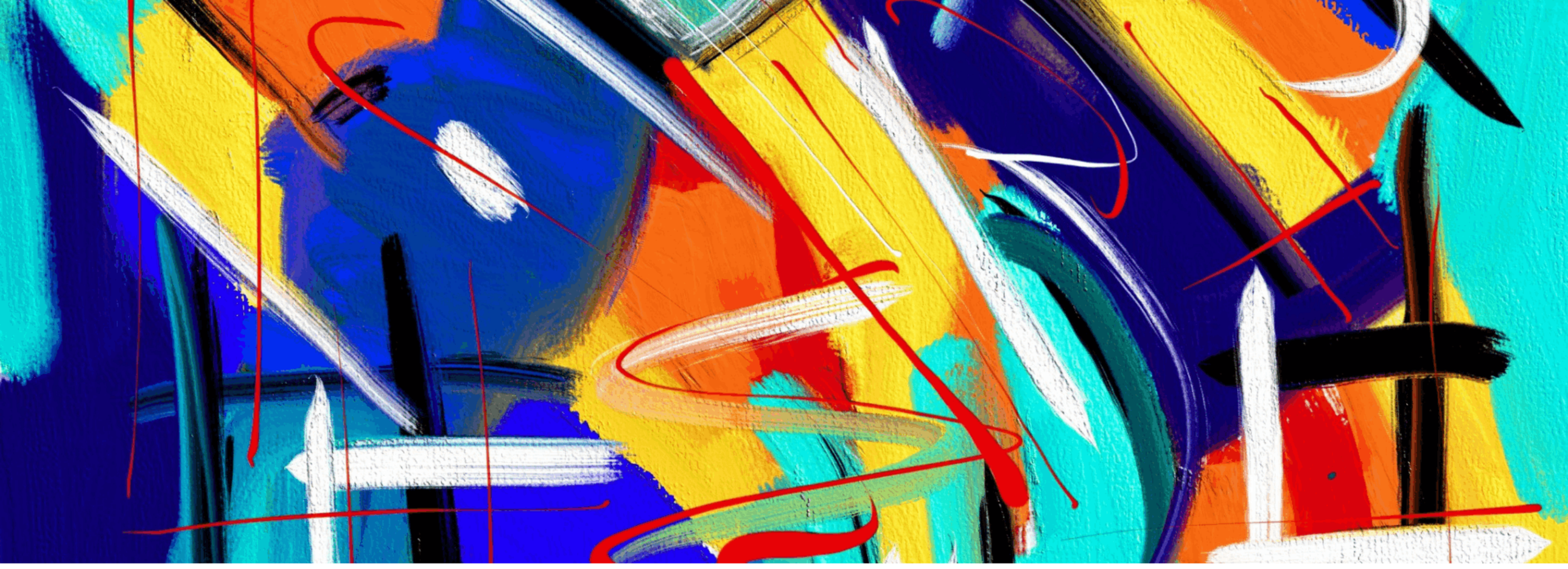


Designing agentic experiences

Communication Experience and the future of digital brands

Finpace

Foreword

Executive perspective

“The next generation of product design will shape the judgement software exercises between a customer's intention and its fulfilment.”

Over the past decade digital design has supported increasingly sophisticated interactions across screens while preserving a familiar relationship in which people choose visible actions and receive feedback on the results. Buttons have become more refined and menus have moved between devices, yet the person using a product still carries much of the responsibility for deciding how its functions should come together. Agentic experiences begin to change that relationship by allowing software to interpret an intention and determine part of the work needed to fulfil it.

The significance extends beyond a more convenient way to operate an application. When someone delegates an outcome, the service acquires responsibility for decisions that would otherwise have appeared as individual interactions, potentially continuing its work after the conversation ends. Interaction designers will increasingly shape how software exercises that responsibility, with the quality of the experience depending on whether the system understands what matters to the person and preserves that meaning as circumstances change.

This is the transition towards **Communication Experience**. The central design problem becomes how a person and an intelligent service establish enough shared understanding to work together, with language carrying intentions that develop into action. Screen composition will give way to a broader concern with how the relationship unfolds, requiring a different account of what makes a service intuitive and a different set of skills for bringing it into operation.

