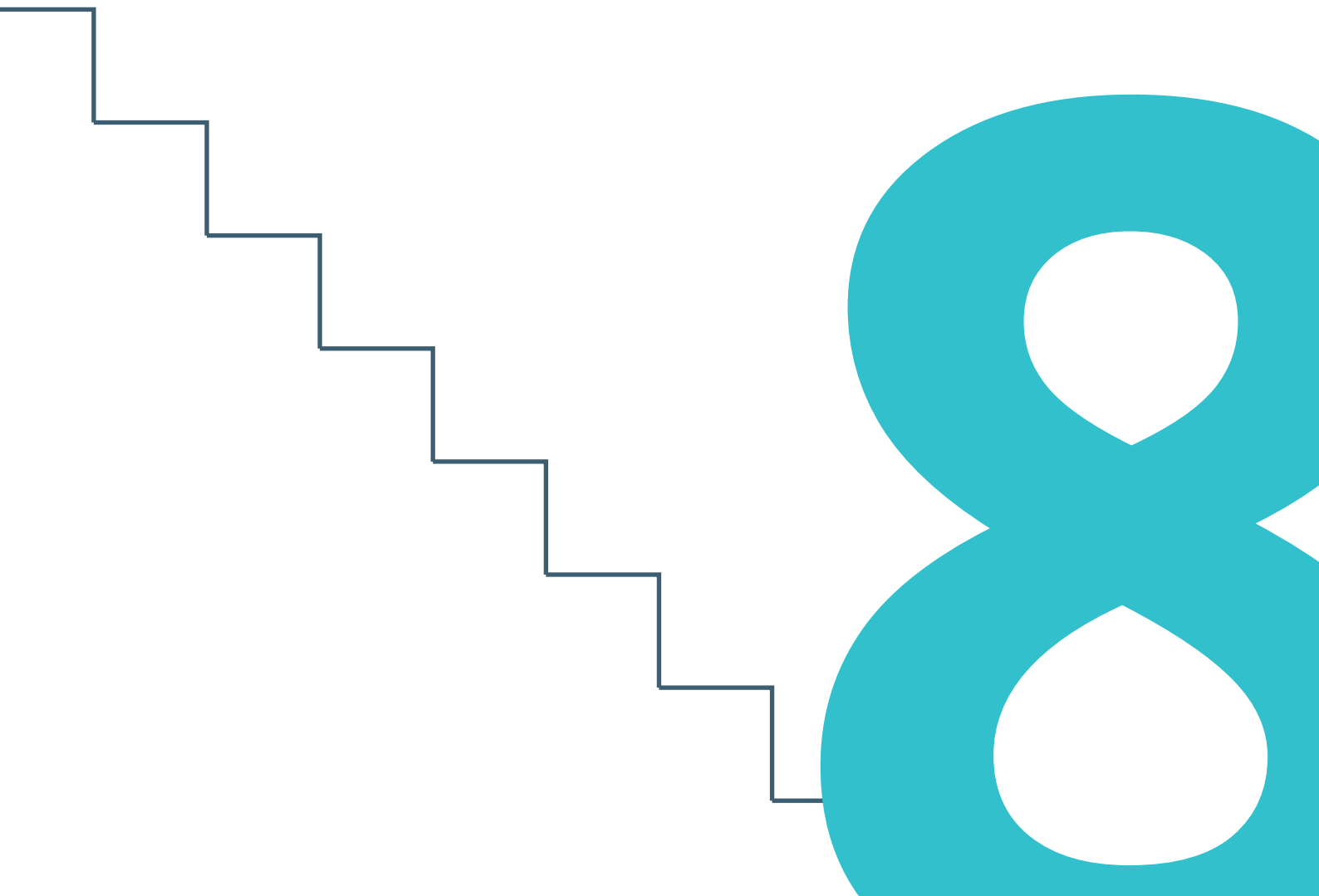


The 8 step plan to build a digital culture

Martin Talks



Introduction

The key to driving digital transformation is culture. And that's where many businesses fail. This report outlines the essential steps to establish a sound digital culture.

Embedding new ways of thinking and collaboration throughout organisations isn't easy. But it is essential to adopting true, lasting digital transformation in your organization.

In fact, culture has been identified as the number one barrier to digital transformation.

Fig 1: Altimeter Group¹

THE TOP CHALLENGES FACING DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION



The Cambridge Dictionary defines culture as:

'the way of life, especially the general customs and beliefs, of a particular group of people at a particular time'².

Effective digital transformation can never be achieved unless you build belief in your staff that digital can help your organisation, your people and society to achieve a positive future.

Below are eight steps to go about building a culture for the digital age in your organisation.

