



Digital Transformation

It's about being customer centric, connected, responsive, decisive, always on and available...

But where do you begin?

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SHARP
Be Original.



What is Digital Transformation?

Digital Transformation or 'DX', is hardly new, but is an increasingly over-used buzz phrase nonetheless.

Information sources and articles on this subject are plentiful, as is expert advice on the steps to take to successfully undertake and implement this type of business change. 'Customer Centricity' is at the heart of DX, as such it touches all of us in our daily work and home lives.

Things we already pretty much take for granted such as WiFi, email, the myriad of social media platforms, online shopping and self-service citizen portals and in most cases; 'there's an app for that', have already transformed the way in which we travel and 'carry documents', along with how we can communicate instantly whether talking, video-chatting or simply messaging each other - so long as you can get a connection!

Do most of us think of DX in this way?

Some may do - but probably not all...

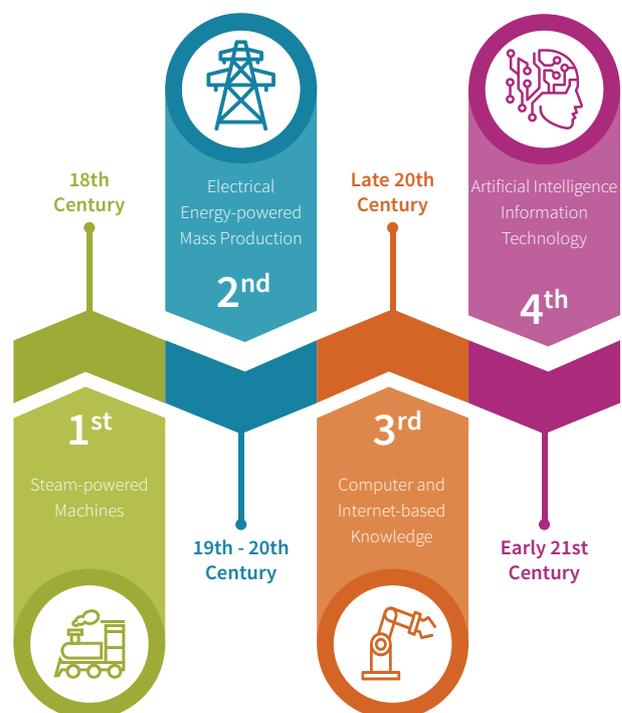
As consumers and buyers, we can be demanding and curious; as business providers and leaders, we can be conflicted and are cautious. The need to do all this increasingly faster, error-free and secure is driving the need for greater automation and for computers (robots) undertaking repetitive, time-consuming manual tasks instead of humans... but we are getting ahead of ourselves.

So, when did this all begin?

Back in the late 40s a digital revolution, and Third Industrial Revolution, started with the invention of the transistor, which led to the development of the computer as we know it today.

Digital gained momentum in the 80s and the revolution 'exploded' in the 90s with the introduction of the internet.

Today we have more connected devices than humans on the planet! This is driving the fourth industrial revolution with the 'Internet of Things' or 'IoT', 'AIoT' the 'Artificial Intelligence of Things', increasingly referred to as 'Industry 4.0', something that was envisioned back in the 80s! In an 'information age' we are bombarded with messages in various formats on the myriad platforms and devices of our choosing - all vying to be noticed and gain our attention.



A hand is shown on the left side of the page, pointing towards a glowing network of white nodes and lines on a dark blue background. The network is composed of numerous small white circles connected by thin white lines, creating a complex web-like structure. The background is a gradient of blue, with the hand and network appearing to be in the foreground.

What DX isn't...

However, this is not about 'technology for technologies sake', you need to think about what is available, what you are trying to achieve in and for your organisation, then test your thinking, concepts, determine your ideal outcomes and establish what your people are good at - even those who do not want to change need to find their role where they can thrive...

