

Embracing digital disruption

The internet of things is driving the need for organisations to transform into digital businesses and this is disrupting business operations like never before.

Companies need to become digitally enabled

Being globally competitive means being able to make rapid business decisions. For companies this means digitisation of process, automation of workflow, access to global information affecting one's business and being able to respond with agility, based on factual information.

Digitisation is not just about scanning and saving a document but having the ability to scan, extract, analyse and search information in a document automatically as an example.

Customers are more connected and this has resulted in an enormous increase in the amount of data flowing into the organisation. If a company is to survive this revolution, they will have to become digitally enabled and take advantage of business analytics to make sense of this data. This is the view of Isaac Mophatlane, CEO of Business Connexion.



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"Through the internet of things we are seeing a vast increase in the amount of devices connecting to organisations," says Mophatlane. "You can no longer ignore the fact that you can control everything remotely and that is being driven through the internet and the cloud." He says for companies to remain relevant in this age of the digital business, they will have to have a solid strategy in place to manage these access points, devices, increased data and the potential security risks that come with it. "You must be able to monitor these devices, knowing where they are in your organisation and what information they are accessing, otherwise you are leaving your organisation extremely vulnerable."

Removing complexity

The proliferation of data, increased customer demands and the evolution of service-orientated technologies are forcing organisations to disrupt existing infrastructure to develop new systems and processes that drive business value. According to International Data Corporation (IDC), 44 percent of chief information officers (CIOs) in South Africa are already prioritising aligning IT and business needs.

"Today's chief executive and chief financial officers know what value IT can bring to the business and the pressure is mounting for the CIO to show innovation and drive business agility to deliver on those expectations. IDC also states that already 56 percent of CIOs in South Africa are prioritising driving innovation through IT," Mophatlane adds.

"The complexity of the digital age is forcing organisations to consolidate and underpins the need for automation and analytics across industries. We have experienced it within Business Connexion - due to the number of mergers and acquisitions made over the years, we became a complex business." He adds, however, that they have now developed a new operating model that simplifies the business, making it easier to support its customers and drive additional value. "We are not just talking the internet of things talk, we have the building blocks in place and are bringing it alive as an organisation, which means we are best placed to take our customers on this journey to digital transformation."

Taking advantage of opportunities on the continent

While South Africa has already reached some level of IT maturity, the rest of the continent presents massive opportunities. IDC has predicted that a new cloud model will emerge in 2015 and that markets such as Kenya and Nigeria will catch up to more mature markets. Mophatlane agrees: "We are definitely seeing growth in cloud and data centre outsourcing in other African markets. The retail, health and education sectors are already experiencing increased growth and previously untapped markets like Rwanda are seeing huge investments in IT, infrastructure and telecommunications."

He adds that the key to success in other parts of Africa is understanding the market. "You have to know how each country operates and have a deep understanding of the rule of law and legislation," he says. "You also need to work with locals who will understand and embrace your culture and way of working. Companies also need to understand whether the right skills exist within the markets they are exploring and here, selecting the right partner to take you on this journey could mean the difference between success and failure," Mophatlane concludes.

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