

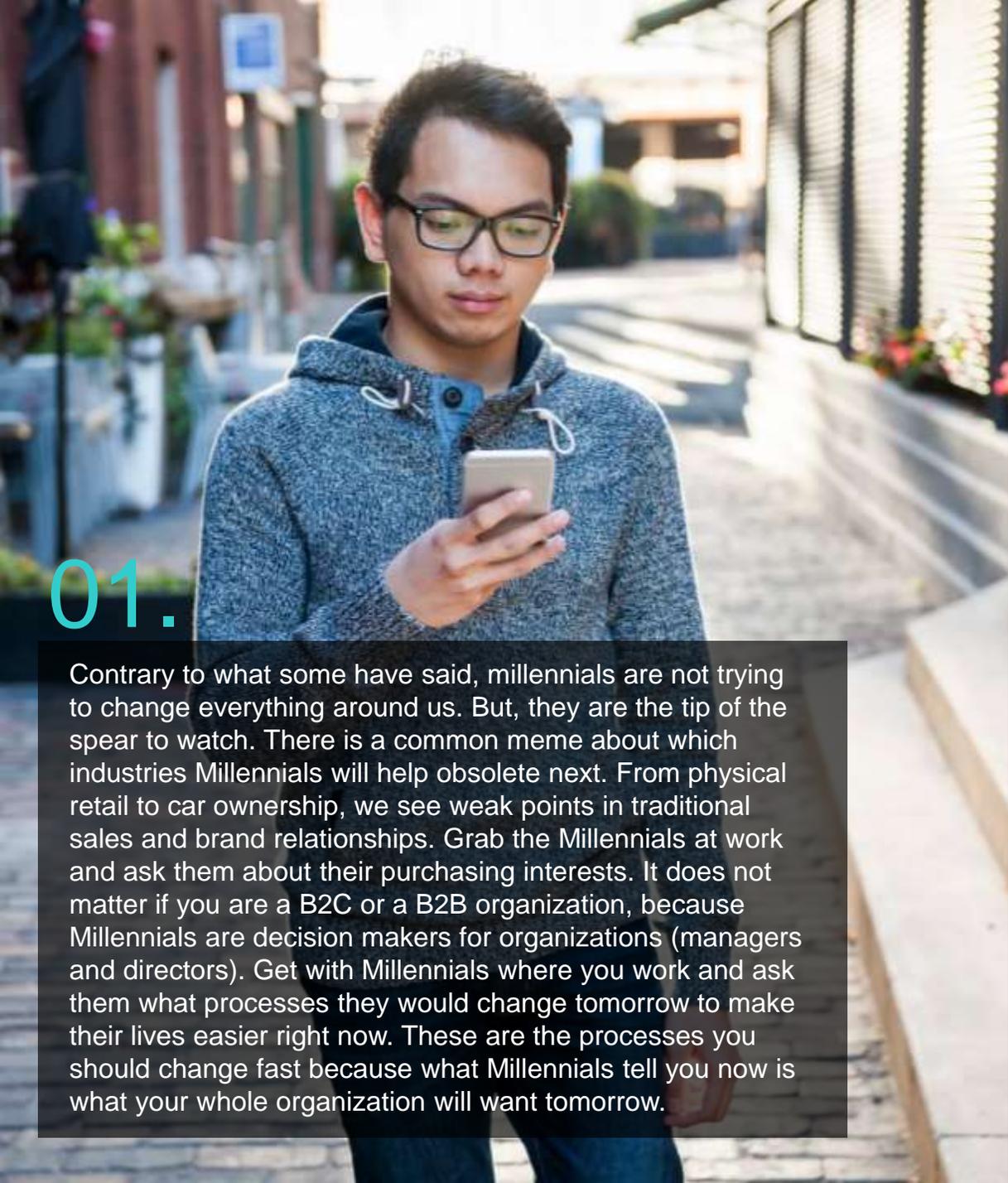
# 16 Things To Test Your Digitally Transformed Mindset

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By Chris Aarons and Michael Gale

Everything is digitally transforming and many of us are involved in it (usually marketing and/or sales). You may be driving it (in the C-suite, service and support), you may be reacting to stuff happening around you (IT, HR, product design) or you may not be sure how it relates to you (legal, finance, facilities, administration). Here are 16 statements or predictions for the digitally transforming world we live in, and how you might think about handling them as a protagonist, a participant or as a non-participating witness





01.

Contrary to what some have said, millennials are not trying to change everything around us. But, they are the tip of the spear to watch. There is a common meme about which industries Millennials will help obsolete next. From physical retail to car ownership, we see weak points in traditional sales and brand relationships. Grab the Millennials at work and ask them about their purchasing interests. It does not matter if you are a B2C or a B2B organization, because Millennials are decision makers for organizations (managers and directors). Get with Millennials where you work and ask them what processes they would change tomorrow to make their lives easier right now. These are the processes you should change fast because what Millennials tell you now is what your whole organization will want tomorrow.



