

Avoid disruption, reach 'techquilibrium' in any industry

 By Leigh Andrews

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The opening keynote of Gartner Symposium 2019 was a comprehensive session on 'winning in the turns' through leadership in a digital society. See key outtakes from Gartner senior vice president Valentin Sribar on reaching 'techquilibrium' below.



Techquilibrium, as explained at Gartner Symposium 2019. Image via Hypertext Africa on [Twitter](#).

Sribar began with a reminder that it's been 50 years since the first message was sent over the Arpanet, which was the forerunner to today's internet.

While he expects the next five years to bring as much change as the past fifty, he also feels that with that change comes increasing uncertainty, especially when it comes to digital customer expectations.

Changing role of the CIO

Luckily, technology-enabled connectedness has put IT leaders in a unique position to help design the next 50 years, and chief information officers or CIOs can leverage today's technology accelerators as well as organisational agility to turn what may have first presented as dilemmas into opportunities by adapting to change faster than ever before.

The session explained the changing role of the CIO and IT itself as an industry operating in an increasingly digital society.

“Of course, change means challenges, with the newtype of dilemma emerging that sees two opposing forces attempting to pull apart the decision-maker as both decisions are important to your success, especially in times of economic uncertainty - for example, there's huge focus right now on driving valuable insights from data, while also being ethical in how you use that data.”

But this is no longer an 'either-or' decision to make. Both options can create value when done together - and doing so is a means of reaching 'techquilibrium'.

Techquilibrium, defined

“ *Techquilibrium: The balance point when your business model drives value from the right mix of traditional business and digital technology.* ”

Sribar explained that well-equipped business leaders know when to brake and when to accelerate when facing the twists and turns along the road. Right now, the bulk of those challenges are both geopolitical and economic. Approaching them with extreme caution and rigidity only increases the chance of a crash when you make that turn in the road, which is why it's important to put a spotlight on techquilibrium and how to best achieve it in your own company.

There will be a different techquilibrium point for different businesses operating in industries, so there's no cut and dried formula to copy-paste, but the business leaders who successfully make these manoeuvres are the ones that will lead their businesses into the future, as the industry disrupts around them.

“ *"Attaining [#techquilibrium](#) takes about 7 years. With each turn in the industry, the techquilibrium point changes."* ~ Valentin Sribar, senior VP [@Gartner_inc](#) at [#GartnerSYM](#), Cape Town ~ <https://t.co/aDIRZzzCOu> — IT-Online (@ITOnlineSA) [September 16, 2019](#) ”

Whenever there's an industry disruption, we slowly accept the changes, and society slowly sets new boundaries - when that momentum grows, that's when the whole industry shifts to a new techquilibrium.

When disruption strikes...

The further your business is from your industry's point of techquilibrium, the more likely it is that you'll be disrupted, warned Sribar.

Looking to the future, how do you know which turns lie ahead and how to handle them? Sribar said it's best for CIOs to think like designers in this regard and anticipate what may come, designing for more frequent turns along the road by factoring in AI and analytics, to find the golden few insights that will make a difference.

Taking the time to do this scenario planning effectively will leave your business more likely to win in the turns.

“ *Gartner explains that TechQuilibrium takes seven years to come to fruition, even for digital giants. Sribar points to Apple as an example, which is now entering the financial services space with Apple Card. [#GartnerSYM](#)* ”

pic.twitter.com/T2KptrJ9iS— Hypertext (@htxtafrica) [September 16, 2019](#) ”

You'll also have a clearer idea of when to cut and when to forge ahead with innovation, as the data gives you better situational awareness, as you analyse then execute.

Be sure to align and test those insights within the different geopolitical boundaries you operate in, as that's the specific context of the scenery along the road that may present new obstacles.

Sribar ended with a reminder that technology is more than IT, as IT people have become more business-savvy and businesspeople have become more IT-savvy in recent years.



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To effectively transform dilemmas into opportunities, as it's no longer an 'either-or' situation where you choose the best of two routes and hope for the best.

Decide on your techquilibrium point, then execute. In doing so, you can hold onto your legacy values with pivoting towards the future, effectively functioning as both traditional companies and technological company at the same time.

Watch the [#GartnerSYM hashtag](#) for further coverage of the Gartner Symposium.

ABOUT LEIGH ANDREWS

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