

**Delivering on Digital  
How to make  
transformation happen**

# Making change executable

You have to evolve mindset and leadership buy-in to make change. You also need a set of precise digital and data-driven tools. But to really make things happen, you need to execute: and that requires a number of additional steps...

This represents the move from idea to execution – and, for some companies born many years before the digital age, this can be a period of great uncertainty. How ambitious should we be? Should we recruit to help us make this journey a success? How quickly can we reach our digital goals?

Putting digital change into practice poses many questions to traditional business.

In the final part of a three-part study, we look at how some organisations are answering these questions, from quantifying their digital ambition to achieving its potential as quickly as possible.

### **What boundaries to push?**

Blockbuster. Kodak. Blackberry. Borders. The past is littered with well-intentioned firms that failed to react quick enough to the digital revolution – and more importantly, the overwhelming need for change. Avoiding a similar fate is the number one strategic priority for every organisation. So what are the best firms doing well in order to capitalise on the digital opportunity?

“For me there are some traits that I see consistently in digital leaders, regardless of the industry, regardless of geography,” says Sholay. “They are very good at designing experiences, business models, processes, identities and services. They use information as a strategic weapon, value it as an asset and they use it to drive the experience, to create new business models and even to sometimes take out their competitors. And they tend to be very platform- centric. They don’t think in terms of products, they build a platform and an ecosystem and they go to market from there.”

Not only that, the companies that succeed also tend to push the boundaries a lot more.

“The firms I’m spending most of my time with aren’t necessarily start-ups,” continues Sholay. “It’s not the cool kids. It’s HSBC. It’s Unilever. It’s governments. Just look at what the Digital India initiative is doing right now, it’s really pushing the nation towards digital. The British government too, and the Dutch government. These weren’t the organisations that were meant to be poster children for digital. But they are the ones that are leading the pack at the moment, precisely because they are trying new things.”

“If you want to play to win in this space, then you’ve got to be very clear with the way you want to use information to create more real-time, personalised and enriching experiences for the customer,” agrees Citi’s Chawla. Anthony Cabrera from Emery Oleochemicals is even more direct: “The purpose of the business is to innovate more in the products that we bring to market,” he asserts.

And key to that is harnessing both people and technology to deliver that all-important element: momentum. A recent report by Deloitte suggests that those born between 1980 and 1999 – in other words, the first digitally native generation – will make up 75% of the global workforce by 2025. Tapping into the right expertise, regardless of age, will be key to digital success.

**75% of the global workforce in 2025 will be made up of people born between 1980 and 1999**

## Inspiring digital talent

“If you really want to be a digital company then you have to attract the right talent,” says Alejandra Leon Moreno from Philips. “When you don’t have the right skillset, it’s really hard to do that type of transformation.”

Hesham Rashed, Head of IT Operations at Orange Egypt, takes a similar view. “Having the right skills and the right people to manage digital transformation – having the internal capability to work on big data and artificial intelligence – is key. But this skill is very rare,” he says. What’s more, the challenge of developing those skills in-house is often proving a significant hurdle to moving forward with a true digital mindset. “If you have to get a fresh graduate with special skills and teach them, grow them from scratch, it really is proving a showstopper for the transformation process in our region.”

And with the best will in the world, developing those internal capabilities is tough. “People want to learn new things. People want to change. But they have to know what they need to learn, how they can change,” suggests Moreno. “I feel companies waste so much time in that regard; in not providing enough direction.”

But there is hope – not least in terms of the role technology can play in simplifying, rather than adding to, the growing complexity firms face. “My advice is this,” offers Sholay. “Don’t chase those few data scientists and pay a premium. Seek out ways to abstract and simplify the data, using technology, so that your regular staff can use it better. There’ll be maybe 20 percent of use cases where you need the rocket scientists but drive the rest to where you can simplify and abstract, because it’s going to be an expensive business otherwise.”

Without doubt, technology – in the form of new platforms, new tools, new ways of capitalising on the vast swathes of data being generated at every firm – is helping organisations make sense of the digital revolution. But only insofar as it is enabling them to react faster to changing trends and demands.

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Alejandra Leon Moreno, Director & Lead Digital Architect, Philips

## Build for speed

“The ability to launch something very quickly is a common thing I’ve seen amongst firms that are being successful in their digital transformation journeys,” suggests Sholay. “Speed is the new essence of business delivery. Organisations that are able to move quickly – and that could mean building a product and getting it to market, or just completely turning their business model around – are the ones that are really pulling away.”

Reliance Industries’ Gupta takes a similar stance. “I don’t think there’s a choice. If you don’t do it fast enough, somebody else will – and then they’re going to take the business and the money,” he says. “You’ve got to decide quickly what you want to do. It’s not just about keeping pace: you’ve got to get ahead and stay ahead.”

The world has never moved so fast – and it will never be this slow again. Transforming your business to take advantage of emerging tools, talent and new ways of working is critical to your success – both today and in the future.

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Piyush Gupta, SVP Business Transformation, Reliance Industries

## **How we can execute innovation ideas faster**

Oracle's Neil Sholay offers his top tips for success.

### **Push the boundaries**

Changing the organisational mindset is one of the most critical steps. "Those businesses that are highly motivated to change and experiment are the ones that see the greatest success. You change the culture by experimentation. You learn by doing as opposed to fearing."

### **Be built for change**

When disruption hits, are you ready for it or are you running around like a headless chicken? If you're built for change, you can embrace the disruption. "That's why things like digital APIs are incredibly important, because they give you that ability to respond very quickly."

**To find out more about how change leaders are tackling digital transformation and making change a practical business reality, read our other ebooks on culture and mindset and change tools and technologies.**