

Companies now want to see digital action

By [Brad Pulford](#)

22 Jan 2019

South Africa is absolutely becoming a digitally maturing market. We can no longer talk about just early adopters or the few taking the lead in the digital revolution. For years Dell EMC and its peers have been sharing the message of digital transformation: why it is important and how far its impact reaches. It took a while for that message to resonate, but today there is clearly a lot of change happening in the market.



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To me, these are the characteristics of a more mature, more enabled market. Companies are more actively driving their digital strategies. This is good news for 2019, but the pressure is on to keep moving with the revolution...

A massive indicator of this new mindset is obvious when you look at the cloud. Not only is cloud adoption happening fast among local businesses, but there is a growing appreciation for what cloud is and isn't. It's not a destination, but an operating model that should align with businesses' unique needs. Yet while companies used to see the cloud as the be-all to their technology requirements, they now realise it's another choice in a growing market.



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This is why there is more back-and-forth between hosted cloud and on-premise investments. Just to be clear: it's all cloud. Cloud is also a methodology and a new way to run applications, involving such technologies as software-defined systems. So even those on-premise systems are in a way part of the cloud.

Choices are flexible

But companies are figuring out which applications and workloads they want to keep close, co-host or consume as a service. Part of the reason why is that they know how flexible their choices are. Since hyper-converged infrastructure (HCI) adds the heft of cloud systems to on-premise and helps reduce the complexity around deploying such systems, businesses are becoming craftier about what they deploy where. They make decisions based on newfound efficiencies and being able to redeploy their resources towards new solutions.

This adjustment is also changing how skills are looked at. More and more of Dell EMC's partners are investing in and deploying skills for Modern Technology Solutions. This is in direct response to customer demands for more internal agility. We have been educating the channel for a while now on these changes, adding that they have to transform their own business models to keep up with the market. Now we're seeing that change happening as well.

Transformation is an immense and ongoing project for every business, so it's good to see channel partners aligning themselves with those requirements. This sounds like a mundane point but, trust me, it's a really big deal. Five years ago the IT market was very different, even as cloud, agility and HCI were ascending. Today things have shifted entirely, enough so that the partners who don't change are being left behind.

Focussing on enabling the market

But therein lies Dell EMC's responsibility. We've been working to enhance our channel support, which already constitutes the vast bulk of our business. In 2019 we will focus even more on enabling the market: solution providers can't all be everything to everyone, so we are helping them find those areas of specialisation and vendor alignment that will take them forward.

Some of our partners still struggle with legacy and complexity. We are there to help them transform. We are also supporting smaller and more agile solution providers to serve the market.



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What can we expect in 2019? The era of talking about cloud and digital transformation is coming to an end. Customers have by now gathered enough of a sense of what they need - and they are expecting the market to meet those. As hyper-scale data centres are set to go live in SA next year, the country's business will stop asking 'what' and 'why' around digital technologies. They know those answers - what they want to know is 'how'. And that's where we'll be, with our partners, to make digital a reality.

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