C2

*Unlocking New Value in
the Experience Economy*

GENERATIVE EXPERIENCES

GEN XP

V.01

G E N X P

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The INTRODUCTION

This insight forms the foundation of what we have come to call Generative Experiences (GenXP), a series of strategic experience pillars that we believe unlocks new and massive value that other experience models simply cannot access.

While "generative" has become associated with artificial intelligence and machine learning systems, we use the term to highlight the broad spectrum of value created when humans gather with purpose. In Generative Experiences, technological capabilities and human collaboration work together, generating multifaceted benefits through collective creativity and intentional connection.

What follows isn't just theoretical, it is a framework forged through practice, refined through iteration, and proven through results. We are sharing it now because we believe Generative Experiences will define the next decade of the Experience Economy and offer new forms of value for people and businesses.

More than a decade ago, C2 set out to reimagine what business gatherings could be. Our mission was ambitious: to leverage the power of connection, creativity, and commerce to catalyze economic growth, beginning with our hometown of Montreal, Canada.

Our approach quickly captured global imagination. As we deployed our designs around the world, something profound became clear: the most powerful experiences are those where participants actively shape the content rather than merely consume it, where they transform into co-creators.

When this transformation happens, we see remarkable results. Companies discover unexpected solutions to complex challenges, industries find new paths for growth, and individuals develop capabilities that transform their careers and their lives.

This paper is intended as a contribution to the wider business and experience design community across fields and industries. It is a codification of the principles that have guided our work and a roadmap for those ready to embrace evolving models of engagement. It explores how the Experience Economy has transformed alongside shifting audience expectations, the new challenges these changes present for experience creators, and offers a practical framework for leveraging Generative Experiences to yield comprehensive economic, community, and personal value.

Whether you are a business leader, an experience designer, or simply someone who believes in the transformative power of meaningful participation, we invite you to explore the potential of Generative Experiences with us.

GENXP

Setting the
SCENE

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GenXP and the Experience Economy

The term "Experience Economy" was coined by B. Joseph Pine II and James H. Gilmore in 1998 and has since evolved into a foundational concept that continues to shape industries today. It describes a shift in value creation—moving beyond products and services that address daily needs to memorable, immersive, and engaging experiences that foster community, spark new connections, and inspire innovation.

In the experience economy, brands and organizations compete not only on quality and price but on their ability to create meaningful, emotionally resonant experiences that drive loyalty and long-term engagement. This shift has transformed traditional business models, unlocking new revenue streams as companies embrace experience as a central pillar of value creation.
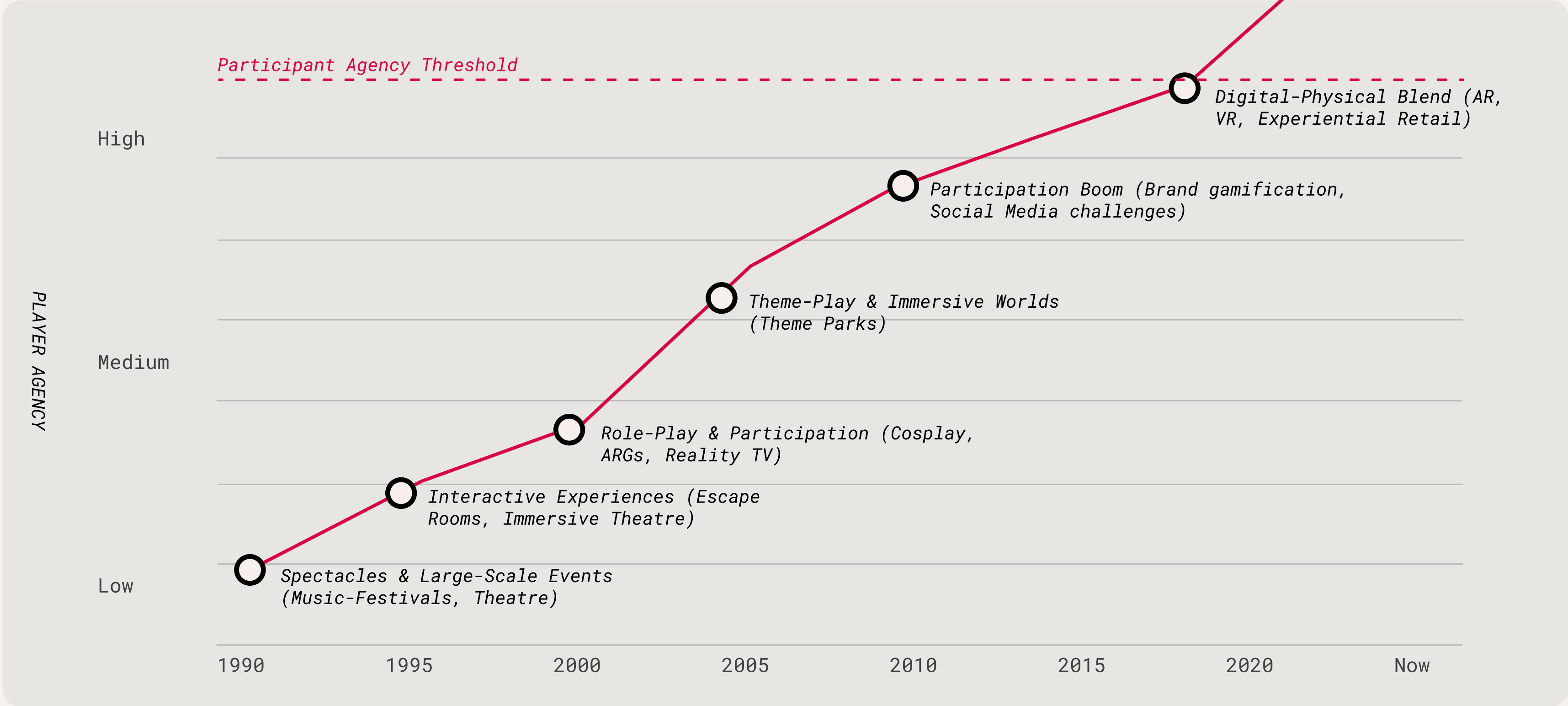
Research suggests that people often place greater value on experiences than material possessions. This shift in consumer preference has made experience-driven engagement a key driver of growth across industries, from entertainment and retail to hospitality and technology. In fact, by 2032 the Experience Economy is projected to reach $1.5 trillion [1], underscoring its profound influence on business strategy, consumer behavior, and cultural trends.

