

People at the centre of successful digital transformation

Many technology-based transformation efforts hit a roadblock around successful resourcing. A flexible workforce and an aligned culture and vision are essential to achieve the targeted outcomes

At its simplest, digital transformation is how technologies such as artificial intelligence, cloud and blockchain are used to power a company forward. This can be to enhance, or create, processes, culture and customer experiences to meet changing business and market requirements.

Digital transformation is largely driven by customer experience, expectation and engagement. Some 84 per cent of customers say the experience a company provides is as important as its products and services, according to research by the cloud-based software company Salesforce.

While other catalysts for digital transformation will vary by company, all digital transformation is business transformation. Organisational change, operational improvements, and embracing new technologies and ways of working are drivers of success in a hyper-competitive marketplace.

Recent research by the transformation business TEKsystems* reveals that one third of organisations identify the coronavirus pandemic and resulting market pressures as the catalyst for their digital transformation efforts. Nine hundred technology and business decision-makers were interviewed for the report, which also found digital transformation leaders had a strong focus on prioritising projects that will unlock fresh business models in the tough environment.

Navigating transformation challenges
Successful digital transformation can be elusive and some of the common challenges have taken on even greater weight as a result of the disruption caused by COVID-19.

Barriers to effective transformation often occur within organisations. Most commonly, these include having too many competing technology priorities, leading to cost and resourcing problems. Then there are implementation complications created by rigid business processes and complex operating models. Lack of executive level buy-in or organisational alignment, resulting from siloed mindsets and behaviours, also hinder success. Finally, external factors, such as compliance, security and economic uncertainty, undoubtedly play their role.

At its heart, the digital transformation journey will always be less centred on the technology and more geared towards people. Organisations are using technology at scale to enable innovation, automate processes and deliver insights that fuel growth. Workforce adoption strategies behind the implementation of new technologies are critical to transforming a business, but the TEKsystems research found 44 per cent of decision-makers also believe extensive talent structure changes are needed for successful digital transformation efforts.

"Where we often see digital transformation projects break down is when businesses fail to bring their people

along on the journey or they fail to acknowledge any structural changes needed across a workforce," says Grant Wafer, Vice President of TEKsystems for Europe, the Middle East and Africa. "Despite the very best intentions and substantial cash investments, if their people haven't bought into the benefits of new technology and aren't willing to adapt, it is unlikely the project will meet expectations."

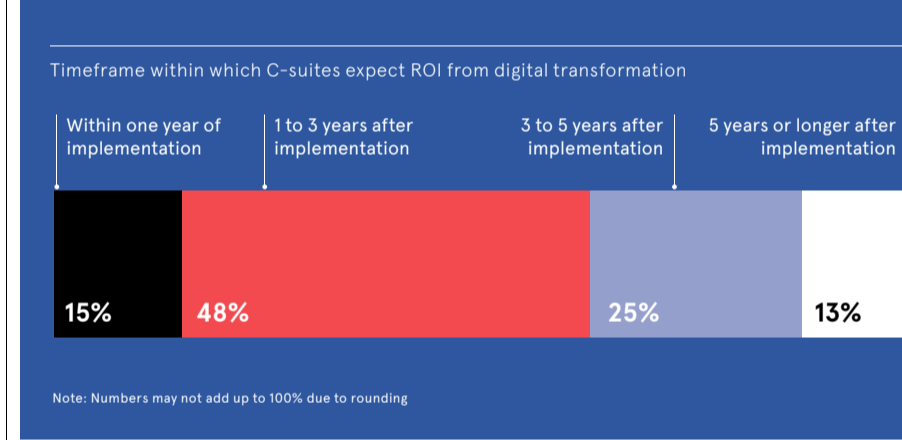
Winning hearts, shifting mindsets and embracing new ways of working are what will ultimately define successful and sustainable digital transformation.

Transformation focused on people

There are five core steps businesses must remember if they are to succeed with digital transformation. First, companies must place their customers at the centre of the digital transformation vision, mapping journeys, anticipating what they will want and making it easy for them to do business.

Next, organisations must ensure there is consensus and conviction among senior leaders regarding the transformation goals, using that alignment to break down organisational silos. Third, it is equally important to select the technology that will not only achieve the desired outcomes, but be scaleable across the enterprise.

Businesses must also cultivate a culture that embraces change and that can respond to data and insight-driven decision-making with flexibility and



agility. Finally, they need to identify the skills and expertise required to successfully deliver digital transformation efforts, determining how the right resources and partners should be aligned to the business.