This publication is not meant to be comprehensive or exhaustive, simply because each industry or sector's requirements will differ, and it will change again by the time this document is finished and distributed. Its focus is primarily on the key assets of a business or organisation i.e. its documents and document-driven business processes. It includes collaborative and mobile working, information sharing, data security and developing that ecosystem of partners and vendors - 'trusted advisers and critical friends' - all necessary to be successful.

To assist you with your own personal and organisational DX journey, this publication therefore aims to provide thought leadership and reassurance, by offering a blend of practical experience and insights gained from over a century of inventing and innovating, combined with the vision and mission of Sharp, its customers and partners alike... Hopefully, it will reassure you that you are correctly doing more than you thought and are well on your way with DX!

Where to Begin and the Key Stages of Digital Transformation

From hard-copy security to easy cloud access, there are lots of new ways to run your business more efficiently.

Firstly, we need an acceptable and usable definition of what DX is, so we are all on the same page. Look up from this page for a moment and ask anyone in your place of work; “What do you think Digital Transformation is?” You will undoubtedly get a different answer each time you ask!

If we say: “DX is achieved by viewing your organisation holistically, leveraging the latest (Industry 4.0) connected technologies to improve both your customers’ experiences and your staffs’ work experiences, whilst improving your overall business efficiency”; then perhaps we get a sense of what this is all about.

When all said and done, at its heart DX is about business transformation and change. DX is a response to changing technologies and our adoption and use of them to effect change within our respective organisations. It is how people make changes and respond to those changes that characterise and define our respective DX journeys, not the technologies alone.

With the pace of change seemingly relentless and increasing with such rapidity to create an ‘always on - always connected lifestyle’, then just the thought of it all could be off-putting to those averse to change.



Envision.

What's the plan?

How do we break down all your DX considerations and concerns into manageable, deliverable, 'bite-sized chunks'?



Remember, this is still about transformation and change, not a quick, or one-off fix to an organisational problem, so effort must be owned, co-ordinated, controlled and sustained. It therefore cannot be overstated how essential it is to consider transformation initiatives organisation-wide and holistically, before becoming focussed on automating one business process at a time, or a silo approach may prevail.

Being holistic means any discrete, specialist or standalone services are recognised and incorporated into the overall vision, rather than automatically being viewed as out of scope. Potential and unintended consequences of transforming a process, without this level of consideration and analysis, could be an adverse effect on existing systems and processes, and the people who support or access them.

Taking a holistic approach to your operations, to see all its facets - good and bad, will underpin your overall vision and your ability to continue to deliver expected innovation and rapid change, whilst maintaining reliable and consistent performance.

It also means you avoid the possibility of losing sight of what you have already achieved, and still need to achieve, during your own transformational journey. So be prepared and take nothing for granted as you examine your organisational processes and consider its prevailing culture.

Develop an Ecosystem of Support

DX is not something that can be achieved overnight, or simply on your own.

Critical to success is developing an ecosystem of internal subject matter experts and champions, in conjunction with like-minded peer groups and external strategic partners and vendors: your 'trusted advisers and critical friends'. Building your network is another critical success factor. To be authentic your network should not be formed of those that simply agree with you.

Having Board-level commitment and support is an absolute necessity from the outset, with strategy and funding agreed, understood and sustained throughout, underpinned by your Programme and Project Management Office (PMO) approach. Looking for natural champions, who can and want to drive change through your organisation, often uncovers latent talent just waiting for the right opportunity to shine.

Piloting a transformational project with a dedicated team or division can accelerate development, by taking areas of existing best practice to build a 'centre of excellence'.

Whether staff or customer, participating and interacting are our goals through coordination, collaboration and cooperation.



Change Management and Communicating Change



Project and Programme Management Office (PMO) is essential for transformation to succeed completely - but it is often overlooked. Marketing and a Communication Strategy - for staff and customers - ensures engagement starts early, continues regularly, feeds back along the way to maintain a sustained and vested interest in positive outcomes for all stakeholders.

How many times have we heard about a new initiative, where our feedback was important, and on occasion wondered what happened with it?

