

DIGITAL TRANS- FORMATION IN GREECE **2022-2023**

Reassessing
progress,
readjusting
course



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CONTENTS

Foreword **04**

About EIT Digital **06**

About Found.ation **06**

Objective & Methodology **07**

Opinion articles

Sotiris Alexopoulos, Deloitte **08**

Giannis Kordonis, Retail Innovation Hub by Cardlink **10**

Elena Barla, Stanton Chase **12**

Digital Transformation from 2022 to 2023

Digital Transformation in Europe **14**

Digital Transformation in Greece: The Country's Digital Profile **16**

Digital Transformation in Greece: The Public Sector **20**

A statement from the Ministry of Digital Governance **24**

Digital Transformation Trends **26**

Digital Transformation Maturity and Digital Cultures **30**

Digital Transformation Maturity Levels **32**

Digital Cultures **37**

Digital Tools as a Revolution **42**

Digital Transformation in the Private Sector **48**

2022 Executive survey results **51**

Infographic **56**

In Discussion with:

Maggie Athanassiadi, SEV **58**

Giorgos Verdi, European Digital SMEs Alliance **60**

Christos Tsolkas, Delta Foods **62**

Key Takeaways **64**

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FOREWORD



**Filippos
Zakopoulos**

Managing Partner,
Foundation

The Transformation Illusion

Every year, the first question we include in our survey is asking participants to state whether their company has begun its digital transformation journey. More than 75% say they have, but this affirmation is not enough to indicate the progress they are making, and whether their efforts are bearing any fruits. Long story short: mostly, they do not.

Two challenging years have provided more than enough evidence that there are no skills that cannot become outdated.

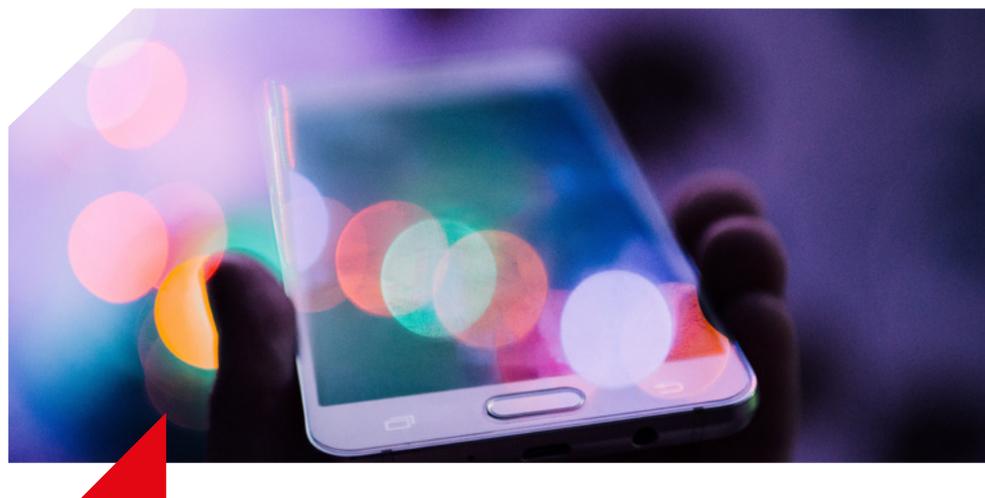
To better support this argument, this year we have devoted a fair part of this report to explaining the importance of Digital Cultures and Digital Maturity. The former can be seen as the ingredients - the elements - that make up a new type of culture: that of a modern company in a digital world. There is no unique recipe with these ingredients, rather each organization needs to make their own mix to ensure a smoother transformation journey with higher chances of success. The latter is an overview framework, a more structured effort that takes time and resources of all kinds but may act as a top level map towards the desirable outcome. While these tools cannot on their own ensure success, both can help organizations

understand their current position and readjust their course.

Our survey showed that a fair amount of executives feel like their organizations have embarked on the digital transformation journey long ago, but their answers reveal some weaknesses that are tell-tale signs of some overlooked aspects. One of the most critical is that of upskilling. Upskilling must be applied on all levels of an organization; leaders must be able to predict the change of times; employees must be able to keep up to date with rapid advances, and a whole new generation of people now entering the business world know they will have to either cooperate with or compete against synthetic co-workers.

Two challenging years have provided more than enough evidence that there are no skills that cannot become outdated. Additionally, there are many different categories of skills, and not all are equal when it comes to moving up the digital maturity ladder. Identifying and developing the right ones is not as easy as it might seem. Getting acquainted with concepts like artificial intelligence (the term our respondents mostly identified with DT this year) is the first step. But truly understanding its potential for each organization requires far more than a seminar – it requires a change of mindset that goes hand in hand with the company culture.

All elements coming together. This is when transformation happens.



ABOUT



www.eitdigital.eu



EIT Digital embodies the future of innovation by mobilizing a pan-European multi-stakeholder open-innovation ecosystem of top European corporations, SMEs, startups, universities and research institutes, where students, researchers, engineers, business developers and investors address the technology, talent, skills, business and capital needs of digital entrepreneurship.

EIT Digital builds the next generation of digital ventures, digital products and services, and breeds digital entrepreneurial talent, helping business and entrepreneurs to be at the frontier of digital innovation by providing them with technology, talent, and growth support.

EIT Digital answers specific innovation needs by, for example, finding the right partners to bring technology to the market, supporting the scale-up of digital technology ventures, attracting talent and developing their digital knowledge and skills.



www.thefoundation.gr

Found.ation is an innovation management consulting firm that passionately transforms organizations and teams by activating new skills and disruptive methodologies.

Originally established in 2011 as one of the first tech incubators in SE Europe, it has since developed into a fully-fledged consultancy for the evolving business world, uniquely positioned at the heart of the innovation landscape in Greece. We connect brands, startups, business leaders and young talent in order to create successful, future-ready companies in the tech space and across various industries.

Since 2016, Found.ation is a strategic partner of EIT Digital, for Greece and other East Balkan countries, with the objective of strengthening the Greek startup ecosystem and enhancing the Digital Transformation of local corporations even further. Through the implementation of common, well-structured initiatives the aim of the collaboration is to initiate discussions and enhance cooperation between small and big companies. This will both help startups expand and grow and corporates adapt and evolve.

Objective & Methodology



Found.ation prepared this report to provide an invaluable scope of the Greek business ecosystem. It offers important insights and examples on up-to-date practices, examines how much companies and large organizations have adopted Digital Transformation procedures, and pinpoints the reasons for any delays. The report follows the strategy of selected large organisations that operate in the country and aims at drawing attention to the need for transformation. Instead of trying to define what Digital Transformation is, the report focuses on key points that summarize the strategies most commonly practised by industry leaders.

To provide a context and better understand the frame in which Greek companies operate, a brief review of developments in Europe and the world, as well as a summary of the Greek economic and digital indexes, is provided.

For the sixth version of this report about Digital Transformation, Found.ation conducted once again a survey completed by industry stakeholders from various Greek and multinational companies that operate in a broad spectrum of sectors. The purpose of the survey was to examine how much companies and large organisations have adopted Digital Transformation, and identify the extent of knowledge that individual employees have, regarding Digital Transformation and its practices. This year's questionnaire focuses on the post-pandemic reality in the business world, the practices that are here to stay and the ones that were adopted as urgent measures.

The report includes a statement from the Minister of Digital Governance to provide a scope of what has been achieved in digitally transforming a public sector that has long been ranking low on a European level, and also what comes next for the Greek business ecosystem, from the government's point of view.

WHAT'S NEW?

After more than two years of remote or hybrid working, businesses are completely different from before. Both corporate values and culture have been affected, but, most of all, people. To understand the extent of these changes and to better coordinate future actions, we provide a thorough explanation of what digital cultures are. Furthermore, we do a deep dive into the digital maturity levels that can be achieved by organizations as they go from experimenting with new tools to becoming truly agile and embedding the digital aspect in their DNA.

Lastly, to offer a fresh perspective on what drives innovation in Greece today, we have included editorials from Cardlink, Deloitte and Stanton Chase, all of which have a lot to say about digital transformation, as well as a short discussion with SEV, the European Digital SMEs Alliance and the CEO of Delta Foods.



THE ROLE OF EXPERIENCE AND PEOPLE IN DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION

Sotiris Alexopoulos

Senior Manager, Consulting, Deloitte Digital

Deloitte.

What is the only constant in today's digital economy where customer engagement is expected, relationships are real-time, choice is infinite, and delivery is on-demand? Change—driven by technology. Successfully adapting to change through digital transformation means the difference between a failing and a thriving business. Digital transformation is how we future-proof a business. But there is no doubt that regardless of whether digital transformation comes as a compliance push or growth pull, the content and the ambition for digital transformation can vary from incremental digitalization, advanced digitalization, new markets and new products to new business models.

How we experience Digital Transformation within Deloitte

At Deloitte, as the largest organization worldwide in professional services, we embraced digital transformation several years ago, exploring the benefits of being a digital enterprise. At Deloitte Greece, we localize global digitalization initiatives, as well as plan and run our own, to meet domestic needs and market specialties. Moreover, as early adopters, we have **experienced this journey, explored the opportunities, tackled the challenges and become more efficient.** This process, undoubtedly, has contributed to maturing our organization in becoming one of the most **trusted partners in the digital transformation pursuit.**

Digital Transformation and the role of Digital Experience

At Deloitte, we consult our clients that they need to master three digital domains, in order to thrive in the digital age: Experience, Core, and Work. Those who master all three are classed as Digital Enterprises.

Digital Experience is about reinventing customer value propositions and experiences to grow revenue. Experience Design enables various research and design methodologies, both qualitative and quantitative, focusing on the end customer with the mandate firstly to identify the problems, then design specific products and services to serve the customer experience, and finally deliver the

solutions in the most relevant way. Starting with an Experience-first approach in digital transformation, the organizations could have a **clear view of the ideal customer experience they want to achieve as well as the technical and operational constraints to deliver it.** Moreover, Experience Design contributes to making informed choices and maintains the emphasis balanced among the aspects of understanding the customer context and implementing it technically and in an operational aspect.

Once the Digital Experience domain is championed, the focus shifts to the following domains. **Digital Work** will orchestrate how work is done to improve business agility and **Digital Core** will improve operating margin through efficient, predictable, low-cost operations, digitalizing processes, automating work, and leveraging data.

Looking inside the organizations and their people

A digital transformation initiative, in order to be successful, needs the proper sponsorship and support. **CEOs and senior executives owe to become the “change agents”**, recognizing that the world might be dramatically different a few years from now. They need to state their vision for what the industry or world will look like and then articulate how the company needs to change in order to adapt, leading by example.

Moreover, there is a clear connection between digital transformation and talent. The new generation of employees is educated and continuously being upskilled with digital skills, meeting their full potential only within a digitalized organization. So, being digitalized, among the obvious benefits, also helps acquire and maintain talented professionals.

Summing up, digital transformation is a challenging journey and requires the proper vision, top management support, experienced partners, and proven tools.

Digital Experience is the starting point to achieving a transformation that aligns customer experience requirements and technical and operational choices being made. While digital transformation starts with Digital Experience, Digital Work improves agility and Digital Core focuses on operating margin, all of them contributing collaboratively to becoming a Digital Enterprise.

At the end of the day, all organization leaders should have in mind that whomever they transform for, be it customers or employees, it is the human experience that matters.





TRENDS, CHALLENGES, AND SOLUTIONS FOR A SUCCESSFUL TRANSFORMATION IN RETAIL

Giannis Kordonis

Head of Product & Innovation, Cardlink



Over the last two years, retail was one of the sectors that pushed its acceleration over the technology tipping point, entering a period of continuous transformation that is still in progress. The industry has faced significant challenges, as new trends emerge and companies must satisfy the needs of a completely different, post-pandemic, consumer crowd. Everything is being reshuffled: market dynamics, consumer demographics, emerging technologies, and global economic indexes. What will retail look like in 2023 and beyond?

As consumers got more acquainted with online shopping, aiming for a seamless omnichannel experience has brought remarkable challenges for businesses. Retailers face an urgent need to transform their infrastructure, as well as completely rethink the form and function of the physical stores, to support both consumers and their own operations. The creation of the so-called dark stores was the result of the urgent need to meet the demand, but this is not to be considered the evolution of stores. The new role of stores as hubs comes to meet the renewed demands of consumers, who require having their orders delivered at the time and location that serves them, whether it is something they have searched for and bought in-store or online. Additionally, the stores are undergoing a real resurgence, following a new philosophy that allows consumers to live an all-day experience in them, enjoying so much more than a shopping process.

In theory, the technologies driving this transformation are already available. Nevertheless, it is really hard for traditional retailers to catch up and upgrade their technology architecture and operating model to keep pace with the emerging landscape. The structure of IT departments in most companies makes it difficult for them to run holistic projects around improving the customer experience while, concurrently, upgrading the tech. Consequently, most resort to urgent and often badly designed moves that don't have the desired effect, as they cannot address the challenges threatening their operations, meet the needed infrastructure and technology upgrades and, ultimately, offer the desired customer experience.

With the exception of some large retailers (mainly in the tech sector), that had the vision and the resources in place (both in infrastructure and human) to serve this purpose, most still have a long way to go.

The only way to help retailers move to this new era while at the same time creating the prerequisites for faster future advances is to foster innovation. This was the vision behind the creation of the **Retail Innovation Hub by Cardlink**: a place to gather feedback from the market regarding existing problems and try to find ready-made, efficient solutions with the shortest market time. Powered by Found.ation, the Retail Innovation Hub has already organized a number of initiatives during 2022, aimed at bringing together the wider retail technology ecosystem – from startups to large companies, from tech experts to leaders and retail industry stakeholders. Furthermore, the **Retail Innovation Hub Business Factory** is a novel initiative to foster meaningful ecosystem partnerships. Our vision is to create new technology products, solutions or services, enabling the industry to innovate faster and deliver a better, more unique customer experience.

Although there has been significant progress in this area recently, there are still areas where progress needs to be made and past shackles that delay transformation need to be overcome. This is precisely why we crave to continue developing our initiatives and actions for 2023 as well, continuing a path that aspires to accelerate transformation and provide tangible solutions necessary for the next steps of retail.





DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION IS LESS ABOUT TECHNOLOGY AND MORE ABOUT PEOPLE

Elena Barla

Director at the Stanton Chase Athens office, where she leads the Digital Acceleration & Sustainable Innovation Unit.

STANTON CHASE

Over 70% of the companies that try to digitally transform their business end up failing. Why? Several reasons apply, most important being the growing gap between existing and necessary skills to support and sustain the transformation. For companies, the ability to upskill and reskill their people is a challenge that must be met head-on.

Although the latest technology creates powerful business opportunities, it also widens the skill gaps, specifically in industries like retail, IT, consumer products, financial services, and health care, where a skilled workforce is much sought-after.

Likewise, for employees, the further digitization of certain professions and roles is inevitable, and everyone will have to adjust to the increase of digital technology in the everyday running of their companies. According to research from the World Economic Forum, 65% of the skills and roles that companies will be hiring for within the next decade do not currently exist. Gartner also estimates that 58% of the workforce will need new skillsets to do their jobs successfully.

