

Enabling Digital Thinking in Your People

by **Joe Hunt**

As the continuum ensues in the digital revolution, few consumer goods and services organizations have gone beyond digital development around the consumer's path to purchase. Most companies have made plenty of progress developing capabilities for digital consumer engagement, and many have developed ecommerce capabilities. Too few, however, are exploiting the power of digital as the catalyst for enabling strategic capabilities in their people.

Company's simply lack the talent to fully leverage new technologies and drive organization-wide change. Organizations and entire industries must digitally transform over the next decade to ensure their continuity.

Developing digital natives to enter the leadership ranks must be a priority to ensure organizations have strategic plans for digital transformation and an organizational culture that will support it.

Digital is the key ingredient to enable organizations to adopt transformational capabilities, create and market new products like a start-up, serve customers with automated tools, manage operations responses to demand fluctuations, or track orders and provide alerts like a shipping company. While underleveraged, most companies already have the technology and required information in their enterprise applications to get to the next level and beyond.

The underlying and critical variable to enabling your people and capabilities still resides in your people's ability to fully understand and apply disruptive technologies and insights. This is uncharted territory for most, but a digital competency has to be developed and installed at the individual and company culture level to sustainably track. Developing and applying advanced digital technology needs to become one of the core competencies and pillars of the organization to survive. The winners will be the organizations that can get their first and do it best.



I had the privilege to attend GS1's Digital Convergence Forums over the past few years. With the speed of change and ongoing next level disruptions, the Digital Convergence Forum is a first innovator, early adopter and quick follower must attend event. Even though this event was attended by executives most interested in and likely the digital leaders at their respective organization, I was amazed at

the fact that the majority barely had a rudimentary understanding of what Blockchain is. As I surveyed others, it turns out only the small group of first innovators really understand Blockchain and its inevitable rise to prominence in every aspect of our life.

This is just one example of the digital malaise most people and organizations remain in. The chief digital officer is a much-needed role and I believe should be a direct report to the CEO vs. report to a CMO or a CCO to assure digital thinking is applied and capabilities developed beyond a single functional vertical. The mandate of this role has to go well beyond strategy discussed and employed in the C-Suite. Much like changing the enterprise culture a decade ago from employees asking each other what each other thinks, to asking what the consumer or end user thinks, in the digital realm companies need to make sure all employees learn to continuously ask the right questions around digital and apply the answers.

In Blockchain, everything physical has a digital equivalent or clone. Critical thinking skills combined with creativity and innovation are mission critical in order the separate and parallel

the physical and digital realms. This is easier said than done, since most people tend to stop learning after college. I'm not saying only 10% of the people think, I'm saying only 10% remain learners or students. This explains why only 10% of people are "A" players. The best CEO's and C-Suite executives I know remain avid students throughout life and what separates the wheat from the chaff is determining who can actually figure out how to apply the new learnings.

Our *LeaderShift* Architect competency suite puts data analytics, insights and their application as table stakes for all key positions. Design thinking in using digital disruption as a competitive advantage requires next level thinking that only those that are winning have figured out how to apply, but none have yet to master. The good news is that learning, understanding and applying digital thinking is not a difficult skill to develop. It merely requires a commitment to a digital convergence, where quite literally everything becomes part your internet of things (IOT).

I'd welcome learning your interest and ideas around this body of work. Please email me at joehunt@huntgroup.com

Joe Hunt is a Managing Partner at Hunt Executive Search/The Hunt Group, a boutique executive search firm that provides human capital solutions to consumer goods, retail, life sciences and diversified industrial markets.

Contact Joe Hunt:

212.861.2680 | 800.486.8476 | info@huntsearch.com

- [Retained Executive Search](#)
- [Executive Assessment](#)
- [Private Equity Advisory](#)
- [Executive Coaching & Outplacement](#)
- [Human Capital Consulting eDossier](#)
- [Video Presentation](#)

2 | *LeaderShift* Perspectives

“A” Player human capital leadership by HUNT EXECUTIVE SEARCH