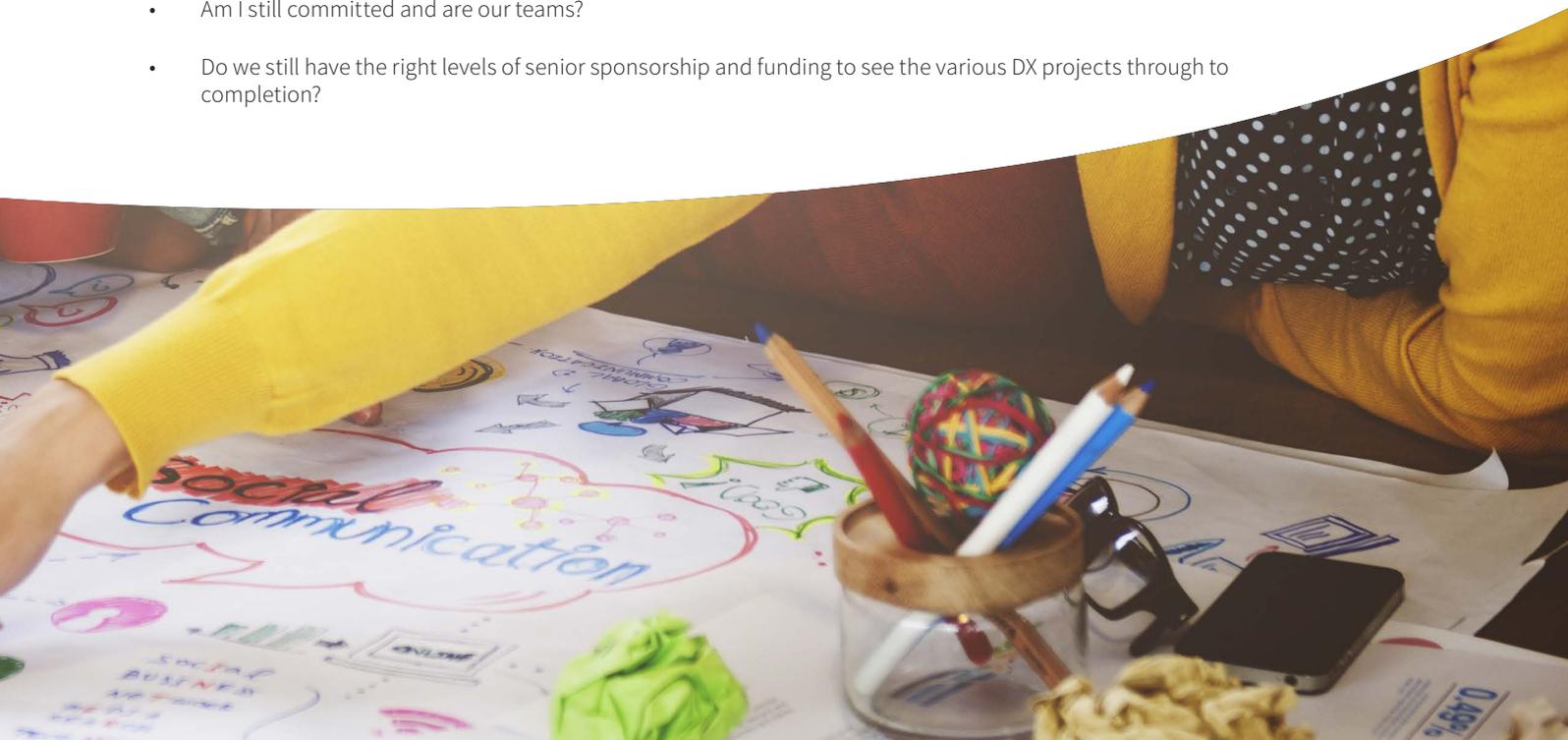


Continuous Assessment

A moment for introspection and review

Assuming you have already begun your own DX journey to some degree, including taking a moment to be introspective, then there are questions that should reasonably be asked, and continue to be asked, as part of an ongoing assessment, so that corrective action can be taken early, and successes are celebrated:

- Where is our plan - what is our strategy - what are the concepts - do we have example 'use-cases' - who has the roadmap - why are we doing this and are all the reasons still clearly defined and understood by all?
- What does success look like?
- Are we thriving or just surviving from the changes we have made?
- Does everyone in our organisation know about the plan now and are they suitably engaged and on board?
Check - by asking a colleague today what they know about your Digital Transformation plans as part of also asking; "what do you think Digital Transformation is?"
- As important; does everyone involved in the project know each other (see also Virtual Teams and Communications Strategy) and what they do??
- Where exactly are we on our transformation journey?
- What have we learned so far - experiences both good and bad; expectations versus realisations?
- What business process transformation(s) are we (still) trying to achieve through digital transformation?
- What is our current level of 'Digital Maturity'?
- Are we still following in the footsteps of others (safer) or do we want to be at the vanguard (riskier)?
- Is the DX project still relevant and viable?
- Am I still committed and are our teams?
- Do we still have the right levels of senior sponsorship and funding to see the various DX projects through to completion?



Digitise and Digitalise with Sharp Business Systems

Moving away from manual repetitive error-prone processes and a reliance on paper is still one of the first steps with DX, for most.

2020 is the 45th year since the notion of the paperless office was first mooted, but we are not quite there yet. Print is only one channel in an increasingly omni-channel social and business context. Yet people still like paper, and there are many studies on the 'affordances of paper' with positive reasons why paper is still used so extensively today - and will no doubt continue long into the future.

So, is 'simply' moving to 'paperless' or 'paper-lite' ways of working, easy or realistic? Yes, it is - but we still want choice with that because of our personal preferences.

Have you ever travelled using e-tickets, emails and apps perhaps - but then printed out some items just in case systems are down? Having a paper version can be reassuring. So, it's not surprising, for example, that our print management software reports 'boarding passes' as a frequent document type when analysing and reducing print usage, as part of making data-driven decisions.

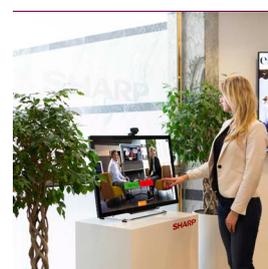
Consider if a paper document in your organisation has ever gone 'missing', been accidentally defaced or destroyed and you've thought, "if only I had a digital copy". Trying to defend this loss to a valuable customer, which in turn delays payment, or other action, losing some of their confidence in your organisation's abilities to manage their information too. Our class-leading portfolio of document management and capture solutions makes this a simple digital reality.



Collaboration and mobile working sharing paper-based information is unrealistic and too slow to be effective in a fast-paced working environment today. Travelling just to be present at meetings has negative connotations when justifying 'green ways of working' and reducing your carbon footprint. We also recognise the frustration of arriving at meetings and having 'technical difficulties' that prevent the meeting beginning - plus the constant need to swap cables if various team members or visitors need to present too.

Sharp's innovative Virtual Meeting Room (VMR) and 4K or 8K resolution touch-screen display technologies offer the perfect solutions, along with its Optimised Visitor Management Systems, Digital Content-Driven Signage, Meeting and Training Room Solutions that all bring Digital Transformation to every working space. Our collaboration with Microsoft has produced the Windows Collaboration Display (WCD) utilising Azure Digital Twins via in-built IoT sensors. A single USB-C cable ensures a genuine walk-in, plug-in and work together experience.

Everyone is at different stages of development and transformation, that's natural. It's why, for example, you might check-in your car at a hotel reception using a tablet display, because your vehicle triggered the hotel car park's ANPR system (automatic number plate recognition) when you arrived, but you might still sign a piece of paper with a pen to check yourself in!



What stage are you at?

'DX' - MOVING FROM PRODUCT CENTRICITY TO CUSTOMER CENTRICITY

STAGE ONE

Document management focus mostly on printed output and simple scanning workflows with break-fix support.

