How do CSPs go about achieving true digital transformation?

By Pikie Monaheng   17 Nov 2020

The global pandemic has accelerated the need for true digitisation as South African customers demand a more seamless digital customer experience from their communications service providers (CSPs).

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It's no secret that CSPs need to transform their businesses to compete in the country's highly competitive communications landscape and deliver the experiences that customers are demanding today. However, digital transformation is a journey, which takes time, and there are many tasks to undertake on the way.

So, how do CSPs go about achieving true digital transformation? What are the main challenges they must address?

IT modernisation is a key enabler of any digital transformation and adoption of cloud technologies is central to that. In addition to cost savings, the cloud provides the ability to swiftly evolve, react to market dynamics and launch new offerings. It enables elasticity on demand, creating an always-on environment where the flexibility to do things as a service is much greater and the organisation is not confined to own-premise computing power and IT.

CSPs will necessarily adopt a hybrid approach to cloud adoption with some systems remaining on-premise and others migrating to private cloud, public cloud and even multiple public clouds - like AWS, Azure and GCP - to benefit from the latest technologies and cost efficiencies.

This complex IT environment creates challenges around managing the hybrid co-existence of the current and the new platforms, which requires careful management. Moreover, adoption of cloud brings new concerns such as the need for continuous optimisation, financial and economic management, regulatory compliance and data and security management.

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Data is key for anticipating customer needs. Savvy CSPs will need to start leveraging data more effectively to make more astute business decisions. Here, AI plays a key role, helping CSPs to quickly create new offerings based on what customers are demanding. Injecting artificial intelligence into everything the organisation does will help it make critical business decisions, but also keep pace with an ever-changing, connectivity-first society.

CSPs will also need to inject intelligence into their own operations. To remain ahead of technology's rapid evolution, organisations will be compelled to introduce AI-driven operations, while making continuous improvements to their IT environments. This is the only way to ensure flexibility and a fleet-footed response to change.

Transformation is determined by the people and the processes

Ultimately, the success of any digital transformation depends on the people and the processes that execute the transformation. This requires getting employees to buy into digital adoption, embrace new technologies, new processes and new ways of working.

CSPs need to adapt their organisational culture to break down barriers and automate and expedite processes. They must instil a continuous learning and innovation mindset in their employees. Steps such as these will allow CSPs to be more agile and ensure their employees have the inherent ability to quickly adapt to the next big disruption.

With the focus on reskilling and repurposing, as well as the automation of manual tasks, employees will no longer have to do repetitive or onerous tasks. Rather, they will be freed up to concentrate more on business innovation and customer service.

Digital transformation journeys may come with some challenges, but the rewards are worth the effort. CSPs that have already embarked on accelerated journeys to transform their businesses are positioning themselves to deliver digital customer services that leverage new opportunities and technologies and elevate their customers' satisfaction and happiness rates. And frankly, the operations that don't ride the transformation wave will be left behind.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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