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Digitize Corporate Culture to Increase Artificial Intelligence Impact

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Abstract

This article aims to show that, to more effectively use artificial intelligence to prosper, corporations also need to develop a digital culture. This article is not to present data and comes from our 30 years of observations and consulting work experience in the fields of organizational transformation and emerging technology in the world. In this article, we propose that organizations develop a digital culture to effectively address these concerns and increase the positive impacts of artificial intelligence technology in their corporations. The corporate world has never been the same since the invention of artificial intelligence technology and never will be. In today's AI-centric era, shaping equals transformation. Shaping means changing the shape. In the cyberspace of AI, real-time transformations take place on the stage. The emerging technology of artificial intelligence is a powerful weapon but a neutral agent, and executives in the US and the other developed world now have two options: develop a digital culture to use it or ignore such a culture to lose it. This is a position article in which we particularly show that if executives select to use artificial intelligence, they should be aware that there is also one concern regarding an effective transformation for AI: cultivating an effective digital culture for corporations.

Keywords: *Artificial Intelligence, Emerging Technologies, Digital Culture, Digital Leadership, Agile Companies, Design Thinking, Organizational Innovation, Organizational Effectiveness;*

1. Introduction

All management scholars and practitioners agree that change and transformation are two of the characteristics of this millennium. In the business world, those seeking mediocrity limit innovation and creativity. In the wake of COVID-19, electronic leadership created opportunities. Electronic leadership as a culture is needed today with many hybrid workers working from home two or three days a week. Now, leaders must prepare to change the culture to adapt to this new business method.

In this new business method, employees are either hired temporarily or are full-time but working hybrid or fully remotely (Belte, 2022; Stoker et al., 2022; Gratton, 2023). This causes both anxiety and a feeling of insecurity. Real estate shifted since COVID-19, and profits, in some industries, have not recovered. Just recently, Denny's Corporation, the diner restaurant chain, plans to shut 150 of its restaurants. Fifty lower-performing restaurants will close by the end of 2024, while the remaining one hundred will shut down next in 2025.

The new world of artificial intelligence (AI) has its roots in everything, organizations and employees that work for them are facing surprises, conflicts, and dead ends with no sign of survival. Research showed that 88% of the data-com companies believed that the internet would change all imaginable aspects of future business (Trittin-Ulbrich et al., 2021). Young people were becoming savvier than their senior colleagues because they grew up with electronics and had the wherewithal to feel confident with modern technology. The current generation of AI is also growing up in a revolutionary atmosphere, young people provide much more knowledge to society at a rapid rate.

The emergence of AI has opened wide opportunities for tech-savvy employees (Huang & Rust, 2018; Cardon et al., 2023; Brown, 2024; Ekuma, 2024). This also causes intergenerational tensions within the companies. Human resource managers are having to hire more tech-savvy generalists. The older employees want to keep things the same while the younger ones do not consider some of the systems used in the past not useful anymore. Older workers mistakenly equated experience with age and leadership scholars found that age does not determine leadership skill. To solve these intergenerational tensions, this article presents the solution of digital culture for corporations. Much of what we share in this article has been adapted from our book titled The Future of Business which summarizes our 30 years of consulting work experience across the globe and will be published in the Business Expert Press soon (Sayyadi & Provitera, 2025).

2. Corporate Culture in the Post-AI Corporate World

The five stages of career concepts include the linear type, the technical expert, the spiral type, and the transitional. Younger people are transitory and technical experts while the older workers are linear. Linear leaders feel that technical experts want to become linear. This backfires because technical experts may not desire to become leaders. This causes a bottleneck in the upward stride of the corporate ladder. Conflicts arise and tensions linger.

Successful companies represent all aspects of career concepts for both senior and junior employees (Stump, 1986; Lehtonen et al., 2022; Rautio & Uusiautti, 2024). The linear employees are leaders that offer both drive and ambition. The technical expert employees, usually middle managers, and supervisors, offer skill and artistry which is especially important for innovation and creativity. The spiral-type employees offer opportunities to gain experience

in new things in their specialty and bring the knowledge back to the organization. The young, more tech-savvy employee has mastered this function, but they may not be adequately praised and rewarded.

This is where the conflict arises between the senior employees and the young employees. The transient employees, while mostly overlooked and not important to senior leaders, are, at times, the most important group. Nurturing the transient employees can serve the organization well when the busy seasons occur which they are much needed when the organization has a large volume of customer traffic. Transient workers can be let go when the down period exists because these employees go on vacation or travel during down periods. The young workers who are paid well for their tech-savvy knowledge can not only earn a good living, but they can also reap the benefits of their high pay to travel and enjoy their careers.