Print devices being reactively monitored, with little or no management information provided, meaning data-led decisions are not possible.

Visual solutions are typically reliant on non-touch screens and static content that extends visibility of organisational web content - but is not interactive.

Multi-channel physical and digital channels of communication are under - developed and not joined up.

Silo working, siloed systems and data continue that prevents reliable data-driven decisions from being effectively made.

STAGE TWO

Transitioning printing, copying, faxing and scanning infrastructure to a single Managed Print & Document Services provider with comprehensive device and user reporting via print management workflows as standard.

Advanced scanning into collaboration platforms.

Some Hybrid Mail utilisation to optimise outbound document provision moving away from localised printing.

Consideration to digitising inbound mail.

Web content distributed digitally via professional screens and signage.

Digital communications utilising Web, SMS and Apps in early development...

STAGE THREE

Optimisation of inbound and outbound mail and communications partly achieved through Hybrid Mail with SMS integration and simple Digital Mail Room processes. Digital delivery is now an option - printing is still a choice - not the default.

Business improvements are developed through audit and data analysis along with the creation and implementation of rules-based Print & Mail Policies.

Holistically managing documents, print and visual solutions infrastructure including IT elements enabling a secure mobile workforce that embraces BYOD and BYOC and collaboration.

Customer experiences via Apps and self-service web portals now the norm.

Reduced reliance on paper underpins organisational strategies and policies for the Environment, Sustainability, CSR, GDPR...

STAGE FOUR

Organisation is customer centric and holistic in its approach digitising document and information-driven processes to deliver omni-channels services bringing together Web-content, SMS and Apps.

Paperless Virtual Learning and Meeting environments are the norm offering coordinated cross site and distributed team collaboration and cooperation.

Optimised meeting spaces achieved utilising the latest display screens with in-built AIoT capability.

Multi-functional devices are not at the end of a process - but integral in capturing and routing electronic documents and content into Line of Business systems.

Highly automated document processes and data-driven decisions achieved with Robotic Process Automation (RPA), Machine Learning (ML) and Artificial Intelligence (AI)...

This is 'Digital by Design'

TRANSITIONING MPS TO MANAGED DOCUMENT AND WORKFLOW SERVICES

Sharp's Approach to Digital Transformation

At Sharp to 'Be Original' means to think for yourself and never give up.

Our mission is to help our customers create their own workplace of the future by assisting them with successfully implementing their DX projects.

How do Sharp achieve this? Using advanced technologies and a commitment to innovation, quality, value and design. Sharp products are created to help individuals, and enterprise teams alike, to connect effortlessly, communicate clearly and unleash creativity.

Our ideal connected workplace incorporates all our products and services - producing complete seamless solutions.

We also accept that we cannot fulfil everything ourselves on your DX journey. We work with expert industry partners, through our approved 'Sharp Connect Partner Program' as part of our own DX ecosystem.





