




“Across industries, enabling digital capabilities and leveraging them to systematically deliver better customer experiences are at the heart of leadership priorities.”

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The Business Success Formula for the 2020s: Adopting a Digital-First, Customer-Centric Culture, Capabilities and Ways of Working

It's Time to Embrace a Customer- and Digital-First Way of Working

Business success in the new century requires new ways of working.

No matter what industry you are in or who you serve, today's customers embrace an increasingly digital mindset and ever-greater expectations of the experiences they get from those that wish to serve them.

This is one of the key reasons why the business imperative of enabling—and consistently delivering—‘digital first but not digital only’ multichannel experiences means that to get the business value out of digital transformation, you shouldn't focus on it without a parallel customer experience transformation effort.

And these aren't (just) technology issues. These are workforce issues.





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“Today, it’s nearly impossible to provide a great customer experience without a strong “digital first” organizational mindset, along with the culture and technological capabilities to back it up.”

The world of business and the customers you serve has changed.

The fact is, this era of smart, ever more digitally-enabled customers requires companies to shift their culture in two key but interrelated ways, enabling and adopting:

- A customer-centric way of *looking* at their business
- A digital-first way of *thinking in* the workforce

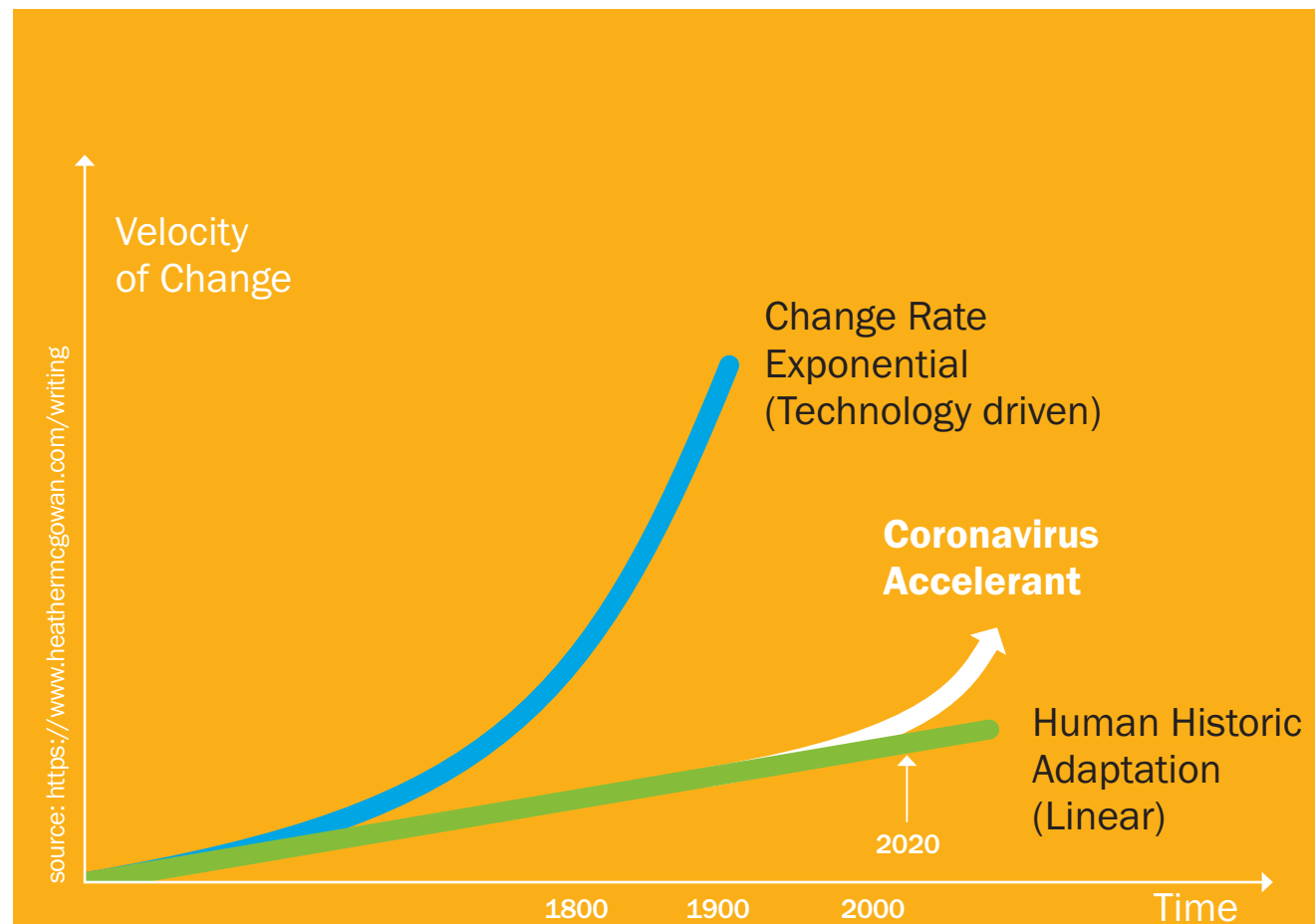
That’s where this guide comes in—providing a quick look at what success looks like for leaders and how they got (and stay) there, as well as some steps your enterprise can take to get there.

