

How to approach digital transformation in 2020

Trend predictions are for Fendi, Gucci, and Chanel. Even Louis Vitton opening their new restaurant in Osaka is a trend for luxury brands, following Burberry, Ralph Lauren, Tiffany's. But, in digital transformation, there are things that, if you aren't already doing, you should be doing. And what you should be doing depends on your particular business and who your customers and employees are - not trends.



Templar Wales

Templar Wales, a partner at DYDX and former head of digital marketing at Investec Group, explains how you should approach digital transformation in 2020.

No e-mail - and the future of work

Email might always have a small role for formalising agreements, just like paper still has a small role but we find that in workshops on team behaviour, most agree that emails (asynchronous) should be replaced by something like Slack because its synchronous, organised, and the right people are in the right channels - no "who should I CC?" issues.

But what's important is that the people in the team agree on new behaviours (even if just by majority consensus), commit to trying, and don't lapse to old ways when they're stressed or under pressure. And even if they do lapse, that they just get back on the bus again.

The future of work is not about selecting and implementing new software. Successful transformation is about shifting teams behaviour and skills to use the software and continuously measuring and improving the systems and processes.

No code - and XaaS

Yes, there will always be some code to be written but most of the functionality we need is readily available as a service. This means faster implementation, more flexibility and manageable costs. All the time you save building services should be spent on defining the customer or employee experience from end to end, weaving the services together into a more seamless journey and automating anything that computers do better and faster than us mere mortals.

By the time you scope, build and test your Titanic, it'll be out of date.

Transform at the speed of life.

No design - and better design

There is still lots of design and the experience is vital to the use of a product or service. But with the rapid adoption of voice commands and apps that communicate with us primarily through audio, and minimising visual engagement, we need to consider how people experience brands and their services without aesthetic cues. All of the design decisions you made in the past need to be accounted for in audio.

In both visual and sound design, less is better - don't let your ideas and brand get in the way of good user experience.

No consumers, no users - and the rise of the human

AI, machine learning and automation feel like they could threaten our jobs and our security but in most cases they free us up to be more human - giving us more time to do the stuff we're good at and neural networks aren't (for now).

Digital transformation is all about improving the human experience, about solving human problems. Service Design and Design Thinking are rooted in Human-Centred Design. The person you're solving for is at the centre of the solution, not your very, very clever engineering.

So, we need to stop thinking of people as 'users' and 'consumers' and start seeing them as customers, employees and partners. It might sound like semantics but the language we use changes the way we see experience things.

While on this point, stop saying 'millennials'. People of all ages, colours and shapes have certain emotions and behaviours. Capture those feelings and behaviours and design for them but seeing millennials as a segment is just laziness.

No end

Transformation is not an end goal, it's not a project, it's an approach to ongoing improvement. It will become as normal as IT which used to be a 'thing'. In 2020 transformation will mature to be more pragmatic, more measurable and more achievable.

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