As the Experience Economy continues to mature, we are witnessing a significant shift in consumer expectations: a growing demand for experiences that invite active participation rather than passive observation. This progression aligns with the thinking of Joseph Pine [2], who described the evolution of economic value as moving beyond commodities, goods, and services to experiences and, ultimately, transformations. The highest value now comes not just from staged experiences but from those that empower participation, co-creation, and meaningful change in the individual. This evolution signals a new era where experiences are not just consumed but actively shaped by participants. With this evolution, Generative Experiences emerge as a key paradigm, enabling dynamic, evolving interactions that respond to participant input, foster co-creation, and transform passive engagement into meaningful, adaptive storytelling.

Figure 1: Experience types within the Experience Economy

Participant Agency Threshold

Generative Experiences

Digital-Physical Blend (AR, VR, Experiential Retail)

Participation Boom (Brand gamification, Social Media challenges)

Theme-Play & Immersive Worlds (Theme Parks)

Role-Play & Participation (Cosplay, ARGs, Reality TV)

Interactive Experiences (Escape Rooms, Immersive Theatre)

Spectacles & Large-Scale Events (Music-Festivals, Theatre)

PLAYER AGENCY

High
Medium
Low

1990   1995   2000   2005   2010   2015   2020   Now

The Rise of Meaningful Participation & Changing Expectations

We believe we are approaching an exciting new frontier in the Experience Economy. While immersive, high-production value experiences continue to captivate, we are witnessing a growing appetite for even deeper engagement. Participants appreciate carefully choreographed moments but increasingly desire more in the form of meaningful participation, offering the opportunity to actively and intentionally shape experiences in real time.

KEY TRENDS DRIVING THE SHIFT

3.
LIVE ENTERTAINMENT & SPORTS

1.
GAMING, VIRTUAL WORLDS AND LOCATION BASED ENTERTAINMENT

4.
EXPERIENTIAL TRAVEL & PERSONALIZED HOSPITALITY

2.
CREATOR-DRIVEN PLATFORMS & USER GENERATED CONTENT (UGC)

5.
GENERATIVE AI

Burning Man, Julian Walter

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Burning Man, Susan Becker

The tremendous growth of gaming experiences—with 190.6 million Americans playing games regularly and spending $57.2 billion on video games annually ($48 billion on game content alone)—demonstrates how deeply people crave active roles rather than passive consumption [3]. The meteoric rise and sustained growth of creative sandbox-type platforms like Minecraft, Roblox, and Fortnite have created models of player engagement that companies across industries are now striving to replicate. The gaming phenomenon has expanded far beyond just digital platforms: board games and location-based experiences like escape rooms are also experiencing significant growth, reflecting a broader cultural shift. This widespread exposure to interactive decision-making and participatory environments has made more passive experiences feel increasingly unengaging by comparison as audiences across all demographics now expect to meaningfully influence the entertainment they consume.

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Twitch, Jimmy Hamelin

Media platforms built on audience-driven narratives—such as Twitch, YouTube, and TikTok—have dramatically outperformed traditional media in user growth and engagement. TikTok reached 1.04 billion monthly active users worldwide as of May 2024 through its model where users both create and consume content [4]. This explosive growth demonstrates how experiences that position audiences as active creators have become the new standard, fundamentally shifting expectations across all media and entertainment categories.

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C2 Montreal, Mikael Theimer

The rapid shift to interactive viewing formats reflects audiences' growing desire for real-time engagement. Platforms such as LiveLike have transformed the viewing experience by implementing live voting, polling, and cheer meters that enable fans to make match predictions and share real-time reactions. These participation mechanisms actively involve viewers in the narrative of sporting events. Major sports leagues including the NFL, the NBA, and the Premier League have embraced second-screen experiences where fans can access real-time statistics, alternative camera angles, and community discussions during broadcasts. This evolution from passive spectatorship to active participation mirrors broader trends in entertainment, with event producers increasingly designing experiences that blur the line between performer and audience.

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Birth, Giulio Ghirardi©, Michelangelo Foundation

