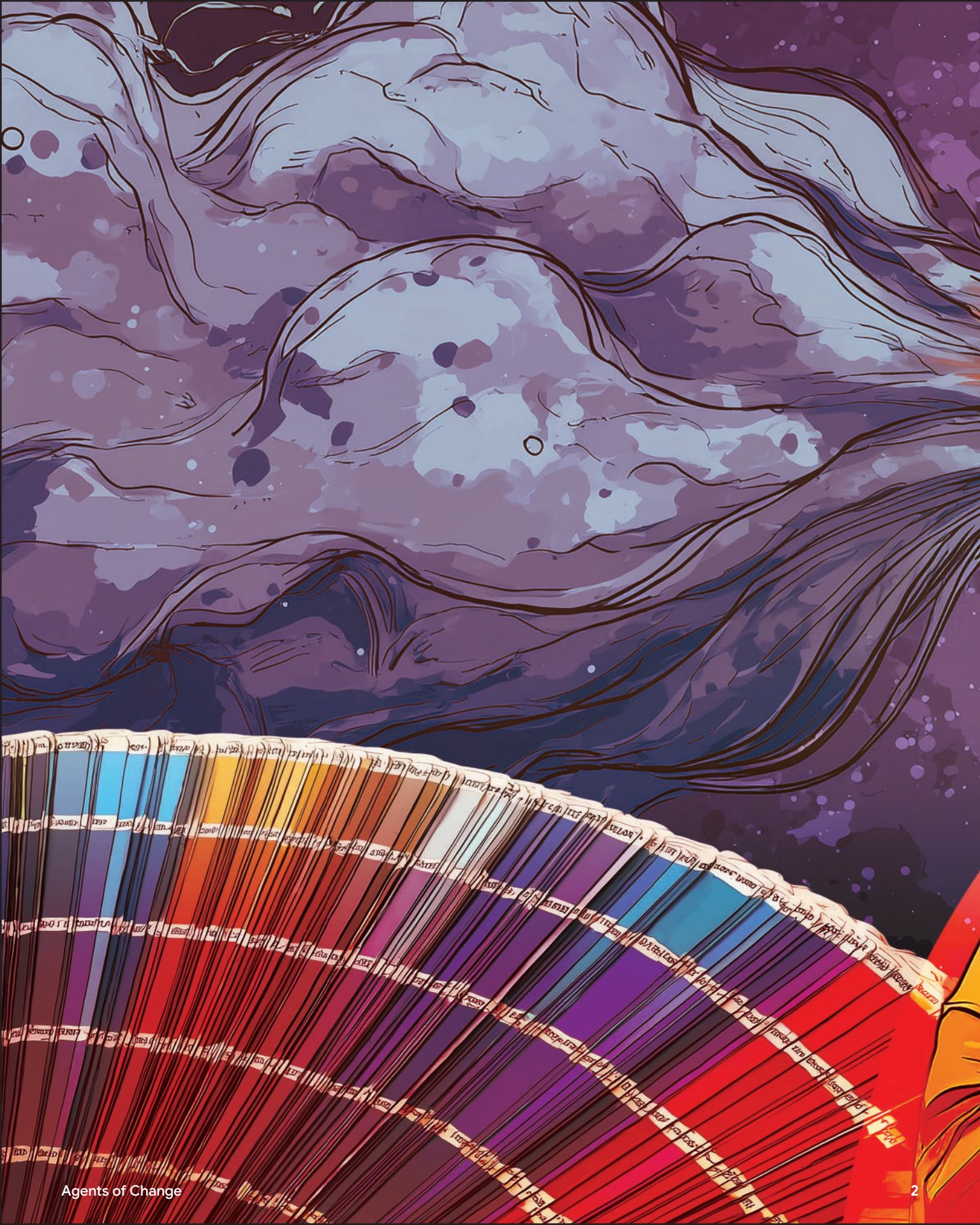




Agents of Change





Morning glory

Working with Google Cloud and Gemini, Asian Paints built a visualisation tool that helped customers choose the perfect colours for their homes.

Chapter 4 | Agents of Change by Google Cloud



About this series

Agents of Change is a human-crafted narrative series about how people inside organisations use technology to change the systems around them. These stories are deeply reported, researched and produced through the combined force of human intelligence and machine capability, not as replacements for one another, but as collaborators. In each story, the customer team is the agent of change; Google Cloud is the enabling technology partner.

The Breakthrough

Asian Paints became an agent of change by taking on one of the most intimate frictions in Indian home-making: people could be inspired by color, but very few could confidently visualize it on their own walls. For years, that gap was bridged slowly: through fan decks, reference photographs, designers, or a software interface that took time and expertise.

Working with Google Cloud and Gemini, Asian Paints built a generative-AI visualizer that could turn a room photo, a reference image, or a prompt into a realistic direction for that same space in roughly thirty seconds. The breakthrough was not just image generation. It was making visualization usable inside the actual decision moment while the customer, the family, and the field representative were still in the room.