While digital adoption has been accelerating for the last 10 plus years, the events of 2020 radically increased the pace, usage and extent of digital—and its impact.

As work went remote, schooling virtual, and shopping even more online, the adoption of digital ways of working, learning and interacting have radically accelerated.

We—along with most analysts and pundits—see this adoption as a simple acceleration of existing technology, business and customer-related trends.

These are trends that every organization needs to understand and embrace to effectively compete in the years ahead.

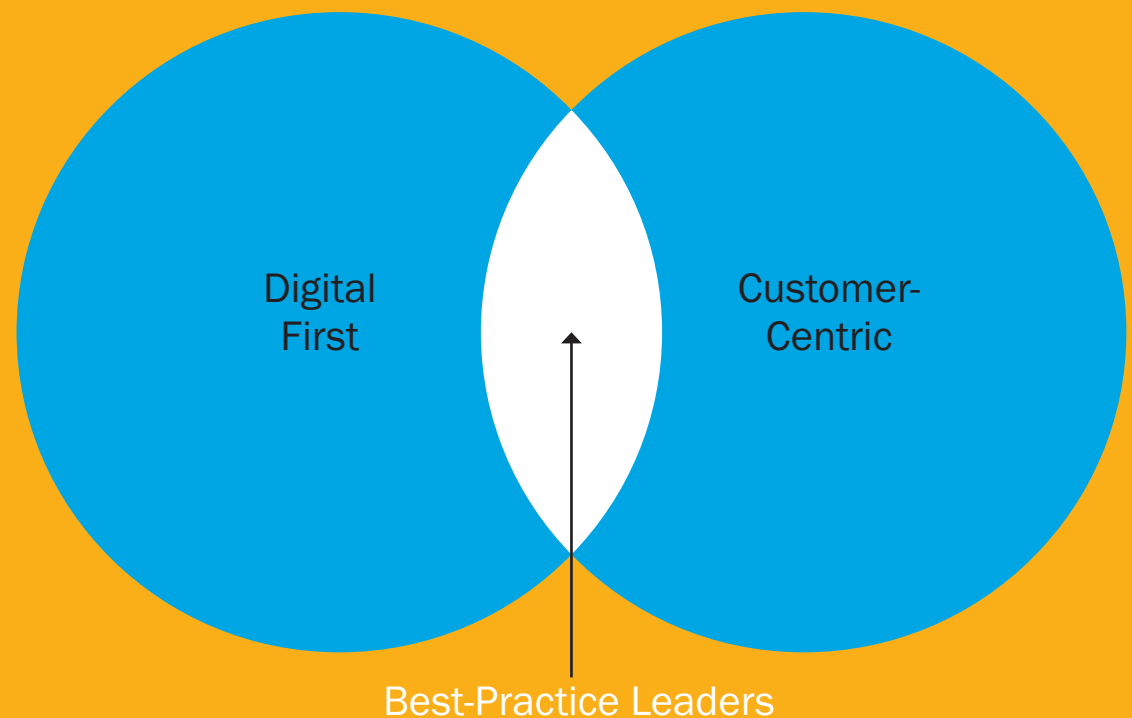


“In the coming decade, the winners will be those businesses that tackle the challenges of digital-first, customer-centric business transformation—and successfully extract value as a result.”

