HR Key Catalyst in Digital Transformation

By **Garry Priam**

H R HAS MOVED AWAY FROM BEING AN AFTERTHOUGHT IN companies to being an important business partner at a strategic level. Today's HR is integral to a company's success and, as a result, it has become imperative for HR professionals to keep up with changes in their industry, as well as the ongoing changes in tools and technology.

Wearing as many hats as HR does creates a unique opportunity; HR's blend of talents acts as a catalyst and difference maker in successful organizations. HR is undergoing rapid and profound change. Once viewed as a support function that delivered employee services, HR is now being asked to help lead the digital transformation in organizations across the world. HR's role in digital transformation is far more critical than one thinks.

HR Key to Changing Digital Mindset

Consider that while our world has changed to the point that people are always connected and want simple, intuitive user experiences for work and play, not all organizations are embracing the technology change fast enough.

There's room for improvement in many organizations and HR's digital transformation begins with a change of mindset within the organization—with real-time operations, prioritizing connectivity, platforms and automation.

Keep in mind that tools are beneficial only if they serve a purpose and are useful only if employees adopt them and use them. Resultantly, HR must begin with employee needs and the user experience.

Setting the Tone for Technology

This change can take place in the following areas:

Engage the digital workplace: Organizations can design a working environment that enables productivity and promotes engagement using modern communication tools like Microsoft Teams, Slack, and Workplace by Facebook.

Look beyond departmental boundaries: Don't think of digital as being a department. Digital is not a department or something that should be filtered. Consider developing plans for digital talent to be dispersed throughout the organization.

Celebrate the social qualities of digital: It's called social media for a reason; it's about people sharing and connecting and being social with each other. Rather than stopping these behaviours, embrace and celebrate the people coming together for business gain. Allow people to be social using digital, to chat informally, to arrange social meet-ups, to connect and to build friendly and amiable relationships with each other and the organization's clients.

Inspire resourcefulness: We've all heard the phrase "just Google it…" Train your people to become more inquisitive, to find out what they need to know and where and how to find it. Encourage resourcefulness as many of the digital skills that can be learnt can be done so flexibly online. Using online platforms

"The whole point of social media is continuity and continual engagement."—Clara Shih

intelligently is a start as it is the behaviour of using them effectively and efficiently and the empowerment they provide to connect and network that will make the difference.

Construct a modern-day culture: Digital talent is looking for purpose, fun, agility and building momentum towards something rewarding. In today's world, they're not looking for a gold watch or a lifelong position. They are curious and want freedom—to be where they have a voice that matters, to make a difference and to not be stuck in a corporate box.

Encourage cross-functional learning: Leverage and create the means to transpose learning across teams and functions. Provide a positive framework for this learning to inform people in getting better, sharing best practices and the means to resolve issues thereby preventing recurrence.

Become vs. Do Digital

HR leaders are being asked to take on more of a leadership role to drive their organizations to "become digital" and not just "do digital."

According to the report by Deloitte, "Rewriting the rules for the digital age – 2017 Deloitte Global Human Capital Trends," there is an increasing gap between technological sophistication and the amount of work actually performed. HR has an important role to play, as it can help leaders and organizations adapt to technology, help people adjust to new models of work and careers and help the company as a whole to encourage changes in society, regulation and public policy.

In essence, what we need today is transformational innovation which can impact many business models at once.

Building Your Digital DNA

To get to this mindset, organizations need to have this ingrained in them like building a digital DNA. This requires the promotion and support of digital artists. Digital artists can balance the science, technology, engineering and skills required for business model design. In principle, this is akin to the right brain meeting the left brain. You want balance on your organizational team in order to achieve a high level of proficiency.

In this digital, on-demand world, we no longer sell just services or products, we deliver on brand promises, which requires a focus on experiences and outcomes.

HR managers will need to balance out right brain and left brain people—the big thinkers and the doers—with one goal in mind: to create a culture of digital DNA which grows throughout their organizations and upwards. **℗**

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