

# The role of apps in the digital transformation journey

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In a world driven by big data, the Internet of Things (IoT) and cloud connectivity, applications have become the system we use to record everything, as well as the platform we use to interact with customers, suppliers, each other and – yes – things. Smart things. Whether businesses use the cloud, on-premise systems, or an amalgamation of both, digital transformation is happening – and applications are playing a rather big role.



Image by 123RF

Data is a valuable asset and tool for any business, and recording data for use is increasingly important. Applications serve as the perfect system for the sourcing and recording of data through engagement with multiple arenas, from customers to suppliers to personnel and even competitors. When viewed as a system of record and a platform for systems of engagement, it is possible to see how applications sit at the core of digital transformation.

## Applications for customer experience

Customers rule business today, and businesses are continually striving for a unique and superior customer experience to set themselves apart from their competitors. Customer experience sits at the heart of any business, and applications enable customer experience, regardless of the channel.

As a system of engagement, applications allow anybody – staff, suppliers and customers alike – to interact with a business from virtually anywhere. In the case of a customer, applications allow a customer to engage with a business using the channel with which they are most comfortable.

Data gathered and recorded from interactions across a number of applications can be analysed to assess a number of things, from buying and ordering trends to customer preferences. It gives businesses a single view of their customers, enabling businesses to streamline and plan their business strategy around the “customer of one.”

## Supplier collaboration and business networks

Imagine a business being able to automatically replenish standard stock items and bestsellers as supplies dwindle, ensuring the business never runs out and can meet all order requirements. Imagine a business having an overview of all suppliers and their pricing which allows them to place orders cost effectively. Imagine a business never missing a payment and

knowing the exact whereabouts of expected deliveries at any given time. Now, stop imagining.

This is a reality enabled by applications, giving businesses a means to interact with their suppliers as if they were a single entity, while still being able to separate them for practical purposes. Suppliers and vendors can be easily managed, while data can predict supplier habits and future trends.

## **Workforce management**

The use of applications within a business environment can ensure a business not only hires and retains the best suited personnel for any specific function, but can also help to identify weaknesses and redundancies within a workforce.

User-friendly and informative applications can also serve to motivate and inspire staff, helping businesses to reduce high staff turnovers and maximise performance. Management can use them to communicate with personnel and even incentivise them through offering in-house loyalty-type programs.

Using an application for hiring of staff can also ensure that a business hires only suitable candidates and, given sufficient information, can also predict whether an applicant will succeed or struggle in a specific position.

## **Applications for IoT**

The world is consistently getting smarter, and most businesses are investigating IoT, if not already embroiled in rolling out an IoT strategy. Applications can drive the engagement between smart devices and management systems, pinpointing and fixing problems proactively, and sorting and feeding data back to wherever it needs to go.

Smart devices are business assets and exist to deliver valuable information to a business. Applications enable businesses to keep real-time track of their assets, and to deploy them where they are needed most, or will deliver the most benefit.

Behind the scenes, applications ensure that data is made available to analyse for trends and records so that businesses can strategise and plan with foresight.

Digital transformation can be seen as the means to glean the best possible business value from the vast quantity of data that currently exists. Applications enable digital transformation to occur across all sectors of a business. They ensure an organisation is able to view, service and extract the maximum value from their clients, suppliers, employees or assets as single, individual entities. They also provide an organisation with cognitive and predictive analytics to further its growth. Whether in the cloud or within an organisation, the right applications allow businesses to digitally transform, remain current, and stay ahead of competition.

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