

Digitalisation is not about IT alone; culture, knowledge transfer included

By G Vinod | 2 days ago | In Business



WITH digitalisation becoming a must across the globe due to the pandemic, on top Industrial Revolution (IR4.0), it has become obvious that businesses reliant on the old way doing things face a bleak future unless they adapt and transform.

In the second part of the interview, Adobe Southeast Asia (SEA) managing director Simon Dale shares with *FocusM* about what the future entails and how one can still manoeuvre to keep up with challenging times

FocusM: What are the challenges facing well-established traditional economy businesses in building a digital ready workforce in a post pandemic world?

Dale: I believe that successful digital transformation has three crucial components – people, process and technology. Challenges faced by businesses typically evolve around these areas too. Let us look at a few areas:

Going beyond content digitisation: No doubt, COVID-19 has changed the world forever. Digital transformation is now a priority not an option. Organisations have to pivot to a whole new level of digitalisation, for example, by altering their organisational structure and internal processes to meet the new demands of customers.

It is not just about putting your content online and commoditising it. It is about understanding who are coming to your site, how are they interacting with you, what are they looking for and how are they liking the experience. It is also about analysing data across every interaction at every millisecond and responding consistently with personalised content and the right offering throughout the customer journey. Traditional businesses need to re-map their entire customer journey to focus on the experience and put in place the right structures, technology and systems to support that.



Simon Dale



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Going beyond technology: While it is common to think that digital transformation is an IT consideration, it should involve the entire organisation – and that starts with the people. New technology, without people with the right skills and mindset behind it, will not work. Traditional businesses must retain employees with deep domain expertise and transfer that valuable knowledge by reskilling and upskilling them for the new roles created in the new economy. This may include equipping experienced staff with new digital skills – such as data analytics and digital storytelling – as well as technical competency to leverage technology tools effectively.

Creating a digital culture: Training employees in new digital skills is one thing but making sure they are able to keep applying those skills effectively is another. Employees will need to build new habits and be comfortable being productive in a digital, remote environment in order to be successful in the new digital economy. Leadership teams need to create a conducive environment and culture to support that – including implementing new digital processes such as electronic signatures, digital document workflows and online collaboration forums.



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FocusM: According to Hays Malaysia, many Malaysian employers are still reluctant to embrace digitalisation and allow remote working, with only 51% of them transforming themselves from the previous 47% recorded.

What advice can you give these employers, in terms of adapting to new norms?

Dale: The uncharted waters of this pandemic demand agility and innovation – not just in technology and digital tools, but also with people. Adapting to rapidly changing systems and regulations is an absolute need.

In an increasingly digital world, remote working – or a hybrid model – is fast becoming the norm. Accelerated by the pandemic, this change is unlikely to come to a halt even in a post-pandemic world.

Not only will employees expect the flexibility to work remotely and across devices, customers will also expect a different mode of interaction. Employers will need to enable their staff to learn new ways to communicate digitally and stay productive in a digital environment.

The pandemic has also pushed companies to shift from traditional workflows to going paperless. According to Adobe's Digital Insights Survey, 73% of Asia-Pacific (APAC) respondents believe that companies lacking in e-signature options are behind the times.

It is clear that the rising trend of remote working is not driven by employees alone and that there are customer expectations too, for businesses to keep up in setting the agenda for the future economy.

The shift to remote work will have a significant and enduring impact on businesses moving forward, requiring new marketing strategies for reaching and keeping customers. The most progressive companies are already looking ahead and investing in hybrid workplace approaches for improved productivity and as a hiring differentiator for the best digital and CX talents.



FocusM: In terms IR4.0, how does Adobe position itself in the new era and how do you see Malaysia embracing it?

Dale: IR4.0 is upon us, and its acceleration is inevitable due to the rapid digital transformation taking place across the globe. Malaysian businesses will increasingly look to focus on customer experience management (CXM) by personalising experiences and understanding the cultural nuances from market-to-market and, even, on a hyper-local level.

Furthermore, the future of work in Southeast Asia has also raised the urgency for reskilling and upskilling the workforce to meet the demands of accelerated digital transformation.

In support of this, Adobe is committed to assisting Malaysians with reskilling and upskilling. For example, through our upcoming annual digital experience conference, Adobe Summit, attendees can participate in 250 sessions and more than 100 training workshops across 11 tracks, including 15 dedicated APAC sessions, to hone their skills in CXM, e-commerce, and data analytics.

Additionally, workforce reskilling and upskilling will require a collaboration between vendors, Government and higher education.

We look forward to extending the SEA Adobe Programmatic League, a purpose-built training programme which provides customer experience (CX) digital skills training for public officers, into Malaysia to equip local public officers with digital and creative competencies. – June 23, 2021.