HUMAN
CONNECTIONS

12 digital thought leaders share insights and
experiences from their transformation journeys

CGI

Foreword

A traditional print media company's foray into digital media.

A 38-year-old bank's journey to become more responsive to its customers' needs.

A construction company revolutionizing its business by creating a more efficient operating model.

What can we learn from these organizations' experiences in navigating the often ambiguous and seemingly risky transformations, that are starting to produce results? Do the leaders of these diverse industries share common pivots? What does it feel like to lead such transformations?
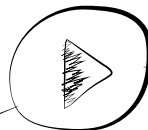
This comes at a time when becoming digital is top on many organizations' agendas, but few are seeing results*.

To find some answers, we held lively and open conversations with 12 digital leaders across industries and geographies (organizations that are starting to realize value from their transformation efforts). We spoke about their lessons learned and the pivots in their journeys. Their stories reveal the common missing links in digital transformation. These leaders focus on the human elements of an organization, such as strengthening internal and external collaboration, engaging customers and end-users, finding and

retaining talent, managing a wider ecosystem of partners and suppliers and investing in leadership and culture. In this publication, we highlight some of their experiences and insights in their own words.

Using this wealth of information, combined with the design principles for an agile organization, we start to paint a picture of practical tactics for building and operating a successful agile organization.

We hope these insights provide practical steps and inspire further thinking to continue leading your organizations boldly into the dynamic digital future.

Business priority
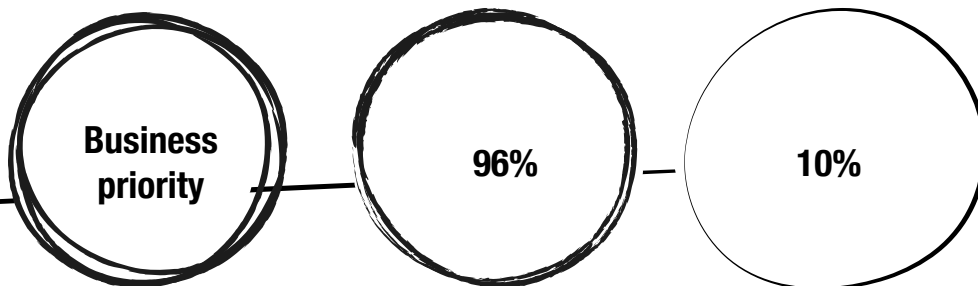
For organizations to become digital to meet customer expectations

96%

Clients with a digital transformation strategy

10%

Digital strategy producing results at the enterprise level

*Source: CGI Client Global Insights (2019)

Digital thought leaders

Over the years, we've closely watched the digital space, getting insights from various sources, including our annual Voice of Our Clients program, where we interviewed in-person more than 1,550 client executives. We also conducted an organization design study with over 200 business leaders in partnership with IDC to gain deeper insights into the design and measurements of success of leading digital organizations.

Across both of these initiatives, this year, for the first time, we expanded to more qualitative research by holding in-depth conversations with some of the most knowledgeable and experienced leaders of leading digital organizations.

These interviews were held between March and August 2019, and focused on the following topics:

- Tell us about your transformation journey.
- What were some key pivot points in your journey?
- Can you share some lessons learned?

To share honest views, we've maintained anonymity in the quotations used throughout this book.

Thanks to all the following thought leaders for their insights:

Arto Tolonen
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CIO, France Renewable
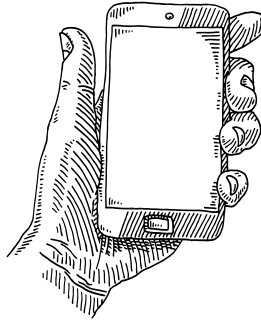Energy, Engie
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**Steen Gram
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CEO, Forca
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01.

Introduction

Organizational leaders want to create maximum value for shareholders, customers and employees, while navigating dynamic markets with blurring industry borders. They're constantly striving to find the next innovation – and fast!

Individual digital leaders are bold and non-complacent, and want to bring about a new culture and way of working to lead their organization to new heights. They're on a journey to create the best-run organization in their industry and beyond.
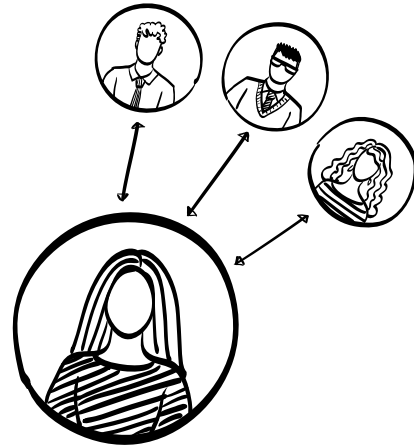
As we move to an increasingly digital world, becoming digital is a top industry trend and business and IT priority for our clients. However, according to the CGI Client Global Insights (2019), while 96% of respondents said they have a digital transformation strategy in place, only 10% are producing results at the enterprise level.

As one digital leader told us:

"The winner takes it all! If you're second, you may get something, forget the others."

So, while we recognize that becoming digital is a journey that takes time, the pressure is high.

Adopting an agile operating model

Different technology eras have come and gone—each enabling fast, collaborative ways of working and new business models. The blurring of industry boundaries is driven and enabled by the evolution and accessibility of technologies.

These technologies have disrupted the channel (web, mobile and social) and relationship barriers to entry, creating insights that enable the delivery of new and improved customer experiences.

Now with emerging technologies, such as intelligent process automation, IoT, artificial intelligence, robotics, 3D printing, drones, autonomous vehicles, 5G and digital twins, we are now starting to see the emergence of advanced automation that will disrupt the barriers around

servicing, manufacturing, distribution and logistics.

We see leading organizations focus more on the two barriers that remain:

Innovation

Barrier one is the ability to go from ideation to realization, driving improvements to an organization's brand, products, services, channels, customer experience, profit model, structure, product system, processes, employee engagement and network.

Agility

Barrier two is the ability to implement those innovations across the enterprise at speed and scale, and to respond to change continuously in an agile manner.

We identified those organizations that are considered to be leaders in these agile operating areas. Our selection focused on three main areas:

1. Introducing applicable innovations to the business
2. Driving an agile organizational model
3. Realizing value from transformation

Today, very few organizations have managed to achieve this state of operation.

In today's high-pressure environment, what are these leaders doing?
What could we learn and validate from their journeys?

In this book, we share the insights from our conversations with the thought leaders, while drawing a parallel with the CGI Client Global Insights and the CGI Organization Design Study in research partnership with IDC.
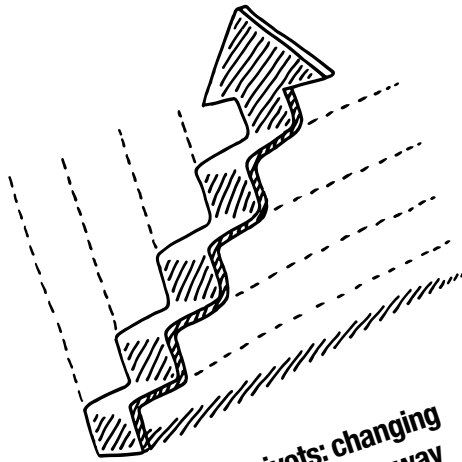
02.

Transformation overview

Every organization has a unique transformation journey with different approaches to pivoting. "Pivoting" is a concept developed by Eric Ries and explained in his book, *The Lean Startup*. Pivoting is widely known in the startup world as a shift in business model or strategy when the original plan doesn't work.

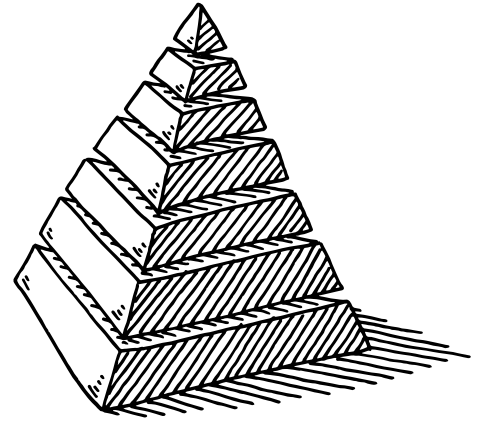In our conversation with the digital thought leaders interviewed for this book, 90% of whom are part of mid-to-large-sized organizations, we focused on the key turning points in their transformation journeys, covering their organization, business and technology.

Their unique journeys and approaches are exemplified by some of their visualizations shared on the right that will be explained later.

Pivots, as described by some thought leaders

Pyramids pivots: tackling different levels of organization

Stairs pivots: changing every step of the way

Old business model

New business model

Profitability

"Dead Man's Valley"

Time
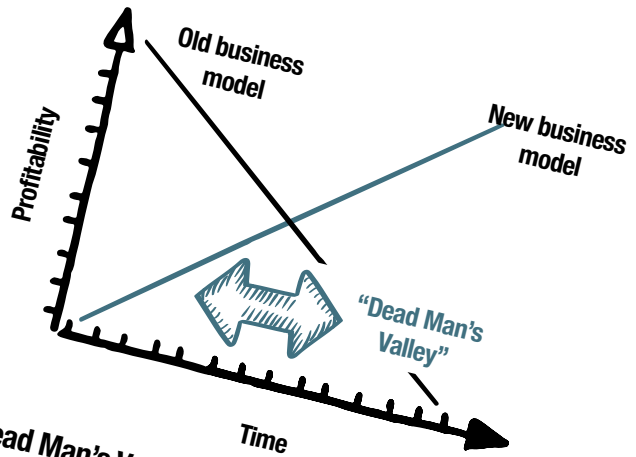
"Dead Man's Valley" pivots: taking early action to avoid the often irreversible "valley" of low profitability
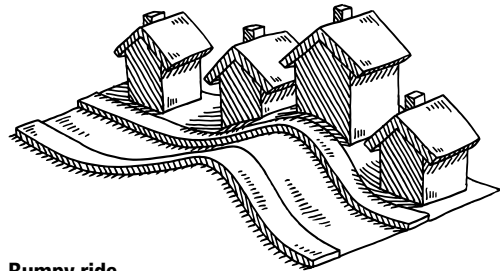
The transformation journeys of the digital thought leaders vary in length, intensity and operating markets. However, there are many common views they share about the feeling of transformation in general.

