



SUTHERLAND

**DRIVING DIGITAL  
DISRUPTION**

WITH CUSTOMER  
FOCUSED OPERATIONS



## Digital disruption requires a new approach to process transformation

Today's markets are rapidly evolving, and the rise of social, mobile, cloud, analytics, and technology innovation is driving digital disruption at an astounding pace. The rules of the game are changing, enabling companies to interact and deliver value in innovative ways that diverge from established norms.

To remain relevant, companies must constantly evolve to engage and delight customers and deliver on their promises. Customers now expect their experiences to be personalized, consistent, and available anytime/anywhere. Though digital transformation is often a top priority, many companies are ill-equipped to execute their digital strategy. To create differentiated and seamless customer experiences, companies must break down organizational barriers between front, middle, and back-office. Competing and thriving in the digital age requires having a customer-first mindset from first to last touchpoint.

Three imperatives are required to transform the integrated office and drive digital disruption.

### 1. Innovative design thinking, centered on customer experience and enabled by a disruptive digital strategy

Design thinking enables organizations to see the world through the customer's eyes and re-imagine how they provide value to their customers. It helps untangle complexity and identify breakthrough innovation by putting people at the center of the questions, the process, and the ultimate solutions.

Design thinking entails conducting research to understand the customer journey, their pain points, and the

potential for new and more positive experiences, while also revealing deep insights about the people, behaviors, and cultural factors at play within a natural customer experience setting. These insights help organizations focus on the areas where improvements can have the greatest impact. Unearthing a deeper understanding of the customer journey seeds the potential for transformed experiences that nurture empathy and improved responses.

### 2. Disruptive digital strategies should be centered on customer experience

A digital strategy is at the heart of competitive survival, and will need to serve as a foundation to new business models and execution strategies that disrupt operational norms. A great digital strategy provides direction, enabling an organization to effectively drive digital initiatives, monitor and measure progress, and then refine or redirect efforts as needed. A customer-first digital strategy strives for superior, personalized experiences that cultivate customer loyalty.

Developing a meaningful digital strategy requires a willingness to disrupt the organization, and to integrate operations that deliver seamless, extraordinary customer experiences end-to-end. It requires collaborative engagement of business stakeholders across the front, middle, and back-office. These stakeholders must reach agreement on the digital business vision priorities, transformation goals, and key points of integration. Ultimately, the integrated organization must operate from a common framework based on a 360-degree view of the customer.

Insights gained and approaches tested through design thinking can feed the digital strategy, helping the organization prioritize business process disruption in those areas of the business that will have the greatest impact.



To create differentiated and seamless customer experiences, companies must break down organizational barriers between front, middle, and back-office.



The digital strategy must also consider the following for fulfilling business process transformation goals:

- **Identifying and gaining access to critical data and insights.** Leaders should ask themselves critical questions: What are the critical data sources for relevant insights that drive decision-making or are essential to integrated operational workflows? What must be done to provide accurate, timely, and integrated data access across the parts of the operation that need it most? What needs to happen to produce a thorough and consistent 360-degree view of the customer and other necessary insights for effective execution?
- **Selecting and effectively deploying social, mobile, cloud, and intelligent automation technology solutions.** Organizations must examine and identify areas where innovative technology solutions can help achieve business process

transformation goals. In what areas of the business can social solutions play a greater role in facilitating communications, information sharing, and community building? Where do customers need the greatest mobile access to interact and transact with your company? Where can the cloud play a greater role in lowering costs and scaling access to applications and data? Where can intelligent automation enhance productivity and efficiency, increase predictive insights and accuracy, or drive improved business outcomes?

- **Digital strategy that transcends legacy limitations.** Digital transformation requires leveraging flexible technology solutions that can coexist but also transcend legacy capabilities. Many organizations get stuck because legacy systems have gaps that prohibit the capabilities necessary to deliver innovative customer experiences.



A digital strategy is at the heart of competitive survival.



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A leading fuel refiner and distributor needed to transition end-to-end finance and accounting processes previously managed by its parent company. It was faced with overwhelming costs, an aggressive timeline, and a significant lack of domain knowledge and skilled resources to establish a new operation from the ground up. All of this was occurring amidst the backdrop of a complex enterprise resource planning (ERP) implementation. Leveraging a design thinking approach, the company assessed existing business processes to develop a best-in-class operating model for the new system and post-organizational restructure. It leveraged the domain expertise from oil and gas accountants and consultants in deep-dive learning boot camps for rapid knowledge transfer, and to provide targeted finance and accounting processes, including complex hydrocarbon management accounting.