Travelers today expect customizable, interactive, and transformative experiences rather than passive itineraries. Platforms like Airbnb Experiences and Marriott's AI-driven recommendations tailor journeys in real time, while luxury providers such as Black Tomato's "Get Lost" expeditions craft adventures where travelers co-create their path. This trend extends beyond activities to physical spaces themselves, with the rise of theme-based and experience-based hotels and restaurants that transform traditional hospitality venues into immersive worlds. Properties like Barcelona's Paradiso (designed as a 1940s-style speakeasy), Treehotel in Sweden (featuring unique architectural rooms suspended in trees), or immersive dining experiences like Sublimotion in Ibiza demonstrate how the entire hospitality ecosystem has evolved to prioritize participant engagement over passive consumption. This shift mirrors the broader trend of meaningful participation, where individuals seek personalized, dynamic engagement rather than pre-scripted experiences, reinforcing hospitality as a co-created, evolving journey.
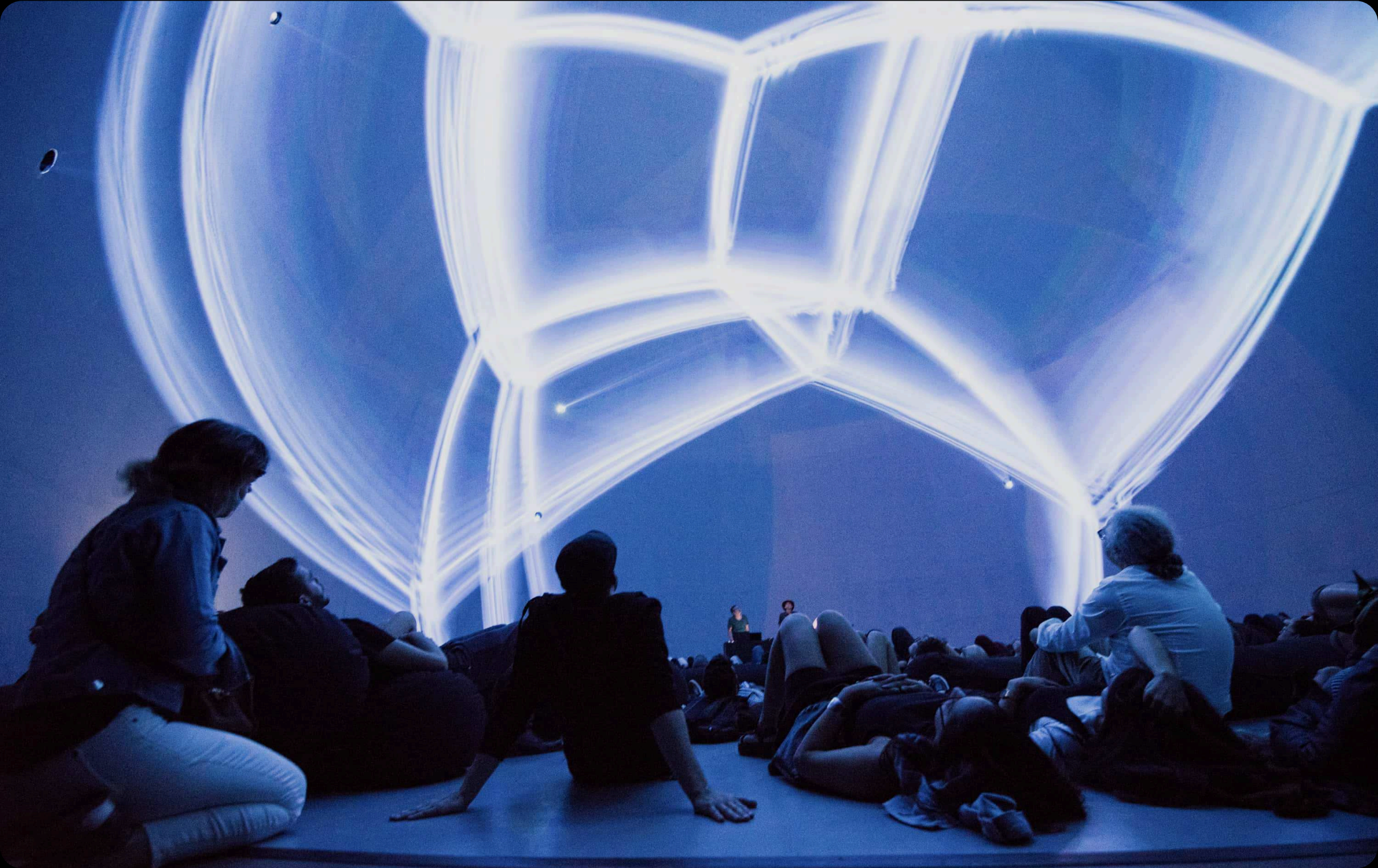
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The rapid advancement of generative AI is fundamentally reconfiguring the relationship between creators and audiences across industries. While earlier digital technologies expanded access to content and enabled some forms of interactivity, generative AI introduces a qualitatively different capacity for creating dynamic, responsive experiences that continuously evolve based on participant input. This shift manifests in experiences ranging from entertainment narratives that adapt to viewer preferences to creative tools that transform casual users into sophisticated content producers. The distinctive power of generative AI comes from its ability to transform passive consumption into active co-creation, learning from and incorporating user participation in real time. As these technologies mature, they are establishing new expectations for immediacy and personalization, accelerating all the previous trends toward greater participation and turning what were once one-way experiences into ongoing dialogues between creators, audiences, and the experiences themselves.

As we have watched the experience economy evolve, a persistent design challenge has become apparent: while audiences increasingly seek meaningful participation, most experiences, even those with substantial production budgets, remain predominantly linear and unidirectional. Not all experiences need to be generative, but understanding these design challenges is essential for identifying where deeper participant involvement can create significant value.

Challenges in Designing for Meaningful Participation

Experience creators approach
interactivity with caution for
sound business reasons.
Organizations that invest
substantial resources in
experiences face significant risks
when introducing unpredictability.

Creating truly responsive
environments demands complex
systems that maintain quality,
protect brand integrity, and
ensure consistent outcomes.
Controlled, scripted interactions
provide a safety net that delivers
predictability and reliability—
qualities that experience
designers prioritize when stakes
are high.

C2 Montreal, 2017

We've identified *four key challenges* that must be addressed to bridge this gap and unlock the full potential of participant-driven experiences:

CHALLENGE 1
Real-Time Adaptation

Despite being labeled "interactive", many experiences merely present the illusion of engagement through limited pre-scripted responses. This design approach is understandable, as truly adaptive systems require a delicate balance between structure and spontaneity. However, audiences increasingly recognize these predetermined pathways as shallow engagement. People expect experiences that genuinely respond to their unique inputs and choices.

The challenge is to create responsive frameworks that can interpret participant actions in real time, generate contextually appropriate responses, and maintain thematic coherence, all while accommodating the unpredictable nature of human engagement. To succeed, designers need to go beyond scripted reaction patterns toward systems capable of producing meaningful, novel content based on participant contribution, turning passive consumption into active co-creation.

→ *Impact*: Limited engagement duration, Low return on experience (ROX)

CHALLENGE 2
Deep Interactivity

Creating truly responsive experiences requires managing an exponentially growing decision tree, where each participant choice could lead the experience in wildly different directions. This presents a fundamental challenge: how do you maintain narrative coherence and quality control while still honoring participant input? Most experiences resolve this tension by limiting interactivity to superficial choices that do not significantly alter the core experience. This results in participants feeling like they are merely selecting from predetermined options rather than genuinely influencing the world they are meant to be immersed in. For sustainable engagement, designers must develop sophisticated systems that balance structured narrative frameworks with flexible response mechanisms, allowing participant choices to meaningfully reshape the experience without sacrificing overall quality or coherence.

→ *Impact*: Low conversion from engagement to action, Low repeat participation

CHALLENGE 3
Long Term Impact & Experience Evolution

Many experiences today function as isolated moments in time, creating initial excitement but failing to establish ongoing engagement ecosystems. The value generated dissipates as soon as the moment concludes, leaving no lasting imprint on either the community or the experience itself.

The true challenge lies in designing systems that not only respond to participation in the moment but actually evolve because of it—creating visible, cumulative change that reflects the community's ongoing contribution. Experiences that successfully address this challenge transform from fleeting events into living ecosystems that grow richer and more meaningful with each interaction.

→ *Impact*: High content fatigue, Poor ecosystem expansion

CHALLENGE 4
Tracking & KPIs

The ephemeral nature of many experiences creates a fundamental measurement challenge. Without the right tracking mechanisms, value creation becomes difficult to capture and attribute. Organizations typically measure immediate metrics—attendance, impressions, sales, and satisfaction—but lose visibility on the ongoing community engagement, creative applications, and behavioral changes that represent a true ROI. This measurement gap leads to underinvestment in generative elements as teams default to what they can easily measure rather than what might generate greater long-term value.

