Leading Tech Adoption:

Beyond Development to Strategic Integration

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The significance of effectively adopting and integrating new technology in the workplace is rising.
However, many companies still need to prioritize and acknowledge the importance of these crucial steps.

Traditionally, the focus has been predominantly on tool development, specifically its features and potential output. However, this approach often neglects a vital component: the value for specific stakeholders and users. Such an oversight can cause long-term inefficiencies and missed opportunities for productivity gains.

At the outset, C-suite executives should recalibrate their approach toward technology development, emphasizing adoption as a foundational element. The focus should be on adopting a proactive methodology that integrates thorough stakeholder analysis from the project's kickoff. This strategy ensures products and processes are not only technically sound but aligned with end users' actual needs and expectations.

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Leading from the front

The effective adoption of new tools and processes often hinges on the involvement and vision of top management. Many companies initiate projects or adopt new protocols based on surplus budget capacity without consideration for demand or strategic necessity. This approach can cause a disconnect where tools and processes are developed without a clear understanding of the bigger picture.

Instead, the CEO's overall vision for the organization should set a guiding principle for the project. The next phase should involve mapping the organizational ecosystem to identify the needs of various stakeholders. Explicit needs are readily identifiable through surveys. But it is equally crucial to explore implicit factors like adaptability to change and potential disruption to the status quo.

This nuanced understanding will allow for the creation of customized UI/UX designs tailored to each team's perspective and requirements. For example, a salesperson might be given a space within a digital tool to simulate various sales scenarios, offering them control over the data they report. Conversely, a production team might need less flexibility due to their controlled environment.

It should be evident that this comprehensive approach is essential for successful tool adoption and maximizing the impact of new processes within an organization.

A strategic approach to adoption

Effectively leading technology transitions involves a strategic, two-pronged approach that addresses organizational culture and facilitates a seamless transition into new work cultures.

For the first part, C-suite executives must champion change initiatives to set a precedent for the rest of the organization. When leaders actively engage with and utilize new systems, it sends a potent signal across the organization, fostering a culture of adaptability and innovation.

The second part of the approach emphasizes the shift from output (the tool itself) to outcome (how the tool advances the organization toward its objectives). This involves actively engaging stakeholders in the solution development process, leveraging the so-called "endowment effect." This concept suggests that people value contributions they have had a hand in creating. Involving team members in designing solutions, such as custom dashboards, transforms these tools from external impositions to internally crafted systems. This can help foster a sense of ownership and commitment.

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Building a dedicated team for transitions

The process of adopting and transitioning necessitates careful and strategic management, as it involves delicate operations. This requires a dedicated full-time team with specialized skills to unlock value, save time, and optimize resources.

Ideally, this team should be led by a high-ranking executive, such as a Vice President of Adoption (VPA), who reports directly to the CEO. This is crucial for navigating and resolving the interdepartmental challenges frequently arising during transition processes. Operating at a strategic level and integrated into the C-suite, the VPA can help her team effectively mitigate friction and obstacles often caused by departmental silos. This approach not only streamlines the adoption of new initiatives but also aligns them with the broader goals and visions of the organization.

Understanding and implementing strategic metrics

Measuring adoption efforts begins by aligning the adoption process with the CEO's vision through quantifiable metrics. A common challenge is the need for more capability in existing tools to track specific data, such as the usage frequency of certain features. To counter this, measurement functionalities must be integrated during the development phase.

Structured feedback is vital, especially for analysis using AI and machine learning models. Many of these models are adept at interpreting data, monitoring performance, and providing relevant feedback to stakeholders, which is crucial in identifying and resolving issues.

This focused approach ensures that technology adoption goes beyond surface-level integration, making it an integral part of daily workflows.

Leveraging social proof and peer influence

Human learning is inherently driven by observation, often surpassing direct instruction. The natural inclination to emulate peers facilitates smoother transitions and boosts adoption rates. Leveraging this tendency involves sharing data on tool usage with employees. For instance, notifying individuals that their team peers regularly utilize a new feature subtly implies the potential benefits they might be overlooking. This non-verbal and non-intrusive strategy facilitates seamless and efficient scaling.

Key to our strategy are two main metrics:
- *Lead measures:* encourages initial usage through tactics like social proof.
- *Depth of engagement:* evaluates the extent to which users leverage all available tool features.