Often, when you read transformation success stories, they paint a smooth journey, and don't highlight the navigating of uncertainty and learning that happens along the way. Here are some examples of how digital thought leaders experienced their journey.
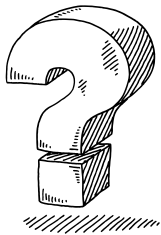
Starting off with ambiguity
Leaders may not always know where to go in the beginning. Sometimes, beginning includes taking a risk and a leap of faith. With time, confidence is gained through results and insights.

Bumpy ride
The journey is not always smooth sailing —there will be failures in the beginning. The key is to persevere.
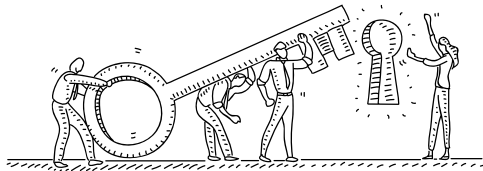
CEO sponsorship makes a huge difference
Many of the digital leaders' transformations would not have been easy or even possible without CEO sponsorship and commitment.

It's a continuous journey
Staying in front involves never resting. Therefore, be in a continuous journey of non-complacency and constant change.
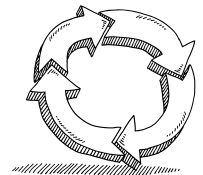
Comments from the digital thought leaders:

"Two years ago, our new CEO decided to have a combined digital and IT department and have them report to the executive committee. That made a huge difference and executing the digital transformation strategy would have been impossible without being present at the executive committee."

"Be ready for multiple hops toward a transformation destination."

"The digital transformation journey is not easy. You have a lot of anticipation, reflection, communication and open discussion. You need to deliver something concrete regularly."

"Start small, start somewhere. Eat the elephant one bite at a time."

In this bumpy, ambiguous, continuous journey, the leaders unanimously agreed on the "need for speed." With the exponential advancement of digital technologies, they also agreed that using technology to achieve innovation continues to accelerate:

- Adopt a cloud approach that balances efficiency, collaboration, agility, security and data privacy.
- Use advanced analytics and machine learning to gain better insights.
- Implement artificial intelligence and automate tasks to improve productivity.

Nobody has reached the end

Leaders are yet to realize the full value and potential from their transformation initiatives. Our research supports that no organization has reached the end. Yet, the trait these digital thought leaders share is non-complacency. They're not settling on a past success nor giving themselves full marks on their journeys thus far. They see that there remains a long way to go and there is a lot left to learn.

As one of the digital thought leaders said:

"We're perpetually never satisfied."

Everyone is pivoting and learning

In their journeys, the digital leaders have had to pivot at several steps. Some pivots involved high risk to their profitability and even existence. Some were crucial "steps" and decisions in building a road to the top and feeding the "growth engine."

Irrespective of the type of pivot, leaders were faced with the question: to pivot or not to pivot?

- **Should we implement agile as a way of working across the enterprise?**

- **Is improving our current state enough, or do we need disruptive change?**

The answers to each of these questions vary by leader. In the following chapters, we share the common pivots and lessons learned.

Organizing the insights interviews

To provide the insights in an actionable way, we combined findings and insights with our design principles to help provide clear recommendations.

Before the recommendations, we briefly introduce the design principles of an agile organization we identified and discovered through our research and experience.

Interviews → Common themes → Insights → Actionable recommendations in a structured framework
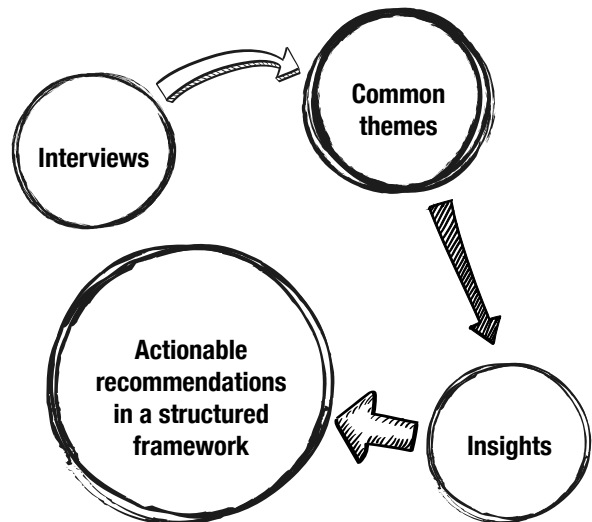
Design principles for an agile organization

We use the design principles for an agile organization as a framework to organize the insights and arrive at actionable recommendations.

The principles can be viewed as:

- Eight lenses through which to look at an organization's operational agility.
- Eight ingredients for agility. Every organization will have different amounts of the ingredients for their own unique recipe.
- Eight kinds of levers to pull in organizational change.

These principles are not mutually exclusive and each one has an impact on the other.

For example, if we use technology to "automate" routine tasks, it affects:

- Employees by enabling their focus on value-add
- Simplification of processes, enabling agility

We do not intend for these to be "cookie cutter" principles. Each organization has different flavors of design principles.

The eight design principles are:

Structure and governance
Clusters of smaller, focused, autonomous business units that partner and collaborate with other business units, making decisions faster

Insights
Decisions made based on insights generated from customer and operational data

Employees freed up
Employees freed up to work on value-add activities

Technology
Enabled by smart, fast, integrated and automated technology platforms and solutions

Leadership and culture
Culture and management system that encourages a curious mind-set, collaboration and innovation

Ecosystem
Integrated into an ecosystem of partners that collaborate, share, innovate and deliver increased value to a networked and shared economy

Co-design
Co-designed market opportunities, products and services informed by customer needs and behaviors

Agile, simplified and frugal processes
Delivered by agile, simplified and frugal operational processes

Innovate · Operate · Change
Organization · Technology · Rethinking · Business
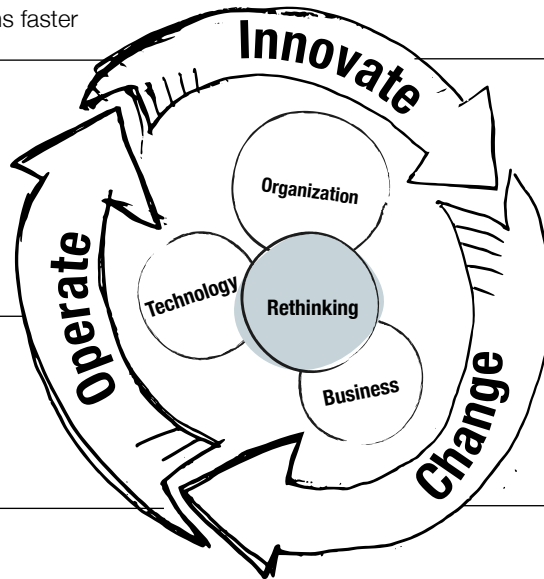
03.

Pivots and lessons learned

This chapter highlights the common pivots and lessons learned that emerged from our conversations with the digital thought leaders, mapped to each category of the design principles. We then highlight gaps and provide a summary and recommendations on each design principle.

The pivot points are not linear activities and don't occur in the same order for organizations. We start with the agility principle, as this underpins many journeys and answers the "why" for many of the other pivots. Here, we present the insights in an order that makes sense in the story that emerged from the leader conversations.

01
Agile, Simplified, Frugal Processes

02
Structure and Governance

03
Leadership and Culture

04
Co-Design

05
Employees Freed Up

06
Ecosystem

07
Insights

08
Technology

Pivots	Lessons learned
Changing the game by shifting to an incremental, agile approach	• Avoid feeling lost in never-ending stories by staying focused. • Meaningful change takes time; have the business courage to continue.
Strengthening central capabilities and organizing teams closer to the business and customers	• The art is in selecting which functions to centralize and which to not. • Fighting for technology skills will be a key activity that cannot be ignored. • Collaboration is necessary and can be a competitive advantage; but measuring it is difficult.
Selecting the right leaders and fostering a culture that drives innovation and high performance	• It takes exemplary leadership and reinforcement through communications and training to build a leading digital organization. • It takes a culture of non-complacency and collaboration to stay ahead.
Putting customers first	• Validating assumptions about customer needs is the way to make sure products and services work.
Taking a deliberate look at creating an innovation environment	• There's no formula for how, when and where innovation will take place, but there's a need to create time and an environment where employees feel safe to try, experiment and even fail.
Looking strategically at the ecosystem landscape	• Choosing the right partner will make the journey easier.
All leading organizations taking steps toward becoming truly insight-driven, but we're still in the early days	• Becoming truly insight-driven is a journey in itself and takes time.
Elevating technology discussions and capabilities	• A balanced cloud approach is critical to achieve benefits of efficiency, agility, collaboration, security and data privacy. • Introducing new technology requires some form of change management.

01. Agile, Simplified and Frugal Processes

In the words of one of the digital thought leaders:

" **We are now also competing with smaller players, which have very focused products and efficient processes.** "

Pivots
Changing the game by shifting to an incremental, agile approach

Lessons learned
- Avoid feeling lost in never-ending stories by staying focused.
- Meaningful change takes time; have the business courage to continue.