→ *Impact*: Inability to demonstrate full ROI; Focus on immediate metrics over sustained value; Difficulty justifying investment in participation

These challenges aren't just isolated problems—they are symptoms of a fundamental misalignment between how experiences are traditionally designed and what today's participants truly value. We have concluded that addressing them requires more than incremental improvements to existing models.

This is why we are introducing the Generative Experiences Framework: a comprehensive set of strategic experiential pillars that recentres design around meaningful participation.

G E N X P

The GenXP

FRAMEWORK

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What are Generative Experiences?

Generative Experiences are experiences that place participants and their actions at the center, empowering them to actively shape outcomes rather than merely consume content.

When done right, these experiences:

1. Generate *immediate and long-term economic returns* through extended engagement lifecycles

2. Build *meaningful connections* between people, businesses, and communities

3. Foster *personal growth through creative participation* and skill development.

After a decade of practice and study we have codified five pillars that allow us to design Generative Experiences.

Each pillar holds its own significance, but it is how they function together that truly unlocks new value.

THE 5 PILLARS OF GENERATIVE EXPERIENCES

WORLD BUILDING

At the heart of every Generative Experience lies thoughtful world-building, a practice used across fields from video game design to immersive theatre. World-building establishes a cohesive internal logic that flows through every aspect of the experience, from visual aesthetics and narrative elements to interaction patterns and participation guidelines. When executed well, previously separate components transform into a unified, dynamic ecosystem.

Effective world-building invites participants to inhabit an experience rather than merely engage with it. When people grasp the underlying principles, values, and "rules" of this world, they develop the confidence to explore, interact, and ultimately create within its framework. What casual observers could interpret as simple thematic elements actually form the essential foundation upon which truly transformative experiences are built.

C2 Montreal 2015, Felix Renaud

Core Coherency

Before diving into the design of specific world elements, a guiding theme or purpose that unites all aspects of the world we are building is created. This acts as the central idea and intention behind the world. Once this is established, specific world elements are designed.

History & Context

Understanding the world's past to provide depth and motivation for present events. This ranges from origin stories, guiding narratives and philosophies to norms and conventions.

WORLD BUILDING

KEY DESIGN ELEMENTS

Characters & Individuals

Characters that bring the world to life. This includes players, participants, and support actors.

Geography & Environmental Setting

The physical environment that shapes the world's tone, culture, and conflicts. This ranges from architectural structures and landscapes to light, texture, and atmospheric effects.

Rules & Systems

The code of conduct in which the world operates effectively. This considers cause and effect relationships, motivational structures, and behaviour modelling.

Culture & Society

The world's culture shapes interactions, traditions, and aesthetic language. This ranges from material choices, typography, symbols, and food.

WORLD BUILDING - INSPIRING CASE STUDIES

Secret Cinema's
Blade Runner [5]

Secret Cinema's Blade Runner experience demonstrates world creation through its transformation of a 16-acre London warehouse into a living, breathing version of a living, breathing representation of the film's vision of 2019 Los Angeles. Rather than simply decorating a space with film references, creators built a complete sensory ecosystem where every element—from neon-soaked marketplaces and functioning food stalls to interactive corporate offices and rain-slicked alleyways—contributed to a coherent dystopian vision. Participants received character assignments and costumes prior to their arrival, immediately positioning them within the world's social hierarchy and narrative framework. The environment responded to collective behaviour, with actor-led narratives shifting based on audience engagement patterns. Environmental details extended beyond visual design to include custom scents, temperature variations between districts, and soundscapes that subtly guided emotional responses. By creating a fully-realized environment with consistent internal logic, Secret Cinema enabled participants to improvise authentic responses rather than following prescribed paths, demonstrating how thorough world-building establishes the necessary conditions for truly Generative Experiences to emerge.

Secret Cinema's Blade Runner

Meow Wolf
Omega Mart

Omega Mart, anchoring Las Vegas' AREA15 complex, exemplifies world-building mastery at a commercial scale. What initially appears to be an ordinary supermarket—albeit stocked with surreal products like "Emergency Clams" and "Tattoo Chicken"—reveals itself as a gateway to elaborate hidden realms. Behind refrigerator doors and stock room entrances lie sprawling psychedelic environments, all part of an intricate storyline involving Dramcorp (Omega Mart's fictional parent company) and "The Source", a mysterious element powering their unusual merchandise. Every product label, corporate memo, and hidden passage contributes to the narrative, creating a unified creative vision. What distinguishes Omega Mart is its cohesive universe that extends beyond a single location, connecting to Meow Wolf's other installations and rewarding repeated exploration as visitors continually discover new narrative elements, making one visit never quite enough to uncover everything this extraordinary world offers.

Meow Wolf Las Vegas, KateRussell

EY Innovation Realized

EY's Innovation Realized is an exclusive, peer-to-peer summit designed to encourage innovative thinking and collaboration among C-suite and senior business leaders. The summit focuses on exploring new approaches to navigating a rapidly changing world, with the goal of fostering a more adaptable and forward-thinking mindset. The purpose is to disrupt business-as-usual thinking and unlock creative collaboration, leading to unexpected ideas and solutions.

It is an immersive, intimate event that brings together leaders from various organizations to connect and share insights. The summit delves into themes like rethinking strategies, embracing complexity, and utilizing technology (including AI) to drive innovation. Participants are encouraged to embrace doubt, cultivate curiosity, and develop the ability to quickly adapt to change. EY's Innovation Realized aims to empower participants to shape the future with confidence and build a better working world.

EY, *Wade Muir*

C2 Montréal

Every edition of C2 Montréal is a different world built around the thematic of each edition. We design immersive physical environments that bring our annual themes to life through architecture, lighting, materials, and spatial flow. Taking inspiration from our Cirque du Soleil heritage, we craft cohesive settings with their own visual language and internal logic—whether transforming hangars into futuristic marketplaces or creating secluded garden sanctuaries amidst conference bustle. These carefully constructed worlds establish alternative rules and social contexts that encourage participants to temporarily step outside their conventional professional personas. By suspending the familiar constraints of traditional business settings, our environments create psychological safety for exploration, vulnerability, and authentic connection. This world-building approach doesn't just change where business happens—it shifts how people engage with ideas and each other, enabling forms of participation that would be impossible in conventional conference spaces.