As technology becomes integrated into nearly every facet of our lives, we inch towards a brand-new post-pandemic digital landscape wherein digital technologies are a dominant part of our daily lives.

The transformation applies not only on the company level, but also on a sectorial level, with experts anticipating that sooner than we think every sector will become 'techified' (proptech, medtech, fintech, etc.). Regardless of whether you're a sales manager, recruiter, doctor, teacher, engineer, or farmer, your profession will be digitized one way or another. So how can employees prepare themselves and their company to become tech-accelerated?

To quickly adapt to this necessary yet challenging new normal and conditions, companies are not only looking to digitally transform their business but are also seeking a digitally agile workforce and employees with all the relevant skills.

This is the time to invest significantly in employee upskilling so that they become more productive and future-ready, but also to hire new talent that possesses these skills. The war for talent is on.

Upskilling/Reskilling Or Hiring?

The answer is both. Understanding and choosing the right mix of new hires and upskilling/reskilling is of great importance.

According to a report by the World Economic Forum and Boston Consulting Group, it would cost less for the private sector to reskill 25% of its workers than hiring new employees to take their place.

Choosing upskilling over hiring though, where possible, promotes a stronger learning culture and a positive brand of internal development & growth for the company with longer-lasting benefits. It strengthens corporate identity, employee engagement, and performance while enabling company strategy execution, agility, and transformation deployment, which ultimately increases the company's overall competitiveness on the market.

As Jack Welch, former CEO of General Electric, says: "An organization's ability to learn and translate that learning into action rapidly is the ultimate competitive advantage."

People-driven Transformation

When leaders think about investing in technology, as part of their Digital Transformation, they should think first about investing in the people who can make the most of that technology. A company's ability to adapt to a digital future depends on developing the next generation of skills, closing the gap between talent supply and demand, and future-proofing your transformation process.

Leaders must prepare sufficiently before embarking on their digital transformation journey by ensuring they have a detailed transformation plan in place that will help them drive the company forward at the right pace, towards the right direction and with the help of the right people.

They also need to be diligent in understanding their companies' pain points, digital readiness and cultural constraints that could hinder their digital transformation by successfully assessing the current skills and competencies of their workforce and mapping them against their current and future needs.

Finally, they must prioritize innovation and digital strategy on their corporate agenda by focusing on ways and methodologies that will improve innovative thinking and a digital-first mindset among their employees.





DIGITAL TRANS- FORMATION

FROM 2022 TO 2023

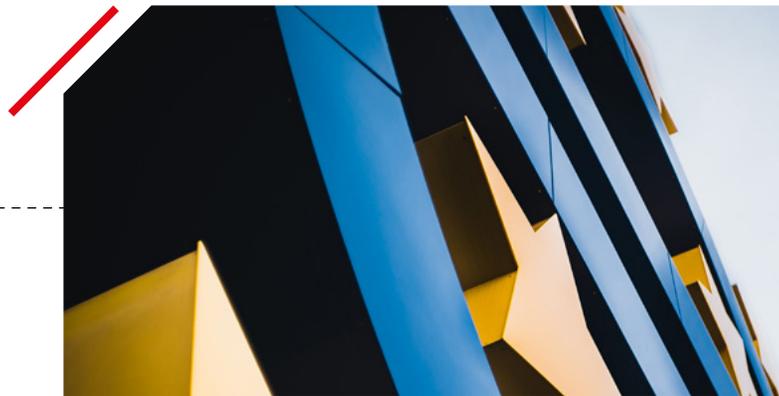
DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION IN EUROPE

In the summer of 2022, a political agreement was announced by the European Parliament and the Council of the EU on the 2030 Policy Programme: Path to the Digital Decade¹. It is a program that creates a monitoring and cooperation mechanism to achieve the common goals and objectives for Europe's digital transformation set in the 2030 Digital Compass². It covers the area of skills and infrastructure, including connectivity, digitalization of businesses and online public services, as well as respecting EU digital rights and principles to achieve the general objectives.

To effectively monitor progress, the Commission, together with the Member States, will develop projected EU-level trajectories for each target. In turn, member states propose national strategic roadmaps, which describe the national projected trajectories and actions to achieve the goals and objectives, including planned regulatory measures and investments.

Progress will be measured by key performance indicators (KPIs) based on an enhanced Digital Economy and Society Indicator (DESI) and assessed against the developed trajectories in an annual 'State of the Digital Decade' report presented to the European Parliament and Council. To give a comprehensive overview and analysis of the digital transformation, the report will also examine the progress made in terms of the Digital Decade goals, objectives, rights and principles.

The Commission has identified an initial list of areas for investment for multi-country projects, including shared data infrastructure, 5G corridor deployment, connected public administration, high-performance computing, European blockchain service infrastructure and low-power processors, for example. The Commission will review the targets by 2026 to take stock of technological, economic and social developments.

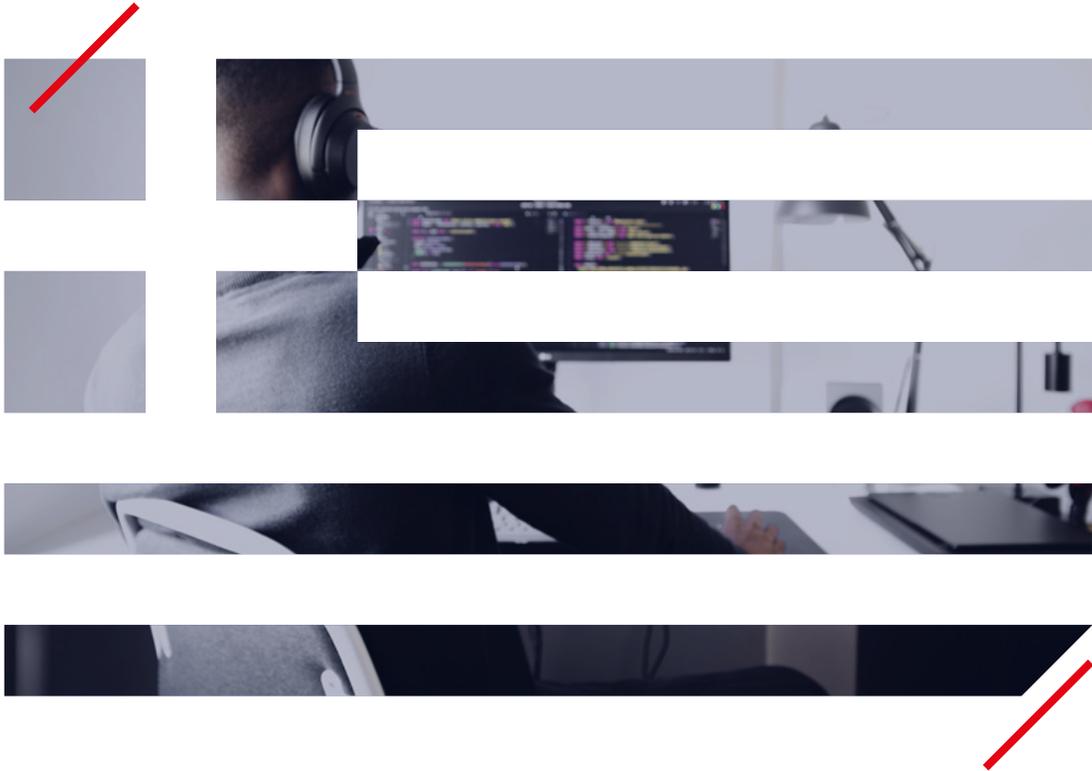


THE YEAR OF SKILLS

In October 2022, the Commission adopted the proposal to make 2023 the European Year of Skills³. The green and digital transitions are opening up new opportunities for people and the EU economy. Having the relevant skills empowers people to successfully navigate labour market changes and to fully engage in society and democracy. This will ensure that nobody is left behind and the economic recovery as well as the green and digital transitions are socially fair and just. A workforce with the skills that are in demand also contributes to sustainable growth, leads to more innovation and improves companies' competitiveness.

With the European Year of Skills, in cooperation with the European Parliament, Member States, social partners, public and private employment services, chambers of commerce and industry, education and training providers, and workers and companies all together, the Commission proposes to give a fresh impetus to lifelong learning.

DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION IN GREECE: THE COUNTRY'S DIGITAL PROFILE



DESI 2022: OPTIMISTIC FIGURES FOR GREECE

The data of the DESI 2022⁴, an index about digital economy and society, is particularly optimistic this year for our country, as it is among the three EU member states (along with Poland and Italy) that managed to show the most digital progress. The three states have managed to significantly improve their DESI scores over the past five years by implementing sustainable investments with an enhanced political focus in the digital sector, which are also supported by European funding.

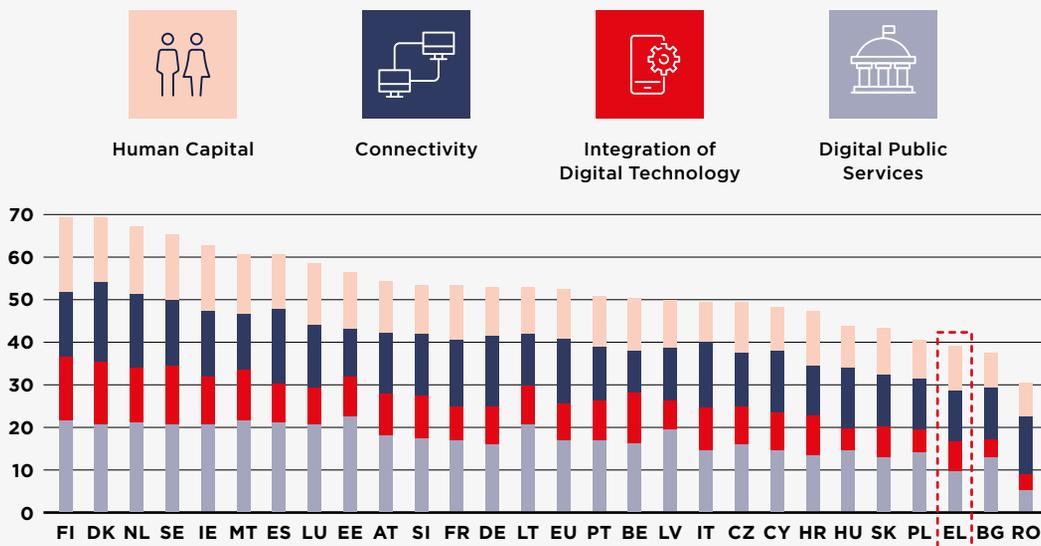
Greece is ranked 25th in the DESI 2022 index (same position as last year) among 27 EU member states.

	Greece		EU avg.
	rank	score	score
DESI 2022	25	38.9	52.3

Source: European Commission, DESI 2022

In terms of connectivity, Greece has made significant progress, especially in the coverage of Very High-Capacity Networks (VHCN) and 5G. However, more progress is needed, especially in terms of at least 100 Mbps fixed broadband and further improvement of 5G coverage to ensure access to high-speed connectivity across the country. In digital public services, the number of active users of e-government services increased from last year. The country has also made progress in terms of the population having at least basic digital skills. Regarding the integration of digital technologies in business activities, Greece's performance falls short of the EU average.

Digital Economy and Society Index (DESI) 2022 Ranking

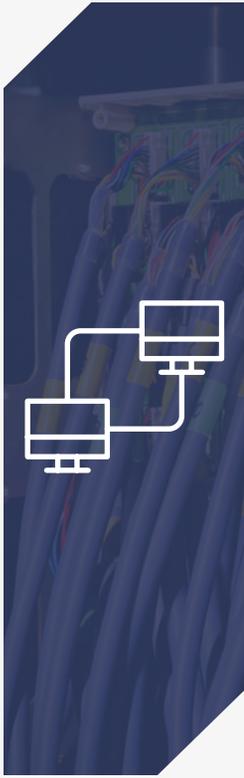


Source: European Commission, DESI 2022



HUMAN CAPITAL

Starting from the parameter of human capital, Greece ranks 22nd among the 27 EU countries, with a score below the average. In the area of basic digital skills, Greece is very close to the EU average (54%) with a percentage of 52% (statistic for people aged 16-74). However, the statistics are extremely optimistic when looking at the 16-24 age group, as 88% of young people have at least basic digital skills, much higher than the EU average (71%). There is a small increase in the percentage of information and communication technology (ICT) specialists, but it remains low (2.8%) compared to the EU average (4.5%). However, the proportion of female ICT specialists (21%) is above the EU average (19%). Finally, only 12% of businesses provided ICT training to their staff in 2020, compared to the EU average of 20%.



CONNECTIVITY

Moving on to connectivity, Greece ranks 22nd in the EU with an overall score of 49.6 (quite low compared to the average of 59.9). Greece has made significant progress in Very High-Capacity Networks (VHCN) and high-speed broadband coverage, e.g., next generation NGA access. This coverage increased in 2021 by 5 percentage points to reach 92%, higher than the EU average. VHCN coverage reached 20%, up from 10% the previous year, although this is still well below the EU average of 70%. Fixed broadband of at least 100 Mbps remains very low (reaching 9% from 3% in 2020) compared to the EU average (41%). Overall fixed broadband take-up exceeds the EU average (82% compared to 78%). However, Fiber to the Premises (FTTP) coverage was 20% in 2021, up from 10% in 2020, and 0% in rural areas. Greece has made progress in the broadband price index, scoring 58 in 2021 versus 53 in 2020, which is lower than the EU average. Mobile broadband take-up (76% in 2021) remains below the EU average EU (87%).



INTEGRATION OF DIGITAL TECHNOLOGY

Greece ranks 22nd in the EU in terms of the integration of digital technology into business activities. Only 39% of SMEs show at least a basic level of digital intensity compared to the EU average of 55%. Although 20% of SMEs in Greece take advantage of the opportunities offered by e-commerce (above the EU average of 18%), only 7% sell cross-border online (EU average: 9%). E-commerce accounts for 11% of total SME turnover, close to the EU average of 12%. The percentage of businesses using social media stands at 29%, the same as the EU average. Regarding the adoption of advanced digital technologies, 13% of businesses in Greece use big data, which is close to the EU average (14%), but their performance is much lower than the EU average in the use of cloud computing and artificial intelligence (AI). Finally, Greece is close to the EU average in terms of technology information and communication (ICT) for environmental sustainability (65% vs. 66%).



