

PARTNER CONTENT November 2018

25 Years Ago, AT&T Predicted the Future We're Living Now

IN 1993, AT&T shared its vision for how technology would radically alter the way people would live, work and interact. That vision—delivered as a series of short TV ads with “You Will” as the catchy tagline—captured people’s imaginations.

“You Will” envisioned a future that viewers would soon live.

The ads asked people to imagine speaking with a loved one from a wristwatch, untethered from a phone. Or receiving driving directions from a computer in the car’s dashboard. Or taking a meeting from the beach with colleagues stuck in cubicles or conference rooms. The series struck a chord then, and it’s remembered today for the accuracy of its vision.

The 1993 campaign successfully foresaw the future because the predictions weren’t guesswork. They were rooted in the work of research scientists and engineers who were building the future at Bell Labs, AT&T’s ambitious R&D operation. Innovations of that era that sprang from within Bell Labs’ walls, including the transistor, made the digital era possible, while other innovations were cutting-edge prototypes for now commonplace technologies like the smartphone and video conferencing.