The conventional business universe is at risk of being terminated by unfamiliar digital forces. These digital forces have already reshaped entire industries in the past few years?

Emerging companies, which were designed solely as digital businesses, have created new markets faster than ever and are toppling industry titans:

- **Uber®**, the world’s largest “taxi” company owns no vehicles
- **Facebook**, the world’s most popular media owner creates no content
- **Alibaba®,** the most valuable retailer has no inventory
- **Airbnb®,** the world’s largest accommodation provider owns no real estate

It is not a question of if you should deal with digital forces. You really must to survive or you just might disappear—like 52 percent of the Fortune 500 that have vanished since 2000.

Our recommendation? Prepare immediately. You can start by reading this “hitchhiker’s guide” to becoming a digital business. We’ll give you a high-level view of how to transform from where you are today into a real customer-centric digital business, ready for whatever the future brings.

Need even more guidance? Talk to Software AG’s Global Consulting Services who specialize in Digital Enterprise transformations.

**In search of the question?**

“Digital!” You’ve heard the answer over and over again. But you actually don’t know the exact question.

You’ve heard, “You need to be more agile,” and the answer was: ”Digital!” You’ve heard, “You need to be more real time.” The answer was: ”Digital!” You’ve also been told, “You need to be more customer-centric.” The answer was (again): ”Digital!”
What exactly is digital or, more precisely, what does digital mean for you, your business model and your customers? This “hitchhiker’s guide” leads you through the different stages on your journey to becoming a digital business. You’ll see how to identify your goals and turn them into a digital strategy. You’ll also discover how to make a digital business blueprint and create a Digital Enterprise IT architecture. Sounds easy? Actually it is with the right tools and methodology.

A “babel fish” would come handy

To turn your enterprise into a digital business, you need to include many, many stakeholders. And they won’t just be inside your company. In fact, you should start from the outside. Look at your customers! To become a well-run digital business, you need to look at your enterprise through the eyes of your customers. Only then will you create the best possible experience for your customers. Remember, you only exist because of your customers—they are the key to your success.

What’s especially challenging is that all your stakeholders—your customers, partners, business lines, IT, legal, compliance officers and so on—“speak a different language.” How will you be able to hear all their voices and get them to work in sync? The answer is actually pretty simple. You need a babel fish! A babel fish, as seen in “The Hitchhiker’s Guide to the Galaxy,”* can convert any voice and any language into a form you can understand and vice versa.

Luckily, there is a babel fish called ARIS for your digital transformation. With ARIS from Software AG, all of your stakeholders can start communicating immediately and, importantly, they can understand each other. And, by using ARIS, you can keep all the information needed about a project or process, for example, in one central place, which becomes your digital blueprint.

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Your “hitchhiker’s guide” to digital transformation

Software AG is here to help you master your digital transformation—because how you do it will differentiate you from your competitors. Changing into a digital business that is driven by your customers, powered by digital processes and fueled by a digital-enabled IT infrastructure will help you make significant improvements in customer experience, business efficiency and agility—all of which are critical to survival in the digital age.

Put customers first!

Almost every business claims to put customers first and that improving customer service is one of its key objectives. However, despite this, many businesses still continue to build very internally focused processes and applications that fail to properly consider the experience customers have when they interact with the business.

Successful digital businesses, on the other hand, are those that see customer satisfaction as a key differentiator and enabler for success. They truly live these values rather than just going through the motions. To a large part, this has been driven by the success of online retailers such as Amazon® and DELL™ that have been totally focused on delivering high-quality service, resulting in a largely excellent customer experience.

The degree to which a business really does put its customers first can be seen by looking at its customer journeys and how they manage every customer touchpoint. The best organizations take an “outside-in” approach; that is, they look at how their customers want to interact with them and then build business processes around these customer interactions.

So in today’s world, a good process is no longer good enough; it’s the customer experience the process delivers that really counts.

Learn more in our white paper on customer experience management.

Collaborate!

It is critical to engage all relevant stakeholders in your digital transformation early on. You cannot successfully change your business without them. This starts with involving them in defining your digital transformation strategy, the necessary changes, your road map and, of course, how you will execute and monitor your digital business operations.

Keep in mind that change management is not a single event. It is the process of understanding, internalizing and supporting a change. However, change management needs to be effectively integrated with your transformation road map. So start change management at the beginning of your transformation to fully integrate stakeholder activities (and avoid under-utilized and depressed robots like Marvin in “The Hitchhiker’s Guide to the Galaxy”).

Software AG provides a proven methodology and collaboration technology to identify and engage stakeholders to ease your digital transformation. ARIS acts as your “babel fish” to translate different languages (used by customers, partners, markets, regulators and so on) into one that can be understood and spoken by each stakeholder. This ensures that everyone works in unity to make your business digital, more efficient and more operationally effective.