The How

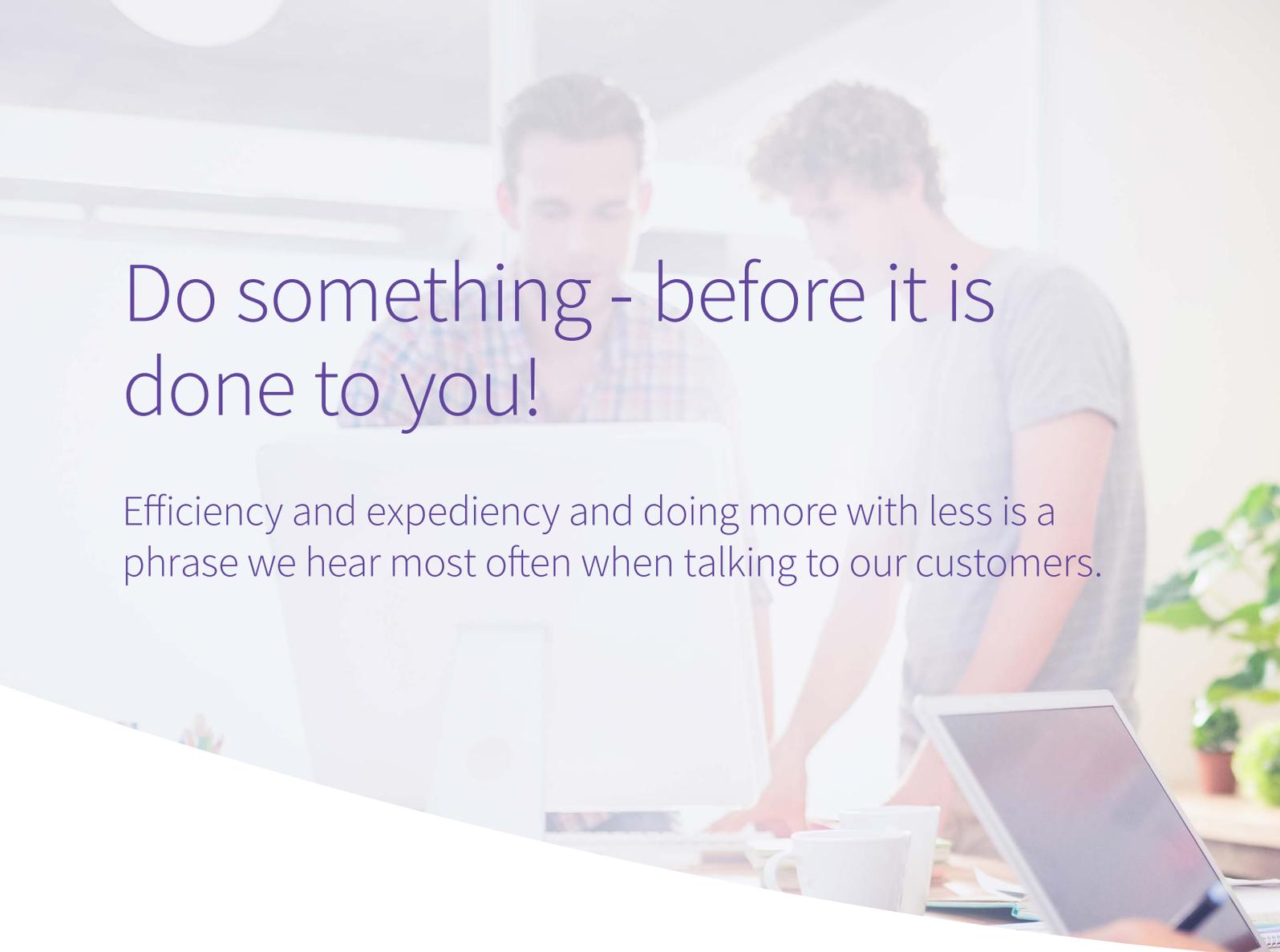
First-steps are achieved by identifying - then converting cumbersome, error-prone, complex paper-driven workflows, that may also rely heavily on human decisions, into highly-automated smooth-running digital processes often starting with Human Resources, Finance, Sales or Distribution.

This is just the beginning however, and the adoption of new technologies to go beyond document automation and digitisation is required to benefit from digitalisation at every stage, from creation to archive.

Identifying those processes initially relies on you - the process owner - to review, analyse and act. As we said earlier - you are unlikely to be able to do everything yourself just because of the need to keep everything else working. Reaching out to Sharp's Professional Services Consultants could augment your own specialist teams to get to the heart of the matter and then design the solution. Our range of specialised audits examine your printing devices, document processes and their security. We can help you create 'as-is' Workflow Process Mapping to multi-layered executable 'future-state' plans and cost-benefit analysis.