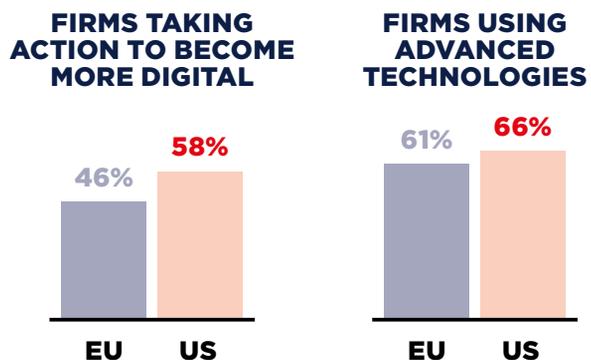
DIGITAL PUBLIC SERVICES

Greece ranks 26th in the EU in the field of digital public services. The percentage of active users of e-government services (69%) increased from last year (67%) and is 4 percentage points higher than the EU average (65%). In terms of open data maturity, Greece's performance (82%) is slightly higher than the EU average (81%). However, with a score of 45 for pre-filled forms, Greece's performance is below the EU average (64), although the gap is narrowing (36 vs. 63 in DESI 2021). Greece is still well below the EU average in both indicators on digital public services for citizens and digital public services for businesses, with a score of 52 for citizens (EU average: 75) and 48 for businesses (EU average: 82). However, the provision of services to Greek citizens and Greek businesses improved significantly in 2021.

DIGITALIZATION IN EUROPE 2021-2022: EVIDENCE FROM THE EIB INVESTMENT SURVEY

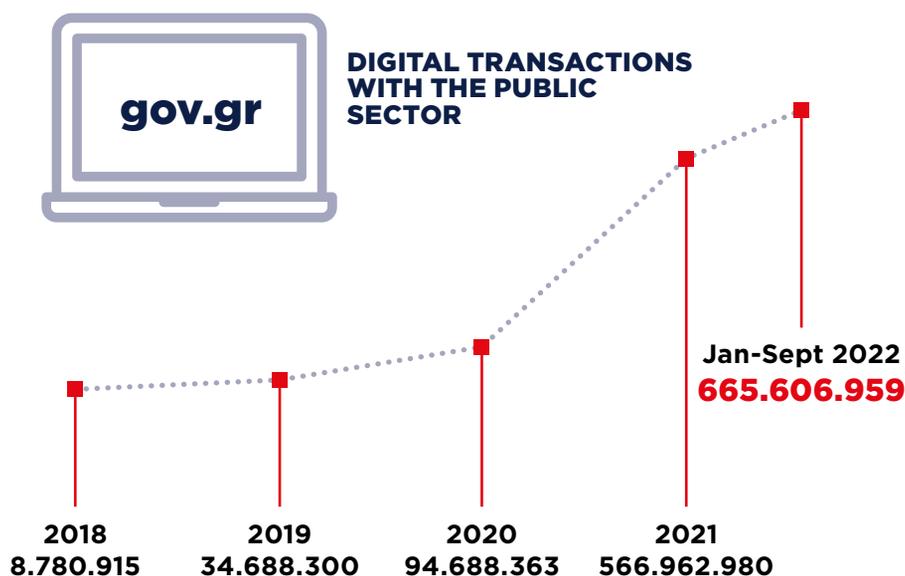
According to Digitalisation in Europe 2021-2022: Evidence from the EIB Investment Survey⁵ from the European Investment Bank, in 2021, Finland and Malta were the top two digital countries, followed by Denmark, Austria, the Netherlands and Sweden. The EIBIS Corporate Digitalisation Index explored the degree of digital adoption in the European Union and the United States from six different composite angles. The top performing EU countries, in individual areas of digitalisation, were as follows: the Czech Republic for the use of advanced digital technologies, Finland for digital infrastructure and the use of formal strategic business monitoring, which is an indicator of management practices, Austria for the uptake of digitalisation during the coronavirus pandemic, Cyprus for investment in software and data, and Sweden for investment in employee training.

46% of EU firms report having taken action to become more digital during the COVID-19 crisis, compared with 58% of US firms. Furthermore, the share of firms using advanced digital technologies is higher in the United States (66%) than in the European Union (61%).



DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION IN GREECE: THE PUBLIC SECTOR

During 2022, the Greek state moved to advanced levels of digital transformation at a rapid pace, which had significant benefits both for citizens and businesses, but, of course, for the country's public sector as well. The digital platform gov.gr is now a focal point for every transaction of citizens and businesses with the State, providing around 1,500 digital services, the number of which is constantly increasing. In particular, during the period from January 1 to September 30 of this year⁶, Government systems either provided electronic services to citizens, or "communicated with each other" cumulatively more than 665 million times, preventing up to a corresponding number of physical visits from citizens to services. The 665 million digital transactions in the first nine months of 2022 already exceed the total number of electronic transactions in 2021, when a cumulative 567 million digital transactions were recorded. It is noted that the same numbers for 2020, 2019 and 2018 amounted to 94, 34 and 8.8 million respectively. The Ministry of Digital Governance aims to establish, for the first time in Greece, a national coherent policy of administrative procedures, which will be presented in the near future and is based on three pillars. The first is the national register of procedures, where all administrative



Source: G.S.I.S. - Gov.gr

procedures related to the public are collected and recorded, the second is the national program for simplifying procedures and the third is the evaluation of all interventions in terms of how much money businesses save from the digitization and simplification of processes.

RAPID PROGRESS IN THE AVAILABILITY OF DIGITAL PUBLIC SERVICES

Since the start of the pandemic, Greece has made significant progress in bringing public national services for citizens and businesses online. Greece's DESI score of 90 exceeds the EU average of 89 (in 2020 it scored 68 against the EU average of 85). In terms of business, it scores 95, a score slightly below the EU average of 97 (in 2020 it scored 78 against the EU average of 95).



In July 2022, **Gov.gr Wallet**⁷, the official application of the Hellenic Republic for creating, storing and checking the authenticity of digital copies of the identity card and driver's license on our mobile phone, was launched. In this way, citizens can now use their mobile phone for transactions within Greece, as they used their police ID and driver's license until now. Furthermore, through the application they gain the ability to sign digital documents even more easily, quickly and more securely, through docs.gov.gr.

During the summer, the platform⁸ for the digital transformation of small and medium-sized enterprises was also opened. This is a project implemented within the framework of the **National Recovery and Resilience Plan "Greece 2.0"**, with funding from the European Union - NextGenerationEU and a total budget of 445,000,000 euros.

The action is implemented by the Information Society S.A. (supervised body of the Ministry of Digital Governance) and concerns the strengthening of the digital maturity of the country's small and medium enterprises (SMEs), with the aim of modernizing their productive, commercial and administrative functions.

The action to support small and medium-sized enterprises, for the purchase/utilization of digital products and services and their general support for their digital transformation, is divided into three individual State Aid programs:

**Program I:
SME Digital Tools**

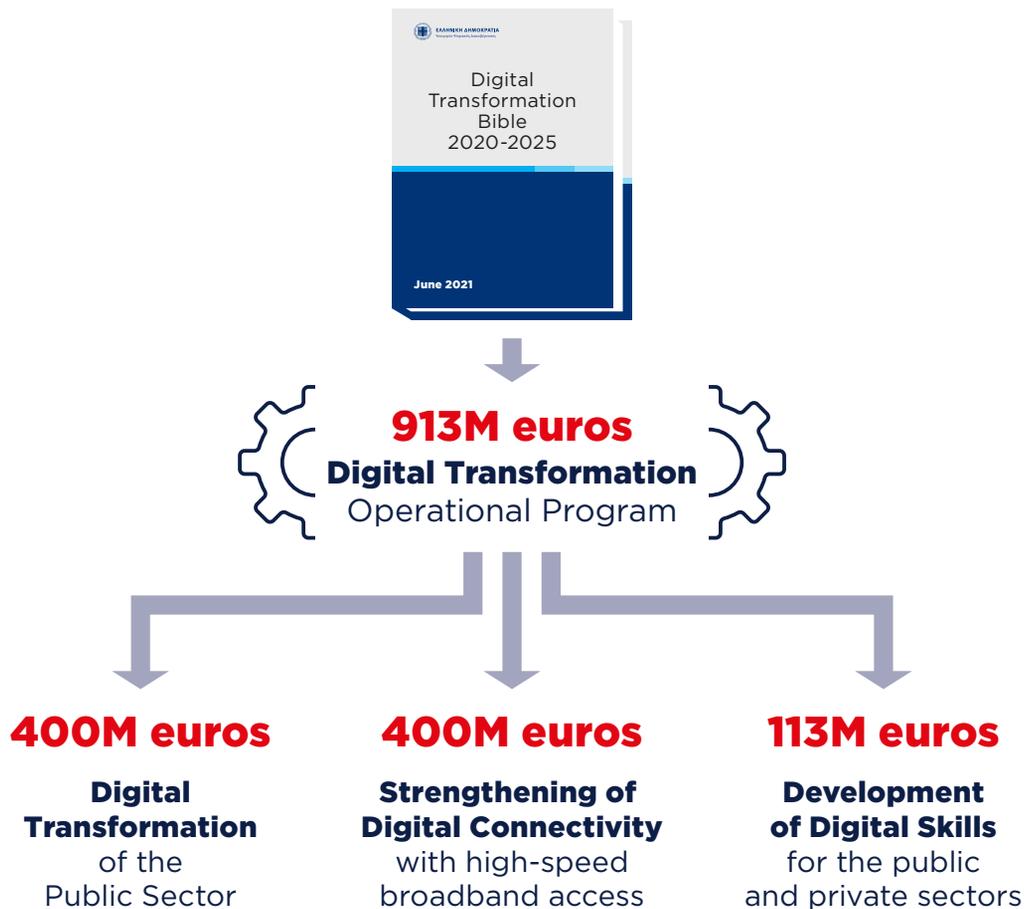
**Program II:
Development of Digital
Products and Services**

**Program III:
Digital Transactions**

Program I “SME Digital Tools” provides vouchers that will be allocated for the acquisition, through purchase or lease, of new digital products and services, with the aim of strengthening the digital maturity of the country’s small and medium enterprises (SMEs), through the use of various digital tools.

Through **Program II “Development of Digital Products and Services”**, a budget of 100 million euros, digital investments will be subsidized, in the form of a non-refundable grant, amounting to between 200,000 and 2 million euros, for the development of infrastructure and cloud services.

Finally, **Program III “Digital Transactions”**, which will also take the form of including the upgrade or replacement of cash registers, as well as the replacement of old POS machines.





In the summer, the European Commission approved the **Operational Program “Digital Transformation”**⁹ with a total budget of 913 million euros, which was designed in the framework of the NSRF 2021-2027, with the aim of “a smarter Europe through the promotion of innovative and intelligent economic transformation, as well as regional digital interconnectivity”.

The “Digital Transformation” Operational Program will substantially contribute to the building of “Digital Greece” by promoting the economic transformation of the country, emphasizing the utilization and integration of cutting-edge technologies, but also serving the strategic choice to strengthen digital skills.

The OP “Digital Transformation” moves along three main strategic axes: The digital transformation of the Public Sector with a total budget of 400 million euros, the strengthening of digital connectivity with high-speed broadband access where an additional 400 million euros are planned to be allocated and the development of digital skills with funding of 113 million euros.

The point of reference for the implementation of the OP “Digital Transformation” is the Digital Transformation Bible 2020-2025, where the guiding principles, the governance and implementation model, as well as the strategic axes of the digital transformation are captured.



COMPLETING THE DIGITAL LEAP

Kyriakos Pierrakakis
Minister of Digital Governance

If we had to use a single data point in order to describe Greece's digital progress over the last three years, it would be the number of citizen and business digital transactions with public services. Using this number, we are able to determine how many times citizens have used a digital public service as well as how many times, via interoperabilities, various government registries “exchanged” information with each other based on the citizen's consent. In effect, the number of digital transactions shows us how many visits to government front desks citizens have avoided.

In 2018, 8.8 million digital transactions were recorded — on average, less than 1 digital transaction per citizen. In 2019 the number of digital transactions rose to 34 million and in 2020 it reached 94 million. Last year, Greece reached 567 million digital transactions. This year, it is estimated we will reach one billion digital transactions. Decoding this number again, we can reach the conclusion that it amounts to, on average, less than 100 visits to government front desks per year. This means higher productivity and more free time to spend with friends and family.

The exponential growth is the result of a multifaceted strategy that the Mitsotakis government planned from the start. Until 2019, the government was, so to speak, focused on herself: the overall public services philosophy and design served mostly the administration itself, rather than the citizens. Precisely for this reason, we began to reexamine every structure and function of the state from the citizen's perspective a year prior to the election of 2019 in order to be able to rapidly and drastically improve the citizen's interaction with the government.

This resulted in rapid delivery of digital services. In March 2020, we created gov.gr, which features all digital public services of the government. Gov.gr was launched with 501 services. Today, gov.gr has reached 1,500 services. At the same time, we place particular emphasis on two complementary actions: simplifying processes

and interconnecting registries and government systems. This way, we can drastically reduce bureaucracy, minimize incorrect data and ultimately create digital public services which are faster, more flexible, effective, and friendly to citizens and businesses.

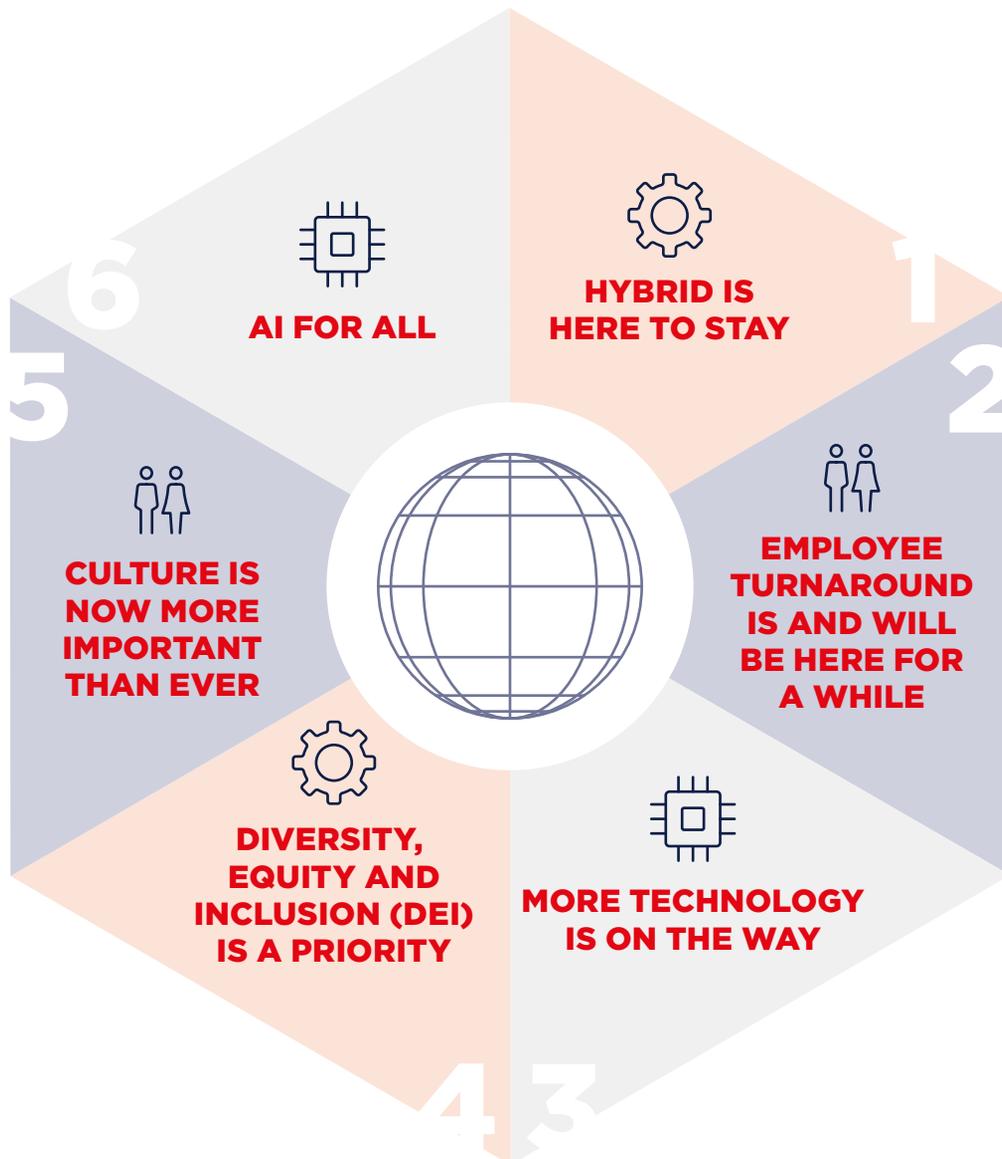
On top of designing more flexible and efficient digital public services, a core aspect of our policy is responding to emerging challenges. Thus, in the last three years, Greece has introduced innovative legislation and an array of common-sense regulatory initiatives. We have implemented a Cloud-First Policy, which has acted as a key driver of investment in the field of data centers. We completed the auction of the 5G spectrum and launched the "Phaistos Fund", a venture capital fund investing in 5G-related products, services, and infrastructure. Finally, we also established the use of emerging technologies such as blockchain, 3D printing and AI creating a framework for their safe and secure application in the context of the 4th Industrial Revolution. The third pillar of our policy involves with upgrading Greece's digital infrastructure. From telecommunication networks to government systems, we make sure to invest the required capital and cover the lost ground in those fields.