Pivots

Changing the game
by shifting to an
incremental, agile
approach

With the fast pace and constant evolution of technology, economic climate, competitive landscape and customer expectations, all the digital thought leaders represented in this book have had organizational "soul-searching moments" at the start of their journeys, and asked the questions:

- Are we fast enough as an organization?
- Are we able to deliver value to our customers through our traditional ways?

Often, the answers have been "No." In response, many digital leaders pivoted to an incremental, agile approach to change their games, with one commenting:

"We did some mega projects with lots of learning. By the time you get to the end of them, whatever you're developing has less value. And so we said we need to change that game."

The ultimate key goal is to improve the go-to-market speed of products and services.

As with the concept of agile itself, adopting agility as a way of working among leading organizations has often blossomed from initially small, often experimental teams/ projects, not coincidentally from IT teams in many cases.

As digital thought leaders told us:

"It's important to deliver something quickly, something to see value and then go on a journey to evolve that."

"Start small, explore, prove and then scale."

Among the leaders we spoke with in this book, agility has transcended into a new way of working, cutting across the organizational structure, operating model and technology. For some, this is now part of their culture.

Some are simplifying and leaning their processes by following quarterly prioritization, quarterly agile budgeting and even monthly "estimations" as opposed to budgeting. As one leader cited:

"Agile is primarily a mind-set and not just a 'trick.' We really went ahead and we're proud of that."

Lesson learned

• Avoid feeling lost in never-ending stories by staying focused.

In the quest for agility and innovation, leaders find themselves eager to invest time, effort and money across many areas. In these cases, it's easy to lose the long-term vision.

Both a key lesson and wish shared by many of the leaders interviewed for this book is to have more focus.

Comments from the digital thought leaders include:

"Productivity is about efficiency and effectiveness. It is not enough to do things efficiently, you need to do the right things."

"Speed is good, with the right vision and right focus."

"Let's get the right things done fast. Not everything done fast."

"We have a lot of things going on. We need to concentrate more on those that are absolutely having the highest priority and invest both finances and effort in them."

"Focus and set the right priorities and work toward a common goal and help each other out."

Lesson learned

- Meaningful change takes time; have the business courage to continue.

It may seem almost counter-intuitive to agility, but leaders agree that meaningful change takes time.

Whether you're moving to a new way of working or developing and launching a new product/service, it takes time and perseverance to make it big and successful.

This is in one part because change requires clarity of purpose across the teams/organization, and it involves a lot of communication and "hand-holding" initially.

As one digital thought leader told us:

"Change takes time! Don't jump into big programs. Start small and work it out bigger and bigger. And everybody should be clear why a program is important."

Also it is because you have to make your own mistakes to learn. There may be market-leading examples and success stories that glorify success. However, what doesn't get reported are the failures.

As a unique organization, one can learn from others, but the key is to try, learn and adapt for oneself. As one of our digital thought leaders cited:

"In my experience, when building a new product/service, the first step is always disappointment. My advice is to have the business courage to continue and be in what's looking like a failure, for at least 4-5 years."

Food for thought

Through the organization design study CGI conducted with IDC, top performers reported that they:

- Plan to take 6-18 months (vs. 6-12 months by average performers) to commercialize a product/service to better meet customer expectations.

Do you have additional
observations and
lessons learned?

This is your workbook.
Write down your
thoughts.

02. Structure and Governance

In the words of one of the digital thought leaders:

"**We're organized as a small core with several business units. The key for us is collaboration in navigating our complex hybrid organization. It is a key mind-set of the employees we hire. We seldom do projects alone, and navigating complex organizations requires people who are collaborative, open-minded and respectful.**"

Pivots
Strengthening central capabilities and organizing teams closer to the business and customers

Lessons learned
- The art is in selecting which functions to centralize and which not.
- Fighting for technology skills will be a key activity that cannot be ignored.
- Collaboration is necessary and can be a competitive advantage, but measuring it is difficult.

Pivots

Strengthening
central capabilities
and organizing
teams closer to
the business and
customers

When embarking on a change journey toward an innovative agile organization, most of the digital thought leaders we spoke with started with a key question: Do we have the basics right? In other words, do we have the right structure, people, tools and processes to achieve our goals?

Therefore, one of the key pivots that emerged through the conversations is on the operating structure of the organization. For the leaders, this involved an assessment and action on:

- What capabilities do we need centrally?
- How should our development teams be organized for agility?
- Where's our skills gap and how do we motivate our employees?

A central capability is seen as necessary to improve administrative efficiencies. In most cases, this is not from a centralization of power or influence, but more to provide enough support to the business units through standardization. This involves functions like procurement, finance, HR, marketing and IT. For example, in their pivot, leading organizations have reassessed and standardized their IT platforms, work orders, supplier negotiation and more to support their business units and to drive innovation and agility.

While central capabilities are strengthened on the one hand, key development activities and decision-making are kept close to the business and customers on the other. For some organizations, one way of doing this is to create cross-functional teams by product lines. This involves a change in the way of working and different employee skillsets. And, for the leaders we spoke with, this often means reskilling/upskilling existing employees or hiring new employees with the right skills.

Structure plays a key role in retaining those skilled employees and providing fulfillment in their roles. As one of the digital thought leaders said:

"Relatively flat organizational structure is important for us so that we can provide our employees with more meaning in their work. The principles of Taylorism, where employees focus on single repetitive task, is not fulfilling and therefore we want to give our employees more autonomy and responsibility to more tasks by way of a less rigid structure."

Food for thought

Through the organization design study CGI conducted with IDC, top performers reported:
- **Two times** more business units than the average performers
- **61-81%** of resources and control within the business unit (vs. shared services and core of the organization)
- Governance increasingly impacts agility and requires continuous modification

Lesson learned

- The art is in selecting which functions to centralize and which to not.

The question when it comes to structure is how to strike a balance between agility and governance through autonomy of the business units. What is the right size and number of business units? What is the right size of the central function?

The answer is unique to the size and type of an organization. Some leaders have a more prominent central function than others, some have a smaller number of bigger business units, and others have a bigger number of smaller business units. However, the lesson learned here is to be deliberate about the choice of structure through the lens of ingenuity and agility. Take a hard look at what needs to change (or not) to boost your organizational agility.

As one of our digital thought leaders advised:

"The art is in selecting which bits to centralize and which ones to not. Our policy when it comes to standardization has been to, in a way, stop and think: 'Can we really, really bring added value?' For example, we have a high-performing business unit that knows what they're doing and is producing results. Certainly we have had to provide support on security issues and regulations, including GDPR, but otherwise they're skilled people and can run [the business] and the results show it."

Lesson learned

- Fighting for technology skills will be a key activity you cannot ignore.

Leaders have cracked the code on how to organize and form cross-functional teams or build central IT teams. Suddenly, there is a skills gap and it's not made easier by the intense competition for the right skills in the market. This is part of getting the basics right.

The most common skills gap reported by leaders is around technology. With the growing importance of the role of technology in competitiveness, all leaders are hiring technology skills within their core teams and giving technology experts a seat at the table in early project definitions or, in some cases, in the executive committee of the organization. The overall aim is for the core team to better support the customer development activities in the business units.

An additional complexity is thrown into the mix when knowledge is not enough. What is needed is a collaborative employee who can navigate complex organizations and is eager to learn.

One of our digital thought leaders said:

"A team of 'B' employees that work very well together will make a high-performing 'A' team, but a team of 'A' employees who don't work well together could make a 'B' or even 'C' team. So we're very deliberate about hiring the right people."

The struggle for talent is real and cannot be avoided.
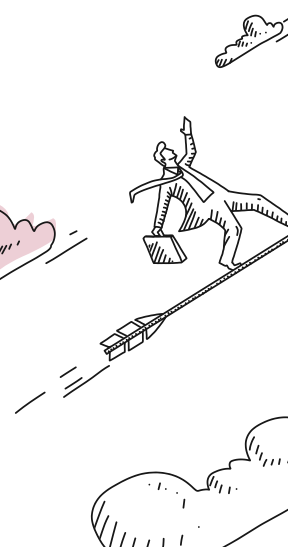
Lesson learned

- Collaboration is necessary and can be a competitive advantage, but measuring it is difficult.

We touched upon this in the previous lesson learned, and it's no coincidence that it appears again.

Collaboration emerged consistently as a theme in all our conversations with the digital thought leaders. It is closely tied to the culture established and communicated by these leaders and permeates in the hiring criteria of employees.

With the move toward agility and increasingly autonomous business units, collaboration is key to a healthy organizational culture and to successful innovation. Making connections with the right people and collaboration can help save time, effort and costs, and enable innovation, while increasing efficiency and effectiveness. Therefore, leaders consider it to be their competitive advantage.

As some of the digital thought leaders told us:

"We have a culture of collaboration. This means we don't spend energy in breaking walls and fighting against colleagues. I believe that this immediately puts us 25% better than our competitors even before we start."

"Social cohesion is really important for us. This means adopting a far more collaborative and sharing culture and supporting each other in reaching goals. The moment you have people slowing down progress, that's a cost that's not always tangible."
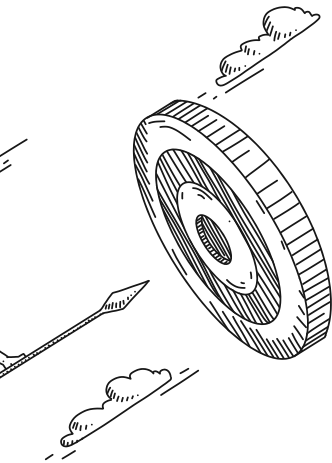
Collaboration is still a sticking point among many leaders. Why? It is hard to measure and prove.

