



DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION

From desperate and struggling to inspired and achieving.

A playbook to EASE your team into successful digital transformations

INTRODUCTION

Digitisation is one of the top trends for all businesses for 2021, and in particular for supply chain itself.

Business leaders realise that digital transformation is critical to be future-fit. This comes with a set of challenges that organisations need to overcome to be able to benefit from the introduction and implementation of the new technology.

The greater efficiency of digital operations, if implemented well, is a game changer in today's world.

As leaders there are a number of challenges you will need to surmount to achieve implementation success and better performance and productivity in the long term.



CHALLENGES

01

The success rate is poor when it comes to digital transformation, especially in traditional businesses. According to McKinsey it tends to be between 4 and 11 percent. This is not a good place to begin a digitisation project. Thinking like this can bring on a negative mindset which can have a ripple effect across the team and eventually the whole organisation.

02

Many leaders find themselves needing to put out fires.

Once they have sorted out one issue, something else turns up which demands their attention. The result is a never-ending day of firefighting. The manager/leader hasn't got the time to think through the issue, delegate and mentor. Everything is being fed by the manager.

This takes a lot of effort and energy leaving them in a state of weariness.

03

Daily task completion never happens for many leaders/managers. They feel as if they are always on call without being given the time to focus on what they need to do. At the end of their workday, they feel as if they have not been productive as nothing seems to get finished.

CHALLENGES

04

Timelines feel like a 'dead'-line bringing on a feeling of being stretched and stressed. These leaders feel as if they are always under the pump with no stop button. They have a high level of angst and are probably heading towards burnout. Everything they do is hard work, using up a lot of energy and effort with time going faster and faster.

From this perspective, the future looks like chaos, pressure and overwhelm.

05

Change fatigue can impact both the leader and the team.

It is characterised by a lingering mental and physical lethargy.

Recently the whole world has been caught up in the COVID19 pandemic. It has meant that organisations have needed to adapt and flex to maintain some equilibrium in their business models. Employees have stepped up and have been ready to change and comply as often as needed. This has required a lot of effort and energy from everyone. It has had a cost, and it's likely that this is now being felt.

CHANGE ACCEPTANCE

Everyone involved must experience a psychological adaptation to the change.

Psychological adaptation is the acceptance of the 'new' system, process, procedure which has been put into operation. It is anchored in the emotions and intellect of each person and how it balances with their mental models based on their experiences, social and cultural environments.

Simply, it is the mindset of an individual who has realised how they can adapt and incorporate the change into their work lives. This is evident in their behaviour, thinking and feelings about the new situation.

The big question here is how does a manager/leader achieve this?
How do they enable each person to put the energy, effort and time into learning and embedding the new ways of working with new technology and systems.

There is one more key aspect leaders need to consider – our neurobiology!



ANOTHER CHALLENGE SET

Our neurobiology inhibits us for change.

Our brains have been built for survival, our survival. In the 21st century this can lead to some difficulties. Knowing how our brain can inhibit our psychological adaptation to change makes it possible to increase the chances of a successful transformation.

01

What are our main neurobiology constraints?

Our brains operate in prediction mode. Many scientists believe this is the primary mode of operation. Prediction is the key to us being able to survive for millennia and our brains still continue to work this way.

We have neural conversations that predict at a microscopic scale. It's like being with a close friend discussing all the details needed to plan our party.

Because we are continually predicting our immediate future, we experience a world we are creating for ourselves. If these predictions are correct enough, our actions reflect this.

One of the key aspects of the need for these microscopic predictions is to manage our body's energy needs so we can stay alive and well. It's our 'body budget', like having a budget to manage our finances. If we do, we won't overspend. The same for our body's energy.

A very important detail to note – our body budget is reduced when we have a supportive person in our corner.

A couple of questions for you to consider:

- Who is your support person, reliable and able to help you when needed?
- What support system can you set up to help your team manage their body budgets in times of need?

ANOTHER CHALLENGE SET

02

Our brains are an energy-conserving organ. It likes to keep our brain energy in reserve, always at the ready to be able to be vigilant and survive.

Have you read some information and realised you took nothing in? You've had to re-read it a few times, and sometimes, it still makes no sense.

Your brain is 'screaming' at you – it has gone completely flat, like your smartphone, and needs time to recharge.

When we are trying to understand and learn a new concept, idea, or process, our brain is expending vast amounts of energy. Our brains need to stop and re-energise.

Time must be built in to allow the new learning to embed. Mental exhaustion puts us into fatigue mode and our brains crave sleep.

