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# A cognitive city will be proactive, powering human interaction. But there's more

How do you build a city that transcends borders? Joseph Bradley, CEO head of NEOM Tech & Digital, talks about powering a dynamic entrepreneurship ecosystem and creating a global movement.



[Source photo: Fast Company Middle East]



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**BY RACHEL DAWSON** 4 MINUTE READ

Welcome to the cognitive city – an urban environment that combines digital and physical architectures with hyper-connected technologies. It's where virtual and real worlds integrate, and citizens can traverse in real-time as a hologram or as robotic avatars.

The mind steering the vision, shaping the creation of a full-scale ecosystem of cognitive technologies, is Joseph Bradley, the CEO of NEOM Tech & Digital Company. With a rich and extensive background in the tech world, he calls himself a “digital humanist.”

The efforts of NEOM Tech & Digital are to bring the notion of a cognitive city to life, Bradley says. He adds that a cognitive city's biggest payoff is its role in enabling a world beyond “static conversation, static experiences, and predetermined things.”

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foundation, building hyper disruptive and engaging solutions, and moving beyond real-time and driving proactive predictability.

In these critical ways, NEOM Tech & Digital Company is helping “crystallize and bring to life Saudi Arabia’s vision 2030.”

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“When you understand and move from a smart city to a cognitive one, you comprehend the power of prediction, predictability, and proactiveness,” he adds.

Despite the tech advances, the success story of a cognitive city is human interaction. Describing the importance of relationships in pivoting from a smart city to a cognitive city, Bradley says, “The more we relate to one another, the more interactions we have, which determines the value of the entire platform.”

Future tech ecosystems are grounded in an inspired workforce. Bradley highlights how crucial it is for employees to be motivated and have a purpose at work. “The most important element in attracting talent is purpose. We provide a purpose far bigger than any individual or company. It’s about redefining how we as humans can live on the planet productively and responsibly. That’s core to our DNA.”

### **DYNAMIC ENTREPRENEURSHIP ECOSYSTEM**

Apart from a clear sense of purpose, he highlights the role of wealth creation. “We’ve worked on creating an environment where you can be an entrepreneur. You can get that idea created.”

integral to which, Bradley says, is building a system that is supportive of accelerated learning.

The next element is funding. “You have to have a strong economic sense of funding. Most places today provide accelerated learning opportunities and globalization, making funding available.”

The third element is access to common data. “When you think about moving into a cognitive world, you need to provide access to common data architecture. If you think about the world today, data is siloed. So, it’s hard for entrepreneurs to get data from one enterprise to another,” says Bradley.

Creating a common data architecture is one of the core elements that NEOM Tech & Digital Company has leveraged and removed “the friction” it takes to extract insights from data.

### **LEVERAGING INTELLIGENT DATA**

Insight is the currency in the 21st century, says Bradley. To leverage intelligent data, building customer trust is crucial.

“We’re taking intelligence data and allowing individuals to know how their data is used and who is using it.”

After the trust is established, it’s about turning data into insights. NEOM Tech & Digital, Bradley says, has overcome the problem of not just data scarcity but extracting valuable insights. “But, ultimately, you have to take care of the people providing this information, as well as citizens and enterprises.”

### **BLUEPRINT FOR CITIES OF THE FUTURE**

When envisioning the future, Bradley says, “You have to understand that NEOM Tech & Digital is more than just a place. It’s a movement. It may be located in Saudi Arabia, but it’s for the world.”

On his ambition for the cognitive enterprise, Bradley says, “I don’t want NEOM Tech and Digital to be known as a place that replaced humans.” Calling himself a digital humanist, he believes technology is not about replacing humans but about making us more human. “It allows us to be more of who we are and accentuate humanity’s best.”



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Rachel Clare McGrath Dawson is a Correspondent at Fast Company Middle East who writes on tech, design, and culture. [More](#)

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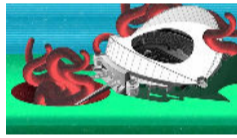
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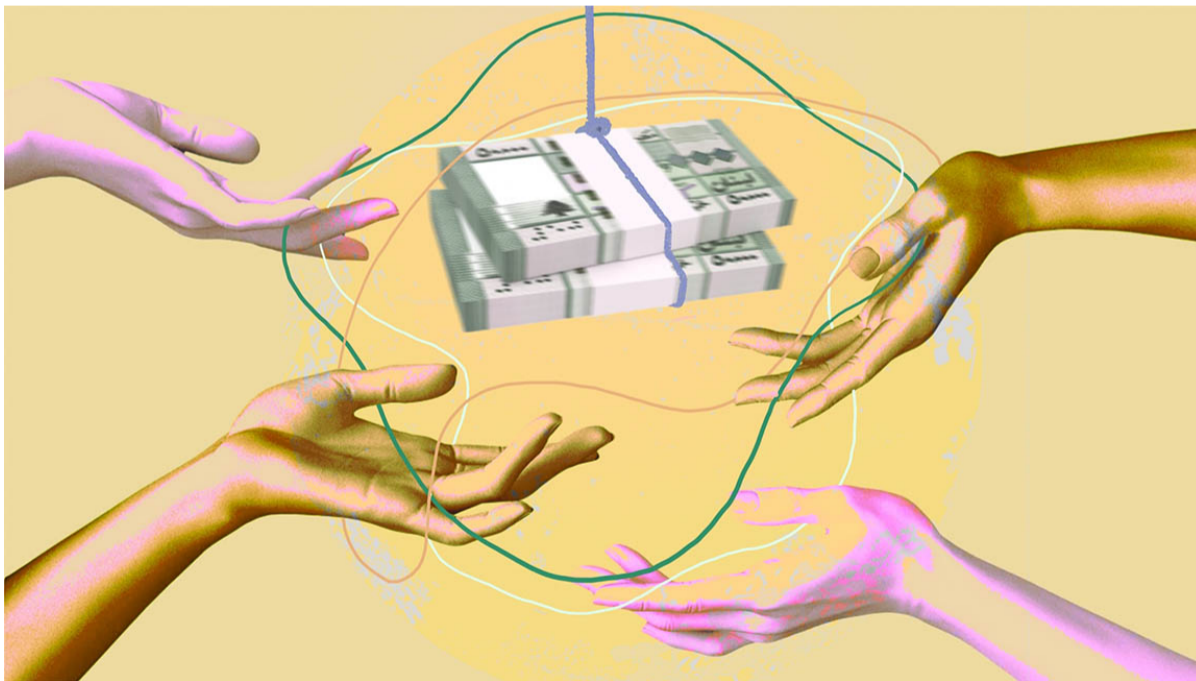
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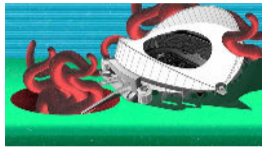
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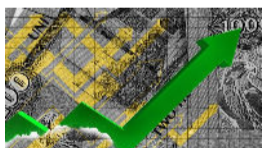
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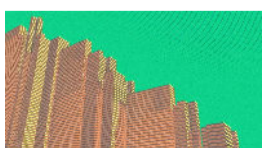
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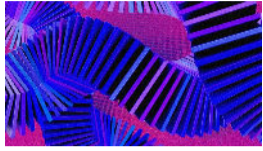
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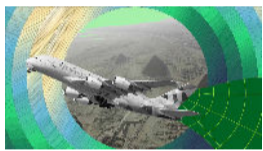
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