

3 steps **toward digital transformation success**

Don't overlook customer and employee experiences as paths to positive transformational results.



THE GLOBAL MARKET for digital transformation tools and services

is expected to increase at a compound annual growth rate of 23.1% from this year through 2030, according to Grand View Research.

What's driving these transformation investments? That's the question we asked the CIO Experts Network, a community of IT professionals, industry analysts, and other technology influencers. Here are their responses, including three steps that will get organizations closer to digital transformation success.

Customer and employee experiences are critical transformational drivers

Although transformation efforts and digitization projects kicked off well before the pandemic, the efforts have continued to accelerate digital transformation initiatives.

"Postpandemic 'digital Darwinism' is still alive and kicking, with many firms in a fight for their very survival," said Kieran Gilmurray, CEO of Digital Automation and Robotics Limited. "Connected customers; digitally literate staff who want greater life/work balance; and hungry, digital, globally located competitors are all chomping at incumbents' markets and profit margins. "Other experts agreed and pointed to factors that help transform employee and customer experiences:

"Remote and hybrid work are the most important drivers of digital transformation.

The cloud and SaaS are foundational to such a transformation right now," said Will Kelly, a writer and analyst focused on the cloud and DevOps.

"The biggest driver of digital transformation is the ability to capture data 'exhaust' from user and employee engagements that provide deep insights into customer and employee experience. Obviously, the distributed digital workforce and customer online experience have magnified this," added Frank Cutitta, CEO and founder, HealthTech Decisions Lab.

"The most important driver of digital transformation – I'd argue it's the only driver – is to deliver a differentiated customer experience. Leverage digital technologies to deliver a customer experience and help you win in the market, which will then lead you to innovate and improve the employee and partner experience," said Charles Araujo, publisher and principal analyst of "The Digital Experience Report."

What's the best way to enable better customer and employee experiences? The experts offered three tips.

Step 1: Position transformation areas for success

Whether your organization is transforming experiences, workflows, or processes, the first step should involve setting up efforts for success. **It has been widely reported that up to 70% of digital transformation efforts fail.**

"The reasons for this vary and include various business, technology, people, and process challenges and related complexities," said Gene De Libero, chief strategy officer, GeekHive.com.

That's why organizations should start by defining parameters and objectives. "Clearly understand the desired outcomes of the transformation effort," De Libero said. "Intimately know your internal and external customers' expectations and understand your market and competitive pressures."

David Geer, thought leader and cybersecurity expert, agreed:

"You must design your transformation by targeting specific processes. Clearly identify what you are transforming, why, the desired end state of that process,

"and how it must perform. You need observability and metrics from project start to completion to ensure you can stay on target and measure your success."

Step 2: Transform experiences with data-driven insights transformation areas for success

Data is required to gain an understanding of expectations, competitors, potential outcomes, and a desired end state for digital transformation initiatives. Insights help organizations "make decisions quickly and tackle actions based on analytical analysis of operations and opportunities," said Jack Gold, president and principal analyst, J. Gold Associates, LLC.

Gold suggested that organizations take a data-driven approach, using a modern application architecture that optimizes use of cloud-enabled infrastructure as well as edge, data collection, and analysis tools.

Artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning (ML) tools can accelerate delivery of these insights, give context to data, and help organizations innovate, said the experts:

"Digital transformation needs to integrate business knowledge, AI/ML insight, and technical advances with customer experiences to retain existing customers

while gaining new ones with powerful and trustworthy product or service innovation,” said Adam Stein, principal, APS Marketing.

“Often in digital transformation, organizations are focused on breaking down data silos and reimagining how data is being utilized today. It is imperative to take a closer look at different ways to integrate and improve the current usage of data for the future. Leveraging AI/ML can help organizations gain new data insights that might otherwise not be possible with dark stealth data that is hidden in silos or unstructured formats,” said Peggy Tsai, chief data officer, BigID.


“Future-thinking companies are looking very closely into the extreme value of what some say is 80% of data that is unstructured or conversational. While this segment has evolved, competitive advantage will go to enterprises that start experimenting to capture data that occurs within real-time conversations at help desks and customer service centers, for example,” added Cutitta.

Step 3: Modernize employee and customer connectivity

Another important aspect of transformation is the ability to communicate, share, and collaborate around data. Customers and employees want great connectivity and need it for businesses to succeed.

“It’s essential to begin internally and invest in network modernization efforts, which help to maximize cloud-based communications that dynamically adapt to application demands and bandwidth fluctuations. It’s simple: Reliable connectivity makes for happy employees and customers,” said Peter Nichol, chief technology officer of OROCA Innovations.

“Secure, reliable, and fast connectivity is a business assumption, and it can be extremely frustrating to business leaders and employees when there’s poor network performance even when issues arise outside of IT’s controls. IT can prepare for uncertainties by implementing robust SD-WANs, investing in AI-enabled network monitoring, automating standard procedures, moving low-latency compute needs to the edge, and partnering with MSPs to extend beyond basic services, especially for when something goes wrong,” said Isaac Sacolick, president of StarCIO and author of *Digital Trailblazer: Essential Lessons to Jumpstart Transformation and Accelerate Your Technology Leadership*.



**“Reliable connectivity
makes for happy employees
and customers.”**

The bottom line

As Gilmurray noted, there is business urgency behind digital transformation efforts, especially for those organizations that have not gotten started. There is “an imperative for action,” he said, “with firms now rushing to knit together digital, talent, change management, security, and technology strategy with their business strategy in record time.”

“There is an imperative for action, with firms now rushing to knit together **digital, talent, change management, security, and technology strategy with their business strategy in record time.**”

Learn more about how to deliver a [reliable network and solutions](#) for your business.

SE-MS-AT006

This post is brought to you by CIO. The views and opinions expressed herein are those of the contributors and do not represent the views and opinions of Spectrum Enterprise.



SPONSORED BY

