4 Reasons Most Enterprise-Level Businesses (Still) Don’t Get Digital Adoption

Even larger, more established companies struggle to understand its importance. Make sure yours isn’t one of them.

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We live in a digital age, but in many enterprise-level businesses, you wouldn’t know it. Many companies have vague plans for how they will shift to a more digital focus. Despite this, a bulk of their operations — both internal and customer-facing — remain stuck in an earlier era.

These corporations stand to miss out on significant profits enabled by digital adoption. As just one example, research data from McKinsey & Company reveals that companies driven by customer analytics are 23 times as likely to acquire new customers and 19 times more likely to reach above-average profitability.

The benefits are clear. However, many enterprise-level organizations continue to lag behind startups in fully adopting and embracing the digital solutions now available. Though in fairness, there are several factors that can keep a company from achieving digital adoption, despite efforts to improve tech usage. Here are four to be mindful of.

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1. Failure to understand what digital adoption really is.

One key issue holding businesses back is that many company leaders don’t understand what digital adoption truly means. Some assume that it merely means providing advertising through social media and other digital platforms. Others make the mistake of believing it is nothing more than an upgraded form of IT.

In reality, digital adoption is an extension of a business’s complete digital transformation. As new software is introduced to streamline operations, digital adoption occurs as end-users are able to fully benefit from these upgrades. But research from Michael Gale at Forbes reveals that 84 percent of businesses report failing at this crucial process.

2. Lack of employee training.

Speaking of digital adoption, Tamara Rosin, managing editor at WalkMe, explains in a blog post that, “You choose cutting-edge technology to make it happen, then dive into implementation. But then, few employees actually use the technology, and the ones that do stick to a small range of elementary features.”

Continues Rosin, “Complex business processes lead many to drop off before they even complete a task. Demand for IT support becomes unmanageable. User frustration and stress cause a serious blow to employee morale. The tools that were supposed to lift employee productivity to new heights are becoming barriers to completing everyday work.”

This all points to the fact that when businesses don’t understand what digital adoption entails, they tend to overlook one of the most crucial elements of digital adoption success: employee training. Without quality training, employees will fail to benefit from new tech and might even

use their own preferred applications instead. In fact, a research survey from McAfee found that more than 80 percent of employees use unapproved SaaS applications at work. Without a strong digital-adoption solution in place, even the best software won’t improve results for your company.

3. Underestimating digital’s disruptive nature.

Part of the reason employee training can get overlooked during digital-adoption efforts is because business leadership has a tendency to underestimate just how disruptive new digital products can be. This is a trend that has, sadly, repeated itself all too often in the business world. Just consider what happened to once-dominant brands like Blockbuster and Kodak, each of which failed to anticipate how disruptive digital competitors would be.

Similarly, the adoption of new digital tech will disrupt your way of doing business. It will change processes for your employees. It may change the way you interact with customers. It could even lead to a shift in your product and service lineup.

The consequences of digital adoption can be far-reaching for your business operations, and your employees will feel the brunt of these changes. Planning for potential outcomes in advance will ensure that you can successfully make the pivot.

4. Lack of value-driven change.

Change for change’s sake is rarely a good idea, and this applies just as readily to digital adoption. Any transformative efforts for implementing digital tech in your company must focus on how it will provide meaningful value for your company and your customers.

For example, as Sherice Jacobs writes in a blog post for Neil Patel, “Despite all of these innovative uses of big data, there’s still a fine line to cross between convenience and creepiness … Preventing the spread of illness and helping stranded travelers have a comfortable place to stay are two smart ways to help further cement customer loyalty beyond just the pure common-sense application of helping out your fellow humans. But being able to predict things as intimate as pregnancy, or how the weather might affect your hair, could be getting a little too cozy with customers for comfort.”

Whether your new tech tools will be used for big-data collection or automating key supply-chain tasks, you must start with the end in mind. Focusing on how a particular change will provide value to your organization as a whole will help you better understand how it will affect employees and customers. This will, in turn, guide you to be more efficient in digital-adoption efforts.

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Our increasingly digital economy has introduced many new challenges for startups and enterprise-level companies, but it has also brought about key opportunities for growth. As businesses overcome the roadblocks keeping them from true digital adoption, they will be better equipped for what the market holds in the future.

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