

5 TIPS FOR SUCCESSFUL DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION



Digital transformation is a concept that has become so mainstream it has morphed into somewhat of a catch-all, confusing at best and meaningless at worst. Although the phrase has different value for each individual company, it ultimately marks a radical rethinking of how the organization wishes to use technology, processes, and people to evolve its business performance.

This all-encompassing evolution, although typically led by the CEO, must be accepted by the entire organization, requiring cross-departmental collaboration and shifts in current business philosophies. This type of drastic change doesn't occur overnight, however, and [digital transformation](#) isn't just something that comes in a box.

With a wide variety of steps companies can take to initiate this process, there are a few strategies for digital transformation that [mature organizations](#) have utilized to ensure it is successful.

1. Obtain employee buy-in at all levels (including C-level leaders)

Digital transformation requires change at all levels of an organization, especially from tech-savvy leaders and key decision makers. In fact, recent [research](#) from McKinsey & Company suggests that companies who engaged a chief digital officer (CDO) to support their transformations were 1.6 times more likely than others to report a successful digital transformation. When people in leadership roles, both general senior-level positions as well as those specific to the digital transformation, are involved in the planning and execution, the transformation is also more likely to succeed.

Achieving buy-in from executives is only part of the process, however, as it is vital that all employees are also on board. The most successful initiatives experienced a complete culture shift in the company environment and ensured that all employees felt like they were part of the change. This can be done by redefining individuals' roles and responsibilities so they align with a transformation's goals. This not only helps clarify the skills and roles the organization needs, but it also helps ensure employees are included in the process from the very beginning.

2. Take inventory of your current tech stack

Once leaders and decision-makers are on board, the next step for successful digital transformation is to take a full inventory of your organization's tech stack, including technical competencies and potential gaps. By noting the tools used for things like email marketing, customer relationship management, and internal collaboration, you will have a better idea of how to streamline and make functions more efficient.

For a lot of companies, digital transformations begin from a need to re-platform. Whether the current systems are simply becoming obsolete and need replacing, or they aren't as beneficial as they once were for employees and users alike, organizations find that changing their technologies can completely alter the business as a whole.

Digital initiatives aren't just about the customer's journey, however, it is important to also think about how different technologies can support employees, as well. Does data flow smoothly between teams and departments? Is information highly accessible? Inefficiencies in the employee digital experience will not only negatively affect the culture, but they can also have an impact on the customer experience.

3. Create a digital roadmap and vision

Digital transformation isn't simply about adopting new technologies then calling it a day, rather it's a completely holistic endeavor that requires an explicit vision for how these digital tools will be leveraged as well as a detailed plan for execution across the organization.

Assess organizational goals.

The entire digital transformation agenda must be well-thought out. Check all the boxes before starting anything and make sure you consider:

- Market research
- Overall brand strategy
- Projected ROI
- Baseline metrics
- Performance expectations
- IT budget
- Resource and technology requirements
- Operational costs
- Expected outcomes
- Organizational impact

Analyze integration needs.

Going back to the concept of digital maturity, it is necessary to examine where your company lies on the spectrum in order to fully plan out your strategy. By considering short-term (one year), mid-term (three to five years), and long-term (10-20 years) goals, your transformation committee can ensure that the overall vision makes sense with your digital strategy.

Don't forget about communication.

One of the first steps of a successful digital transformation involves getting buy-in from employees, but that's not where communication with them ends. No matter what channel works best for your organization, it is vital to share the vision, goals, benchmarking process, and any challenges or celebrations along the way with them.

4. Optimize operations

Streamlining operations is always a good idea, but even more so when creating a digital transformation strategy. One of the best places to start is by truly understanding and assessing your team's abilities and strengths. Should they need outside support, this would be a good stage to obtain it.

The next step would be to set clear planning methods and explicit procedures, reducing the time spent on misunderstandings and improving overall workflows. By executing projects with standardized plans, your team will be more efficient and ultimately more creative, spending increased time on innovations and less on roadblocks. Continue to share these plans with stakeholders, including all industry compliance and regulatory best practices.

5. Consistently evaluate and make adjustments

No matter how good a digital transformation strategy may be, there is always room to grow. As company and industry needs evolve, these changes will be even more crucial, so having consistent and ongoing evaluations is essential to long-term success.

Drive with metrics.

Collecting data is beneficial, but only if you take action as a result. Using metrics and sharing them in ways that specific teams can leverage is necessary for growth. A business that remains transparent and applies dedicated resources to collecting and analyzing data is more likely to experience positive outcomes.

Are You Ready for Digital Transformation?

Preparing your organization for digital transformation can be a daunting task, but by [creating a detailed plan](#) and utilizing your team's strengths, you can ensure that you are prepared to make the process successful.

Ensuring a Successful Transformation

BMC offers a structured approach to digital transformation that helps businesses respond swiftly and effectively to digital disruption. Learn more in the blog series, "[Digital Transformation that Endures](#)."