

Perspectives on connectivity

The first examples of connectivity may have been the networks formed by early human relationships: selecting partners, developing tribal identity, organising hunting parties – all devised to help humans survive, and eventually, to thrive.

In a sense, modern connectivity serves the same purpose: allowing humans to connect with each other, and to connect all the things in their world, always with the ultimate purpose of improving quality of life.

The principal feature of today's wave of connectivity is that, in a relatively short time, it will affect virtually everything, and everybody. The way we do almost everything has already been changed: shopping, banking, building and transporting, communicating and recreating, even sleeping.

And nowhere has the effect of connectivity been more dramatic or more pervasive than in the business world. Companies change not only their images but their fundamental philosophies and business models seemingly overnight. As you can read in this issue of Generations, this trend

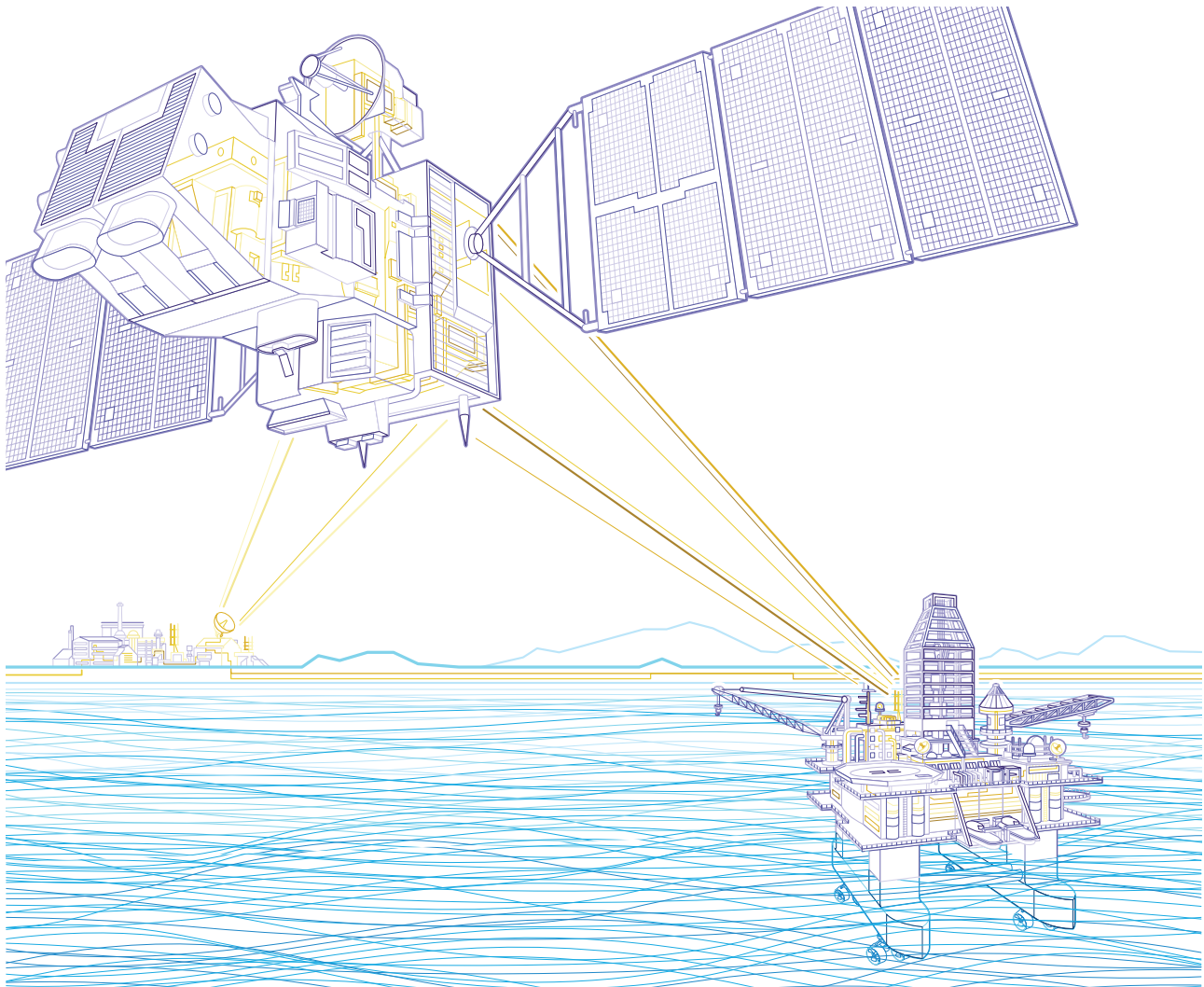
applies not just to small, nimble start-ups, but to world leaders like IBM, Ericsson, and Deloitte, who have had to embrace the digital revolution at a pace that would have been inconceivable only a few years back.

The Big Buzz

In the wake of this digital tsunami, certain buzzwords have emerged and ensconced themselves in our vocabulary, and our consciousness: Cloud Computing, Big Data, and the Internet of Things have become the templates on which virtually all new business developments are built. At the same time, competitors have had to cultivate their own unique identities in order to carve out a niche in the cloud.

For example, the Internet of Things has quickly become many things: ABB uses the Internet of Things, Services

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and People (IoTSP), IBM talks about the Internet of Everything, Inmarsat likes the Internet of Everywhere, and the Industrial Internet of Things has evolved more or less organically.

From buzz to bucks

But in order to make money on the buzz, value must be created, and therein lies the core challenge of the latest industrial revolution: How to deliver digital services that make life better for your customers, and that they are willing to pay for. This is the

rock solid, meat and bones reality that the winners in the digital economy have embraced.

Tools and knowledge must be developed to take advantage of the opportunities that new technology presents. Sensors and satellites, information and analysis, sharing and security, all must be moulded from virtual possibilities into concrete advantages for suppliers and their customers. That is what we are witnessing in the best examples of companies successfully leveraging connectivity today, and

those likely to do so in the future.

However intriguing digital technology and new business models may be, the real value of connectivity is found in its impact on human relationships. In helping us to help each other, connectivity achieves its ultimate meaning, and purpose. The examples cover nearly all aspects of human life. We are honoured to share some of the most remarkable of these in the following pages.

The Generations editorial committee