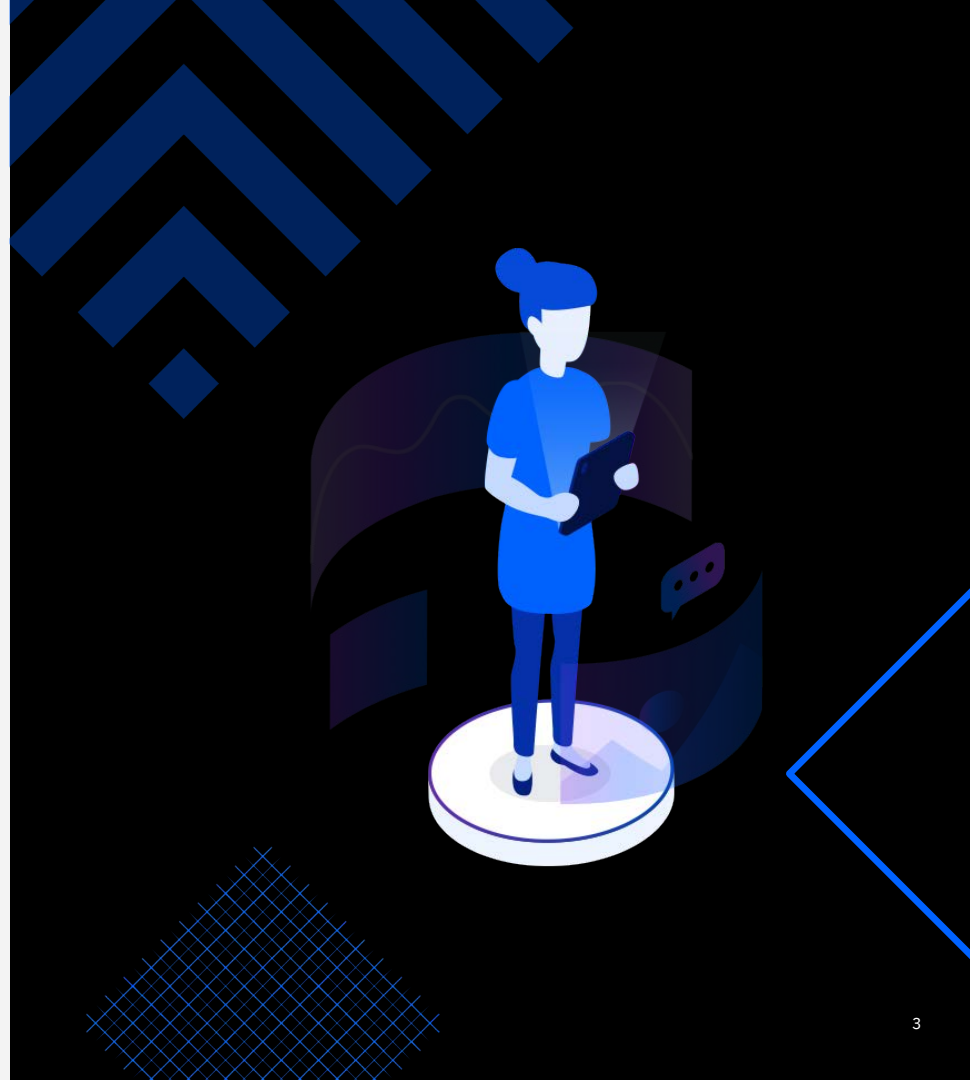
Your team at Aperto – Part of the IBM iX family

Digital as the new normal

What will be the defining challenges for digital experience in the post-crisis era?

Will there be new rules for digital success?

What opportunities will arise for those ready to seize them?



Digital experience matters

The COVID-19 crisis has done nothing but heighten the already eminent role of digital by dramatically accelerating the acceptance of information technology in most areas of life. Remote work, video conferencing, online shopping, streaming and gaming have taken years off the adoption curve. Many more people have now experienced the good, the bad and the ugly of digital services first-hand and are not ready to settle for anything subpar.

