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THE ESSENTIAL GUIDE TO UNDERSTANDING DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION

Top experts share insights from their efforts in achieving digital maturity.

INTRODUCTION

Few changes we see happening in the world today are as completely and fundamentally impactful as digital transformation. But what exactly is digital transformation? Many debate its true meaning, and though it may mean different things to different organizations, few would argue that if a business is not on a clear digital-transformation path, it won't have much of a future.

In this Beginner's Guide to Digital Transformation, generously sponsored by Iron Mountain, seven experts weigh in on the topic of digital transformation, discussing everything from how you know it's time to transform to the most effective strategies for preparing and implementing digital change in your organization. All the contributors to this eBook have overseen digital transformation and continue to guide organizations through the process. They offer insights based on their experiences that show how to avoid costly mistakes and how to realize unanticipated benefits. Most importantly, they show how to build a foundation for digital transformation that enables continuous digital change as technology evolves.

Digital transformation is a big topic. We have organized this guide into chapters that present key ideas in a way you would naturally approach transformation in the context of your own business. In reading through this eBook, I'm pleased with how it has succeeded in collecting so much valuable advice useful to anyone responsible for developing and implementing a digital-transformation strategy.

All the best,
David Rogelberg
Publisher, Mighty Guides, Inc.

Mighty Guides

Mighty Guides make you stronger.

These authoritative and diverse guides provide a full view of a topic. They help you explore, compare, and contrast a variety of viewpoints so that you can determine what will work best for you. Reading a Mighty Guide is kind of like having your own team of experts. Each heartfelt and sincere piece of advice in this guide sits right next to the contributor's name, biography, and links so that you can learn more about their work. This background information gives you the proper context for each expert's independent perspective.

Credible advice from top experts helps you make strong decisions. Strong decisions make you mighty.

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HOW YOU KNOW IT'S TIME TO **DIGITALLY TRANSFORM YOUR BUSINESS**

With all the talk about digital transformation, how do you know your business is ready for change? Today's reality is that if you're waiting for the right time, you're already falling behind. Technology is changing the world. You need to embrace changes that can strengthen your business, because your competition is already doing so. For many businesses, the big question is not if or when, but where, to start.

"You don't want to be growth-limited by an inefficient process."

Marcos Bueno, Head of Media Technology, Vox Media, Inc

Over the past seven years, Marcos Bueno been has building Vox Media's strategic capabilities for media technology and operating its content studios. His work has enabled the enterprise to grow new business lines such as long-form and over-the-top (OTT) content production, licensing, and distribution. Bueno understands that the only limit to a media company's growth potential is its ability to build capability thoughtfully around its priorities.

One indicator that you can benefit from a digitally automated process is the level of duplication in the workflow. This is especially true when you have multiple actions or processes facilitating the same goal. A poorly managed process can have implications across multiple business units in the organization.

A good example is in the production world for TV-film and digital editorial content. Gathering releases for talent, location, artwork or assets that are used in the final content, whether it's the soundtrack or a photo or whatever it might be, is typically a paper process that is labor-intensive and can be error-prone, it is also difficult to scale. We've grown from a couple of networks to eight, each with its own digital editorial team and production team. You don't want to be growth-limited by an inefficient process.

Early on I adopted a standard of not tolerating more than 20% duplicate work in a process. That rule gave us enough to be a little scrappy about testing out ideas for streamlining using simple tools that we had, before investing in a big transformation. Every business will have a different measure for what contributes to that 20%. ◼

> **"If you're not constantly finding easier ways for customers to do business with you, then somebody's going to lap you very quickly."**

Mike Huskins, Head of Product Operations, Twilio

Mike Huskins is a senior business leader whose passion is to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of an organization's operations. He also has a broad range of experience developing and implementing strategy and completing complex transactions. He is currently the head of Twilio's super network operations team. Previously, he was a strategy and operations consultant at McKinsey, where he worked across a number of industries, including the semiconductor, financial services, and healthcare sectors.

Based on my previous experience as a consultant, there are some tell-tale signs that it's time for a digital transformation. If you see that your company has a lot of data but you can't get any insight out of it, or customers are frustrated because you have to ask them the same questions three times during an engagement process, or you're missing out on cross-selling opportunities, or employees are frustrated because they have to copy and paste things when they're working, these are all good signs that you are not using your data effectively.

The fact is, if you're not constantly automating, using your data, finding easier ways for customers to do business with you, then somebody's going to lap you very quickly. ■

> **"If you have to ask for permission to implement change, it's time to seriously look at how you are operating."**

Brad Orluk , Enterprise
Solution Architect, Nintex

Brad Orluk has been evangelizing technology and process automation for over 15 years. Prior to joining Nintex, he had roles in infrastructure, IT consulting, and most recently, as an information architect at a Fortune 500, where he worked on business and IT process improvement and automation on a variety of real-world global projects and productivity initiatives. Orluk's unique technical-yet-business-focused background gives him the ability to help users leverage technology to drive value to their businesses.

A clear indicator that it is time to digitally transform your business is living with inefficiencies because you are trapped in legacy systems. The pace of innovation is accelerating. Competitors and customers are not going to wait for you to change. If the answer to why you do things the way you do them is because that's the way you have always done them, that is a sign that you may be vulnerable. If you have to ask for permission to implement change, it's time to seriously look at how you are operating. ■

> **"Every business needs to look ahead, even if they've just undergone a recent transformation to one of their business processes."**

Every business needs to look ahead, even if they've just undergone a recent transformation to one of their business processes. You always need to be looking at how you're using technology and making sure that it's being implemented and leveraged in the most effective manner.

Well-managed, smooth-running operations are often the easiest ones to transform because the workflow does not require a complete redesign. You can focus on eliminating manual processes and removing steps to improve operational efficiencies. The more challenging transformations involve a poorly designed workflow or process. In that case you must rethink the workflow itself as you implement technology to support it. ■

Steven Freidkin,
CEO, Ntiva, Inc

Steven Freidkin is the CEO of Ntiva, Inc., a full-service technology firm headquartered in the metro DC area. Ntiva provides managed IT services to businesses of all types, from day-to-day support to long-term strategic planning. Freidkin's top focus is working with clients to grow their business based on the effective use of technology. He also spends significant time on identifying opportunities for business development.

> **"It is naive to assume that your organization can continue to thrive without constantly reacting to the complex changes high-speed digital technologies bring about."**

Cristian Citu, Digital Transformation Lead, World Economic Forum

Cristian Citu works at the World Economic Forum headquarters where he's focusing on the impact of digital technologies on business and wider society. Previously he was senior director of group digital strategy at DHL global headquarters. Before focusing on pure digital-transformation work, Citu managed global digital-marketing programs for DHL. He also spent a few years in consulting, working with a wide range of customers. He shares his insights on digital transformation at @TheChiefDigital and www.chief.digital.

Unless you're a relatively new and successful technology company or a start-up, chances are you will feel pressure to design and execute a holistic digital-transformation agenda. This is likely to be an ongoing initiative, even though the first few years will require the most aggressive actions (at least until the next digital tsunami hits, potentially triggered by quantum computing, for example). Massive venture capital is invested in every industry with the single purpose of creating disruption, so it is naive to assume that your organization can continue to thrive without constantly reacting to the complex changes high-speed digital technologies bring about. ■

> ## "A lack of ability to tie marketing programs directly to revenue is an indicator that you need transformation."

Signs that digital transformation is necessary are stagnant growth, inefficient operations, and a lack of data insights into what is or is not working. This can apply to any aspect of the business.

A good example is marketing, which is often viewed as a cost center. A lack of ability to tie marketing programs directly to revenue is an indicator that you need transformation. Making that revenue connection is difficult in a traditional organization where functions are siloed and don't share information. In such cases, it becomes almost impossible to get a 360 degree view of the customer, their end-to-end journey and engagements across various channels. ◼

Anastasia Pavlova, Vice President Marketing | Advisor, Webgility

Anastasia Pavlova is a marketing executive, thought leader, storyteller, and public speaker with over 15 years of experience in SAAS, ecommerce, MarTech, and consumer tech industries. She currently advises startups and established growth companies on best practices for digital transformation, go-to-market strategies, demand generation, account-based marketing (ABM), sales and marketing alignment, content marketing, corporate storytelling, brand marketing, and high-performance team building.

> ## "If you're paying attention to the world around you, you know it's time."

Joel Layton, Senior Advisor,
BounceX, Unbxd, Terra's Kitchen

Joel Layton is a long time digital commerce expert with a passion for his craft. With a tenure of leading and building ecommerce strategy at the likes of Lands End, Medifast, rue21, and The Children's Place, Joel has a solid history of driving innovation and growth. He also has been able to inject digital thinking across a variety of verticals from consumer electronics to weight loss to apparel. A team builder by nature, nothing makes him more proud than the relationships he has developed over the years, building true partnerships along the way.

If you're paying attention to the world around you, you know it's time. Technology is moving at such a rapid pace, it's incumbent on any organization to keep up. In the retail business, if you are asking when you should digitally transform, you might already be too late. The advent of the internet and digital commerce has changed everything over the last decade.

Still, you need to step back and look at your business. Some years ago I joined a fashion-retail business serving a young demographic to help build an e-commerce strategy. At that time the company's mantra was that to grow business, you have to open more stores. Yet 15% to 20% of the group's stores were unprofitable. Its core demographic was between ages 17 and 27. If you want to reach them, you need to meet them where they are, and they are at their computers and on their cell phones — they're engaging with your brand at a digital level. Launching more stores was not the answer. That was the moment when I realized what was wrong with classic American retail.

Digital transformation is evolutionary: You're either adapting to the world around you, or you're going to be left behind. ■

KEY POINTS

One way to prioritize transformation is to consider automating any process or workflow whose execution involves more than 20% duplicate work. This involves taking a close look at processes and defining what is redundant.

If you have difficulty making a direct connection between a key business process and revenue, then you have a transformation opportunity.

SETTING MEASURABLE AND **ATTAINABLE GOALS**

Measuring success is often difficult in complex change processes, and digital transformation is no different. Introducing new levels of automation is rarely as simple as automating an existing process. Digital transformation often cuts across work groups and business units, and it can be disruptive. How do those who have been successful measure the effectiveness of digital change?

> "Setting goals for a transformation requires mapping your change needs to strategic capabilities that are essential to business execution."

Marcos Bueno, Head of Media Technology, Vox Media, Inc

Over the past seven years, Marcos Bueno been has building Vox Media's strategic capabilities for media technology and operating its content studios. His work has enabled the enterprise to grow new business lines such as long-form and over-the-top (OTT) content production, licensing, and distribution. Bueno understands that the only limit to a media company's growth potential is its ability to build capability thoughtfully around its priorities.