If you don't already have identified pain points that you are working on, then you could begin by thinking about your current organisation by taking a 'virtual walk', or better still a real walk, from arriving at the car park, through reception, to your office and then on to your print and mail rooms, if you have them, and onto goods-in-out. Consider objectively the information you are presented with, that helps or hinders you getting to where you need to be, combined with the various interactions you experience as a member of staff or visitor. Consider then how information flows into, through and out of your organisation to see where best practice exists or bottle-necks occur.





Do something - before it is done to you!

Efficiency and expediency and doing more with less is a phrase we hear most often when talking to our customers.

There are many publicised examples and ‘post-mortems’ of outwardly successful high-profile brands failing and believing they did nothing wrong even when the business was lost.

Nokia (pre Microsoft acquisition)

Most early users of mobile phones will remember, perhaps even fondly, Nokia phones in the 90s. Easy to use, tough and very successful and an instantly recognisable ringtone - even now. Current users will think of those original and iconic 3310s as ‘retro’ today, but it’s enjoyed a recent revival nonetheless, perhaps in an ironic way though, because you have to forget all those gestures you’ve learnt with your smartphone and press ‘real buttons’, but you do get ‘snake’ plus the incredible battery life! Nokia also recognised the future of IoT before it’s time, developed early smart phones before the turn of the century

and the camera phone shortly after. So, what happened? A combination of hardware outstripping the operating systems usefulness - with too late a response, or leap of faith when the smart phone market shifted; a greater focus on performance and measurement above a balanced ratio of continuous innovation and development too. Left with the lower-end of the market they met plenty of smaller vendors they did not anticipate ever competing with.

Blockbuster

Part of Blockbuster’s failing was ‘enjoying’ high earnings by punishing its customers with late fee charges for not returning films on time. When the opportunity to embrace an online subscription postal DVD model with Netflix was presented, it chose to refuse at the time and continue the way it always had.



Netflix successfully moved from DVD rental to streaming services whilst Blockbuster continued to decline and ultimately closed its doors for good just over 10 years after meeting with fledgling Netflix, which was reportedly offered to Blockbuster for 'just' \$50M at the time and today is worth more than \$100BN with over 50M subscribers to its services.

Kodak

Silo mentality! Silos are often protected and self-serving, especially if - as in Kodak's case, the biggest silo by dominance in their market i.e. film production and camera manufacturing - is favoured over a smaller innovative silo i.e. the one that invented the digital camera in 1975.

In 2012 Kodak was bankrupt - it held back the launch of its digital camera arguably until it was too late to save it from the huge decline in film sales, because digital cameras had revolutionised photography.

The above examples are highly abridged 'tales of woe' and opportunities to be great that were missed or not taken, but what have we learned? Do you already know and understand your customer networks and your internal networks that ensure that you get traction with ideas, rather than possibly being undermined or usurped at a crucial moment?

Are you receptive, responsive and ultimately prepared to change your business model, to reflect the necessary changes that your customers and staff demands that are driving your adoption or consideration of DX? It could be time to re-examine what you do.



Next Steps, First Steps, 'Baby Steps' or 'Bold Leaps of Faith'; still not sure?

With the pace of technological change ever increasing, will we ever truly be digitally mature? Do some of us still hark for simpler times? Or, do we accept and embrace the reality that digital transformation is ongoing, it's not going away, there's no clearly defined endpoint - but has many stages along the way. All of this is simply due to the constantly evolving nature of technology, because of the indefatigable ingenuity of humans, and the necessity of organisations to adapt and transform to be relevant and viable long-term, and to consistently deliver a great customer experience.

And let's not forget that a simple 'like' or positive review via social media, or your website, is a little bit like getting a gold star on a good piece of work completed as a child. It felt good then and it seems we never quite lost how that feels - even as business owners today.

If you are already well on your way with your own Digital Transformation Strategy, but not quite there yet, or simply need support, product or solution ideas to move your initiatives forward; then call your Sharp Account Manager today and we will be happy to help!

With our leading print and collaborative technologies, excellence in optimised document capture and workflow solutions, we ensure customer interaction and engagement is achieved.

Sharp Business Systems working with you all the way on your Digital Transformation journey.

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