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# Cultivate a digital-first mindset

## Spell out a vision that will resonate with employees

At the turn of the 21st century, most companies didn't need a digital strategy in order to succeed. The business landscape involved lots of custom software, minimal data-sharing, little online shopping and no mobile markets.

Fast forward a decade, and the norm today involves e-commerce and mobile apps. Fail to keep up, and businesses risk being left behind.

In this increasingly digital age, innovations are transforming the world in which we live, play and work. In order to stay competitive, it is important for companies to keep up and move at the speed of the connected consumer.

The digital era promises rapid innovation and seamless collaboration. However, relying on technology alone is not enough in today's rapidly changing business landscape. The engine for success is talented people.

Leveraging talent with digital capabilities forms the antidote to slow innovation cycles and can help instil a culture of speed in response to today's dynamic and volatile business world.

### TALENT ACQUISITION WITH A DIGITAL-FIRST MINDSET

Attracting and managing the talent needed to make this shift will be radically different from what

worked in the past.

Technology matters a lot because new technologies will impact how knowledge work is organised, distributed and completed. Human talent must adapt to this new reality.

The workforce of the future, therefore, must evolve amid a digital revolution that will undoubtedly upend revenue flows, business models and cost structures.

Since the digital world is the primary driver of all business success today, and change starts from the top, managers need to make the first move in inculcating this mindset within their teams.

Here is what leaders at traditional companies can do to cultivate a digital-first mindset, proactive marketing and an electronically-empowered workforce:

### ARTICULATE VISION

The ideal approach to this problem is to create and articulate a vision for the company.

A digital transformation could apply to a wide spectrum of activities, such as using digital tools to speed employee evaluations and compensation, and enabling remote work and flexi-time opportunities with reporting and analytics to validate and recognise their accomplishments.

### ASSESS COMPANY CULTURE

Monitoring how employees interact and communicate tells you a lot about employee morale and the policies that frustrate their efforts.

Use storytelling, among other techniques, to start changing your narrative. As with all change, cultural transformations must start at the top.

Many companies have sought change by hiring junior-level employees from the millennial generation in the hope that their savvy behavior might percolate upwards. But it seldom works that way. Senior management cannot defer or delegate digital culture down the line but must lead from the front.

### SET CLEAR GOALS

These goals should create a sense of urgency and speak to the hearts and minds of employees – "50 per cent of leads online", "fully omnichannel within two years" or "launch two new consumer experience apps to enhance the satisfaction of younger customers" – rather than just serving as financial goals.

### TAKE ACTION

Management must also use highly visible and symbolic actions to emphasise the transformation to internal and external audiences.



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In this increasingly digital age, innovations are transforming the world in which we live, play and work.

Senior leaders must personally exemplify the new digital ways of working, communicating and collaborating. Simply put, the new mantra to adopt should be, "Be the change you wish to see in the world".

Be it baby boomers or millennials, building a digital-first mindset is important as it creates work environments in which technological expertise can develop across generations.

As a cross-discipline practice, companies should consider adopting these four primary functions to ensure that their digital future is building the right roster of skills.

Get it right and this new breed of talent can be used to harness innovation, drive customer co-creation and develop intercompany collaboration over time. This is why it is crucial to get the talent model right for the digital age.

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