The result was a market-disruptive competitive advantage that enabled the company to take a greater volume of business and easily take-on more complex industry-specific processes. The company successfully transitioned and transformed its finance and accounting operation. And the new operations provided greater transparency and control of services.

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### 3. Agility through intelligent digital process transformation

Transformation requires the delicate balance of rebuilding business for the future while delivering business outcomes today. Once a digital strategy has been developed, the collaborative engagement of business stakeholders across the front, middle, and back-office must continue.

A true digital business requires examining, rethinking, and rebuilding processes aligned to an organization's digital goals. It is important to take the end-to-end view, as actions from one part of the process have implications for another. Transformation of an end-to-end value chain must weave intelligent, coordinated, and aligned execution across operations. If not, there can be negative implications to the customer experience or unnecessary inefficiencies as one part of the organization compensates for the missteps of another.

In this age of digital disruption, rapid technology advances are having tremendous impact in reshaping how business is conducted, how value is delivered, and how efficiently and effectively organizations perform. Leaders should embrace the potential for transformation by investing in appropriate technologies, such as intelligent automation platforms and predictive analytics, that possess the potential for meaningful impact. This requires thoughtful application of technology capabilities and careful integration within the rebuilding of business processes.

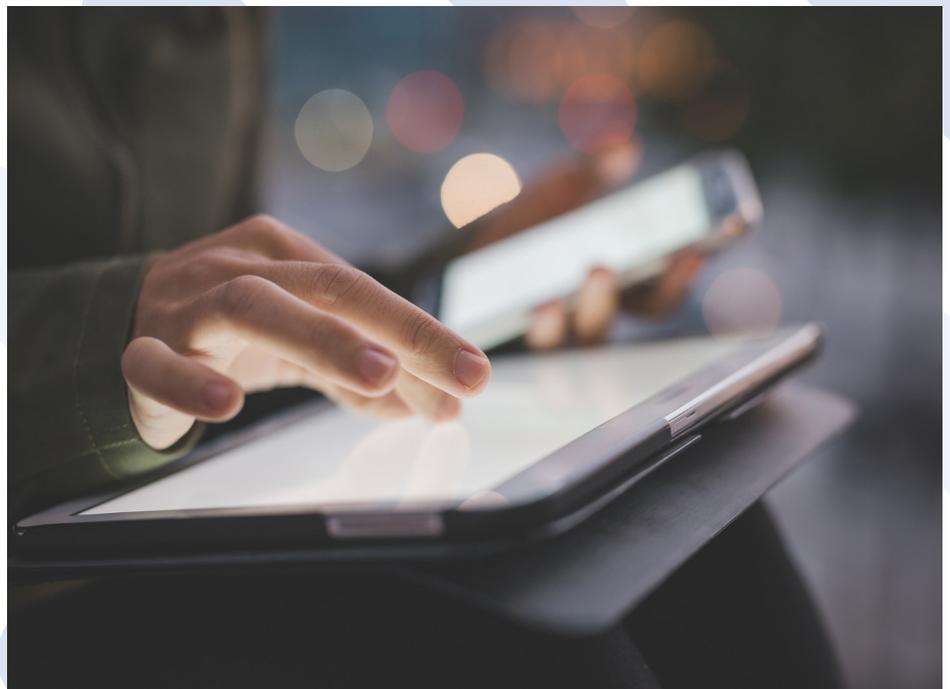
Analytics will change business processes, incorporating data-driven insights for improved decision-making and workflow execution. Organizations must learn to unlock the value of data for analytical insights. These insights drive intelligent next-best-actions that can weave appropriately synchronized execution across their operations. It is critical to synthesize multiple sources of data across end-to-end operations for a robust and comprehensive data ecosystem. Organizations can more readily gain

a 360° view of customers across the lifecycle. They can discover, predict, and prescribe opportunities that drive actionable insights for improved decision-making that optimize business and customer outcomes.

Advances in robotics, machine learning, and artificial intelligence (AI) can minimize the human touch, provide predictive insights, enhance productivity, scale throughput, increase accuracy, and improve overall outcomes. Robotic process automation (RPA) technology solutions simulate the routine or repetitive actions of human workers. When integrated with cognitive technology solutions like machine learning, natural language processing, speech recognition, and more, companies can automate recurring and judgment-based functions and workflows, improving efficiency and agility while lowering costs. Deploying a 'digital workforce' that incorporates these technologies, organizations can ensure always-on services for customers, eliminating human errors and inefficiencies. Combining human and virtual agents in appropriate customer interactions can provide expedient and higher-quality customer experiences.



