Survey reveals executive thoughts on digital transformation

IFS's Digital Transformation Survey has unveiled how senior decision makers in 20+ countries view the need for digital transformation, what technologies will drive the transformation, and who owns the area within the company.

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The global enterprise applications company released the findings of the survey of nearly 500 senior decision-makers from companies ranging across industrial manufacturing, construction, retail, oil and gas, automotive, energy and utilities, and other industries. 86% of the respondents think that digital transformation will play a key role in their market but 40% lack a strategy for it.

Unclear internal responsibilities

When asked who within the company has responsibility for driving digital transformation, the respondents came back with: CIO (40%), CEO (39%), and the CFO (35%), while the CTO (20%) and the CMO (6%) are not considered as influential in this area. When the C-suite leaders answer to who owns digital transformation, they often point at themselves. 53% of the CEOs consider they are responsible. The corresponding numbers for CFOs and CIOs are 69% and 63% respectively.

High priority but no clear strategy

86% of the respondents say digital transformation will play a key role in their market in the coming five years and 76% answered that they need more information about digital transformation. However, many companies have not come as far when it comes to implementing strategies: 40% of the respondents answered they don't have a clear strategy for digital transformation.

Technologies driving digital transformation

When asked to rate several disruptive technologies on how important they are in driving digital transformation in the respondents' industries, the following ratings were given:

(Scale: 1-100. 1=Unimportant, 100=Very important)

Internet of Things: 59
Cloud computing: 59
Cognitive computing: 55
Machine learning: 53
Wearable technology: 48
3D printing: 42
Drone technology: 39

Regional differences

The survey reveals a number of regional differences regarding the view of internal responsibilities:

• The Polish respondents believe the CIO (57%) is the one driving digital transformation, while only 41% think it is the CEO.
• In the U.S., the CFO is believed to drive digital transformation (42%), 30% think it is the CEO who is responsible. This is the lowest CEO score out of all the regions.
• 57% of the Brazilian respondents call out the CTO as the one responsible for digital transformation – this is the highest number for CTOs out of all the regions.
• The Scandinavian respondents trust the CIO to be the one responsible for digital transformation (45%), followed by the CEO (38%).
• The Asian respondents are the most uncertain, where 29% say that they don't know who within the organisation owns digital transformation.

"This survey shows that senior leaders of large industries have realised the potential that digital transformation offers, but in many cases don't have a strategy in place to leverage it yet. It appears there is also a great uncertainty regarding who is actually responsible for driving the digital transformation agenda within companies. Companies must clarify their goals and outline clear strategies in order to utilise the full potential of digital transformation," said Mark Boulton, CMO at IFS.