

# Five steps to effective digital strategy implementation

By [John Tadman](#)

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In today's highly competitive market, companies need to recognise and capture the diverse skills and expertise of the entire workforce to deliver results. Digital technologies have the capacity to enable everyone within an organisation to be more productive and innovative - from the newest intern to the most seasoned member of staff. However, embracing digital is uncharted territory for many organisations, so implementing an enterprise digital strategy can represent a challenge.



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As we talk to clients globally, many admit to being confused about what a digital strategy actually is, who should own it, and how it should be implemented. Additionally, a common mistake organisation often make is to start with what digital can do and then look to build a strategy around the technology.

To establish an effective enterprise-wide digital strategy, Avanade recommends organisations first formulate a business case for an enterprise-wide digital strategy aligned closely with corporate objectives. The board and CEO should sponsor the digital strategy and timings for implementation, based on business priorities.

Here are five steps to help your organisation develop an enterprise-wide strategy to drive sustainable digital transformation:

## 1. Articulate a vision

Develop a vision that articulates why it's critical to transform to a digital business, and how undertaking the transition will help achieve the organisation's goals. It should be inspirational in tone and emphasise how employees will be able to perform their roles more effectively and innovate for the business. After all, a business must be digital on the inside in order to be digital on the outside.

## 2. Build senior support

C-suite governance is necessary to balance the dual – and often competing – challenges of business stability and innovation that arise when implementing an enterprise digital strategy. Buy-in from the C-suite is essential to align current imperatives with the organisation's vision for the future.

## 3. Chart an agile journey

It's important to remember that digital transformation should be built on incremental steps – from A to B, B to C, and so forth. A preparedness to pilot small innovations and then iterate is integral to an enterprise-wide digital strategy: in our hyper-connected world, there is no time to structure and implement a strategy over multiple years. Instead, organisations should embrace a fail-fast philosophy that encourages more experimentation and risk-taking to innovate and differentiate.

## 4. Establish structures and processes to drive change

According to [recent research from Avanade](#), 90% of business and IT leaders globally believe that their organisation's workforce will need to change substantially by 2020 as smart technologies become more widely used. It is therefore not a case of 'if' smart machines will enter the workforce, but 'how' these technologies can be used to enhance humans and human judgment and actions. Far from making humans obsolete, this augmented workforce will require a digital strategy that enables better collaboration, critical thinking and problem-solving. The bottom line: keep people front and centre.

## 5. Convert data to value

Modern business leaders have access to more information than ever before, but research shows that only one per cent of data globally is analysed. Data itself is meaningless if it can't be harnessed to drive business decision making, so translating information to insights should be a key driver of an enterprise-wide digital strategy.

While the fundamental business operating model changes required to implement an effective enterprise-wide digital strategy can be daunting, the cost of failing to do so is market irrelevance. Following these five steps will help your organisation transform all of the interactions of its customers and employees into digitally empowered experiences. The most important step in the digital transformation journey is to start.

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

John Tadman, Country General Manager for Avanade South Africa

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