Our strategy is delineated in the "Digital Transformation Bible", a strategy and execution document which includes more than 400 digital projects with an implementation and completion horizon by 2025 for most of them. Thanks to the European Commission's Recovery and Resilience Facility, Greece now has the resources to fund the necessary large-scale digital projects in order to complete her digital leap. As a result, in the coming years, we aspire that the large-scale digital projects Greece is currently carrying out in conjunction with the investments in the technology industry will culminate in the country's digital transformation unleashing its economic and growth potential, upgrading our international position, and improving the lives of all citizens.



DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION TRENDS

Monitoring developments on a global scale, Found.ation has assimilated a number of trends that are underway in the global frontstage and will be affecting people & organizations, the processes that are in place and the technology used to do the work.



People



Processes



Technology

HYBRID IS HERE TO STAY.



More and more employees realize that work after the pandemic need not “normalize” into its state before the pandemic. Having witnessed first-hand that work can carry on even remotely, it is only normal for one to wonder why this state cannot carry on, regardless of health and safety restrictions¹⁰. This is an indicator that the nature of work ought to change, and in order to conquer this, organizations should roll out a number of processes and tools to ensure productivity, fairness and wellbeing among their employees.

Managers ought to be more proactive in establishing and developing relations with their teams¹¹, while also operating as team mentors, enablers and connectors, caring for work output rather than team member office presence, focusing on team member wellbeing rather than pure performance. After all, “Remote work, is just ... work”¹², and this may be an interesting perspective to keep in mind.

EMPLOYEE TURNAROUND IS AND WILL BE HERE FOR A WHILE.



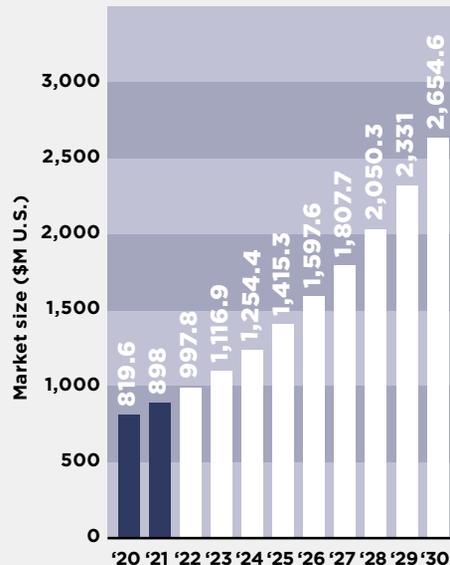
As the Great Resignation has begun during the pandemic, the trend will not likely diminish for the short-term future, even though some have expressed regrets for changing workplaces¹³. Employees understand that what they witnessed over the past 2 years can generate opportunities and new modes of working. They seem to not be so tied solely to compensation, but rather, what they seek from an enticing work opportunity consists of a mixture of mainly flexibility, what makes them happy, compensation and benefits. Notably, most realise that work does not have to be as it used to and are in the lookout for a better work-life balance. However, as Gen Z is becoming a greater part of the workforce, seeking a sense of purpose at work can be tricky. Reports note that work is not just a place to go, but an activity for purpose¹⁴, while thought leaders advocate the return to the office as a means to enrich the sense of belonging within the organization¹⁵. However, some organizations have been working on building a sense of belonging among remote workers by leveraging digital tools and setting up universal experiences for employees¹⁶.

MORE TECHNOLOGY IS ON THE WAY, BUT IN A HUMAN-MACHINE COLLABORATIVE WAY.



Technology will continue to advance, new products and services will be developed for B2B, B2C or B2B2C applications. This may lead to a changing nature of existing jobs, though more and new jobs will be born. Robots will not replace humans. Currently, only around 30% of employees are concerned their job will be replaced by automation within the next 3 years¹⁷. Robots may be coming, but predictions indicate that many of these will be machines working alongside humans, known as cobots. Furthermore, the most recent discussion on AI generated art and images, though in the past has been discussed through the lens of deepfakes, today begins to be seen in a different light; that of an engine for imagination¹⁸, thus, enhancing and complementing human capacities rather than replacing them.

SIZE OF THE COLLABORATIVE ROBOT (COBOT) END-EFFECTOR MARKET WORLDWIDE IN 2020 AND 2021, WITH A FORECAST FOR 2022 TO 2030 (IN \$M U.S.)



Source:
Next Move Strategy Consulting @Statista 2022
Additional Information: Worldwide; 2020 and 2021

DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND INCLUSION (DEI) IS A PRIORITY IN THE WORKPLACE.



As times have changed, and society-wide we are discussing issues of DEI harder than ever, through art, social movements and in popular culture, the workplace needs to tend to this need of employees and society. 65% of employees state that they are having conversations at work regarding political and social issues¹⁹ mostly in a beneficial context. This, apart from the immediate indication of interest in these issues, paves the way for more employees to discuss taboo issues and take up possible inequalities with their employers much easier. From creating Labour Unions²⁰, once unheard of gig workers, to protesting against new company policies, it seems that employees know and fight for rights and just treatment by employers. In addition to the challenges brought in by hybrid working, where it can be the case for on-site employees to be more likely to be promoted than remote employees²¹, issues of equality in the workplace based on output rather than presence are discussed and of all employees being treated as equals within the corporate ladder.

CULTURE IS NOW MORE IMPORTANT THAN EVER.



In a post pandemic office, it is only natural to have employees wondering what the best model of work might be. Remote proved workable. But returning to the prior office-only setup might not be achievable or even desirable²² as latest media reports suggest²³. This new mode of work might, as suggested earlier, mean measuring performance based on output and managers rewarding creative ideas and the likes that challenge established practices in order to make work and process much more efficient²⁴. The uptake of technological tools and upskilling ought to be a definite goal for every organization, since it is reported that 39% of employees are concerned they are not getting sufficient training from their employer²⁵, making for a corporate culture that struggles to give the best and most promising skills and knowledge to the people it employs.

AI FOR ALL



Artificial Intelligence is still on an upward trajectory. Traditional sectors are exploring ways of embedding the technology in day-to-day activities. Bots may have been the beginning, but backend operations have been reaping great benefits from the technology, where they are beginning to make micro-decisions for businesses²⁶. From travel assistants and tag-less smart luggage handling in airports²⁷ to a biology-driven genomic interpretation process²⁸, AI is set to optimize products and services, helping us humans make better and faster decisions. Its applications when it comes to immediate communication with humans, has been an age long dystopian fear for humans, who in turn feel threatened of losing their spot against the technology, only with research experiments finding AI generated faces more trustworthy than real ones²⁹ and claims of AI being sentient³⁰ reinforcing these thoughts.

However, these impressions may be owing to ill language use on behalf of the humans making such claims, in conjunction with widespread excitement and hidden opportunities these technological developments generate. As all technologies that have come of age in the past, resistance to this new technology uptake might be overcome given a different name. So, instead of “artificial intelligence”, it could be called “extracting statistical patterns from large data sets”³¹ - one has to say though that this is not as catchy as “AI”. Just as a box making numerical calculations was named “the electronic calculator”³² and did its part in human evolution, changing the nature of the job off “the human computer”³³. What would your office be today without some form of electronic calculator?

AI tools no longer require coding skills. This image was generated by MidJourney by simply providing “Digital Transformation in Greece” as a prompt.





DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION MATURITY & DIGITAL CULTURES

PREPARING FOR INNOVATION

As any forward-looking organization would tell you, setting the grounds to become a more innovative business entity is not an on/off switch. A substantial amount of human energy must be dedicated to advocate, persist, lead, support, enrich and develop a transformative path. And the path is not the goal.

Turning into an innovative organization requires constant effort in organizing official and casual meetings, discussing the aspects of what makes the organization innovative and stand out from the competition, obsessively generating leads for the creation of novel mindsets, compulsively seeking out the best training programs the market has to offer and orderly putting together interdisciplinary teams to work on common business goals.

This can be a tiresome large-scale project, and without recognizing that the transformation is a marathon rather than a sprint, it can be “easier” to let go and not carry through with it. This may be reflected on the demoralized and overworked

DT internal champions, the upper management who cannot be provided with quantitative data on which to make robust decisions in regard to the transformation's impact, or the combination of both, denoting "transformation fatigue".

Be aware that both drawbacks and fast lanes exist alike on every transformational journey.

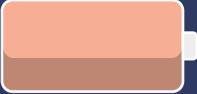
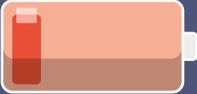
Considering that transformation is more of a journey than a commute, it is important to be aware of the overall legs of the trip required to "get there", understand that drawbacks and fast lanes exist alike, uptimes and downtimes take turns, and moments of extroversion can be followed by moments of introspection. In this regard, it is important to acknowledge that the people leading the task of Digital Transformation are riding a rollercoaster: at times, high energy might be followed by slow development, leading to a rocket propulsion upwards, possibly continuing in a downward spiral, before leveling at a plateau. This sequence is undetermined, falling prey to fortunate and unfortunate events, susceptible to luck, requiring employees and leadership to show persistence in the goal of transforming digitally and showcasing a much sought-after business skill: grit.

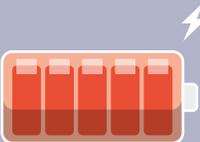
Being at the core of the innovation ecosystem and an advisor on Digital Transformation, Found.ation has drafted a map of Digital Transformation Maturity Levels in order to help organizations identify where they stand today and consider where they might go tomorrow, based on feasible roadmaps.

The six maturity levels presented in the following image are organized and presented so as to capture qualitative evidence one might come across in their work environment, and are plotted to help make extra correlations. Of course, the quotes presented are not actual encounters but rather, fictional storylines capturing an overarching mindset attributed to the organization as a whole, instead of a single person or department.



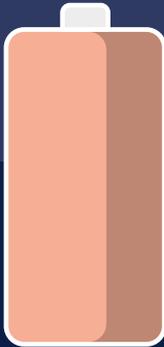
DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION MATURITY LEVELS

 Digital Transformation Maturity Level/Stage	 Mindset (what the organization thinks)	 Actions (what the organization does)	 Evidence (how the organization does it)
0 BUSINESS AS USUAL 	We are risk-averse	Digital is an invisible factor	Do not touch, so it doesn't break
1 TEST & LEARN 	We see shifts happening and want to be part of them	Actively trying to understand and assess DT	We are trying but it does not seem to take us anywhere...

<p>2</p> <p>SYSTEMISE & STRATEGISE</p> 	<p>We are open to internal cross disciplinarity</p>	<p>Organizing cross-departmental opportunities</p>	<p>Considering ways to make the most out of this strategic path</p>
<p>3</p> <p>ADAPT</p> 	<p>We believe DT is future-proofing our business</p>	<p>Structured DT efforts (benchmarking, goals, KPIs)</p>	<p>We have some DT pilots underway</p>
<p>4</p> <p>TRANSFORM</p> 	<p>We are a digital-first organization</p>	<p>DT governing body in place, rolling out local & enterprise-wide changes</p>	<p>Our entire enterprise is working digitally</p>
<p>5</p> <p>INNOVATE</p> 	<p>Transformation is no more! Long live the digital!</p>	<p>Looking for opportunities to evolve beyond DT</p>	<p>Innovation never stops. Off to new disruptive services and processes!</p>

0

**BUSINESS
AS USUAL**

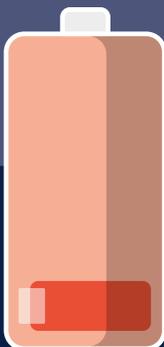


Ground Zero of Digital Transformation (DT), companies in this level of maturity tend to turn a blind eye to digital developments and how they may improve their business. They carry on as usual and may ignore or be unaware of the opportunities and risks digital transformation holds, continuing to work as they have been over the previous decade. There is a lack of urgency, and ticking important boxes such as profitability levels can act as a smokescreen for change. Furthermore, the organization's culture is mostly risk-averse, investments and ideas happen within established parameters and any novel suggestion or proposal can be discouraged.

This mindset settles for “business as usual” and, as a result, the organization continues to operate as it has in the past. In the few places that digital is not ignored, it is not used as a formal directive to lead a digital transformation journey. Instead, these organizations follow technology-first roadmaps and year-old processes. Established technology is primarily a mechanism for operational optimization, scale, and efficiency.

1

**TEST
& LEARN**

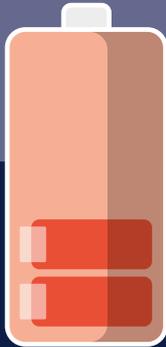


Any small part of the organization showcasing an interest in the latest DT developments or recognizing that some things could work better – but are currently not – can be signs of entering the 1st level.

By growing an appetite for disruptive technologies, which may include digital, mobile, and social, new opportunities can be introduced in order to test and learn internally and externally. Change agents take action in uncovering the potential of hidden opportunities and may even tinker with new approaches and methodologies. These efforts are not necessarily organized or centralized, nevertheless they create an internal buzz and interest around change which is necessary to building critical mass and momentum towards Digital Transformation. A range of experiments taking place with unclear reasoning for many, though hinting their importance and impact in the future, can generate a sense that “something is happening, but nobody really knows what”.