One thing is certain: digital experience will matter even more than before the crisis.

Already the main driver of a brand's attractiveness, connectedness and power to rejuvenate, digital experience will become a key battleground for businesses. Mindful and skilled orchestration of digital touchpoints will determine success.

Without convincing and high-performing digital services, organisations will have a hard time maintaining valuable relationships with many of their stakeholders.

This rapid push of digital technologies into all corners of life will open up new opportunities. It will bring new competition and once again fuel the race and collaboration between incumbents and start-ups

to capture value. Future success will depend on investing in new ideas, but also divesting of old ones.

At the same time, collapsing or delayed demand and high levels of uncertainty warrant a prudent approach. Times of recovery require an even more thoughtful prioritisation of digital initiatives.

Only a smart, holistic and agile approach to digital experience will enable organisations to – depending on their starting point – avert obsolescence or seize the opportunities that lie ahead.

Welcome to a new business reality

In the post-crisis world, digital experience will become an even more important driver of business success. Five strategic imperatives can guide the approach to digital experience to thrive in times of recovery and quickly adjust to the new normal.

Rethinking digital experience for the new normal

1.

Support the rebuilding of trust

Trust is the glue of business and society. Post-crisis, it will become even more vital to recovery and success. Organisations have to actively promote and foster trust through their digital experiences.

Trust building needs to be a key principle for all design and engineering decisions.

2.

Calibrate to new values

Every crisis is a new beginning. Post-crisis, there will be profound shifts in attitudes and behaviour leading to new preferences and needs. Organisations need to leverage their digital experience so they stay closely tuned to the cultural conversation.

Actively listening and a readiness to recalibrate are essential to thrive.

3.

Live up to rising expectations

The crisis has greatly accelerated the adoption of digital means across society and increased expectations towards digital services. People are unwilling to waste their time with companies that are not able to deliver great experiences.

Getting one's digital house in order, quickly and decisively, is mandatory.

4.

Do more with less

Economic challenges and an altered demand landscape strain resources. Smart prioritisation and a prudent approach to digital experience enables organisations to double down on those aspects that truly make a difference.

Leveraging automation, self-services and accelerators to balance ambition and budget.

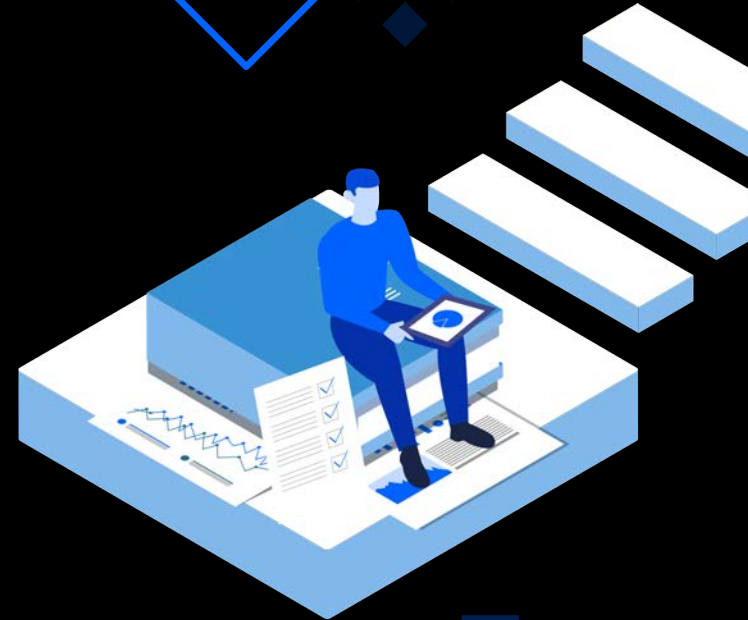
5.

Maintain flexibility

Digital investments come with the risk of technology lock-ins and a loss of much-needed flexibility. Deploying a future-proof technology stack based on modern architecture principles creates room to manoeuvre.

Agile methodologies enable employees to swiftly respond to changing needs.