The same transition will change how brands become recognisable. As more activity takes place through spoken or written exchanges, institutions will have fewer occasions to express identity through an owned interface, while their agents speak and make decisions in situations that a visual guideline cannot fully anticipate. Character will emerge through the language of the exchange and the judgement exercised on the customer's behalf, turning brand expression into a continuing property of the service.

The opportunity is to make sophisticated services accessible through relationships that people can understand, allowing complexity to recede without making responsibility disappear. Institutions that achieve this will offer a different kind of digital confidence, built through the experience of being understood and seeing that understanding carried into the work performed on their behalf.



When intention becomes the starting point

Most digital products ask people to translate their purpose into the structure of an application, identifying the relevant function before supplying the information it needs. Even an exceptionally intuitive interface assumes that the user can recognise the next operation, leaving the larger task of connecting those operations with the person. Familiarity makes that effort less visible, but it remains part of the work required to use software.

“You won’t have to use different apps for different tasks.”
Bill Gates

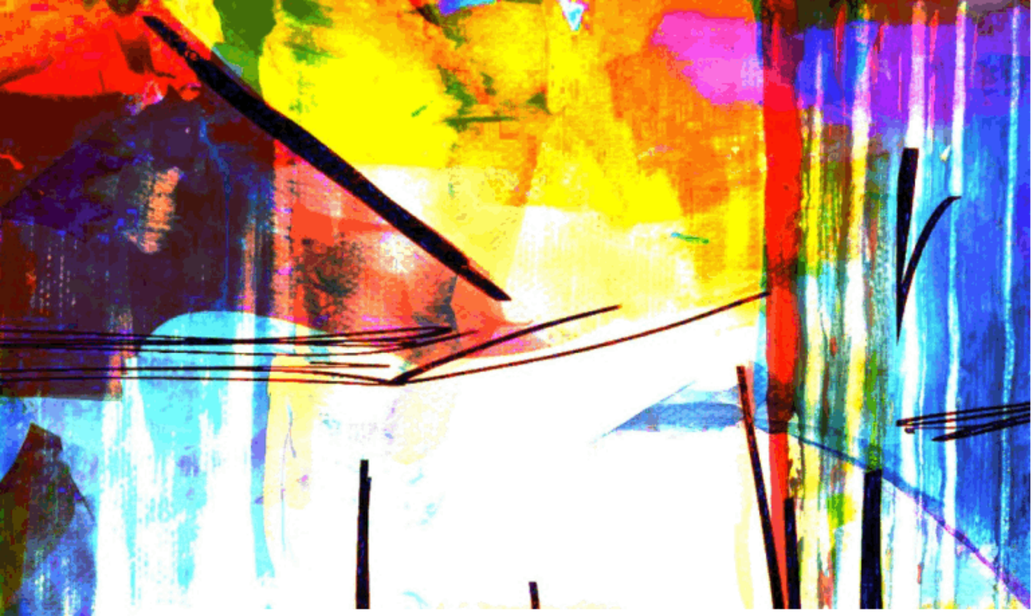
When intention becomes the starting point

Agentic services will increasingly begin with the outcome a person wants, interpreting the request before deciding which capabilities to bring into the task. The experience can therefore extend across applications whose boundaries matter to the organisation providing them but have little relevance to the customer's purpose. Product value will move towards the ability to coordinate that work, with navigation becoming one possible means of participation rather than the organising logic of the whole relationship.

This vision creates a different competitive question for product teams, because reducing the effort of finding a function will deliver only part of the benefit. The greater opportunity lies in reducing the translation people perform between their intentions and the operations available to them, allowing the service to carry more of the burden of working out how an outcome should be reached. Interfaces will become more responsive to the task as it develops, with visible controls appearing where direct inspection or adjustment helps the person decide.

Fewer interactions will provide an incomplete measure of that progress. In a controlled content management task involving 73 participants, an agent interface reduced mean clicks by approximately 43% without a significant reduction in completion time. Waiting and checking continued to require effort, illustrating why the commercial value of delegation will depend on the work removed from the whole experience.

The disappearance of a familiar screen will consequently matter less than the disappearance of unnecessary coordination. Where customers can express their purpose in terms they already understand, the institution gains an opportunity to make a complex service feel accessible without requiring the customer to learn its internal organisation.



