

# Digital transformation is not just an IT project

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While technology certainly plays a role, transformation is the keyword. Transformation changes the way businesses work, both internally and externally.



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An exclusive focus on the customer experience is short-sighted since any transformation project inevitably affects the entire ecosystem, from employees to vendors, to partners and end customers. Ensuring that digital transformation projects are focused on the business, not the technology, is essential to success.

## Technology does not equal transformation

When digital transformation becomes solely about the technology, the IT department is expected to drive the project unsurprisingly with insufficient support from the rest of the business. This results in little to no buy-in from the users and a dearth of top-level involvement and ownership - a certain recipe for disaster.

Digital transformation, by its very definition, transforms a business and changes the way people work and interact. Without top-down leadership and buy-in from the people affected by the transformation, it is bound to fail. Processes change, access to information changes, the way the business runs changes, both internally and externally.

Making digital transformation about technology also frequently results in a lack of business case appraisal for technology solution investments. A mobile app or moving some workloads into the cloud will not miraculously improve a business if there is no solid business case behind why these technologies are being implemented in the first place.

Transformation is not built from a series of disparate components; it is an evolution of the business and the business case is pivotal. The vision of the business needs to be revised and then a roadmap developed as to how technology could help to achieve the vision.

## **Business has internal and external customers**

The old saying that the 'customer is king' is still true, but businesses tend to forget that they have both internal and external customers. All employees are customers of the business as well and their needs and requirements need to be prioritised.

Customer satisfaction can only be realised by ensuring that the entire value chain supports it. This includes internal skills development to engender buy-in of and ensure employees are empowered to use new technology solutions. Equipping internal customers to operate more efficiently and at higher levels of productivity, translates into better service to external customers.

## **Collaboration is key**

Collaboration has the potential to increase productivity exponentially. However, once again, it is not just about technology. Simply implementing collaboration technology and then telling people to use it will not achieve the desired results. The cultural component is vital, there needs to be a change in mindset from the rigid handoff interfaces to more integrated collaboration.

Organisational Change Management is essential in inculcating this new way of working. Internal processes must change, since it is impossible to collaborate if the business still operates in strict siloes.

## **An integrated approach to transformation**

Digital transformation represents a complete change in the way businesses run and operate. By extension, this has an impact on the business' entire value chain and ecosystem. Organisations would do well to align their digital transformation efforts with their wider network, including partners, to help support external goals. Engaging with partners and vendors, identifying projects that can be leveraged together and collaborating on transformation initiatives, reduces digital transformation bottlenecks.

Digital transformation ultimately represents a complete shift in business operations, which means that a technology-led approach will not work. It is essential to begin with the end goal in mind and then work towards achieving this through collaboration, agility, and a cultural shift that encourages innovation throughout the organisation.

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