Without this, people are in a constant state of weariness and unable to concentrate and learn the new systems and processes.

Ignore this at your peril, it will be like trying to empty a sinking boat using a teaspoon. You are now locked into a dead end without the glimmer of hope of a successful digital transformation.

03

Our brains have a negativity bias.

When we look at what's happening and our brains are predicting the possible outcomes for us, it's framed in a negative way: will this harm us in any way?

The harm is based for the most part on our self-image; we use this as the lens in which we focus our thinking. Our self-image lens is interlaced in how we see our self-worth and value to others. If we believe this new technology will downgrade this in any way, we will continue to behave negatively to learning and implementing the new system.

- Will this new technology mean I will no longer call the shots about ...?
- Will I be able to learn all this new-fangled stuff or will I mess up?
- Will I have enough help to learn and practise this or be left behind to struggle?

THE SHIFT

Leadership Capability and Outcomes in Digital Transformations

Where do your leaders/managers find themselves on most days? If they feel drained, their teams will also feed off this lack of energy and be drained as well. It's important to realise where the start of each leader's journey begins to build their own energy levels which will ripple out for the people in the teams to become motivated and inspired to be energised at the end of a workday.

Capability	Result	Impact	Outcome
Superb	Achieving	Inspired	Energising
	Emerging	Motivated	
Average	Managing	Coping	Surviving
Poor	Challenging	Overwhelmed	Draining
	Struggling	Desperate	

There are extremely different results for people in leadership and their teams largely depending on the capabilities of themselves. When a leader has an excellent understanding of how best to work with each person and the team as a whole, the results improve exponentially.

POOR CAPABILITY: DRAINING

When a leader is in this range, every day is going to feel far too long. By the time they get home they will want to collapse and do nothing.

There is no room for 'healthy life living' as they are extremely fatigued. This impacts everyone, both in their work and homelife. These people are likely to spiral downwards and will find it difficult to clamber back up without support.

At work they will only focus on the fires and how they can put them out, it's all about the short term. There's no energy left for further thinking.

They feel as if they are getting nowhere and wondering if being the team manager/leader is worth all of this angst.



AVERAGE CAPABILITY: SURVIVING

Leaders who are in the survival mode are going in the right direction most of the time. They are coping. They are able to set up processes which work most of the time. However, they are unsure why some work better than others.

They enjoy a sense of satisfaction that they are slowly getting through their targets, although many of them have not been within the required timeframe.

At this level, leaders are treading water. Their legs are moving quickly underneath as they keep their heads above the water.

Although this is currently working for them, it's not a long-term solution as there are too many variables that are unknown leaving little energy over to do the other expected daily tasks.

Some days are better than others and they look forward to these 'good' days when they go home feeling like they have achieved something.



SUPERB CAPABILITY: ENERGISING

It is at this level leaders are seeing and feeling that everything is coming together.

At first the leader can feel they are rising above the current challenges and issues. They are able to manage their workloads along with the transformation targets. Their energy levels are naturally increasing as their neurochemistry responds to these achievements.

They are beginning to understand how the small different approaches to their team members can have exponential increases in motivation and learning.

Once they are achieving the expected results, they themselves are feeling inspired and this is reflected in their teams' attitudes and ability to implement the new technology.

These leaders are gaining momentum with their abilities and this is reflected in everything they do.

Once the leader is 'kicking' goals regularly, they are achieving their targets in a synchronised and collaborative way. It is as if the orchestra has come together to play seamlessly with each note making its contribution to the overall beauty of the music.

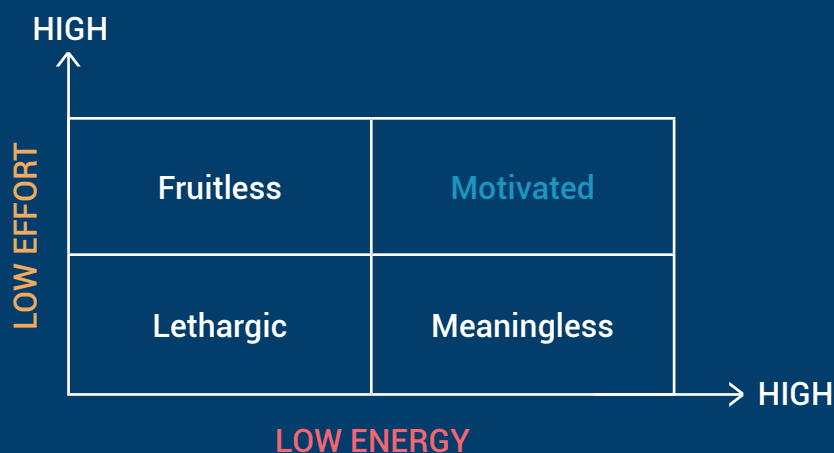
Based on their achievements, leaders are encouraged and encouraging. They are energised and are able to show their excitement in the successes of the digital transformation.

