

## PwC | Diamond Winner

### Orchestrating Executive Engagement

Technological advances accelerate at a rate well beyond the pace of change and adoption for corporations. Business leaders understand this: 69% of CEOs in PwC's 23rd Annual Global CEO Survey are worried about the speed of change in technology and they're struggling to keep pace. Yet just 20% said they've made significant progress in getting smart about technology and its potential implications for their business.

Recognizing an opportunity to help executives accelerate their understanding of technology and where it is headed, PwC's Emerging Tech practice analyzed the business impact and commercial viability of more than 250 emerging technologies and zeroed in on the "Essential Eight" technologies. While the Essential Eight are critical for companies to remain competitive, it's the convergence of the essential new technologies that yields powerful business solutions greater than the sum of their parts.

Thus, PwC brought together its Emerging Tech practice, marketing team, creative team, and external partners to help executives create a memorable connection to these technologies and see how they are transforming the lives of customers, businesses and society.

This cross-functional group conceptualized the **Emerging Technology Exchange**, which immerses executives in first-hand experiences to show how emerging technologies can grow their businesses and their bottom line. The goal was to demonstrate in a hands-on, interactive environment, how and why executives need to start experimenting now with new technologies—as well as understand powerful capabilities that are available already. The theme for the Exchange was "humanizing the autonomous enterprise."

The Emerging Technology Exchange included the Next Tech Studio, a tech playground where leaders tinkered with new technologies and learned from shared experiences with their peers. During the 1 1/2-day program, executives interacted with technologies that demonstrated how robotics, artificial intelligence (AI), extended reality, IoT, data intelligence, and blockchain can enhance their processes, manage their workforces, and create memorable customer experiences. PwC's "show, not tell" philosophy made the Emerging Tech Exchange different.

PwC also brought in speakers and technologists to discuss nascent applications of emerging technologies, and what is necessary—platforms, skills, processes—to support them as they experiment and scale. For example, Digital Anthropologist Rahaf Harfoush addressed what it means to be human in a world where machines can now replicate what used to make us unique and how we can strive to find the right balance to avoid burnout.

At the Emerging Technology Exchange, executives experienced a variety of technologies:

- They wore a VR headset and gloves which radiated haptic feedback to create the sensation that they were really manipulating their environment. Imagine learning to fix machinery or playing video games where you can physically feel if your movement creates the desired reaction on an object.
- They tried on Immersive wearables and interfaces that can augment human capabilities, including robotic devices that reduce injury risk and improve productivity of industrial workers when lifting heavy loads in a factory.
- They saw an autonomous four-legged robot capable of solving various inspection tasks with a wide range of sensors in challenging and dangerous industrial environments.
- They learned about new research in computer voice recognition and AI that can be used to profile humans from their voice. This team is currently working with researchers around the world to develop an automated AI system that can detect signatures of COVID-19 infection in the human voice.

One of the primary reasons clients attend live programs is for networking, so the team brought together a community of people that executives really need to know if they are embracing new technology. This community brought their insights as well as their technology and forged new relationships with participants.

Promoting the program directly through a partner network and maintaining a strict invitation-only policy on attendance created a small, trusted community. The program was capped at 50 C-level Executives from top priority accounts to create an intimate environment where clients could strategically connect. The exclusivity of the event was reinforced by direct partner outreach to ensure clients were creating a network with fellow executives.

The Emerging Technology Exchange was incredibly timely in helping executives understand emerging technologies and how they are converging to unleash new possibilities in business and society. The program exceeded PwC's goal, driving revenue 25X higher than the cost of the program, more than doubling the previous year's results, and deepening executives' appreciation for the depth of PwC's technology capabilities. This program, planned before the COVID crisis, turned out to be even more relevant as the pandemic has accelerated many trends around tech adoption and digital transformation.