That was hard for several reasons. Home-decor language is domain-specific. Consumers do not describe rooms the way designers do. AI output is not deterministic. And a company with more than 5,000 paint shades, a large wallpaper and texture library, years of trend forecasting, and regional color preferences had to make all of that behave with enough consistency to earn trust.

The system was built iteratively. Asian Paints began on one model path, switched when Gemini's output proved materially better, worked through repeated backend changes, and kept designers and engineers in one loop so the machine could learn how real consultations actually happen. Google Cloud became the enabling layer: first through the company's broader cloud relationship, and then through Gemini's multimodal capability and engineering support as the product took shape.

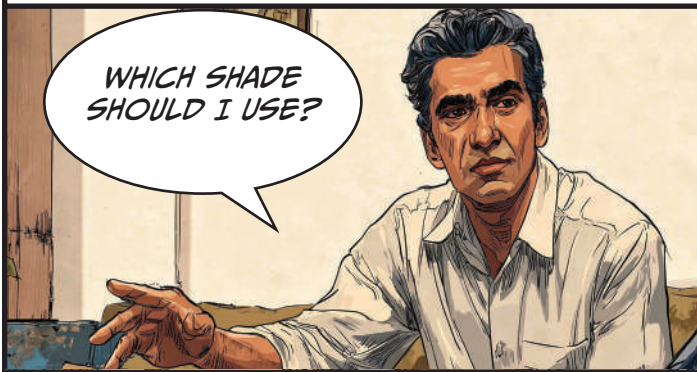
The first visible change showed up in the field. Sales representatives who once defaulted to safe near-whites could suddenly generate options in real time and guide families through color with confidence. What had been a slow, expert-led service began turning into a shared conversation. The story that follows is about how Asian Paints got there and why the company believes this could make India a little more color confident.

The safest answer

FOR YEARS, THE EASIEST WAY OUT OF A CUSTOMER'S COLOR QUESTION WAS A SHADE SO SAFE IT SAID NOTHING AT ALL.



WHEN A CUSTOMER ASKED THE OLDEST QUESTION IN THE BUSINESS: WHICH SHADE SHOULD I USE? THE SAFEST ANSWER WAS MORNING GLORY.



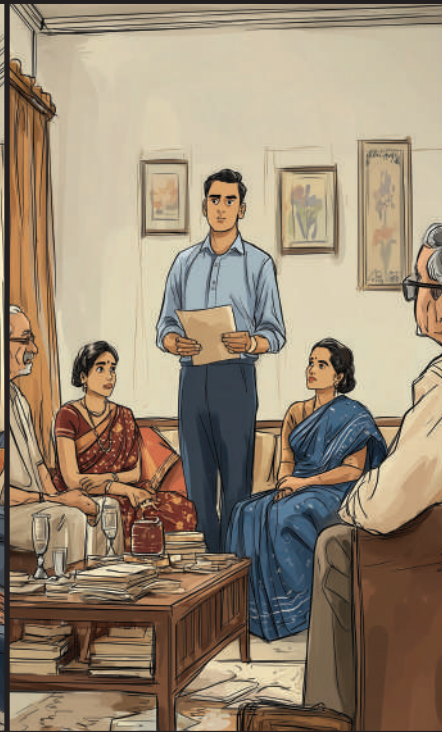
IT WAS NOT EVERYONE'S FAVORITE. IT WAS SIMPLY THE LOWEST-RISK ADVICE. A NEAR-WHITE. A HARMLESS ANSWER. A WAY TO AVOID BEING WRONG IN SOMEONE ELSE'S HOME.

A colorful country, careful homes

INDIA LIVES IN COLOR. ITS HOMES OFTEN DON'T.



"PAINT KA HINDI RANG," KARAN SAID. COLOR SITS CLOSE TO EVERYDAY LIFE HERE—IN FOOD, FABRIC, ARTIFACTS, FESTIVALS, LANGUAGE.



AND YET THE WALLS PEOPLE LIVE INSIDE ARE OFTEN FAR MORE CAREFUL THAN THE WORLD OUTSIDE THEM.



FOR A LARGE PART OF INDIA, PAINT IS NOT ONE DECORATIVE CHOICE AMONG MANY. IT IS THE MOST ACCESSIBLE FORM OF DECOR ITSELF.

“SEE OUR CULTURE... AND THEN SEE OUR HOMES.

