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# The Topics And Trends CMOs Were Most Interested In And Talking About At CES 2019: Study



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It's clear that everyone has a different experience at and perspective on the Consumer Electronics Show. The event is so massive and multidimensional that it's inevitable to have no two people experience it exactly the same way.

Still, CMOs' CES experience is one unto its own. Increasingly, CMOs have been attending CES, a reflection of the new reality that **CMOs control an increasing amount** of the technology investments at companies these days—a result of the need to get closer to and create better, more customized and more effective customer engagement than ever before, driven by technology.

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But what at this year's show most attracted CMOs' attention? What topics did they find most interesting? And what were they most talking about?

Quantifying CMOs' experience of CES in the main, the topics they were most interested in and talking about, arguably could serve as a revealing indicator of where their priorities lie and how they're considering tech and growth investments in 2019.

In an exclusive study conducted for Forbes, digital-research firm [MavenMagnet](#) did just that—it revealed the topics at CES CMOs were most interested in and talking about—providing a picture of where CMOs are leaning in in terms of technology and growth initiatives moving forward. And it's not all bytes and bots. From closed-door conversations about women's leadership, to initiatives and awards focused on CMOs' driving diversity and inclusion priorities, to continuing discussions about the importance of maintaining the humanity of brands in a tech-driven world, to networking between marketers and agency executives, to celebratory parties, the marketing industry's splash at CES includes far more than interest in smart refrigerators, selfie drones and autonomous cars.

The study analyzed conversations, posts and interviews of 132 CMOs from Jan. 4 to Jan. 11.

“Marketing innovation, led by data-driven marketing and personalization, was the most discussed topic among CMOs at CES 2019,” according to the study. “The advent of concurrent technologies like 5G/IoT, AI etc. that are aiding access as well as analysis of big data is driving the trend of data-driven marketing. Product as well as communication personalization is another big trend that is being led by personalized experiences, intelligent products and new-age touchpoints.”

Indeed, key topics within the marketing innovation bucket include social media/digital platforms, intelligent products, and innovative touchpoints.



Key themes among CMOs at CES.

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But the second most interesting and talked-about topic among CMOs at CES was brand fundamentals—including the topics of consumer centricity and storytelling.

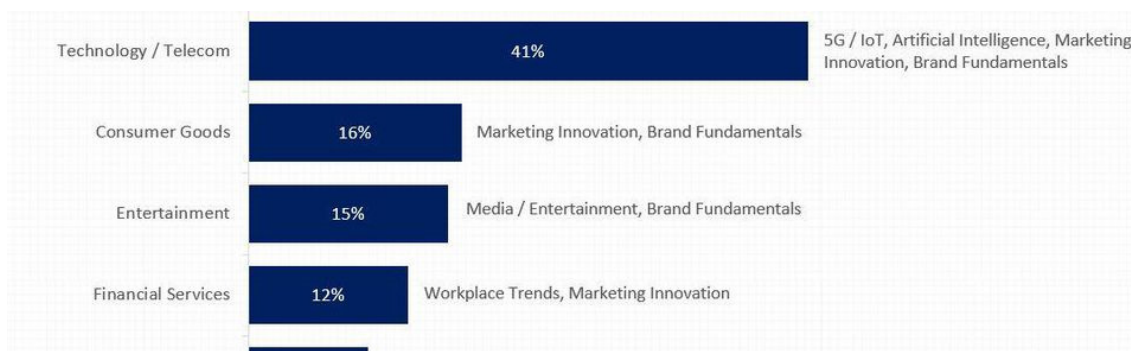
The height in importance of brand fundamentals, a focus on customers, even amid the din of the latest and most alluring new technology, aligns with the dominant theme that came out of this year's [Forbes CMO Summit](#)—the concept of the importance of the human at the center of brand engagement, even as data, digital and new platforms bring new complexity and automation to marketing.

Artificial intelligence was the third most interesting topic to CMOs, followed by 5G and IoT. But those topics are closely followed by workplace trends—topics like the role and skillsets of the marketer and diversity and inclusion initiatives—and, after smart mobility, management principles—things like leadership and strategic partnerships

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Indeed, the soft skills are peppered among the hard skills, the topics related to human resources and managing people and creating effective and meaningful brand engagement.

The research identified the individual trends that resonated within the top topics. For example, within the topic of marketing innovation, which accounted for 30% of commonly discussed topics among CMOs, data-driven marketing and personalized experience were key trends. And within the topic of brand fundamentals, which accounted for 25% of commonly discussed topics among CMOs at CES, customer centricity and storytelling dominated. Within the topic of artificial intelligence, data analytics (45%) was followed by smart assistants (27%) and proprietary use cases (23%). Meanwhile, CMOs' engagement with 5G/IoT was driven by their excitement about the technologies' potential and use cases across sectors, according to the report, impacting cars, phones, augmented reality.





Key topics within top themes.

Marketers’ changing role and the new skillsets required to meet the demands of a tech-driven world drove conversations around workplace trends, accounting for 65% of such conversations, while the topic of diversity accounted for 29% of discussions related to workplace trends.

Interestingly, within the topic of media and entertainment, which accounted for only 10% of CMOs’ conversations and interest at CES, according to the study, digital content delivery was the topic that accounted for 50% of conversations, followed by voice technology and personalization.

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The study also found that CMOs from technology and telecommunications companies dominated discussions at CES, accounting for 41% of engaged chief marketers at the event—certainly, to be expected. But following that were CMOs from consumer goods companies (16%), entertainment (15%), financial services (12%), automotive (9%), and marketing and advertising companies (7%).

The study also revealed engagement themes by sector: The dominant theme for technology and telecommunications CMOs was 5G/IoT; for consumer goods CMOs was marketing innovation; for entertainment CMOs was media and entertainment; for financial services CMOs was workplace trends; for automotive CMOs was smart mobility; and for marketing and advertising company CMOs was brand fundamentals.