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MOMENTS THAT BREAK DOWN BARRIERS TO TRANSFORMATION

The topic of digital transformation has been heard as water cooler conversations or seen in management presentations for quite some time. But the term was not really filled with practical reality, nor top-of-mind for many organizations, until the pandemic forced companies to drastically rethink their business and operations overnight. The pandemic gave a substantial thrust to digital transformation spending and execution, and will continue to do so for some time to come. The unprecedented imperative, as noted by McKinsey, forced organizations to drastically shorten the implementation of digital efforts to a fraction of time compared to normal circumstances.

However, while the speed and depth of digital transformation impetus is startling, organizations must still address barriers in order to take advantage of the impetus, achieve sustainable impact, and gain an ability to scale the business. These are the four barriers we come across the most.

1. COMMUNICATION

Here's a short video to enjoy that makes this point on communication. It plays on the theme of a couple sitting in a therapist's office and coming to realize that in many cases perceived differences are about communication. There's a lot of communication happening, but it's misaligned, or the communication isn't clear to both parties. The digital transformation "relationship," by definition, needs to be applied across many different groups and teams. Unless every team involved in a digitally transforming organization participates, it runs a high risk of ultimately causing most communication to be ineffective or misinforming.

It is essential, therefore, for organizations to find a common frame and taxonomy to arrive at organization-wide clarity on their digital transformation strategy. This pan-enterprise frame is particularly important for bringing stakeholders from lines of business and IT closer together. Building a guiding coalition both requires and fosters clarity about the strategic goals behind various digital initiatives, particularly when transitioning from and enhancing immediate reactions to macro situations such as COVID-19 into long-term impact on your business. Metrics and taxonomy are likely to differ when discussing initiative A to increase productivity, initiative B for faster time-to-market, and initiative C to enhance trust in the entirety of the organization's internal and external environments.

2. ORCHESTRATION

Developing a common view and shared taxonomy on digital transformation presents an essential aspect—but it only represents an initial step that others need to follow to also realize sustainable business value. Many organizations still struggle to sequence and orchestrate their many important initiatives undertaken to drive and scale the digital agenda. Here, insufficient alignment and commitment across the organization can add uncalculated risks.

Certain dependencies, risks, and pre-requisites may exist between various initiatives, as well as within an individual initiative itself. To demonstrate with an example: implementing a new digital service around predictive maintenance implies connected machines as pre-requisites, the structure of a data fabric for data aggregation as a dependency, and a legacy on-premises infrastructure environment as a risk. Thus, not only deep insights, but also further white spots such as production data security and compliance can be identified early to de-risk the organization's path to value realization, supporting effective orchestration, and scaling.

3. DIFFERENTIATION

When was the last time your business did something completely unique and differentiating in the digital context, that none of your peers had thought of? If the answer is a long, long time ago, then now is probably the best chance to take a different path and pursue digital efforts to truly differentiate your business from peers and the market.

Uniqueness and differentiation are not only playing an important role in personal social and communication circles with easy comparison options possible through Instagram, Twitter, and so on. More and more companies are also desperate to break out of "me-too" initiatives caused by the fear of missing out (FOMO) when not copy-catting others. With customer experience overtaking price and product as key differentiators according to Gartner, do not allow your organization's transformation strategy to be directed by FOMO, where every company is simply doing what their peers are doing, too. Instead, advance your digital ambition through the co-invention of novel ideas that create exceptional customer experiences and execute "outside-the-box-thinking" with maximum impact on your business, enabled through a unique value proposition with technology.

4. PRIORITIZATION

During the immediate response to the COVID-19 pandemic, customers,' partners,' and employee's safety, as well as business continuity, were primarily driving decision-making addressing digital efforts. Subsequently, organizations are shifting from emergency and reactive modes to being pro-actively-oriented and shaping character in pursuit of their digital transformation strategy. However, with that comes the so-called priority paralysis. Too much choice for digital initiatives can leave your organization paralyzed and may leads to resourcing issues due to the potential of ineffective prioritization.

It's crucial to design your transformation strategy effectively by gaining insights into critical building blocks early in order to accelerate the time from an initial digital idea or crisis implementation to actually achieving the expected impact on business value. In order to realize benefits faster, identify and build minimum viable product (MVP) targets to prioritize effectively and accelerate time-to-value. Include profound technology expertise and your business' complete ecosystem to arrive at an architectural strategy containing concrete building blocks for your MVPs that ultimately impact and scale your organization's efforts.

ABOUT YARA-YASEMIN SCHUETZ

Yara-Yasemin Schuetz is a Digital Advisor at HPE. She supports organizations in their digital transformation journey, from strategizing to realizing the full value of leveraging digital technologies, in order to advance the way people live and work. Fluent in four languages, she uses those linguistic skills to good use to create a shared language between business outcomes and IT requirements. Her consulting approach to empowering organizations to unlock their full digital ambition embodies having participants step out of their comfort zone for greater collaboration. She holds an MSc in Digital Business Management from the University of Reutlingen, recently led an empirical study on digital strategy patterns.

DIGITAL NEXT ADVISORY PROVIDES STEPS TO BREAK DOWN THE BARRIERS

With its Digital Next Advisory approach, HPE offers a lightweight, proven, and iterative framework to jointly engage in removing these hurdles wherever you are currently in your digital transformation journey; at its beginning or stalling. To effectively execute and scale your digital transformation journeys with the right technology in place, the Activate moment provides a powerful model for framing and communicating your digital initiatives. During an Align moment you gain deep insights to better sequence and orchestrate your digital initiatives. With an Advance moment, we help rapidly identify a differentiated and unique value proposition through technology for your business. And the Accelerate moment helps you move faster from your initial digital idea to benefit realization.

Addressing and removing these four common barriers not only enables your organization to create real impact and sustainably scale your digital efforts, but it also provides enablement and stimulation to continuously grow your organization's digital ambition. This can create a prosperous cycle of effective execution that drives business value and the confidence for even greater digital ambitions.

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