

Future Car Configurator

Accenture Interactive

Abstract

Consumers seek personalized configurator experiences. True personalization does not rely on swamping users with all possible options, as today's configurators do. Instead, true personalization handles complexity while keeping variability to contextually serve the user with what is relevant to them. To help consumers successfully navigate their path-to-purchase and become their zero moment of truth, we need to rethink and redesign today's concept of "personalized configuration" to what it really needs to be: an experience.

Self-sufficient simplicity and curated navigation to guide user's decision circle

Customizing a new car is a complex process which is perceived by most users as not only overwhelming, but also as a tiring process. Therefore, users seek a spectrum of needs — reaching from **guided and transparent flow control to inspiring experience expansion.**

While users want to self-sufficiently drive their own journey, compare, and play around independently, curated and contextual- relevant assistance is crucial for buyers being confronted with the endless amount of options today's configurators offer. **Thus, people feel most reassured in their decision-making process when being introduced to a simply navigated and digestible overview of options that are actually relevant to them.**

Making confident choices as a boost to buy

Whether casually browsing newest models or making a final informed-decision for ordering a car, easy and light configuration is an essential part of the e-commerce experience, and is essential to making online shopping for cars, parts, or accessories a joyful experience that meets today's benchmarks.

Today's configurators are the most common dealbreaker in online car sales processes and cause of customer exits.

Instead: configuration needs to enable and strengthen the logic of e-commerce

- Casual commerce: Hiding complexity and overwhelming portfolios in lightweight and casual interfaces and processes, making space for quick and digestible interactions that create trust and confidence instead of doubts and insecurities
- Learned e-commerce patterns: It's about having a limited transparent selection of relevant choices that can be customized to personal preferences. The result: Users have a satisfying feeling of making the right choice and striking a good deal
- Exploration and playfulness in selection

Here's our idea for a future car configurator



Different, low-level need, inspiration, and comparison-based entry points through the whole experience guide the user to a light configurator, a tool with which the user can customize their car and add some extras. **The key is to offer selected options which are completely combinable, won't cause direct buildability conflicts, and doesn't complicate with the whole bandwidth of opportunities.** Flanked by support options (e.g., "Which rims are right for you?") the user should not be stopped to proceed if there's still a need for explanation. And, if the user still wants to configure every detail, the customizer should offer direct access to the advanced configurator. In the end, transparent price communication, payment, and delivery or pick-up options are mandatory, as well as permanent access to the final checkout.

The future car configurator

Benefits:

- Escaping the legacy tech trap and making progress despite technical limitations
- Flexible integration and usage of the configuration pattern in various contexts and use cases
- Not bringing the internal product complexity to the customer
- Modular design and experience
- Mobile accessibility
- Visual experience in full focus put the car in the spotlight and bring brand to life



1

Background Check

Digital pure players have democratized the design process by putting users in the driver's seat

Today's technologies and design capabilities have transformed user behavior and established full-on customization as a leading driver of consumer value. **Being used to the overarching user-centric designs of market-dominating platforms like Netflix or Spotify, users demand smarter products that match their exact needs at every level of specification.** Regardless of the industry, customers expect to be sitting in the driver's seat of their own experience, tailoring it in real-time and on-demand. **Premium companies become successful by following their users,** guiding them to their goal when needed.

Capitalize on this market trend: Customizable modules instead of monolithic configurator systems

Having changed user's behavior deeply and setting new standards in their expectations, **configurators became the remnants of a time when there was little knowledge about customers' individual needs**. Compensating this lack of knowledge with offering maximum choice to the consumer, monolithic configurators are no more than an expression of technical feasibility instead of being a solution to a user's need and, therefore, no longer an adequate solution.

Contextual response as a key to e-commerce

With today's focus on e-commerce and the contextual response to customer needs as the preparation for the purchase process, there is no such thing as a single configurator. To fully respond to the what consumers want, **it needs customizable configuration modules that react and depend on the user's context: handling complexity while keeping variability, creating an all-encompassing process with smaller submodules that can be designed independently, yet function together as a whole — contextual to what the users strive for.**

From Configure to Customize

From Maximal Choice to Personalized Selection

From Explore to Experience

2

**Configurator as users'
zero Moment of Truth
driving e-commerce**

Configurator as user's zero moment of truth driving e-commerce

Online became the preferred playground for car buying prospects to start their journey of finding their new car. Seeking for greater convenience and time-efficiency, **45% of those prospects do now also feel comfortable with online being the endpoint of their path-of-purchase** (J.D. Power U.S. Manufacturer Website Evaluation Study, 2021).