These leaders create a dynamic and vibrant workforce. People want to work with these leaders as they connect and unite their staff into a synchronised, learning and innovative team.

People working with these kinds of leaders feel they can make practical suggestions for improving the system and are willing to go the extra mile when needed.

Working in this environment is uplifting, inspiring and energising. Our bodies zing with the neurochemistry of reward.

- How do you reach the energising outcome?
- How can you enhance your capabilities to achieve success?
- What needs to be done for you to be inspired?



THE SOLUTION

EASE Framework for minimal People Disruption in major Digital Transformations

One of the greatest challenges in bringing on a digital transformation is to ensure there is no ambiguity. Ambiguity creates uncertainty. Uncertainty is a 'threat' state driver for our brain. When we are in a threat-state we tend to have heightened emotions and our intellectual capacity is then limited.

Using the EASE framework allows you to bring on more certainty, to be transparent and take people into a 'reward' state. When people see and understand what the digital transformation is all about, their part in it and where 'their' future lies, they are much more likely to become motivated to perform and do what needs to be done.

This framework has been divided into sections to make it simpler to show everything that needs to be included when taking on a major change. It is not necessarily in the order you would use. It needs to fit your own style of communication along with that of your team.



PROACTIVE

Get the message out there as soon as possible.

Rumours can be messy and are unlikely to suit your purpose for a smooth-as-possible digital transformation.

Often people use the office grapevine to pass on negative thinking and catastrophic thinking. This is not helpful as you may find it extremely hard to engage your team to be able to listen and 'hear' what this digital transformation is really all about.

Being PROACTIVE includes both EXPLANATION and APPLICATION

EXPLANATION – for the digital transformation project should include

Why:

- Why now?
- What has changed?

Alignment:

- How does this fit into the current operations of your team?
- How will it help them to reach their operational objectives?

APPLICATION – focus is on:

Vision:

- The overall look and feel of the technological system
- How deep this will go into the organisation

Design:

- What the expected benefits are for customers
- The benefits for other departments

INSPIRING

Motivation is an internal drive. You cannot motivate people. You can set up the situation to make it possible for your team to be intrinsically driven to achieve. Once you achieve this, people are inspired to reach further and do more.

Your team needs to have a good idea of what the payoff/reward is for them. Learning and adapting takes energy and your team needs to believe it is worth this effort.

INSPIRING includes SPECIFICS and EFFECT.

SPECIFICS should incorporate:

Timeline:

- Approximate length of the project
- When the project is likely to begin

Disruption:

- Amount of time expected for the team to learn the new system
- Time needed from their day/week to ensure implementation success

EFFECT ensures the team knows:

Support:

- Training, workshops prior to 'go' day
- On-going support for the start of the digitisation

Personalisation:

- Expected role post digital transformation
- Expected overall changes for the team

CONCLUSION

If an organisation wants to be future-fit it must introduce digitisation. To have a successful digital transformation, it should be led by leaders who are ready to role model and enable people to work in new ways and embrace the necessary changes.

They ought to be able to build on the current capabilities of their workforce and ensure they are future ready too. It is up to today's leadership team to recognise the challenges and constraints and work with them to bridge these limits to create successful digital implementation in their organisations.



NEXT STEPS:

Are you ready to inspire for a successful digital transformation?

Neuroscience is the critical element to success.

If you want to use it effectively and confidently, work with Karen.

Karen provides a range of programs for leaders to enable digital transformation with EASE. These include workshops, group coaching and one-on-one coaching.

If you want to find out how Karen can help you, please get in touch:

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Karen has spent the last 30 years immersed in leadership. She has worked with a range of leaders in a variety of industries including mining, oil and gas and service providers. Known as an expert in her field of leadership training, Karen is obsessed with leaders unlocking their potential and engaging better with their teams and other stakeholders to achieve successful outcomes.

Her humour, energy and streets-smart style encourages her audiences to be involved, have fun and learn some new techniques and strategies. Some believe it's like having all the right equipment in place and being able to reach out and find the right one to use at the right time.

Effectively by highlighting behaviour through a neuroscience lens, Karen enables leaders to uncover their talents and use them as a springboard for creating teams of excellence. Each person is then able to contribute in different ways to add value to their organisations and gain confidence in themselves.

