

Breaking through digital frontiers to achieve the exceptional

We stand at the precipice of the Fourth Industrial Revolution, which promises to be the most globally impactful revolution to date. The immersion of technology into virtually every aspect of our world is resulting in the convergence of the physical (hardware), digital (applications and software) and biological (human) domains of life.



Source: pixabay.com

Digital transformation, customer experience, and agility fueled innovation are becoming the overarching drivers of a business, regardless of product, service or industry. To achieve these, businesses need to adapt the way they view IT, and the freedom which they need to build, control and manage their IT environment as the foundation upon which to drive business success.

Digital transformation creating the exceptional

Talking to Ian Jansen van Rensburg, senior manager: systems engineering at VMware sub-Saharan Africa, and Marco Vieira, country manager for Hybrid IT at HPE, we ask them to tell us what they believe digital transformation means to business:

Jansen van Rensburg says, "Of the three domains that are converging to spearhead the Fourth Industrial Revolution, the physical and digital elements are continually evolving at an exponential rate. While people themselves remain relatively static, the way we do business and the way we wish to be served by business is spurred on by the evolution of technology.



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“People are no longer satisfied with standard; people want to be amazed through experience, technology and real-time service delivery. Businesses who weren’t born into the digital age need to adapt to this new world and transform in order to remain relevant and compete with those who were.”

Says Vieira, “Digital transformation is a long-standing buzzword and many businesses are still unsure of what it means. Essentially is boils down to leveraging IT to achieve the business agility demanded by today’s market. Technology should be applied to any previously manual process or operation in order to enhance it, speed it up, and react quicker to market conditions.

“Digital technology enables businesses with the ability to spin off a new project and act on an idea almost as soon as it is conceptualised. This is what separates the leaders from the competition. This is what creates the exceptional.”

Local vs. International

Businesses born in the digital age are often assumed to be international, and many are. However, South Africa is hardly behind the curve as we evolve with our own digital business concepts that are challenging the status quo and disrupting traditional business methods.

Says Jansen van Rensburg, “Businesses born in the internet age are not just an international phenomenon. We have already seen the far-reaching consequences of the internet where a connected world has demonstrated the eradication of traditional borders. An app used here in South Africa will have the same look and feel as an app used in the United States or Turkey, or anywhere else in the world.



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“South African enterprises know that digital transformation is needed to be innovative, agile, retain competitiveness and relevance. We certainly don’t lack the technology to enable this, however, what we do still need, is the change of mindset from traditional to digital in order for digital to succeed.”

According to Jansen van Rensburg, many businesses still adopt a siloed approach to business problems and challenges, saying that the focus on separate, individual teams within businesses is still a very common practice both locally and internationally, and a potential stumbling block to achieving digital success.

“Businesses need to break down their siloes, assess and redefine their processes and embrace a digital way of thinking in order to achieve the agility they need to be innovative. The cloud is an enabler, however, it requires that mindset to be truly effective.”

Get your head in the cloud

The blurring lines between physical, digital and biological means that it is hard to determine which technology truly matters. However, with digital transformation unwittingly wearing the face of the Fourth Industrial Revolution, it's safe to say digital is where it's at.

"People, both customers and businesses, are not concerned with how they receive their service or experience, but just that they receive it securely, quickly and digitally. The cloud truly enables digital," says Jansen van Rensburg.

However, true digital requires that a business having the ability to leverage multiple clouds based on their unique individual requirements, as and when they need them. Businesses are catering to more diverse customers and are required to offer from here on out, unknown levels of customisation and personalisation.



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Jonathan Houston 26 Sep 2018



For this reason, says Jansen van Rensburg, the ability to see the cloud as the new "hardware" and spin up any application, whether traditional or cloud-native (born in the cloud), or any X-as-a-Service offering, based purely on requirement regardless of the cloud, is vital.

"It becomes critical to be able to connect any device securely and easily to the cloud, and seamlessly between clouds. The "hardware" shouldn't matter – only the application and what you do with it," adds Jansen van Rensburg.

Synergy

"For businesses to achieve the best out of the cloud and their digital efforts, working with partners can be the difference between successful digital transformation and a failed attempt. HPE's collaboration with innovative, cutting-edge partners such as VMware means that we can build our platforms in alignment with VMware's goals to deliver the seamless agility that businesses need," explains Vieira.

"Together, we are helping businesses to break through the digital frontier to emerge at the forefront of their industries."

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