

It's 2019: Stop following the hype

Build testing models aligned with your business, not with what the hype says you should be doing.

When looking to an analogy that best describes digital transformation and the impact it has on the business, perhaps the best is death star. It's packed with exciting technology, is powered by the latest in innovation and has ground-breaking solutions that can change the face of the business, but it can also explode unexpectedly thanks to an unplanned loophole.

According to Mandla Mbonambi, CEO of Africonology, organisations need to change the way they approach emerging technologies such as Artificial Intelligence (AI), Internet of Things (IoT), blockchain and robot process automation (RPA) so that they are better prepared and get far better results.



Mandla Mbonambi, CEO of Africonology

“There is an appetite for change and automation and this is both subtle and aggressive at the same time – everyone wants to be first, but nobody wants to go first until they know the quality and standards of the products,” he says.

“Decision-makers are finding ways of accommodating these technologies into their existing infrastructure and investing relentlessly into digital transformation. But if you unpack this landscape, if you really look at the motivation that spurs on this momentum, it is that nobody wants to be left behind. Everybody wants to be on par with the market.”

Is your company investing in the right technology?

Unfortunately, many organisations end up investing in technologies and solutions that they already have or don't need. They aren't asking the right questions, the questions that will see them invest in digital transformation solutions that have sustainable relevance. Instead, they end up investing in new, and often irrelevant, technology instead of leveraging what they already have. What they should be asking is, 'How do we invest and modernise with an understanding of our existing infrastructure?'

“So many businesses want blockchain, IoT or AI – they want to prepare for what lies ahead, to ensure that their infrastructure and organisations are future proof and ready,” says Mbonambi. “There is a lot of hype around digital transformation but there is a catch – the organisation needs to understand what they are buying and what they are buying it for. First, solve the mystery that surrounds your existing technology investment, then invest.”

First identify the challenges

Mbonambi has two very salient pieces of advice - build testing models and approaches that are aligned with your business and ignore the hype and rather focus on what is needed to take your organisation where it wants to go. Companies should be identifying the challenges and the loopholes rather than following where the next hype cycle will take them.

“It is a significant shift in thinking as most are thinking that if their competitor releases X, then they need to release it as well. Things move so quickly that few take time to observe,” says Mbonambi. “Everyone is too scared to be left behind. But it is far better to be late than to be early and waste money. It isn't cheap following the hype and usually, solutions follow on at a lower price point and allow for those who waited to do so much more. Rather focus on what you need, monitor your return on investment, and consistently use testing and questioning to ask how these solutions are going to deliver.”

Digital transformation has disrupted more than just the speed of decision-making but also those who make the decisions. The investment in and testing of new technologies and solutions has moved out from being solely the remit of IT and into the business. The line of business wants to own the digital shift; the CEO and the CFO are driving their own onboarding and agendas and the calls for testing solutions are coming from the business and not IT.

Build infrastructure that is best suited to your business

“This trend is driven primarily by two needs – visibility and control,” says Mbonambi. “They want to keep the projects closer to where the budget is seated and they want fresh approaches to testing models for AI, IoT, machine learning and robotics. We have found that this has really changed the dialogue in the industry and it has informed our customer approach significantly. We deliver the dashboards, visibility, and the tools that the decision makers need to frame their digital transformation investment.”

Change remains the only constant in a landscape that's only going to become even more competitive and challenging. For Mbonambi, the best way to approach transformation is to build an infrastructure that's futureproofed and prepared using testing and savvy to determine precisely what's needed, not hype. That is the most reliable way to ensure that development is sustainable and relevant.