This changes the relationship between interface content and product behaviour. Language will need to be designed with an understanding of what the system can actually do, while the system will need a dependable way to retain the meaning established through the exchange. Institutions will increasingly compete on how naturally that relationship works, with understanding becoming something the customer can observe through the conduct of the service.

“Communication becomes the experience when the words that establish an intention also set the conditions under which the service acts.”



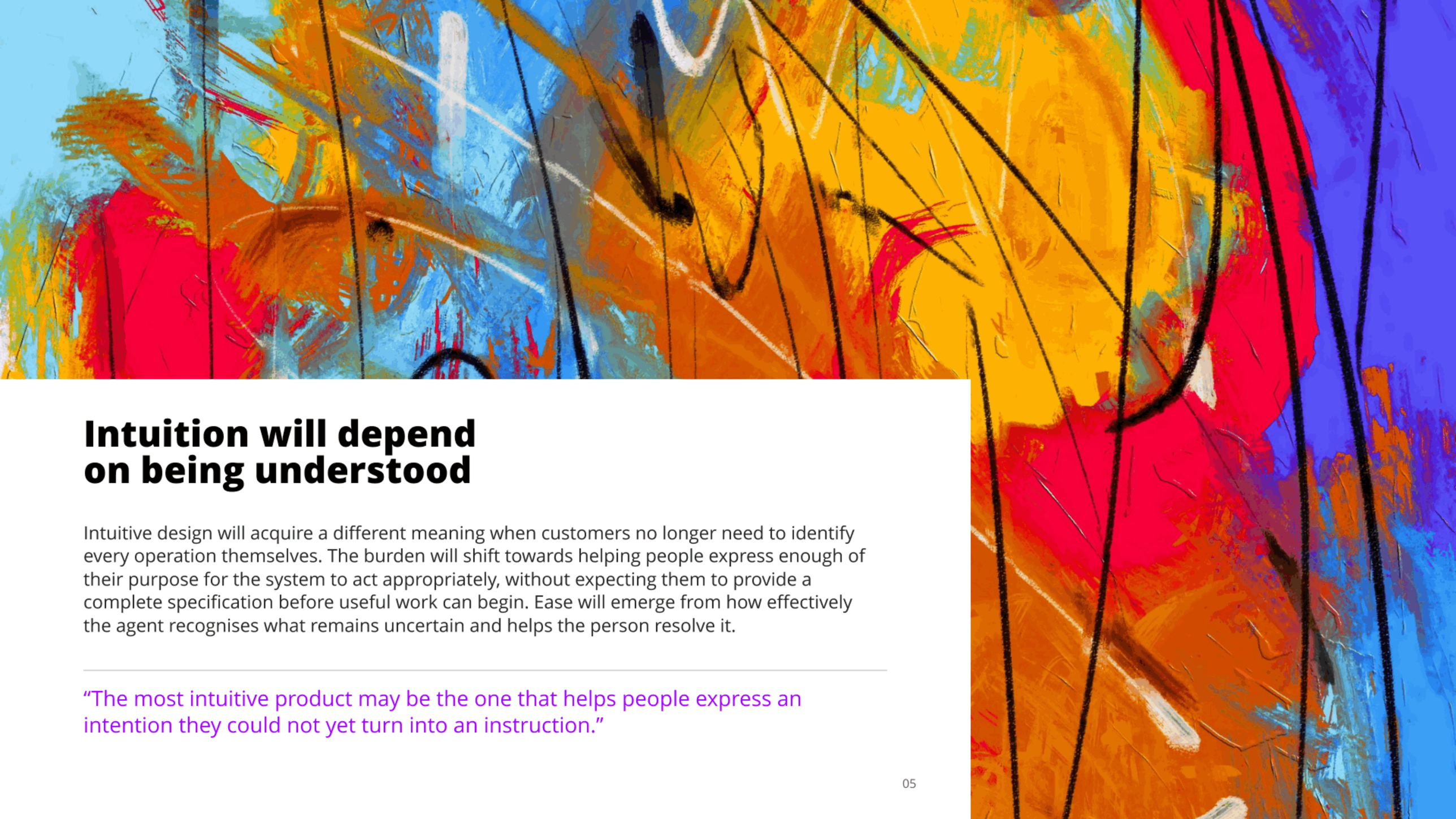
Communication becomes the product experience

Communication Experience will become an organising discipline for services that interpret intent and act on it, bringing the formation of an agreement into the centre of product design. Words will influence which work is undertaken and what the customer expects to happen, giving the exchange a role in defining the product itself. Its quality will depend on how well the service develops an understanding it can reliably use.