Covid-19 is pushing this shift towards full-on digital transformation to e-commerce and urges brands to move away from their pure sales and product-driven logic, and **invest in the experience**. Customizers are therefore not only conversion drivers in delivering personalized experience. They offer immense potential to drive user's path-to-purchase by becoming consumers unified main stage of action: delivering all information needed at hand, comparable, offering variety, and transparency on all levels.

What does the research show?

- Connectivity, Autonomous, Sharing/Subscription and Electrification transformed the automotive industry already before the pandemic. What changed is that those trends accelerated and become widely adopted at a faster pace due to Covid-19
- Covid-19 pushes user needs to transform the dealer experience to their homes: U.K. search interest for "dealership near me" dropped more than 70% in February 2020 to April 2020. However, users still want to engage with vehicles as they would at a dealership; they just want that experience to be closer to home (Google Data, U.K. English, February 2020 vs April 2020)
- Car shoppers ranked online configurator, at-home test drive, digital showrooms, reviews videos, and video conference as the top 5 alternatives to dealer visits (Google Surveys, U.S., Global Auto Pulse, April 2020)

3

What is needed now?

1. Guided Experience

Finding a new car is perceived as an overwhelming and tiring process. Thus, having more options to choose from does not equal more opportunities. Quite the opposite, it rather translates into more stress and struggle to make the right choice. Feeling drained by the sheer amount of information, most users get lost within their journey. Thus, they seek for contextual, need-focused orientation and clear guidance to gain confidence in the choices they are about to make.

Focus points

- **Simplify to amplify:** Reduce complexity to maximize user value through simple navigation and orientation
- **Match the purpose:** Know where your user is coming from and what they are looking for
- **Be the backup:** Assist through expertise to help user's feel confident in their decision-making process
- **Always there principle:** Be ready to help users when needed

2. Curated autonomy

Being just a part of the process is not sufficient enough anymore for today's users. They are used to being active leaders of their own path, shaping the process according to what's most convenient for them. In order to become the expert of their own journey, they strive for an in-depth understanding on all levels.

- **Pave the way:** Provide the users with the tools needed to autonomously walk their own walk at their leisure by having non-linear processes allowing for individual journeys
- **Speak their language:** Pick up your users language to help them understand and gain confidence in their choices
- **Connect the dots:** Enable users to freely move between offline and online and connect all touchpoints to one seamless experience

3. Activating relevance

Having all the the options at hand from different designs, ownership models, and a variety of drive trains, users want to get inspired about what's out there for them in a way that caters their profile. They want to catch fire by the brand's excitement and learn from other people's choices to get triggered to explore more.

- **Trigger with relevance:** Set personally relevant triggers and grasp users' emotions to spark their excitement and explore beyond
- **Enable exchange:** Let users get inspired by each other customers' choices, designs, and recommendation to benefit from their experiences

4. Riveting experience

People become increasingly conscious about how their consumption patterns are affecting other spheres of their surroundings. Thus, they are no longer identifying themselves with the product, but with the brand, the purpose, and the social and environmental responsibility behind it. Combined with what technology brings to the table, this shift redefines what product engagement means for today's consumers. They do not only want to get engaged with the broad range of opportunities lying in front of them by experiencing the products' look and feel digitally. They demand the translation of the product's value into their personal life to see how it serves their purpose.

Focus points:

- **Communicate value, not status:** Feed user's need for self-actualization and explain the added value instead of just blunt value propositions
- **Make it reality:** Use AR and VR to translate the product to their personal space and help them understand how it answers their requirements
- **Responsive interaction:** Help users engage with their car, it's functionalities, and features by responding directly to their actions — whether it is just changing the color or playing around with carseat settings