Setting goals for a transformation requires mapping your change needs to strategic capabilities that are essential to business execution. In our case, our strategic capabilities are guided purely by the need to publish premium content at scale. The workflow around that is complicated, so finding the areas that are most impactful are important. For example, if you hire staff with specialized skill sets, you want to be sure they are focused on where they specialize and not having their time eaten up by duplicate work. So one measure might be greater productivity around that skill set.

Another really straightforward example is the opportunity to reuse content. If we have a system that allows us to search all of our content and pull up things that we've shot in the past so we can reuse it, we don't have to pay someone to go out and shoot it again. That saves on production time, reduces costs, and enables us to get more value out of the things we've already created. Those are all measurable goals. ■

> ## "Goals are often operational. They often relate to becoming more efficient."

Setting measurable goals for a transformation depends a lot on the scenario. Goals are often operational. They can relate to becoming more efficient because you're wasting your own time, you're wasting customers' time, or you recognize you have too many people involved in a process. Objectives related to these scenarios would be shorter cycle times and lower costs associated with their processes. You try to estimate how you're going to move the operational needles, and then determine what the change does to customer experience, costs, revenues, and profits.

Some transformations change the nature of the business, and this can make measurement trickier. You have to do the what-if analysis. If you transform, what happens to your customers? If you don't transform, do your customers go to your competitors?. If you're the leader in your market, transformation can deliver additional revenue. If you're trying to catch up to somebody else in your industry, then transformation becomes a way to stop losing customers and gain market share. ◼

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"I suggest taking the path of least resistance by using a measuring stick that's already been established by the business."

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When it comes to setting workable goals for a transformation, I suggest taking the path of least resistance by using a measuring stick that's already been established by the business. Many businesses already have something like a service-level agreement or documented expectations about what a business process needs to deliver. Setting goals for the transformation can be as simple as mapping the new capabilities to meet documented service levels of the process that is being transformed.

But it really depends on what you are transforming. If you are changing a manufacturing process, that might be how many more widgets per hour you're pushing off the assembly line. If it's a workflow-management process, it might be the human effort that was expended on the process. A lot of people still want to have conversations about hard-dollar savings, but the era of simply appeasing the bean counters is gone. It needs to be something that is impactful to the business. I would say operational value is the key today.

"The best measures of the effectiveness of transformation are ordinary operational metrics."

I believe the best measures of the effectiveness of transformation are ordinary operational metrics. Are you able to get information to the right people faster? Are you able to reduce errors in day-to-day operations? Are you able to take steps out of a process? Are you able to remove people from certain processes and operations? I don't believe the goal should be simply to eliminate people from an operation, but rather it should be to use automation in ways that elevate people so they can focus on doing what they are uniquely able to do. ■

Steven Freidkin,
CEO, Ntiva, Inc

Steven Freidkin is the CEO of Ntiva, Inc., a full-service technology firm headquartered in the metro DC area. Ntiva provides managed IT services to businesses of all types, from day-to-day support to long-term strategic planning. Freidkin's top focus is working with clients to grow their business based on the effective use of technology. He also spends significant time on identifying opportunities for business development.

> **"Some of the most important effects of a successful transformation are often qualitative."**

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Defining some concrete measurable targets for a digital-transformation agenda is a must, but organizations shouldn't fall into the trap of simply chasing those numbers. Some of the most important effects of a successful transformation are often qualitative.

For instance, it's great to set timelines for goals, such as reaching 50% digital revenue for a traditional brick-and-mortar business. But this shouldn't stop the organization from exploring a significant number of new or complementary business models with the purpose of delighting customers and creating future cash cows. It also shouldn't prevent it from looking at a new business that could completely replace the current core business, even though the revenue contribution on short term is insignificant. ■

> ## "Digital transformation is not an end goal in itself — it is a means of getting to the business goals."

Goals for a transformation ultimately need to tie to those for the entire business. Typically these boil down to how to grow revenue, how to increase profits, how to retain existing customers, how to grow lifetime value, and key operational goals such as how to attract and retain top talent.

Digital transformation is not an end goal in itself — it is a means of getting to the business goals. In marketing, there are three fundamental things that keep CMOs up at night: how to build the brand; how to grow revenue and how to prove marketing impact. There are a number of trackable metrics associated with these activities. Starting with revenue, sales teams have specific revenue goals for a month or quarter. Marketing is responsible for pipeline and opportunity goals related to those revenue goals. You can measure early, middle and late stage metrics throughout the revenue funnel while optimizing conversion rates at each stage. For example, some early stage metrics to look at right after the program execution include the number of content downloads, or webinar/event attendees; a few weeks later, you can look at how many MQLs (marketing qualified leads) have been generated by the program; and at a later stage (which could take a few months depending on your sales cycle) you track the number of new opportunities and pipeline and how many opportunities are won and the associated revenue. These are all traditional demand generation metrics and in the new world of account based marketing, teams focus on driving engagement within target accounts, opportunities, pipeline and revenue from target accounts. ■

Anastasia Pavlova, Vice President Marketing | Advisor, Webgility

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Measurable goals for transformation need to map back to what is essential to the business. In the case of retail, going digital should make it easier and less expensive to reach more people. To measure that, you look at how people are engaging with your brand, and this can happen through many different channels. Often people begin at a web site, and they show their likes through reviews and social media. Digital makes it possible to track customers through many channels of engagement.

Start looking at the economics: how much income a website is generating, how many orders per day or hour, and revenue per visitor. Then you can look at the costs of generating that revenue in e-commerce compared to revenue per square foot in a store paradigm. You can look at the costs of digital commerce versus the costs of spending more on advertising, or building another store. You begin looking at the cost per acquisition of the various channels, and you start assessing the effectiveness of investing in digital.

Digital retail provides a lot of data from multiple channels so that you can measure outcomes and show dramatic results. Other business models, such as B2B, have different data resources, but in a transformation, they need to be able to measure goals in terms of their business fundamentals.

KEY POINTS

Saving on production time, reducing production costs, and getting more value out of assets are all measurable goals.

The goal of transformation should not be simply to eliminate people from an operation. Rather it should be to use automation in ways that elevate people so they can focus on doing what they are uniquely able to do.

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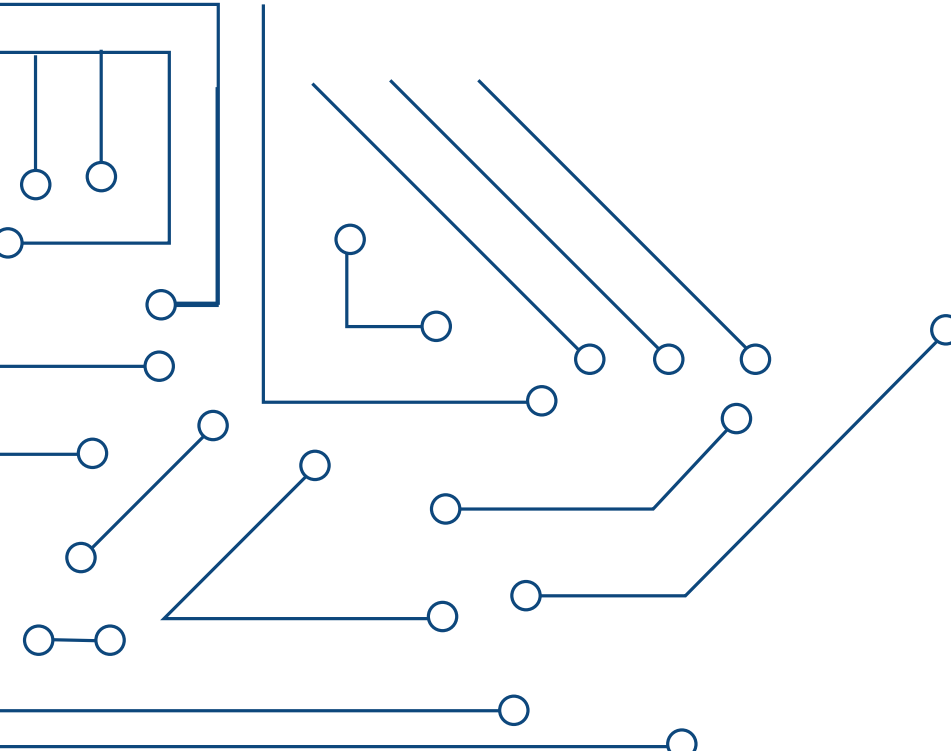to accelerate your digital transformation.

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PREPARING YOUR BUSINESS FOR CHANGE

Some organizations are more accepting of digital transformation than others, but at some level, change is always difficult. To succeed, businesses need to commit to transformation at a high level, they must be disciplined in their approach, and they need to recognize that this kind of change impacts people's lives.

> "You need to make sure that each stakeholder group includes someone who is championing the cause."

Marcos Bueno, Head of Media Technology, Vox Media, Inc

Over the past seven years, Marcos Bueno been has building Vox Media's strategic capabilities for media technology and operating its content studios. His work has enabled the enterprise to grow new business lines such as long-form and over-the-top (OTT) content production, licensing, and distribution. Bueno understands that the only limit to a media company's growth potential is its ability to build capability thoughtfully around its priorities.

There needs to be a leader responsible for the transformation process, but the implementation team can't do it alone. For us, there are a lot of stakeholders, including editorial teams, the legal team, and IT. You need to make sure that each stakeholder group includes someone who is championing the cause.

It also involves change becoming part of the culture. For example, media production is often routine-driven, where folks use the same thing they've been using for years because they know it works and they know it very well. Sometimes, taking people out of that mindset is very difficult. The culture has to be one where one of the core values as a company is to thrive on change. We are better at that than many organizations because we started as a digital-first company where tools, platforms and processes are frequently shifting. ■

"The person ultimately in charge of transformation needs to be the business owner, the person who owns the profit and losses in the relevant business activity."

Transformation can be difficult for an organization, partly because most people fear losing things more than they value gaining them. If your culture overvalues tradition, it can stifle necessary change. That's why the person ultimately in charge of transformation needs to be the business owner, the person who owns the profit and losses in the relevant business activity. This might be the CEO, or it might be the business-unit owner in a large enterprise.

There also needs to be coordination between affected groups. This can be done through the creation of a special group, like a center of excellence, or a tiger team responsible for maximizing the value of your data. When it comes to transformation, companies often start with a single process or business unit and limited data sets to prove the concept, and as it becomes stable, expand data and process integrations. ■

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> "All businesses are different. The less amenable they are to change, the more difficult it will be to get a digital transformation initiative going."

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Digital transformation happens best in an environment where change is allowed, nurtured, and accepted. Then it involves doing a classic kind of discovery, trying to figure out who the players are in whatever process that needs to change, or the entire organization if necessary, and then having the right stakeholders to help drive that change.