1. Support the rebuilding of trust



Build your trust advantage

Trust is the glue that holds together business, markets and society. Brands need trust to grow. In recent years, we have witnessed a dramatic decline in the levels of trust people place in public and private institutions. This crisis of confidence has been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic, which has further shattered our sense of security.

The result is a heightened need to rebuild trust across all of society. Businesses have both the chance and the obligation to play a vital role in the rekindling of confidence not just in their products and their solidity, but in the wider community. Trust is the fuel of recovery.

In rebuilding trust, digital experiences play an important part. During the crisis, digital services have become an essential lifeline for many people.

Working, staying in touch, seeking information and assistance have been a digital experience in many cases. People have had to place their trust in the digital world.

Now, the experience quality businesses create for their customers, employees and partners directly influences their perceived trustworthiness.

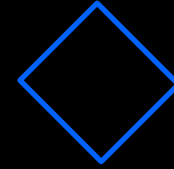
With subpar experiences that frustrate, dispirit and reveal a general lack of empathy, organisations not only demonstrate incompetence. Increasingly, they also display a disregard for the people they interact and work with. This chips away at their perceived integrity and, in turn, the trust they enjoy.

*“Digital experience
has become a vital
trust factor for any
organisation.”*

Elke Röttgen, Chief Operations Officer, Aperto – IBM iX

How to thrive

- Make sure all aspects of your digital experience foster a sense of competence and integrity. Firmly establish trust building as a guiding principle in all design and engineering decisions.
- View your digital touchpoints as important signifiers of trustworthiness to customers and partners. Ensure that all digital interactions with you are useful and help users to quickly achieve their goals.
- Prioritise privacy and adopt best practices in data collection, storage and processing. Offer value in exchange for data. Go beyond mandatory aspects like GDPR and CCPA and offer customers control over their data.
- Realise that in a low-trust world, there is no forgiveness for data leaks and security breaches. Plan for the worst and deploy robust cybersecurity and data protection systems.
- Leverage technologies that foster trust through increased transparency. Incorporate blockchain-based tracking systems that reassure customers and partners by providing the ability to verify transactions.



Insight for impact

IBM Food Trust is a blockchain-based ecosystem for producers, suppliers and retailers to create more trust and efficiency in the food system.

It connects across the supply chain through permissioned, permanent and shared data. The result is a smarter, safer and more sustainable food system. Expect to see a lot more blockchain-based applications designed to foster trust in the post-crisis world as customers and partners seek reassurance on health, safety and sustainability aspects of products and services.

[Learn more](#)

2. Calibrate to new values



New values, new needs

Every crisis is a new beginning marked by shifts in attitudes and behaviour. Some of these changes can be easily spotted as they manifest in new consumption patterns.

Some adjustments are evolving more slowly and sometimes become apparent only in hindsight. After a crisis, while on the surface things might seem back to the old normal, people often reconsider what they value in businesses and brands.

Currently, the public debate is filled with scenarios of how these shifts might play out. There are high hopes that an emerging sense of community, a new 'we', will transcend traditional differences and lead to a renaissance of solidarity.

Some expect the crisis to nudge consumer choices towards more sustainable products and services.

Others take a more negative stance with predictions of increased self-reliance and isolation, leading to cocooning in private and increased support of populist nationalism in public life.

This breadth of interpretation is a testament to how uncertain the future truly is.

The only certainty is that things will be different.

For businesses that requires a new sensibility to shifts in attitudes and values that might impact their bottom line.

Being in tune with the cultural mood is vital for brands. Early detection of changes in customer sentiment and preference will be key to staying relevant and to seizing new opportunities that arise.

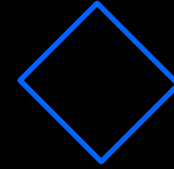
It is more important than ever to keep an ear to the ground. Organisations must be ready to listen and to recalibrate.

“The post-crisis world heightens the risk for brands to fall out of step with customer sentiment.”

