In every industry around the world, companies are keen to pursue an ideal mix of best practices, technologies and thinking, to be truly digital. Digital transformation is not all plug-and-play. Going digital is definitely not a hasty leadership push to outdo the competition by purchasing bespoke technology stacks, laying out the piece parts and assembling them together to get a digital enterprise. It is a complex and introspective journey that demands bold decisions to simplify, modernize and secure the company’s digital assets to achieve the nirvana.

Fast, Efficient, And Secure IT Backbone A Must For Successful Digital Transformation

IT complexity can be overwhelming, and could be a hindrance rather than enabler in digital business
Before embarking on the digital transformation journey it definitely helps for long-established IT organizations to have a modern and secure IT backbone as a pre-requisite. With such a robust IT backbone, businesses will be equipped to fend off continuous threats from ‘born digital’ competitors, and also defeat corporate sabotages and frauds that aim to inflict critical liabilities.

To grow revenue, market-share and profitability in today’s digital world, it is necessary to effect technology changes at every layer of the enterprise. Some companies extend their legacy systems with modern digital platforms, which could add unnecessary complications in terms of IT infrastructure. With so much changing so quickly, it is neither feasible to spend big on maintaining legacy systems, nor is it possible to effect cumbersome changes to make legacy IT compatible with myriad systems from acquisitions and partnerships. Keeping all these in mind, here is a three-point blueprint that helps any organization get started on its digital transformation journey.

SIMPLIFY: REDUCE LEGACY, STREAMLINE PROCESSES, AND TIGHTLY ALIGN WITH BUSINESS

IT complexity can be overwhelming, and could be a hindrance rather than enabler in digital business. Only those who declutter, will emerge winners in the digital race.

A global wireless major was struggling with rising costs in providing customer support through its bulky and inefficient 400-strong support staff. The company’s IT support handled a huge alphabet soup of services that even employed external service providers. Realizing that the inefficiencies stemmed from this systemic complexity, the leaders wasted no time to take firm decisions to overhaul the systems and simplify existing processes.

The company went ahead with improving its service management model and consolidate to a sole provider of Level 2 support (technical problem solving capabilities) for most of its applications. This untangling of IT systems prevented more than 2,000 service incidents in the first six months, and improved the overall quality of its services. The simplification yielded a 34% reduction in the total ownership cost.

Thus, reducing the cost of IT services and freeing scarce funds and skills will help any organization work well on revamping its businesses and stay competitive. Today, businesses are selling more products and services in more markets across more channels than ever before, resulting in largely avoidable complexities. On top of that, supporting them in new and different ways while complying with ever-increasing regulatory requirements may impose conflicting demands. Add to it, the fast-paced mergers, acquisitions and reorganizations to existing legacy systems! This can only be managed if a company reduces legacy debt, simplifies its processes, optimizes staff, and aligns all its businesses to the new system.
MODERNIZE: INTRODUCE NEWER, CLOUD-ENABLED ARCHITECTURES
A premier financial institution was looking at new ways of handling its range of tier-one applications, the complexities of its financial messaging through multiple channels. The company was also facing a challenge of finding ways to reduce production incidents and service requests. The organization embarked on a modernization plan by implementing automated software testing solution, and an efficient, low-cost support model in place of its legacy system. The company implemented a centralized monitoring dashboard imbibing these changes, which resulted in not only improved response time and customer experience, but also managed to reduce all critical incidents by 30 percent. Modernization has become imperative for competing in today’s hyper-personalized and always-on digital marketplace, where informed customers expect services and offers that suit their personalities and unique needs. By replacing point-to-point interfaces between siloed, legacy systems with services-based approach makes it easier, faster and cheaper to create a unified experience that users demand.

Fast evolving social, mobile, analytics, and cloud (SMAC) platforms, combined with microservers, Internet of Things (IoT), and virtual and augmented reality make a dynamic and fluid IT landscape. Together with a modern IT architecture, an agile methodology and better business process mapping, new digital business models serve the customer faster and better.

SECURE: MAKE, ESTABLISH AND MAINTAIN A RESILIENT IT LANDSCAPE
Today, digital security grabs headlines more often than ever before, with attacks of shocking scale and depths being reported from around the world. Since 2016-17, about 4,000 ransomware attacks have been happening every day. With the explosion of connected devices, it is estimated that cyber security attacks could result in an estimated damage of $6 trillion by 2021.

A third-party payment processor was in a hot spot as attacks exposed its customer credit card data, impacting the company’s reputation. The repairs were quite expensive, as switching fees for rogue transactions was steep, and the rise in traffic caused by the attacks increased the risk of failure of its credit card authorization systems. To fix these challenges, the company implemented a real-time, rules-based fraud monitoring system that continuously evaluated declined transactions against predefined fraud patterns, blocked suspicious transactions and alerted security staff within seconds of an attack. The system’s early detection of frauds helped the company save up to $30,000 per month in switch fees, and halted more than 1,500 attempted fraud transactions every single day!

An IT manager of today should not only avoid attacks, but also make it safer, quicker, and more flexible for permissioned users to seamlessly deal with data and systems. To achieve a secure digital infrastructure, it is therefore necessary to put in a strong defence system, implement an impenetrable identity, application and data protection layer, and also manage all risks while complying with the constantly changing data security requirements.

LOOKING AHEAD
In the pursuit of becoming truly digital, CIOs and IT organizations should re-think how to build and maintain an efficient, resilient and safe digital backbone by simplifying, modernizing and securing their IT infrastructure. A good start would be to implement a right investment and change management plan, building team skills, and aligning all such changes with the company’s overall business vision.

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