All businesses are different. The more stodgy and old school a hierarchy is, and the less amenable they are to change, the more difficult it will be to get a digital-transformation initiative going. The flatter the organization is, the easier it is to drive that kind of change. Digital-transformation change agents and their constituencies will have greater success in driving change if they can drive the flattening of the organization.

> "Organizations that do best with transformation are those that enjoy the opportunity to grow, change, develop, and perfect themselves."

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CEO, Ntiva, Inc

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Most transformation failures happen when the executive leadership isn't truly behind the initiative or they themselves don't follow it. If top leadership wants to keep doing things the way they always have, how can they expect operations teams to follow through? C-level executive leadership must bear ultimate responsibility for a transformation. They need to take the lead in getting the organization to understand why a change is going to happen, embrace it, and support it from the top down.

Additionally, there should be a steering committee consisting of representatives from each department involved in the transformation. They need to participate in selecting applications, establishing an implementation schedule, training, and support in developing a custom workflow. Each member of this steering committee becomes the transformation evangelist within his or her department.

Organizations that do best with transformation are those that enjoy the opportunity to grow, change, develop, and perfect themselves. They have a culture of people who are always learning and believe there is always a way to improve what they currently do. ◾

> **"The scale and impact will always remain limited if digital transformation remains only on the agenda of the CDO, CEO and the board."**

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Most companies start their digital-transformation journeys bottom-up through early adopters and digital champions in different parts of the organization, who are running and proposing new digitalization initiatives.

The first major wave then normally starts with some significant progress in the digital-marketing space, because there is so much smart technology available that can deliver amazing results in digital customer acquisition. The chief marketing officer or the chief customer officer is often in charge because this is their area, but also because they control significant financial resources and can easily trigger cross-functional integrations. Of course, transformation involves IT, but chief information officers tend to remain focused on their IT function, and very few have enough commercial expertise to run the full organizational transformation.

Sooner or later, a chief digital officer (CDO) is appointed (formally or informally), pushing to accelerate organizational transformation and focus on new digital commercial endeavors. Unfortunately, many CDOs suffer from isolation and lack of proper resources or mandate, and since they

need to challenge the organizational status quo, their progress is often slow, with many existing managers seeing potential threats or becoming confused by the new internal dynamics. Ideally, every CDO should report directly to the CEO and have the support of a digitally mature board. At this stage, most CEOs also start taking direct responsibility for the transformation journey and they start talking about digitalization in every town-hall, country-team review, or media interview. This is when the pressure from the top starts meeting the pressure from the bottom and the digitalization magic finally begins.

The scale and impact will always remain limited if digital transformation stays only on the agenda of the CDO, CEO, and the board. Organizations need to aim to have every single employee constantly asking him or herself: "How has technology changed my functional area recently? What is feasible today that was not feasible two years ago? How can I leverage technology to make my job better, faster, and using less organizational resources? How can I better leverage my role to maximize the benefits for our customers?" ■
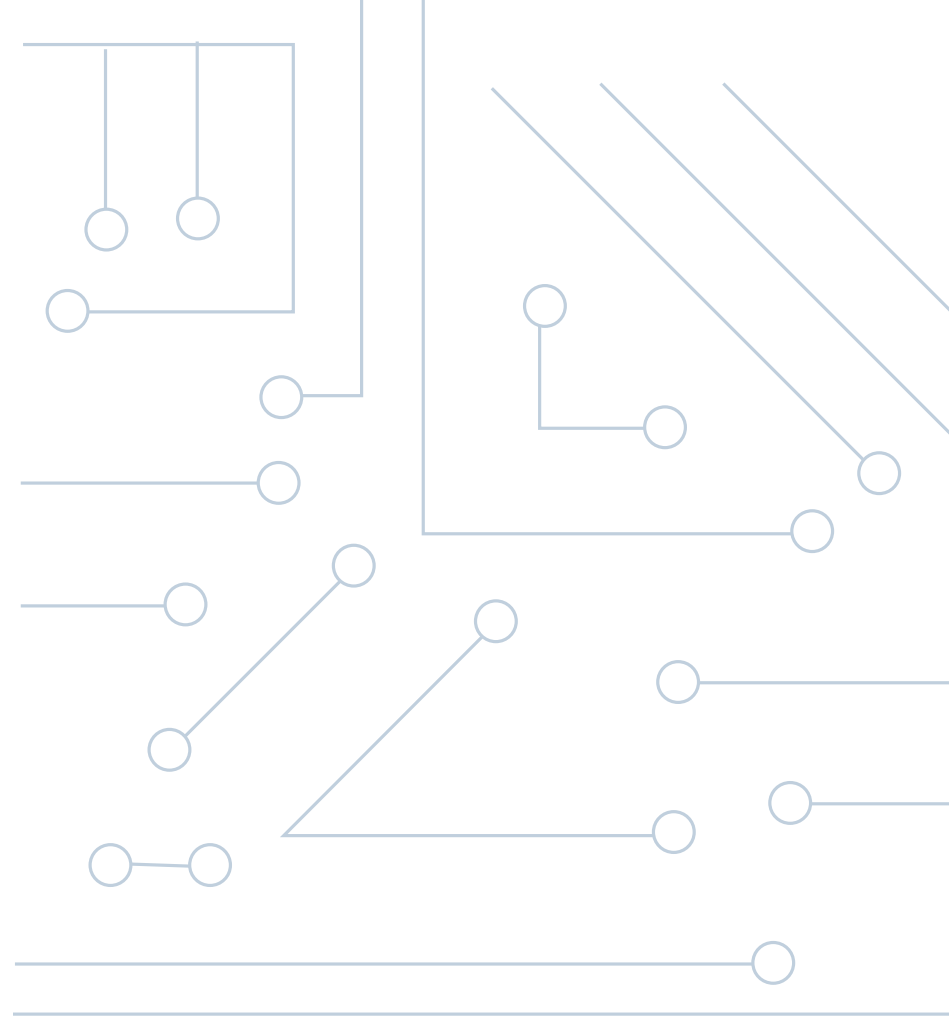
> **"It has to start in the C-suite, with a CEO, or head of marketing if you are changing a marketing organization, and then it cascades down through the organization."**

Change is never easy, and bigger, more established companies have more difficulty. Changing processes within a large global enterprise is like trying to turn the Titanic. In the case of digital transformation, it has to start in the C-suite, with a CEO, or head of marketing if you are changing a marketing organization, and then it cascades down through the organization.

You start with directives at the top that influence the culture shift, and you also hire the right talent that fits the new digital profile and start changing processes from the bottom up so that the new talent, the new skills, can influence the rest of the organization. I've implemented marketing transformation that carries lessons for other teams. At Marketo, we held regular knowledge-sharing sessions with our global marketing team on key strategic initiatives and best practices around operational account scoring, customer journey and nurture, product launches. I made it a practice in weekly staff meetings to have my demand generation team share weekly lessons with those on the creative or content team so that those folks knew which particular content assets performed better. And it was vitally important to talk to customers and listen in on sales calls to gain this first-hand knowledge and apply it to campaigns or develop battle cards for sales to better handle objections.

Anastasia Pavlova, Vice President Marketing | Advisor, Webgility

Anastasia Pavlova is a marketing executive, thought leader, storyteller, and public speaker with over 15 years of experience in SAAS, ecommerce, MarTech, and consumer tech industries. She currently advises startups and established growth companies on best practices for digital transformation, go-to-market strategies, demand generation, account-based marketing (ABM), sales and marketing alignment, content marketing, corporate storytelling, brand marketing, and high-performance team building.

> **"Digital transformation is disruptive. It needs to be done with discipline and empathy for how these changes affect people."**

Joel Layton, Senior Advisor,
BounceX, Unbxd, Terra's Kitchen

Joel Layton is a long time digital commerce expert with a passion for his craft. With a tenure of leading and building ecommerce strategy at the likes of Lands End, Medifast, rue21, and The Children's Place, Joel has a solid history of driving innovation and growth. He also has been able to inject digital thinking across a variety of verticals from consumer electronics to weight loss to apparel. A team builder by nature, nothing makes him more proud than the relationships he has developed over the years, building true partnerships along the way.

For some businesses, digital transformation is disruptive. It requires changes that can be painful, including a complete shift in mindset and staff changes. The transition needs to be carried out with discipline and empathy.

It may also change business-leadership roles. For instance, in retail there is a merging of marketing and technology functions. The chief digital officer (CDO) position is now replacing that of the chief marketing officer. Those are the key personnel, but they need a CEO backing them up with a clear vision of the business's direction. This is important, because significant cultural obstacles can surface. For example, in fashion retail, digital-commerce people not only think differently, but they dress differently than traditional merchants. It takes a lot of adjusting. ◼
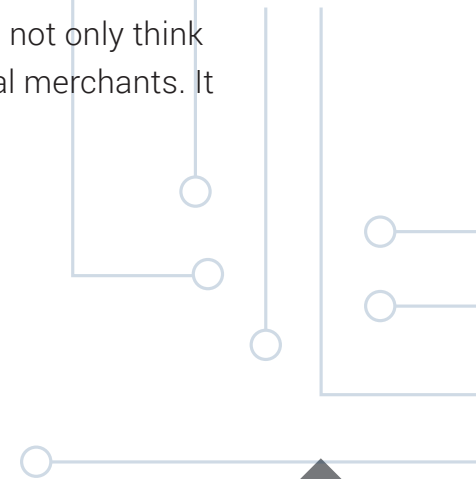
KEY POINTS

Digital transformation requires commitment from the top down, and every stakeholder group needs someone embedded in their team who is a transformation evangelist.

A transformation will not succeed if it remains the sole responsibility of an operations group, or if it's solely on the agenda of the CEO or CDO. Every employee needs to recognize how he or she can leverage the technological change.

CHAPTER 4

DISCOVERING YOUR DATA ASSETS

Digital transformation depends on having the right data to streamline and automate essential business processes. It also depends on being able to collect that data. As businesses pursue their transformation strategies, some discover new value in old data, and others find they are overflowing with conflicting data. How do companies that implement successful digital transformations identify their valuable data, and how do they collect it for actionable analysis?

> **"Cloud storage has played a big part in this by giving agencies the ability to move older data into the cloud for recall at a later time."**

Marcos Bueno, Head of Media Technology, Vox Media, Inc

Over the past seven years, Marcos Bueno been has building Vox Media's strategic capabilities for media technology and operating its content studios. His work has enabled the enterprise to grow new business lines such as long-form and over-the-top (OTT) content production, licensing, and distribution. Bueno understands that the only limit to a media company's growth potential is its ability to build capability thoughtfully around its priorities.