Some of the digital thought leaders we spoke with are exploring and contemplating various ways to measure the effectiveness of collaboration and the key characteristics of successful agile teams. There is a serious attempt by many leaders to embed it deeply into their culture. One leader said:

"Co-operation is one of our company values. It is a very major strength that we have, that we actually work working together, we know each other, that we can contact each other."

The effectiveness of collaboration we see is mostly intuitive. A key gap overall in terms of collaboration are the right key performance indicators (KPIs) and tools.
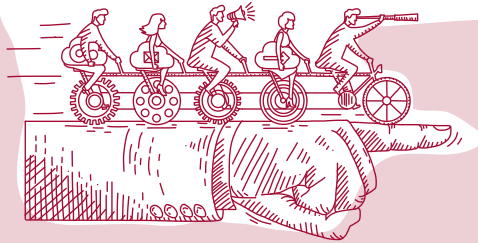
In summary, the lesson learned here is that collaboration is critical, but it is easier said than done. If done correctly, it can differentiate an organization from the competition and aid agility and innovation, but it is difficult to nurture and measure.
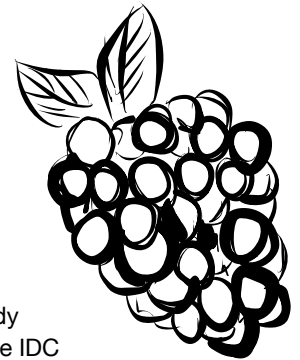
Food for thought

The organizational study CGI conducted with the IDC revealed the following about top performers:
- **2.6 times** more advanced in establishing a culture that encourages collaboration
- **53%** link the measurement of collaboration to rewards (but the quality of KPIs is a challenge)
- **92%** are implementing or have implemented a single collaboration platform

Do you have additional
observations and
lessons learned?

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03. Leadership and Culture

In the words of one of the digital thought leaders:

" We will not lose on technique. We will not lose on systems. We will lose on culture, and we will win on culture. You cannot copy the cultural element of our business."

Pivots
Selecting the right leaders and fostering a culture that drives innovation and high performance

Lessons learned
- It takes exemplary leadership and reinforcement through communications and training to build a leading digital organization.
- It takes a culture of non-complacency and collaboration to stay ahead.

Pivots

Selecting the right
leaders and fostering
a culture hat drives
innovation and
high performance

When it comes to executing a new strategy, leadership plays a "make or break" role. A revolutionary idea may originate on the shop floor, but bringing about enterprise-wide change and adoption starts from the CEO and the operations leaders who need to model the change and believe in the new direction of the organization.

For many leading organizations, this has meant rebuilding the leadership team with people that are committed to the (new) strategy. This often starts with the CEOs and their sponsorship of key leaders and activities and culture.

Leaders have not stopped there. They have worked with all levels to build a culture of innovation and high performance, and lead through the change with patience.

As one leader told us:

"About 15 years ago, we started a culture to be intentional in everything we do, and have conversations without fear, in complete safety, that are about getting results. We invest, more than any organization I've ever seen, in leadership, training, reinforcement and cultural reinforcement."

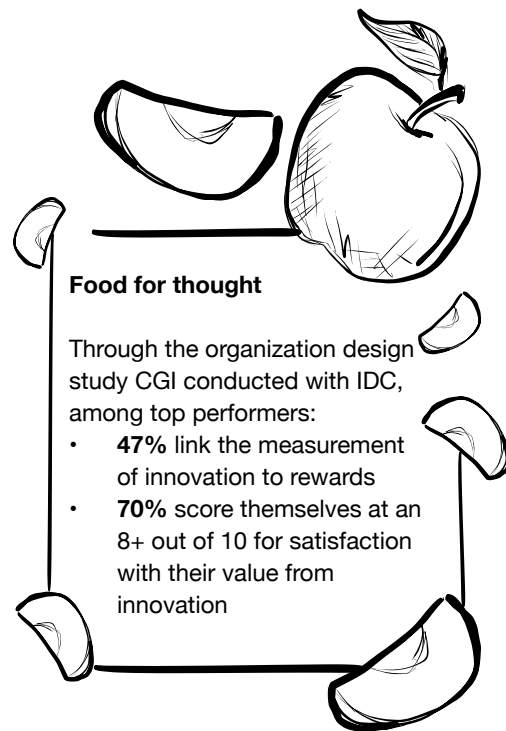At startups and large enterprises alike, successful innovations are often outcomes of curiosity, building upon initial failures and pivoting where necessary. Leading organizations take the importance of learning, failure and recovery from failure very seriously. As another leader told us:

"Experience is not what has happened but what you will do with [the information of] what has happened."

To summarize, many digital leaders have pivoted on their culture to promote innovation through:

- Experimentation and an environment where failure is acceptable, as long as employees learn from it and adapt
- Customer-centricity, where customer experience is at the heart of product and service development
- Collaborative mind-set
- Innovation teams and partnerships with universities and industry to constantly look for the next innovation
- Curiosity, continuous learning and non-complacency
- A healthy risk appetite and business courage

These highlight the importance of focusing on the human side of business.

Food for thought

Through the organization design study CGI conducted with IDC, among top performers:
- **47%** link the measurement of innovation to rewards
- **70%** score themselves at an 8+ out of 10 for satisfaction with their value from innovation

Lesson learned

- It takes exemplary leadership and reinforcement through communications and training to build a leading digital organization.

All our conversations with the digital thought leaders highlighted the role of exemplary leadership in creating a healthy high-performance culture.

It takes sponsorship of change but also reinforcement from the leader, primarily the CEO to drive fundamental change. For example, it takes a CEO who demonstrates agility or collaboration, and really communicates and reinforces regularly through actions, more than words.

Especially in an agile organization with autonomous business units, it is critical to have enterprise-wide alignment on the overall goal and direction—the organization's true north. Digital thought leaders demonstrate commitment and understand the need for communication when it comes to bringing about real change—communication from the top about strategy, culture and goals, and communication from outside to inside about innovation, trends and customers.

This requires reinforcement through training across the organization at all levels. Often lack of communication also breeds false assumptions and can set the organization up against success. As one digital thought leader stated:

"If you're not explicit about the true intentions, underlying feelings can be misinterpreted and things are up for failure."

A key lesson learned as part of the culture and reinforcement was to on-board new employees appropriately. As another leader cited:

"We were growing too fast without having a systematic induction process for new employees. A fragmentation of company culture started as a hidden sickness. However, reactive corrective actions were started to keep the company culture on a strategic path. Its impact is much bigger than I understood."
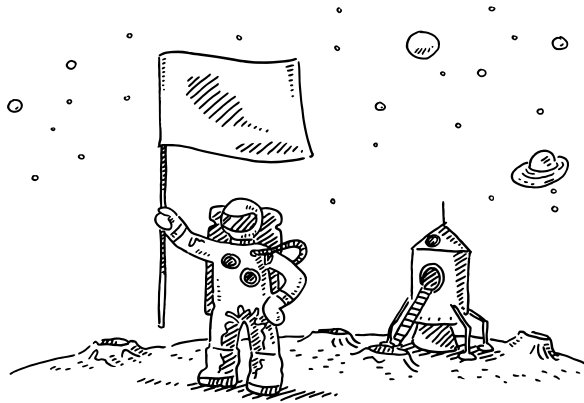
Lesson learned

- It takes a culture of non-complacency and courage to stay ahead

The leaders we spoke with demonstrate perpetual non-complacency and courage. That's what continues to drive their "growth engines."

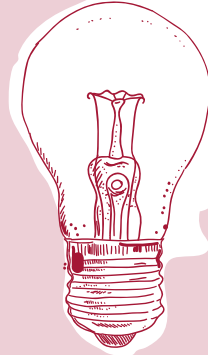As some of the digital thought leaders told us:

"To be a visionary, you have to be in the front. The way that you continue to be n front is by asking the so what, then what, how can we improve. This can be really disruptive and authentic."

"By virtue of the law of the handicap of a head start, when you're a pioneer, you've to be alert all the time."

"You cannot sleep because you had success yesterday. You have to walk and develop yourself every day to be on par. If you want to be in front, you may have to run a little. If you stand still, you will be overtaken. So our business is about changing all the time."

"Be brave to do things that benefit your customers. And believe in your team to execute it."

This also means giving employees time and space to learn, collaborate and innovate. We will cover more on this later.

Do you have additional
observations and
lessons learned?

This is your workbook.
Write down your
thoughts.

04. Co-Design

In the words of one of the
digital thought leaders:

"**Speaking with
customers revealed
that assumptions
can be wrong.**"

Pivots
Putting customers first

Lesson learned
Validating assumptions about
customer needs is the way
to make sure products and
services work.

Pivots

Putting customers first

It sounds easy and commonsensical. Isn't everybody putting customers first? But with all the forces in an operating environment—from competition and financial pressures to cool flashy technologies—it's easy to get carried away.

We found that many leaders have pivoted on a customer-centric strategy. But what does it actually mean for the digital thought leaders?

The secret for some is being able to empathize with customers and to design products and services by involving them in the process and organizing around their needs.

As one of the digital thought leaders told us:

"Digital for us is a customer strategy. It can integrate the best of digital and face-to-face. This strategy involves speaking with our customers and validating our assumptions about what they need."
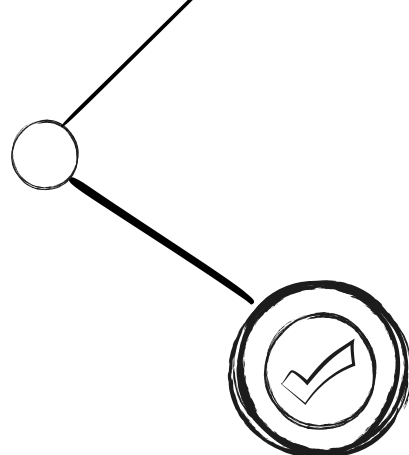
After speaking with customers, however, they realized that going all "digital" to meet customer needs isn't the only strategy—hence these leaders discovered they needed a holistic customer strategy.

