

Symphonies not solos - For a business, the whole is greater than the sum of its parts



DXC Technology's '**Beyond Disruption 2020**' Business Pulse has found that an overwhelming number of organisations are re-thinking their business strategy around technology to better manage the disruptions of 2020. Stuart Dickinson, General Manager of DXC Oxygen Australia & New Zealand and New Zealand Country Leader, says by focusing on connectivity and integration, organisations can build resilience to survive the current economic turmoil.

In a 'business as usual' economy, an organisation can experiment with any number of strategies and technology solutions to improve growth, increase margins and lift productivity. Those were the good old days.

During times of widespread disruption, such as we are experiencing in 2020, organisations are forced to play survival of the fittest. This involves purging non-essential projects, focusing on business-critical activities, and creating enough agility to pivot business operations if circumstances change suddenly. In the last 25 years technology has been a significant enabler of business growth, and there is no doubt it will play an essential role in helping organisations navigate the unstable trading conditions that lie ahead.

Every sector and organisation will have their own flavour of critical response to the current situation but, as borne out in DXC Technology's four pulse business survey, 'Beyond Disruption 2020', there are some fundamental trends emerging. According to the survey, 82% of Australian and New Zealand (ANZ) organisations believe that technology is critical to managing disruption. The ability to connect and integrate business operations is of the utmost importance and is the driving force behind much of the sentiment and market activity highlighted in the survey.

The findings also reflect the current market narrative from our SAP customers who want to optimise technology investments, build flexible platforms that allow the rapid exploitation of new technology and focus on resilience and application modernisation. The survey showed that ANZ organisations have identified the most important technology investments for the next 12-months to be workplace modernisation (75%), cybersecurity (66%), data analytics (72%), cloud (68%) and modern business applications (66%).

These are all positive steps in preparing for future economic shocks – but none of them can be accomplished without a conscious desire to integrate applications, connect core operating systems, and build collaborative relationships with supplier/partner networks.

Running in real time

Without integrated applications and a connected workforce, the ability to make decisions quickly using accurate data is severely hampered. If the disruptions of 2020 have taught us one thing, it is that there is a genuine need to run businesses in real time as much as possible. Information needs to be up to date, and accessible to everyone that needs it. As a result of recent disruptions, remote working is on the rise and team members cannot depend on being in the same room at the same time. Information must be current, reliable, visible and distributable across the business.

During normal operating conditions, B2C companies can safely favour one consumer touchpoint over others, and B2B organisations can trade with partners through tried and tested supply chains. However, as many organisations have discovered, these fundamental transaction pathways have been severely challenged during the current disruptions. That is why many organisations are now looking to establish a more resilient, omni-channel approach to their customer service and supply chain needs. Front and back office connections need to be robust across the organisation, and sales channels – whether online, in store or via a customer service centre – must be connected to inventory in real-time, so customers know exactly what products can be purchased and know their supply and delivery can be guaranteed.

During crisis conditions, customers tend to be hyper-sensitive to delays. If an organisation cannot reliably source a product or service – or inform the customer when it will arrive – they will not only lose the sale, but risk losing customer loyalty and damage their brand reputation in the long term. Allegiances count for little when customers require urgent delivery.

Focus on areas to build resilience

If future disruption becomes the norm, a continuous focus on areas that make business more resilient, such as cybersecurity, digital demand planning and modern, flexible applications is paramount. 57% of survey respondents have launched transformation initiatives to better prepare for future disruptions and make existing core infrastructure more resilient.

Now that organisations are managing workforces separated by time and distance, they need connectivity. This explains why we are seeing pent-up demand for products such as SAP's Integrated Business Planning (IBP) software – a cloud-based, next-generation planning solution that helps overcome these challenges and enables organisations to run smooth supply chain and planning processes.

Building team spirit

Application modernisation is one thing, but even more fundamental is building a secure and sustainable employee experience. It is crucial for organisations to review the products, platforms and processes they have in place to ensure workers remain connected, focused and suitably incentivised to perform in remote working conditions. The Beyond Disruption Business Pulse found that 67% of ANZ organisations were shifting their focus from customers to employees and 70% are implementing programs focused on creating a culture of productivity.

At the basic level, this means up-to-date employee records and open communication channels. It also requires organisations to look inward and focus on human experience management – an emerging discipline that uses employee surveys and workforce management tools to increase workforce tenure and employee engagement. A happy, committed workforce is an extremely valuable commodity when a business is fighting strong headwinds.

Singing from the same song sheet

We are helping customers on their integration journey to create a harmonious data model that presents one view of the customer, employee and business partner right across the SAP technology stack. Organisations need to not only optimise their existing SAP environment, but to activate a cloud-first policy when on-boarding new applications or migrating existing critical platforms.

Ensuring the old and the new are connected and integrated, both at the business process and technical level, will allow businesses to enhance resiliency and increase their chances of riding out challenging market conditions.

About DXC Technology

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