Business success in the 2020s: What Differentiates Leaders

There's a reason business leaders such as Best Buy, Microsoft, American Family Insurance and others pursue their digital-first and customer-centricity efforts as a fundamental change of mindset focused on the customer, along with operational and IT improvements.

Because together, a focus on integrated, digital and customer experience transformation can generate a 20 to 30% increase in customer satisfaction and economic gains of 20 to 50%. ²





What do we mean by a digital and customer-centric workforce?

Simply stated, a digital and customer-centric workforce is a workforce that has the willingness, motivation and learning mindset to bring the customer view to decision making—and that does so in a way that recognizes and embraces the impact that various digital developments have on customer and employee experiences, as well as a focus on business, process and IT efficiencies.

Much like the TQM (Total Quality Management) movement, it's about having a culture that embraces transformation and that operates in ways that drive continuous and incremental improvement because of workforce involvement.

“Customer experience leaders are almost three times more likely than their peers—and digital-first companies are 64% more likely than their peers—to have exceeded their top business goals.” ³

How can you develop these workforce capabilities?

“Tell me and I’ll forget; show me and I may remember; involve me and I’ll understand.”

Benjamin Franklin’s words ring true here.

A key reason why employees resist change is that they’re typically not involved or invested in it. Top-down edicts with little context and lack of clarity on vision and strategy don’t drive change; they drive resistance.

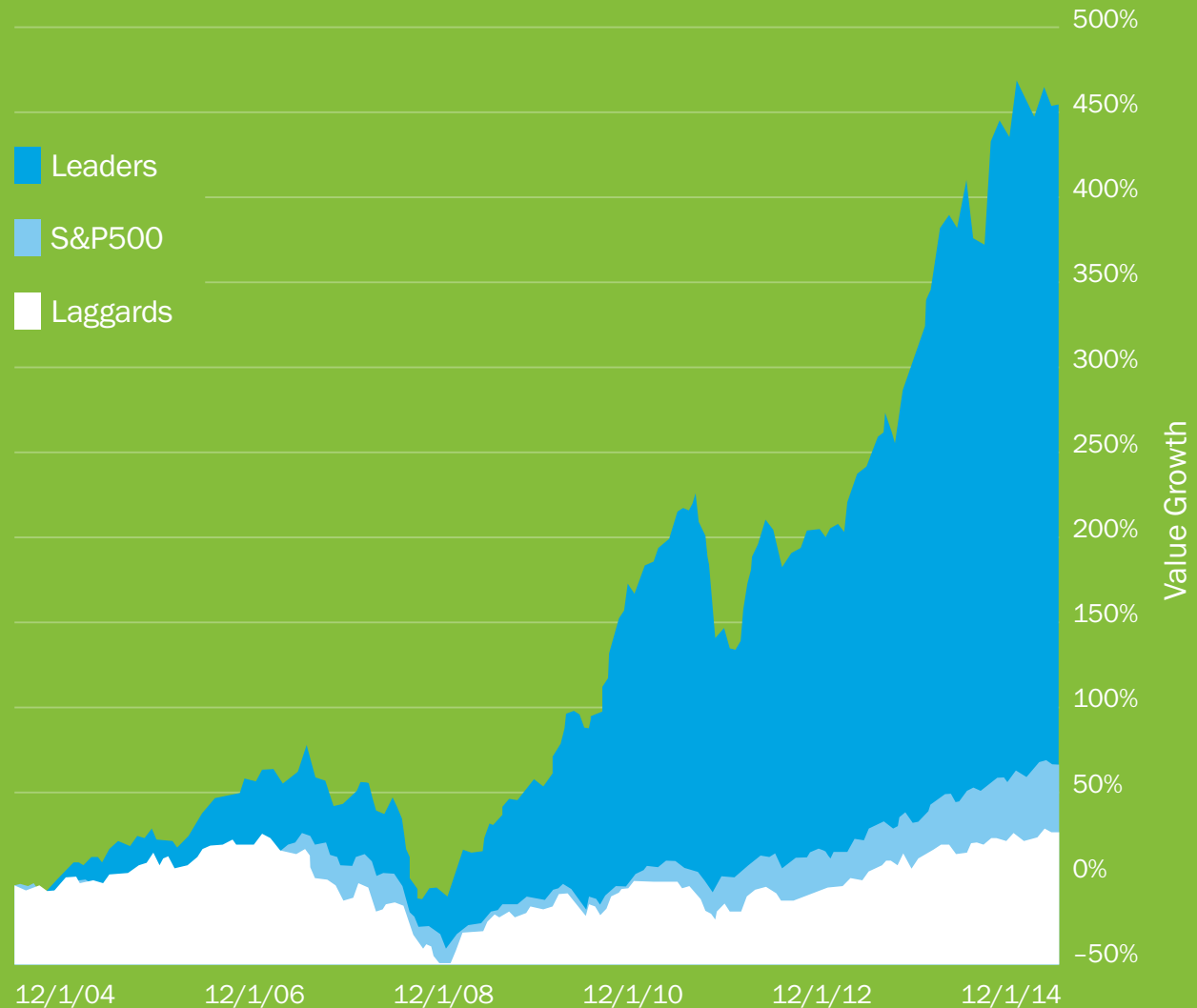
That’s why successful transformations exhibit these four things:

1. A co-created ‘change vision’ to provide focus and context while driving motivation and willingness in the workforce
2. Developing the learning mindset to ensure adoption and “stickiness” of a digital-first, customer-centric way of working
3. Skills creation and enablement cascaded across the organization
4. Ongoing skills enhancement and accountability for those skills

“Leveraging both digital and customer experience transformation forces companies to understand, address and optimize all the ways in which they interact with their customers.”

Market Performance of Leaders 15x Greater Than Laggards

Looking at the customer experience capabilities of public companies over a ten-year period, leaders returned an average of 450% to shareholders, whereas laggards returned 30%. In other words, market returns for leaders are about 15 times greater than market returns for laggards. ⁴



Source: Medallia Analysis. Leaders and laggards are defined using the American Customer Satisfaction index

“Together, a focus on integrated, digital and customer experience transformation can generate a 20 to 30% increase in customer satisfaction and economic gains of 20 to 50%.” ²

Benefits for Customer-Centric Leaders

Customer experience leaders are proven to have consistently greater business results than those that have yet to make customer experience transformation a priority. A few of those benefits include:

- Customer-centric companies are 60% more profitable than companies that don't focus on customers. ⁵
- Over a 300% greater lifetime customer value ⁶
- Greater bottom-line revenue growth ¹²
- 84% of companies that work to improve their customer experience report an increase in their revenue. ¹²
- Up to 200% greater customer and employee loyalty ¹²
- Significantly reduced (up to one-third) cost to serve customers ¹²
- Up to 2.4 times per-customer revenue increase ¹²
- Brands with superior customer experience bring in 5.7 times more revenue than competitors that lag in customer experience. ¹¹

Benefits for Digitally-Enabled Leaders

At the same time, digitally mature companies realize a myriad of benefits thanks to digital activation and adoption, especially compared to those who invest in digital without the organizational ability to optimize those investments. For example:

- Digitally mature companies are 23% more profitable than their less mature peers. ⁷
- Digital-first companies are 64% more likely to achieve their business goals than their peers. ³
- 71% of digitally mature companies say they can attract top new talent compared to 10% of early-stage digital companies. 70% of digital transformations fail, most often due to resistance from employees. ⁸
- The biggest reason: failure to effectively communicate the goals, strategy, purpose and outlook with their employees. ²

The highest profile leaders aren't a mystery. You know them, too.

You know who the highest profile leaders are today. In fact, you probably interact with several of them on a regular basis.

Across industries and distribution models (B2C, B2B, B2B2C and more) leaders like these have taken customer centricity to heart. Often, those models are built around the customer. They've also deployed digital technologies and ways of working, together maximizing their agility, revenues and profitability.

The examples on the next page are clearly well-known, higher profile organizations. But they're not alone—because organizations of any size, and in any industry, can reap the myriad benefits of digital and customer experience leadership.