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Overcoming challenges in adoption and transition

Successful technology adoption and scaling require a blend of flexibility, adaptability, and strategic management.

Throughout various project phases, we optimize the project team's size to meet specific needs of each phase, often reducing it to a single member during rollout. This team member, having been involved since the project's inception, has a deep understanding of the project, facilitating effective transition monitoring.

For larger projects or expansions, we often retain a designer on-site post-rollout to oversee scalability and implement necessary adjustments. The role of designers goes beyond aesthetics; they are pivotal in ensuring technology aligns with business objectives and the external environment. For instance, when unforeseen global market changes disrupted a bottle manufacturer's supply chain, our embedded designers swiftly adjusted the dashboard to accommodate new suppliers.

Mitigating challenges with best practices

In a recent proposal involving an American insurance company, the challenge of effectively adopting over 30 sophisticated yet underutilized GenAI tools highlights a crucial lesson for C-suite executives. The core issue stemmed from the tech department's tendency to develop tools based on their capabilities rather than aligning with user needs. This resulted in tools with overlapping functions and unclear value propositions. This scenario underscores the importance of establishing a clear desired outcome before adopting technology. Such clarity is a guiding principle, ensuring the tool's development is strategically directed and aligns with organizational goals.

The case study also reveals the need for proper positioning and internal marketing of these tools within the organization. While external tools like ChatGPT are marketed effectively, internally developed tools often suffer from poor positioning and low awareness among potential users, despite being secure within organizational firewalls. This insight demonstrates that successful technology adoption involves more than just creation; it requires aligning the tools with the company's needs and effectively communicating their value to internal stakeholders.

This approach serves as a best practice model, demonstrating that successful technology adoption hinges on strategic alignment with leadership objectives and a thorough understanding of user needs.

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Key takeaways

To achieve successful user adoption and effective change management, C-suite executives must shift their focus from merely developing tools to understanding and meeting the actual needs of users. Executives should champion the adoption process from the start, setting a clear vision for projects and engaging stakeholders at all levels to foster a culture of adaptability and innovation.

Additionally, establishing a dedicated team for transitions is essential for navigating inter-departmental challenges and ensuring a smooth integration of new systems. This proactive approach will ensure not only the technical soundness of new tools but also their relevance and successful adoption within the organization.

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Fractal experience brings together Design and Behavior Science to solve AI, Analytics and Data problems through a unique understanding of the user – the context, beliefs, and mental models that affect the decision-making process.

What do we bring to the table?

A uniquely skilled team with diverse backgrounds that can handle challenges in various services our solutions are created to work across a host of problems in the organization, while deepening engagement with the relevant users.
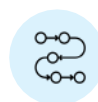
Business Strategy

Design Systems

Behavior Science

User Experience & Interface Design

Information Design

Service Design

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Fractal is one of the most prominent providers of Artificial Intelligence to Fortune 500® companies. Fractal's vision is to power every human decision in the enterprise, and bring AI, engineering, and design to help the world's most admired companies.

Fractal's businesses include Crux Intelligence (AI augmented analytics platform), Eugenie.ai (AI to identify, explore and leverage anomalies and patterns in maintenance data), Asper.ai (AI for enterprise revenue growth management), Senseforth.ai (AI for customer interactions) & Flyfish (generative AI for Digital Sales). Fractal incubated Qure.ai, to provide automated interpretation of radiology exams like X-rays and CT scans.

Fractal currently has 4000+ employees across 16 global locations, including the United States, UK, Ukraine, India, Singapore, and Australia. Fractal has been recognized as 'Great Workplace' and 'India's Best Workplaces for Women' in the top 100 (large) category by The Great Place to Work® Institute; featured as a leader in the Forester Wave: Customer Analytics Service Providers , Q3 2021 Report, the Forester Wave: Computer Vision Consultancies , Q4 2020 & the Forester Wave: Specialized Insights Service Providers, Q2 2020 by Forrester Research Inc., a leader in Analytics & AI Services Specialists Peak Matrix Assessment 2021 by Everest Group Inc. and recognized as an 'Honorable Service Provider' in 2022 in the Magic Quadrant™ for Data & Analytics Service Providers Report by Gartner Inc.

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