

C-Suite scores low on digital transformation strategy

A new survey of senior corporate executives, [Digital Enterprise Execution: Ailing or Excellent?](#), shows a near-unanimous validation of the business gains from digital transformation - but it's not entirely due to strategic leadership from the corner office.



Source © Denis Putilov [123rf](#) Less than 12% of chief executives are seen as highly strategic and adept at evaluating and implementing new technologies for competitive gain and growth.

While an overwhelming 89% of survey respondents believe digital transformation is enabling enterprises to achieve greater business value, performance, and innovation, less than 12% of chief executives are seen as highly strategic and adept at evaluating and implementing new technologies for competitive gain and growth. Most (44%) are seen as moderately strategic.

“Business, marketing, and IT leaders around the world recognise a critical competitive imperative for technology to become a bigger driver of business innovation and growth. They overwhelmingly see the need to map and embrace digital transformation to accelerate business performance.

“At the same time, they also question the ability of management to lead strategically and activate resources inside and outside the enterprise to execute effectively,” says Donovan Neale-May, executive director of the CMO Council & BPI Network.

Survey findings

Contextually, global enterprises will spend some \$4.4tn in 2022 on technology acquisition, and more than a quarter of this on digital transformation.

With new software investments approaching \$700bn, survey participants were asked to rank how well these solutions are being deployed to improve business execution in critical areas of eCommerce, marketing automation, customer experience, organisational collaboration, and operational excellence.



Two-thirds of global marketers lack confidence in their data, analytics and insights

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According to respondents, the top five operational areas where enterprises can benefit the most from digital transformation are:

1. Digital commerce and multi-channel engagement.
2. Data asset management, analytics, and insights.
3. Marketing automation and campaign execution.
4. Revenue optimisation and customer value creation.
5. Business continuity, availability, and agility.

The three biggest obstacles to effective digital transformation in the enterprise are:

1. Cultural resistance to change and application uptake in the organisation.
2. Lack of digital enterprise transformation strategy and roadmap.
3. Insufficient skills, capabilities, and digital leadership resources internally.

Respondents believe the success of digital change agents in using technology to modernise or streamline business processes is most influenced by their ability to:

1. Evidence where and how digital solutions will deliver improved revenue and margin.
2. Show how digital transformation creates competitive advantage and shareholder value.
3. Achieve buy-in and support from the CEO and the C-suite influencers.

Software applications considered most vital to modernising and automating enterprise operations are those dedicated to:

1. Digital transformation.
2. Data analytics.
3. AI and intelligent automation.
4. Security.
5. Focused industry solutions.

Strategic understanding of customer needs and competitive market dynamics is viewed as the most important quality of a digital enterprise transformation partner or leader. Surprisingly, a warm, human-based relationship approach; satisfied customer references and track record; and commitment to sustainability were least important to decision makers when evaluating a digital execution partner.

In contrast, nearly 60% of survey participants believe sustainability is either highly or moderately strategic in realising digital enterprise transformation growth objectives. Thirty eight per cent expect an increased focus in this area. Pursuant to this, some 67% say they will very likely, or somewhat likely, select a vendor who helps them reach sustainability goals through digital innovation.

Resistance to change

The CMO Council and the Business Performance Innovation (BPI) Network fielded a global survey of more than 250 enterprise executives (technology buyers, specifiers, and influencers) across companies of all sizes.

The quantitative research fielded in Q3 2022 explored areas of focus and challenge in digital transformation; perceived value and benefits; as well as considerations and requirements for digital change agent/partner selection and success.

Nearly 30% of the 254 respondents represented companies with annual revenues of more than \$1bn. Just under 10% represented companies with revenues of between \$100m and \$1bn. And a further 60% had annual sales of less than \$100m.

“Organisational resistance to change is strong and migration to new cloud-based apps and platforms from legacy systems can bring both pain and gain, particularly as it relates to adoption, use and new levels of visibility and accountability.

“In this regard, we believe that the biggest and most pressing question raised by management and boards in authorizing funding for digital transformation today is: “But, can we execute?”

“Relentless and progressive end-to-end enterprise execution that is outcome-driven in a “digital first economy” is the new mandate.

“This requires predictive data-driven decision making, operational agility, functional modernisation, automated compliance, customer-intuitive organisations, and higher levels of availability, scalability, and sustainability,” says Neale-May.

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