



## How an Integrated Framework to Digital Operations is Critical to Building a Successful Business Case for Transformation

Organizations continue to wrestle with the growing number of new — and conflicting — definitions of digital operations and digital transformation. Chris Menier, Transformation Strategist at Vitria, answers questions on the value that businesses can derive from the effective implementation and integration of these two concepts.

**Let's talk a little bit about the distinctions that are being made, between digital operations, and digital transformation. There has been a lot of talk about digital transformation but less actual execution. What do you think is holding back a more significant move to digital transformation?**

When we look at some of the established companies — the non-digital natives — there certainly is some friction that is holding them back from pursuing real transformation initiatives. Part of the problem is a general resistance to change. There's legacy thinking that makes it difficult to change an organization's cultural DNA. There are also legacy systems in which large investments have been made — not just in terms of hard dollars, but in terms of time, training, and other resources. Finally, it is very difficult to move away from legacy processes, which involves personnel, and changing behavior that has been ingrained in people for a long time.

Taken together, that is a lot of muscle memory that has to be undone. This is what causes friction within the organization. It is important to recognize that this "transformation" concept isn't a simple switch. This is something that requires the whole organization to get behind it.

**What's interesting that even when presented with evidence, you still get resistance to moving in important new directions — at even the senior levels. What can we do to overcome some of that resistance?**

It's great you mentioned that because I see this almost daily. There's a massive push for data based evidence, data based decision-making. We've been talking about it since the early days of Business Intelligence, and now we've moved into this generation of machine learning, and artificial intelligence. Nevertheless, we still have that resistance to data-based evidence.

In the end, I believe it really comes down to trust. We have to have humans who are in this process — who have subject matter expertise — who will provide comfort and confidence in articulating a new framework and taking a new direction. That is the key to changing culture and overcoming resistance.

**Interesting. Frameworks seem to be absent in connecting our present to that desired future state. Is there a way to establish a framework that can contribute to accomplishing wins today, based on the operations that are currently in place, and connecting that somehow to a fairly radical digital transformation?**

Frameworks are important because that's the way that organizations need to look at this. It can't be about additional tools that are creating a short-term Band-Aid solution. Organizations need to start where they can logically support a move toward a desired future by leveraging as much as possible their legacy systems, people, and processes that they already have in place. A good framework supports this roadmap for the long term. But by approaching the transformation in this way, you can develop a context of the time that needs to be invested to achieve success. It can take from 2 to 5 years of investment to fully digitize and transform an organization — though the process never really stops.

**It does seem — when we engage in these conversations — that a level of urgency emerges that engenders an unhealthy level of impatience. How important is it to take the time to get it right...and how important is it to measure twice and cut once as we begin to move forward with even an ambitious transformation initiative over the long run?**

We see a lot of knee-jerk reactions in large organizations. They can certainly be dangerous. I think I'll answer that question by an anecdotal example. I was shopping the other day and went into a large iconic brick and mortar retailer. I had this combination of transactions — including in-store and e-commerce purchases — that I wanted to make.

I needed to recover some purchases that I had picked up at the store, and change some things that I had bought online. It became very obvious that those two areas of the business were disconnected. This retailer felt pressure to move into e-commerce — to do more business online — but what they failed to do was wrap in the operations of it first, and then layer a platform and framework on top that front end sales engine to integrate the entire customer experience. I ended up having a very frustrating experience that tied up a lot of my time as a consumer.

This was in stark contrast to my next experience. I went down the street to a company that approached their business very differently. This is a massive company, one of the most successful retailers now in the United States. They really started as an e-commerce company, and now they've launched a few select brick and mortar operations. I went into that operation, and it was completely seamless. I felt like I was in a physical e-commerce environment almost. The way that I returned and exchanged purchases I had made online and in physical stores was completely seamless.

They had carefully thought through all of their digital operations first, and then developed a customer experience that works.

**Digital operations, then, really revolves around optimizing existing processes with a view towards developing a common approach in which moving toward a desired future state is not incompatible with the investments that you're making to solve today's problems?**

That's right. I think a key point there is it has to be looked at across the organization. The way to successfully digitally transform is to make sure that your operations team is in line with your sales and marketing revenue generation team. It has to be a coordinated effort across the organization. You can make some local changes, but it should be done in the context of global objectives, or the long-term overall goal that you're trying to achieve.

**As you try to establish this framework, what do you believe are the important conditions that need to be in place to achieve success?**

The way that I approach this is to imagine three intersecting circles. The first represents industries or companies that are going through digital transformation. The second represents a company's operations and the third circle is customer experience. When you focus on where those three circles overlap, you are on the path to having the correct focus, and are in the process of laying the foundation for success.

**Can you explain how this focus changes the way new initiatives get funded and how it guides the implementation of immediate digital operations, and – in the long run – the digital transformation?**

Absolutely. Looking through the lens of the customer is something that – happily, as consumers – we have seen large organizations start to embrace. A focus on customers creates a common language and vocabulary that works across the different enterprise disciplines.

Conversations revolve around how the network impacts the service to the customer versus how it changes the behavior of a device. Or, how the implementation of a new strategy impacts the speed at which an organization can deliver a new service – versus how I accomplish my goals that my boss set for me.

It's a really important cultural shift. When we speak the same language, we start to think about how every action that we take, how every investment that we make, actually impacts the customer experience. It creates a new...and better...framework.

**Very interesting. How does a company like Vitria contribute to the development of a framework, and to deploying a solution that hangs onto optimizing today while moving it forward into transforming your tomorrow?**

At Vitria our VIA platform for digital transformation really provides that underlying framework for that digital operations journey. We put together a set of quick start templates to address the basic use case areas that we see across multiple industries.

We focus on breaking down silos and giving decision-makers real-time operational windows into all the different areas of the organization that is critical to enhancing the customer experience. This, in turn, informs how we approach: change management strategies; incident lifecycle automation; and all the other key decisions that allows us to dynamic engage in failure prediction.

Vitria has future-proofed this underlying technology that leverages the best in class software stack, and machine learning, and the artificial intelligence models. We also manage complexity by using a model driven, low code development environment. It creates an agile framework that all business unit leaders can understand, appreciate... and ultimately support.



**About Vitria Technology**

Vitria VIA IoT Analytics Platform empowers enterprise and industrial customers to analyze faster, act smarter, and achieve better outcomes in their IoT and business operations. The company has a history of success in streaming analytics, business process management, enterprise application integration, and operational intelligence.

Vitria is now a leading player in the rapidly growing IoT (Internet of Things) analytics market. Customers include Fortune 500 companies and enterprises across a wide range of industries, including finance, manufacturing, telecommunications, utilities, retail and more. For more information, visit [www.vitria.com](http://www.vitria.com).