Identifying and accessing underused data is critical to getting more value out of your assets. We have a very large, dense library of assets that needs to be handled very particularly. Often it gets locked so only two or three people have access to it. But 100 or more could actually leverage those assets in their day-to-day workflows. Ease of access is a major factor. If it is too laborious or cumbersome to access that content, people give up, and then it's back to reproducing existing content.

Being able to search archival content depends on having quality metadata about what is in the footage, what rights we have to release it, and how we can use and syndicate it. Metadata ends up driving the value for the content because the more data points we have associated with it, the more useful it becomes in programmatic advertising and other opportunities involving highly targeted and nuanced audiences.

For a long time, the technical requirements for content creation restricted the media industry to high-performance servers that live on-premises at post-production facilities. However, significant advances in storage technology, video data compression, and non-linear editing software are redefining how we work. Cloud storage has played a big part in this by giving agencies the ability to move older data into the cloud for recall at a later time. This enables business-continuity strategies while reducing the costly footprint of on-premises data centers, and it streamlines workflows. Powering cloud storage with a media asset manager (MAM) or production asset manager (PAM) enables various business units to control content and associated metadata. ■

> **"When using cloud data storage, data governance becomes a critical issue, especially for businesses that retain regulated data."**

One way to discover underutilized data assets is to find a data scientist in the organization and ask them if they have access to all the data that they need.

If your request to speak with the data scientist is met with a blank stare, you can be sure the company is not even thinking of how it can leverage its data. If you find a data scientist and they tell you they are spending 90% of their time just trying to get the data flows, and they need real-time data but it's not available, that's a strong indicator that the company is not using its data effectively. Most companies have lots of underutilized data. A data scientist's wish list is a good place to start in identifying those untapped resources.

Unless data centers and storage are part of your core business, it's no longer necessary to build and maintain them yourself. Cloud facilities have made storing data cheap and easy. However, when using cloud data storage, data governance becomes a critical issue, especially for businesses that retain regulated data.

When using cloud data-storage solutions, companies need to answer fundamental data management questions. Who is responsible for what part of the data? Is the data accurate? Does everyone have the right level of access? Is the format compatible? What can be accessed in real time vs. delayed? What gets retained? What gets deleted out of privacy concerns? If a company fails to address these questions across the board, each team will make up its own answers. You will have islands of data in the company, which can result in you missing out on the insights that come from combining data across teams, groups, functions, and departments. ■

Mike Huskins, Head of Product Operations, Twilio

Mike Huskins is a senior business leader whose passion is to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of an organization's operations. He also has a broad range of experience developing and implementing strategy and completing complex transactions. He is currently the head of Twilio's super network operations team. Previously, he was a strategy and operations consultant at McKinsey, where he worked across a number of industries, including the semiconductor, financial services, and healthcare sectors.

"Fast, inexpensive storage has allowed unstructured content to explode in the enterprise."

Brad Orluk , Enterprise
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Brad Orluk has been evangelizing technology and process automation for over 15 years. Prior to joining Nintex, he had roles in infrastructure, IT consulting, and most recently, as an information architect at a Fortune 500, where he worked on business and IT process improvement and automation on a variety of real-world global projects and productivity initiatives. Orluk's unique technical-yet-business-focused background gives him the ability to help users leverage technology to drive value to their businesses.

Businesses typically have a lot of underutilized data assets because businesses are information hoarders, even when then don't think about themselves that way. Modern businesses are often sitting on a treasure trove of untapped valuable data that's in file shares, databases scattered about the business, on people's desktops, and in their email. There's tons of unstructured data that's incredibly valuable.

Finding valuable data can be a challenge in many businesses, and often requires collaboration between IT people and those in business operations and management. If coming at this from the business perspective, I would say make friends with those geeks in the basement, the IT department. Because they're going to know where the bones are buried. And if you're an IT department, this is an opportunity to become a trusted adviser. This is how you gain new relevance to the business — by helping it tap the value of its hidden data.

Fast, inexpensive storage has allowed unstructured content to explode in the enterprise. Arguably this is some of the business's most valuable

data — ranging from quarterly business reports to quotes and pitchbooks, or even critical intellectual property such as capital expense and research and development plans used to bring products and services to market. Document management and enterprise content management (ECM) platforms offer myriad options for storing unstructured content and making it safe and secure and findable.

Cloud storage absolutely plays a role in digital transformation by virtue of massive economies of scale. While large, high-performance storage — on-premises — has dropped considerably, no enterprise has the ability to deliver as much raw storage as many of the cloud leaders. While this shift does affect the way users get to their data, by essentially delivering storage as a service, it has been obfuscated by advances in PC/mobile device sync and share improvements.

There are always visibility and compliance issues related to legacy data, but with advances in the ability to index and find data, as well as interact with technologies such as intelligent process automation (IPA) and robotic process automation (RPA), IT groups and business users are finding it easier to overcome these challenges. ■
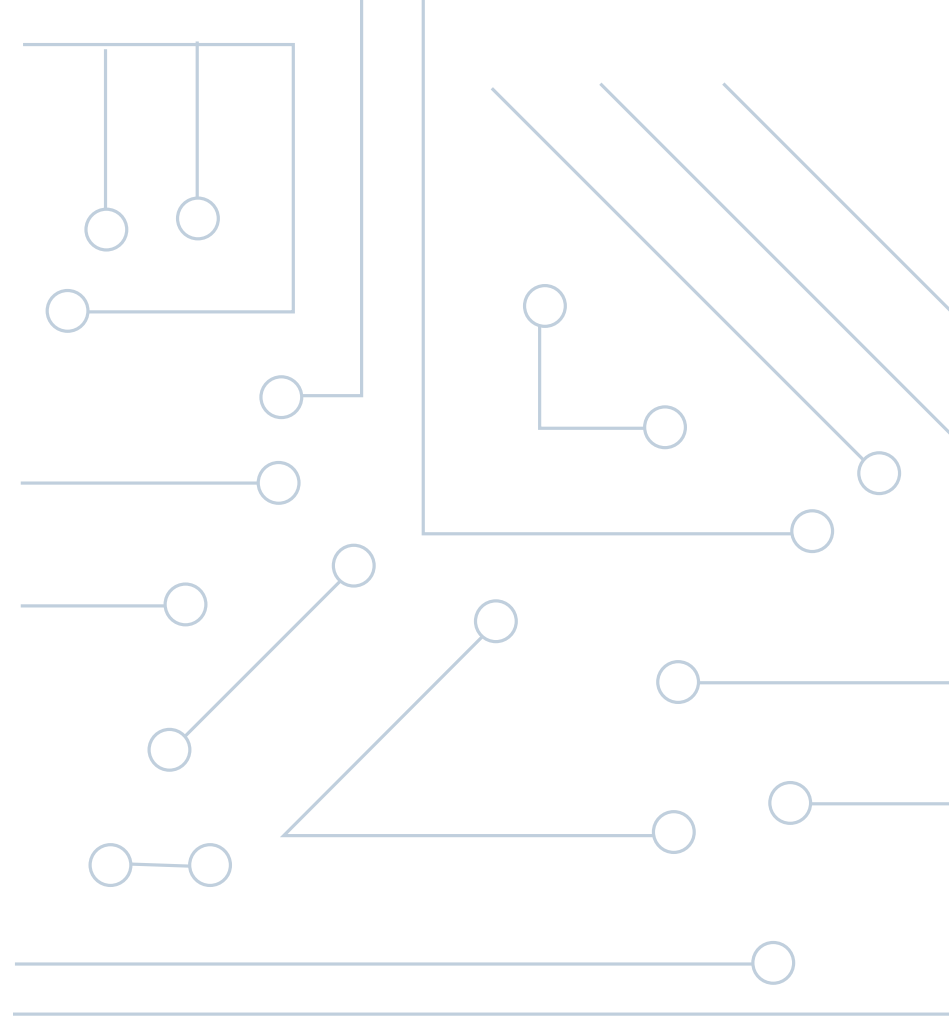
"Low-cost, high-speed, on-demand cloud solutions with minimal management overhead allow you to query and analyze data quickly."

Steven Freidkin,
CEO, Ntiva, Inc

Steven Freidkin is the CEO of Ntiva, Inc., a full-service technology firm headquartered in the metro DC area. Ntiva provides managed IT services to businesses of all types, from day-to-day support to long-term strategic planning. Freidkin's top focus is working with clients to grow their business based on the effective use of technology. He also spends significant time on identifying opportunities for business development.

Finding data assets that can be valuable in a digital transformation may require bringing in an outside set of eyes to see what you are doing and ask the questions that you may not think to ask yourselves. It's a good idea to bring someone in who has expertise in your vertical market and who has familiarity with what other businesses in your space are doing.

Sometimes it's surprising to see what companies can do with the data they have. For example, we are working with a high-volume chiropractic practice that has a lot of data about the patients they see, their conditions, and the treatments they receive at each session. They have applied a level of artificial intelligence (AI) to process all this data to the point where they can track current patient treatments to determine how quickly different patients' conditions are resolved. If the system detects unexpected patterns, such as a patient requiring too many visits to resolve a problem, then they can move quickly to pinpoint the issue and find a better way to treat that patient. The overall result has been to deliver faster outcomes for their patients.