Given that people are key to any transformation, large-scale change often leads to the emergence of significant gaps in talent. Wafer explains: "The digital skills required to commence and deliver a transformation project generally do not sit within a business, and traditional external resourcing channels can struggle to identify and attract the best talent in the market. Working with the right partner, who has the ability to augment permanent teams with a project-based workforce, deploying specialist skills at the right place and time, is crucial."

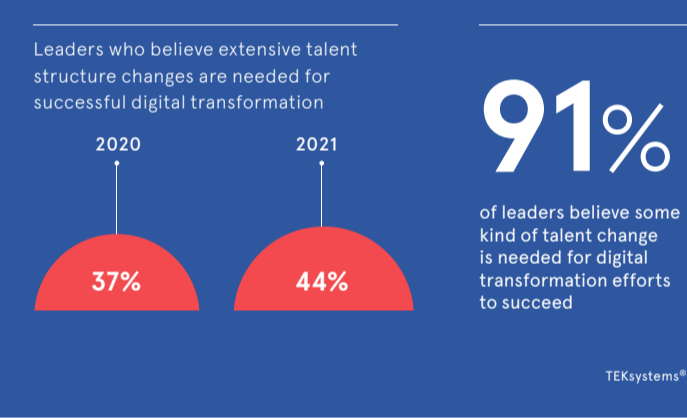
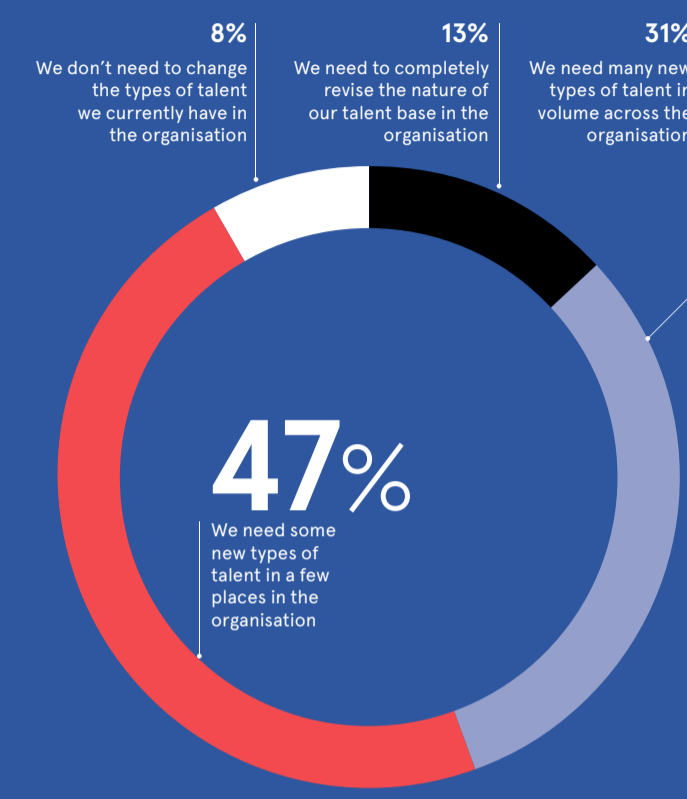
Digital transformation requires extensive operational change, which challenges mindsets and traditional orthodoxies. Delivering value by fusing new technology with existing systems can be a major task for organisations. Businesses often struggle when they take a narrow approach and focus on a specific redesign or automation of single processes.

Such digital transformation projects are achieved more successfully when an all-inclusive, holistic approach is taken and the broader implications are thought through, including how workflows, customer interactions and partner ecosystems will be impacted. Technology adoption can create clear competitive advantage; the transformation journey is accelerated with

- FIVE TIPS FOR DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION SUCCESS**
- 1 Put customers at the centre of the digital transformation vision. Map customer journeys, anticipate what they want and make it easy for them to do business with you.
 - 2 Secure consensus and conviction among senior leaders on digital transformation goals; use that alignment to break down organisational silos.
 - 3 Select the technologies and solutions that will not only achieve the desired outcomes, but can be scaled across the enterprise.
 - 4 Cultivate a culture that embraces change and can respond to data-driven decision-making with flexibility and agility.
 - 5 Identify the skills and expertise required to execute and deliver on digital transformation efforts and determine how the right business partners should be aligned to the business.