You don't buy the can

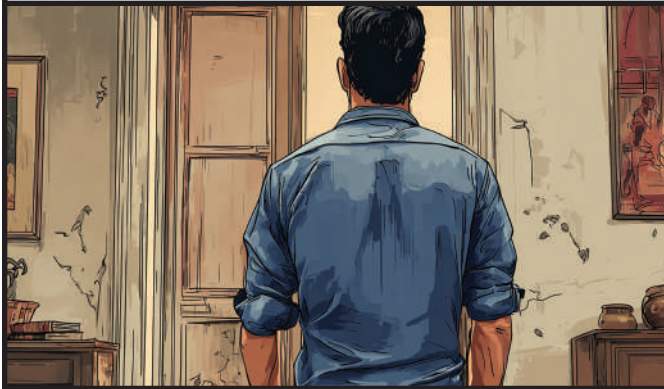
A CAN OF PAINT IS EASY TO PURCHASE. A PAINTED WALL IS A CHOICE YOU HAVE TO LIVE WITH.



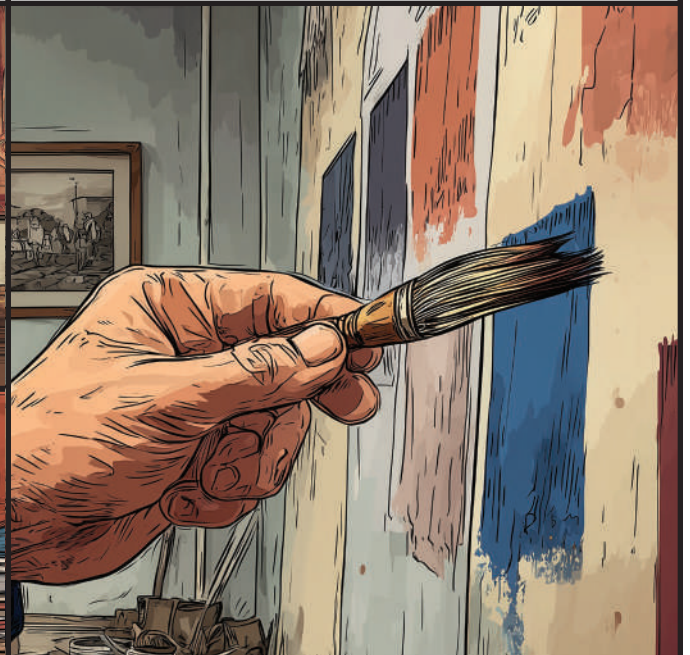
THE PROBLEM WAS NEVER ONLY THE PRODUCT. IT WAS COMMITMENT.



WHEN PEOPLE BUY PAINT, THEY ARE NOT REALLY BUYING THE CAN. THEY ARE BUYING THE WALL AFTER IT CHANGES.



AND THAT WALL WILL BE JUDGED. IT WILL BE LIVED WITH. IT MAY REVEAL TASTE, ASPIRATION, CAUTION, OR REGRET.



A LOT OF PEOPLE WANTED MORE COLOR. MANY SIMPLY DIDN'T KNOW HOW IT WOULD LOOK IN THEIR HOME.

The old ways of seeing

BEFORE AI, VISUALIZATION LIVED IN DESIGNER TOOLS, INDIRECT CUES, AND A LOT OF BACK-END WORK.



ASIAN PAINTS HAD LONG TRIED TO APPROACH THE UNSAID THING IN THE CUSTOMER'S MIND.



SOMETIMES THAT MEANT SHOWING PHOTOGRAPHS AND ASKING WHICH IMAGE FELT CLOSEST TO WHAT THE CUSTOMER WANTED.



TURN THE CARD OVER, AND THERE WOULD BE A CORRESPONDING COLOR DIRECTION.



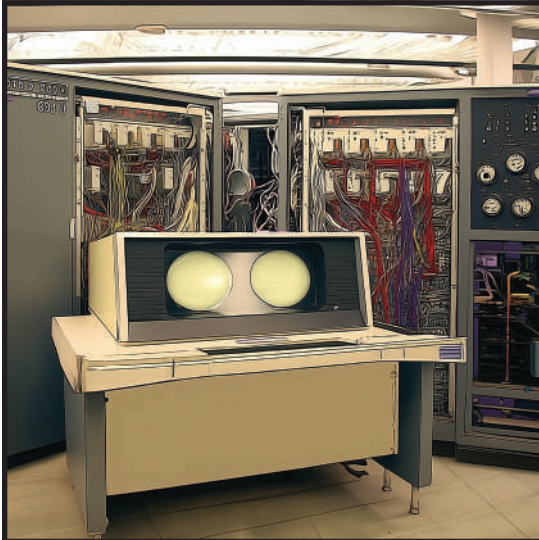
AT THE OTHER END OF THE PROCESS WAS A BATTERY OF PEOPLE IN PHOTOSHOP—CLEANING IMAGES, PLACING SHADES, BUILDING VISUAL MOCKUPS AS A SERVICE.



INSPIRATION EXISTED. VISUALIZATION DID TOO. BUT IT WAS SLOW, ASSISTED, AND LIMITED TO THE FEW.

