

TRANSFORM YOUR BUSINESS (DIGITALLY OR NOT!)

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Over the past few years, business leaders, journalists, scholars and predominantly consultants(!) have been obsessing over everything and anything digital. Digital transformation has come to mean the be-all and end-all for every business owner and manager, so much so that it is now considered blasphemy not to have at least one (preferably more) “digital initiatives” on the go!

As a professional who has been advising CEOs and other members of the C-suite for more than 26 years, the current digital hype is all too familiar. Whilst there is no denying that recent advances in technology are having a profound and extensive impact on the available business strategies and models, not every business can or should try to become a “digitised business”. Does that mean that technology is not critical in delivering business and commercial advantages? On the contrary! Indeed, during the last five years, the reliance on technology for the success of even the most mature businesses has dramatically increased.

In this respect, even though Banking, Insurance and Financial Services have always had an almost extreme reliance on technology for their strategies, the opportunities for these types of organisations to build entirely new business models, and engineer innovative and cutting-edge service and product or service delivery options appear to be without limits. On the other hand, Retailers, Manufacturers, Healthcare Providers and Fast Moving Consumer Goods (FMCG) distributors – to name just a few – are now able to reach new markets and optimise their costs bases through the use of technologies such as eCommerce, Analytics and Business Intelligence, Sales Force Automation and Enterprise Resource Planning systems. On top of that, Artificial Intelligence, the Internet of Things (IoT), 3D Printing and Blockchain all present exciting options for revenue growth, cost optimisation and control improvements.



So how should organisations go about determining the type of digital or technology transformation journey that is right for them and likely to deliver the maximum positive business impact and return on investment? The building blocks to achieve such a goal, are diverse and include (a) a strong understanding of the industry direction and current status quo, (b) strategic design thinking and business analysis skills, (c) deep and wide knowledge of available and emerging technologies, (d) imagination and enterprise architecture skills and (e) a “healthy” risk appetite.

There are several methodologies to design a digital or technology transformation strategy. From experience, though, the ones most likely to help you succeed in creating an innovative, practical and feasible strategy reflect certain key characteristics.

First, engage and challenge the business leadership team to imagine your business in the most “extreme” scenarios and, as a team, evaluate each of the presented ideas. Then, brutally attack them

against the criteria of innovation, sustainability, relevance, feasibility and suitability for your industry sector. At the end of that process, no more than five ideas should survive! Continue by running a SWOT analysis of your existing business against each of the shortlisted strategies, considering the tools and initiatives to reach success, the financial and other resources that are necessary for each option, the likelihood of success and the rewards you can expect at the end of each idea implementation.

Based on the results of the analysis, rank and prioritise the shortlisted ideas and determine how best to test and evaluate them in greater detail. At this stage, you should have reached your Digital OR Technology Strategy for the next 4-6 years.

Then the hard work of implementation commences, but we shall address this in another article!

If you have enjoyed the thoughts and analysis presented here and would like to learn more about how Baker Tilly Global Solutions can support your strategic thinking and implementation initiatives, please contact Georgios at g.korellis@bakertilly.com.cy or on (+357) 22458500.