The biggest problem with implementing this hiring and career planning culture mindset is that the linear employees often feel that the technical experts want to become leaders. This causes conflict because the technical experts may not have a desire to be in a leadership role. There are many strategies for talent management but the model above would be the most appropriate to implement today. The flexibility of the workforce can provide a solid bridge between AI technology, customer relationship management, and managing the product and service. This leads to more ability to innovate and create while maintaining a low-conflict workplace.

Many startups that do not know their users and their needs have not thought of special ways to use AI technology (Cukier, 2021; Kozinets & Gretzel, 2021; Narayan & Shestakofsky, 2024). Some startup organizations believe that AI will rewrite the rules of competition, change the traditional standards of organization management, and provide many opportunities for the growth of businesses. Organizations that are pessimistic will not survive over their optimistic competition. Organizations that are full of pessimists try not to enter the AI world as little as possible. Small changes cannot help the organization survive the big digital divide of AI. Victors must rethink and re-engineering the culture, and in many cases, retool the entire organization with the emerging technology of AI. Successful organizations are challenged with old ideas in the field of communication, decision-making, outdated work methods, and insignificant operations. In addition, compensating managerial behavior and rewarding and retaining employees is the road to success.

The established companies in AI today are divided into two main groups: the agile ones and the slow ones. This division is caused by the answers to the questions and their transformation (or not) in the field of using AI. Agile ones have brought the basic business to the AI field faster and earlier than the competitors and they are satisfied with the result of their work and reaching their goal. Slow ones start late and accept the least exploitation of AI. In such a way that they are left behind by their competitors and are unhappy with their achievements. Agile ones have accepted AI with open arms and considered it an opportunity to evaluate and improve the current business and other exploitations of modern technology. Thus, agile companies have dealt with the issue in an organized way and step by step. They do not wait for a unified and codified program to be announced and implemented by the top management. They try different experiences to reach the right process. Then the matter is transferred to the elevated level of the organization's leadership to get their support to stabilize the program and expand it to the whole country.

Efforts are being made to establish coordination and cooperation with the AI parts of the organization in agile companies. But slow ones face the issue and transformation very

uniquely. They start by denying the new phenomenon. Instead of asking and searching about the capabilities of this emerging technology, they make it seem less important and think that it can be forgotten or only used extraordinarily little. Instead of being flexible and arousing the organization's curiosity in understanding new differences, they allow their past victories to blind them and imagine that this case can be easily dealt with. Sometimes thoughts are accompanied by anger and blame. This situation only leads to wasting both organizational and human energy which increases the delay in developing the required organizational capabilities for AI.

The second stage of the work of slow ones is in the field of transformation, acceptance, and dealing with appearances. Instead of innovation and creativity, they often resort to imitation. Sometimes they also get infatuated with their small victories and underestimate their competitors. They do not deal with deep organizational transformations and when the agile ones reach innovation, they just deal with second-hand traditional. The big challenge in front of slow ones is to pass from the stage of external transformations to real and fundamental transformations. Research shows that the leadership of these companies only embraces it when they witness the obvious efficiency and profitability of this modern technology. Even agile companies need a decent effort to understand the environment and how the AI-oriented world works. The big challenge is to know how various parts act and react, which is quite different from the traditional process. In short, agile ones enter the AI field with a positive and hopeful vision and differently re-approach the fundamental factors of their culture. These factors include:

- They take the strategy of implementation and improvement exercises.
- They open the door to many partners.
- They integrate small cell-like organizations.
- They create a culture that attracts and maintains elites.

Organizations must create a capacity for themselves that will bring a chain of victory (Suchman, 1995; Kozlowski & Ilgen, 2006; Sonmez Cakir & Adiguzel, 2020; Barker Scott & Manning, 2024). For this, they need rebellious waves. Traditional management, like the program of traditional theaters, performs new or repeated plays based on a specific script in each section. Each actor is assigned a role and words that they must perform beautifully and always the same. The boundaries are marked in advance and any actor who crosses them will be criticized. Some companies still want to set up a complete program before starting to move. The post-AI corporate world is full of surprises. In our AI implementation project at Sony Group Corporation in Sydney Australia, a senior manager expressed: "We were working in an environment where everything was cal culated and clear in advance. The design and supply of each new product took 8 to 24 months. Now, in the design and supply chain units of the company, they are advancing at a speed that is difficult for many of us to keep up with." Innovation is inherently associated with initiative. Because you cannot know the reaction of people to something you have never seen, something that has not been invented yet, or something that has not happened, sometimes people have needs that they do not know well, or they cannot explain them, but as soon as they see, accepts.