Jan Pilhar, Executive Director Strategy & Business Design, Aperto – IBM iX

How to thrive

- Leverage your digital touchpoints as early warning systems on shifts in customer sentiment. Ensure you have the analytics capabilities to deliver timely and actionable insights to leadership, product and marketing teams.
- Update and extend the scope of metrics you track across your digital ecosystem to get a complete picture. Deploy social listening tools to improve your understanding of the conversations your customers are having.
- Leverage cognitive technologies to process data at scale and rapidly generate insights. Speed up your reporting cycles through automation. The closer you get to real-time insights, the better.
- Adopt agile ways of working to be able to act swiftly upon detected changes. Set up integrated DevOps teams collaborating across development, deployment and operation to quickly build for new needs.
- Integrate marketing operations and give teams responsibility for complete customer journeys. Shorten content planning cycles for increased responsiveness.

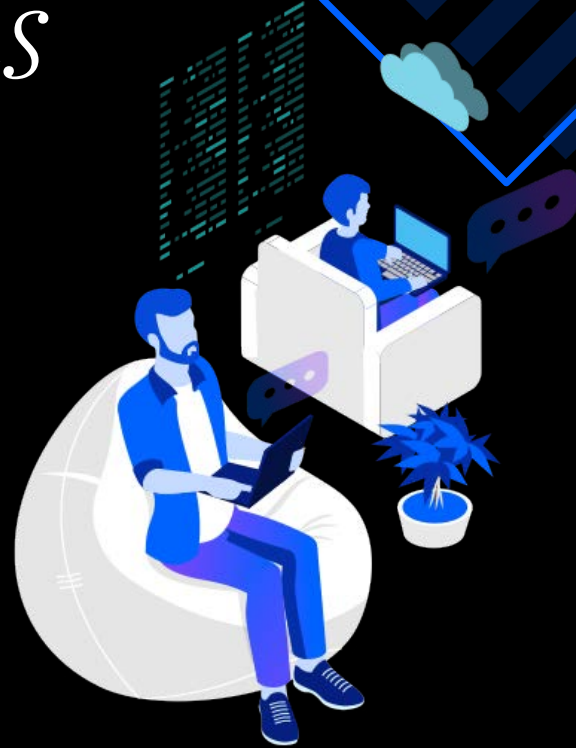


Insight for impact

IBM iX Agile Marketing enables marketing, brand and content teams to increase their flexibility, responsiveness and efficiency.

It adopts agile methodologies pioneered in software development and translates them into an actionable framework for marketing operations. Based around empowering employees with intelligent and integrated workflows it fosters data-driven experience design. As a set of guiding principles, it is designed to work for organisations of any type and scale and can be adjusted to individual needs without losing impact.

3. Live up to rising expectations



Good experience is good business

We have been advocating the ‘last best experience effect’ for years. This phenomenon expresses the simple truth that expectations towards digital services are constantly evolving.

Customers who have had a great digital experience anywhere, instantly expect the same quality and thoughtfulness of service everywhere. This continually raises the bar for digital experience and puts laggards under increasing pressure to perform.

The COVID-19 crisis has increased the impact of this effect manifold. Life under lockdown has been a crash course in digital living and working. For a large number of people, digital services have become truly essential – from digital hang-outs with family and friends to online shopping to accessing government services. Collectively, digital technology has brought us through hard times.

Many have also suffered through bad digital experiences. Slow websites, careless content, confusing navigation, endless forms and other hallmarks of digital inadequacy are bad enough in good times.

In a crisis, such missteps become unforgivable. People are unwilling to waste their time with companies that are still not getting it.

Now, if they have a choice, they will vote with their digital feet.

There is no turning back from this. With many organisations now rushing to digitally meet the new demand, those who seemed just two steps behind suddenly appear to be trailing far behind.

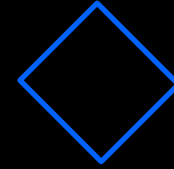
In the post-crisis world, getting your digital house in order, quickly and decisively, is mandatory. Now is the time to do get it right.