The growth and prominence of cloud storage has been a key factor in enabling digital transformation. Low-cost, high-speed, on-demand
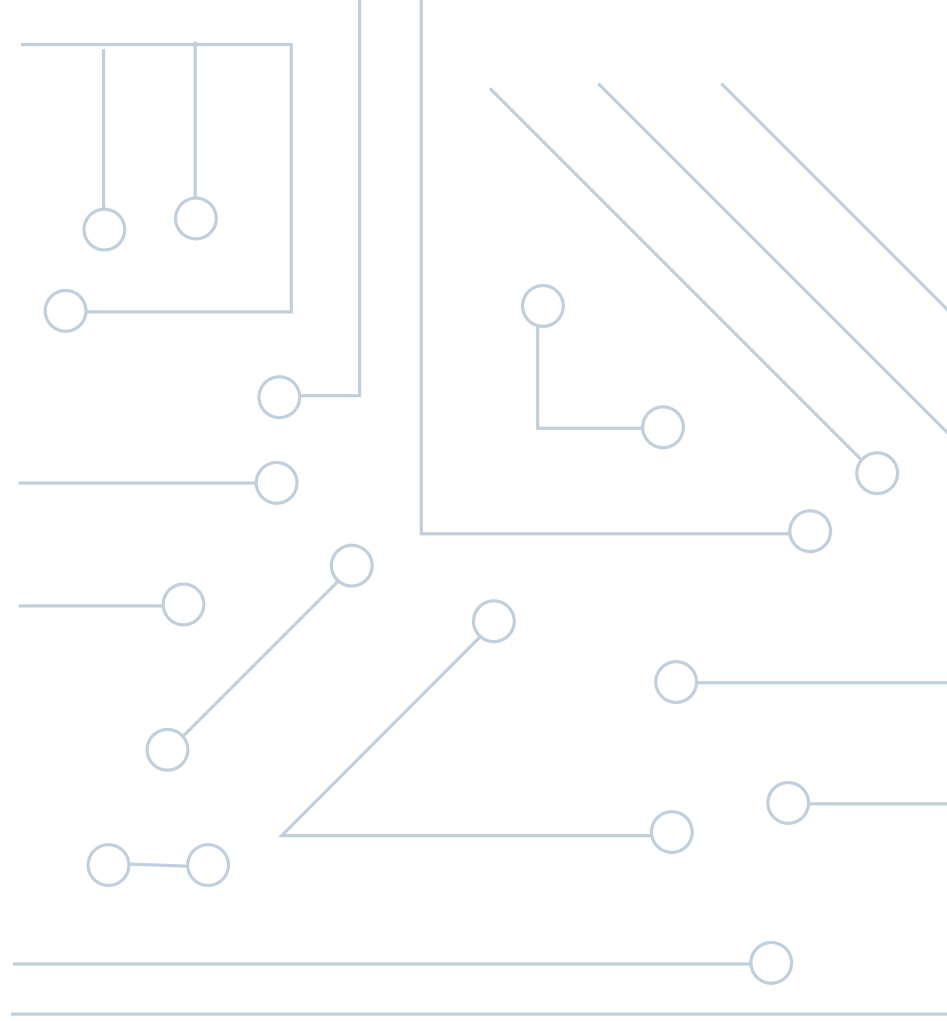
cloud solutions with minimal management overhead allow you to query and analyze data quickly, and only incur the costs for higher performance when you have activity that justifies it. When cloud solutions are managed correctly, you can ensure all your legacy data is included, check off any compliance requirements that may exist for your industry, and get the best balance of cost/performance that you need to support data-driven decisions. This capability used to be available only in large enterprises. The cloud makes it available to small and midsize businesses. ■

> "Primary data is often not valuable enough if the organization doesn't learn how to work under a digital ecosystem mindset and enhance its own data with third-party data."

Cristian Citu, Digital Transformation Lead, World Economic Forum

Cristian Citu works at the World Economic Forum headquarters where he's focusing on the impact of digital technologies on business and wider society. Previously he was senior director of group digital strategy at DHL global headquarters. Before focusing on pure digital-transformation work, Citu managed global digital-marketing programs for DHL. He also spent a few years in consulting, working with a wide range of customers. He shares his insights on digital transformation at @TheChiefDigital and www.chief.digital.

Digital transformation is not possible without a solid data culture, but building such a culture requires significant financial and organizational efforts. You need a data executive with a team of data scientists who can code and apply econometric models, and who can also define and implement an organization-wide data-governance model.

Large companies require important financial investments in data warehouses, data lakes, APIs, and a high level of protection against cyber risks. More importantly, the CEO and the board need to remove the barriers between the organizational data silos, and they need to accept that their traditional method of decision-making needs to be complemented and often replaced by data-driven decision-making and much higher levels of cross-functional transparency. Another very important consideration is that the primary data is often not valuable enough if the organization doesn't learn how to work under a digital ecosystem mindset and enhance its own data with third-party data.

Cloud storage will be the default option for the majority of organizations, as there will be fewer and fewer use cases that can justify on-premises infrastructure (from real-cost, opportunity-cost, and organizational-complexity perspectives). Cloud storage will also offer significantly more convenient AI integrations, and the potential wins in insight agility could generate major competitive advantage for the organizations that are ready to leverage cloud and AI at scale. ■

"One challenge facing many companies is too much data."

One challenge facing many companies is too much data. A company can easily be using 100 different tools that are not well integrated, and this can include several analytical tools. Companies try to measure everything, and as a result they are drowning in data. Many times all the tools and data streams lead to conflicting data. Teams lose a lot of productivity trying to reconcile this data.

In one company where I was implementing digital transformation, we addressed this prior to important meetings or quarterly business reviews by agreeing on a "single source or truth" for data and making our operations team responsible for pulling data. Then we would all analyze the same set of data. Reaching this agreement can be challenging, especially for marketing, where it's important to build a holistic 360-degree review of the prospects and customers based on their engagement across all the different channels. The number of channels has grown, and the data they generate has increased exponentially. We have email, websites, and digital ads, and we have mobile and location-based data. We have digital voice assistants, chat bots, messaging apps, and wearables. Marketing needs new tools such as AI and machine learning to process all this data and make it usable.
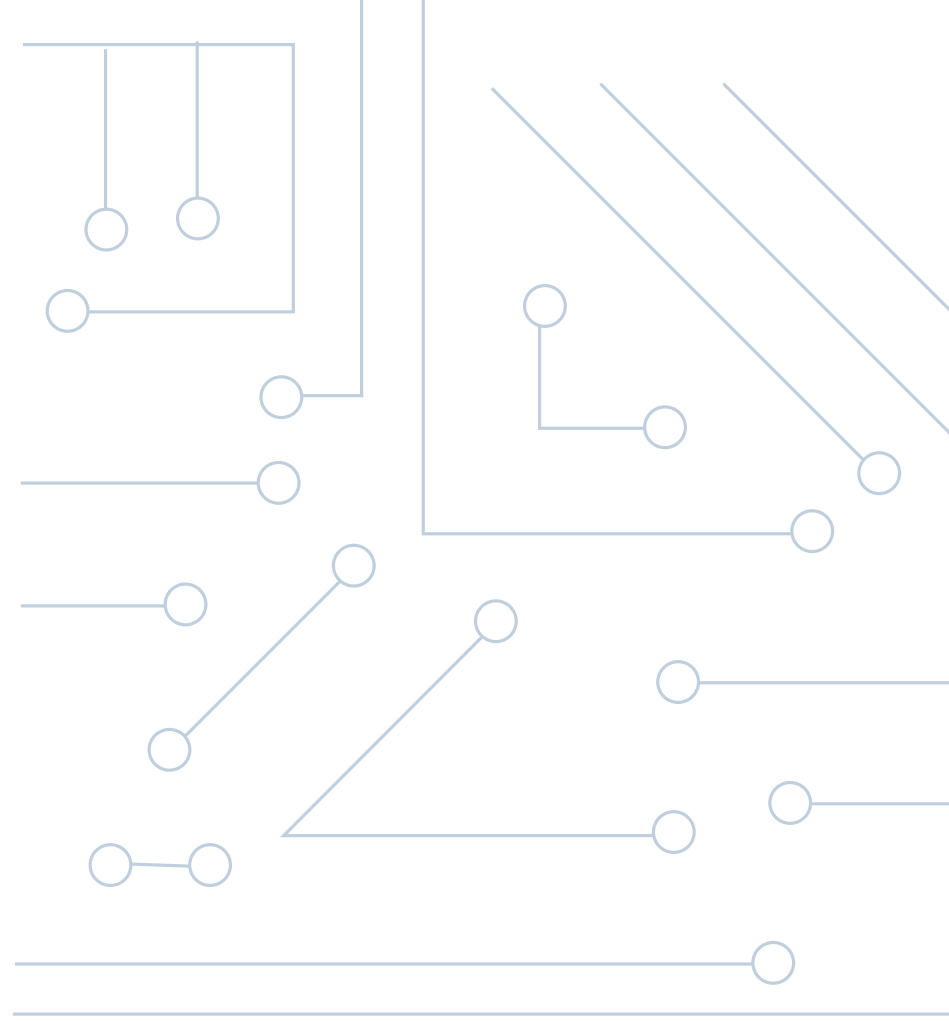
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Many companies use cloud-based third-party data tools that plug into one of the major cloud platforms, which makes the process of data storage, access and analysis/manipulation faster, easier, and more scalable. However, many companies haven't made a full transition to the cloud and use a hybrid model with cloud-based and on-premises data.

Some digital enterprises have entered into partnerships with the cloud platform providers that enable tighter integration between cloud-based business logic and data functions such as analytics and machine learning. The objective is higher-performance data-dependent processes and greater scalability. ■

> **"The success of digital transformation depends on being able to pull disparate data together. Mountains of data are typically spread across a multitude of sources."**

Joel Layton, Senior Advisor,
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For many organizations that deal with large amounts of data, the challenge is not finding the data, but rather deciding how to leverage that information. Begin by taking a step back and thinking about why you are in business. Retail is a very customer-centric industry, so a good way to answer the data-usage question is to begin with the customer. Start focusing on the data about the customer, and then see how deep and how far you can take the data journey.

Traditionally, the most important data in retail was sell-through rates of product — it was all about product data. The mountain of consumer data that was accumulated was not interesting, because we had to buy goods, and we were only concerned about which products were selling. But digital engagement put customers in the driver's seat, and now it's all about knowing what the customers think and what they want, to the point where it's changed the way we source products.

The success of digital transformation depends on being able to pull disparate data together. Mountains of data are typically spread across