C2 Montreal, 2019, Myriam Baril Tessier

UNPREDICTABILITY & SURPRISE

Unpredictability in Generative Experiences emerges from a deliberate design strategy that balances controlled randomness with adaptive frameworks. Rather than relying on scripted moments of surprise, these experiences create conditions where unexpected developments naturally emerge from participant interactions.

Drawing inspiration from improvisational theatre, procedural generation in game design, and the spontaneity of live events, this approach ensures each experience remains distinct. When thoughtfully implemented, this element of unpredictability transforms predictable engagements into journeys of continuous discovery and delight.

Twitch , 2022, Jimmy Hamelin

Progressive Revelation

Strategically unveiling new content, capabilities, or interactions at carefully timed moments to maintain engagement and create sustained discovery throughout the experience.

Identifying Peak Moments

These moments break from the thematic coherence established in world creation to introduce an unexpected yet contained and exciting twist.

Data-Informed Personalization

Collecting and analyzing both individual participant data (behaviors, preferences, history) and environmental conditions (collective moods, physical context, social dynamics) to deliver surprises that feel personally relevant while responding appropriately to the moment.

UNPREDICTABILITY & SURPRISE

KEY DESIGN ELEMENTS

Setting Adaptive Frameworks

Designers must create adaptive journey ecosystems where decision trees, feedback loops, and contextual triggers enable experiences to shift organically, instead of predictable linear paths.

UNPREDICTABILITY & SURPRISE - CASE STUDIES

The Paris 2024
Olympic Flame

The Paris 2024 Olympic flame exemplifies unpredictability through multiple innovative departures from tradition. The relay featured a groundbreaking split design where four separate flames travelled independent routes throughout France, transforming a typically linear journey into a nationwide, multi-narrative experience. But the most surprising element came with the cauldron itself: replacing the traditional combustion flame with an ethereal illuminated balloon that floated above Paris. This balloon cauldron—created using an LED lighting system illuminating a cloud of mist generated by water jet— defied audience expectations of what an Olympic flame should be, creating genuine surprise among viewers worldwide. The experience extends beyond the Games themselves as the balloon is set to return every summer until the next summer Olympics in 2028, creating a second wave of public engagement that further disrupts the traditional Olympic torch lifecycle.

Cauldron, Olympic Games, Paris

Twitch , 2022, Jimmy Hamelin

Twitch Partner Summit
Pop-Up Emotions

The Twitch Partner Summit aimed to rebuild critical relationships between Twitch leadership and top creators amid increasing competitive pressure. Our strategic use of unpredictability became key to the summit's success. By transforming a Marriott hotel into a three-day "phones-out" experience, we created an environment where conventional dynamics dissolved. Throughout the event, we surprised participants with personalized moments based on information we had discreetly gathered before and during the summit. These unexpected revelations—thoughtfully acknowledging individual passions and accomplishments—created genuine connections that transcended typical platform-creator interactions. The approach proved transformative, revitalizing relationships and achieving unprecedented satisfaction scores that demonstrated how strategic unpredictability can rebuild trust where it had begun to erode.

PILLAR 3

MEANINGFUL PARTICIPATION

Meaningful participation defines the depth and impact of engagement in Generative Experiences. Drawing from game design's interactivity principles, open-source collaboration models, and collective intelligence frameworks, this pillar elevates interaction beyond superficial engagement. In truly generative settings, participant contributions fundamentally alter the experience's trajectory and outcomes. The focus shifts from simply allowing participation to designing systems where creative problem-solving, strategic thinking, and authentic co-creation become central to the experience. When participants see their actions creating tangible impact, their investment and sense of ownership in the experience dramatically increases.

Twitch, 2022, Jimmy Hamelin

KEY DESIGN ELEMENTS

Collective Intelligence Mechanisms

Methods for aggregating individual inputs into collective solutions.

Reward Architectures

Tangible and intangible benefits that acknowledge meaningful contribution.

Player Agency Frameworks

Systems that give participants genuine control over outcomes and direction

Rules & Systems

The code of conduct in which the world operates effectively. This considers cause and effect relationships, motivational structures and behaviour modelling.

Incentive Systems

Motivational structures that encourage continued and deepening engagement.

MEANINGFUL PARTICIPATION - CASE STUDIES

Homo Faber
Biennial

The Homo Faber Biennial [6], which celebrates master craftsmanship, partnered with immersive festival creators Littlegig to transform a traditional cultural showcase into an experience defined by non-trivial participation. By doing away with a fixed program and instead activating Venice's historic palazzos, gardens, and hidden venues, participants discovered experiences organically while actively shaping the festival's atmosphere and legacy. With only about 80 participants, attendees contributed to collaborative art installations, engaged in immersive performances, and curated personal journeys through the labyrinthine setting, each choice creating a unique narrative. This approach elevated visitor engagement from passive observation to meaningful co-creation, with participant actions influencing both the immediate experience and the event's evolving legacy across future iterations, demonstrating how non-trivial participation can transform cultural preservation into living, evolving practice.

Birth, Giulio Ghirardi©, Michelangelo Foundation

In the Dark,
Dubai

In C2's "In the Dark" experience, participants enter a pitch-black room where they must complete collaborative challenges without visual cues. Seated in circles they cannot see, teams progress through increasingly difficult tasks—from coordinated counting to identifying and assembling mystery objects—relying solely on listening skills and verbal communication. The sensory limitation transforms how participants interact, forcing them to develop new strategies for coordination and connection that would never emerge in traditional settings.

What makes each session genuinely unique is that while the challenges remain constant, the solutions are entirely participant-generated. Some groups develop rhythmic systems for turn-taking, others create precise verbal descriptions, and many discover communication approaches they never considered before. The facilitators simply provide the framework—everything else stems from the participants' collective ingenuity. This creates sessions that are unrepeatable and deeply personal, as each group's journey through darkness becomes a reflection of their unique collaborative chemistry and emergent problem-solving abilities.

PILLAR 4

TRANSMEDIA LAYERING

Layering amplifies impact by deliberately combining physical and digital media (visual, audio, tactile, olfactory, kinesthetic) into a cohesive experience. Through strategic format layering, these diverse elements work together to create experiences with both breadth and depth, often drawing from transmedia storytelling techniques where narratives unfold across multiple platforms over time. Each layer can provide a different entry point, accommodate varying preferences, and offer unique forms of value, all while maintaining thematic consistency across the whole experience.