This did not start with Gemini

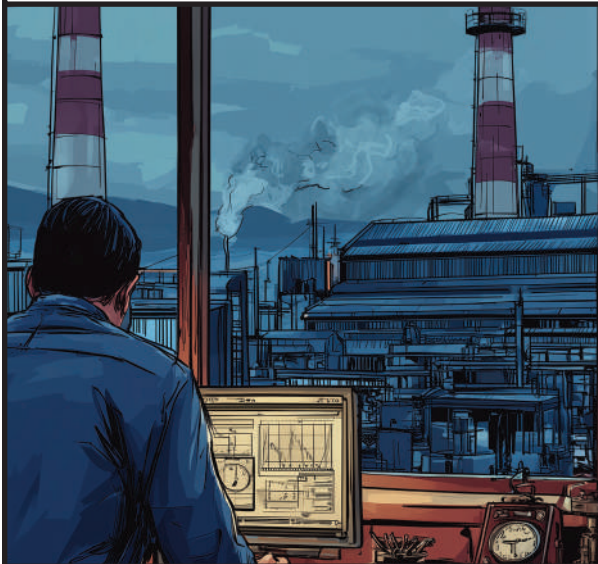
THE VISUALIZER CAME OUT OF A COMPANY THAT HAD BEEN TREATING TECHNOLOGY AS STRATEGY FOR DECADES.



ASIAN PAINTS HAD BEEN BETTING EARLY ON TECHNOLOGY LONG BEFORE AI BECAME FASHIONABLE.

THERE WAS A MAINFRAME AT BHANDUP IN THE EARLY 1970S. THERE WERE HANDHELD SAP TOOLS IN THE FIELD WHEN INTERNET SPEEDS WERE STILL POOR.

ABOUT SIX YEARS AGO, THE COMPANY BEGAN ASKING A MORE SERIOUS QUESTION: HOW DO YOU MAKE ALL THIS DATA TALK?

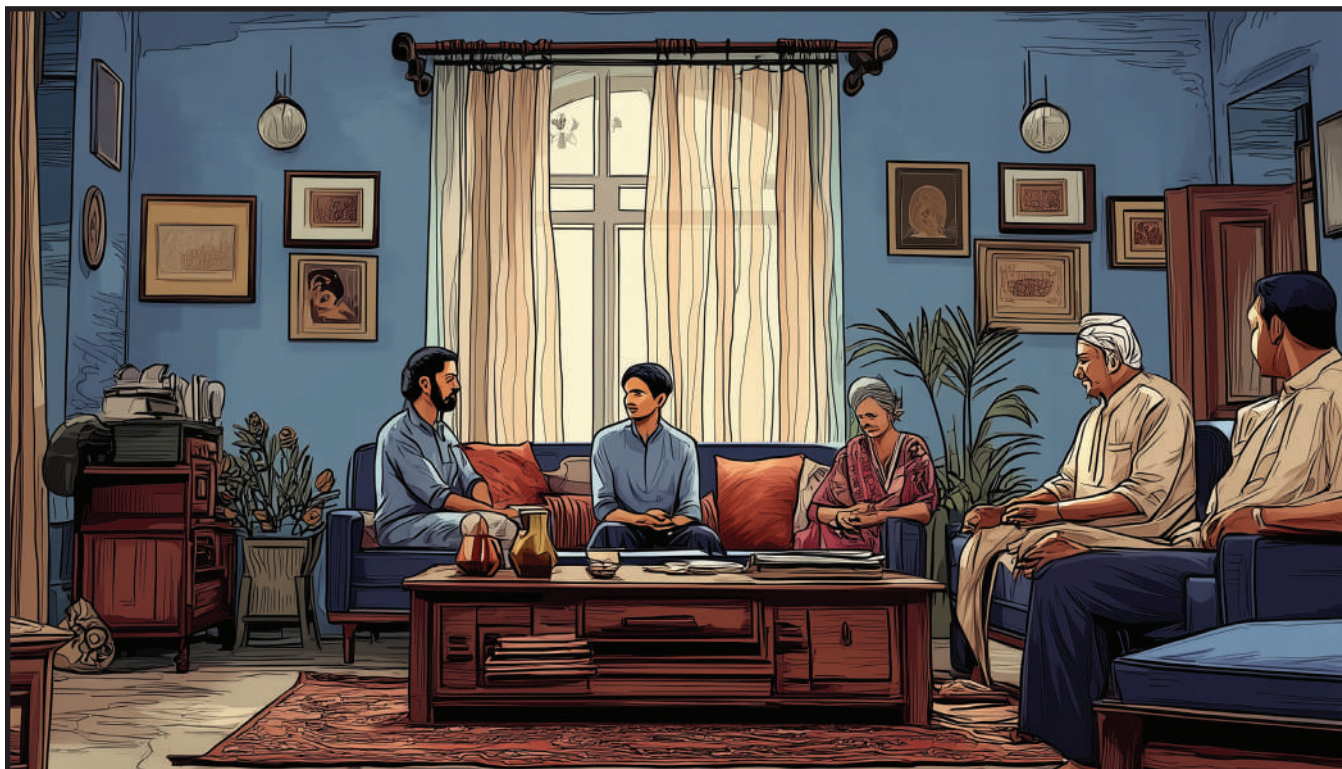


A DIGITAL TWIN OF A PLANT—FED BY SENSOR DATA, ERP DATA, AND MACHINE DATA—BECAME ONE OF THE FIRST BIG INTERNAL PROOFS. IT COULD HELP PREDICT DEFECTS BEFORE THEY HAPPENED.

