

Why Digital Transformation Is Important Now More Than Ever

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There has been a survey running on LinkedIn and Twitter asking people what inspired their digital transformation. Was it 1. CEO 2. CTO or 3. Covid-19? Already, 70% of companies had a digital transformation in place or were working on one, but it seems most companies were not far enough along to make Covid-19 a non-issue. COVID-19 has been a turning point in most organisation's digital transformation efforts and we have experienced the most drastic change in Telecommuting, Virtual events and the cloud.

The goal of a digital transformation is to use technology to solve traditional problems, which means integrating technology into every area of the business. When done right, digital transformation allows companies to provide unprecedented value to customers. Over the last decade, the typical HR function has worked hard to meet the needs of a constantly changing business environment. To a great extent, keeping costs low while moving quickly to meet company and employee needs, focusing on streamlining transactions, and helping employees comply with policies.

12 steps to digital transformation

Here are my 12 steps to digital transformation, adapted from the book *The Customer of the Future*:

Customer focus

Before a digital transformation can truly begin, the company must switch its mindset from being product-focused to being customer-focused. The driving force behind technology decisions should be customers, and the goal should be to make their lives easier instead of making things easier for the organization. A customer focus is the basis for all other digital transformation decisions.

Organizational structure

Companies need to break down internal silos to create a cohesive organization that embraces change. That means getting executives and leaders on board with the new digital vision.

Change management

Change is hard, no matter how much it will benefit the company. One of the most common reasons digital transformations fail is because employees don't support them. The most effective change management efforts are aligned with the modern, dynamic business environment.

Transformational leadership

A successful digital transformation starts from the top with leaders who drive employees towards the vision. Every executive and leader must play a role in championing digital change and uniting the digital transformation with the company's larger, long-term goals.

Technology decisions

Digital transformation impacts the entire organization, not just one department. An average of 15 people are involved in most technology purchase decisions, which means that everyone's voices need to be heard.

Integration

All data systems need to work together and be integrated into the company's internal processes. A streamlined data strategy is required for a successful digital transformation.

Internal customer experience

When focusing on digital solutions for customers, companies also need to consider their internal customers—employees. Getting employee feedback and providing consumer-grade technology solutions empowers employees to provide an amazing experience.

Logistics and supply chain

Digital transformation can be powerful in improving the speed and reliability of the supply chain, from how fast products are manufactured to the speed and efficiency of order fulfilment and delivery. To fully leverage a transformation, companies need to look at how the supply chain can be digitized and improved.

Data security, privacy and ethics

Adopting new digital solutions opens the doors to new questions about data security. Most consumers think their personal data is at risk, which means that adopting company-wide standards for privacy and security should be top of mind. With the many examples of "Zoom Bombing", with hackers sneaking into people's private meetings — again we are reminded that any data breach or hack can erode your brand.

Evolution of products, services and processes

Digital transformation requires a change in thinking about how an organization delivers its products and services, and even the products and services themselves. Successful companies push past what's always been done to find the most efficient and innovative solutions.

Digitization

Digital transformation touches all areas of the organization and blurs the line between digital and physical stores. That means moving past segmented operations to digitize every aspect of the business.

Personalization

Digital transformation provides unparalleled opportunities to offer personalized service to customers. Leverage digital solutions to understand customers and provide recommendations and experiences that are unique to them.

Digital transformation is an ongoing process, which means continually working through these 12 steps. Change and venturing into the unknown can be difficult, but the benefits that come from creating a forward-thinking, customer-focused, digital company can be lasting. Perhaps this is the silver lining for businesses in the age of COVID-19, forced change can be positive - for your employees, partners and customers.

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