a multitude of sources. The most common methods require collecting it into a data layer or service bus where it can be easily consumed by the reporting systems. Cloud-based storage makes data readily available to all parties for quick and easy access, and many cloud platforms include tools that allow business-intelligence integrations. When using cloud storage, companies need to be disciplined about how they handle the data, especially if compliance is an issue. Ultimately, storing this data on-premises or in the cloud will come down to organizational preference, but large data centers are not easy to build yourself. ■
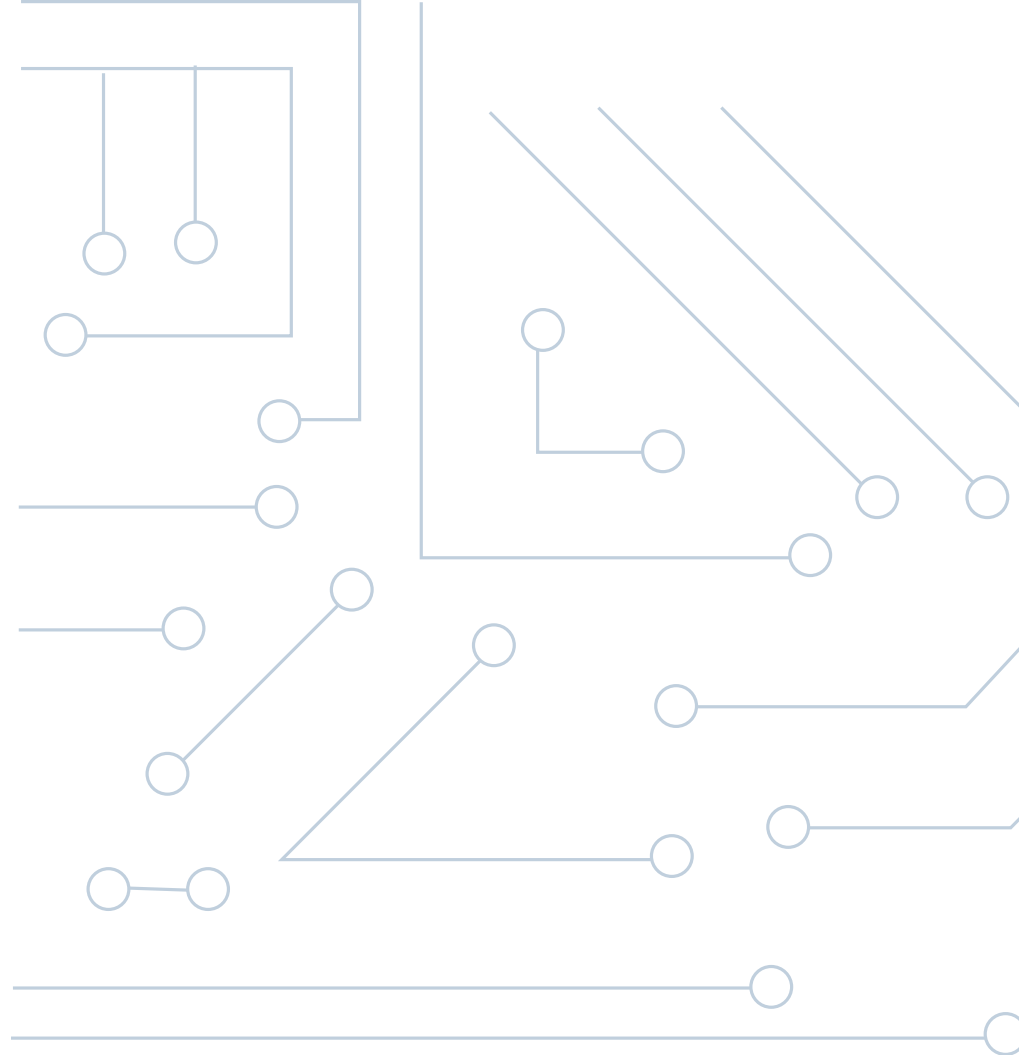
KEY POINTS

Finding valuable data in the enterprise typically involves collaboration across business or organizational units, and sometimes it requires an outside set of eyes that can look at data assets in the context of processes and business objectives.

Storing data in the cloud is becoming the method of choice, but businesses using the cloud need to address data management questions related to accessibility, security, compliance, and process performance.

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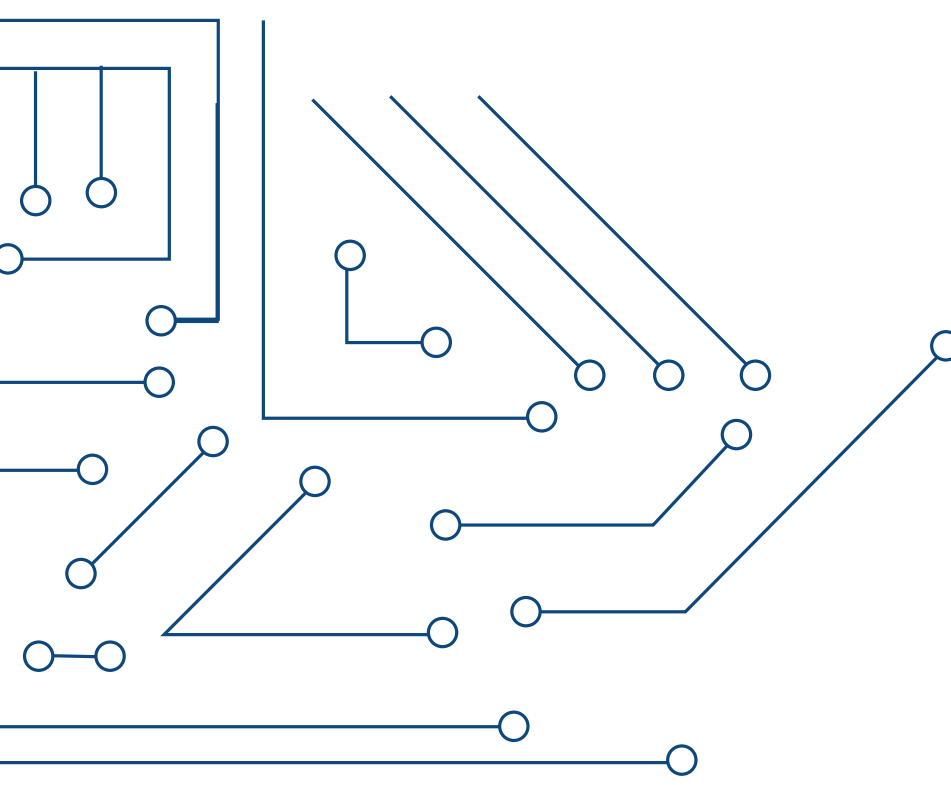DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION / SECURE DESTRUCTION

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CHAPTER 5

ADDING PROCESS AND WORKFLOW AUTOMATION TO YOUR TRANSFORMATION

Once you have set goals for your transformation and identified your data assets, it's time to implement the technology that will make your changes a reality. This is where the hard work begins. Every business is its own special case. One key to success is recognizing that digital transformation is an evolutionary process.

> **"Identifying business need and leverageable assets are essential steps in developing a workflow-automation process to achieve your goals."**

Marcos Bueno, Head of Media Technology, Vox Media, Inc

Over the past seven years, Marcos Bueno been has building Vox Media's strategic capabilities for media technology and operating its content studios. His work has enabled the enterprise to grow new business lines such as long-form and over-the-top (OTT) content production, licensing, and distribution. Bueno understands that the only limit to a media company's growth potential is its ability to build capability thoughtfully around its priorities.

Identifying business need and leverageable assets are essential steps in developing a workflow-automation process to achieve your goals. Then it comes down to the strategic capabilities your business needs most, and deciding if you will get enough return on a transformation, or answering that fundamental question, is the juice worth the squeeze? Ultimately you're going to be limited by the resources you have, both culturally and staffing, and the availability and cost of technology.

In the TV-film business, being able to identify and reuse content assets at a granular level is hugely valuable. It gives us the ability to generate more licensing revenue. Having the right metadata makes that possible. Now we can pull information from the camera footage itself, like GPS information, and associate that freely available data from other sources such as weather data. With advances in machine learning and AI we can automate the search process to the point of saying we want to break out content by demographic, by ethnicity, region, season, and other factors. No one has to go through all the footage the day it was shot to enter those things. And to find something, you no longer have to look at hours of video frame by frame to see what's there. The system can quickly do that for you. ■

> "Start with processes that will have the most impact on revenue and costs compared to the implementation effort."

When automating workflows, the decision of where to start should be based on ease of implementation and the return on investment. Look for automation opportunities that that will have the most impact on revenue and costs relative to the implementation effort. Then leverage any data relevant to that process.

You can usually find good process information from the people performing the process today. For instance, if the process is customer facing, find out what questions customers frequently ask. If customers ask the same questions every time at the same point in the process, you likely have an opportunity to implement a more effective process. Your process should anticipate a customer's questions. If a customer has to ask for an update, you have failed in properly designing that workflow automation. ■

Mike Huskins, Head of Product Operations, Twilio

Mike Huskins is a senior business leader whose passion is to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of an organization's operations. He also has a broad range of experience developing and implementing strategy and completing complex transactions. He is currently the head of Twilio's super network operations team. Previously, he was a strategy and operations consultant at McKinsey, where he worked across a number of industries, including the semiconductor, financial services, and healthcare sectors.

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Virtually every process in modern business can benefit from some level of automation. There are inefficiencies in many processes, where too much human capital is invested or people are working much harder than they should be to accomplish something. Deciding how to implement automation depends on the goals you have for your digital transformation. Your goals could be to make it so that employees are working smarter instead of harder, or more effective HR onboarding, or it might be to improve customer service, or increase customer satisfaction, or build new, richer product offerings. All of these involve different discussions with different stakeholders.

Automation can apply horizontally across an organization so it really needs to be a deliberate conversation around the processes that's being automated, and the objective. There needs to be soul-searching, understanding, and honest process-mapping. Digital transformation is an opportunity to really figure out if a process is broken and then improve it as you automate it. ■

"The goal is to prove the concept before rolling it out across the organization."

Steven Freidkin,
CEO, Ntiva, Inc

Steven Freidkin is the CEO of Ntiva, Inc., a full-service technology firm headquartered in the metro DC area. Ntiva provides managed IT services to businesses of all types, from day-to-day support to long-term strategic planning. Freidkin's top focus is working with clients to grow their business based on the effective use of technology. He also spends significant time on identifying opportunities for business development.

When it's time to build workflow automation into your transformation, businesses typically face one of two scenarios regardless of their industry segment. In one scenario, the processes ready for automation are run with well-designed workflows. These might be processes unique to the business that do not need to be redesigned so much as refined, streamlined, and made more efficient through automation. In this case, a good approach is to start small and test. You can build out the new workflow using new technology, and run it in tandem with an existing process to compare them. The goal is to prove the concept before rolling it out across the organization.

However, many businesses face a second scenario where their process is poor to begin with, and they struggle to transform their bad process with modern tools and technology. In that case, we help our clients select a best-of-breed application that's designed for their industry, and encourage them to use built-in templates and processes to help drive the change in the organization.

