

# THE SUBTEXT OF THE TECH TALK

OUR VIEW FROM THE GROUND AT CES 2026

# A SHIFT IN TONE SIGNALS AI OPTIMISM

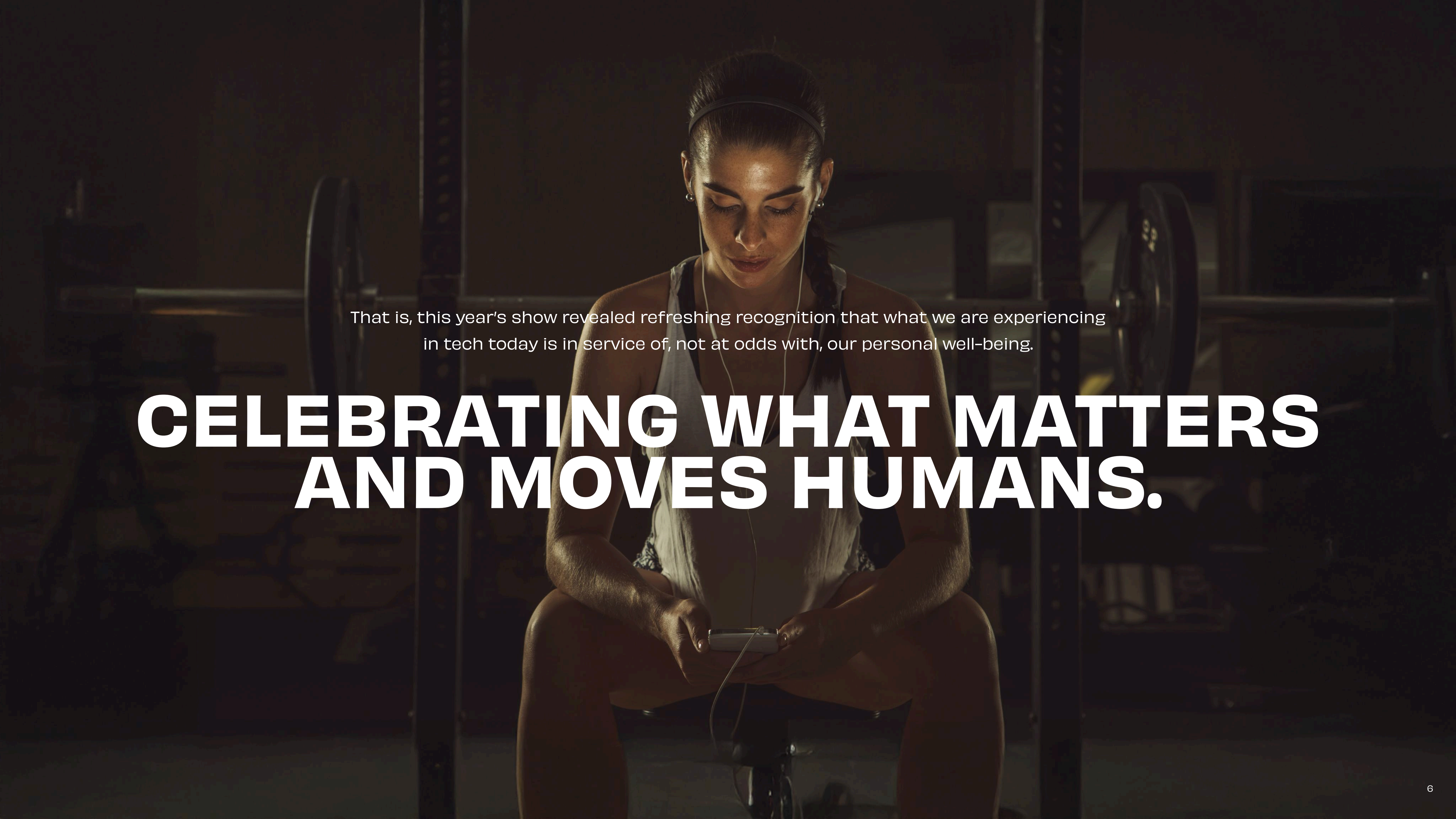
Beyond the shiny new objects and most talked about topics, we observed first-hand a palpable shift in tone at CES this year as it relates to AI's implications for humanity—indicating increasing acceptance of how our exponential advances in AI technology are empowering, not overriding, our personal human success.

This is telling of a shift in an underlying feeling toward AI...

**FROM  
~~PARANOIA~~ TO  
POSSIBILITY.**

**FROM  
~~THREAT~~ TO  
WINNING BET.**

**FROM  
~~ALIENATING~~ TO  
OFFERING AGENCY.**

A woman with dark hair tied back, wearing a white tank top and a headband, is sitting on a stationary bike in a dimly lit gym. She is looking down at a small device in her hands, possibly a smartphone or a fitness tracker. The background shows gym equipment like weight racks and barbells.

That is, this year's show revealed refreshing recognition that what we are experiencing  
in tech today is in service of, not at odds with, our personal well-being.

