Fast, Faster and Fastest – the Growing Need to Accelerate Digital Initiatives

Mindtree
Welcome to possible

A customer who heads a digital subgroup for his company recently said to me, "One of our executives asked if we were planning any initiatives around the Apple Watch." This statement represented a déjà vu moment for me, because I heard similar comments at the releases of the iPhone and iPad. New digital technology often makes it into a business very quickly because executives and senior managers find uses for their new possessions in the workplace. When we ask our customers about adoption time on new technology – the time from idea to realization– they tell us it takes 24 to 48 weeks.

Interestingly, most of that time is spent conceptualizing the idea, building a business case and getting funding. Less time is required to actually build the technology. This raises the question: With cycles this long, how many digital initiatives can an enterprise roll out?

A CIO visiting our facility once mentioned that a digital project that takes longer than one quarter needs to be re-examined. He was referring to an enterprise trend to increase the pace of digital

adoption by doing more digital projects. Influencing enterprise project creation speed are new mediums, user trends and continuously changing business models.

Increasing digital projects implies an increase in cost with no guarantee of return on investment (ROI). Innovative enterprises are overcoming this challenge by increasing the speed of a digital project. Rather than the traditional "build it once, build it all, build it right" approach, they are focusing on building just the essentials.

There's No Slow or Medium for Today's Digital Projects

User habits and technology are changing so fast that enterprises can no longer afford slow or medium steps when it comes to digital projects. Fast, faster and fastest are the only options, and they describe a paradigm popularized by start-ups – to build small, learn quickly and scale. The idea here is to quickly kill projects that do not scale at each stage and divert effort into projects with better potential.

Below is a summary of the three speeds of a digital project:

SPEED	STAKEHOLDER	NEEDS	TIME FRAME	SUCCESS CRITERIA
Fastest	Business owners	■ Differentiation focus ■ Validate applicability ■ New technology & medium ■ Partial functioning ■ Support business case	1-2 weeks	Business case creation
Faster	End users	■ Usability focus ■ Time to market ■ User experience ■ Functional coverage ■ KPI gain ■ Ready for pilot	4-6 weeks	User acceptance & viral adoption
Fast	IT	■ Architecture focus ■ Global rollout ■ Reduction in operational cost ■ Analytics ■ Standards compliance ■ Regular upgrades	8-12 weeks	Sustenance & scale

The FASTEST Digital Project Step

The fundamental belief behind the FASTEST step in a digital project is that - the enterprise problem is not so much about shortage of ideas but of bandwidth to realize ideas. Bandwidth is a matter of money and time. In monetary terms, realizing an idea requires a sponsor. Getting a sponsor requires making an idea sellable.

Our customers tell us that this project step is often tiresomely long, because it's relegated to the spare time of resources who aren't currently available to tackle the business case. To stop ideas from getting choked, many businesses are creating what amounts to an idea nursery, where digital concepts are quickly put together to demonstrate use case and win sponsorship. For example, one of our insurance customers created what it calls a Business Partners Group. This group, acting like an in-house creative agency, works with business stakeholders to rapidly create visual concepts that show potential sponsors uses for new technologies in their businesses.

At Mindtree, we tackle the FASTEST digital project step with a co-creation and co-investment platform called the Digital Pumpkin. At the Digital Pumpkin, we nurture ideas into business cases by creating experience-based concepts and use cases that sponsors can see in context.

The FASTER Digital Project Step

An idea with a convincing business case is not a guarantee of success – many independent variables influence an outcome. It is not hard to find enterprise projects that struggle to achieve adoption, cannot justify ROI, or have started as one thing but ended up as something entirely different. The FASTER digital project step supports the paradigm of build-as-you-go and learn-as-you-go through pilot projects. Pilots are solutions targeted at a small or controlled audience. Businesses use them to learn, adopt and grow.

The biggest difference between a pilot or beta testing project and a traditional project is that a pilot project never ends with the first rollout; it includes a pause in development. This pause poses operational challenges for enterprises, because it keeps many resources frozen only to resume the project pending a favorable outcome. A practical way to execute the FASTER digital project step is to use a shared services model rather than a dedicated services model. For example, one of our fast-moving consumer goods customers has been launching short-cycle pilots in one factory, where they showcase them to build a business case for a larger initiative.

At Mindtree, we facilitate the FASTER digital project through shared services teams that provide resources (people and infrastructure) on demand and use cloud infrastructure for quicker, cost-controlled pilots.

The FAST Digital Project Step

Successful pilots will gather enough backing to become full digital initiatives, where all non-functional and functional goals must be achieved. FAST digital initiatives are expensive. They have a larger impact and are often business-critical, which means they warrant the standard due diligence given to the build-and-deploy process.

A Trusted Digital Partner can Make You Faster

With a three-speed approach to projects, enterprises can provide a gating system for digital initiatives rather than choking ideas with potential value. Possibilities for digital projects are endless but bandwidth is limited. That's why we started with a successful pilot before launching a global initiative last year for a hospitality customer – and we can do the same for your organization.

Mindtree was born to be a digital company, so FAST digital initiatives have been a mainstay of our existence. We advocate a three-stage approach to digital initiatives as a way for our customers to enhance their digital experience and expression.

Now more than ever, faster time to market determines survival, because no matter how exceptional your digital experience is, it won't matter if it's yesterday's news by release date. At Mindtree, we have the people, processes and technology to help you acce-lerate digital initiatives and stay ahead of competitors. Let us know how we can help you on your journey to digital transformation.