I have firsthand experience with this approach in my own company. Some years ago, I thought we had a great workflow to support our

clients through various tools and systems we had custom developed. I realized, though, that we were growing and we needed an application that would grow with us. I invested in the best-of-breed application and spent two years and almost $100,000 trying to customize that software to match my workflow. One day I woke up to the realization that they support 10,000 other companies like me, and they actually have a better workflow. I needed to embrace it instead of trying to change it. It was really hard for me to accept that revelation and change my approach, but scrapping our old workflow in favor of their templates was what made it possible for us to transform. ■
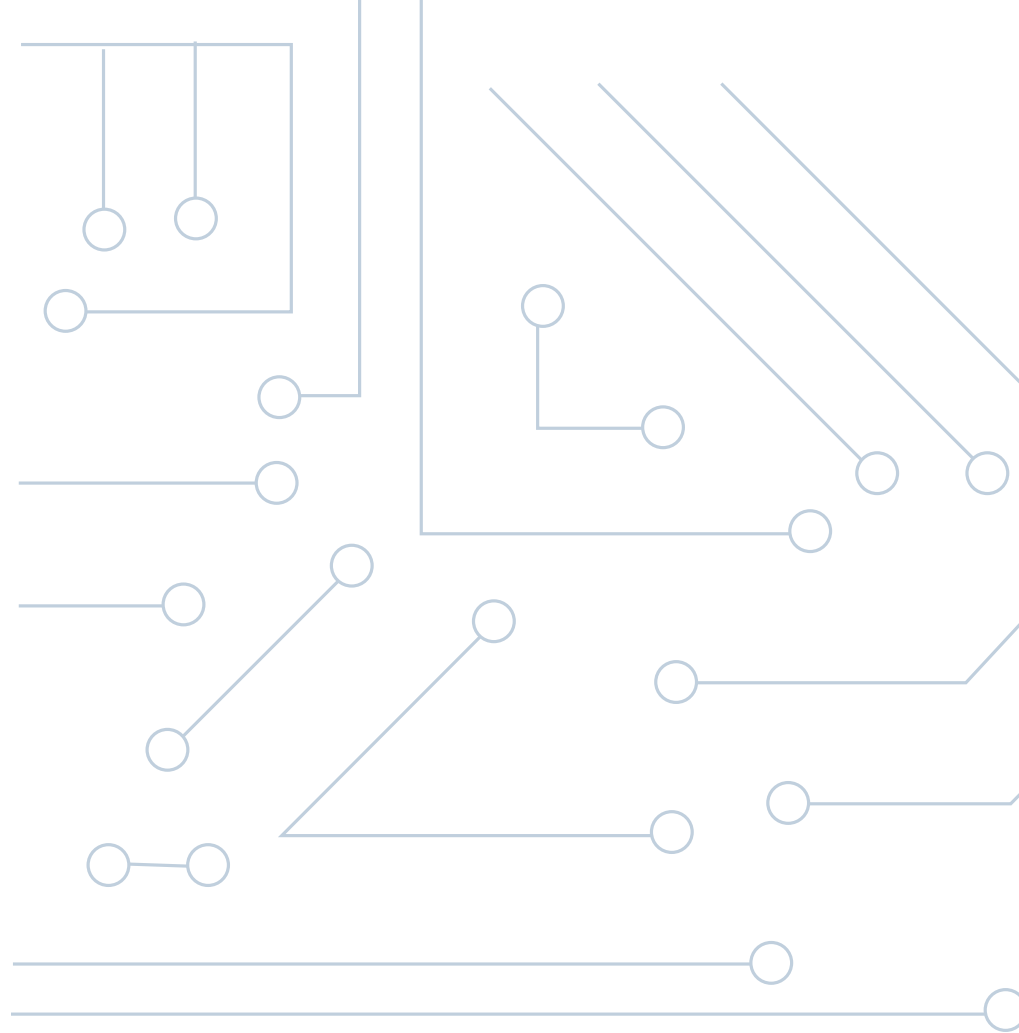
> **"Digital transformation implies the evolution of processes, and this is an area where a lot of organizational resistance exists."**

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Any organization that has several hundred employees (or more), starts functioning with a high number of internal processes. Digital transformation implies the evolution or replacement of those processes, and this is an area where a lot of organizational resistance exists. The biggest challenge is migrating to a world of organizational processes that support agility at scale, data-driven decision-making, and customer centricity — an organizational context that is far away from the status quo of most traditional corporations.
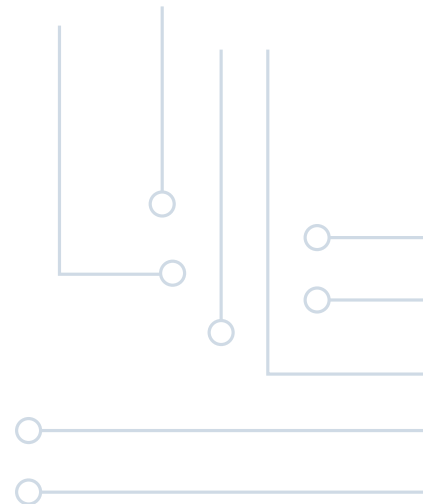
> "The first step is really to understand the existing process and then whether it's the right process."

Having the tools and the data is not always enough. Without a good process, the tools cannot be used effectively. And it's not uncommon in marketing that when you digitally transform, you also have to build entirely new processes. The first step is really to understand the existing process and then whether it's the right process.

I experienced this implementing a digital-marketing and demand generation strategy where the team was not ready. They weren't trained in the best practices, and there was little documentation or proper operational processes. The result was a lot of tension between sales and marketing. The data was limited and fragmented. I had to upskill the team, retool everything, and apply Marketo best-practices blueprint to the demand generation program. This involved going step by step to build a revenue model with goals for each step, cleaning the database, establishing hygiene rules, developing operational processes for scoring, routing, and assignments, building segmentation, and developing advanced nurturing practices. All of this had to be done to implement digital marketing effectively. The company was growing very fast and had the latest tools, but still a lot of retooling was needed to transform the business. ■

Anastasia Pavlova, Vice President Marketing | Advisor, Webgility

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In retail, digital transformation brings sales and marketing closer together in ways that better serve the customer, and it streamlines product sourcing for greater efficiency on the cost side. To accomplish this, you may need to introduce AI or machine-learning tools to help you scrape and condense the data into a consumable fashion.

Doing this successfully improves communication between merchants and marketing, two retail groups that traditionally have diametrically opposed visions of how to fulfill business objectives. Customer information and transaction activity become "marketing data" that marketing partners use to decide what to buy.

What Amazon has done right from the very beginning is using customer data to give consumers what they want.
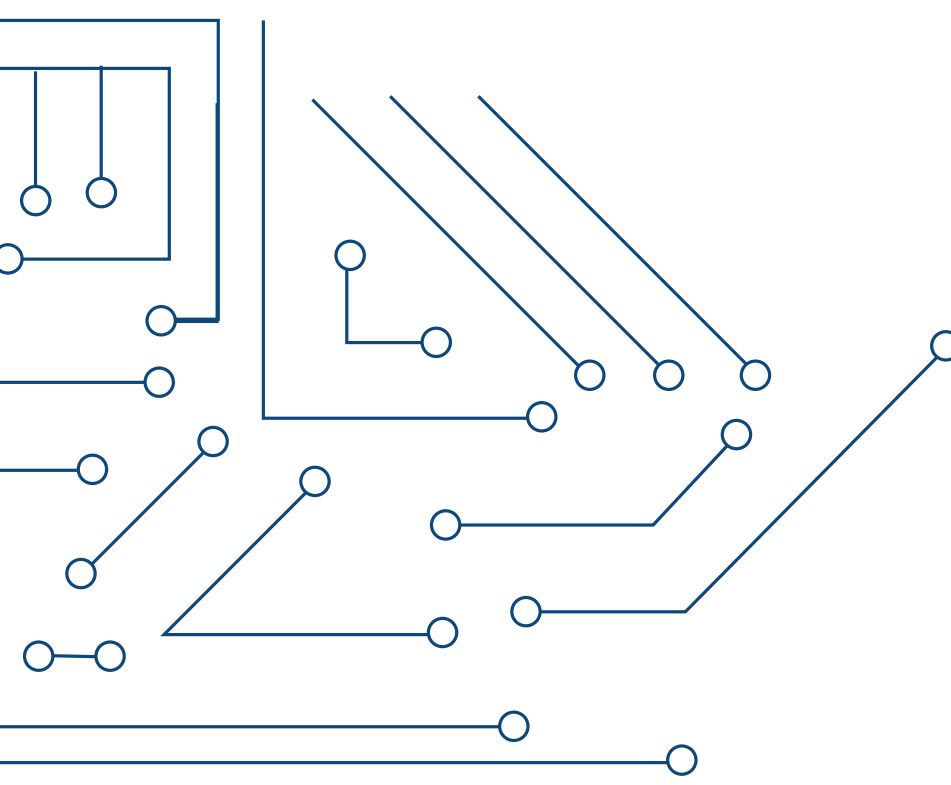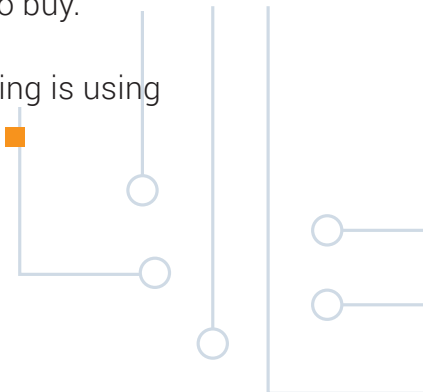
KEY POINTS

Deciding how to implement automation depends on the goals you have for your digital transformation. Typically, businesses are either automating a process that already runs smoothly, or the process they want to change is broken, requiring redesign as well as automation.

Having the tools and the data is not always enough. Without a good process, the tools cannot be used effectively. The first step in implementing a digital transformation is to understand the existing process and deciding whether it is the right one.

RECOGNIZING THE BENEFITS OF **DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION**

The success of a digital transformation is often measured in terms of its original goals. Those who have successfully pursued a transformation strategy often discover benefits that go well beyond simple workflow-efficiency improvements and more agile business processes. By its very nature, digital transformation has the power to change the way companies work internally to engage with their customers.

> **"In the case of TV- film production, digital transformation and process automation have translated directly to faster time to market."**

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Over the past seven years, Marcos Bueno been has building Vox Media's strategic capabilities for media technology and operating its content studios. His work has enabled the enterprise to grow new business lines such as long-form and over-the-top (OTT) content production, licensing, and distribution. Bueno understands that the only limit to a media company's growth potential is its ability to build capability thoughtfully around its priorities.
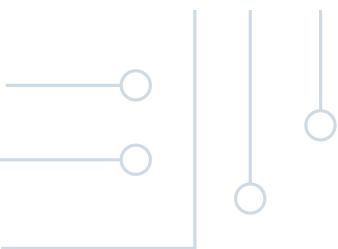
In the case of TV-film production, digital transformation and process automation have translated directly to faster time to market, by a lot. It also makes us more agile. If a mandate shifts, whether it's diversity in content or whether it's a special, timely event, we can respond more quickly. Another benefit is that through better visibility into our digital assets, we can look at all the workflows at a higher level and take greater advantage of more specialized and regional talent for certain projects. This can save on production costs and actually deliver a better product.

And of course the big gain for us is growth in our licensing business. Even though that has become an important part of the company, I believe we are just beginning to tap its potential. It comes back to making the content accessible along with its metadata. If you're not managing that well, you can't license it, you can't generate revenue from it, and in fact you don't even know for sure what it is worth.

> **"Benefits of digital transformation go back to the original goals for the change. Often, however, that does not tell the whole story."**

One way of seeing the benefits of digital transformation is to go back to the original metrics established around goals for the change. Often, however, that does not tell the whole story.

