



## Weekly Brief

June 05, 2025

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# The Future in Five Short Chapters



I'm Dylan Bolden, chair of the functional practices at BCG. I'm filling in for Christoph and Rich this week after leading our annual innovation showcase: EDGE—short for explore, discover, grow, and experience. Held last week in Vienna, the event featured more than 60 exhibits that brought to life how bold ideas and breakthrough technologies are rapidly reshaping business and society.

EDGE is always a forward-looking event. But this year felt different. The pace of innovation has accelerated. The tools are more mature. And, most importantly, the impact is real. These weren't proof-of-concept pilots or aspirational demos—but scaled solutions delivering tangible P&L value across industries.

Robots navigated the event floor. AI agents autonomously solved complex problems. We also saw immersive glasses in action—guiding a maintenance worker through challenging tasks using GenAI.

These successes were only partly about technology. Many of them depended on new end-to-end value chains and strong teaming internally and with partners. It was an inspiring reminder of how much is possible when innovation meets execution.

Across all the exhibits, five themes best signaled the future:

- **AI Agents.** These tools now observe, plan, and act with increasing autonomy—supporting decisions, generating insights, and enhancing human capability. But fundamentals

still apply: What outcomes are you seeking? Can you measure the business value that agents deliver? Technology may change, but accountability doesn't.

- **Adaptability in Operations.** With uncertainty swirling, operations today require constant adjustment. Success depends on data transparency, speedy decision making, and intelligent systems embedded across supply chains, procurement, and execution.
- **New Operating Models.** Rather than asking what AI can replace, leaders are rethinking the design of workflows so people and AI can collaborate in new ways. More than just tech, these models demand new capabilities and mindsets.
- **Personalized Engagement.** Companies are moving beyond tailored marketing to continuous, context-aware interaction across the full customer journey. This shift will reorient how teams think, act, and measure success.
- **Sustainable Business Models.** Many organizations are now integrating climate risk considerations into their core business strategies. The most ambitious are building models that are both circular and economically resilient.

What stood out most at EDGE wasn't just the diversity of solutions but how deeply AI is embedded in everything. It showed up not as a standalone topic but as an enabler across functions, industries, and value chains. The most compelling stories crossed disciplines, connected systems, and delivered measurable results.

As I walked the floor, I found myself genuinely inspired. The stories being told were broad in scope and deep in substance. They reflected the kind of transformation that comes from real collaboration, shared learning, and persistent experimentation. Whether the focus was deploying proven tools, reshaping work, or inventing new paths to value, the throughline was clear: these changes are not incremental.

BCG founder Bruce Henderson often quoted Archimedes: "Give me a lever and a place to stand, and I will move the world." We now have new levers in our hands. Let's use them with clarity, purpose, and a bias for real-world impact.

Let's get to work.

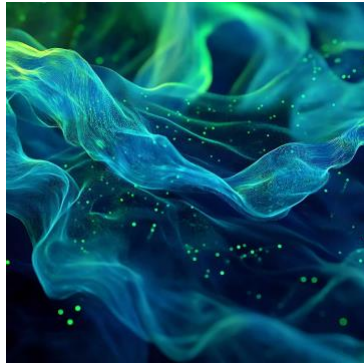
Warm regards,



**Dylan Bolden**  
Chair, Functional Practices

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## Further Insights



### How CMOs Are Scaling GenAI in Turbulent Times

Growing optimism about GenAI's future impact is fueling new marketing investments that prioritize growth and not only efficiencies, according to BCG's annual global survey of 200 CMOs.

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### BCG EDGE

Jessica Apotheke, chief marketing officer of BCG and BCG X, provides an inside look at the firm's annual innovation showcase.

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