

Digital is more than just a slice of tech

Digital has become so commonplace as a term that it has almost lost its value. It is all digital. Digital transformation and digital disruption and the digital revolution. However, within this endless sea of ones, zeroes and hype lies a commodity that can be leveraged by organisations if they can approach it strategically.

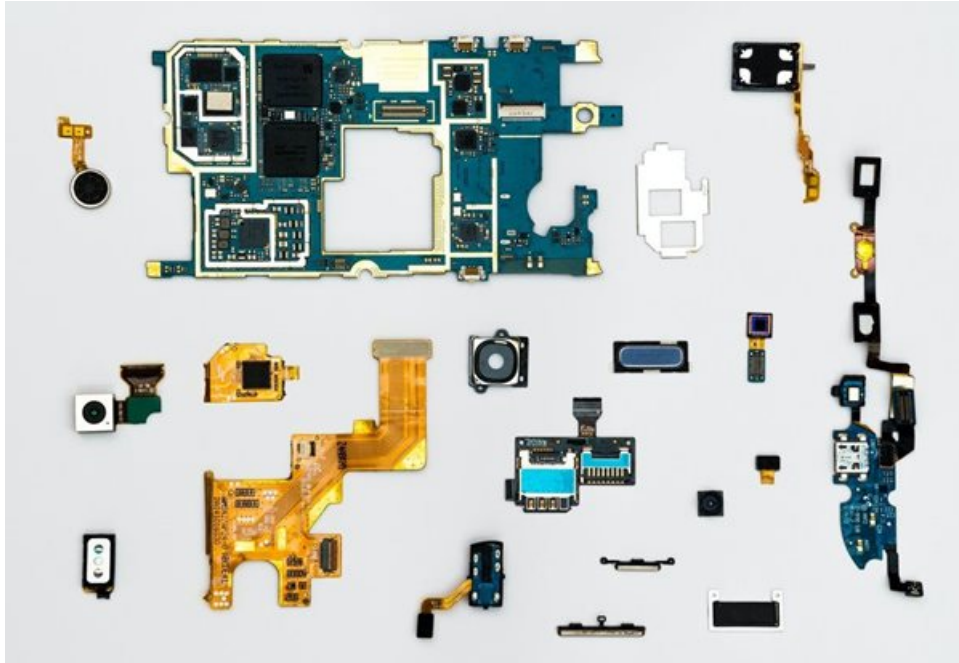


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According to Mark Walker, associate vice president for Sub-Saharan Africa at IDC Middle East, Africa, and Turkey, the next generation of organisation is one that is digitally determined, one that plans its business and infrastructure in alignment with digital principles and potential.

“The digitally determined organisation asks – how can we do digital better? How can we make our digital investment more effective? How can we live in the cloud and leverage the third platform and innovation accelerators?” he adds.

“ The goal is efficiency and reducing costs and overheads. But, perhaps most importantly, it is about optimising experiences and systems. From the customer experience to the supply chain to business processes – digital is refined until it gets exceptional results. ”

The factors that drive digitally determined organisations are the same that drive most in today’s pandemic-powered markets – cost-savings, efficiencies, productivity, personalisation, and improved ecosystems within the company and culture. With the right digital investment, the organisation can better manage its environment and make better decisions that are based on data and relevant insights rather than on gut feel.

“Artificial intelligence, automation, machine learning, and other technologies are providing real-time information to decision-makers that can be used to achieve better outcomes,” says Walker.

“The digitally determined organisation isn’t the same as the digitally transformed organisation. The former is digitally connected and is focused on results. Companies want benefits and value, and this is what a strategic digital investment will deliver.”



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Yaron Assabi 15 Jan 2020



Adapt or die?

There has always been that murmur of conversation that hums behind those that stubbornly refuse to go digital or adopt the next big thing in technology or business. Adapt or die – a mantra older than most of the technologies that are considered a mandatory investment today – rings even truer now than ever before. If companies do not go down the digital route and embed it into culture, system, and process, then they will be left behind. It is not an ad hoc statement delivered by agencies to ignite spend – it is the cold, hard, digital truth.

“Digital is integral to the organisation,” explains Walker. “This is not just in the work-from-home situation that has put immense pressure onto organisations to shift into digital gear, whether they like it or not, but in terms of personalising relationships and getting value from existing investments and systems. Those that have focused on a digitally-driven infrastructure are more able to pull out insights, improve processes, and change gears at speed than those that remain entrenched in legacy architecture.”

That said, there is a disclaimer. Yes, most companies will struggle if they do not move towards digital, but this is dependent on sector and industry. In some, there is less impact if they become digitally determined than in others. However, key sectors such as retail demand that digital underpins strategy and vision. Retail, finance, mining, manufacturing – digital solutions can potentially minimise significant potholes on their roads to success in the current market.

“The catalyst for the sudden growth and uptake of digitally determined organisations has been the pandemic and the lockdowns,” says Walker.

“ This is a global phenomenon that has hit everywhere, hard. Companies are scrambling to find new ways of engaging with their customers and meeting targets, ways that can only be invigorated with a solid digital investment. ”

From the Pick ‘n Pay collaboration with Bottles to Checkers’ Sixty60, retail has been leaping into the digital fray with solutions that meet very real customer needs. And this is not going to suddenly end. Companies are going to have to adapt to new ways of engaging with their markets, find inventive solutions that meet evolving customer needs and shift the way that they think about work and people. Many have recognised this and made fundamental changes to how they operate, others have found innovative ways of overcoming the limitations imposed by the lockdown.

“What has clearly emerged from our ongoing research leading up to the IDC RSA CIO Summit taking place in October this year, is that the online realm has changed and there are tangible and immediate examples of the digitally determined organisation,” concludes Walker.

“This is evident in how events are moving from physical to immersive virtual experiences as well as flexible workstyles, new opening times, shifting approaches to distribution and logistics, alternative revenue streams – these are all the result of access to digital solutions that can adapt on-demand, to demands.”

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