# CELEBRATING WHAT MATTERS AND MOVES HUMANS.

**UNDERNEATH  
THE MODELS &  
MACHINES LIES  
AN AGENDA:**

**KEEP HUMANS  
THRIVING**

The tonal shift we sensed came in the form of tech devoted to *enhancing the quality of life and wellbeing.*

Specifically:

- Keeping us alive longer via health diagnostics
- Reducing manual effort at home via connected tech
- Freeing up our time to focus on the things in life we love via robotics
- Accelerating our creativity via production platforms
- Improving our experiences via next gen displays & wearables

# THE "WHY" WITHIN THE WOW

# WHY DOES THIS MATTER TO BRANDS & MARKETERS?

In the context of LC's ambition and passion to build Personal Experience Brands (PXB's), this is an exciting tonal shift for us, because it signals new avenues for connections we can create between our brands and consumers.

It's a moment where the ascent of AI, and the technology it enables, can inspire conversations, innovations and creative expressions that fuel experiences that are more, not less, personal. Where utility, empathy, and trust for brands are felt through everyday interactions.

We see five primary implications for the impact of AI on creating Personal Experience Brands (PXB's), framed below in the context of the five key dimensions of our PXB Factor™ that define what we believe it takes to be a Personal Experience Brand.

AI, and the technology it is powering, will enable brands to be:

- 1. Inspirational**
- 2. Contextually Useful**
- 3. Human Centered**
- 4. Culturally Connected**
- 5. Dynamic**



# INSPIRATIONAL

AI is enabling the lived expression of the brand, turning brand values, tone, and utility into daily behaviors consumers feel, not just messages they hear (e.g., Samsung's Family Hub; LG's Affectionate Intelligence platform; Panasonic's Wellness Living platform).

**"Across the world, families are all facing their own unique set of challenges and struggles, and we are here to support them on their wellness journey."**

*– Yoky Matsuoka, CEO of Panasonic Well*

# CONTEXTUALLY USEFUL

AI enables brands to show up in new media channels at the right moment, in the right context, where the appliance itself became a contextual media channel—offering guidance precisely when the consumer is already engaged. In this way, the experience is not interruptive but is instead integral, with solutions that feel human and honed (e.g., Mobvoi TicNote Watch; Solos AirGo V2 smart glasses; LG's Affectionate Intelligence in-vehicle system).

**"With the LG AI Cabin Platform, we are creating mobility that not only understands drivers, but responds proactively to their needs and preferences, making every journey uniquely personal."**

*– Seok-hyun Eun, President of LG Vehicle Solution Company*

A photograph of three women sitting in the front seats of a car at night. The woman on the left is wearing a black top and a gold chain, the woman in the middle is wearing a white top, and the woman on the right is wearing a green top. They are all smiling and looking towards the camera. The car's interior is illuminated with blue and green lights. The background shows a city street at night with a sign that says "11 8 PM".

# HUMAN CENTERED

Brand experiences that feel personal start with an obsession with people, that leverages data to spark the movement of people through intention, not attention. To this end, AI has upped the ante by reducing friction, anticipating needs, and ultimately making life feel more fluid. (e.g., Withings Body Scan2 smart scale; VenHub Autonomous Smart Store; Nvidia's AI Automotive platform).

**"Think of the car as having a soul and being an extension of your family and (recognizing occupants)...knowing it's someone's birthday and cueing up their favorite song without being asked."**

*- Sri Subramanian, Nvidia Global Head of Generative AI for Automotive*

A close-up, high-contrast photograph of a person's face, focusing on the eye and nose. The lighting is warm and dramatic, with strong highlights and deep shadows, creating a textured, almost painterly effect. The person's eye is looking directly at the viewer.

# CULTURALLY CONNECTED

CES wasn't about just the gadget economy, it was about the creator economy too. That label permeated multiple titles and tracks throughout the week, one of which we attended in its entirety. The key takeaway: Culturally, we are thirsting for authenticity, relatability and credibility and as a result, micro-influencers (not celebrities) are the big attraction. And the content we're craving from them is to feel more emotionally connected, real, stable in a world amid constant change. As brands prioritize real connections (the very strength of micro-influencers) over big celebrity reach, micro-influencers are ascending into cultural and creative powerhouses in their own right.

**"Creators are not just there to market the product...they're actually the next Spike Jonze or Sofia Coppola."**

*- Brad Haugen, EVP of Digital Strategy & Growth at Lionsgate*




# DYNAMIC

Finally, as it relates to trust and ethics, winning PXB brands will plan and act with agility, sensitivity and transparency, adapting with AI legalities to empower consumers by reinforcing confidence, control, and connection rather than overwhelming, or deceiving them (e.g., Privacy-forward AI controls; recommendation rationale and clarity; clear data boundaries).

**"When it comes to AI, users are looking for transparency and control...that level of visibility builds confidence."**

*– Allie K. Miller, CEO of Open Machine–Samsung CES 2026 panel*

A close-up photograph of two Black women laughing heartily. The woman in the foreground has curly hair and is wearing a red top. The woman behind her is also laughing, with her mouth open. The background is softly blurred, showing what appears to be an indoor setting with warm lighting.

**Bottom line:** Brands have entered the onramp to using AI to deepen connection, generate brand love, and create moments that genuinely improve people's lives, in ways that are tailored to individual needs and preferences.

**THAT'S  
MAKING IT  
PERSONAL.**

# LET'S TALK

If you are interested in hearing more about our experience at CES 2026 and how we can apply our observations to your business, please reach out to Katy Gajewicz at [kgajewicz@laughlin.com](mailto:kgajewicz@laughlin.com).



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