2

SYSTEMISE & STRATEGISE

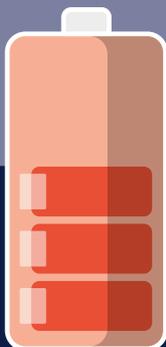


After initial experiments and early trials & errors on identifying Digital Transformation opportunities, strategic investments are forming in people, processes, and technology. The organization is getting smarter, its change agents begin to see the bigger picture and start working towards it formally. In this level, we witness silos breaking, for instance IT forming a working alliance with Marketing to expedite investments and support infrastructure for transformation.

The new possibilities observed during level 1 create the need to invest in ways of learning more about where and how to make more formalized investments that can lead to greater impact. Training programs and business initiatives become more intentional, and early stages of uniformity of mindset within the organization begin to take shape. Here, executive education is key to earn support for formal programs.

3

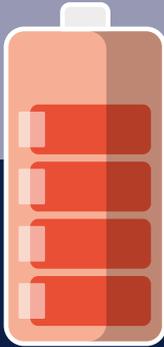
ADAPT



Businesses at this level of DT maturity are becoming resilient. Efforts in Digital Transformation become intentional with outlaid short-term and long-term objectives and outcomes supported by investments in infrastructure. Transformational efforts are now more ambitious and formally organized, moving from prioritized-but-focused pilots to official pilots that span every category that can affect customer facing services, as well as inner organization processes. These pilots affect areas such as sales, product service & support, marketing, and also begin to expand into HR, product development, manufacturing, etc. Additionally, umbrella categories are formed under each area, where common resources are shared across once-disparate departments, namely: “Data”, “CRM”, “Content”, “Education and Training” and “Governance”.

4

TRANSFORM



Digital Transformation is embedded in the company's DNA, and becomes the norm. During the DT journey, experiments, trainings and pilots have reshaped the organization, created new models and operating standards, affected people, processes and technology by function and line of business, at both the local and enterprise-wide levels. The organization is now operating in a more unified manner, owing to a dedicated governing team leading and managing Digital Transformation efforts, ensuring that functions and business units manage aspects of DT locally and enterprise-wide alike. IT and other key functions invest in dynamic architecture and sophisticated technologies to optimize the change process, empower new models for collaboration and streamline this adaptation to the new way of working. The team leading DT is operating with a renewed and cutting-edge mission as a guide into the augmented way of working.

5

INNOVATE



Transformation has settled in, and a culture of innovation is prevalent. Models of working, roles and investments look towards the "innovation mindset" built through the DT journey in order to identify new, unconventional opportunities for growth and development.

The workgroups once dedicated to transformation and technology can now focus on implications of innovation and market disruption. They evolve into the next "iterative" effort of understanding how to identify innovation and disruption outside the organization. Innovation centers or teams are officially formed to recruit new talent, identify new technologies that can benefit products and services, and invest in worthwhile opportunities, comprehending where to strategically focus the organization's transformation efforts in the short and long term.



DIGITAL CULTURES

Culture is defined by the Oxford Dictionary as the customs and beliefs, art, way of life and social organization of a particular country or group.

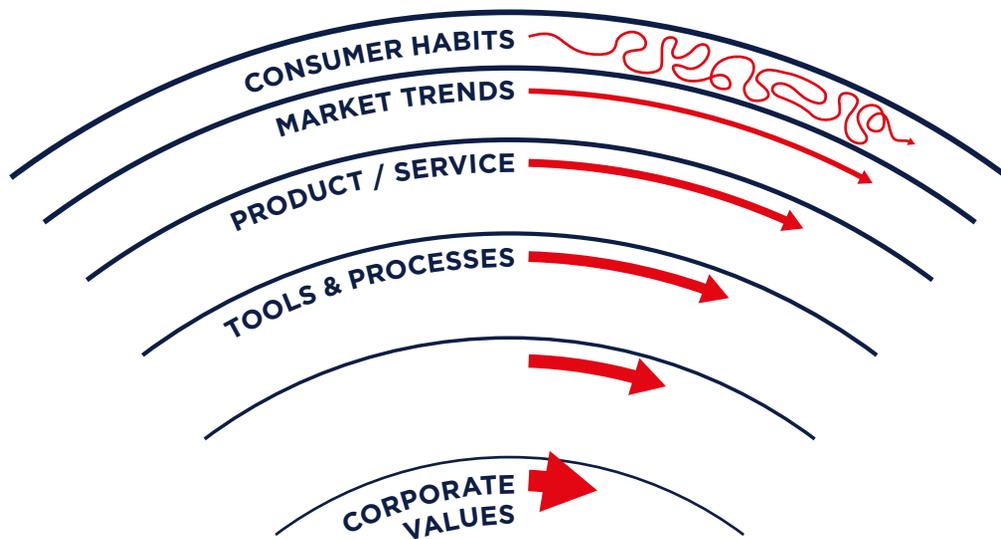
Corporate culture includes the beliefs and attitudes about something that people in a particular group or organization share³⁴. As a 'living' organization, corporate culture is evident in how employees and management interact, is susceptible to influences by national cultures, traditions, economic trends, company size and products and is shaped intentionally or organically, affecting every aspect of the business. It can be reflected in the people's dress code, business hours, office setup, operations, customer experience and more.

CULTURE & CHANGE

Change happens. So do shifts: smaller changes. However, it is important to grasp a sense of how fast these can take place. In his book "The Clock of the Long Now", Steward Brand portrays an infographic to relate the pace at which changes can occur in various sectors of society. Culture would change at the slowest pace of human-made activities, while fashion and commerce move the fastest.

If one would make the leap of thought to consider an organization as a system, just as a society, they could relate the above graph to corporate culture and might begin to uncover hidden differences in changes and pace that happen within the organization's different operations. For instance, changes in fashion might be thought of as changes in consumer habits. Change in commerce might be thought of as the rhythm at which the organization responds to market changes, whereas infrastructure can imply the velocity at which changes take place in the organization's offered products and services. Change in governance can be compared to the velocity of change in internal processes and tool uptake. Consequently, changes in culture, which may mostly involve people, their understanding and application of corporate values take much longer to happen and may be the result of the influence of all faster changing dimensions that have preceded.

RATE OF CHANGE OF VARIOUS ORGANIZATION ASPECTS



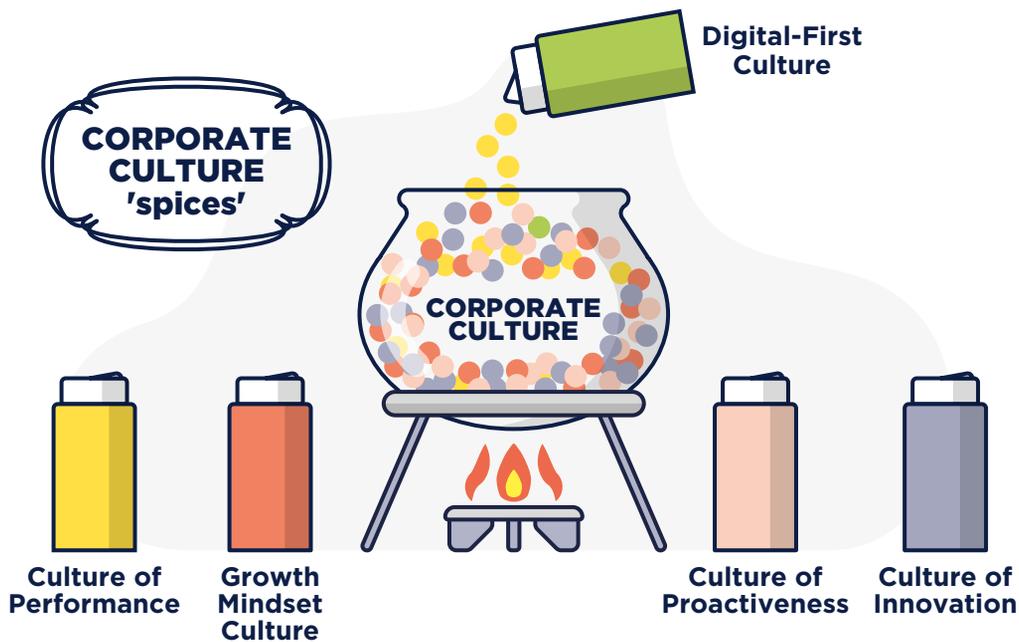
The digital, as a new layer of infrastructure, is bound to change the core of corporate values and culture, as it has already affected commerce and fashion through omnichannel products and services and is currently working its way to changing people and processes.

CULTURE & CULTURES

Culture is not a “one-size fits all” recipe. Each organization and business, depending on its legacy and vision for the future, has and cultivates a different culture. Corporate culture is a recipe that requires being developed, built, invested in, and does not change overnight.

Given the transition in the digital age begun by the 3rd industrial revolution and is currently led by the developments of the 4th, “the digital” has affected all areas of business and our lives. Corporate culture is no exception. As an extra layer in the fabric of our daily activities, “the digital” is transforming every area where humans are active, as a tool for better operations or as a lens through which to envision better futures.

Found.ation has distinguished the following five versions of organizational cultures, which ought to be seen as ingredients of a corporate culture rather than isolated silos where an organization should follow one or the other blindfolded. Instead, they should be viewed as practices and examples of ingredients for making an appropriate, useful and tailormade culture in any one organization.



DIGITAL-FIRST CULTURE

In a Digital-First culture, the business is admirably operating in a bright digital world. Employees are enabled, proficient, and empowered to embrace existing and emerging digital technologies. Internal policies allow for them to work remotely effortlessly, without differentiating between physical and digital presence, as most of the work utilizes digital tools and appropriate technologies to keep all work and people in sync.

Although technology is the main focus, it can easily overshadow the efforts of humans who are actively performing the work. Rather than be in the spotlight, technology ought to be used as a backstage enabler and the organization should resist the development of tech-infatuations. Employees remain the protagonists, constantly assessing their actions' alignment with strategic business objectives.



GROWTH MINDSET CULTURE

An organization with a Growth Mindset culture understands that change is everywhere, digital is prevailing and lack of keeping up with concurrent developments puts the organization's viability in peril. This culture continuously encourages attaining of new knowledge and supports the development and improvement of existing and new skills and talents. Rewarding personal development, investing in the people who perform the work, considering them their highest asset, an organization with a Growth Mindset culture sets a high standard of developing its people to



come up to speed with the latest DT trends and follows processes that permit such growth. Technology uptake and DT are not at the forefront of the Growth Mindset culture, but rather a symptom of such a way of thinking.

The focus on employee growth in such an organization can be constant and at times overwhelming. The level and ask of people who participate in growth activities ought to be balanced with the rest of their obligations in order not to overwork employees or inadvertently push them out of the organization. Furthermore, a growth mindset though serving similar goals and values, must not be misconceived for an educational organization or establishment, seeing as the goal of the business remains its prosperity.

CULTURE OF PROACTIVENESS

An organization focused on proactiveness seems looser than what one might be used to. This seeming looseness derives from the inbuilt trust put in the work and results brought by the employees. Here, people are not in the organization to follow orders from a manager higher on the hierarchical ladder. Instead, they are proactive, invested in the organization's product or service, make decisions they are accountable for and have a clear understanding of business goals and KPIs. Organizational processes are in place to mend inevitable mistakes rather than punish, and managers act as mentors to their team instead of imposers of authority. In this culture, individuals thrive in teams, self-regulate their workload based on deliverables and seek input across departments, for the benefit of the common business goal.

Such a culture, though results-driven and goal-focused, puts the saying "people are our greatest asset" to practice.



CULTURE OF PERFORMANCE

Leveraging the benefits of digital technologies and big data, an organization that embraces a culture of performance is in a position to have a real time overview of a large number of measurable aspects of work. Whether it is customer interactions, adoption rates, feedback, acquisition costs or employee performance across several factors, numerical indicators can set a clear baseline for any department to address its annual goals and monitor their execution, live. This allows for better decision making, so long as an agile frame of mind is in place, as well as a reliable system to develop rewards for performance and target achievements.



As far as corporate culture is concerned though, there is a fine line with the culture of performance. There are people who can thrive in such an environment but for most, it can be a quite stressful experience, an indication that care should be taken to find the right balance for the existence of this culture in the overall corporate culture. In addition, should unexpected events such as unpredictable market fluctuations take place, the organization must be swift to reexamine the numerical values used to measure performance, otherwise it runs the risk of operating out of context and out of touch with reality, further risking alienating its employees instead of motivating them.

CULTURE OF INNOVATION

In a culture focused on innovation, a mindset of trial and error prevails, people are liberated from the stigma of failure, pushing the organization forward through constant experimentations of complete or partial products and services. The goal is to learn from mistakes and failures, before they become full-fledged features in shipped products or services. Here, multidisciplinary teams work on common business goals, leveraging their individual expertise to develop state of the art insights, placed before the team to use and build upon. “Silos” is a non-existent word in the vocabulary of this culture, and T-shaped employees work collaboratively to deliver results.

The processes in place permit cross-departmental collaboration and employee participation in a wide spectrum of projects that fit their skills, and allow for the breathing space to make these projects happen, while putting the most appropriate tools into action, with regards to understanding the context and people who use the product or service, developing possibilities through prototyping and tinkering, and striving to validate ideas and original assumptions.

In this culture, a wide range of qualitative and quantitative data is the input for the organization, which in turn uses state of the art thinking and tech tools to translate these into findings and meaningful insights for the business, allowing and pushing for the experimentation and development of novel propositions that will be tested repeatedly before they are put into the organization's regular line of products/services.



DIGITAL TOOLS AS A REVOLUTION

Tools are said to be the crafter's path to mastery. Any job can be done more easily or more effectively with the appropriate tools. But of course, the tool operator needs to be in their top game, otherwise no tool can act on its own to create an artistic masterpiece. In business and corporate culture things are not much different. Tools made available have been used by people to get a job done. Once, the tool was something as simple as a pencil. Now, a tool can be a piece of complex machinery or software. But still, tools must be trustworthy, and tool operators skilled, experienced in their use, but also critical of any result and tool output.

FROM STARTUPS TO BIG CORPORATIONS: HOW DIGITAL TOOLS REVOLUTIONIZE WORK

If there is anything one can learn from startup culture, it is the importance and effect of their bootstrapping mentality³⁵: being able to make the most with the least available resources, employing people willing to learn plenty and fast, people with a great sense of ownership in the business, developing a company-wide can-do attitude and culture, and communicating an understanding by each employee that they have more than one role and areas to monitor and push ahead.