*“Digital experience
drives business outcomes.
It has become a key element
to win and retain clients.”*

Kai Großmann, Chief Executive Officer, Aperto – IBM iX

How to thrive

- Approach digital experience with a people-first mindset. Understand what is really relevant to customers, partners and employees at the various stages of their journeys and build it.
- Develop a compelling vision for the digital experience you want to deliver. Share it across the organisation. Agree on experience metrics, set quantifiable targets and make them part of your incentive structure.
- Invite customers and partners to innovate with you. They know what they want and are happy to tell you, so don't be afraid to ask. Involve your sales and customer care teams to provide a deeper understanding of market needs.
- Provide your employees with the tools and workflows to deliver experience excellence. Adopt frameworks such as IBM Enterprise Design Thinking to help you accelerate the transition to customer-centricity.
- Don't expect to get everything right the first time around. Realise that winning in digital is a process, not an end state. Testing and iterating are a crucial part of the work to be done – not a sign of failure.



Insight for impact

IBM Enterprise Design Thinking (EDT) is a framework to solve user problems at speed and scale and support the transition to a more customer-centric way of working.

EDT is design thinking re-envisioned for the modern enterprise. It empowers teams to collaborate more efficiently. It's a proven way to come to better solution faster and reduces development times by 30%. Organisations adopting EDT can double their time-to-market speed for new products and services giving them a critical advantage in competitive markets.

[Learn more](#)

4. *Do more with less*



Balancing ambition and budget

Companies are facing tough economic challenges. The covid-19 crisis has pushed the majority of countries into recession. The verdict is still out on how long and deep the slump will be. While some businesses are expecting a rapid pickup in demand, others will recover only slowly.

Reduced budgets and staff don't make it easy to deliver against rising customer expectations. Many organisations face the intimidating task of achieving more with less.

In this situation, companies need to be smart and prudent about investments in their digital experience. Now is not the time to try out moon shots and invest in nice-to-haves. Rather, it is all about doubling down on the quality of those digital services that truly drive preference, revenue and operational efficiency.

Key to succeeding in this challenging environment is to use efficiency boosters where possible.

Building on existing assets can help to reduce development time and effort. Modern digital experience design and delivery leverages platforms and preconfigured components to accelerate time-to-market. Design systems mitigate costs for interface design and content production by providing ready-to-deploy formats and code snippets.

Automation and the use cognitive technologies help to manage surging workloads with fewer resources.

Intelligent workflows free employees from time-consuming but low-value work and can inform better decisions.

In many organisations, inefficient customer service and content production processes eat up resources better spent elsewhere.

Offering thoughtful self-service options coupled with smart routing of incoming tickets takes the burden off strained customer care teams.

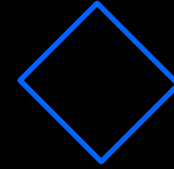
Automated content management systems eliminate mundane but necessary tasks like format adaptations, picture cropping and streamline approval processes.

“Design systems are essential for cohesive and scalable experience design.”

Marko Thorhauer, Executive Creative Director, Aperto – IBM iX

How to thrive

- Don't build digital touchpoints from scratch. Leverage market-leading platforms and accelerate your development with pre-built components and APIs.
- Adopt a digital design system to provide speed and consistency to interface design and content production at lower cost. Enable your development and marketing teams to fully leverage it.
- Streamline your workflows with intelligent automation and smart assistants to free your teams from repetitive tasks and refocus on what really drives experience value.
- Deploy marketing automation to autonomously generate and manage digital assets like landing pages, campaign touchpoints and customer care conversations.
- Transition customers and partners into self-service models based on conversational interfaces. Leverage AR/VR technologies to enable cutting-edge customer experiences while driving down costs for physical store locations.



Insight for impact

Design systems bring consistency and quality to the development of digital experiences while increasing efficiency and focus. With up to 50% less development time for digital touchpoints, they are powerful accelerators.

Design systems consist of visual guidelines, patterns, working code, and governance. They provide guidance and repositories to improve experience consistency. Modern design systems are built on current front-end frameworks like React, Angular or Vue and serve designers and developers in jointly delivering excellence.

