



STAYING AHEAD OF THE GAME IN TODAY'S DIGITAL ERA

Technology for everyone, opportunity for some

Businesses of all shapes and size now have access to cost effective, transformative technology, so where does differentiation happen?

How does IT become the enabler for implementing new business models, products or services?

With the right strategy in place; a well deployed and adopted technology platform will enable those willing to invest the time and resource, to build a significant competitive advantage.

This whitepaper takes a look at how companies can stand-out in this era of digital transformation, using IT to support business innovation and growth and empower core business functions from operations and finance, to marketing and sales.

Capitalise on the digital opportunity

Organisations established on their journey with digital transformation generate an average of \$100 million more operating income each year than those who lag behind.*

It's clear, companies that have embraced digital transformation are reaping the rewards.

By empowering staff, connecting operations, and engaging with customers via multiple channels, they're seeing impressive results: Companies can achieve savings of over 20% in transport costs by using end-to-end planning systems and processes.**

The ability to connect and globally manage all of your assets, field services, products, employees, and customers is now possible, and companies embracing this strategy are reducing their costs, optimising their resources and ultimately, increasing their profits.

Start with change management

Only 14% of organisations today say they have completely digitised their business processes.***

So where to begin?

If you're just starting out on your digital journey, then a change of mindset within your organisation is vital. That's where change management comes in.

Becoming a digital enterprise will alter how decisions are made, how transactions are handled and how you engage with your customers and suppliers.

Your change management team needs to communicate the objectives at the heart of these changes and the potential value they will bring to the company.

New processes and behaviours need to be adopted, and employees should be fully informed as to what is expected of them when it comes to the performance of their roles.

If this information is not communicated from the outset, then you're likely to encounter challenges when making the transition to a new digital led culture.

Connect with people and devices

The mobility of the latest technologies means that both customers and employees can be connected to your organisation 24/7.

This is never more true than conversations on social media. By engaging in social listening, your company can pick up on consumer trends or moods and analyse customer behaviour. The insights that can be gathered from this information offer you the opportunity to adapt and target your activities more effectively, and to personalise your customer communications.

As well as social media, there is your history of client and supplier transactions, and the growing proliferation of connected devices. The growth of IoT means that certain organisations are connecting with their customers and their customers' environments on a round the clock basis.

Cisco estimates that the number of connected devices worldwide will rise from 15 billion today to 50 billion by 2020. Intel claims that over 200 billion devices will be connected by then.+

As a result of all this connectivity, your organisation will have a vast amount of data at its disposal. What you choose to do with it is what counts.

Exploit your data

The knowledge obtained from this data can have a significant impact on your business. Instead of basing decisions on opinions or habit, you can start basing them on facts.

What you also gain is the opportunity to harness advanced analytics, machine learning and artificial intelligence.

Machine learning refers to a method of data analysis that enables computer programs to grow and learn by studying predictive and statistical analytics, rather than by being explicitly programmed.

At least 40% of companies surveyed are already using machine learning to improve sales and marketing performance.+ +

This type of artificial intelligence brings new dimensions of insight; predictive analytics can be used to help your company optimise its workflows and processes to improve operational efficiency.

In today's digital era, embracing the data culture is essential to differentiation and in some cases, even survival.

Build profitable partnerships

Forging new partnerships will help you on your digital journey. Strategic relationships are instrumental in helping fine-tune existing business models, and enabling you to apply your new digital approach.

They're also essential when it comes to transforming your IT environment.

Many companies underestimate the time and resources required to implement new digital solutions, as well as the disruption this may cause internally.

When it comes to deploying new Customer Relationship Management (CRM) and Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) systems, the extension of schedules and budgets need to be avoided, otherwise you will run the risk of the project failing in its objective.

To find a solution that will improve operational performance through digital transformation, and encourage employees to follow best practices, you should look for a partner who is already familiar with the challenges that your type of business faces. They will have the capabilities and knowledge to adapt a solution to suit your particular sector's needs.

67% of organisations reported that they need a solution with more industry-specific functionality than their current ERP system gives them.+++

Cloud based solutions, like Microsoft Dynamics 365, offer the flexibility to be deployed as business needs demand, whilst providing the digital edge that may otherwise elude those with legacy and fixed ERP and/or CRM systems.

Change the way you think

Only 5% of organisations feel that they have mastered digital to a point of differentiation from their competitors.****

This statistic shows that there's still much work to be done. Whether you start from your customer systems, backend operations, key employee requirements or the creation of new products and services – you should be using technology as a catalyst for growth.

Is it time to reinvent your products, alter your business model and optimise your operations? By adopting a mindset that's open to change and by utilising the latest technology tools, you can stay competitive in this digital era.



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**** Digital Transformation in the Age of the Customer, Forrester/Accenture, October 2015

+ <http://www.fool.com/investing/general/2016/01/18/internet-of-things-in-2016-6-stats-everyone-should.aspx>

++ MIT Sloan Management Review Survey

+++ Mint Jutras