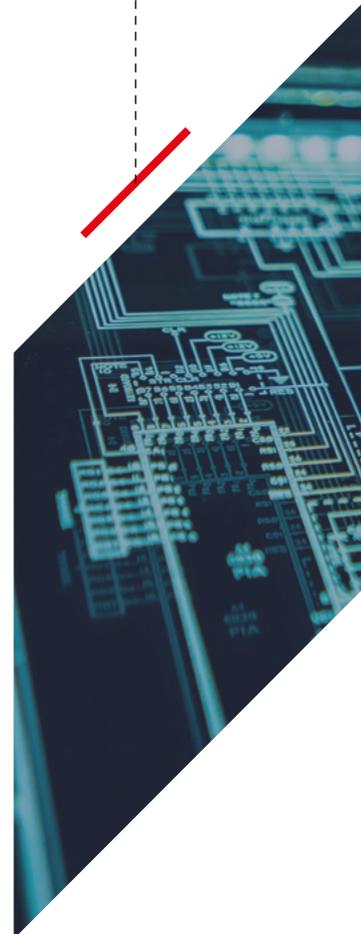
Tool operators must be skilled, experienced, but also critical of any result and tool output.

To some, the above may sound like the doing of a disorganized group of individuals. To the seasoned and up to date manager though, these actions speak directly to the most pressing issues of today's business world: clear and horizontal decision making, short loops between decisions, product development and market, continuous employee upskilling and an agile and versatile organizational structure.

Technological advances such as cloud, AI and ultrafast broadband have paved the way for the birth and use of tools for remote management, project management and collaboration. One can easily find digital alternatives to master ideation, prototyping a Minimum Viable Product (MVP), designing and developing a service, marketing, fundraising and many more. Unlike heavy weight corporate software, these tools can help with fundamental business functions, and can easily be integrated in day-to-day processes, within a reasonable price tag. Additionally, they can effortlessly become part of the business, as most are “plug and play” and require little onboarding, though some may require an agreement among users as to how best to be used, in the likes of a code of action or a digital savoir vivre.

DIGITAL TOOLS ALLOW A NEW WORKING REALITY

Many of these tools operate on the cloud, only requiring a user login before they can be used and functional. This can have extreme advantages for employees and businesses alike since operation across devices and geographies can be streamlined. Gathering the entire picture of a specific operation online permits all levels of management to have a bird’s eye and real time view of processes and project developments. This can be important for team alignment and operations transparency, even across teams dispersed geographically. The ‘online-first’ mode of working has been a driver for remote work, aided by policies such as “no meeting days” which can reinforce no office attendance days, making “working from anywhere” a “business as usual” setup. However, not all businesses have had this insight and outlook on remote work for their own reasons, Tesla is one example, demanding its employees’ full return. From research, though, more employees are eager to quit their job if “remote” is not an option on the table³⁶, leading to the phenomenon of “the Great Resignation”. During the last two years, many have been able to carry on productively with their duties thanks to digital tools, therefore there seems to be a census under development that coming into the office is not a benefit, rather it brings about worse work-life balance and diminishes happiness levels, if not just making employees spend more money in routine expenses³⁷, that have since become even more burdensome. Other organizations are responding to the need for remote work by planning for more flexible work options for the future³⁸, though many strategies and mixtures among “fully remote”, “remote-first”, “office-occasional” or “office-first/remote allowed” are currently on the table.



THE COST OF DIGITAL TOOLS

Tools that provide freedom through their digital experience can have an impact on most aspects of business, from day-to-day monitoring to long term vision setting. A plethora of tools for project management can allow task assignment and task progress monitoring from the comfort of one's web browser. While some can be very efficient in fundamental operations, such as time tracking and accounting, others may be utilized to bring creative thinking on a digital table, permitting teams to brainstorm visually while being remote - think online digital whiteboards, or decluttering email threads by substituting internal email communications with state-of-the-art messaging tools³⁹. But the most recognizable kind, the one that has taken up significant space in our working life is any kind of teleconference platforms, substituting in person meetings, occasionally reporting 270 million unique monthly users in 2022 by only one such platform⁴⁰, providing freedom of choice as to where one can geographically place their physical body, while their digital body can be in any virtual meeting room.

DIGITAL TOOLS OFFER GREAT VALUE COMPARED TO THEIR COST



For the purpose of exhibiting what the impact of taking up a range of such tools might be for various organizations with different strategies and directions, we have aggregated the details in the following table.

These scenarios were created having a hypothetical medium enterprise in mind of approximately 100 people, and the cost provided (per user, per month) is indicative, based on the pricing of some of the most popular digital tools available in their basic package pricing category – which usually for these cases is more than enough. The more the required user licenses, the greater the cost, therefore one should weigh-in tool benefits with available budget in order to create a customized digital tools arsenal.

Tool category	Indicative cost per user per month			
		Scenario 1: The Digital Essentials Kit	Scenario 2: Flexible office	Scenario 3: Digital Pioneer
Project management (e.g. Monday, Asana, Jira)	€15		✓	✓
Time keeping (e.g. Harvest, Toggl)	€10			✓
Productivity suite & File management (e.g. Microsoft 365, Dropbox)	€10	✓	✓	✓
Communication & Video conferencing (e.g. MS Teams, ZOOM, Slack)	€22	✓	✓	✓
Remote Online Collaboration (e.g. MIRO, Notion)	€18			✓
HR (e.g. Bamboo, Workable)	€12			✓
Accounting (e.g. Elorus)	€19		✓	✓
CRM (e.g. Salesforce, Pipedrive)	€35		✓	✓
Total cost per user per month		€32	€101	€141

SCENARIO 1: THE DIGITAL ESSENTIALS KIT

Organizations that opt for this entry level may be in the beginning of their digital transformation journey, relying on the online evolution of digital tools they have already been using for years in a stand-alone mode. They use technology for basic functions, having replaced isolated personal computers with digital cloud-based tools that host team communication, collaborative productivity tools like online spreadsheets and presentation suites and cloud file saving. Though they may be following mainstream business trends, they have an interest in the application of such technologies in business, especially given that in recent years, their people have been using similar technologies in their personal lives, and are now eager to allocate small funds to test the benefits of this progress.



SCENARIO 2: FLEXIBLE OFFICE

Organizations that have already been convinced of the benefits of adopting digital tools, here we find businesses that have fully embraced digital tools to operate either remotely or in-office and feel at ease with employees being anywhere. Basic operations as well as organizing their people can happen as long as there is an internet connection, trusting that work will be completed on time. Having actively chosen to operate with a geography agnostic setup, their people may advocate the use and adoption of new tools, as long as they help and push work forward. As they have already seen the benefits of digital tool adoption, they do not hesitate to place a good amount of their annual operating budget to make use of such tools.



SCENARIO 3: DIGITAL PIONEER

Organizations considered digital pioneers may be young, up and coming businesses that may well have started off digitally from their beginnings. Here, in these digital-first businesses, people may have previously had less digitally transformed experiences, and are now liberated and feel in their natural place to work completely digitally, performing more complicated functions online and having even embraced modern creativity and collaboration platforms. These organizations have a keen eye on new technologies and tools which may optimize business and do not steer away from the face of costs for tools, being perfectly aware of the returns that come along.



NEW TOOLS, NEW CULTURES: THE DEEPER CHANGES THAT NEED TO TAKE PLACE

Very small businesses, such as startups, have taken up the opportunity of using the aforementioned digital tools, possibly out of necessity in their first unstable business steps, fast go-to-market pace and horizontal and transparent communication and decision-making organic processes. The pandemic and lockdowns brought light to the opportunity these tools hide, making them interesting for larger organizations, leading them to decide on adopting SaaS (Software as a Service) solutions. Though adoption is only the first step, the transition to proper and effective tool use requires more in-depth changes - from **upskilling** of employees and managers to **organizational restructuring**, as in some cases company roles such as the middle manager can be greatly disrupted.

Upskilling is a crucial step in the process of new tools adoption. But, rather than mere training on the specific software, employees should be trained in the mentality of using specific dexterities (skills) afforded by these tools, such as project management, online and remote collaboration, fast problem solving, as well as the understanding of how emerging technologies disrupt the business world. In a sense, developing their soft skills, which in consequence can be practiced and applied through the digital tools.

In terms of organizational restructuring, most current business structures involve silos and middle management ensures people are present and do their work. In the new digital tool enabled environment, employees, just as in startups, are in the loop with business decisions, are trusted with performing their work irrespective of time and location, are proactive and self-driven. In this context, where tools offer greater visibility of all operations to the leaders, helping them make faster decisions and pivots, the middle manager has to be upskilled to a connector between people, tools and upper management, while attaining the role of a team orchestrator and team member mentor. Here, team members are entrusted to make decisions, since tools give even lower-level employees access to the same business-wide information and the middle manager ensures deliverables are in time, within budget, irrespective of how and when intermediate steps were taken. Additionally, as in startups, more agile, smaller and swifter teams may have to be formed inside large organizations, that can act autonomously, while still be connected to the whole organization, no matter how distributed they are in locations, time zones and lifestyles.



DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION IN THE PRIVATE SECTOR

In a year following the pandemic high, a lot have changed for people, organizations and the world. In our annual survey on Digital Transformation in Greece, Foundation has captured the sentiment of employees in Greek businesses.

A total of 65 executives responded to our call, predominantly from the 35-54 demographic (67%), with an average of 22 years of working experience, mostly in a managerial role (58.33%). The most represented industry was ICT, Banking and Consulting, with 67% of the respondents accumulating for Directorial & C-level posts. This profile offers an added value to the answers received, as we believe it reflects a good part of industry experts.

Respondents were mostly involved in DT projects with more than half of them belonging to organizations with a department with a main role in DT, just as last year's survey. It is stated by **70%** of respondents that DT is considered **a company-wide effort**, rather than the work of a specific department. This is promising, as the census suggests that a company-wide effort reaches out more than isolated business functions and taps into the organizations processes, culture and values.

In a year without lockdowns, **62%** of the respondents claim that their organization is operating in some variation of **hybrid mode** (working from office, working from home or elsewhere), indicating a shift in our current working culture due to the pandemic which might persist, or not in the coming years - discussions are ongoing.

UPSKILLING IS THE NORM - BUT WHAT PEOPLE LEARN MIGHT NOT BE WHAT THEY NEED

57% of the participants stated that they attended **upskilling** programs in 2022, most of them following the subjects of **emerging technologies**, followed by programs developing their productivity and technical skills, though few were involved in being upskilled in innovation or creativity skills. Compared to what they aspire to learn in the year to come, **emerging technologies** come first in the list of priorities, followed by **leadership and innovation skills**, leaving technical skills in the last place. Our results indicate that emerging technology training is on track. People are curious of what is coming, want to stay informed and ready to act. Though they were involved in technical training, it seems they do not choose more of the same. **Whether they feel content with their level of technical skills or just have been overexposed to buzz words, they understand the requirement for softer skills, such as leadership, innovation and creativity skills, areas in which they seem to not be getting enough support.**

UNDERSTANDING DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION

In regard to the adopted tools, technologies or methodologies, most survey participants revealed their uptake of **data-driven decision making**. Less responses were led by tech uptake, potentially pointing to the direction of a “wait and see” behavior of small and medium sized Greek organizations, anticipating to see trends becoming more prominent before investing and getting involved in new technological uptakes.

However, in considering what Digital Transformation is, it seems the ‘exotic’ promises of **Artificial Intelligence** have captured the imagination of the participants, though it seems they are clear in understanding that a prerequisite for “working from anywhere” is the upgrade to cloud based systems. Most participants claim that the most **useful** technologies regarding DT for their company are **Big Data and cloud technologies**. But most emerging technologies, which are considered a useful training to receive, are not yet in the forefront of usefulness for the organization, potentially conveying the message that, **before these emerging technologies are deemed as useful and necessary for the organizations, the people who will envision their applications and set the roadmaps for their implementation need to know more about them ASAP.**

DIGITAL MATURITY AND DIGITAL CULTURES

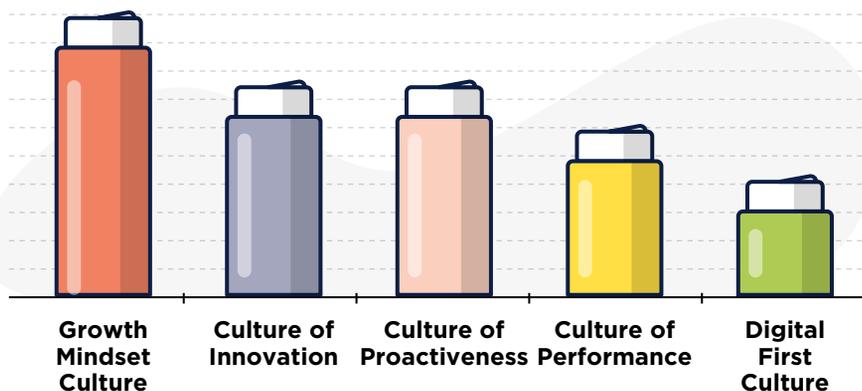
When attempting to uncover the census that described Digital Transformation in their organizations, the majority of the participants believe that DT future-proofs the business, illustrating aspirations that people expect to see value in their



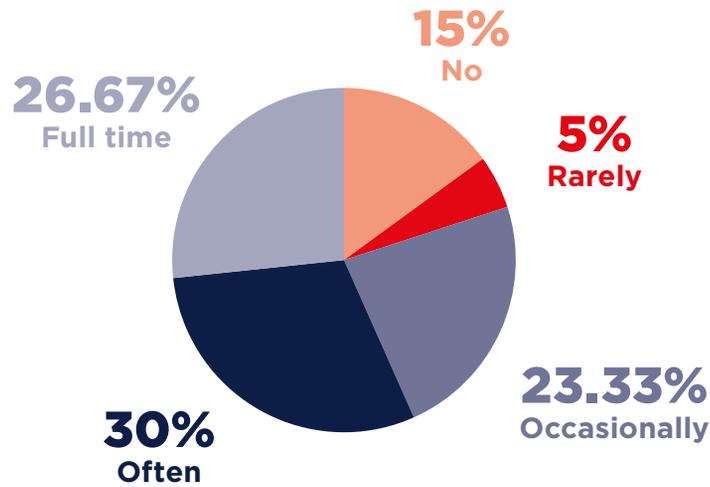
transformation, though a small percentage were open to internal cross-disciplinarity, which begs for the questions: Are the values of cross-disciplinarity widely understood? Is this evidence of organizational silos reigning supreme? A third of participants mentioned that their organization has structured DT efforts to benchmark, achieve goals and follow KPIs, where approximately 23% are actively looking for opportunities to evolve, since they claim to have achieved DT, and 19% are in the lookout to understand and access DT, portraying an overall picture of Greek businesses of many different speeds. On average, though, survey participants consider themselves and their organizations mostly on board the DT journey, entering the 4th level of Digital Maturity, hoping to soon reach ashore and reap the benefits of the newfound land. However, it is crucial to recognize that, though this might be the sentiment among the survey participants, a case by case in depth evaluation of each business' DT Maturity Level ought to be carried out before the DT journey begins, since we find that perceptions on the DT Maturity Level might be highly subjective.