In my experience, the biggest gains tend to be in customer satisfaction, which should turn into additional revenue, although tracking revenue growth and profitability directly to a transformation initiative can be difficult. For example, mobile-banking apps that enable you to deposit checks by taking pictures with your phone have had a huge impact on retail banking. Customers prefer using these applications to the point where no one ever goes into the bank branch. Mobile-banking apps have become an essential part of building customer loyalty, but they are also changing the banking industry itself.

Mike Huskins, Head of Product Operations, Twilio

Mike Huskins is a senior business leader whose passion is to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of an organization's operations. He also has a broad range of experience developing and implementing strategy and completing complex transactions. He is currently the head of Twilio's super network operations team. Previously, he was a strategy and operations consultant at McKinsey, where he worked across a number of industries, including the semiconductor, financial services, and healthcare sectors.

> "The outcome of any digital transformation should be to do things better, faster, and cheaper. But to increase its relevance to customers, everyone is part of that process."

Brad Orluk , Enterprise
Solution Architect, Nintex

Brad Orluk has been evangelizing technology and process automation for over 15 years. Prior to joining Nintex, he had roles in infrastructure, IT consulting, and most recently, as an information architect at a Fortune 500, where he worked on business and IT process improvement and automation on a variety of real-world global projects and productivity initiatives. Orluk's unique technical-yet-business-focused background gives him the ability to help users leverage technology to drive value to their businesses.

Realizing the benefits of a digital transformation is about meeting the original metrics, whether that's measurable change or business impact. But I think it goes beyond that. I would argue that the goal of digital transformation is to increase the stickiness of your relationship to your customers, whether they are internal or external, and to be the trusted source for what they need.

Engagement apps provide a good example. Apps are all about catering to exactly what the customer wants. That's why Walmart, Home Depot, and every other big organization has an app, because they want to sell exactly and specifically what you want, and give you that experience. A lot of digital transformation has to happen inside a company to make those apps work for the customer. The gain or the outcome of any kind of digital transformation should be to do things better, faster, and cheaper. But to increase its relevance to customers, everyone is part of that process. ◼

> ## "Often you find unexpected positive benefits, and sometimes unexpected negative consequences."

Recognizing the benefits of a digital transformation often goes back to looking at your original goals and metrics to see if you accomplished what you set out to do. Often, though, you find unexpected positive benefits, and sometimes unexpected negative consequences.

For example, a company might decide to implement a kiosk in a customer reception area to improve the customer experience. The intended benefit is that customers can, through a self-help process, immediately engage and have a better reception experience. The unintended benefit is that in addition to providing a more engaging customer experience, the business discovers it is capturing more accurate customer information. That benefits other processes that depend on customer data. On the other hand, the same kiosk if poorly implemented can have the negative consequence of frustrating customers with too many questions that become obstacles for them. They have a negative experience that might result in them going elsewhere to get the services they want. Now the business is losing customers as a result of its digital transformation.

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Steven Freidkin,
CEO, Ntiva, Inc

Steven Freidkin is the CEO of Ntiva, Inc., a full-service technology firm headquartered in the metro DC area. Ntiva provides managed IT services to businesses of all types, from day-to-day support to long-term strategic planning. Freidkin's top focus is working with clients to grow their business based on the effective use of technology. He also spends significant time on identifying opportunities for business development.

Digital transformations typically have an ultimate goal of enabling the business to do what it does more effectively, which should ultimately have a positive impact on its customers. Therefore the question of "how will this affect our customers" should never be far from any digital transformation. In the case of the kiosk example, if you are just thinking about a better way to gather data, you are thinking like a machine, and you are setting yourself up for an unintended poor outcome. If you are thinking first and foremost about providing a better experience for the customers, then the positive unintended benefit is better data gathering. ■
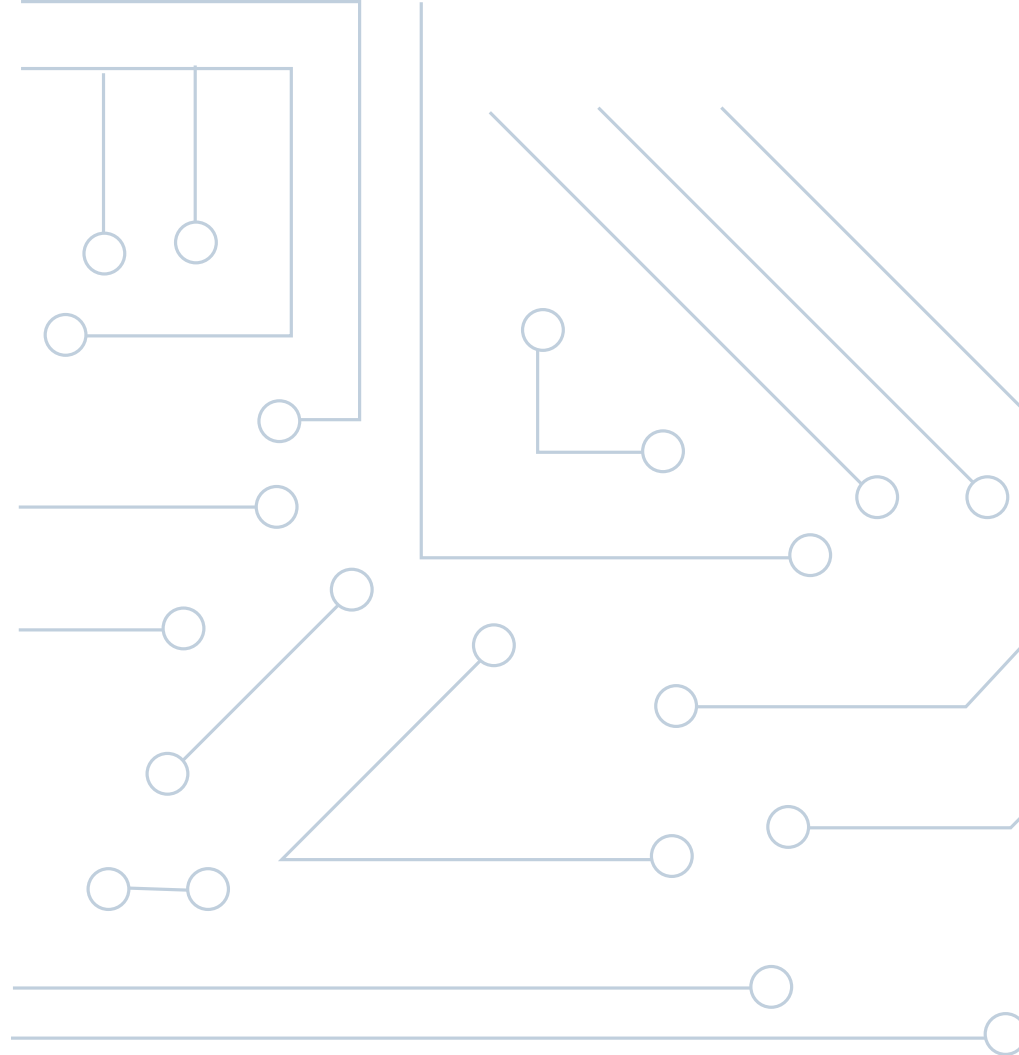
> **"A mature digital transformation-plan implies a considerable effort with a long list of goals, always starting and ending with the customer in mind."**

Cristian Citu, Digital Transformation Lead, World Economic Forum

Cristian Citu works at the World Economic Forum headquarters where he's focusing on the impact of digital technologies on business and wider society. Previously he was senior director of group digital strategy at DHL global headquarters. Before focusing on pure digital-transformation work, Citu managed global digital-marketing programs for DHL. He also spent a few years in consulting, working with a wide range of customers. He shares his insights on digital transformation at @TheChiefDigital and www.chief.digital.

It's often easy to create the appearance of successful digital transformation by highlighting the cost reductions achieved through the implementation of new technologies, the percentage of processes migrated from analog to digital, IT capabilities moved from on-premises to cloud, and so on. Those are definitely mandatory actions and they might even help from a PR perspective, but they won't save an organization from potentially becoming irrelevant.

A mature digital-transformation plan implies a considerable effort with a long list of goals reflecting the evolution and transformation of every part of the organization, its ways of working, and its organizational culture — always starting and ending with the customer in mind. ■

> **"Being able to show that connection between marketing programs and revenue really changed marketing's role."**

Meeting the goals of a digital transformation is not a trivial task. It takes a lot of time and effort to optimize all the processes to the point where you can see consistent changes in the metrics you are tracking. But you need to show that it is making a difference.

In one digitally transformed marketing operation, I was able to track that we doubled the volume of marketing-qualified leads we were sending to sales. We could also prove through metrics that marketing was driving 40% of the revenue growth for the company. We had significantly better alignment between marketing and sales, and marketing was being viewed as a revenue driver, not a cost center. Being able to show that connection between marketing programs and revenue really changed marketing's role in executive and board meetings. It was no longer a discussion about defending marketing budgets. We began to have more influence on corporate strategy and driving the digital-transformation initiative. ◼

Anastasia Pavlova, Vice President Marketing | Advisor, Webgility

Anastasia Pavlova is a marketing executive, thought leader, storyteller, and public speaker with over 15 years of experience in SAAS, ecommerce, MarTech, and consumer tech industries. She currently advises startups and established growth companies on best practices for digital transformation, go-to-market strategies, demand generation, account-based marketing (ABM), sales and marketing alignment, content marketing, corporate storytelling, brand marketing, and high-performance team building.

> ## "The internet has created the single greatest testing environment we've ever seen."

Joel Layton, Senior Advisor, BounceX, Unbxd, Terra's Kitchen

Joel Layton is a long time digital commerce expert with a passion for his craft. With a tenure of leading and building ecommerce strategy at the likes of Lands End, Medifast, rue21, and The Children's Place, Joel has a solid history of driving innovation and growth. He also has been able to inject digital thinking across a variety of verticals from consumer electronics to weight loss to apparel. A team builder by nature, nothing makes him more proud than the relationships he has developed over the years, building true partnerships along the way.

For many in retail, digital transformation means using digital channels to reach more customers, and it has also enabled retailers to be smarter about product sourcing. But I think the internet has made two astronomically important contributions. First, it created the single greatest testing environment we've ever seen. I can literally change my website in seconds and get instant feedback. Try doing that with a storefront. The internet's second big contribution is that it has created the greatest discount bazaar ever invented. Tabular browsing has made it easy for consumers to compare products and prices — and place orders — in seconds.

Those two things have completely changed the retail game in the customer's favor. Add to that the advent of social media, which allows word of mouth to explode at levels no one could possibly have comprehended, and now you have a new world of retail that requires digital engagement. ■

KEY POINTS

Many see the benefits of digital transformation in terms of their original goals, but often there are unanticipated benefits. Digital transformation is a continuous, evolutionary process that becomes the foundation of future business operations.

Digital transformation has the power to change the strategic role of essential business processes, and even create new business opportunities.