¹ <http://www.altimetergroup.com/2014/07/the-2014-state-of-digital-transformation/>
² <http://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/culture>

1

Define your organisation's digital values

Bring an open state of mind to defining digital. 'Digital' is far more than technology, a process or a mission statement; it is a state of mind, a way of doing things, a belief system.

A digital culture is a belief that by being more collaborative, connected, adaptive, flexible, data driven, transparent, diverse and open that we can create more positive futures for ourselves, our businesses and our societies. Every organisation's take on what that specifically means for them can differ. But a key to building an effective digital culture is agreeing what your organisation's core digital values are.

Your organisation may already have a set of values or beliefs. These should be considered and matched against core digital qualities like being collaborative and connected. But this shouldn't be purely a management exercise. Include the views of your people and wider stakeholders to create a holistic and inclusive set of values of which everyone can have a sense of ownership.

2

Assess where you are now

You already have a culture within your organisation and there will be many aspects you wish to keep. But to what extent does your organisation act in a way consistent with your digital values?

Carry out an assessment of your organisation's capabilities and create a GAP analysis of where you might be doing well or falling short:

Technology: do you have the tools necessary to deliver on your digital values? Too often the technology provided by organisations is far worse than their staff use at home. Not only will this hamper productivity, but your people's belief in digital at work.

Processes: the digital world moves fast - are you set up for speed in decision making and action? Re-examine your processes and see if they are too linear, too top heavy and too slow.

People: are your people empowered? Unless your people are equipped with the right skills, the freedom to get on with what they do best and the belief that what they are doing is significant, you will always be pushing water uphill.

3

Tool up with technology

A digital culture is not all about technology, but technology still forms a vital part of the mixture of elements required.

- Invest in technology that enables your staff to learn new skills, relate to your customers and be the best they can be.
- Consider BYOD (Bring Your Own Device to work) as a solution to any shortfall in the technology your organisation may have and what is desirable. Weigh up security and privacy issues with the benefits of the greater capability, adoption and flexibility that BYOD can deliver.

- Create opportunities for staff to be exposed to new technologies from virtual reality to wearable technology. Physically using virtual technologies removes barriers such as fear, confusion and misunderstanding. Technology such as virtual reality viewers based on Google Cardboard can cost as little as a few pounds so this need not be an expensive exercise.
- Embrace collaborative technologies to connect people in diverse locations, but be wary of creating new organisational silos.

4

Perfect your processes

Core values of digital include collaboration and openness to ideas.

- Consider how you can enable processes that are inclusive of ideas that can come from anywhere in an organisation. Consider the wider ecosystem of partners, suppliers and customers too. This will not only expand your creativity, but provide insights driven from real experience.
- Decisions will be required in any organisation, but get away from the HIPPO (Highest Paid Person in the Organisation) calling all the shots as often that person is not a digital native.

- Be data driven in all you do rather than relying on subjective opinion as this will be subject to a range of behavioural biases.
- Be agile in getting things done. Consider Amazon's 'two pizza team' rule where teams should be no bigger than can be fed by two pizzas. Bigger teams can be cumbersome to manage and find it harder to come to a consensus.

5

Enable your people

To spur a digital culture, you cannot just perform a software update to your staff. It is a matter of winning hearts and minds.

Training:

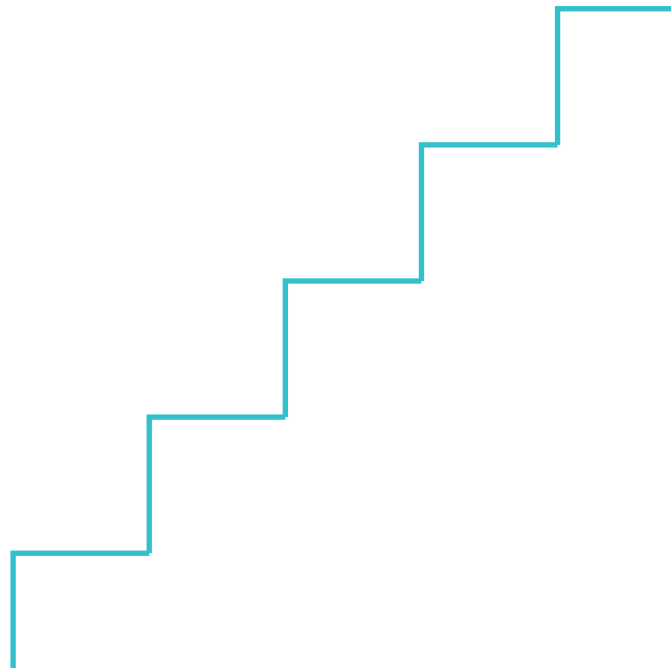
- Formal training in new technologies, processes and ways of thinking will help give confidence to staff and kick-start new behaviours.
- Initiatives such as reverse mentoring with your 'digital native' staff can not only be enlightening, but empowering to a more open culture.
- Facilitate continuous learning by staff through a range of resources. In many ways we need to relearn how to learn. Giving your people the means to do so in their own time will benefit this.