FROM THERE CAME DOZENS OF PREDICTIVE MODELS, AND THEN A LARGER AMBITION DEEPAK LIKED TO NAME ALOUD: A "GOD-LIKE ENTERPRISE," WHERE INTELLIGENCE BECOMES DISTRIBUTED AND INCREASINGLY SELF-CORRECTING.

The dream home problem

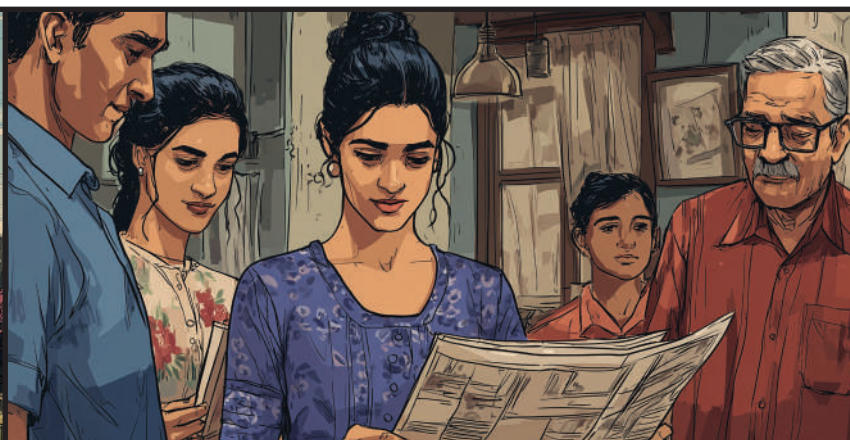
ASIAN PAINTS NO LONGER WANTED TO LIVE ONLY ON THE WALLS. IT WANTED TO WORK IN THE SPACE BETWEEN THEM.



FOR AT LEAST A DECADE, ASIAN PAINTS HAD BEEN MOVING FROM A PAINT COMPANY TO A HOME DÉCOR COMPANY.



THE BUSINESS WAS NO LONGER JUST ABOUT WALLS. IT WAS ABOUT HELPING PEOPLE VISUALIZE A DREAM HOME.



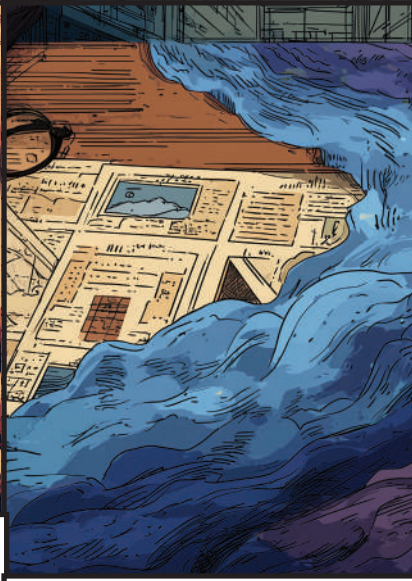
AND DREAM HOMES ARE RARELY DESIGNED BY ONE PERSON. THEY ARE NEGOTIATED BY FAMILIES, ACROSS GENERATIONS, MOODS, FEARS, BUDGETS, AND PRIVATE TASTES. THE REAL CHALLENGE WAS NOT ONLY SUGGESTING A PALETTE. IT WAS HELPING THOSE MANY VIEWS CONVERGE.

The stack turns

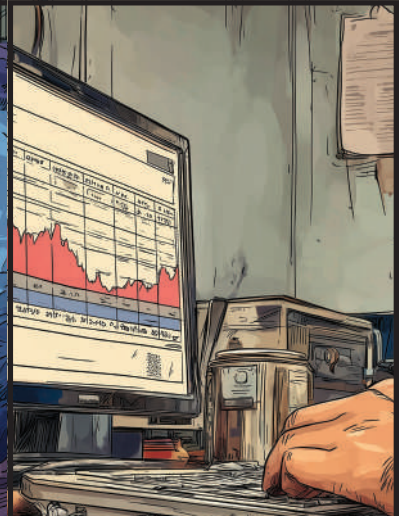
THE PRODUCT WAS BUILT ON MOVING GROUND.