When asked what the ideal organization looked like, participants, by majority, preferred an organization with a **growth mindset**, continuously encouraging its people to obtain new knowledge, develop and improve new skills and talents, while it is results-driven and operates with well-defined metrics (Culture of Performance). Its most important attribute would be the existence of a safe-space for experimentation and learning through failures, even if an organization with an experimental mentality, generating implementable ideas, blue-sky thinking and implemented and working in a start-up mentality scored relatively low (Culture of Innovation). How, then, might a safe-space for experimentation operate in the absence of the spark that imbues innovative thinking (Culture of Proactiveness), as our results indicate? It would be worth considering whether organizations ought to create this safe-space before beginning to welcome new ideas for implementation or if they should welcome new ideas in order to build an appreciation and understanding of the need for a safe-space to nurture innovation.

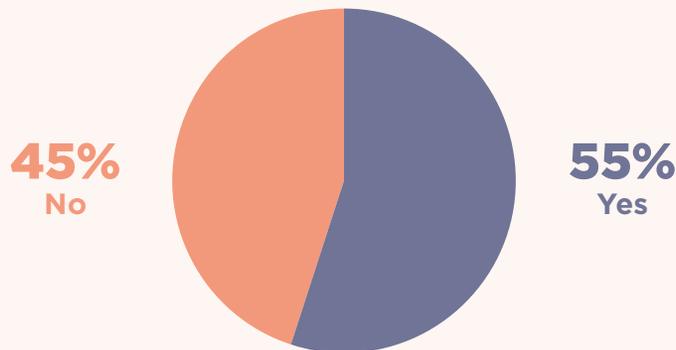
PREVAILING DIGITAL CULTURES IN GREEK BUSINESSES



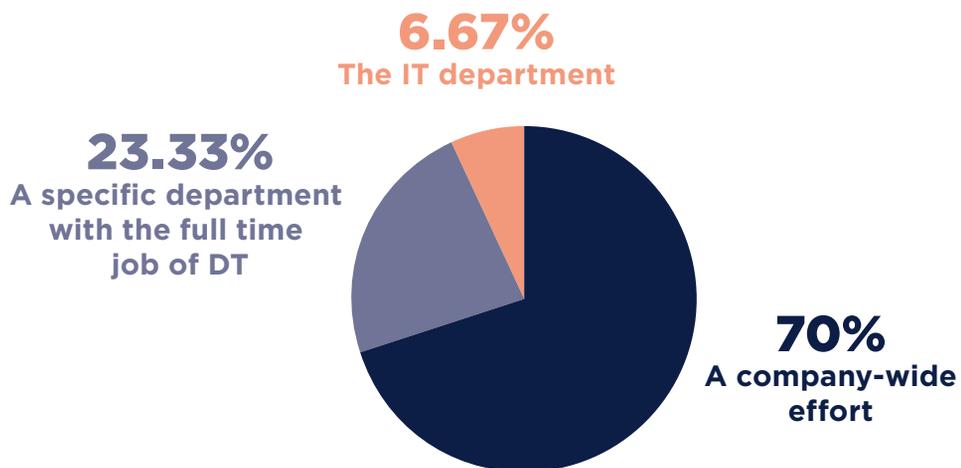
In your organization, are you actively involved in Digital Transformation projects?



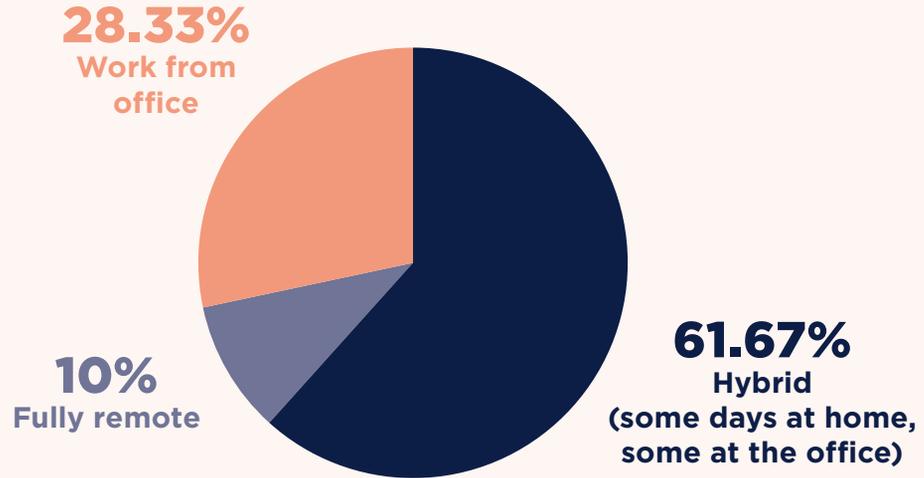
Does your organization have a department with its main role around Digital Transformation and/or Innovation?



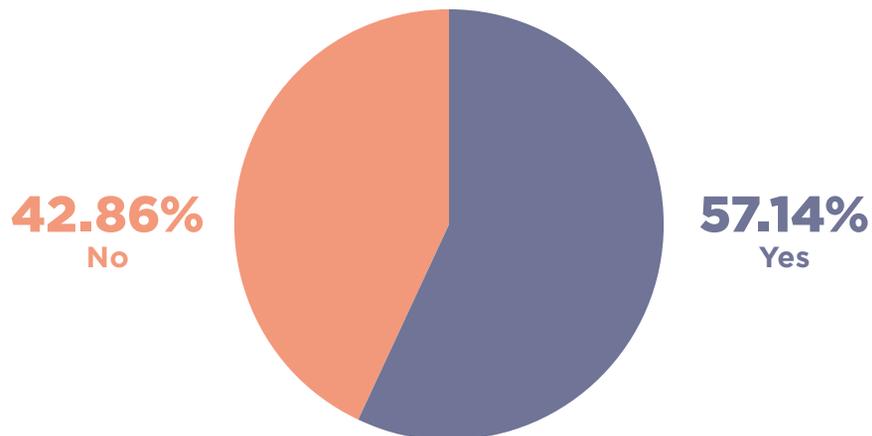
In your opinion, what is the best way to achieve Digital Transformation?



What is your organization's work policy?



Did you participate in any upskilling/training programs in 2022?



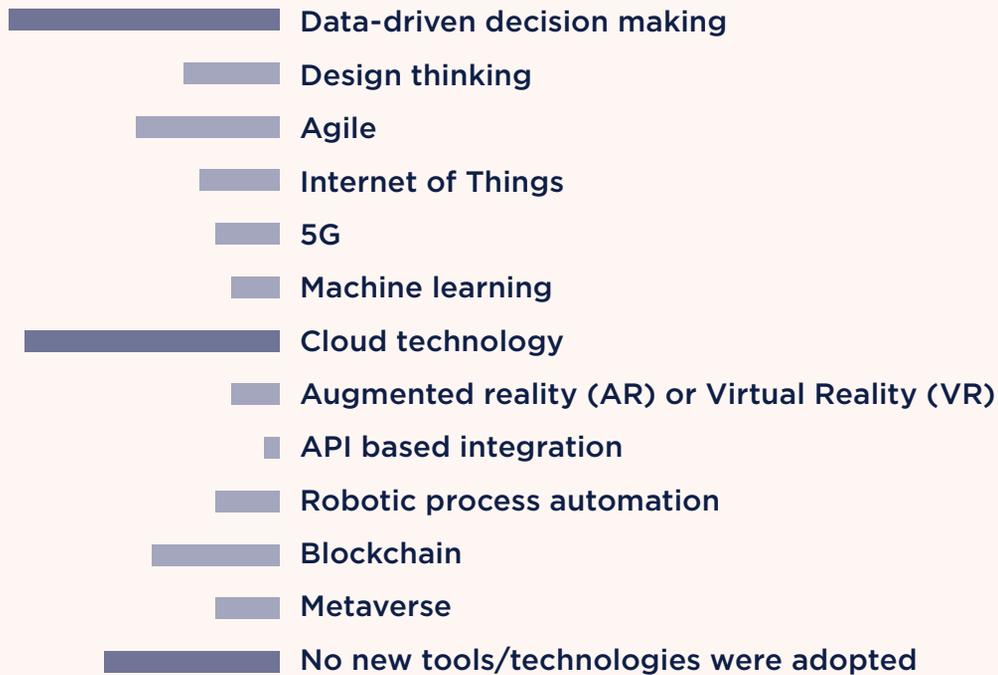
If yes, what was your upskilling/training on?



Which of the following skills would you like to obtain or enhance in 2023?



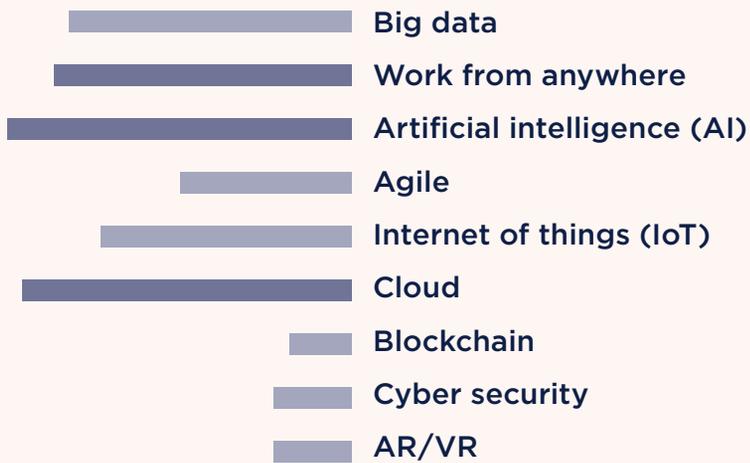
Which new tools/technologies/methodologies did you adopt during the past year?



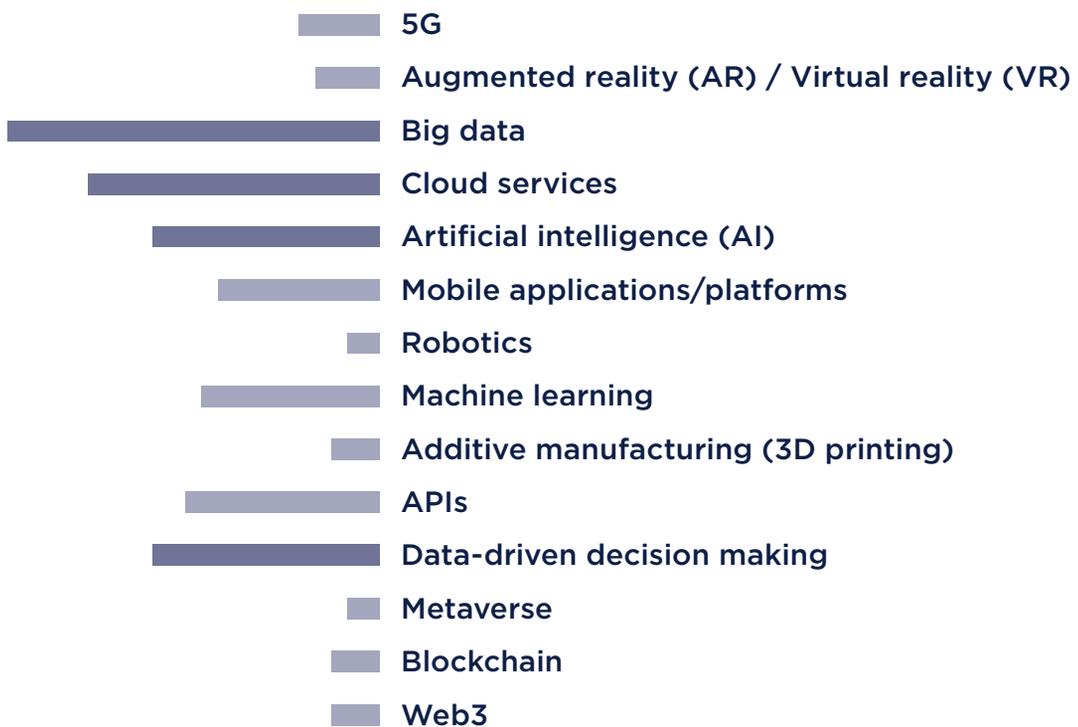
Lately, a number of online "lightweight" digital tools are available to handle traditionally heavyweight functions. Think of the likes of Asana, Slack, Bamboo and Pipedrive. If you currently use any such tools, for which of the following functions?

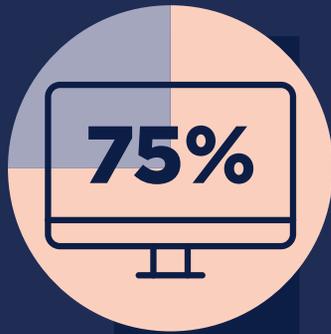


What are the terms you mostly think of when you read “Digital Transformation”?

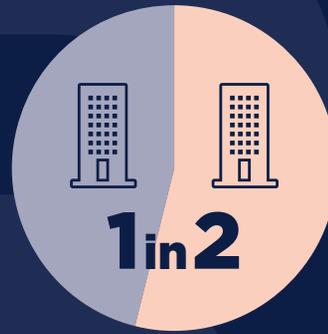


What type of Digital Transformation technologies do you believe would be more useful to your company?





of the respondents are **actively** involved in **DT projects** of their organizations



businesses (54%) has a department with its main role around Digital Transformation and/or Innovation



But **69%** of the employees believe DT should be a company-wide effort



Roughly **2 out of 3**



employees participated in an **upskilling program** in 2022, up from 1 in 2 in 2021



Out of those who received training, they mostly sharpened their **Productivity** and **Technical skills** or learned more about **Emerging Technologies**



But when asked which skills they wish to develop in 2023, the majority preferred **Emerging Technologies** followed by **Leadership**, **Innovation** and **Creativity** skills



Data-driven decision making and **Cloud** were the two new methodologies/technologies adopted by most in 2022



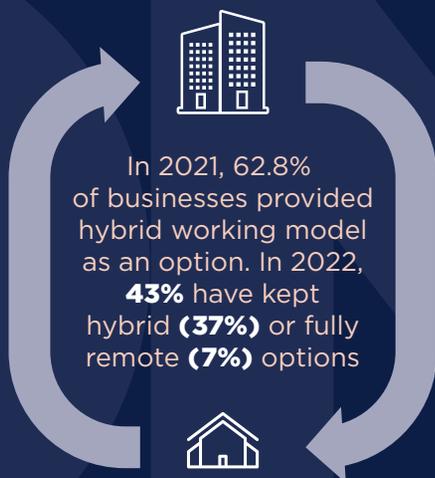
Video conferencing and **Project Management** tools are the ones mostly used in organizations



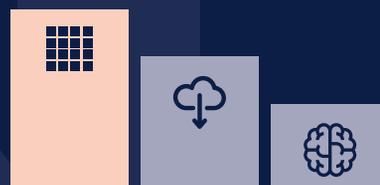
When it comes to business **cultures**, respondents prefer to work in an organization that adopts a **growth mindset**, encouraging them to evolve and learn



When asked to evaluate their company's **digital maturity level**, most people feel it is on the **4th out of 5 levels**



Artificial Intelligence is the term mostly associated with Digital Transformation



but it ranks only 3rd in the list of technologies thought to be the most useful to their company. **Big Data** and **Cloud Services** take the two first spots respectively

IN DISCUSSION WITH

**Maggie
Athanassiadi**
Director
Industry, Growth,
Technology &
Innovation
SEV (Hellenic
Federation of
Enterprises)



How does SEV help Greek businesses in their path to Digital Transformation?

