

Editorial: *Competing on CX in the Digital Age by Working Deep, Focusing on*

Valuable Digital Activities and a Digital Culture Strategy specific to the Human-Machine Partnership

During this year which is coming to end we have seen how companies are struggling to improve the way they work, recognizing opportunities, accepting change and sustaining it, organizing accordingly – considering technology, people, process, structure, strategy to adapt to their relevant markets in evolution, rethinking their business models while navigating the complexity of the business environment, connecting the new technologies’ potential with their relevant markets market needs and customers’ demand, including meeting unmet needs and turning needs into key insights, opening the door for new opportunities in right managing customer experience (CX)...

Companies’ decisions are increasingly governed by algorithms and visual, being guided by an adequate benefiting of the constantly expanding volumes of data which are at the heart of business strategy as part of the digital transformation. (Sharma, 2018) As shown in Forbes by the CEO of DataStax, the leader in data management for cloud applications, in order to successfully bring a company into the Digital Age and position its business to compete on CX it is necessary to implement the so-called three P’s of digital transformation and: People (who have to transform before the company can digitize), Products (product plus experience), and Processes (decisions around company’s process being driven by the impact on CX, and digital transformation being driven by IT in cooperation with marketing). (Bosworth, 2018)

But talking about People let’s recall three aspects:

- Two years ago, in December 2016, Cal Newport, a computer science Professor at Georgetown University (who started blogging in 2007), approached the topic of “On Digital Minimalism”, (Newport, 2016) defining it as “a philosophy that helps you question what digital communication tools (and behaviors surrounding these tools) add the most value to your life. It is motivated by the belief that intentionally and aggressively clearing away low-value digital noise, and optimizing your use of the tools that really matter, can significantly improve your life”; it is not by chance that at the beginning of the same year Newport published his book entitled “Deep Work: Rules for Focused Success in a Distracted World” (Published by: Grand Central Publishing, Hachette Book Group, January 5, 2016; this book won three awards: Wall Street Journal Business Bestseller, Amazon Best Business Book for January 2016, 800-CEO-READ Business Book of the Week) – among the numerous significant quotations given by well-known brand names allow us to cite only two of them: “Deep work is the killer app of the knowledge economy: it is only by concentrating intensely that you can master a difficult discipline or solve a demanding problem” (The Economist); “Cal Newport is a clear voice in a sea of noise, bringing science and passion in equal measure. We don’t need more clicks, more cats, and more emojis.

We need brave work, work that happens when we refuse to avert our eyes” (Seth Godin, author of “What to Do When It’s Your Turn”;

- On October 1, 2018, Tim Wright, Consultant, Workforce Transformation, DELL EMC Education Services, while approaching the topic of “Why the Workforce Needs to Change for Digital Transformation”, (Wright, 2018) started from the fact that critical to successful digital transformation is the effective workforce transformation (transformation readiness among employees), and highlighted four tips for “going digital” effectively: *a digital technology accompanied by a true digital mindset (among team members), an embedded and comprehensive digital readiness (which generates and reinforces a true digital culture), a well-designed and implemented communication strategy (which enables all members of the business to talk the digital talk strengthening the digital culture), engaging everyone in the business in learning, experiencing and enjoying exposure to the many ways digital makes a difference is the other half of the digital culture strategy*; within this approach, Wright made reference to the words expressed by Michael Dell – in the DELL Technologies study “Realizing 2030: A Divided Vision of the Future” (research commissioned by Dell Technologies and undertaken by Vanson Bourne, UK) – with regard to the reality that *“We are entering the next era of human-machine partnership, a more integrated, personal relationship with technology that has the power to amplify exponentially the creativity, inspiration, intelligence and curiosity of the human spirit”*;
- Recently, on December 4th, 2018, Cal Newport officially announced that his new book entitled “Digital Minimalism: Choosing a Focused Life in a Noisy World” will be published on February, 5th, this new book (a response to the above mentioned previous book) proposing to radically reduce the time spent staring at screens, and to focus just on the digital activities which strongly support things you deeply value, while ignoring the rest and taking back control of the technological live. (Newport, 2018)

There is no doubt that we are at the point when business is about to be reimagined and transformed given to the recent advances in artificial intelligence (AI), as argued by Paul R. Daugherty and H. James Wilson in their new book *“Human+Machine: Reimagining Work in the Age of AI* (Publisher: Harvard Business Review Press, March 20, 2018; on the book cover there is a quotation given by Klaus Schwab, Founder and Executive Chairman, World Economic Forum: “A richly detailed guidebook that leaders need to capture the opportunities of AI and the fourth industrial revolution”). The book’s authors focused on this symbiosis (which is unlocking the third wave of business transformation) between man and machine taking into account that *complementing and augmenting human capabilities constitutes the greater power of the new technology*, and revealed five crucial principles (MELDS) adopted by the leading companies in various industries which are already riding the above mentioned third wave of business transformation: *mindset, experimentation, leadership, data, and skills*. (Daugherty, 2018)

And finally, there is also no doubt that it’s time for companies to capitalize on AI’s potential by making progress on their digital journey, scaling AI’s impact across the enterprise,

and putting key enablers in place, as recommended by the reputed McKinsey's representatives (Webb, 2018) on the basis of a November 2018 Survey.

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