

# Pathways to Growth

## Digital Disruption

In a global environment marked by uncertainty, complexity and swift change, success stories feature the disruptors: businesses that have shaken up their industries, either through innovative products and services or by streamlining systems and processes. Driving this creative storm is technology, with a recent Grant Thornton survey showing a clear correlation between accelerated growth for mid-size businesses and the smart use of technology.

Nevertheless, many businesses are reluctant to explore the possibilities an integrated technology platform offers. Having guided many mid-size clients through digital upgrades and transformations, it's clear to us that successful businesses embrace technology and aim for creative disruption. Many mid-size businesses fall into one of two camps: those struggling to expand and those struggling with strong growth. Both can leverage technology to strengthen their operational core and, ultimately, drive innovation. The path to embracing a digital platform is marked by bold choices, a single-minded focus on the customer and a strategic outlook. Businesses aiming to consolidate their technology infrastructure and to align their IT investment to business objectives need to develop a new mindset: they need to move from disrupted to disruptor.

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# Aligning organisational capabilities with customer expectations

Fast-growing mid-size businesses use technology to better serve their customers.

These high-performers strive to understand, fulfil and predict their customers' expectations, which they then translate into a seamless, frequently individualised, service experience. This is where technology fundamentally disrupts traditional modes of customer service, with the right platform ensuring consistency across all channels through integration of front-end sales and business development processes with internal supply chains.



The right platform ensures consistency across all channels

## Retail sector shows the way

The retail industry has developed into something of a technology innovation hub over recent years. The digital transformation that saw bricks-and-mortar companies morph into integrated, online multi-channel behemoths has challenged established brands and helped create new market leaders.

A leading Australian retail chain provides a recent example of a successful digital transformation, using technology as a growth enabler. With a presence in 12 countries, a global staff of 15,000 and an aggressive growth strategy, the company uses ecommerce as a market-testing tool guiding its geographic growth. From online stores mapping out development opportunities and providing market analytics in foreign countries, the chain then moves on to pop-up shops and, later, flagship stores.

This approach, using digital channels to test the market and determine an optimal investment plan, is not only cost-effective resource allocation; it's smart use of technology to understand consumer habits within a new market. Having an initial online presence ensures that the brand is fully embedded in each location and enhances supply chain efficiency through onsite stock and timely order processing.

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# From disrupted to disruptor: Using technology as a competitive advantage

While many mid-size businesses struggle to identify sustainable growth strategies, the retail example above points to a different approach: the company became a market-leading disruptor by betting on technology to aid geographic expansion and business growth.

More specifically, they used technology to better understand the opportunities available in new markets before betting big on the right locations.

Their success underlines the relative ease with which mid-size businesses across all sectors and industries can move from traditional routes to market to regular cross-channel customer interactions that deliver consistent messaging, branding and growth.

How can other businesses manage the transition from disrupted to disruptor, and what investments are necessary for this? The following roadmap is a guide we use with our mid-size clients to turn technology into a real competitive advantage.



## Design

An individual roadmap for digital transformation.



## Consolidate

existing technology and install a multichannel platform.



## Implement

a multi-channel approach to sales and distribution channels/ extend to new channels.



## Innovate

using technology to develop new products and services or enhance current ones.



## Optimise

disrupt the competition and become a market leader. Use analytics to strategically target services and products and deliver tailored customer experiences.

# Start with strategy

It's no longer an option to leave technology choices solely to the IT department or to an executive who 'understands computers', with minimal strategic thought given to the necessary investment.

With technology critical to future growth, it's time for boards and C-suite executives to lead their business' digital transformation, rather than rely on their IT department to lead innovation piecemeal.

Beginning the dialogue, companies need to define a clear strategy that aligns business goals and technology requirements, with choices guided by a customer-centric approach rather than a technical checklist.

The following are key to this technology blueprint:

- An understanding of customer and business requirements and the IT investment necessary for the business to grow and succeed.
- A clear view of the technology already in place and of what is still required to support the strategic goals.
- An achievable, costed and governed plan to achieve optimal results.



## Building a technology platform that delivers

With the blueprint completed, the next step is to consolidate existing technology infrastructure and implement an integrated platform that can deliver a consistent customer experience.

Decisions will need to be made regarding the necessary software, applications and processes that will deliver:

- Foundation tools that drive efficiency across the business, like core customer, financial and reporting business applications.
- Additional specialist, integrated applications that may be required.
- Technology that supports a better way of working. For example, a state-of-the-art forecasting tool will provide less-than-accurate results if operated without the proper training and changes to process required.

# Digital disruption and optimisation

While delivering a seamless, multi-channel customer experience and disrupting their industries may appear a fantasy to some mid-size businesses, for others it's become a successful reality.

With the foundations laid and their technology base strengthened, companies are ready for the next step: a multichannel approach that delivers a unified brand experience. At this point businesses are able to make the leap from conventional business operations to online and mobile, all the while relying on a solid technology infrastructure. By now digital is no longer a feature of the business model; it's become organisational DNA.



Digital has become organisational DNA

# Enhancing supply chain efficiency through artificial intelligence

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A few years ago artificial intelligence was science fiction material. Today, it's helping manufacturers leapfrog their competition.

The competitive edge delivered by a reliable and cost-efficient supply chain is often overlooked. However, price wars and increasingly complex global supply chains have brought about a change of mind. From a necessary evil, technology has come to be seen as a competitive advantage not only in production but across the supply chain, with analytics-based decision-making benefiting, in particular, stock levels and shipping.

This is about making already good supply chains even better. Firms that are investing in such forward-thinking technologies recognise that their supply chains are a means to gaining a competitive edge and a source of innovation and new ideas.

Creative disruption is present in all industries. We think the future holds many more success stories – companies using innovative technology to drive sustainable growth and disrupt their competition.

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47,000+

People globally



130+

Countries



\$4.8BN

Worldwide revenue 2016 (USD)



1,160+

People nationally

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Technology advisory & solutions

Business risk services

Performance improvements

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Indirect tax

Transfer pricing

Remuneration taxes

### Public Sector Advisory

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Financial Services

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Health & Aged Care

Life Sciences

Manufacturing

Not-for-Profit

Professional Services

Public Sector

Real Estate & Construction

Consumer Products & Retail

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