Unlike a fixed journey, the conversation will evolve as the person discovers what they want and the system encounters new information. Meaning may develop over several exchanges, with an apparent instruction becoming a question once its implications are understood. Designing for this requires a service to participate in clarifying the purpose of the work, rather than treating every sentence as an independent command with an immediately available answer.

The distinction becomes clear in an illustrative request to make better use of money left in an account. Holding EUR 5,000 says little about which funds the customer regards as available, particularly when EUR 2,000 is needed for rent on Friday. Before proposing an action, the agent needs to establish how the customer's desire for a better return relates to the need for access, turning an informal request into an agreement that can guide the next decision.

Within this experience, the wording of a question affects the quality of the resulting service. Asking how much must remain available, and until when, helps the customer articulate a constraint that a balance alone cannot reveal. Once agreed, that condition becomes part of what the product is expected to honour, even if the conversation moves to a different aspect of the task.



Intuition will depend on being understood

Intuitive design will acquire a different meaning when customers no longer need to identify every operation themselves. The burden will shift towards helping people express enough of their purpose for the system to act appropriately, without expecting them to provide a complete specification before useful work can begin. Ease will emerge from how effectively the agent recognises what remains uncertain and helps the person resolve it.

“The most intuitive product may be the one that helps people express an intention they could not yet turn into an instruction.”

Intuition will depend on being understood

This makes the timing of a question part of product intelligence. Interrupting too early can require customers to make decisions they do not yet understand, while proceeding too far can turn an unexamined assumption into an unwanted outcome. The experience will need to reveal the next meaningful choice at the point where its consequences become clear, allowing precision to develop with the task.

Customers will also expect freedom to revise an intention without reconstructing the entire exchange. When a preference changes, the service should be able to determine which part of the agreement has changed and what that means for work already undertaken. Intuition will depend partly on the continuity of this understanding, because repeated explanation makes the person responsible for maintaining the relationship between the conversation and the task.

Visible information will remain valuable where it helps someone compare alternatives or inspect a commitment. The more consequential change lies in how that information appears, with the interface increasingly assembled around the decision at hand and the context established through the exchange. Comparisons can become useful because of what the agent has understood, while a persistent control can make an agreed constraint easier to change.

Delivering this experience will require evaluation of how meaning develops across an interaction, since answering each individual turn plausibly does not establish that the continuing task remains coherent. Evidence of models losing track of requirements across multiple turns makes this a practical design concern, with the future value of conversational systems resting partly on their ability to preserve an evolving agreement.

The experience will outlive the screen

Delegation changes the duration of a digital relationship because an agent may continue working while the customer turns their attention elsewhere. The experience will therefore include intervals in which there is no active interaction, yet the service still carries an expectation about what it should accomplish. Continuity will depend on making that ongoing responsibility understandable whenever the person returns.

Progress communication will become part of the service's credibility. In the cash management example, finding a suitable option establishes a different state from receiving permission to move funds, while a submitted transfer may still await settlement. Customers will need to understand the difference through language that follows the actual work, allowing confidence to develop from what the service can confirm.

The timing of communication will matter as much as its accuracy, because an agent that reports every internal event can recreate the burden delegation was intended to remove. Judgement about when to speak will depend on whether new information changes the customer's decision or the agreement governing the task. Quiet operation can become a valuable part of the experience when the institution has made clear what remains under way and when the customer should expect to hear from it.

Memory will extend this relationship across future encounters, allowing an institution to build continuity without asking customers to repeat what remains relevant. Its value will depend on whether retained information remains open to correction and whether the agent can distinguish an enduring preference from a condition that belonged to an earlier task.

Remembering more will contribute little if the service cannot recognise when the meaning of that information has changed.

Across devices, continuity will also require sensitivity to the setting in which communication takes place. Spoken interaction may begin within another activity, while a written summary may provide a better way to inspect a consequential decision later. The design challenge will be to preserve the same agreement as the relationship moves between these forms, allowing the device to serve the interaction without making its boundaries the customer's concern.