AMAZON

Famously delivering on the “voice of the customer” in every market it’s entered with leading digital technologies. ¹³

Amazon is investing \$700M to retrain workers



L'ORÉAL

“Inventing the beauty of tomorrow” from product design to the beauty experience and embracing digital technologies. ¹⁴

L'Oréal has upskilled over 14,000 customer-facing employees on digital



MICROSOFT

Shifting from product-focused to a customer-obsessed leader has driven a 60% revenue increase and a 355%+ stock price rise. ¹⁶



JPM CHASE

Investing heavily in digital and experience, gaining market share from traditional banks with better user experiences. ¹⁷

JPM Chase has committed \$600M to reskilling workers for a digital future



WALMART

Accelerating innovation across all channels to become an ecommerce and brick-and-mortar retail leader. ¹⁵

Walmart's \$4B investment for launching workers into the future pays off



DISNEY

With a laser focus on their customer from the beginning, today they're also a digitally-driven company. ¹⁸



SALESFORCE

Transforming multi-channel customer management, and the leader in the move to cloud solutions. ¹⁹

Case Study: Global Digital Marketing Organization

Client: This digital agency with operations in New York, London, Singapore, and Mumbai helps its clients develop and activate corporate marketing strategies for global organizations using a range of PR, digital, video and mobile services.

Business Imperative

- Deliver a delightful customer experience by being empathetic with them & by staying aligned to their changing needs
- Get work done faster by increasing collaboration & agility for the globally dispersed workforce
- Develop digital leadership so that my team can imagine what is digitally possible and competently run a digital enterprise

Solution

- Carried out the team Assessment on Digital Maturity by covering Digital Mindset & Culture, Tools & Digital Methodologies
- Developed the imperative, motivation & excitement in the team for change & embracing digital
- Digitally upskilled the team by carrying out Immersive Experiential exercises focused on technical & digital mindset attributes, methodologies like design thinking, agile & data-driven decision making

Outcomes

- EVP Speak: “Within a couple of weeks of the Gestalt Program, we have seen a very visible effect on the depth & quality of customer engagement and scope of work.”
- CEO Speak: “Our New York and Bangalore teams, which underwent the Gestalt Program, have been remarkably effective in managing customer engagement and business operations even during the pandemic in contrast to our London and Delhi teams.”



Case Study: IT Services for a Fortune 500 Technology Leader

Client: The leadership and 5,000 employees of this \$1.2B IT services group is responsible for planning for, deploying, and managing technology solutions across enterprise environments for this multi-national technology company.

Business Imperative

- To improve customer and partner experiences across channels, products, and services by adopting an organization-wide, customer-centric perspective
- Reduce internal process friction, interactions, and handoffs between internal silos
- Build the institutional muscle to quickly adapt technology development to changes in the behaviors and preferences of customers

Solution

- Bring the internal and external customer and user view to the organization of processes and systems and the prioritization of problems to solve
- Engage leadership and the broader organization to win over skeptics and earn internal buy-in by providing external validation for changes in strategy and approach
- Customer and internal user research and a series of internal working sessions in which we identified and prioritized problems to solve co-developed potential solutions, and built out action plans and roadmaps to guide deployment

Outcomes

- Chief experience architect: “Through its use of multidisciplinary cross-functional teams, McorpCX helped break down internal silos and barriers to cooperation. They set up the framework and the vision of how to do it; they co-created with us, and they trained us.”
- Stakeholder and Sponsor: “We changed the way the IT organization executes projects, streamlining processes and reducing handoffs.”



An integrated approach, proven in academia and business

A strategic framework for successful digital-first, customer-centric transformation.

Businesses tackle the dual challenges of digital disruption and changing customer expectations by positioning themselves to extract value through a defined strategic transformation framework.

Driven by two decades of real-world business applications and primary research.

McorpCX and Gestalt share a deep passion for discovery.

Separately, we each codified the best practices of digital and customer-centric leaders.

Then, we conducted primary research with executives and faculty through Columbia University's Digital Business Leadership Program.

Through this process, we interviewed and observed executives from hundreds of Global 2000 companies across multiple industries and operating models over a multi-year span.



“Digitally mature companies are 23% more profitable than their less mature peers.” ⁷

Becoming a digital-first, customer-centric leader is not simple. But it is straightforward.

We have learned that while there are, of course, myriad differing approaches, there are also a number of core digital-first and customer-centric capabilities that drive successful transformation efforts.

By success, we mean those organizations that achieve the economies, returns, growth, and competitive advantages that the best-executed transformations promise.

A proven model you can begin to leverage today.

On the pages that follow, we will share some of the things that we learned as well as the capability frameworks we’ve created.

These frameworks are strategic management tools designed to help companies innovate, orchestrate, and accelerate digital-first, customer-centric business transformation.

How well does your organization do these 9 things today?