Effective Layering extends the time and space of experiences beyond isolated moments through anticipatory elements, peak engagements, and lasting touchpoints that continue generating value long after the initial interaction.

C2 Montreal, 2017, Jimmy Hamelin

Multi-Dimensional Entry Points

Methods through which participants can access the experience in real life, online or as a combination of both before, during, and after the experience takes place.

Social Amplification

Designing for user-generated content (UGC) by embedding shareable, remixable, and interactive elements that extend engagement beyond the core experience and drive organic participation.

Experience Orchestration

Showcases how different content types can complement and enhance each other.

TRANSMEDIA LAYERING

KEY DESIGN ELEMENTS

Personalized Paths

Allow for simultaneous, personalized experience paths while acknowledging user engagement preferences.

Netflix's Squid Game Experience

Squid Game: The Experience exemplifies Digital Layering through its multidimensional second season that seamlessly blends digital and physical experiences across multiple touchpoints. Here, the series extended beyond the screen through globally coordinated installations— from the iconic giant doll appearing in key global cities (Sydney and Paris) to pop-up game experiences in New York—, while Netflix hosted the world premiere by transforming Seoul's Dongdaemun Design Plaza into a pink experiential zone for 1,000 fans [7]; These physical activations complemented digital layers like the Immersive Gamebox in London where participants used 3D motion-tracking visors and touchscreens to digitally tackle all six infamous challenges from the show, using their own movements to navigate "'Red Light, Green Light" and the "Glass Bridge". The launch further expanded when DJ Peggy Gou's Squid Game-themed rave at London's Drumsheds, sponsored by Just Eat, transformed a traditional ad partnership into an immersive musical event [8]. All these experiences generated millions of social media impressions as participants shared content across platforms, creating another layer of digital engagement that remote fans could access. Through this sophisticated integration of streaming content, interactive digital experiences, and physical activations across multiple cities, Squid Game created a layered ecosystem where fans could engage through their preferred medium, independently or together.


Squid Game, Netflix

Squid Game, Gamebox

TRANSMEDIA LAYERING - CASE STUDIES

Geocaching

Geocaching exemplifies masterful layering through multiple interconnected dimensions that create depth without complexity. The experience combines physical-digital layering as GPS coordinates guide users to physical containers they must find through real-world observation. Its participatory design incorporates temporal layering that extends engagement before (route planning, puzzle solving), during (treasure hunting, logbook signing), and after the find (sharing discoveries, tracking statistics).

Social layering enables geocaching to scale from solitary adventures to community events like Cache In Trash Out cleanups that connect individual actions to collective impact.

This comprehensive layering approach has sustained engagement for millions of participants across 191 countries, with nearly 1.85 million people finding an average of 48 caches each in 2024 alone.
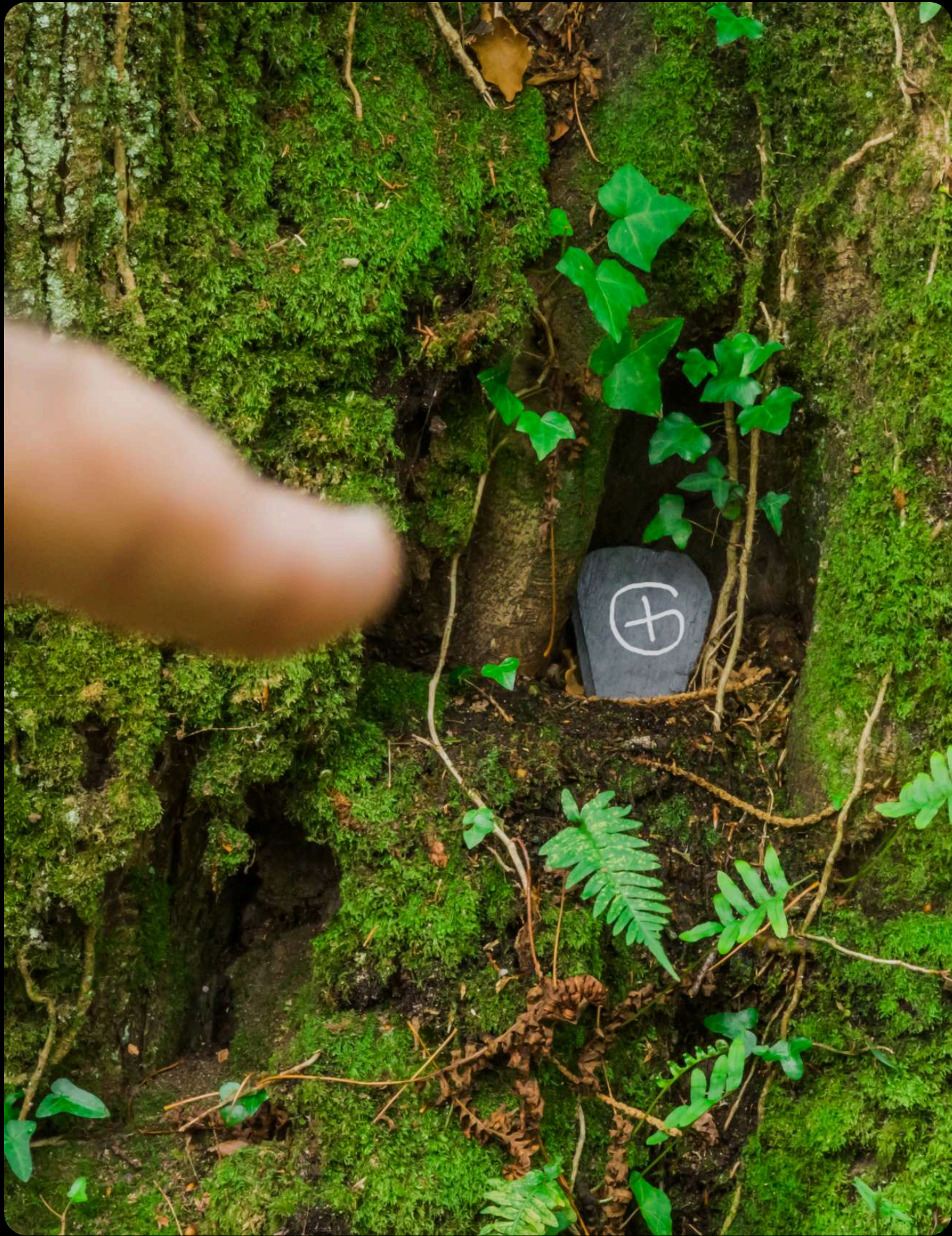
Radisson's Meetings Dream Machine

C2 created a multi-layered experience for Radisson connecting immersive in-person "Infinity Room" sessions with a broader digital campaign featuring an AI-powered "Meetings Dream Machine." Event professionals worldwide used the online platform to visualize innovative meeting concepts, while VIP planners experienced a deeper engagement in mirror-lined environments where creative exercises culminated in using the same Dream Machine to bring their ideas to life.