The resulting experience will feel dependable when customers can leave the interaction and return without losing their understanding of what the service is doing. That ability will become a meaningful expression of convenience, because useful autonomy gives people back attention as well as reducing visible effort.



Language and execution become one product

Communication Experience will require a technical foundation capable of carrying meaning into action, because a service cannot sustain a credible conversation about work whose state it cannot establish. The agent's language will need to remain connected to the systems that perform the task, making the relationship between interpretation and execution part of the product architecture.

“With agents, we can now macro delegate and micro steer.”
Satya Nadella

Language and execution become one product

This direction implies a product that can accept a broad purpose while preserving opportunities for specific human judgement as the work develops. The underlying system will need to distinguish what the customer wants from what the agent has inferred, retaining enough context to revisit an assumption when new information changes its relevance. Research on the architecture of language agents helps establish the technical basis for this continuing decision process.

In the cash management example, the agreed reserve must influence the operation that moves funds, rather than surviving only as a sentence in the conversation. The experience becomes dependable when the condition remains effective throughout execution and the system can explain its effect on an available choice. Product designers will therefore need to understand how an intention is represented beyond the interface, because that representation determines what the agent can reliably honour.

The same architecture will need to distinguish information from authority. Reading a document may help an agent understand a task, but instructions contained within that document cannot automatically acquire the standing of the customer's request. Where software gains greater ability to act, preserving the origin of an instruction becomes part of whether the service's behaviour remains consistent with the relationship the customer believes they have entered.

Generative interfaces will add another dimension by allowing the visible experience to adapt to the work in progress. Screens may be composed around a temporary decision, with language providing the context needed to understand why particular information has appeared. The quality of that interface will depend on a shared account of the task, connecting what the customer sees with what the system is preparing to do.

Institutions will increasingly need to design this connection as a single product capability. Fluent language becomes commercially useful when its commitments survive the passage into operational systems, allowing the customer to experience the service as one coherent relationship from intention through fulfilment.

Designers will become authors of behaviour

Designing agentic experiences will expand the craft of product design towards the specification of behaviour that develops through use. Teams will work with situations whose exact wording cannot be predicted and whose outcome depends partly on information revealed during the exchange. [46]

Conversation design will become more closely connected with an understanding of how people establish meaning. Recognising whether a customer is exploring an option or committing to it requires sensitivity to implication, particularly when the words alone leave room for interpretation. These skills will help determine how the service asks a useful question and how it recognises that an earlier understanding needs to change.

