Agility, Security, and Scale:
Achieving the Goals of Digital Transformation with a Trusted Partner

Executive Summary

The vast majority of organizations, both large and small, are in the midst of a digital transformation. It's vital to remain competitive, and the pandemic only accelerated the timeline. But the process is complex and its goals—including agility, global reach, and security—are difficult to attain. This paper details the findings of an IDG survey of senior IT decision-makers at companies in the US, the UK, Australia, New Zealand, and Singapore on the current state of digital transformation.
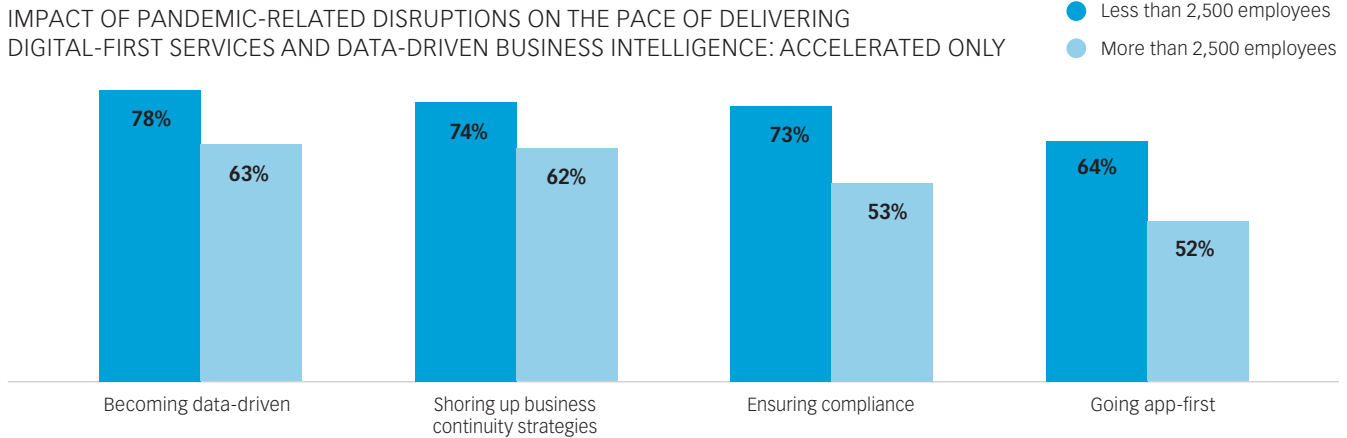
Digital transformation is crucially important for any enterprise seeking to maintain its competitiveness. When done right, it can increase agility, optimize operations to run more efficiently, cut costs, and provide insights from data that enable faster, more accurate decision-making.

But it's a complex undertaking, especially in large organizations where multiple stakeholders may have different, and sometimes competing, needs. To understand the current state of digital transformation, IDG surveyed senior IT decision-makers from the US, the UK, Australia, New Zealand, and Singapore. Three main themes and associated challenges emerged: achieving agility, technology integration and deployment, and security.

The State of Digital Transformation

The vast majority of organizations are investing in digital transformation and ensuring that IT advances the business. Most respondents (61%) consider themselves digital leaders, while 39% rank themselves more towards the middle of the pack. Only 15% said their organizations do not explicitly align IT strategy to business goals.
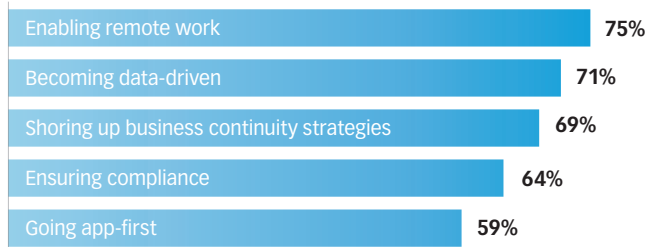
FIGURE 1. **The Impact of Pandemic-related Disruptions**

