Digital Drugs

Mid-future pessimistic scenario

There is more than one way to alter your state of mind when perception-altering technologies are the norm. We use biohacking to give ourselves an excessive rush of dopamine, we use diminished reality for sensory deprivation induced hallucinations, and we use dissolving bioelectronics as a stimulant. Party-goers test their limits. Researchers rush to find antidotes for those that trigger psychosis, loss of neural functions, and permanent brain damage. Digital addiction takes on a whole new meaning. A prolonged dose of reality is the only prescription.
The intersection of work, culture and play unlock tremendous opportunities for innovation teams. From new product development, to experimentation in distributed office structures, to completely reimagining fashion, games, beauty and toys, creative risk takers are in a position to shape the future of their industries. Chief innovation officers should lean in to all this disruption and champion thinking across longer-term time horizons within their organizations.

In the realm of digital vices, R&D teams have plenty to investigate. The future of work will continue to take shape over the next few years. For example, what might a decentralized office look like in five years? What will the infrastructure and technology needs be? When it comes to neuroenhancers and CBD, investors are enthusiastic about the possibilities. Rather than waiting to see what regulations pass, R&D teams can begin preliminary research on questions and hypotheses that could deliver stronger business outcomes in the future.

Chief risk management officers found that their typical risk profiles shifted in the past year, and not all companies were prepared. Strategy will be more agile and dynamic going forward, especially as work, play and culture intertwine. With work from home policies in flux, widely available enhancers and vices, and an endless stream of digital distractions, an organization’s ability to manage risk this year could be a vulnerability. Or a strategic differentiator.
Key Questions

We recommend using this report to support your strategic foresight activity in the coming year. Every executive team should begin by asking these questions:

1. Is our company tracking disruptions outside of our immediate industry? Which trends require a deeper understanding?
2. With regard to digital vices, what is our position on transparency, ethics, and accountability? Do our employees understand this position? Do our customers?
3. Will our organization benefit from continued remote work? How can we reimagine our physical and digital workspaces?
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