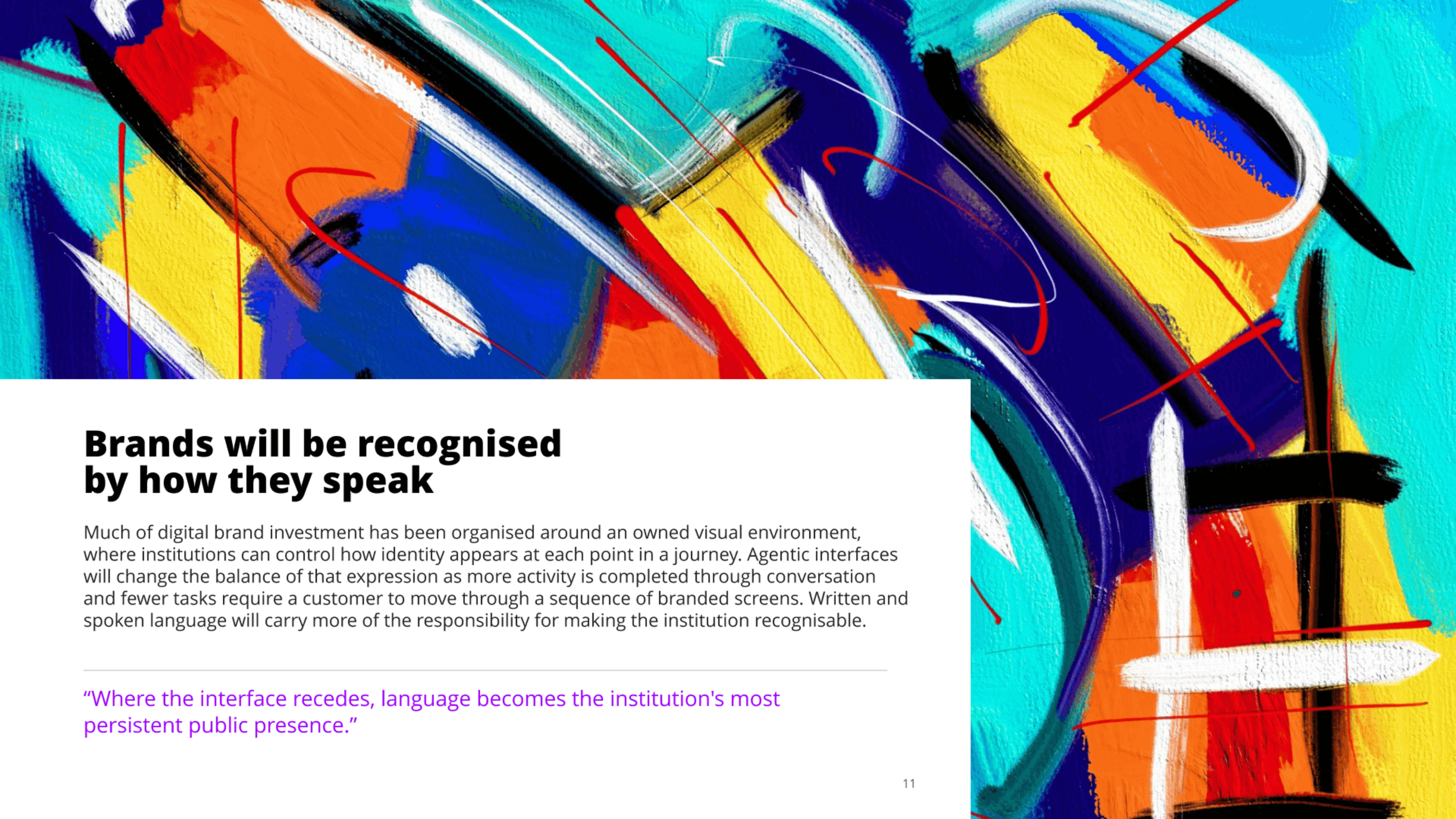
Domain expertise will acquire a more direct role in experience design as the meaning of a request often depends on conditions outside the conversation. In the previous example, understanding which funds remain available requires a workable account of obligations and timing. Designers will need sufficient knowledge of the underlying service to recognise where an apparently simple response would conceal a materially different decision.

Prototyping will also become more behavioural, with teams exploring how an agent handles a developing situation rather than reviewing only a sequence of finished screens. Inspectable intermediate steps will allow a proposed interpretation to be examined before its consequences become difficult to revise. In a controlled evaluation involving 20 participants, independent raters preferred outputs produced through inspectable model chains in 85 and 80 percent of comparisons, showing how interaction design can improve results with the same underlying model.

Brand specialists will participate in this work through a more operational understanding of voice, while engineers will need precise descriptions of the conduct the institution intends to express. New roles are likely to develop around this meeting of language and system behaviour, with their value resting on an ability to translate an institutional intention into a service that remains recognisable across situations. The distinctive skill will be making that intention work beyond the examples used to describe it.

Teams will need skills in modelling shared understanding and testing decisions across exchanges, joining language judgement with enough technical fluency to follow an interpretation into an operational system. This will change what counts as a design deliverable, as the description of intended behaviour becomes a working specification that can be evaluated against actual interactions.

“Design will increasingly determine what software understands about a person before it determines what that person sees.”



Brands will be recognised by how they speak

Much of digital brand investment has been organised around an owned visual environment, where institutions can control how identity appears at each point in a journey. Agentic interfaces will change the balance of that expression as more activity is completed through conversation and fewer tasks require a customer to move through a sequence of branded screens. Written and spoken language will carry more of the responsibility for making the institution recognisable.

“Where the interface recedes, language becomes the institution's most persistent public presence.”

Brands will be recognised by how they speak

Within that environment, identity will develop through how an agent frames a decision and the relationship it establishes with the customer. The degree of formality can indicate how the institution understands its role, while the detail provided around a commitment can reveal the judgement behind it. Repeated exchanges will allow customers to recognise a characteristic way of dealing with their needs, even when the wording changes.

