

## Cultural Aspects of the Digital Transformation Telcos Need to Undergo

### NFV - Cultural Aspects of the Digital Transformation Telcos Need to Undergo

It is often said that digital transformation requires a cultural shift as well as a technological one, but what does this mean in practice?

**The statement on the cultural shift presupposes an understanding of the question, “What is culture?” and “Who’s culture?”.**

Culture manifests itself in different ways and on differing levels. Different levels of culture affect the whole, along the road to digital transformation; the consumer, the operator and the vendor are intrinsically connected to one another. Consumer attitudes and behavioral changes ultimately shape cultural shifts in the ecosystem. The way in which they communicate supplies the demand for the services they receive. Certainly, developments in communication over the last century have demonstrated that new technologies create new etiquettes for communication, with quantities increasing to the point where information overload and the resulting stress is a widely reported problem.

Vendors and operators alike are finding elasticity in solution development is required to support this new world of communications. The transformation to NFV, or [cloud](#), for example, tools of communication may remain the same, but the ideas and information which needs to be exchanged are different. And not everyone has the same ideas around which products and services should or shouldn't be pushed along the roadmap – there are often country-specific barriers for specific products.

And the question of evolution is also dependent on consumer or enterprise behavior. Inertia is not mutually exclusive at the vendor or operator levels, consumers or enterprises still using legacy products or services such as sending or receiving SMS via landline, or fax retrieval could significantly impact time to market.

### How does it manifest itself and how do you go about putting it into practice?

When we talk about [virtualization](#), as in any cultural shift, you will always get, “early adopters”, “late majority”, “laggards” etc. Simply introducing a new communication approach will result in only low usage - at least initially - without significant motivators, whether those are “push” factors (e.g. end of life hardware), or pull factors (the reduction in capex and opex). If the speed of adoption is insufficient then new services will lack adequate momentum to make the transformation useful, in terms of [return on investment](#) (ROI). It doesn't matter what services are transformed, it matters what transformations are used.

Without a tangible business case definition, the transformation of services may be overlooked. Reduction in expenses for new service delivery will only come once more have been migrated, but it's hard to justify [savings as a business case](#) when only one service has moved over. It's a bit like changing the tires on your car as it's driving along.

We are seeing operators leverage those systems that are most widely used and well understood, for example, SMS, to maximize the initial investment, realizing a cultural shift within well-known services as a vital first step to complete modernization. The cultural link between vendor and operator is achieved through shared methodologies, particularly in a dynamic continuous delivery process, such as that mandated by [NFV](#).

## **Does it mean retraining? If so, how do you decide who needs what and who do you get to do the training?**

Training alone is insufficient. Without motivation, the new approach will not be adopted or become ingrained, and indeed the training may be ignored.

Digital transformation has a disruptive impact on employee career paths and raises concern over being left behind to manage legacy platforms. But operators and vendors must diversify with next-generation messaging and build it into their portfolio to enhance the customer experience. Only in this way, can they counter the ever-increasing threat from OTT parties. To do this successfully requires the full cooperation of the workforce through their adjustment to new concepts, technologies, and outlooks in design, deployment, and management of the network.

## **Does it mean working with new partners - again how do you decide where your needs lie?**

This is dependent on the technology - can existing partners provide the new approaches needed? And the internal strategy - to roll out the digital transformation, do the skills exist to explain and motivate those affected.

## **Ultimately, does it mean a lot of job cuts - if so, where and who do you hire as replacements?"**

Many mobile operators started out independently. They had their own idea of what their services were. Some things were just not offered - no one else in the market was offering it so there was no uptake. But as national companies became consolidated within group organizations, conflict in services arose. Each formerly independent division brought its own peculiarities. For example, if a team has invested years working on ringback music, (a service that permit subscribers to select music or even install personalized recorded sounds for audible ringing), or ringback advertising (ad-supported music integrated with ringback), but commercial deployment for this service does not make sense at the group level, certain adjustments must be made with regard to the management of operational overheads. Redeployment of employees to high value-add areas should never be confused with an overall headcount, however, resistance to reassignment is a barrier for change.

The purpose of any transformation is to allow employees to focus on value-add for their enterprise (Telco). And it's important to have the foresight to understand what value-added service today will become a basic service tomorrow.

Find out how our NFV services offer carrier-grade and future-proof solutions for messaging, voice and security [here](#).