

Co-creation will address the urgent need for digital transformation

 By [Ria Pinto](#)

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While organisations in South Africa cannot be entirely ready for the next crisis - to better prepare for future threats requires a new way of driving flexibility and delivering innovation. With the rapid changes we've witnessed over the past two years, organisations in South Africa now realise they have to be flexible and transform quickly during the next crisis and that this requires collaboration, flexibility and urgency.



Ria Pinto, general manager and technology leader – IBM South Africa | image supplied

Key to this approach is adopting and accelerating co-creation and agile ways of working. While digitisation was important before Covid-19 disrupted the world as we knew it, now, it's non-negotiable. Now, organisations have no doubt that technologies like hybrid cloud and AI are not optional, but essential tools for thriving in an uncertain future. And as many organisations are moving further into their hybrid and multi-cloud journeys they are looking to drive innovation that results in valuable changes and real-world impact.

The rapid pace of digital transformation

According to the IBM Institute for Business Value (IBV), South African executives across industries believe that a strong digital foundation will radically change the way business works. South African CEOs believe IoT, cloud, and AI are the primary technologies that will deliver the results they need in the next two to three years and they are keenly aware that cloud and data, and their ability to secure it, are foundations for future success.

Incremental transformation is no longer on the agenda and as digital transformation projects sped up dramatically in the pandemic, organisations pivoted, protected and rescaled. This necessitates new ways of engagement. In the year ahead, IBM will be focused on driving a unique client co-creation experience that will help our clients to drive the business outcomes they seek. Co-creating solutions businesses need to respond quickly to disruption and power digital transformation will be a priority and recognising the challenges will vary across industries, is at the heart of this.

Addressing challenges across industries

Examples are many. For a healthcare company, this challenge could take the shape of responding quickly to fluctuations in

consumer demand to enabling digital interactions with healthcare professionals and patients to minimise disruption to clinical trials.

For the government, this could be the ability for a tax authority to automate all tax classification work, processing and interrogating millions of transaction records within seconds. For a financial services provider, this could take the shape of meeting the demand for hyper-personalisation in a range of categories, including credit card issuance, loan offers and financial advice highly catered to individuals.

To successfully innovate and sustain the innovation, the process has to start with the business outcome — not a specific technology. It's about revealing the true nature of the opportunity, co-create a vision for a solution and co-executing to deliver.

This is traditionally not an easy process for businesses. Many are in a world of massive uncertainty and are hugely constrained. Some are navigating these rapid changes by trying to figure out how to thrive. Most recognise the need to re-emerge in a post-Covid world as a different, more resilient organisation but it's not clear what they should invest in and what results in their efforts would yield.

Often the biggest question is where to start? Data is an integral element of digital transformation for enterprises but a lot of organisations are unclear on how to tackle the task of understanding their own data. The end goal is to leverage their data, but as they encounter challenges resulting from diverse data sources, types, structures, environments and platforms - this predicament is further complicated in a hybrid and multi-cloud environment as their data largely remains siloed and hidden.

An insurance provider could look at this data and imagine a time when they could use client data and exponential technologies to automate key areas of the claims process.

Collaboration is the answer

For this client data to deliver any business value it has been to contextualise and become accessible in the organisation – and the answer would be to collaborate with clients and perform a technical discovery session to understand data sources and context.

The process of co-creating a solution to improve data availability will help the client understand how they can truly enable a self-service environment while protecting and automating across their hybrid cloud. This is a process of innovation that doesn't have to be hard. Once you are able to pull down technologies, put them together in very close connection with the business, test for market fit quickly and expand iteratively using real-time data – you can only be set up for success.

ABOUT RIA PINTO

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