How leaders lead: 9 common success factors for digital-first, customer-centric transformation

Digital-first, customer-centric leaders do many things well—driven by new, integrated ways of thinking and working across their organizations.

For those who succeed, these are some common success factors. The time to start thinking about them—and assess how well you’re doing—is now.

To what degree does your organization...

1. Continually empathize with the customer?
2. Develop the motivation and willingness to change?
3. Embrace a culture of collaboration, speed, and agile operations?
4. Eliminate silos across the business?
5. Enable seamless, omnichannel customer experiences?
6. Assess the business operating model?
7. Show pathways to continuously learn and apply “New Tech?”
8. Adopt digital methodologies like continuous innovation and data-driven decision making?
9. Align key performance indicators to desired business outcomes?

“Put customer experience and digital first; success will follow.” ¹¹



1. **Continually empathize with the customer:** It's crucial to ensure that your decision making is informed by relevant data about your customer, including operational, perceptual, behavioral and business value insights.
2. **Develop the motivation and willingness to change:** The workforce needs to embrace the realization that they need to change; a compelling narrative can help create excitement and buy-in as they help drive the organization forward.
3. **Embrace a culture of collaboration, speed, and agile operations:** This requires the entire workforce to leverage digital tools to seamlessly collaborate across boundaries, acting in an agile, swift, and “hierarchy-less” manner to empower and enable people, teams and systems.
4. **Eliminate silos across your business:** Customers expect to interact seamlessly across channels, departments and groups. But most companies aren't built this way. Now's the time to radically improve performance, simplify internal processes, integrate insights and data sources and change how you deploy initiatives across your entire business.

5. **Enable seamless, omnichannel customer experiences:** Customers increasingly expect to start a transaction in one channel and seamlessly continue in others, giving them the ability to transact on a website, move to a call center or chat function, switch from a desktop to a mobile device, and even walk into a store without having to start over.
6. **Assess your operating model:** Put the customer at the forefront of your transformation by optimizing people, processes, technology, and data across your customer journeys. You'll help ensure a future-proof, innovation-driven, (and perpetually improving) digital-first and customer-centric business operating model.
7. **Show the pathway to continuously learn and apply “New Tech”:** Digital ways of working take root through the emergence, exploration and use of pervasive digital technologies and access to unlimited information. Those who are not digital natives need to learn new technology-enabled skills in a digitally immersive ecosystem to consciously, methodically unlearn practices which can hold them back.
8. **Adopt digital methodologies like data-driven decision making, digital storytelling and continuous innovation:** And we can add design thinking, agile ways of working and more. Given the digital developments around us, each of these and other digital-first methodologies have disproportionate significance as they are each and collectively vital to enabling the digital customer experience.
9. **Align key performance indicators to desired business outcomes:** A digital customer transformation effort is an investment. As such, it doesn't make sense to begin unless you're able to measure business impact from it, most often by linking critical KPIs to anticipated outcomes.

“You’ve got to start with the customer experience and work backwards to the technology...” – Steve Jobs

“When leveraged together, these capabilities—digital-first and customer-centricity—help organizations shift culture and drive competence, enabling the efficient design and delivery of great customer and employee experiences, at digital speed.”

Best-practice capabilities: Leveraging the tools of proven success

A digitally enabled, customer-centric workforce: The starting point for digital and customer experience transformation

It's typically hard to create broad excitement for change initiatives within an organization. But adopting a customer-centric view is an excellent starting point because engaging with customers throughout the process places the emphasis on solving customer's problems.

This aligns cross-functional teams as they better understand and leverage the organization's capabilities and expertise, decreasing internal and external friction, eliminating inefficiencies and driving a focus on bottom-line value.

And that creates organization-wide buy-in—and real excitement.



The 6 best-practice capabilities of digital-first leaders

“79% of CEOs see the lack of digital skills in their employees as a threat to growth.” ¹⁰



These 6 capabilities provide the internal skills digital leaders leverage to develop organization-wide ways of working and thinking in a digital-first manner.