[Learn more](#)

5. Maintain flexibility



Creating room to manoeuvre in uncertain times

The accelerated adoption of online services during the covid-19 crisis requires organisations to rapidly invest in digital services. Many are pondering their options and are making technology decisions amid high levels of uncertainty and restrained budgets. Against this backdrop, it is imperative to ensure maximum flexibility with a future-proof technology stack based on an architecture that is able to adapt to changing requirements.

It is key to avoid technological lock-ins that limit the future expansion of digital services. So-called ‘headless’ approaches have revolutionized the setup of applications for content management, e-commerce and other functions that power digital services. They decouple the business and process from the interface layer presented to the user. The same core processes can easily be extended to new touchpoints such as wearables, smart speakers, in-car systems and other emerging touchpoints.

Modern architectures that are built around micro-services and smart components help to maintain flexibility.

They divide core services into separate units each providing a specific function. If the need for an upgrade of a specific function occurs, only the responsible unit needs to be adapted without having to change the whole system.

Orchestration between the different micro-services is managed via dedicated interfaces (APIs) ensuring easy integration of third-party systems.

Technology is not the only lever to ensuring manoeuvrability. Enabling your development, marketing and content departments to work on your digital experience as a cohesive team is key.

Agile methodologies bring together cross-functional teams to foster seamless collaboration and speed up delivery.

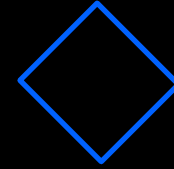
Frameworks like the IBM Garage provide proven setups that accelerate development and integrate service design from strategy to growth.

“Modern engineering principles are key to accelerating your experience transformation.”

Benjamin Geckle, Executive Director Engineering, Aperto – IBM iX

How to thrive

- Don't impede your manoeuvrability by only building for today's touchpoints. Avoid limitations to expand to new touchpoints by taking a 'headless' approach to your experience systems where appropriate.
- Deploy a future-proof architecture that builds on micro-services, smart components and APIs to ensure flexibility and easier integration with third-party platforms and services.
- Adopt agile ways of working to react to changing needs and deliver digital experience upgrades in shorter iterations. Adopt proven and integrated frameworks like IBM Garage to tackle the transition into a more IT setup.
- Bring your people together in cross-functional teams to allow for a holistic approach to experience design. Transcend silos and think about positioning, pricing and market activation for your services early to de-risk innovation.



Insight for impact

The IBM Garage methodology is set of proven agile practices that guides teams through an accelerated, outcome-first approach to get a solution from idea to implementation to scale.

IBM Garage drives transformational change within the organisation by empowering teams to move faster and work smarter. The methodology built on a human-centric approach, co-located and distributed teams, DevOps tools and techniques for continued delivery and operations and a focus on digital talent and culture change

[Learn more](#)

Let's talk.

Are you ready to evolve your digital experience? Partner with us to create, optimise and elevate your digital products and services. Reimagine how you engage with your customers, employees and partners to thrive beyond 2020.

We are one of the largest digital agencies in Germany, Austria and Switzerland.

Working at the intersection of strategy, creativity and technology, we help our clients to digitally reinvent their businesses.

As part of the global IBM iX family, we create exceptional experiences that drive tangible business results.

Aperto GmbH – An IBM Company

Chausseestraße 5, 10115 Berlin

Phone: + 49 30 283921-708

E-Mail: inquiry@aperto.com

www.aperto.com

www.ibmix.de

www.ibmix.com

© Copyright IBM Corporation 2020. All rights reserved. The information contained in these materials is provided for informational purposes only and is provided AS IS without warranty of any kind, express or implied. Any statement of direction represents IBM's current intent, is subject to change or withdrawal and represent only goals and objectives. IBM, the IBM logo, and ibm.com are trademarks of IBM Corp., registered in many jurisdictions worldwide. Other product and service names may be trademarks of IBM or other companies.

A current list of IBM trademarks is available at [Copyright and trademark information](#).

aperto
An IBM Company

IBM iX