

Sheryl Connelly

Leading Futurist & Global Consumer Trends Expert, Legendary Chief Futurist at Ford Motor Company from 1996-2023

When the world's top companies want to understand what's next for their businesses and how they can create the next big breakthrough in their industries, they turn to world-renowned futurist Sheryl Connelly. Connelly is a global trends and consumer expert whose mastery at identifying what's coming around the corner and the potential influences on customer attitudes and behavioral patterns that directly impact business strategy is unparalleled. From 1996 to 2023, she was a cornerstone presence on Ford Motor Company's global trends and futuring team, working her way up the ranks at the automotive juggernaut and becoming the company's chief futurist. Connelly draws upon her business foresight expertise and experiences at Ford to help organizations in any industry identify and analyze global consumer trends in order to lay the groundwork for long-term, future-focused planning and strategy across the entire company, and anticipate the ever-evolving needs and desires of the people they serve.

Connelly leads audiences on a fascinating journey into the potential futures of their industries. She helps leaders and their teams make sense of how STEEP factors — social, technological, economic, environmental, and political trends — will affect their businesses in the short- and long-term, while providing a big picture outlook of the key trends that are reshaping the way we live. With unique perspectives designed to revolutionize approaches to long-term planning and strategy, Connelly reveals how anyone at any level of an organization can think like a futurist, and delivers the insights leaders are looking for as they look for new methods for sparking innovation in their teams and facilitating the growth of their organizations in this new age of never-ending disruption.

As Ford's chief futurist, Connelly led a team of researchers, engineers, marketers, and anthropologists tasked with tracking trends, spotting signals of change, and identifying outliers to develop uniquely compelling insights designed to test the power of innovation across the enterprise. Data-driven insights collected by Connelly and her team were pivotal to all aspects of Ford's operations, including corporate strategy, product development, and design. Prior to joining Ford's trends team, Connelly spent eight years in various marketing, sales, and service field positions at the company. She began her unconventional career path practicing law.

When Connelly speaks, the business world takes notice. She has been named one of *Fast Company's* "100 Most Creative People in Business" and was listed among *TechWeek's* "Top 100 Innovators." Her thought leadership and strategic viewpoints have been featured in leading publications, including *The Wall Street Journal*, *Reuters*, *Financial Times*, *Forbes*, and the BBC. She has also appeared on CBS's "This Morning with Charlie Rose," CNBC's "Fast Money," and NPR's "All Things Considered."

Connelly is passionate about her work, but readily admits that the road to where she is today included a few unexpected twists and turns. She teaches design research at the Center for Creative Studies in Detroit, Michigan, has been a guest lecturer at MIT, the University of Michigan, and Wharton School of Business, and is a former member of the Global Advisory Council on transportation for the World Economic Forum.