LEADERS ARE CONVINCED OF THE NEED TO REIMAGINE TALENT IN ORDER FOR DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION TO BE SUCCESSFUL

Talent requirements to enable successful digital transformation, according to technology and business leaders



a clear vision and framework, where technology plays the role of enabler. This acceleration of digital transformation has been critical for many organisations in not only surviving the impacts of COVID, but thriving in the new digital economy.

Power of partnership
Knowing where to start, however, can be overwhelming for companies. Fully understanding the business challenge that needs to be solved, creating a detailed plan and delivering a quality solution requires deep expertise. Complex answers to increasingly difficult problems require businesses to have access to the right skills and resources, when and where they are needed.

"Organisations should not have to be distracted from the day-to-day running of their business, but transformation

can easily become a distraction," says Wafer. "When a digital transformation project is shared with a partner that has expertise in technology and access to in-demand talent, the outcomes have greater success rates."

As businesses adapt to a rapidly changing commercial landscape and customer expectations, the role of the transformation partner has changed too. Such a partner needs to be a trusted adviser, technical expert, solutions designer and programme deliverer.

Businesses should expect their transformation partner to innovate on their behalf, provide highly tailored solutions and think globally while delivering locally. The partner must be able to build flexible workforces or solutions at scale and speed, have access to the best talent and be trusted to consistently deliver the targeted outcomes.

We're partners in transformation. We help clients activate ideas and solutions to take advantage of a new world of opportunity. We are a team of 80,000, working with over 6,000 clients, including 80 per cent of the Fortune 500, across Europe, North America, and Asia. As an industry leader in Full-Stack Technology Services, Talent Services and real-world application, we work with progressive leaders to drive change. That's the power of true partnership. TEKsystems is an Allegis Group company.

To find out about successful, people-centred digital transformation please visit teksystems.com/en-gb/services/all-services



TEKsystems and Best Western innovate to shape better customer connections

With more than 4,500 hotels across 16 brands in over 100 countries, Best Western Hotels & Resorts is a driving force in hospitality. But rather than rest on their established reputation, they're constantly seeking to improve their business and their guests' experiences. From online bookings to on-premise stays, they aim to delight.

THE PROPOSITION: Experience reinvented
Best Western wanted to provide more innovative and engaging experiences across their digital platforms to their guests. Everything from their online reservation platform to their member rewards programme portal was up for review. To evolve their customer-facing applications, they first needed to look inward. By refining their approach to application development and management, they would be able to quickly respond to changing customer and market conditions by more quickly delivering relevant application enhancements. Increased capability velocity would also increase customer satisfaction. Value accelerated.

THE PROPOSAL: Apps without limits
In supporting and maintaining Best Western's 34 core business applications, TEKsystems maximised value and speed by leveraging a global delivery model. TEKsystems' support included new feature development, testing and production support for many of their most critical applications. In addition, they supported Best Western's portfolio and strategic planning efforts and Agile/SDLC processes.

Through the TEKsystems service evolution – and by leveraging a global footprint – they enabled Best Western to deliver more value, faster. TEKsystems increased the amount of time spent developing and enhancing applications versus maintaining and fixing them by more than 20 per cent. Plus, TEKsystems helped them reduce their overall application incident backlog. Peak efficiency and performance means business running at optimum speed.

POWERFUL PARTNERSHIP: Full-stack solutions
TEKsystems is in the business of enabling change and building tomorrow. Through the evolution of their strong relationship with Best Western, they've partnered to go beyond application enhancement and deliver several critical business and technology innovation initiatives to drive transformation.

Real-world results
The partnership continues to enhance and support Best Western's customer experiences and digital capabilities, while reducing total cost of ownership. By helping to decrease spend on application management and improve speed to market, Best Western continues to deliver exciting new capabilities to customers and member hotels. Through the partnership, they've seen an improvement in their technology ROI. Improved operational efficiency. With enhanced service quality and business capabilities, Best Western delivers customer delight. Satisfaction guaranteed.

"As a trusted partner, TEKsystems Global Services is a crucial part of my Technology Management team, and perfectly fits into our organisation's culture. They deliver continuous process improvement, centred on an outcome-based set of IT service capabilities. They contribute to an increase in our productivity, speed-to-market for deploying technology projects and overall customer satisfaction to our member hotels. TEKsystems has a passion around their clients' success, and we value our long term partnership." Harold Dabler, Vice President of Technology Management, Best Western Hotels & Resorts.