The culture of innovation is the culture of the future. Following the method of innovative theaters is very suitable for working with AI. This technology encourages rapid changes. For two important and great reasons, leaders cannot wait until everything is ready and aligned, then give the order to move. First, the employees are not controllable, and some do what they

want. Second, delay is costly. The post-AI economy has shown that if it is too late, entry will be difficult, or at least costly. Therefore, if the next reform policy is in progress, any movement is better than standing still. It is better to react quickly than to complete before moving. Companies should put aside everything that hinders movement. You should not wait for a perfect plan, complete information, a careful review of what has happened, and fear of making a mistake. Digital culture requires learning, adaptability, and movement (Miller, 2011; Giles, 2018; Beer, 2019; Kocak &Pawlowski, 2023). Agile companies change quickly because they start on time. Agile companies ride on successive waves of transformation and creativity and embrace victories one after another.

In addition, today's established companies are forced to immediately open a path to the new world by hiring new actors and new stage designs. By going to the AI new world, companies gradually realize that they must revise traditional operations extensively. A question on two levels of complexity is raised before companies:

1. Limited level: how to organize your digital business?
2. Broad level: how to change the entire organization?

The first part requires a more convenient and sincere approach of the company to its customers. While the addressee of the second part of the question is the big challenges within the organization. Researchers have shown that agile companies are more flexible and cooperative, and by delegating more authority to employees, they operate very differently from conventional companies. In these companies:

- Units and departments cooperate instead of overlapping.
- They see encounters as opportunities for creativity.
- Employees are allowed to do anything.
- Decisions are made by those who are more knowledgeable instead of seniority.

Working in a digital culture requires the organization to behave like a purposeful and motivated society. Employees in society with the feeling of membership (instead of employment) in addition to performing their duties, also accept responsibility towards others. Organizational integration with the help of AI is different from the traditional centralized organization (Fountaine et al., 2019; Ångström et al., 2023; Birkstedt et al., 2023; Herrmann & Pfeiffer, 2023; Kolbjørnsrud, 2024). Here, we need the flexibility of the structure and empowerment of employees, which results in creativity and innovation. In AI, instead of a bureaucracy, we are facing a society. Bureaucracy has a pyramidal structure, pre-defined relationships, and command and control. Information flows from top to bottom and as needed by subordinates. In society, in addition to accepting written regulations and laws, members voluntarily undertake many other activities. It is possible that the society is specified in the map and diagram, but there are also emotional links. Society has both physical and mental factors. The traditional walls of separation of organizational units must fall to provide the basis for the creation and growth of society. It should also be noted that new walls should not be erected in the nascent society. Six factors are effective in creating a successful organizational society:

1. Aligned structure.
2. Common methods and discipline
3. Multi-channel multi-way communications

4. Integration
5. Cross-border communication
6. Common identity and common destiny

New challenges and life stability skills in digital culture are life in transformation, continuous transformation, moving forward, omnipresent and never-ending movement, and transformation as a condition of survival. Human capital, in general, like most humans, usually resists change, and leaders are forced to deal with AI transformation adversaries. There are at least nine reasons for opposing the transformations as follows:

1. Becoming anonymous, fear of credit reduction, loss of position.
2. Loss of control, transfer of power, and decision-making authority to others.
3. Uncertainty and ignorance about what will happen.
4. Being surprised, getting defensive, facing something without warning, and not having a chance to prepare. The existence of differences, unknowns, and inconsistency, change with the current habits and thought patterns of the person.
5. Doubt in victory, concern for the future, and the ability to continue winning.
6. Side effects, worry about affecting other activities and tasks.
7. Creating extra work, standing in front of new activities, new learning and not having enough time to do them.
8. Past resentments, the presence of unpleasant memories because of problems that have never been resolved.
9. Real threats, anger from causing pain, and harm to change.

Since it is possible to stand still even in safe and calm conditions, leaders must learn the skills to deal with the human aspects of this phenomenon in turbulent conditions. Digital culture needs leaders who have learned well how to jump over obstacles and turn obstacles into organizational commitment. Seven traditional skills are related to innovation-related transformation (expert skills in transformation):

- Harmony with the environment
- Open-minded
- Inspirational view
- Alliance creation
- Cultivating work teams
- Persistence in progressing difficult tasks.
- Crediting and appreciating expert skills.

