HOW TO MANAGE DIGITAL PROJECTS EFFECTIVELY

Gaëtan Bodmer, head of CIO advisory at Kurt Salmon France, explains the key landmarks for companies on the road to digital transformation

Q: What is the starting point for businesses when they launch digital projects?

Bodmer: The first priority: Establish a broad vision of the project and be sure it's shared by the business line in question and the IT department. This entails key decisions with implications for the structure and business model, and the kind of client experience they're after, while maintaining coherence across different channels of contact and activity

Q: And the implications for the structure of a business?

Bodmer: Project success may well need wholesale adaptation of the business and its decision-making structures. Digital projects require the businesses involved and the IT functions towork hand-in-hand. By their nature, digital projects not only involve multiple channels to the client but also cut across different departments of the business in question.

For example, the company may need to establish new competence centers offering specialist skills, possibly through recruitment; these people may have a wholly different profile from those already in the organisation.

It also needs a structure to facilitate innovation, including the ability to monitor developments in the field and to test out ideas that may then be scaled up to a commercial level. This organisational aspect is very important in digital projects, and not all companies pay the attention it needs.

Bodmer: The company should have a global information system providing a multi-channel base for any e-commerce or other digital project. The key is full integration of all the channels involved, including aspects like security. Too often, companies embark on such projects piecemeal. Decision-makers may need to consider which technical standards to use, whether to buy or build, whether to carry out work in-house or bring in partners. Everything may be up for change.

Q: What are the implications for working methods?

Bodmer: Inevitably, there will be new approaches to put in place, although they must be combined with traditional methods already strongly engrained in the enterprise. The emphasis here is on providing the flexibility to bring together different approaches – and IT plays a critical role.

The final requirement is: Performance indicators to guide the digital transformation, making sure the project is on track and fits the company's overall strategy.

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