For some leaders, this has involved re-writing the culture code of their organizations. For example, one of them said:

"A few years ago, we pivoted our organizational culture and mind-set to what we ended up calling "1234," where #1 is always the customer. So when we're faced with an operational problem, we automatically think 1234, starting with the impact on our customers."

And putting customers first also involves understanding your market. One of the leaders said:

"If you don't analyze and focus on strategic and profitable market segments, customers and products, you can have the best processes in the world, but still lose everything."

Lesson learned

- Validating assumptions about customer needs is the way to make sure products and services work.

It's no coincidence that there's a movement around design thinking and regaining the "lost touch" with customers. And, in this case, customers can also be employees for central functions. For example, one leader states:

"We established and promoted, on top of agility, a user-centric approach. This created a big impact. For example, when we go out in the field, people know that they have some friends in user groups. They know that when they participate, they can provide feedback and have an impact."

In fact, if we zoom out and recap, being customer-centric is the beginning of all of these discussions—being agile to meet customer needs, and organizing key development activities close to the customers in the customer-facing business units.

When leaders have pivoted, they have taken actions to put customers first at the heart of their activities. One of the leaders noted:

"A satisfied customer is the best seller for you."

The principle that all our digital thought leaders follow is that there is no use in designing products and services that customers don't want.

Speaking with customers revealed how much they work under assumptions, thinking they know their customers. When actually speaking with customers, leaders found that their assumptions were wrong.

Validating assumptions need not only be at the start of a development journey, but it can be valuable at the end. Instead of assuming that the final product / service delivered works perfectly, why not validate it and feed the organizations growth engine? As one of the leaders told us:

"Having feedback from own installed base, such as buildings at care and maintenance life-cycle phase, is crucial insight into future R&D."

Like anything else with the leaders, we say it's a continuous journey of non-complacency. Acting on customer feedback is the most basic form of customer-centricity.

One of the leaders added:

"We work closely with the end-users of our systems. We have a lot of focus groups that are involved in our decision-making process and testing a number of options to help design the right systems."

Food for thought

The organization design study CGI conducted with IDC revealed the following about top performers:

- For **61%, t**he success rate of products or services comes from co-designed solutions with their organization's customers
- Focusing on less than 10 co-design initiatives showed correlation to the high success rate
- Taking 6-18 months (vs. 6-12 months among average performers) to commercialize a new product or service is correlates to their success.

Do you have additional
observations and
lessons learned?

This is your workbook.
Write down your
thoughts.

05. Employees Freed Up

In the words of one of the digital thought leaders:

"**Every 4 weeks, we have 1 day called the 'Mastery Day,' which is a dedicated day for our engineers to learn. Dedicating a day makes it plannable because it's clear that they're not available that day. It also helped with the velocity of the teams. We would've stopped it if it hadn't worked.**"

Pivots
Taking a deliberate look at creating an innovation environment for employees

Lesson learned
There's no formula for how, when and where innovation will take place, but there's a need to create time and an environment where employees feel safe to try, experiment and even fail.

Pivots

Taking a deliberate look at creating an innovation environment for employees

Innovation starts with people and ends with people. Where it originates, how it originates and where it will end is hard to tell. But the more we try, the more we learn, and the more we will ultimately succeed in creating innovation.

It is clear, however, that having a problem—and a motive to fix the problem—are needed to innovate for the organization, and that innovation doesn't happen in "thin air."

Leading organizations are not leaving innovation to chance. They're taking many deliberate steps toward bringing minds together by, for example, setting up innovation teams, digital factories, formal innovation ideation and gating processes, and more.

At the same time, organizations are promoting a culture of continuous learning—not only on the job, but also by dedicating time for learning.

Leaders agree that there needs to be hunger, curiosity and non-complacency for innovation to happen, and to stay ahead in the race.

And, in line with the non-complacent nature of these leaders, they all agree they haven't "cracked the code" yet when it comes to building an innovation environment, and want to continue to discover better ways that work for them.

Lesson learned

- There's no formula for how, when and where innovation will take place, but there's a need to create time and an environment where employees feel safe to try, experiment and even fail.

Let's start with a question: Are you making enough effort to free up employees' time (and minds) to innovate?

There's no single formula, but leaders clearly need an environment where employees can try and fail and learn, whether it's by setting aside time or by creating a "fail-safe" and "safe-to-fail" environment where failure is not penalized.

As one of the digital thought leaders told us:

"We encourage failure. Because in the moment you are developing something or creating ideas for new things, it's sometimes very hard to say what flies and what doesn't. But try."
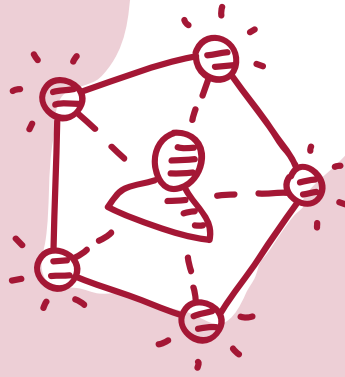
Another way is to use technology to automate tasks, so employees can focus on value-added activities.
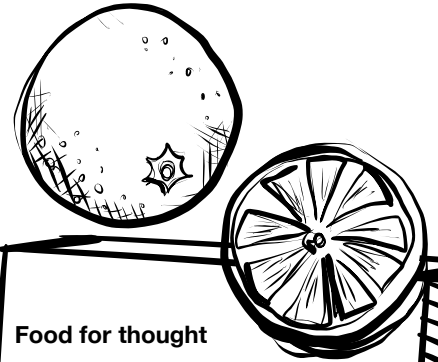
Food for thought

Through the organization design study CGI conducted with IDC, among top performers:

- **34%** spend more than 1 day per month on value added activities (time set aside for front-line and operational employees to participate in activities designed to add value through improvement, innovation, collaboration or learning)
- **70%** score themselves at an 8+ out of 10 for satisfaction with their value from innovation

Do you have additional
observations and
lessons learned?

This is your
workbook. Write
down your thoughts.

06. Ecosystem

In the words of one of the
digital thought leaders:

" **Over the last few years,
we've made some targeted
acquisitions that give us a
wider breadth of capability.
The next thing for us is to look
at consolidating our strategic
suppliers across the group.** "

Pivots
Looking strategically at the
ecosystem landscape

Lesson learned
Choosing the right
partner will make the
journey easier.

Pivots

Looking more
strategically at the
ecosystem landscape

All organizations have had partner and supplier relationships since the beginning of times. In the 21st century, as industry lines are blurring and organizations are operating at different levels of the value chain, leading organizations are starting to look more strategically at their partners and ecosystem in general.

Some lenses they are looking through when evaluating partners:

- As non-technology organizations become more technology-driven, they're starting to look at their technology partners differently. They are assessing which skills they want to master themselves and which services they need from their partners.
- As leaders are undergoing their transformation to agility, they don't want their partners to slow them down.
- To be more innovative and leading-edge, leading organizations are expanding their network to universities and research organizations.

- Leaders are also looking at this from a talent recruiting perspective.
- To best manage their transformation, leaders are asking themselves, "Do we need more or less number of partners?"

As one of the digital thought leaders told us:

"We cooperate with over 80 associations to get feedback and inspiration."

With these considerations and more, leading organizations have pivoted or are pivoting around their external ecosystem.

As in one example case, targeted acquisitions were part of their strategy and now they're looking to consolidate their strategic partners.

Another leader told us:

"We're looking at who are our strategic suppliers for a joint R&D and productivity development."

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Lesson learned

- Choosing the right partner will make the journey easier.

Food for thought

The organization design study CGI conducted with IDC revealed the following about top performers:

- **3.1 times** more advancement in establishing an external ecosystem culture
- Supplier networks, acquisition and outsourcing were cited as their top three partnership approaches

Whether it's innovation, access to channels or IT expertise that leaders seek from their partners, one key theme in the consolidation of strategic partners is the need for an agile partner—a partner that learns, grows and adapts with them on their journeys.

As one of the digital thought leaders told us:

"We want partners who believe in our strategy."

Leaders of organizations are trying to create value for customers, shareholders and employees. As such, leaders want to focus on where they are great within their core business.

It is easy to get distracted with additional layers of administration, but with the right partners, ideas will be amplified and achieving goals will become easier.

An interesting open-ended question to leave this section with is whether leaders have visibility into the value of their partner ecosystems across the enterprise.

Do you have additional
observations and
lessons learned?

This is your workbook.
Write down your
thoughts.

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07. Insight

In the words of one of the
digital thought leaders:

**" When you're data-centric,
you're actually creating and
improving outcomes based
on the data. Then all
of a sudden, that data
means something."**

Pivots
All leading organizations
are taking steps toward
becoming truly insight-
driven, but we're still in the
early days

Lesson learned
Becoming truly insight-
driven is a journey in itself
and takes time.

Pivots

All leading organizations are taking steps toward becoming truly insight-driven, but we're still in the early days

There's wide recognition that we live in a different era where we have so much data and there's much we can do with that data.

But have we realized the full potential? We observed three things: widespread **ambition**, some **action** and some **ambivalence**.

All organizations have an ambition to be truly insight-driven, whether it's an immediate priority or one for the medium or longer term. As one leader cited:

"We still need to do some work to go into the data and insights mind-set."