Transformation of an end-to-end value chain must weave intelligent, coordinated, and aligned execution across operations.



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An integrated financial services organization needed to transform its end-to-end policy claims and accounting management processes. At the time, its costs were higher than industry norms. Through a design thinking approach, a comprehensive, company-wide assessment of business functions was conducted. Executives, stakeholders, and experts were engaged in understanding current business processes while collaborating on future solution designs.

In addition, several technology initiatives set out to minimize the impact of legacy systems and disparate data sources. This included:

1. Digitization of all paper-based and hand-written forms and images
2. Smart workflow and document management enabling automatic routing of transactions and documents as well as business rules-based workload management
3. Robotic process automation for business rules-based data entry, use, and interpretation
4. Integrated customer interaction history, policy, and claims information within a customer relationship management (CRM) system
5. Broad data architecture and consolidation leveraged by a cloud-based analytics platform to support strategic and operational analytics, i.e. dashboard and reporting, strategic diagnostics, and related business decision support.

The result was a transformed, end-to-end policy management process with improved cash flow, increased transaction accuracy, timely policy-holder interactions, and a greatly enhanced customer experience.

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## Reaching your integrated office goals starts with 6 key steps

To achieve your integrated office goals, it is important to review and reflect on the critical elements to provide that exceptional customer experience. Organizations must encourage business stakeholders to break away from conventional thinking and traditional norms, and engage them with research and insights to prototype new ways of conducting business. Then, they should develop a digital strategy that crystalizes a customer-first mindset and integrates operations that deliver seamless, extraordinary customer experiences

end-to-end. Finally, organizations must break down, design, develop, and deliver innovative end-to-end business processes, enlisting innovative digital solutions that drive winning execution strategies to provide value at a different level.

Disruptive transformation is not easy and companies must nurture a culture that embraces change. Often, they are too heavily invested in current ways of doing business and unable to overcome organizational biases. The result: their operations remain siloed and their delivery of value is fragmented.

Many organizations taking on such strategic initiatives cannot effectively meet objectives on their own. They must

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seek out partners that can supplement their own in-house expertise and provide solutions to achieve the desired outcomes. Here are some criteria that will help your organization take the next steps and assess the requirements for the right partner to help operationalize your digital transformation journey:

- 1. Define success measures** – Decide what success looks like. Document those measures and integrate them across the organization.
- 2. Create prototype/pilot** – Put your plan into action via a prototype or pilot phase. Capture the learnings and reflect on what went well and what did not.
- 3. Identify approach: waves or big bang** – After incorporating the learnings from the pilot, determine if you will move forward in waves or all at once.
- 4. Create a digital technology roadmap with a desired end-state execution model** – Identify the required digital technology needed to enable defined objectives and incorporate deployment into overall program plan. Then, define the transformed business vision for how the company will operate to deliver value to customers from first to last touchpoint.

- 5. Assess capability and determine your next phase of build versus partner** – Assess where your organization has the skills and strengths to achieve business transformation goals on your own, and where leveraging the insights of a partner will accelerate outcomes. Include a change management team in your analysis, as this team will be critical to your success.
- 6. Leverage expertise outside of industry** to see different solutions/perspectives.

Sutherland is uniquely focused on the customer experience as the centerpiece of digital disruption. We are a partner that combines design thinking, domain, and end-to-end business process expertise, along with a distinct set of digital capabilities and technology solutions that deliver disruptive execution and produce better business outcomes. Sutherland is a strong partner that will help you answer the key questions above around thriving through disruption by providing end-to-end design, consulting, analytics, and digital services.



Decide what success looks like. Document those measures and integrate them across the organization.



**Is your organization ready for a new model of process transformation that puts exceptional customer experiences first? For more information on how we can help you transform your process to optimize the customer experience, please visit us at [www.sutherlandglobal.com](http://www.sutherlandglobal.com), email us at [sales@sutherlandglobal.com](mailto:sales@sutherlandglobal.com), or call 800-388-4557 ext.6123.**

As a process transformation company, Sutherland rethinks and rebuilds processes for the digital age by combining the speed and insight of design thinking with the scale and accuracy of data analytics. We have been helping customers across industries from financial services to healthcare, achieve greater agility through transformed and automated customer experiences for over 30 years. Headquartered in Rochester, N.Y., Sutherland employs thousands of professionals spanning 19 countries around the world.