The Roadblocks To Digital Transformation

No doubt we've all heard the phrase digital transformation used hundreds of times. A 21st century buzzword, we've seen organizations across every industry make claims of digital transformation, however, most have struggled to follow through on the promise of moving beyond sporadic initiatives and accelerating real organization-wide digital transformation.

Digital transformation is essentially the integration of digital technology into the core of your organization, ensuring that it touches all areas of business and makes fundamental operational changes. Globally, it is reshaping economies, and according to reports from IDC, spending on digital transformation in the Middle East, Turkey, & Africa is expected to reach $40 billion by 2022.

The UAE is spearheading the push towards a digital transformation in the region, both in the public and private sector, launching initiatives designed to promote innovation and drive the public sector's adoption of digital to the next level. The country was also ranked among the top 20 in the digital competitiveness index, according to a report released by IMD World Digital Competitiveness Center, moving up a spot from last year due to its increased adoption of digital strategies in various projects and initiatives. This is a clear indicator of the UAE's efforts to prepare for the future and encourage organizations to do the same. Despite all this, customers continue to come to us with concerns about their own digital transformation, or lack thereof.

Customers typically approach us at GBM, unsure where to begin their organization's digital transformation journey and worried that other industry players may be much further ahead. The truth is, there's a lot of hype around the fastest transformers globally who are ahead of the curve, however there is little commentary on how hard organizational transformation actually is and how long it takes.

There are always roadblocks when dealing with organizational change, but I'm happy to say, the most common digital transformation roadblocks we encounter are quite easy to overcome with time and the right partner.

First and foremost, large legacy companies tend to lack the agility required to move quickly through their digital transformation journey, relying on resource-intensive legacy systems with high maintenance costs. Most large long lasting companies have these issues, it is the burden of their history. In this case, the advice is simple; rather than focusing on what technologies you don't have, focus on the technologies that need to be updated and identify a partner that can build an agile, secure and most importantly, scalable digital infrastructure. This will prepare a legacy business to maintain that legacy for the future, and slowly but surely implement change.

The second roadblock we typically identify for customers is an inability to effectively use and monetize data. In an era where data is currency, not using it to your benefit is a

tremendous waste of resources. What we tend to do for customers is work with them to put solutions in place that transform their data into actionable insights and business value, ensuring that it can be utilized to impact their bottom line.

The third roadblock to digital transformation is an organization's own outdated manual business processes. We find that most large, well-established organizations are guilty of this. As a company grows, practices that become outdated may continue to be used because this is just the way things have always been done. This results in a lack of industry best practices, lack of process integration and an ultimately unavoidable high cost of operations. By analyzing current processes, and identifying gaps, business processes can be optimized and automated, resulting in reduced operational costs, more customer-centric processes and a move towards a more digitalized automated business model for the organization as a whole.

I always tell customers that introducing and adopting new technology can take time, and as organizations work to navigate the business environment amidst the fourth industrial revolution, digital transformation is no longer an option, it is a necessity; an investment into preparing your company for tomorrow. And with the right partner, it can be an exciting journey, rather than a daunting task.

Miguel Khouri - General Manager Abu Dhabi and Yemen

https://www.forbesmiddleeast.com/the-roadblocks-to-digital-transformation