Many leaders have started taking action by implementing tools that automate workflows and generate insights. Another said:

"We've implemented business intelligence tools that automatically generate reports and insights that are given through dashboards. We have significantly better visibility because everything is being put into a system."

And there's ambivalence toward data and the derived insight.

Measuring performance and success of their initiatives

"Always measure and decide the best interventions. Pick 6-7 metrics to get insight on problem areas. Use data as much as you can but don't overdo it. And, as with other areas, try a few metrics at a small scale and then at full scale."

Responsible use of data and customer insights as a way of serving customers better

"Data is today's gold or oil, and it's true. And it's the way forward in the digital world, and it's part of modern marketing to utilize the data and the information to service your customers. But we've got to use data responsibly."

Food for thought

Scientists estimate that **90-95%** of our decision-making is pre-conscious, or intuitive.*

Through the organization design study CGI conducted with IDC:

- **13%** of top performers said they're more than **80%** through their journey to creating a real time, insight driven, integrated organization.
- **68%** said they don't have the right information

* https://www.inc.com/logan-chierotti/harvard-professor-says-95-of-purchasing-decisions-are-subconscious.html

Lesson learned

- Becoming truly insight-driven is a journey in itself and takes time.

The importance of data and insight is widely recognized. It is being prioritized and, yet, data's correct and responsible use is hotly debated.

What we learn from the digital thought leaders is that it is a long journey in itself. Being truly insight-driven on both internal (operational) and external (customer and market) insights is a marathon and not a sprint.

It also cannot work in isolation but in congruence with all the other aspects of the design principles.

Do you have additional observations and lessons learned?

This is your workbook. Write down your thoughts.

08. Technology

In the words of one of the
digital thought leaders:

**"Earlier, the overall
mind-set about digital was
to support the business.
We had to make a decision
to make it the core. We
don't have an ICT strategy,
we only have a business
strategy that includes IT."**

Pivots
Elevating technology discussions
and capabilities

Lessons learned
- A balanced cloud approach
  is critical to achieve the
  benefits of efficiency, agility,
  collaboration, security and
  data privacy.
- Introducing new technology
  requires some form of
  change management.

Pivots

Elevating technology
discussions and
capabilities

Leading digital organizations realize that technology is a key driver for a lot of the change we see around us and for the changes to come. Technology is powering today's digital businesses. Yet many organizations continue to view technology and IT discussions as secondary.

Technology shouldn't be the start of discussions, but should be an important part of the early discussions.

With agile and DevOps and the merger of organizational teams, we started to experience the change that comes from creating effective cross-functional teams.

For some digital thought leaders, technology discussions have become an integral part of their strategy in building a digital business. Technology is not more important than the business case and the people, but technology is a means to achieve many outcomes. For some leading organizations, IT and digital has a seat at the executive table.

In designing a new business or defining a new project, it is critical to have technology discussions early on. As one leader told us:

"In my experience, projects where technology was treated as a second class citizen and not given enough emphasis, have failed. If you want to build a digital business, technology is as important as your business strategy and should be a key part of the strategy. You really need great technology for successful digital businesses and projects."

Sometimes, lessons are learned the hard way when a technology or infrastructure fails, giving the impetus to change. But if leaders have technology discussions early on, some of these failures can be avoided.

These discussions also drive better alignment between business and IT, and harness the collective intelligence of the organization to deliver real value to customers and end-users. As one leader stated:

"We believe in collective intelligence. A CIO does not do IT alone. Nobody has the solution alone. You need to establish a relationship of trust with key stakeholders—to speak with them and listen."

When it comes to capabilities, many leaders are building their own technology teams and strengthening their technology expertise. Having a strong technology understanding and capability in-house is key to innovating effectively in today's digital world. This, then, needs to be supplemented by an ecosystem of technology partners.

Food for thought

Through the organization design study CGI conducted with IDC, among top performers:
- **92%** are implementing or have implemented a single collaboration platform.

Lesson learned

- A balanced cloud approach is critical to achieve benefits of efficiency, agility, collaboration, security and data privacy.

If we sit back and think about the eight design principles, technology can enable all of these aspects—be it collaboration between business units, customers or the ecosystem; becoming data and insight-driven; and engaging in process simplification, automation and innovation in general. Technology plays a central role in successful transformation journeys. As one leader said:

"To enable collaborative work, develop the right tools to link different regions and units. Fixed telephone lines have served their purpose. Don't just talk, but provide powerful, robust tools and devices to drive collaboration."

Among the lessons learned, some leaders pointed out how cloud has enabled their efficiency, collaboration and agility in their transformation journeys. Balancing these benefits with security and data privacy will only increase as a priority.

Food for thought

According to the CGI Client Global Insights (2019):
- **76%** executives are using cloud-based solutions to store and/or process data, yet only **42%** indicate they have mechanisms in place to locate where key data assets are stored in the cloud.

We see concerns emerge daily as cloud-related security and privacy incidents fill the headlines. A balanced approach to the use of the cloud is required, examining the benefits carefully with obligations to protect critical data, ensure data privacy, comply with regulation and mitigate commercial risk.
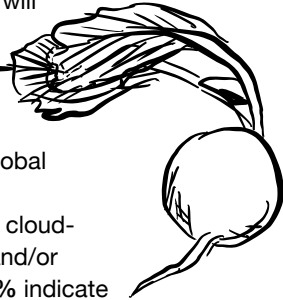
Lesson learned

- Introducing new technology requires some form of change management.

Digital leaders are quick to point out that a technology strategy on its own is not sufficient. As with every aspect of change, technological change also requires a change in people's attitude and way of working through communication, training and reinforcement.

Just like with customers, organizations need to validate assumptions with employees or end-users to help drive the adoption of a technology or system introduced in their organizations.
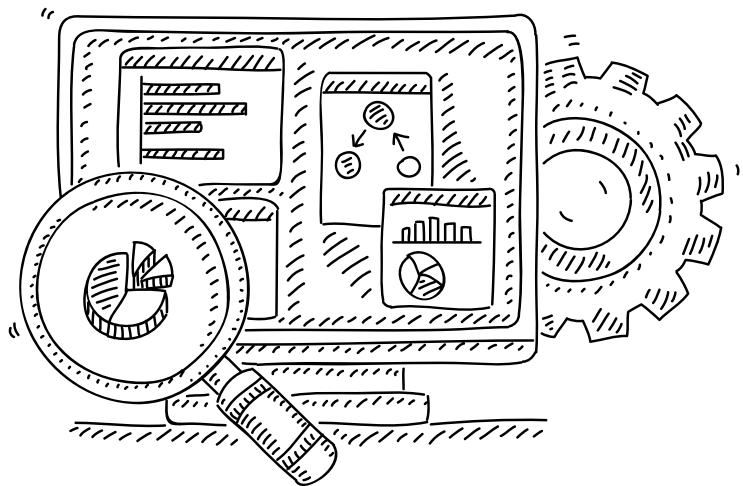
As one digital thought leader told us:

" **Especially with the pace of technology, it is important to bring all employees along in the journey of digitalization. Internally, we want to have highest productivity, hence highest automation factor. Externally, we want to offer the best systems to our customers. We developed a lot of cool systems, but they took longer to be adopted than we expected. A few years ago, we realized that we needed a very big change management. So, we formed a special team that's responsible for bringing all the new systems and functionalities to our end users. In the beginning, we thought we can do it by just training super users. Our experience is that it's too little, we have to intensify this.**"

