

Why learning is at the heart of digitally enabled service delivery



4th February 2019

In this piece for Digital Leaders, our Chief Executive, Emma Weston OBE, talks about how learning is the real enabler for digital transformation.

'Want digital transformation? Encourage continuous learning for all employees.'

Wise words from Daniel Newman, (Principal Analyst Futurum and CEO Broadsuite Media). He continues:

'Change is frightening, especially for someone who feels comfortable in their current position. However, during digital transformation, comfort will need to take a back seat to innovation. You must prepare your workforce by making education a part of the job, not just something to further ignore.'

To realise digitally-enabled service transformation, your staff and customers need to learn; knowledge and skills to make digital 'work' for them. And the confidence and strategies to apply them.

Every part of that is a whole organisation *learning* undertaking.

We're witness to 'whole organisation, learning-enabled digital transformation' - and it gleams.

Bryan is a Housing Management Officer for a council. The Council is very committed to digital transformation and to developing the digital skills and confidence of staff and residents.

Bryan was nominated to become a Digital Champion. His managers understood that time and investment in developing Bryan's skills would reap rewards in the longer term.

His training and support enabled him to help many residents and colleagues. He's heard co-workers shouting out questions and colleagues he's helped providing them with the answers. That has been "really cool".



Importantly it also helps free up his time to do his job.

This is not a work of fiction – it's happening today in Scotland. Everyone has learned why digitally enhanced service delivery is desirable and why the Council is working towards it. Everyone has been empowered to be part of making it a reality.

Learning is the glue that binds

Experience and analysis tell us there are three main organisational themes for bringing people online; business efficiency through channel shift, wellbeing for individuals and community support.

Those themes can present in different ways through a digitally enabled service transformation journey:

"Initially our aim was just about getting residents to transact online as it is more efficient for the business; then we moved to an aim of reducing social isolation and loneliness, and then we widened the target beneficiaries to anyone in the local community, on the basis that they are also potential residents." (Digital Champions Network Member)

To deliver on any part of that ambition, everyone needs to be clear who the stakeholders are and who should be involved. There will, of course, be the infrastructural considerations of kit and connectivity and associated issues and headaches. Thereafter, the real enabler is learning. It coheres the digital change process and fuels its delivery.

Rediscovering and repositioning learning

The [Digital Champions Network](#) was our response to this whole-organisational, cross-organisational learning need. It harnesses digital and people power to deliver digital benefit, to people! It's an open source platform that trains, supports and resources Digital Champions (DCs) to cascade learning within their organisations and to service users. It also has tools and metrics for project managers, further supporting a blended approach to driving change through learning. After all, digitally enhanced service provision is essentially a change process.

Amongst our extensive membership we can evidence this wider move to employee-led learning.

Over half of our 3,000 Digital Champions are providing digital skills support in the workplace and, crucially, they are helping customers and service users too.

Learning is the real enabler of digital transformation

Whether they be (paid) staff or volunteers, we know that 79% of Champions are motivated by helping others. That feeling of personal satisfaction from learning – and applying that learning – can also add to their wellbeing and effectiveness. This is well supported in a recent LinkedIn study:

'Employees who spend time at work learning are 47% less likely to be stressed, 39% more likely to feel productive and successful, 23% more ready to take on additional responsibilities, and 21% more likely to feel confident and happy. [1]

The digital skills agenda, the digital transformation agenda and the learning and development agenda have converged. But they all point to the same thing – organisational change.

With continuous learning as the enabler, organisations can achieve the significant transformation they are seeking as well as a more engaged, skilled – and happy – workforce in the process.

Peer learning through our Digital Champions Network

[Get in touch](#) with us today to find out more about how our Digital Champions can support employee-led learning in your organisation

[\[1\] Josh Bersin / LinkedIn](#)

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