- 1 Imagining Digital Possibilities and Innovation:** Digital is not just about usage of technical tools; leaders must be able to comprehend the application and potential of digital initiatives and competently manage them.
- 2 Customer Centricity:** Ensuring customer delight by developing empathy for the customer and aligning with their changing expectations due to continuous technical innovations are core to the digital-first way of working.
- 3 Digital-First Mindset and Culture:** A digital mindset means to instinctively look first for a digital solution to any problem. It's a mindset that continuously explores and evolves with new technology developments. Leaders with this mindset incorporate agile and adaptive ways of working and establish a digital culture of learning and growth in the organization.
- 4 Data-Driven Decision Making:** Identify decision issues and instinctively look for answers through data. Know what questions to ask the data experts. Get knowledgeable about sources, types of data and the kind of insights, predictions and projections that could be possible.
- 5 Core Technical Competencies:** Understand the core aspects of technology, its adoption, and usage for day-to-day tasks; in addition, apply the best digital practices and new technology developments specific to the organization and industry.
- 6 Automation and Operational Efficiency:** Achieve greater efficiency by developing new and best practices such as intelligent automation, integrated data insights and predictive and adaptive maintenance through empowerment of the workforce to explore emerging technologies such as AI/ML, RPA, Blockchain, IOT, smart machines, and more.

The 8 best-practice capabilities of customer-centric leaders



“Only one in ten organizations see themselves as ‘very advanced’ in respect to customer experience.” ¹¹

These 8 best-practice-driven customer-centric capabilities provide a roadmap for scaling and systematizing customer-centric ways of working and thinking.

- 1 Experience Vision + Strategy:** Aligned to your brand and business strategies, this provides the “north star” for you to deliver on the expectations set by your brand.
- 2 Customer Understanding:** Deep insight into customer wants, needs, and perceptions provides the foundation for design and delivery of experiences that meet expectations.
- 3 Experience Design + Innovation:** This capability allows you to design products, services, and experiences that meet customer needs and differentiate your business.
- 4 Governance:** Despite its tedious overtone, oversight is critical to effectively prioritize investments, guide delivery, and hold the business accountable for improving the end-to-end experience.
- 5 Organization + Culture:** A customer-centered culture helps align the behavior of your people and the meaning they attach to those behaviors (e.g. rewards, social cues).
- 6 Measurement:** Gauging the CX metrics that drive business results is critical to understanding experience delivery and its impact on business performance.
- 7 Technology + Data:** Comprehensive tools enable your organization to understand and distribute knowledge of your customers; these tools help your organization deliver and support customer experience.
- 8 Processes:** The systems your organization develops and enables will support the design, delivery, and management of customer knowledge, data, and experiences.

Continuous Learning Organizations: Digital CX Academies

Digital CX Academies are the answer to the issues today's workforce has with traditional "corporate education."

Today's workforce is eager and willing to learn, but workers are largely unsatisfied with their current learning and development opportunities. In most cases, this happens because traditional corporate "L&D" (learning and development) is more about training than learning.

A core success factor of continuous learning organizations is the movement from a culture of training to a culture of learning. In the context of digital and customer-centric change, this is where "Digital CX Academies" come into play.

"Tell me and I forget, teach me and I may remember,
involve me and I learn." – Benjamin Franklin

“To upskill or not to upskill is no longer the question.
‘How quickly can we upskill?’ is what we need to answer now.”

Attributes of highly-effective Digital CX Academies:

The Digital CX Academy is an institutionalized upskilling platform, armed with learning pathways, processes, tools, content, and more, enabling your organization to digitally upskill its workforce and become more customer-centric.



Plug & Play

A modular approach, designed to seamlessly integrate with existing enterprise learning systems.



Co-Created

A program co-created with the client organization to enable highly relevant internal upskilling capabilities for sustained learning.



Flexible

Provides multiple learning modalities and pathways based on business objectives and the digital maturity of the organization.



Custom Learning

Immersive exercises are customized to the needs and learning priorities of the organization.

What Digital CX Academies do:

A digital-first, customer-centric mindset is best developed through hands-on experience—not by traditional lectures or instruction.

This is why Digital CX Academies deliver deeply immersive, experiential learning. aligning learning goals and program outcomes with consensus around where an organization is today, where it wishes to go, and what it’s going to take to get there.

This creates an orientation to seamlessly working through customer needs, digital tools and technology as essential foundational competencies.

And these academies help leadership and the broader workforce develop and apply a digital mindset to solving customer needs and managing experience, leveraging data-driven decision making and an agile way of working.

