

Harnessing the power of digital transformation for the competitive edge

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Digital Transformation is in talks everywhere – Councils, Cabinets, boardrooms and living rooms. Where previously we discussed cloud, mobility, big data and social media as being part of some nebulous, “third platform”, we have come to realise that a Fourth Industrial Revolution is taking place and has been doing so for some time. All these technologies and more – artificial intelligence, Internet of Things, blockchain – now sit in a well-understood toolbox, waiting to be used.

Our mission at Microsoft — to empower every person and organization on the planet to achieve more — acts as the North Star in everything we do, every product choice we make, how we show up with customers.

It's not just a set of words. When we talk about empowering people, we simply mean that with the right tools, anyone, anywhere in the world, can become anything they want.

Before we go further, let's get grounded on a common definition of digital transformation. It's about driving disruptive change through cloud, business analytics, enterprise mobility and social in your company to serve your customers better. Digital is a major shift in every industry and we spent time to really understand what our customers' expectations.

When they look at Digital Transformation, across industries and geographies, they have four things in mind which we informally call ‘Digital Transformation pillars’: how they can empower employees, how they engage better with their customers, how they can optimize their operations and how they can change the very nature of their products, service or business model. We *mapped* this to our customers' digital needs and addressed them by creating four key solution areas to help them transform to achieve more: Modern Workplace, Business Applications, Applications and Infrastructure, and Data and AI.

For example, cloud-enabled predictive Analytics can empower Manufacturers to connect the physical production process on the factory floor to the back office in seamless and intelligent ways. Retailers can collate disparate data and information pools to derive insights and create a knowledge-rich work environment for sales and customer service staff. And governments can reach out from the digital world to their citizens' everyday devices – to serve, protect and inform.

These are some of the ways how digital transformation can be embraced to empower, engage, optimize and transform. As we enter the era of the **intelligent cloud and the intelligent edge**, becoming a true digital organization is not just about becoming tech-savvy —it requires business leaders to re-envision existing business models and embrace a different way of bringing together people, data, and processes to create value for their customers and stay competitive.