IMPACT OF PANDEMIC-RELATED DISRUPTIONS ON THE PACE OF DELIVERING
DIGITAL-FIRST SERVICES AND DATA-DRIVEN BUSINESS INTELLIGENCE: ACCELERATED ONLY

● Less than 2,500 employees
● More than 2,500 employees

Becoming data-driven	Shoring up business continuity strategies	Ensuring compliance	Going app-first
78% / 63%	74% / 62%	73% / 53%	64% / 52%

Source: IDG

Part of the enthusiasm for digital transformation is attributable to the pandemic, which caused many organizations to accelerate their plans. This was necessary in order to continue efficient, effective operations with many employees working from home. Smaller companies (less than 2,500 employees) were 10 to 15 percentage points more likely to accelerate delivery of digital-first services than larger companies (more than 2,500 employees), depending on the type of service (See Figure 1).

Specifically, COVID-19 and associated public health measures caused enterprises to accelerate:

Enabling remote work	75%
Becoming data-driven	71%
Shoring up business continuity strategies	69%
Ensuring compliance	64%
Going app-first	59%

Challenges of Digital Transformation

The biggest challenges of digital transformation include:

Controlling operational costs	50%
Maintaining data compliance standards	47%
Ensuring scalability	45%
Introducing new technologies	44%
Driving customer satisfaction	43%

The survey also revealed several differences between respondents who identify their organizations as digital leaders versus those in the low-to-mid-pack bracket.

For less digitally mature organizations, avoiding disruption was far more important (48%) than it was to their more digitally mature counterparts (30%). On the other hand, data issues were a more common concern for digital leaders (41%) than less digitally mature organizations (20%).

Senior decision-makers overwhelmingly see partnerships, which are integrated both organizationally and technologically, as key to success.
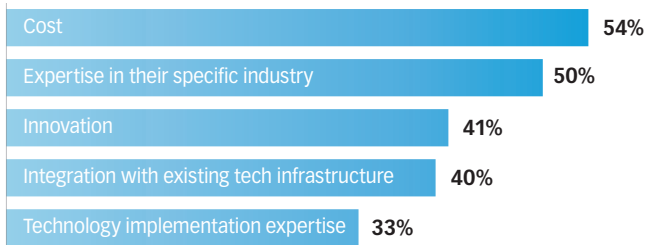
Senior decision-makers overwhelmingly see partnerships, which are integrated both organizationally and technologically, as key to success. Specifically, respondents indicated that fully integrated technology partnerships could help:

Avoid disruption to business operations	92%
Maintain data compliance standards	89%
Introduce new technologies	88%
Drive customer satisfaction	86%
Meet service-level agreements (SLAs)	86%

However, only about one-third (37%) are fully integrated with their partners.

How Trusted Advisors Can Help

When asked to name the most important factors they look for in a vendor, the top five answers were:

Cost	54%
Expertise in their specific industry	50%
Innovation	41%
Integration with existing tech infrastructure	40%
Technology implementation expertise	33%

When asked what qualities vendors are lacking, respondents focused on three: scope of services is too narrow or lacks breadth (56%), they lack an ecosystem of other partners that can help execute technology strategy (50%), or they are purely product-focused (46%).

One of the primary goals of working with a trusted partner for digital transformation is to increase agility. After all, modern markets move very quickly, and organizations must adapt quickly in order to remain relevant and competitive.

But enterprise agility is needed for addressing more than just rapidly evolving markets. For instance, responding to

Not surprisingly, given the pandemic and the shift towards hybrid work environments, enabling remote work was the number-one driver for accelerated digital transformation.

Global scale is a key capability, whether the organization is highly distributed, needs to connect with partners and customers around the world, or is simply supporting a hybrid workforce. Its value is rooted in its ability to enable expansion and rollout of new services without using "rip and replace."

Many difficult IT challenges can be overcome with greater scalability and global reach. For example, financial and operational uncertainty may cause organizations to delay or even forgo certain tech investments. This leads to an incremental approach to scaling compute, network, and storage infrastructures. Especially with tight budgets, achieving global scalability is a vital goal.