Voice will make this expression more immediate because pace and intonation affect how the same words are understood. Responses intended to sound efficient can feel impatient when spoken too quickly, while an expression of confidence can become inappropriate when the underlying situation remains uncertain. Designing a recognisable voice will therefore require sensitivity to the human interpretations that accompany it, including social associations the institution has not deliberately chosen.

Distinctiveness will depend on more than selecting a personality for the model to imitate. The institution will need to decide how its voice adapts when the customer is uncertain and what remains consistent when the conversation becomes difficult. Research showing that prompted personalities vary across models reinforces the need to treat this as a continuing product responsibility, with changes to the technology capable of altering the character customers encounter.

Personalisation will make that responsibility more demanding, because an effective agent should be able to adapt its explanation without becoming a different institution for each customer. The brand will need a recognisable centre that survives variation in language and context. Over time, the strongest identity may be expressed through a way of communicating that customers trust to remain appropriate, with familiarity arising from the quality of judgement behind the words.



Brand governance will consequently reach into the decisions that shape product behaviour. Its role will include defining the commitments that should remain consistent as the agent adapts, allowing expression to vary while the institution's underlying position remains dependable. This creates an opportunity for a deeper form of differentiation, because a recognisable character can be experienced through the work the service performs as well as through the language used to describe it.

"Every decision made on a customer's behalf will carry an interpretation of the brand."

Brand promises will become observable decisions

Agentic experiences will bring brand identity closer to the exercise of institutional judgement, as customers will encounter the organisation through decisions made by it. The language of brand will influence what people believe the service has agreed to do, making the fulfilment of that agreement part of how its character is understood. Distinctiveness will become connected to conduct customers observe.

For an institution positioned around prudence, a defining moment may arise when a proposed action would conflict with an earlier commitment. In the cash management example, protecting the rent reserve gives that positioning an operational meaning, while explaining the constraint allows the customer to understand how it has influenced the result. The brand becomes credible through a decision that reflects its promise in a situation where a different action might have appeared more immediately attractive.

This will place greater weight on situations that conventional brand guidelines describe only broadly. How the agent responds when it lacks enough information will communicate the institution's relationship with uncertainty, while its treatment of a failed action will reveal how readily it accepts responsibility. These moments will have a disproportionate influence on perceived character because they show what the institution's stated values mean when the exchange becomes difficult.

Memory will introduce another test of judgement, giving company more context while creating a greater obligation to recognise what belongs in the present conversation. The future distinction will lie in how appropriately the agent uses what it knows, with evidence on excessive personalisation illustrating why successful recall alone provides an incomplete account of a good relationship.

The next era of digital differentiation

As delegation becomes more capable, institutions will increasingly compete on the quality of a relationship that can extend beyond the interface they own. Customers' preferred assistants may interpret a need and coordinate with providers, leaving each institution responsible for part of an outcome whose surrounding conversation takes place elsewhere. The strategic value of a digital channel will depend partly on whether it remains the place where the customer chooses to establish that relationship.

Providers participating through another interface will need qualities that remain identifiable when communicated by an intermediary. Clear commitments can survive that transition more readily than a carefully composed screen, while a dependable account of what happened gives the assistant something meaningful to convey about the institution responsible. Brand recognition will become connected with how well the provider's contribution can be understood within the customer's broader purpose.

Commercial evaluation will need to follow the same shift, accounting for the work people retain when they specify an intention and judge the result. Services that complete more steps independently may still impose considerable effort through repeated clarification or uncertain reporting. Their value will emerge from the quality of the whole delegated outcome, with cost and dependable completion providing a stronger basis for comparison than the volume of generated conversation.

This is where the implications for design and branding converge. Institutions will need a shared understanding of how their agents should behave, giving product teams a basis -for making communication useful and brand teams a way to make identity observable through the resulting service. The experience will become distinctive when the institution's character helps the customer understand what it is doing and why that conduct deserves continued confidence.

The next era of digital design will be defined by how well people can work with software that interprets their purpose, extending the craft beyond the arrangement of controls into the shaping of an intelligent relationship. Communication Experience gives this work its organising idea, bringing the quality of understanding into direct connection with the quality of execution. Brands that become recognisable through that relationship will carry their identity into decisions made on the customer's behalf, acquiring a presence that endures as the interface itself becomes less visible.

“Software will become easier to use when people can delegate complexity without losing the meaning of what they asked for.”

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