In the AI transformation, there are no regular and orderly steps (Bonnet & Westerman, 2020; Wamba-Taguimdje et al., 2020; Nieto-Rodriguez & Viana Vargas, 2023). These steps cannot be taken regularly and consecutively. In today's fast-paced AI world, transformation steps go back and forth easily. Sometimes a group takes responsibility together, or sometimes people join an idea after it is formed, and sometimes they leave innovative ideas to a new leader to implement. The best personal characteristics of leaders that are used in any transformation

effort include initiative, self-confidence, passion, and the ability to convince others. Turning these human qualities into an efficient and successful company requires learning some lessons, which are:

- Strength, enthusiasm, and human personality are not enough, other people must also believe.
- Organize data in support of transformation. Make the background memorable and the point of view solid.
- Value the knowledge and experience of internal and external organizations. Use connections to source resources.
- It may take time to get support and start a wave of consecutive coalitions to spread your message as widely as possible.
- Try to minimize the damage to others because of transformation. Listen to those who stand. Sometimes they say things that you really need. Approach them and show that you are with them. If you cannot get them going, leave them out of the organization.
- Choose the movement song according to your conditions. Know the audience. Understand what comes from people and organizations and rely on them. But do not forget the acceleration and proper pressure.
- Persistence and standing work. Follow the execution of works.
- Moving with friends and talking with them. In the transformation process, try to make everyone feel good.

3. Design Thinking: A Key Suggestion for a Future with Emerging Technologies

However, we have found that one commonly used tool for fostering AI transformation and blockchain is design thinking. In our empirical research in Australia in 2025, we wanted 147 Australian managers to count the innovative tools of AI and blockchain transformations. 93 percent of them mentioned design thinking. It is an innovative process that enables individuals and organizations to solve problems and generate new and creative ideas. These ideas can be used to develop new opportunities and overcome challenges. Good leaders enhance their company and their followers' strengths. The organization and its stakeholders need to understand what is important for the company, including their vision, mission, values, and what differentiates it from their competitors.

For example, over many years of management consulting, a construction company in the Gulf sought our assistance in establishing a clear identity. Through design thinking, we uncovered the company's unique attributes by engaging key stakeholders, including managers and employees from various departments. Participants employed multiple ideation techniques, including Sinek's (2009) Golden Circle framework, to articulate what they do, how they do it, and, most importantly, why they do it (Straker & Nusem, 2019). While production processes can set a company apart from competitors, true differentiation lies in defining the underlying purpose, beyond financial gain, that drives the organization.

Initially, employees were skeptical and focused on conventional attributes, stating that they were neither the cheapest company, nor the most efficient one. After thinking beyond the

obvious, the stakeholders understood what was special about the company: delivering projects of various scales to international standards while maintaining a network of factories across the country, including in underserved areas. Through design thinking, individuals from different departments and hierarchical levels collaborated to identify and articulate their company's distinct value in a highly competitive construction industry.

3.1 Design Thinking: An Approach to Adapting in an Ever-Changing Environment with the Emerging Technologies of AI and Blockchain

Design thinking is a user-centered approach rooted in empathy, aimed at co-creating solutions with users and stakeholders to effectively address their needs (Bourgeois-Bougrine, 2022; Miller, 2024). To align a company's strategy with evolving customer demands, AI and blockchain technological advancements, and dynamic business environments, design thinking employs a combination of observation, secondary research, and, most critically, user interviews.

Beyond the initial design phase, practitioners must develop prototypes and conduct iterative testing with users. Multiple prototypes are refined and re-evaluated until they meet user expectations (Li et al., 2022; Mariani et al., 2025). This iterative process ensures that companies develop products and services that are not only responsive to customer needs but also continuously improved based on user feedback. Moreover, active collaboration with users throughout the process enhances the successful implementation of the final solution.

4. Conclusion

The need for digital culture in the digital age of AI has reached its pinnacle. AI can have a positive and constructive effect in places where social meaning and concepts are involved. Taking advantage of the capabilities of the AI world depends on the emergence of a well-connected offline community. In a society where face-to-face communication is established in a welcoming environment, AI will increase communication, and expand intelligence, productivity, and group responsibility. In places where social ties are weak, the positive factors of AI will be less effective. We still need more clarification of AI and other wide array of emerging technologies, and we cannot leave the work completely in the hands of science. Take a stand, digitalize your corporate culture to more effectively support AI, and how it impacts your business, or stay at the station. The time is now to make up your mind or be obsolete.

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