



Disruptive Technology - What is your Response?

All companies in the next 10 years would need to become IT companies in order to survive. It does not mean that one moves away from one's core business. Success is achieved by growing and improving through one strategy that enhances processes and business development.

At present many businesses use technology to solve individual problems in silo's whilst it should be using technology as the way forward.

With the speed of change accelerating over time, companies must know today what the customer of the future looks like, and what their needs will be. Interactions with a myriad of brands and technologies are shaping these customer needs.

Digital technology has only begun to penetrate industries. As it continues its advance, the implications for revenues, profits, and opportunities will be dramatic. Bold, tightly integrated digital strategies will be the biggest differentiator between companies that win and companies that don't. A technology partner that has its finger on the pulse of technology is vital in preparing for the future.

Not at a crossroads

Now is the time for business leaders to think critically about the changes taking place in their business. The first question that begs to be answered is whether you are busy with digitizing or digitalizing?

Understanding Digitizing

To digitize is at its core, to convert analog data into digital form. It means that you end up doing what you have always done, but using technology to make it more efficient. Digitizing has created new channels for information and made communication easier and faster, such as when letters changed to emails and lists changed to electronic databases. In the past, becoming operationally more efficient was enough to increase margins and beat the competition. But, not anymore and you may ask yourself whether you are on the right track.

Your business most likely already has some degree of digitizing in place, such as digital marketing, or digitized back-office functions like accounts payable and HR processes. Digitizing is, however, more than just reducing reliance on paper, it's about automating repetitive and manual tasks wherever possible. Digital offers the ability to start automating.

Digitizing is being taken to the next level as we enter a world of machine learning, robots, and data analytics that will continue to revolutionise the way we go about doing our business.

Growing volumes and varieties of available data, computational processing that is cheaper and more powerful, and affordable data storage means it's possible (and necessary) to quickly and automatically analyze bigger, more complex data and deliver faster, more accurate results – even on a very large scale. (SAS, 2019)

This affords an organization a better chance of identifying profitable opportunities – or avoiding unknown risks.

You are on the right track if you continue to push down on the accelerator of digitizing while also understanding and embracing the similar term, but very different concept, of digitalization.

Digitalization Explained

Digitalization is the process of changing existing business models in the light of new technology. On the road towards digitalization, you will ask yourself: “ How can I think differently and use the latest technology to create value for my customers?” Asking the right questions will lead you to new product ideas, new customer segments and allow you to expand into new markets.

At the same time, the business should steer towards using technology to deliver better service, greater value, and improved customer experience. One company which embodies the principle of digitalization is Volkswagen, who is developing a service that

enables car owners to have packages delivered to their car, and a parking app that offers real-time personalized recommendations based on location.

Banks often play a leading role in digitalization by providing new services using technology. The digitalization of banking services makes it possible for other sectors to leverage digital solutions. The trend of integrating banking and telecom can be extended to other fields, thereby opening up endless possibilities to advance products and customer experience. (Finextra, 2016)

Digitalization has the potential to disrupt conventional models and benefit consumers in many ways, for instance, by providing a platform that connects buyers and sellers from anywhere in the world.

Where is the start?

The next consideration would be where to start transforming your business and what technology to pay attention to. An in-depth study on digital transformation found that investment is mainly done in the field of Marketing and Sales but that investing heavily in only one area of the business is not the most successful strategy.

The research concluded that leading companies not only invested more but also did so across all the dimensions studied. The study found that twice as many leading companies closely tie their digital and corporate strategies, than those who don't. (McKinsey, 2017).

It is imperative to take an integrated approach across the organization whilst actively guarding against operating in silos. Success is achieved by growing and improving through one strategy that both enhances processes and business development.

Top disruptors

Some of the top trends supported by disruptive technology are Connected Things; Artificial Intelligence (AI); Blockchain; Autonomous things; Artificial Reality and Smart spaces, to name a few.

The underlying technologies and its value for business are well understood and developed by Fastcomm. The main pillars of these technologies are the Internet of Things (IoT) and Over-the-top (OTT) Applications.

The IoT

IoT can be described as a growing network of connected objects, able to collect and share data via embedded sensors. An IoT ecosystem has five distinct components namely hardware, networks, remotes, platforms, and security protocols. (Newman, 2017)

The Internet of Things is set to have an increasingly vital effect on business success as the world around us becomes smarter and more connected. In a recent Barometer study from Vodafone, it is noted that technology plays a key role in digital transformation efforts for a vast majority of companies. (Moore, 2019)

Surveying 1,758 businesses across the world, the study found that more than a third (34%) of businesses are now using IoT technology with possible use cases appearing every day, and 83% saying they are expanding their deployment based on encouraging initial results.

Almost all of these (95%) say that they are seeing a benefit from using IoT technology, with nearly 72% saying their digital transformation would be impossible without it, and 8% saying their entire business depends on the technology.

Gartner predicts the number of connected things in use will hit 14.2 billion in 2019, and grow to 25 billion by 2021. (Paul, 2018)

The IoT is profoundly changing the way individuals and enterprises interact with technology. Just as important, the conventions for human/IoT interactions — usually without screens and keyboards — are still being established. How that plays out will go a long way toward determining the role IoT plays in both consumer and business applications.

OTT Applications

An over-the-top (OTT) application is any application or service that provides a product over the Internet and bypasses traditional distribution. Services that come over the top are most typically related to media and communication and are generally, if not always, lower in cost than the traditional method of delivery.

Customers today want to engage with businesses using channels and types of conversation of their choice. The critical point here is that it should be the channel of choice throughout their interaction, which then supports an engaging environment that

enhances their experience with the business. OTT Applications are the way to deliver solutions that match the high expectations customers have today.

In conclusion, it is clear that digitizing and digitalization are two critical strategies for businesses to excel in the business landscape of today. Digital transformation is achieved through both converting and optimising processes as well as adapting the way business is done. In this way, a business can make the most of every opportunity that disruptive technology presents.

The Fastcomm Advantage

Fastcomm's business is to build technology platforms that empower its clients to digitally transform their businesses and therefore to understand and address the growing needs of their customers. Our mission is to build long-term technology partnerships that help transform companies, allowing them to concentrate on their core business.

We have a proven track record of understanding disruptive technologies and the effect that they have on businesses. We have built platforms in the IoT and OTT technology domains that allow us to connect people, places and things successfully.

The Fastcomm group of companies have been providing solutions to its partners, since 2002. We have offices in the USA, Europe and South Africa, allowing us to produce innovative solutions, utilizing know-how and skills acquired worldwide. Our skilled engineering teams have, over many years, created platforms and building blocks that allow for rapid development and deployment of solutions.

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