This strategic layering connected the exclusive physical experience with the accessible digital platform, transforming isolated touchpoints into an integrated ecosystem. By providing multiple pathways for engagement across time and space, the experience extended beyond initial interactions, reinforcing Radisson's innovative positioning while generating continued value through widespread participation and social sharing.

LIVING IP

Living & Evolving experiences create value through deliberate design for ongoing development and change. Unlike static experiences with fixed endpoints, this approach establishes adaptive frameworks that respond to participant engagement, cultural shifts, and emerging possibilities. By creating mechanisms that capture, evaluate, and implement feedback, designers can transform one-time activations into dynamic systems where audience contributions directly influence the experience's growth.

The strength of this approach lies in balancing openness to evolution with consistency of purpose, allowing for meaningful change while maintaining thematic coherence and brand integrity. Drawing inspiration from fan communities, cultural institutions, and sporting frameworks, Living & Evolving experiences continue to generate value long after their initial launch, creating sustained engagement through their capacity to respond and adapt.

Burning Man, Susan Becker

LIVING & EVOLVING IP

KEY DESIGN ELEMENTS

Feedback Loops

Methods to capture, analyze, and implement audience input in real time.

Co-Created Ecosystems

Frameworks that enable community contributions within defined boundaries.

Narrative Building

By designing around these elements, brands and organizations can build narratives that remain culturally relevant while growing through authentic audience engagement.

The Sphere

The Sphere in Las Vegas represents a new model of adaptive, experiential entertainment, where technology-driven content creates an ever-changing, audience-responsive environment. Unlike traditional venues, The Sphere's programmable LED exosphere and immersive 16K interior screen allow for a modular storytelling framework, where visuals, branding, and artistic direction can continuously shift depending on the event, cultural context, or audience engagement. The exterior exosphere functions as a dynamic media canvas, evolving daily with real-time visual takeovers, brand collaborations, and interactive content that can respond to cultural moments or live social engagement. Inside, U2's UV Achtung Baby Live residency was custom-built for The Sphere's unique capabilities, featuring visuals that adapted to each show, immersive digital environments that surrounded audiences, and a setlist that evolved with the performance [9]. This flexibility extends to future productions, where a variety of content, from live concerts to immersive films (e.g. Darren Aronofsky's Postcard from Earth [10]) can be reprogrammed and updated, ensuring The Sphere remains a living, evolving entertainment platform rather than a static venue.

THe Sphere, Las Vegas

The Jejune Institute (2008-2011)

The Jejune Institute (2008-2011) represents one of the most innovative examples of a living, evolving experience driven by participant engagement. Created by artist Jeff Hull and his group Nonchalance, this alternate reality game transformed San Francisco into an interactive narrative landscape where over 10,000 participants uncovered mysteries scattered throughout the city. What distinguished The Jejune Institute was its ability to evolve based on collective player actions. Puzzles were solved communally, large-scale events brought participants together physically, and the narrative adapted to community discoveries and interpretations.

The experience's impact extended beyond its official conclusion, with participants creating their own spinoff experiences (like the Elsewhere Philatelic Society) and inspiring Hull's subsequent projects, including yhe Latitude Society and SYGNYL. The Jejune Institute demonstrated how carefully designed frameworks can enable genuine co-creation, where boundaries between creators and participants blur, resulting in experiences that continuously transform through meaningful engagement and collective meaning-making.

PILLAR 5
LIVING IP - C2 CASE STUDY

C2 Labs

Since its inception in 2012, C2 Montréal has functioned as a living laboratory for experiential design, with each edition responding and adapting to participant behaviour. At the heart of this evolution are our signature Labs—innovative experiences situated at the crossroads of workshops, masterclasses, and immersive environments.

Our approach emerged from a simple insight: meaningful transformation requires more than traditional content delivery. We needed to create spaces where participants could explore ideas through direct experience rather than passive observation. Our breakthrough came during the 2014-2016 period, when we developed environments specifically designed to disrupt conventional thinking patterns. Early innovations like "Pool" invited masked participants to explore concepts in ball-filled spaces, while "Cloud" immersed them in fog where they could hear but not see each other. By 2016, we had further refined our approach with experiences like "Net", suspending conversations high above the ground, and "Channel", where participants reached for random telephone receivers to engage with strangers.

These Labs were not merely memorable moments but carefully crafted spaces where the conventional rules of business interaction were temporarily suspended. By designing responsive frameworks rather than fixed experiences, each Lab became unique to its participants. The feedback from each interaction directly shaped subsequent iterations, creating an organic evolution from year to year.

This approach allowed us to maintain the recognizable C2 DNA while continuously reinventing how participants engage with our content and each other. Rather than delivering a stagnant product year after year, we built an experience that grows alongside its community, transforming C2 from a moment-in-time event into an ongoing relationship between our organization and the evolving needs of our participants.

We believe Generative Experiences create three distinct layers of impact that work together to deliver unprecedented value in three ways: Economic, Collective, and Personal.

Value Creation & Metrics

VALUE CREATION

Roblox exemplifies this economic value creation through its user-generated content ecosystem. By empowering players to create and monetize their own games and virtual items, Roblox has built a thriving economy that generated over $2.2 billion in revenue in 2023. This player-driven approach has extended the platform's lifecycle far beyond what a traditional game development model could achieve, with creators collectively earning over $750 million annually from their contributions.

Economic Value

Generative Experiences drive economic value for organizations by extending engagement lifecycles, creating new monetization opportunities, and building deeper customer relationships that translate directly to business growth.

VALUE CREATION

The "Swifties" phenomenon demonstrates how communities of interest can develop around participatory experiences. Taylor Swift's team masterfully designs for co-creation, embedding puzzle-like "Easter eggs" that transform passive listeners into collaborative interpreters while embracing fan-initiated rituals like friendship bracelet exchanges [11]. By offering multi-dimensional engagement pathways and continuously evolving based on fan activities, Swift has created a feedback loop where enthusiasts shape the experience itself. This deliberate approach to community engagement has transformed her tours into self-sustaining cultural movements, driving unprecedented ticket demand and media attention while creating lasting bonds between previously unconnected individuals.