Learn more in our white paper on getting processes ready for your digital transformation.
Change!

Becoming a digital business means changing how you do things today—and that means changing your business processes. Driven by your digital strategy and your “customer-first” approach, you can identify what, how and where to change your business. Current processes will have to be adapted to new requirements and the need for new business processes is sure to arise.

Take a collaborative-process-centric approach to digitize your business. After all, you can’t digitize a business you don’t understand. It’s not just a case of understanding how your business operated in the past or operates now, but creating a vision for how it needs to operate in the digital world, where customer experience must be the focus of everything your business does.

Not only must you transform the customer’s experience, you also must ensure customers can interact with you the way they want—say by social media. Inevitably this means a digital interaction where the customer’s interaction forms part of the end-to-end process that also includes the business, suppliers and partners. No longer can your business impose a way of working with your customers. You must take an “outside-in” approach to defining your business objectives.

Learn more in our white paper on designing and improving processes for your digital transformation.

If you are an SAP® shop, your journey will have specific requirements to accommodate. Many companies over the past two decades have used ARIS to design their SAP-based business processes. SAP is a great foundation for helping you transform your business and IT. Used with SAP, ARIS can help you to better manage your transformation projects. ARIS can help you become a well-run, SAP-based digital business.

Learn more in our white papers on:
  • Designing processes to support digital transformation
  • A process-driven journey to SAP-based digital business

Create the right IT portfolio!

Your IT portfolio plays a crucial role in your digital transformation. Historically, process management and IT planning have evolved independently of each other. However, in the digital age, they are tightly connected.

Achieving your digital transformation objectives will take the right applications to plan, build and run your digital business operations. Which technologies should you use? Which applications are the ones to rely on? What’s your best IT road map and future IT landscape—and how much will it cost? This is where IT planning comes into play.

ARIS combined with Alfabet from Software AG will make sure your IT investments are in line with your digital transformation. With the right IT planning, your Digital Enterprise will be able to deliver agile IT solutions faster to meet business demands. Your business managers will understand and value IT investments because IT will help drive your digital transformation.

Learn more in our white paper on converging business and IT to transform to the Digital Enterprise.
Don’t panic!

Becoming a successful Digital Enterprise takes the right tools and methodologies to plan, build and run a transformation. Software AG’s Digital Business Platform helps you do this by providing everything needed to define your digital strategy, design and build the needed capabilities, and run and monitor your digital business operations.

Software AG’s Digital Business Platform is the foundation for your Digital Enterprise. You can build your custom applications and logic directly on this foundation—content that differentiates you from the competition. Any department at your organization that engages in customer-facing interaction—marketing, sales, support or e-commerce, for example—can use the Digital Business Platform to quickly create highly customized yet lightweight applications. And they can change them at any time. Digital businesses need applications that can adapt continuously and quickly to current needs. Adaptive applications are built to change. The revolutionary thing about the Digital Business Platform’s application infrastructure is you can develop applications on the infrastructure. Your enterprise can buy or subscribe to the platform and build custom applications on it according to your individual requirements.

Learn more on our Digital Business Platform microsite.

“So long, and thanks for all the fish”—Change is forever

With Software AG’s Digital Business Platform, you gain the flexibility needed to implement new business models—or modernize existing ones—in weeks, not months or years. Your organization will become more agile than ever. But beware: As time moves forward, things will change.

A process that is perfect today won’t be perfect tomorrow. Markets, laws and regulations, technologies, customer expectations, competition, innovations and resources will change over time.

No worries, though, if you build your digital business on Software AG’s Digital Business Platform. You’ll have insight into your operations. You’ll be able to quickly adapt your applications and processes to change. You’ll be able to build customer-centric, differentiating applications. It’s how you will not just survive—but thrive—in the digital age.

Take the next step. Learn more about Software AG’s Digital Enterprise Assessment. Software AG consultants are experts in guiding organizations to becoming Digital Enterprises. See how these guides can help you to create a road map for your digital transformation in only seven days.

Register today.
Recommended resources


Software AG white paper: Converging business and IT to transform to the Digital Enterprise. March, 2014


Software AG’s Digital Enterprise Assessment


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ABOUT SOFTWARE AG

Software AG offers the world’s first Digital Business Platform. Recognized as a leader by the industry's top analyst firms, Software AG helps you combine existing systems on premises and in the cloud into a single platform to optimize your business and delight your customers. With Software AG, you can rapidly build and deploy digital business applications to exploit real-time market opportunities. Get maximum value from big data, make better decisions with streaming analytics, achieve more with the Internet of Things, and respond faster to shifting regulations and threats with intelligent governance, risk and compliance. The world's top brands trust Software AG to help them rapidly innovate, differentiate and win in the digital world. Learn more at www.SoftwareAG.com.

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