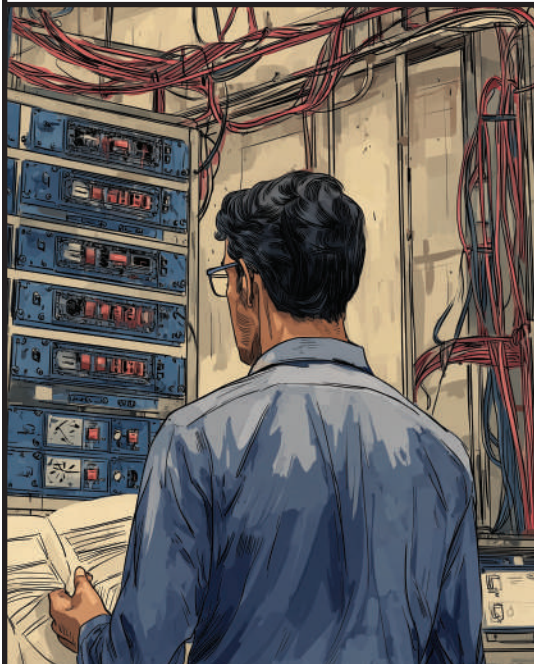
THE TEAM HAD NOT PLANNED TO BEGIN WITH GEMINI. THEY STARTED WITH A POPULAR AI MODEL AND PUSHED THE PROTOTYPE CLOSE TO THE DEMO STAGE.



THEN GEMINI'S OUTPUT ARRIVED AND THE TEAM FELT THEY COULD NOT IGNORE THE JUMP.



THE PROJECT TURNED TO MID-FLIGHT. THEN ANOTHER MODEL RELEASE CREATED FRESH DOUBT. THEN GEMINI MOVED AGAIN.



BY THE TIME THEY LOCKED THE PATH FOR LAUNCH, THE BACKEND HAD CHANGED THREE TIMES IN ABOUT SIX MONTHS.



A BROADER GOOGLE CLOUD RELATIONSHIP—STRENGTHENED THROUGH ASIAN PAINTS' SAP MIGRATION AND THE EXPERIMENTATION ROOM THAT FOLLOWED—GAVE THE TEAM BOTH CONFIDENCE AND RUNWAY TO KEEP REBUILDING.

Teaching the machine a room

THE HARD PART WASN'T JUST MAKING AN IMAGE. IT WAS TEACHING A SYSTEM HOW PEOPLE ACTUALLY TALK ABOUT HOMES.

GENERATIVE AI DOES NOT ANSWER THE SAME WAY EVERY TIME. FOR A CONSUMER-FACING TOOL, THAT IS NOT A SMALL ISSUE. IT CAN MAKE THE PRODUCT FEEL UNRELIABLE. THE TEAM HAD TO CODIFY HOW PEOPLE ASK FOR THINGS—AND HOW THOSE REQUESTS SHOULD RESOLVE INTO OUTPUTS THE COMPANY COULD STAND BEHIND. THAT MEANT BRINGING DESIGNERS INTO THE ROOM, BECAUSE CONSUMERS DO NOT DESCRIBE HOMES THE WAY PROFESSIONALS DO. THE VOCABULARY OF CURTAINS, LEDGES, TEXTURES, TRIMS, AND SURFACES HAD TO BE TRANSLATED INTO PROMPT LOGIC.



WHAT DO YOU TECHNICALLY CALL THAT?



ENGINEERS IN INDIA AND THE U.S. KEPT REWORKING PROMPTS WITH THE TEAM, TRYING TO MAKE THE MODEL BEHAVE LESS LIKE A GUESSER AND MORE LIKE A DESIGN COLLABORATOR.

ASIAN PAINTS DID NOT RELEASE THE TOOL WIDELY AT ONCE. IT FIRST PUT IT INTO THE HANDS OF ITS OWN FIELD TEAMS. ROUGHLY 4,000 PEOPLE IN THE FIELD, YOUNG MEN WHO USED TO EXECUTE PAINTING JOBS AND DODGE COLOR QUESTIONS, SUDDENLY HAD A NEW KIND OF AUTHORITY. THE DAILY VOLUME OF IMAGE GENERATION DURING THIS LIMITED ROLLOUT WAS HIGH ENOUGH TO BECOME A SIGNAL IN ITSELF: PEOPLE WERE ACTUALLY USING IT. THE POWER HAD STARTED TO MOVE, FROM THE SELECT FEW TOWARD THE ORDINARY FRONTLINE WORKER.

Thirty seconds in the living room

WHEN THE CUSTOMER ASKED, THE ANSWER WAS NO LONGER A SHADE. IT WAS A CONVERSATION.



THE VISUALIZER LETS THE CONVERSATION START FROM WHEREVER THE CUSTOMER IS.



ALREADY INSPIRED? UPLOAD THE REFERENCE IMAGE TOO.
NOT SURE? START WITH A QUESTIONNAIRE.
ALREADY KNOW THE CODE? APPLY IT TO THE WALL.