SEV works consistently to support Greek businesses adapt to the realities and needs of our digital economy and society. Its work on digital transformation is organized around three pillars: building business capacities, developing human skills, and advocating for effective policies. The first pillar involves business capacity building and information sharing about new OT/IT trends, opportunities, risks, benefits and best practices. This is done through specialized meetings with experts, workshops, seminars and networking events on topics such as IoT, AI, cloud technologies, connectivity, cybersecurity, digital twins, workflow automations, and so on. Such activities are addressed to all SEV members, regardless of their size, sector or location. The second pillar, digital skills, centers on mobilizing businesses, as well as academic and vocational training institutions, to help the economy and society move faster towards the digital era. SEV collaborates with Universities and research centers to this end, given that some 85% of jobs that humans will perform by 2030 have yet to be developed and will be directly related to the digital transition. As part of the third pillar, SEV advocates for policies and incentives to help Greek enterprises integrate digital tools and new technologies into their operation and management processes, afford costs of the digital transition, and invest in digital training. For example, as a Social Partner, SEV is actively engaged in consultations on new funding schemes for digital transformation under RRF and EU's structural funds 2021-2027 (aka ESPA). Recently announced tools respond to different business levels of digital maturity, while application and evaluation procedures are simplified and faster. SEV advocacy is also related with digital governance and enhanced digital interactions between public administration and businesses. A lot has already changed on that front, and hopefully more is coming.

What are the biggest challenges of Industry 4.0 for Greek enterprises? Which sectors have fallen behind and which are considered pioneers?

Greek businesses are starting their digital transition from quite a low starting point compared to European economies, or other competitors. According to DESI 2022, and despite progress since 2019, Greek enterprises are still underperforming compared to their EU counterparts in terms of

integrating digital technologies, ranking 22/27. The longer it takes to bridge the gap, the bigger the competitiveness loss. Therefore, it is important not only to move forward, but also to do it at a much faster pace. Regardless of the sector – be it industrial manufacturing, food processing, logistics, pharmaceuticals, retail, ICT, services – the businesses that stand out are the ones that are already envisioning a digital future.

Which technologies or tools should Greek businesses focus on in 2023? How can they stay relevant and competitive at a global level?

There is an interesting paradox here. Greek enterprises invest in their digital transformation more than the EU average, ranking 11/27 according to DESI 2022. However, most investment is in I3.0 or I2.0 tools, rather than in cutting-edge technologies like AI and machine learning, IoT, AR, etc. Furthermore, only 39% of Greek SMEs have at least a basic level of digital intensity, compared to the EU average of 55%. Bearing that in mind, SEV works to help businesses develop a digital mindset and adopt advanced technologies as sine qua non factors of value creation and competitiveness.

How much has the digital transformation of the public sector helped Greek enterprises in the last two years?

The change is obvious, as 21% of digital services available on the gov.gr platform involve digital interaction between businesses and public administration. Digitalizing processes, and simplifying them along the way, makes a difference in terms of saving time and resources, as recent SEV research confirms. It should be noted that, during the pandemic, emphasis was given on digital interaction with citizens, and rightly so. Enterprises are now eager to see more digital steps related with doing business and investment, such as interoperability of different public administration platforms and registries, or digitalizing processes related with state aid, taxation, public procurement, commerce, trade, logistics, cargo, invoicing and the supply chain.

What are your predictions or hopes for the year ahead?

Let's start with the hope that it will be more peaceful! Consecutive crises in the last years have shown us that predictions make little sense. However, change is a constant, and in particular technological change. I hope that Greek enterprises will see the opportunities that technological change offers, and act on it, by not being afraid to explore alternative I4.0 solutions for their production and operation processes. Given that €0,5bn is already available to enterprises under the RRF and ESPA, we can be both pragmatic and optimistic about the future of the economy's digital transition.

IN DISCUSSION WITH

Giorgos Verdi
Junior Policy Officer,
European Digital
SMEs Alliance



Tell us a few things about the European Digital SMEs Alliance. How does it help European businesses in their path to Digital Transformation?

The European DIGITAL SME Alliance is the largest network of ICT small and medium enterprises in Europe, representing more than 45,000 enterprises in total. The Alliance is the joint effort of 30 national and regional SME associations from EU member states and neighbouring countries to put digital SME at the centre of the EU agenda.

Our activities are divided in three main pillars. Firstly, we propose and participate in EU- funded projects which are aimed at the digital transformation of SMEs across the continent. Secondly, we represent the interests of SMEs in standards-setting organizations while also raising awareness about the importance of standards for small businesses. Thirdly, we develop policy proposals and advocate for small businesses vis-à-vis the EU institutions.

What role can SMEs play in the transformation of national economies in the digital era?

Small and medium enterprises are the pillars of digital transformation across all 27 EU Member States. They make up 99% of all businesses and account for 60% of total employment. They are key agents in the successful transition of national economies to the digital era.

More importantly, SMEs are integrated in their local communities and are active on the global market at the same time. On the one hand, this is critical for local communities. Small and medium enterprises can provide cutting edge solutions that are tailored to the needs of their local ecosystem while also reflecting European values of democratic and open technologies. On the other hand, the global activity of SMEs promotes knowledge exchange and results in the import of best practices from all around the world.

Which are the biggest challenges SMEs face in the era of Industry 4.0? Which technologies or tools should they focus on in 2023?

It is assumed that emerging technologies pose challenges to SMEs. But we should first consider that these technologies are above all an opportunity. Small and medium enterprises are not only the users of Industry 4.0 tools. They are also the innovators. They can build agile products that utilize artificial intelligence, big data and blockchain technologies to provide solutions for other SMEs and their local communities.

As a result, the biggest challenge for SMEs is navigating the highly regulated and competitive digital landscape. The provisions that European SMEs must comply with have multiplied over the last few years. Moreover, Big Tech companies have posed risks to the operation of SMEs either through their anticompetitive practices or through vendor lock-in effects. As a result, national authorities can support the innovative capacity of SMEs by providing them with legislative and financial support as well as by ensuring a level playing field in the digital markets.

Recent statistics from Eurostat reveal that Greek SMEs have made great progress in their innovation efforts lately, leading the European scoreboard. Nevertheless, the country remains a "moderate innovator" among its peers. What is your message to Greek SMEs that are trying to not only recover from a turbulent decade but also move forward?

This will be the last generation of small businesses that are able to survive, let alone thrive, without being digitally enabled. This is well understood among Greek SMEs, as it is showcased by the statistical evidence. To seize the benefits of digitalization and escape the list of "moderate innovators", cooperation among the Greek public and the private sectors will be key. This demands the mobilization of resources across sectors and institutions. If you're a Greek SME, reach out to your local political representatives and policymakers and make your voices heard. It is understandable that SMEs lack the time and resources to be involved in the design of national policies. Nevertheless, cooperation between public authorities and the SME ecosystem is crucial to ensure a successful transition to the digital economy.

IN DISCUSSION WITH

Christos Tsolkas
CEO,
Delta Foods



How has the role of the leader evolved in the Digital Transformation era? Which are the new skills that they need to develop?

The world is gradually moving away from the term Digital Transformation, in my view, simply because the word “Digital” is a given; it is no longer an exotic capability which everybody needs to add or be trained to.

The world now is 100% digital. Three years old kids, can get onto their mom’s phone, unlock the screen using a password, click the YouTube icon, browse, and select which of the Super Zings or Ninjago episodes to watch any given day – thank God, they are still not able to hack mom’s phone, at least the kids I know.

I am also not sure about the word “Transformation” too; because every leader today, on almost any occasion, in any company, she /he is called on transforming something. A department, a business unit, a team, a company, a business model. In other words, Transformation has become essentially a routine.

So, what are the set of skills needed for a leader’s role?

- a. Put together the right team. That’s difficult. Not every individual, no matter how skillful, suits any mission. In addition, team chemistry: an undervalued element a leader should be able to pursue and create, and of course create an environment of trust.
- b. Create a mission, who we want to become, when and how – the latter is usually called a strategy.
- c. Unpack the set of critical questions & seek answers; what we know, what we don’t. What sort of data we have, what data do we need.
- d. Connect the dots among all stakeholders and initiate the required flows. It is a frequently occurring oxymoron, when executives today are having conversations about Digital Strategy while at the same time, they miss the Strategy. Any digital component or tool comes normally as an auxiliary element to facilitate any given Strategy.

What changes do boards and executives need to make in their organizations today to become more relevant and effective in their Digital transformation journey?

The two main problems facing Boards today are a. The information Gap and b. Managing egos, especially the biggest one; the CEO’s. They can be both partially or fully addressed with a couple of remedies. One of them is to

create a system of increased transparency and data-based conversations and eventually decisions for which they obviously need digital technologies and systems. The other one is learning how to minimize **cognitive biases**. Continuous upskilling is a constant challenge in any organization, especially when it comes to digital. Diversity helps; inclusion of digital natives can lift the performance of any team being a board or an executive team. Finally, digital should be and remain high on their agenda. This will ensure momentum and drive across the organisation.

What challenges does the FMCG industry face today? How can they become opportunities?

In the Greek context, I would like to refer to the three most important values that, according to the latest piece of Dianeosis' research became evidently overarching for the new generation, Affordability, Justice, and Freedom, namely.

My belief is that every crisis can be(come) a gift, so addressing the Greek consumers, all the three above can be translated into opportunities.

FMCGs today need to offer accessibility and frictionless choices. Technology and digital has a lot to do with both. Portfolios of products and services need to be adjusted accordingly. Corporate behaviors have to become more inclusive and generous. In many instances, buyers today are more informed than sellers; so brand propositions have to offer true experiences and not the classic "features & benefits"

Which emerging technologies do you think will most probably be adopted by the FMCG industry in the next couple of years?

Back in 2018, in my book, **The Gift of Crisis**, I was suggesting nine technologies that could potentially shape the world in the coming years. Four of them worthy of note would be present at an increased rate in the next couple of years, especially in the FMCG category.

Growing food is the first. Given the overpopulation and excessive exploitation of the planet the need to move towards lab-made milk and meat will gradually start gaining consumer acceptance and eventually preference.

By the same token, and having understood very well in the last months the loss of disposable income due to the hikes in the cost of energy, solar penetrates our lives more and more. Gradual replacement of fossil fuels with solar energy will enable production costs to remain at a reasonable level, as far as industry is concerned.

The whole value chain will also be increasingly improved using AI and robotics. More accurate algorithm-based decision-making and production efficiencies gained through robotic systems and software should be expected in the near future.

Lastly, social connectivity through internet & platforms, will further govern consumers' lives, while companies will continue competing in the "attention economy" space. Digital Marketing will surely continue to expand as population becomes more digitally savvy.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

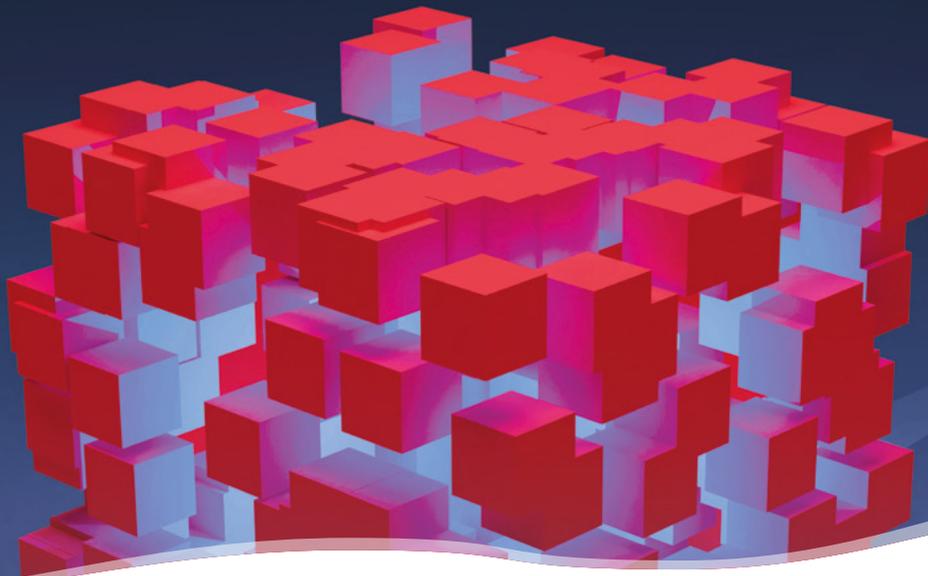
- Global and local numbers agree - employees feel they are not getting sufficient **training** from their employers in areas that matter to them. The lack of skills is turning into a problem that needs urgent solutions. It's no wonder that the European Union decided to declare 2023 the **European Year of Skills**, bringing the attention of both the public and private worlds to actions that must be taken immediately.
- Are we there yet? Seventy-five percent of our survey respondents say the organizations they work for have already jumped on the digital transformation train. Nevertheless, not all efforts will lead to success. When asked to assess their organizations' digital maturity level, most employees feel it is quite advanced, but their answers in other questions of our survey paint a different picture. **Identifying the Digital Maturity Level of a business** can be a demanding exercise, yet it is necessary to address the current status and roadmap for future activities. It has to be done in a sober and non-sentimental/data-driven way.
- Corporate culture** is a live blend of various cultures, specific to each organization, co-developed and followed by the organization's individuals. Employees in Greece prefer to work in an organization that adopts a **growth mindset** culture, encouraging them to continuously evolve and learn, while at the same time providing a safe space for **experimenting** and learning through failures.
- In 2021, 62.8% of businesses provided a hybrid working model as an option. In 2022, 43% have kept hybrid or fully remote options. This could not have been possible if it weren't for **Digital tools**, that have revolutionized the workplace. Their existence does not ensure progress, but combined with company policies and preferred practices can lead to a breakthrough in working as we know it. Our research shows that to upgrade from a basic level (i.e. using just video conferencing and online productivity suites) to a flexible organization (one that is closer to a digital-first attitude), a company needs to spend €70 extra per user on digital tools subscriptions. **The impact is much bigger than the expense.**

- ▮ Employees need to be empowered with an understanding of the potential of **emerging technologies** before they can envision their novel and useful applications. Although most businesses have provided them with training (mostly productivity and technical skills), people prefer to focus on leadership, innovation, and creativity skills, and long for learning more about emerging technologies such as **AI**, big data or even Blockchain. They believe these are more relevant to digital transformation.
- ▮ Overall, while there are still many steps to be taken, most Greek businesses are pointing their efforts in the right direction, understanding that the road to digital maturity and transformation goes through **data-driven decision-making** and cloud services, while they are slowly realizing that this effort should be company-wide.
- ▮ The Digital Transformation process has begun for many Greek organizations. Now is the right time to re-evaluate the results of their efforts and readjust their course towards their goal: an organization with a culture that balances technology and agility with the growth and wellbeing of its people.



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