This sentiment is shared by the other digital leaders, where significant CEO reinforcement, training and dedicated teams have all coerced toward successful adoption.
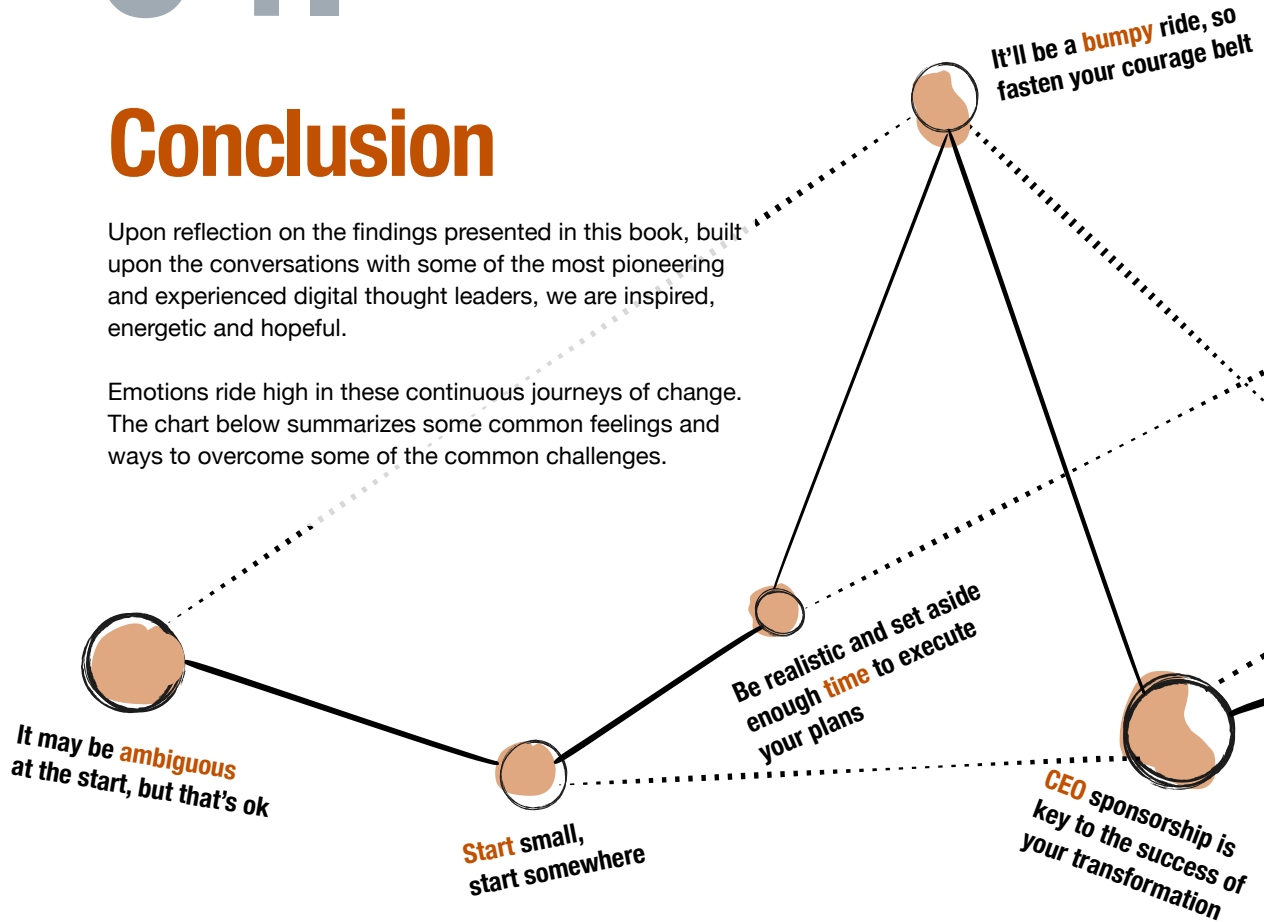
So the lesson is to launch a new system or technology with a change and communication plan.
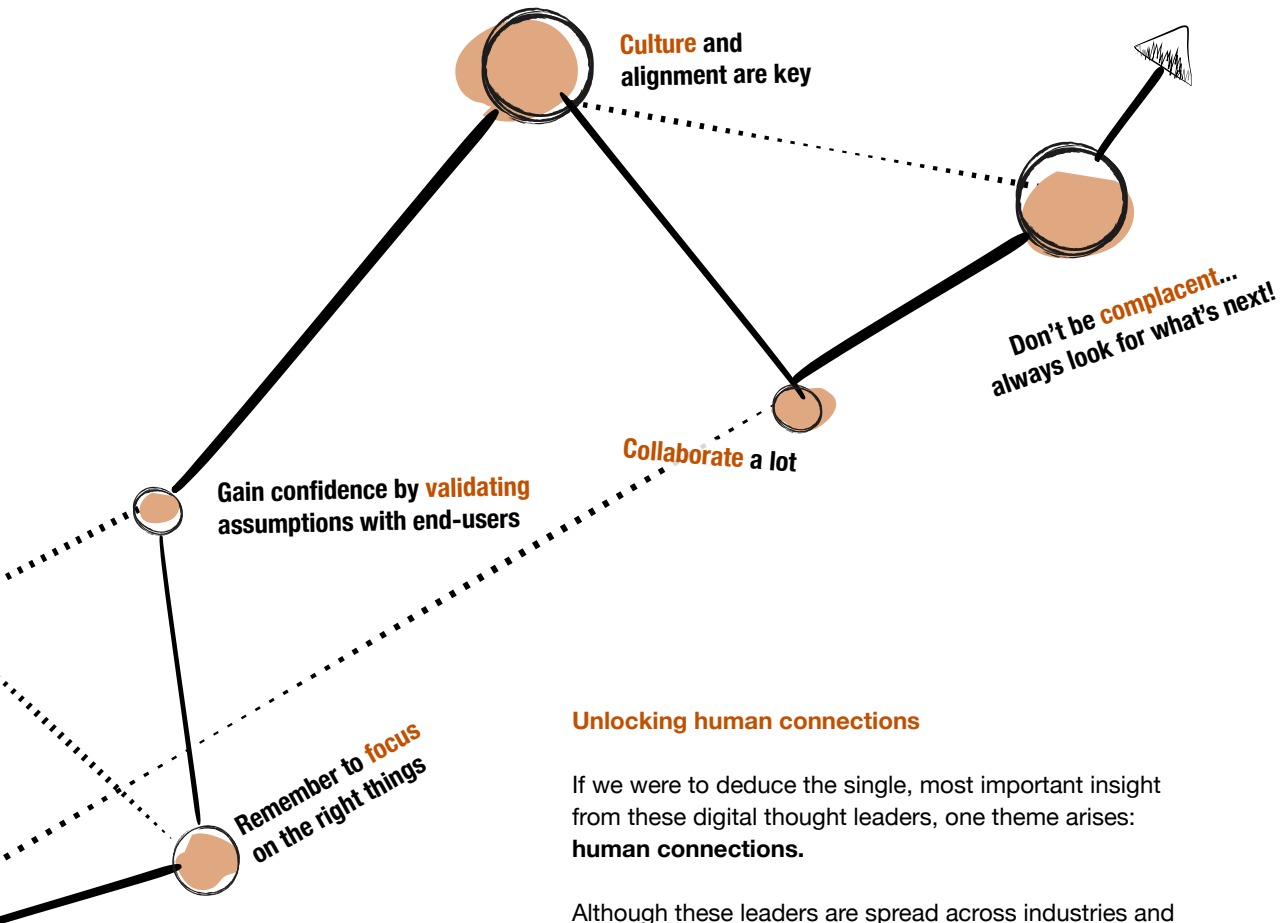
Do you have additional
observations and
lessons learned?

This is your workbook.
Write down your
thoughts.

04.

Conclusion

Upon reflection on the findings presented in this book, built upon the conversations with some of the most pioneering and experienced digital thought leaders, we are inspired, energetic and hopeful.

Emotions ride high in these continuous journeys of change. The chart below summarizes some common feelings and ways to overcome some of the common challenges.

It'll be a **bumpy** ride, so fasten your courage belt

It may be **ambiguous** at the start, but that's ok

Start small, start somewhere

Be realistic and set aside enough **time** to execute your plans

CEO sponsorship is key to the success of your transformation

Culture and alignment are key

Don't be complacent...always look for what's next!

Collaborate a lot

Gain confidence by **validating** assumptions with end-users

Remember to **focus** on the right things

Unlocking human connections

If we were to deduce the single, most important insight from these digital thought leaders, one theme arises: **human connections.**

Although these leaders are spread across industries and around the world, they are connected in their thoughts and actions. Most importantly, through their pivots and lessons learned, these leaders are unlocking the power of human connections in their organizations.
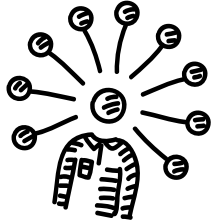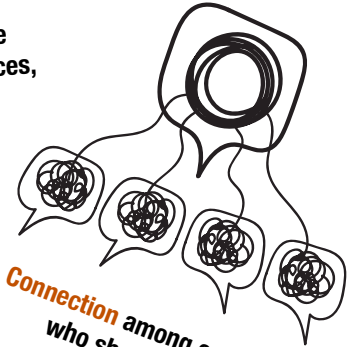
Connection between business and IT and cross-functional teams
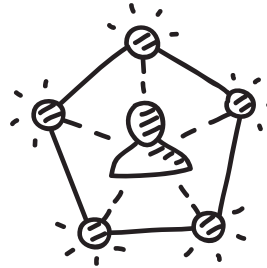
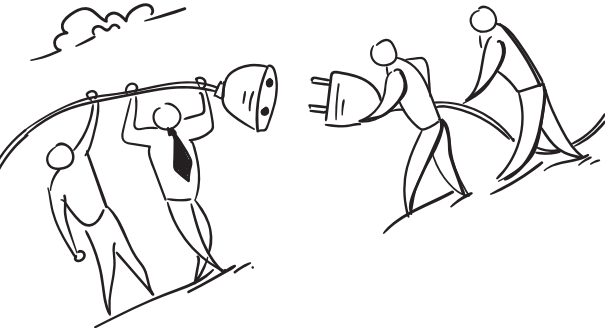Connection with the ecosystem for resources, talent, innovation
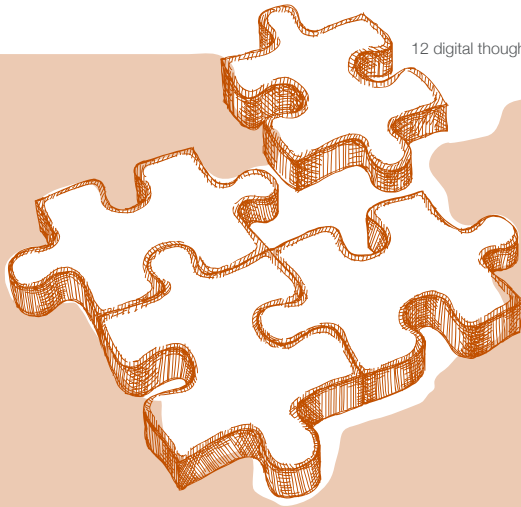
Connection with customers

Connection between autonomous business units or teams

Connection among employees who share common values/culture

While the world today is largely connected by technology, it's human connections that are truly unlocking the power of connectivity and driving innovation, agility and value.

We are grateful for the experience to meet with these digital thought leaders. We feel more connected to these clients in learning about and documenting their experiences, and we hope you find this the book useful and have gained actionable insights to apply in your organizations.

To share your feedback and discuss your thoughts, please contact us at rethink@cgi.com.