WHAT ONCE TOOK MULTIPLE VISITS AND BACKEND WORK COULD NOW HAPPEN IN FRONT OF THE CUSTOMER, IN ROUGHLY THIRTY SECONDS.

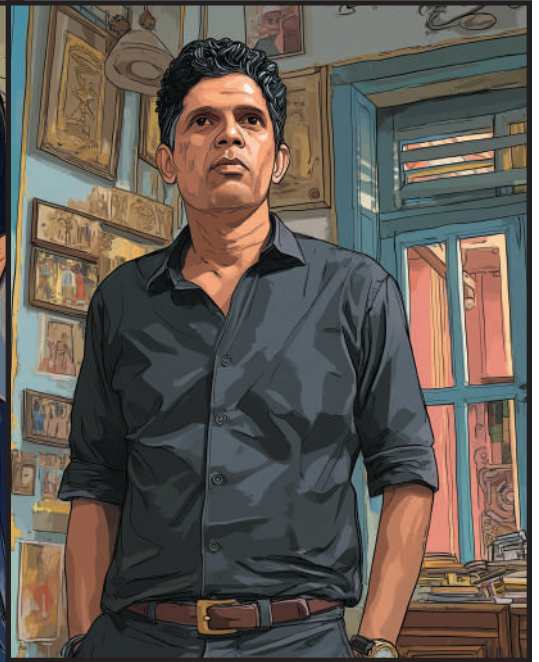
THE SALESMAN WAS NO LONGER ESCAPING INTO WHITE. HE WAS BECOMING COLOR CONFIDENT.

"This is what you meant"

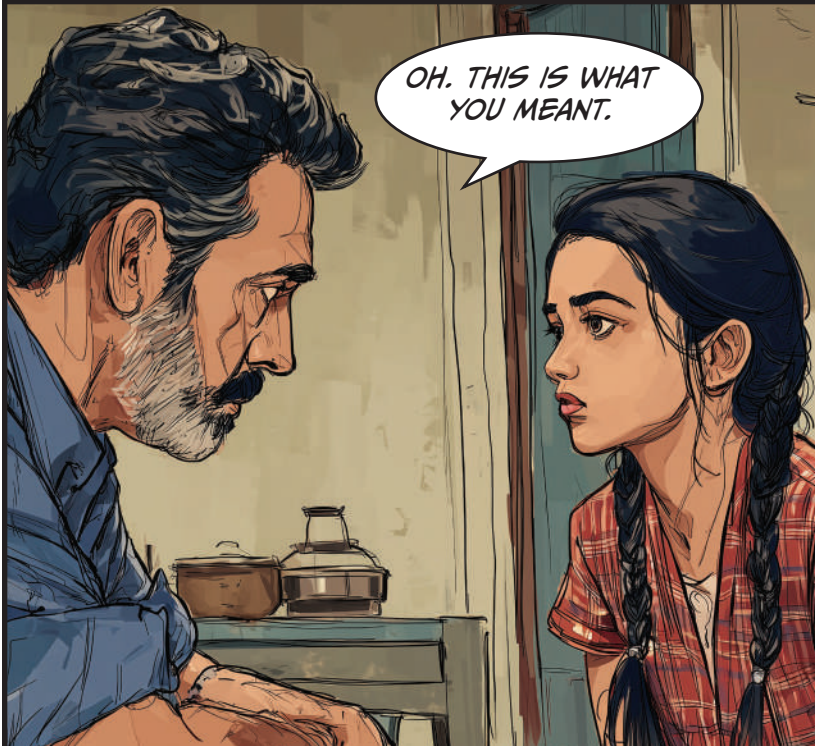
ONCE PEOPLE COULD SEE, THEY COULD FINALLY TALK.



ONE OF THE STRONGEST SIGNS THAT THE TOOL WAS WORKING WAS NOT TECHNICAL. IT WAS CONVERSATIONAL.



DEEPAK REMEMBERED A FATHER AND DAUGHTER TRYING TO EXPLAIN A CHOICE TO ONE ANOTHER.

