



By [Karen Clark Cole](#)

I like to start each year focused on hope for the future and gratitude for the past. Hope has helped me through the extreme challenges we've seen over the last three years, up to and including the current state of the economy. Emily Dickinson said it best:

*"Hope is the thing with feathers that perches in the soul, and sings the tune without the words, and never stops at all."*

Gratitude for the past begins with thanking the employees, clients, friends, and families of Blink for playing a part in our mission: **to enrich people's lives**. And while it's clear on a daily basis that Blinkers strive to enrich the lives of the people we design digital products for (end users), the less obvious ways we enrich people's lives are through our personal relationships.

At our recent holiday party, I was thanked by two different spouses for providing a work environment for their partner to thrive. There is no higher compliment to me. Building our company with a commitment to upholding a positive work environment — where employees go home feeling valued and, therefore, happy at the end of the day — has been my focal point for the last decade.

Because our employees' happiness is contagious, it spreads to the communities around them, making them better friends, spouses, parents, neighbors, and so on. This is the ripple effect of [Blink's Cultural Framework](#) working its magic. As all Blinkers know, I never tire of watching (and playing at every company meeting) our [video of Blinkers](#) spreading their joy and happiness. The video is the essence of who we are as a company.

I am forever grateful to our clients for collaborating with us and for giving us your complex experience problems to solve. Thank you for trusting us with your big ideas, your projects, your company, and in many cases, your careers. We are grateful when you spend your hard-won budgets with us, give us time to deeply understand your customers, co-create your product roadmap, and refer your colleagues to us.

Our UX teams thrive when you ask them to solve some of the world's most challenging problems, such as using design to drive efficiency in logistics and the supply chain, designing for a remote-first and electrified future, blood bank operations, managing the power grid, loan processing, or making a better experience at truck stops for our road warriors. We think hard about how to address accessibility, diversity, equity, and inclusion in the products, services, organizations, hardware, devices, robotics, AR, and VR experiences that we design. This thinking extends across all industries, including energy and utilities, climate, healthcare, banking, financial services, biotech, and of course, outer space.

While much of our work lies behind the scenes of big, complex systems, we had fun with the public-facing work of the Special Olympics and NASA over the last two years. We helped athletes have better experiences at the Games with an evidence-driven mobile app, and we modernized the mothership of NASA.gov, which features our Horizon Design System (HDS) and innovative ways to serve more meaningful content to the American public. Look for the launch later this year.

Looking ahead to this year and beyond, we are excited about the connected city and finally starting to live like the Jetsons! Blink is playing a role in drone shipping; fully automated, Blade Runner-like parking garages; the world of electric vertical take-off and landing; and grab-and-go shopping. We are seeing AI assistants and AI-generated content becoming more common, and customer experiences are being redefined on a global scale for companies such as the clean energy giant, Avangrid. We are also seeing significant advances toward evidence-based, intentionally designed experiences focused on employees (EX), and many companies are now understanding that happiness within an organization extends to its customers (CX).

We are seeing trends in international studies becoming more critical due to increased globalization and the need to understand the mental models, needs, behaviors, and context of use for the current and next generation of consumers. Last year our qualitative user research took us to eight countries around the globe to speak with our clients' customers on how they think about and interact with the world around them.

Getting back to those grateful spouses at the holiday party, our clients tell me similar stories about why they hire Blink. They choose to work with genuine, happy, fun, and wickedly smart people who come to work every day, bringing their whole, authentic selves and who care deeply about their work. Our employees, in turn, work at Blink because our clients are radical collaborators who love to proactively problem-solve with us and are real, wonderful, and wickedly smart people also. It's this partnership that I am most grateful.

Wishing you success in 2023.

Warmly,



Karen