Technology partners can make it simpler for IT to achieve significant improvements in data center performance, agility, and scalability so that overall IT spending is more predictable.

> "Holding everything comes with a cost. You have to accomplish this without burdening the operation. Done incorrectly, data management and governance become a drag on the company operation."
>
> **Marcus Maddox** Global Alliances Manager, Hitachi

customer and market demands requires developing and delivering new internal and external services. These new services frequently require best-in-class infrastructure, which can be extremely complex to roll out and maintain accurately.

Tapping the expertise of technology partners makes it simpler to quickly roll out broad portfolios of user and customer services and apps. The enterprise gains greater flexibility for multi-cloud strategies and distributed workloads, while balancing cost efficiency, performance, availability, and agility. By leaning on the experience of trusted partners—and trusted partners will have worked on dozens, even hundreds of similar projects—IT can accelerate solution installation, configuration, deployment, and monitoring. In sum, the organization can move and change much, much faster while simultaneously reducing risk.

Enabling Global Scale and Reach

Another digital transformation goal: provide global availability and accessibility so stakeholders and employees can access applications and data anytime, anywhere.

Data Management, Trust, and Security

Data plays a significant role in everyday existence; ordinary people have access to more information in their pockets than many libraries used to hold. And while there are obvious benefits to having access to so much data, there are also challenges and risks.

"For a business to survive today, responsiveness is essential," said Marcus Maddox, global alliances manager at Hitachi. "But when you respond there is little to no tolerance for wasting time or resources. This is where the data comes into play. Enterprises now retain essentially all data about the business to provide a foundation for serving customers well and maintaining competitiveness. The problem is that holding everything comes with a cost.

You have to accomplish this without burdening the operation. Done incorrectly, data management and governance become a drag on the company operation."

Ensuring that the data remains secure despite the level of access is a complex task. Security is table stakes for any IT

With partner help, IT can meet SLAs and build customer and user trust, while also enabling perpetual, unwavering security, resilience, performance, and data availability.

initiative. And, not surprisingly, respondents in the survey said that the number-one benefit of working with fully integrated partners was stronger security. After all, security threats are only getting more prevalent and severe. If a new technology or project cannot demonstrate strong security, it's dead in the water.

But as anyone who has worked with IT knows, digital security is hard. Every digital channel—and there are many—must be secure, both operationally and for other stakeholders, such as customers, partners, and investors. And IT must not only ensure all data, workloads, and connections are secure, but do so while continuing to guarantee performance, service, and data availability.

Technology partners' expertise comes in especially handy when building security into digital transformation. With their help, IT can meet SLAs and build customer and user trust, while also enabling perpetual, unwavering security, resilience, performance, and data availability.

The Hitachi /Cisco Partnership

Together, Hitachi and Cisco provide much more than a complete selection of data center solutions—they help organizations navigate the ever-increasing complexity of digital transformation projects. Both companies have extensive expertise in making rapid progress from creation to value, edge, and cloud environments as well as storage,

management, migration, and monetization of data. Hitachi's data management platform can handle a large range of data types—from block and structured to file and object. With Hitachi, enterprise IT can easily scale performance, capacity, and responsiveness.

Cisco provides data and application access wherever the enterprise needs it, offering high performance without sacrificing security. It addresses access from the perspectives of person, campus, and global—without missing a beat. These are baseline requirements for an agile company in the twenty-first century.

Cisco and Hitachi have both built their reputations on a culture where equipment and software failure is unacceptable. It's no surprise that many of the largest financial services, healthcare, and communications companies in the world rely on Cisco and Hitachi, trusted partners with a global presence.

The Bottom Line

Digital transformation is a fundamental requirement for success, but enterprises don't have to undertake this complex, sometimes treacherous journey alone. Trusted, deeply integrated partners can guide IT around the dangers and provide expertise that will accelerate deployment, simplify management, and increase global scale and agility.

For more information **click here**

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