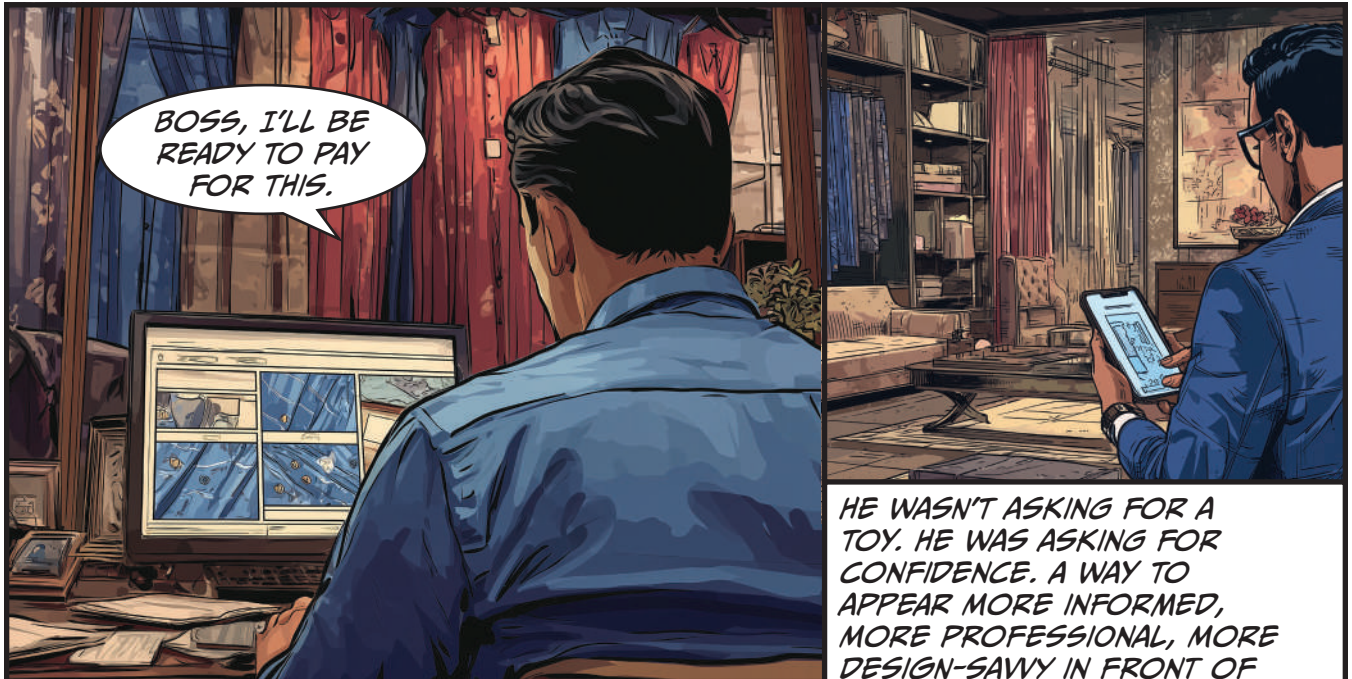


THE GENERATIONAL BARRIER SOFTENED BECAUSE LANGUAGE WAS NO LONGER DOING ALL THE WORK.

THE IMAGE HAD GIVEN SHAPE TO SOMETHING THAT HAD BEEN DIFFICULT TO SAY ALOUD.

When proof travels

GOOD TOOLS RARELY STAY IN THE LANE THEY WERE BUILT FOR.



THE TEAM ALSO TRIED A FABRIC VERSION OF THE VISUALIZER. WHEN THEY SHOWED IT TO A FABRIC DEALER, THE REACTION CAME QUICKLY.

HE WASN'T ASKING FOR A TOY. HE WAS ASKING FOR CONFIDENCE. A WAY TO APPEAR MORE INFORMED, MORE PROFESSIONAL, MORE DESIGN-SAWVY IN FRONT OF THE CUSTOMER. PROOF HAD STARTED TRAVELING BEYOND PAINT.

DEEPAK'S LONGER VISION IS NOT A SINGLE APP BUT A FOUNDATIONAL LAYER. ONE END OF THE SPECTRUM WILL REMAIN "DO IT FOR ME." THE OTHER WILL BECOME "I'LL DO IT MYSELF." AND IN BETWEEN SITS THE RICHEST POSSIBILITY: "LET'S DO IT TOGETHER." OVER TIME, THE SAME VISUALIZATION LAYER COULD EXTEND ACROSS INTERIORS, EXTERIORS, WALLPAPERS, FABRICS, AND INTERNATIONAL MARKETS.

KARAN CALLED ASIAN PAINTS THE "COLOR CUSTODIAN OF INDIA." DEEPAK CALLED THIS LARGER AMBITION A WAY TO MAKE THE COUNTRY "COLOR CONFIDENT." WHAT THEY ARE BUILDING IS NOT JUST A PRETTIER INTERFACE. IT IS A SHARED SPACE BETWEEN INTUITION AND PROOF.



For years, Asian Paints could inspire people toward color without taking them all the way to certainty. The gap between liking a mood and living with a wall stayed wide enough to keep most homes safe.

The visualizer does not eliminate taste. It does not eliminate disagreement. It does something more practical. It gives intuition a surface. It lets hesitation become discussable. It gives the ordinary field worker the tools of a consultant, and gives families a common image to argue over.

In a country that already lives among bright fabrics, foods, festivals, and symbols, maybe that is enough.

Once people can see the wall before they commit to it, they may choose more colors than anyone has been able to sell them so far.

Coming up Next

See it for yourself: How AI turned shopping into self-expression