A 3-Phase launch plan: Four focus areas to begin working on now



Build Digital and Customer-Centric Capabilities



Engage Key Leadership and Stakeholders



Adopt Customer-Centric, Digital-First Tools and Methodologies



Educate and Upskill the Broader Organization

1

Assess current capability levels across leadership and the entire organization. End with program design and short-term action plan.

Align leadership and key stakeholders on the drivers of change and visions of success, and a draft plan to get there.

Assess the current set of systems for understanding the customer experience & listening platforms. Gather customer skills around them.

Set the foundation for digital and customer-centric upskilling with a hands-on, experiential “bootcamp.”

2

Map organizational capabilities to ideal state outcomes, and prioritize focus areas across divisions, roles, and work groups. End with a multi-year roadmap.

Work through early movers, change agents, role models and influencers to socialize, educate and bring to life benefits of the transformation.

Design an “optimal adoption and leverage program” around existing systems. Optional: Make recommendations for enhancing the systems.

Run the immersive experiential program to ensure learning, practice & development of a digital & customer-centric mindset.

3

Begin working the top priorities to show the entire organization commitment and focus.

Begin to embed governance systems to guide priorities and investments, and choose metrics to track success.

Roll out those priorities and integrate them into the organization’s culture and way of working.

Actively coach and continue to have the team apply skills on the job.

About Us: Gestalt and McorpCX

Gestalt and McorpCX are two proven leaders, partnered to bring a unique combination of expertise together to help enterprises develop digital and customer-centric cultures and ways of working, maximizing return on both customer and digital investments.

Some of the organizations we've helped include American Family Insurance, Best Buy, Intel, Microsoft, and many others. We'd be delighted to help you, too.



About Gestalt

www.gogestalt.io

GoGestalt Inc is a digital talent transformation company. We help build digital capabilities in the workforce & enable digital ways of working.

Based on extensive research from academia and digital practitioners, Gestalt's proprietary Digital Talent Maturity Model assesses 120+ capabilities across the dimensions of digital-first mindset, core technology competencies and digital methodologies like agility & data intelligence. The assessment informs the organizational digital upskilling roadmap which, leads to workforce developing capabilities to imagine digital possibilities and sets the foundation for digital culture.



About McorpCX

www.mcorp.cx

McorpCX is independently recognized as a top digital, customer and employee experience consulting services and solutions company, enabling and guiding customer-centric organizations since 2002.

Whether your organization is just beginning its customer experience journey or is well down the experience transformation path, our best practice Customer-Centric Maturity Model (CXMM) helps ensure experience-led business success in a customer-centric world.

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President of customer experience strategy, design and consulting firm McorpCX, Michael Hinshaw is recognized by leading analysts as a digital transformation and customer experience pioneer and has been named to over a half-dozen “Global CX Thought Leaders” lists.

Co-author of the best-selling book *Smart Customers, Stupid Companies: Why Only Intelligent Companies Will Thrive, and How to Be One of Them*, he has been published and quoted in dozens of publications ranging from Harvard Business Review and Fast Company to American Executive, Forbes and Time.

A Teaching Fellow at UC Berkeley’s Lester Center for Entrepreneurship and Innovation at The Haas School of Business, he has consulted for and advised executives at companies such as Intel, Microsoft, Best Buy, Danone, lululemon and Staples.



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Rajesh Makhija is the founder and CEO of Gestalt (GoGestalt Inc.), a revolutionary digital workforce development company. Rajesh is also an Executive Director & President at [McorpCX](#). Rajesh has over 25 years of experience in a diverse range of IT business management scenarios. Previously, Rajesh has served as the CEO of Mphasis Wyde & Eldorado, both Blackstone Group software product companies. He led the successful transformation of these organizations and was recognized as the Executive of the Year in 2018, by Stevie American Business Awards. Prior to that, Rajesh was President & EVP at System Integration & Technology Services firm Mphasis, then an HP company. In the above roles, he advised companies on large scale technology initiatives across the entire breadth of Technology Services for clients including GM, Aflac, AIG, Sprint, and Peugeot.

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McorpCX is independently recognized as a top customer experience consulting and services company, enabling and guiding customer-centric organizations since 2002.

Whether your organization is just beginning its customer experience journey or is well down the experience transformation path, we are experts at driving experience-led business success in an increasingly customer-centric world.