Expert opinion

Digital transformation: have you reached digital maturity?

By Johan Cote, Business Manager, Consulting BU, Hardis Group

This is the key topic of the moment: in the media, in conferences and executive committees, and even in trade fairs in the city, talk is all about the digital transformation of society and business. But this transformation cannot be tackled in a uniform way: it depends on how mature organizations and people are, and also on business sectors.

Defining one's strategy according to digital maturity

The digital revolution is under way: that's a fact. With it, new, often disruptive business models can shake the historical giants of the economy. In order not to get "uberized" and remain competitive, companies are taking the digital turn to maintain, strengthen and sometimes even find their competitive advantages. Digitizing may even make their long-standing business model change.

Before embarking on this transformation, each organization must measure its digital maturity. In other words, assess its ability to transform itself and drive change in order to define an appropriate digital strategy and road map. While technological maturity is of course one of the criteria to assess the level of digital maturity, two other angles need to be considered, that are structural and cultural in nature.

Assessing one's level of digital maturity...

Specifically, to calculate its level of digital maturity, a company must set up six indicators related to the organization, to employees, to digital marketing, digital presence and confidence, to the information system, and finally to the processes for designing new products and services.

Structurally, it is first necessary to assess the organization's ability to transform itself, i.e. to operate in a digital world. And, in particular, to implement agile processes or to get multidisciplinary teams to collaborate. The maturity of employees is the second indicator: their sensitivity to collaborative work, to sharing information or to self-study, together with their level of technological expertise must all be assessed.

To assess how digitally cultured the company is, two other indicators need measuring: first, the level of strategic command of all the methods and best practices in digital marketing (on-line communication using social networks , generating traffic, e-commerce, etc.). Second, digital visibility and the digital confidence index of the company, by measuring its e-reputation and assessing its influence strategy.

Assessment of digital maturity finally involves an audit of the technological maturity of the organization and its processes to design new innovative products and services. The ability of the information system to integrate new digital devices, the degree of technological competence, how well equipped employees are, and their expertise in processing and

securing large volumes of data must all be assessed. Then operational processes in the field of innovation, design and marketing new products and services must be analyzed.

This assessment is used to position the company on a digital maturity matrix at time T. It should not be carried out as a one-shot operation because it is intended to become a business indicator for measuring the progress and the relevance of the organization's digital transformation.

... in comparison with its own sectoral and geographic markets
In addition, for it to be fully useful, this assessment should be compared to the average level found in the corporate sector. For digital maturity differs greatly between sectors and even from one branch to another. The delta resulting from this benchmark, positive or negative, should allow the company to evaluate its lead, in order to maintain or even increase it. Or, on the contrary, to enable it to assess the effort needed not to fall behind the competition.

However, it is not a question of stopping at the borders of one's own market. Initiatives taken in other business or geographic areas, or driven by highly innovative start-ups may be an important source of inspiration for designing new products and services, or imagining new ways of distributing them.

To be comprehensive and fair, the assessment of the digital maturity level involves probing the different departments of the company (General Management, the IS department, the communication department, the marketing department, the HR department, customer service, business departments, etc.), and also employees and the company's customers. This cross-analysis needs to be carried out by an expert of the digital field and the sector concerned, who will be familiar with the ecosystem, the best practices, the expectations and above all the challenges of the sector.

About Hardis Group

Hardis Group, a digital services company and software publisher, assists its customers in their move to digital and omni-channel. The company helps them transform their information systems, their supply chain and their customer relationships to create value and increase operational performance. With its dual historical positioning, Hardis Group has developed business expertise in the areas of banking, insurance and e-health, distribution (CPG and luxury goods), industry and energy, logistics and transport services. This expertise now allows it to provide its clients with global responses to their needs, in an agile approach characterized by co-construction, innovation and continuous improvement.
Since its creation in 1984, the company has built its growth on a pragmatic approach and values of efficiency and firm commitment both to its 2,500 clients and its 700 employees (25% of whom are also shareholders). Hardis Group posted turnover figures of €62.1 million in 2014. The Group, whose headquarters are in Grenoble, has four other agencies in Lyon, Paris, Lille and Nantes.
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