4

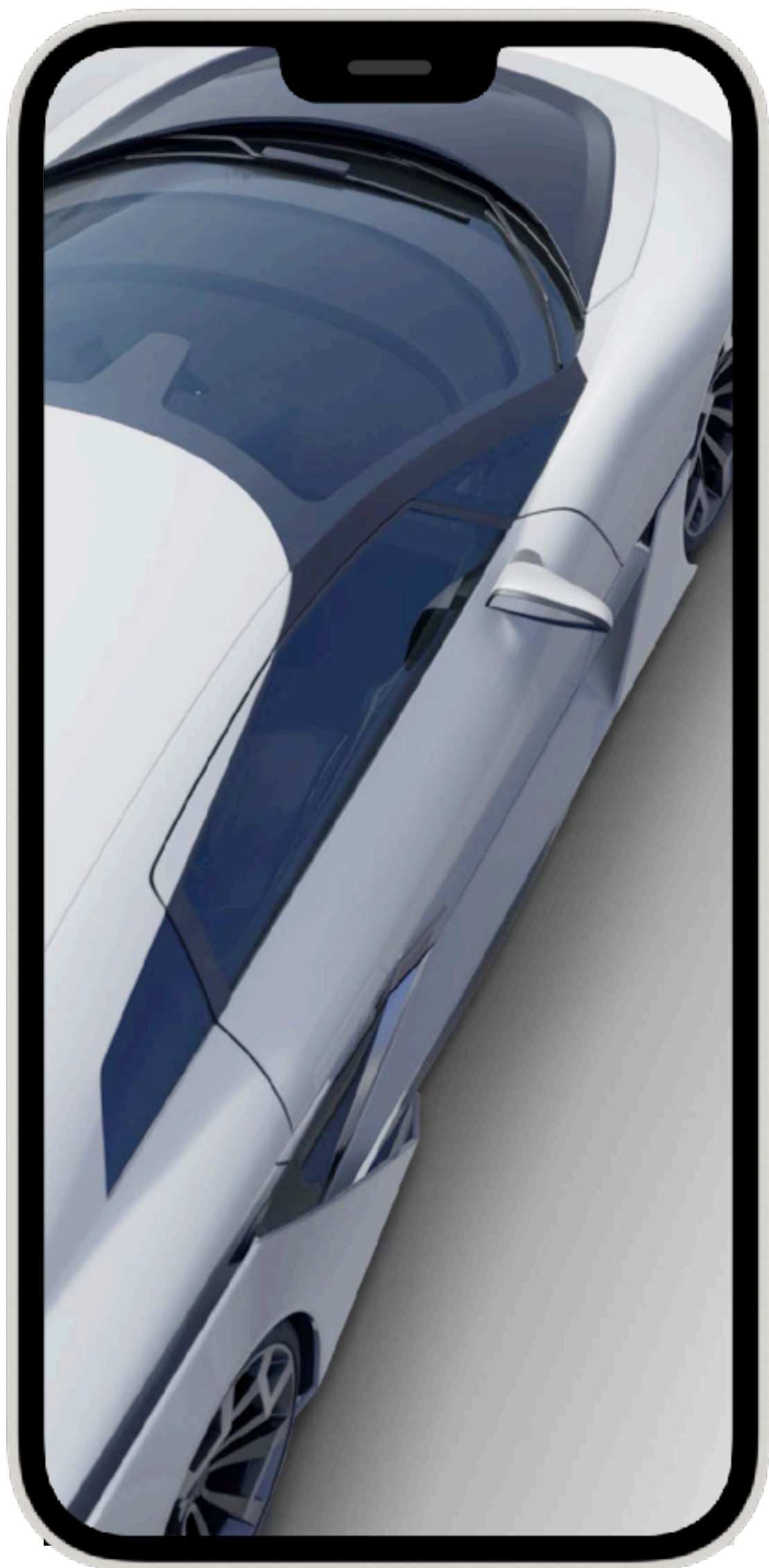
Our Must-Haves

Flawless user experience

An unobtrusive and easy to grasp user interface is the key to pure user experience. The full focus on the configuration and therefore the product itself is underlined by the perfect balance between brand and functionality.