About the leading organizations

Alma Media
Head office: Helsinki, Finland

Alma Media is a dynamic multi-channel media company with a strong capacity for renewal. Our products are the leading media and service brands in their respective fields and they have a strong market position in most of the operating countries. Our best-known brands include Kauppalehti, Talouselämä, Affärsvärlden, Iltalehti, Aamulehti, Etuovi.com and Monster.

www.almamedia.fi/en

Dalkia - EDF Group
Head office: Paris, France

Dalkia, a subsidiary of the EDF group, is one of the leaders in energy services in France. Dalkia offers its clients tailor-made solutions for each building, each city, each community, each territory and each industrial site.

With close to 80 years' experience in managing heating and cooling networks, optimising industrial utilities, enhancing the energy efficiency of buildings and promoting alternative and renewable energy sources, we offer our customers tailored solutions to reduce their energy consumption and boost the environmental and economic performance of their facilities.

www.dalkia.fr/en

Ditto
Head office: Paris, France

Ditto Bank is a new generation French banking service with global ambition that offers a unique multi-currency model. Ditto Bank manages to combine the reliability of a fully licensed bank with the flexibility of a Fintech. Designed for those who need access to multiple currencies on a regular basis (frequent travellers, expatriates, online shoppers, etc…), Ditto Bank customers can use their app to open current accounts in different currencies, manage their money, make transfers and complete foreign exchange transactions, all from a mobile app created for and with the customer, who always remains at the centre of a seamless experience.

Ditto Services develops and operates the technology behind the Ditto Bank offerings.

www.dittobank.com

Engie France
Renewable Energy
Head Office: Paris, France

Our group is a global reference in low-carbon energy and services. In response to the urgency of climate change, our ambition is to become the world leader in the zero carbon transition "as a service" for our customers, in particular global companies and local authorities. We rely on our key activities (renewable energy, gas, services) to offer competitive turnkey solutions.

With our 160,000 employees, our customers, partners and stakeholders, we are a community of Imaginative Builders, committed every day to more harmonious progress.

France Renewable Energy is one of the Business Units focused on delivering on this global ambition.

www.engie.com/en

Farm Credit Canada
Head office: Regina, Canada

FCC is a financially self-sustaining federal Crown corporation reporting to Parliament through the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food. Our corporate office is located in Regina, Sask. We lend money and provide other services to primary producers, agri-food operations and agribusinesses that provide inputs or add value to agriculture. We share business management knowledge and training with our customers, free of charge. We offer insurance, venture capital and management accounting software, that's designed specifically for agriculture.

www.fcc-fac.ca/en.html=
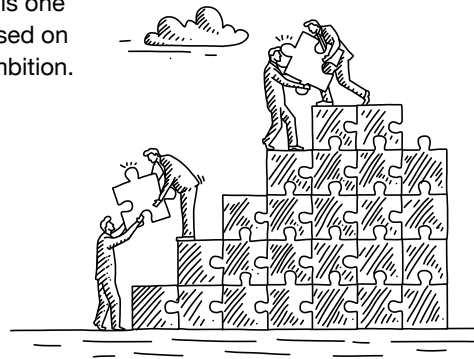
Forca
Head office: Copenhagen, Denmark

Forca is a pure service company based on the pension industry. We ensure your autonomy through agile collaboration and tailor-made operation. In 2006, three independent pension companies were in a business critical situation. They wanted to develop the business and achieve economies of scale, so there was more pension for each pension saver. At the same time, they would retain their autonomy.

Of this, Forca, a jointly owned service partner, was formed. Forca manages all the underlying common denominators between the companies in the form of service and systems, administration, IT and business development.

www.forca.dk

ING
Head office: Amsterdam, The Netherlands

ING is a global bank with a strong European base. Our 54,000 employees serve around 38.4 million customers, corporate clients and financial institutions in over 40 countries. Our purpose is to empower people to stay a step ahead in life and in business.

Our products include savings, payments, investments, loans and mortgages in most of our retail markets. For our Wholesale Banking clients we provide specialised lending, tailored corporate finance, debt and equity market solutions, payments & cash management and trade and treasury services.

www.ing.com/Home.htm
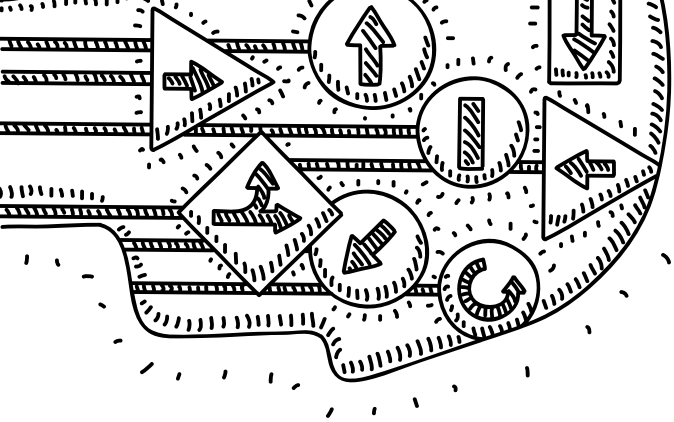
Lehto Group
Head office: Kempele, Finland

Lehto Group Oyj is a Finnish construction company, established more than 20 years ago in Ostrobothnia. We are an innovative company and developer of the construction industry. The core of Lehto is economically driven construction, where everything is based on well-defined product portfolio, own design and pre-manufacturing such as kitchen-bathroom modules. Our factory production guarantees an improved dry supply chain and a more even quality of construction, compared to building on site.

www.lehto.fi/en

Leschaco
Head office: Bremen, Germany

The Leschaco Group is a global logistics service provider that combines Hanseatic tradition with cosmopolitanism and a spirit of innovation. "Experienced. Dedicated. Customized." This is a fitting summary of the company's philosophy: On the basis of decade-long experience teams of specialists set up customized solutions.

The company was founded under the name of Lexzau, Scharbau in Hamburg in 1879 by Wilhelm Lexzau and Julius Scharbau. Since 1992 Jörg Conrad has been the owner and active managing director of the international Leschaco Group.

www.leschaco.com/en/start.html

M Group Services, UK
Head office: Stevenage, UK

M Group Services delivers a range of essential infrastructure services within the utilities (electricity, gas and water), transport, telecommunications and data sectors in UK & Ireland. They have built and maintained relationships with clients over a number of years and have a strong culture that continuously focuses on safety, operational delivery, efficiency and customer service. They are committed to profitable growth both organically and through acquisitions. M Group Services, a trusted employer to c. 9,000 skilled specialists working from 100 locations, operates a divisional structure aligned with its end markets.

www.mgroupservices.com

Total Communicator Solutions
Head office: San Diego, U.S.

Total Communicator Solutions, Inc. develops a platform for platforms that collects data from user devices, and wearables and sensors networks enabling the delivery of smart content based on data gathered. Its platform collects performance data and real time behavior, and delivers actions based on these via the centralized platform; provides high-level insights in user activities; and offers content management system solutions, user interactions, bi-directional communication, real time analytics, based on action event based architecture delivering Augmented Intelligence to the operators. It also allows users to create context intelligent experiences, such as videos, location based notifications, messages, Web experiences, surveys, augmented reality, and more; while enabling the users to measure, analyze, and replicate marketing campaigns in real time. It offers brands, venue owners and operators, retailers and city management a complete integrated platform for platforms integrating new and legacy systems into one. It offers solutions for healthcare and well-being sectors, stadiums and universities, and airports and destinations. The company was incorporated in 2012 and is based in San Diego, California with locations and partners in Europe, South East Asia, Middle East and South America.

**www.bloomberg.com/research/
stocks/private/snapshot**

State Tax Inspectorate
Office: Vilnius, Lithuania

State Tax Inspectorate's mission is careful, effective and accurate tax administration for public and government. The State Tax Inspectorate is striving to become modern organization of active, brave and creative people who are partners for honest taxpayers.

The main tasks of the State Tax Inspectorate are to:
- assist the taxpayers in exercising their rights and performing their obligations;
- implement tax laws;
- ensure the payment of taxes to the budget.

www.vmi.lt/index.jsp?lang=e
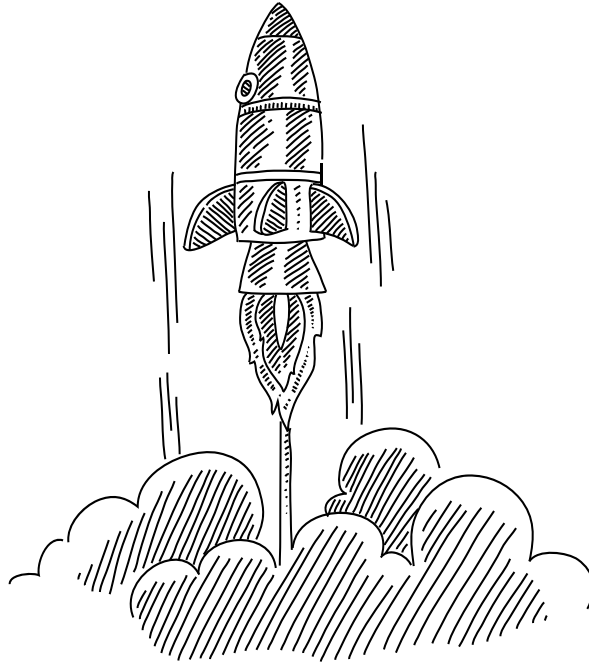
Author

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Director, Digital Transformation and
Emerging Technologies

A collaborative effort with the emerging technology
team, client account teams and our clients.

About CGI

Founded in 1976, CGI is among the largest IT and business consulting services firms in the world. Operating in hundreds of locations across the globe, CGI delivers an end-to-end portfolio of capabilities, from strategic IT and business consulting to systems integration, managed IT and business process services and intellectual property solutions. CGI works with clients through a local relationship model complemented by a global delivery network to help clients achieve their goals, including becoming customer-centric digital enterprises.

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rethink@cgi.com

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