Foreword

by *Nicolò Saidelli, Co-Head of Ardian Buyout Global*

When I was asked to introduce this book and to offer the perspective of a long-term investor on the themes of the C*onnected Signature Experience*, I accepted with great pleasure. We are living in a historical phase where technological innovation and the evolution of consumer habits are rewriting the codes of value. For those of us at Ardian, who accompany companies along their growth journey, understanding these dynamics is a strategic imperative. In recent years, the convergence of technology, creativity, and data has revolutionized the way companies engage with their customers. The fundamental parameters, product, brand, and experience, remain unchanged in their essence, but the way they are designed, communicated, and lived has profoundly evolved. Technology has lowered barriers to entry, democratizing brand building and multiplying touchpoints with consumers. Today, every interaction contributes to shaping the perception of a brand, and every experience is art of a connected ecosystem. In this context, the impact of Artificial Intelligence represents an extraordinary discontinuity. AI is not merely a tool for efficiency; it is a catalyst for transformation, capable of making companies more predictive, personalized, and proactive. From supply chain management to customer relationships, from data analysis to product design, AI is reshaping decision-making models and opening new frontiers in creating unique and consistent experiences. Value no longer lies in the quantity of information collected, but in the ability to interpret and transform it into relevant insights that drive to genuine emotions.

The *Connected Signature Experience* therefore represents the new frontier of the relationship between companies and people: a balance between the physical and the digital, between efficiency and identity, between technology and humanity.

For an investor, all this implies a true paradigm shift. Supporting growth today means accompanying companies through their cultural transformation, strengthening governance, and attracting talent able to navigate the complexity of the present. At Ardian, we believe that the role of a leading institutional investor extends far beyond the capital it provides. It lies in the strategic and operational contribution we can offer to our portfolio companies. Through our global presence, industrial network, and the technological and digital expertise of our teams, we support businesses in adopting more agile, data-driven, and sustainable models. Our commitment is to promote long-term and purpose led growth, built on innovation, responsibility, and the shared creation of value. Ardian aims to be an active partner in the development of its companies in the strategic challenge to unlock their full potential and compete internationally while preserving their identity and culture. The themes explored in this book are therefore highly relevant. They offer a clear and inspiring roadmap on how technology can connect people, ideas, and values, paving the way for a more integrated, conscious, and human future. A future in which the connected experience becomes the meeting point between progress and identity.