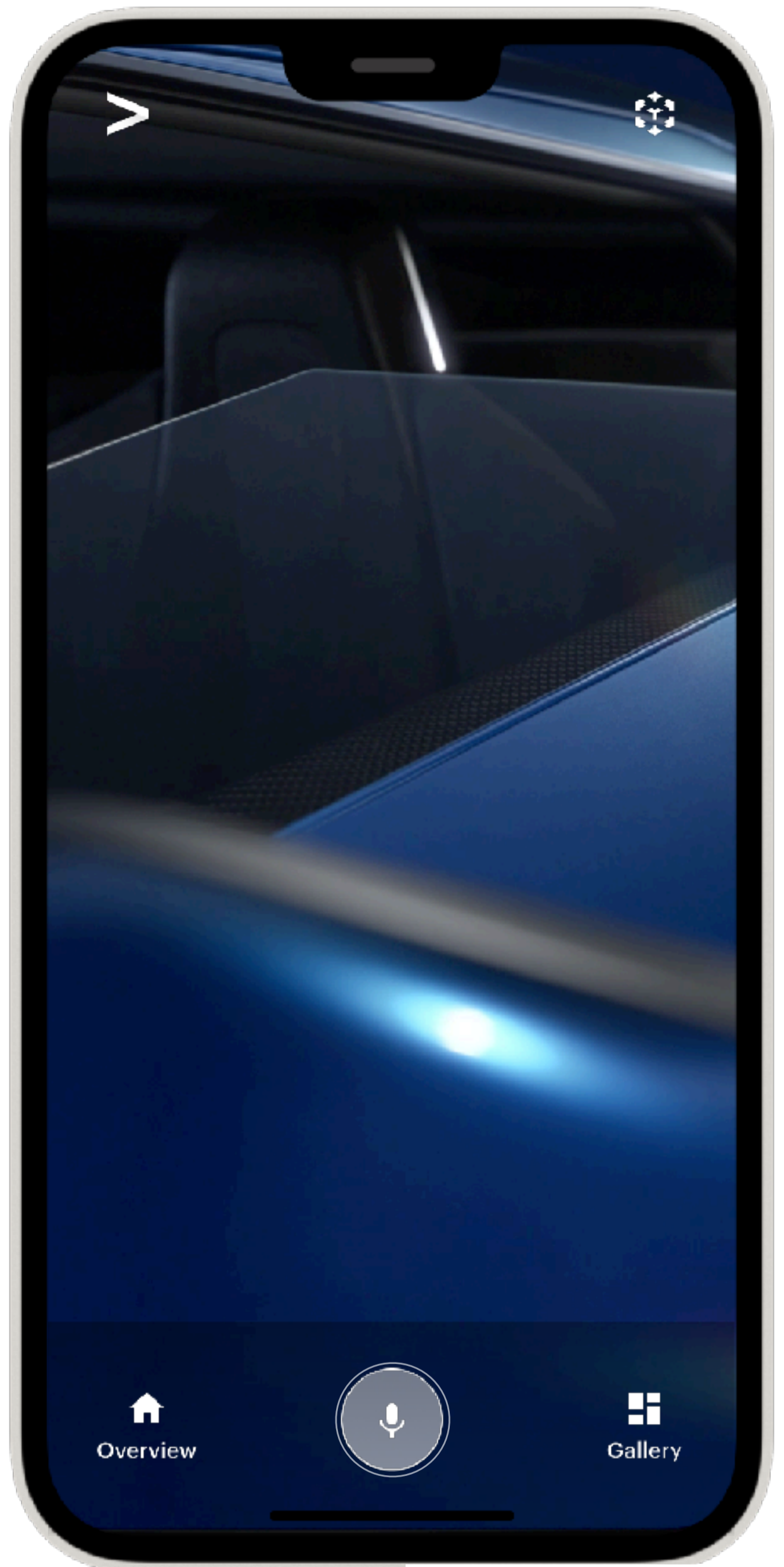
On-demand image visualization



Dynamic visual content is the key for the fastest performance and on-demand images for a maximum of flexibility. A true game changer which guarantees hyper-personalized content.

Voice control

Additional voice control bridges the final gap between product and customer. Providing the freedom of speech puts the user back into the driver's seat – while enhancing the accessibility.



Explore it yourself



<https://sinnerschrader.github.io/future-configurator/>

About Accenture

Accenture is a global professional services company with leading capabilities in digital, cloud and security. Combining unmatched experience and specialized skills across more than 40 industries, we offer Strategy and Consulting, Interactive, Technology and Operations services—all powered by the world's largest network of Advanced Technology and Intelligent Operations centers. Our 537,000 people deliver on the promise of technology and human ingenuity every day, serving clients in more than 120 countries. We embrace the power of change to create value and shared success for our clients, people, shareholders, partners and communities. Visit us at www.accenture.com

Authors:

Kristina Bonitz
Managing Director, SinnerSchrader
kristina.bonitz@sinnerschneider.com

Timo Fuertsch
Managing Director, Mackevision
timo.fuertsch@mackevision.com

Michael Wagner
Managing Director, Accenture
m.wagner@accenture.com

Contact:

Michael Wagner
m.wagner@accenture.com