Empowerment:

- Trusting staff is not always instinctual within organisations who are used to 'bums on seats', timesheets and annual reviews, but enabling flexibility in hours, location and performance will be repaid with loyalty, enthusiasm and initiative.
- Encourage curiosity and sharing, both online and offline.

Purpose:

- Millennials in particular are looking for more significance in what they do. They want to know how what they do helps deliver on a greater purpose. If that purpose has a strong element of social good then all the better. Defining and operating to a purpose requires the nourishment of a culture through which behaviours needed to deliver that purpose can flourish.



6

Know that it's not all about digital

Counter-intuitive though it may sound, a digital culture is not all about digital. In an 'always-on' world staff can burn out, lose their creative edge and get sick. They can lose their belief in digital benefitting them and their organisation.

It has been calculated that after-hours emailing alone effectively cancels out our entire annual holiday allowance³.

Encourage your staff to take breaks from digital to recharge their batteries, give them time to think and encourage human interaction.

Ideas include:

- Yoga, mindfulness and massage sessions
- Encourage lunch breaks away from desks, perhaps including lunch clubs
- Respect out of hours where possible. The French Government has recognised this and is legislating to stop after hours work emails⁴.
- Consider the physical environment as well as the virtual. Create places to collaborate, informally meet, move about and discuss.
- Get your staff physically together even if they are normally in remote locations. Take your team on a digital detoxing adventure to kickstart a fresh approach to creativity, communication and team bonding.

³ <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/newstoppers/howaboutthat/12094025/Workers-after-hours-emails-cancel-out-entire-annual-leave-allowance.html>
⁴ <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/magazine-36249647>

7

Develop your leaders for the digital age

Digital has changed everything, including leadership. Gone are the days when the leader knows everything and can effectively steer the ship through command and control. New leadership values need to reflect your digital values and should include:

- Openness to ideas
- Transparency
- Networked thinking
- Leading by example not managing by authority
- Giving permission to fail
- Data driven
- Always learning

Developing new expectations of leadership within organisations and getting their adoption and support of the digital values is key to effective digital culture change.

To help leaders with this, AVADO provide intensive one- and two-day face-to-face Bootcamp sessions for senior teams and a six-month Executive Diploma in Digital Business, delivered online for individual leaders to collaborate with peers around the world.

8

Ensure your organisation is aligned

Digital, by its nature, is connected. Ensure that your organisation is connected and aligned behind your digital values.

Your culture will form the foundation of your success and give you a true competitive advantage. As Peter Drukker said: 'Culture eats strategy for breakfast'. What he meant by that was that competitors can relatively easily replicate a strategy, but a culture is much harder to copy as it is made up of more fluid parts.

Exhibit: Culture at the core



Finally, never stop working on your culture

There have in recent months been many dramatic predictions about the future of work.

Artificial intelligence and robots, in particular, have reared their heads. The Bank of England's chief economist predicted that robots could replace 15 million British workers. That's nearly half those currently employed in the UK⁵. The figure was taken from the Bank of England's study into widespread automation. And there have been similar predictions coming out of Davos⁶.

With the rise of the algorithm as a key decision engine for people, processes and products, it could be argued that the future of culture is not human at all. But whatever one's view on the future, we all know that we live in times of rapid change. Driven by Moore's Law⁷, the decreasing of technology costs and the increasing spread of connectivity in people and things, we can expect great change in our world. Your culture needs to keep in step with the changes around you. It is a work in progress. But it can do this while staying true to your core digital values.

Above all, the challenge for our time is to create cultures that bring together the best of technology and the best of humanity. And that is a challenge for companies right now as well as the future.

⁵ <http://www.wired.co.uk/news/archive/2015-11/13/will-robots-take-your-job>

⁶ <https://www.weforum.org/events/world-economic-forum-annual-meeting-2016/sessions/the-state-of-artificial-intelligence/>

⁷ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Moore%27s_law

Who are we?

[AVADO](#) creates learning that transforms people, companies, even industries.

Focusing on data-driven learning that creates real results, AVADO partners with disruptive industry brands such as Google and leading accrediting bodies (CIPD, AAT, ACCA) to deliver learning platforms, training solutions and professional qualifications to thousands of individuals and companies every year.

Founded by tech entrepreneurs and rooted in education, AVADO has become the category leader for digital transformation and digital leadership training. They run online courses and immersive workshops that help leaders and their employees to understand the digital world, and to equip themselves with the confidence and toolkit to succeed.

AVADO has more than 250 staff in offices in London, New York and Singapore and a global network of subject matter experts in 50+ countries.

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