Collective Value

Generative Experiences create, reinforce, and extend communities of interest by fostering genuine connections around shared creation, enabling collective problem solving, and transforming passive audiences into active, invested participants with lasting ties to both the experience and each other.

Taylor Swift, Getty Images

VALUE CREATION

Burning Man illustrates the personal transformation enabled by truly generative experiences. Each year, tens of thousands of participants build an entire city in the Nevada desert based on principles of radical self-expression and participation. "Burners" report profound personal growth through the experience of creating art installations, organizing theme camps, and contributing to the temporary community. The annual ritual has become a catalyst for life changes, creative breakthroughs, and skill development that participants carry back into their everyday lives.

Personal Value

Generative Experiences deliver personal value to individual participants through meaningful participation, skill development, and the profound satisfaction that comes from seeing one's contributions shape something larger than oneself.

Burning Man, Julian Walter

Creating New Tools to Track Generative Impact

Let's be clear: tracking these multi-dimensional impacts presents significant challenges. Comprehensive long-term measurement has long been the impossible dream of experience creators, especially in the B2B segment where attribution models struggle to fully connect experiences to business outcomes. Generative brings even more complexity, as existing frameworks were simply not built to capture value that emerges gradually, manifests across multiple touchpoints, or takes shape through community dynamics.

However, emerging technologies and the inherent structure of Generative Experiences themselves are creating unprecedented measurement opportunities. By combining AI-powered analytics with real-time feedback loops, community sentiment tracking, and longitudinal studies, we can now quantify what was previously considered intangible. For experiences where value creation is both deeper and more distributed,

these new measurement capabilities aren't just beneficial, they are essential to capturing their full impact.

Organizations that develop these measurement approaches—combining immediate metrics with long-term value indicators—will be best positioned to demonstrate the full ROI of their Generative Experience investments. Success requires a thoughtful blend of quantitative assessment, qualitative insight, and longitudinal tracking that matches the richness and complexity of the experiences themselves.

METRICS

Measuring the impact of Generative Experiences presents distinct challenges. Traditional experience metrics—attendance numbers, satisfaction scores, social media impressions, and direct revenue—capture only a fraction of the value these experiences create.

The challenge stems from several factors. First, value emerges over time rather than being fully realized at the moment of experience. Second, many benefits manifest across multiple touchpoints beyond the core experience itself. Third, different types of Generative Experiences yield different patterns of value creation.

Digital-first experiences like gaming platforms and online communities have a measurement advantage through their ability to track user behaviour, creative contributions, and network effects in real time. Physical experiences require more intentional measurement frameworks to capture their full impact.

Traditional Experiential KPIs include:

- Attendance and participation numbers
- Net Promoter Score (NPS) and satisfaction surveys
- Social media impressions and engagement
- Direct revenue (ticket sales, merchandise, sponsorships)
- Media coverage and earned impressions

While these traditional metrics remain relevant, they fail to capture the distinctive value creation mechanisms of Generative Experiences. A more comprehensive measurement approach includes:

1. Revived Community Engagement

Introducing genuine surprise and unpredictability cuts through audience fatigue, creating memorable moments that reignite a sense of awe and unity.

→ *Measurable Through*: Post-Experience Expression, Content Lifespan, Physiological Response Patterns

2. Accelerated Collective Intelligence

Leveraging community creativity and input through player agency sparks innovation that exceeds what brands and organizations could develop independently.

→ *Measurable Through*: Idea Diversity Index, Cross-Team Knowledge Sharing, Network Density and Effects

3. Expansive Brand Ecosystems

Translating experience into new channels and touchpoints helps intellectual property evolve alongside culture, extending the lifespan and impact of brand and organizational investments.

→ *Measurable Through*: Emergent Brand Evolution, Extended Engagement Lifecycles, Cross-Platform Participation

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Applying the GenXP Pillars

Given the significant potential of Generative Experiences, organizations might be tempted to apply these principles universally. However, effective implementation requires strategic consideration. Not every experience needs to be (or should be) generative. Understanding the appropriate contexts and conditions for applying these principles is crucial for success.

With a clear understanding of both the principles and implementation considerations for Generative Experiences, organizations can now position themselves to capitalize on this emerging paradigm.

Audience Desire for Participation

Are participants seeking control, adaptation, or creative input? Look for engagement with interactive content, community-building behaviours, or feedback requesting more input opportunities.

Adaptable Frameworks

Consider whether your existing experiences have elements that could be opened to greater participant input, even in limited ways. Start with small feedback loops before building comprehensive systems.

Combination Opportunities

Identify where digital elements could enhance physical experiences (or vice versa) without requiring complete restructuring of your approach.

Scalable Resources

Assess whether you can allocate resources incrementally to support evolution, rather than making a massive upfront investment. Generative elements can be added progressively but require maintenance.

Core Value Alignment

Determine if a more participatory approach enhances rather than distracts from your primary objectives and values.

HOW TO DETERMINE READINESS

1.

What level of unpredictability and co-creation can your model support?

2.

Do you have a system for continuous engagement and feedback?

3.

How will success be measured beyond traditional engagement metrics?

4.

Can your organizational culture embrace participant co-creation and shared ownership?

5.

What mechanisms will ensure the experiences generated maintain quality and brand alignment?

KEY QUESTIONS FOR IMPLEMENTATION

THE FUTURE OF EXPERIENCE IS *Generative*

The Experience Economy is evolving as audiences seek greater agency, expecting experiences that adapt, evolve, and respond in real time.

For brands, organizations, and experience designers looking to meet these new expectations, Generative Experiences represent an entirely new model of interaction—one where experiences are not just consumed but co-created, where audiences are not just participants but architects of meaning, and where engagement is no longer a moment in time but an ongoing, living ecosystem. This transformation will be further accelerated by AI, real-time interaction models, and decentralized co-creation platforms.
More than merely meeting expectations, Generative Experiences foster shared cultural moments, collective intelligence, and expansive brand ecosystems, extending experiential value into community mobilization, innovation, intellectual property, and new revenue streams.

We believe this shift from passive consumption to active participation represents more than a trend—it is an invitation to shape the future of engagement through agency, creativity, and co-creation.

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