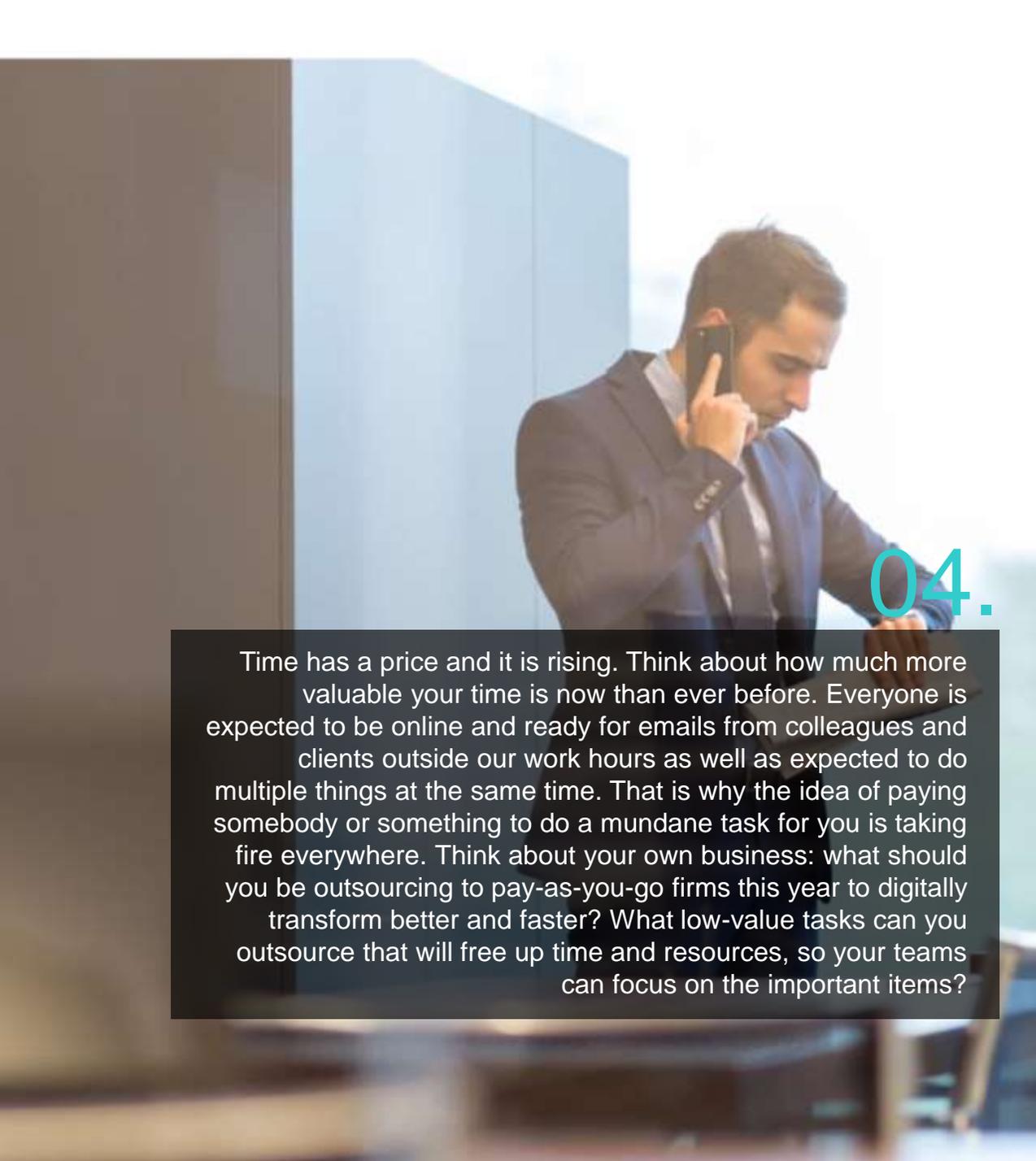
02.

You can't hide from the future, so now is the time to act. The ostrich strategy no longer works and looks foolish in a digitally transforming world. While some may not want to embrace digital transformational thinking, there is no getting around it now. That's why everybody needs to pay attention and make it an item on every weekly team meeting.



03.

Leadership needs to stop talking about the technology and focus on how to get it to work better and/or differently. You cannot buy your way into being digitally transformed. Successful leaders understand that every dollar spent on technology requires another nine on people, processes, thinking and design. That is why you need to understand that digitally transforming is not about the technology. It is about how you think, design and deliver differently with digital technology.



04.

Time has a price and it is rising. Think about how much more valuable your time is now than ever before. Everyone is expected to be online and ready for emails from colleagues and clients outside our work hours as well as expected to do multiple things at the same time. That is why the idea of paying somebody or something to do a mundane task for you is taking fire everywhere. Think about your own business: what should you be outsourcing to pay-as-you-go firms this year to digitally transform better and faster? What low-value tasks can you outsource that will free up time and resources, so your teams can focus on the important items?

05.

The office is gaining in importance as we all need great human interaction to succeed. Humans are meant to work in teams. Unlike a real-world setting, virtual teams can't read the signals or see the movements and the emotions that are essential to interaction. We need this chemistry to do amazing things. This doesn't mean that every meeting or interaction should be in-person. But if you are brainstorming, forming ideas and learning to do things differently, face time matters. As a manager, invest heavily in physical presence this year or you will be vulnerable to missed moments that create silos (death for digital transformation). In fact, everyone should hunger to be around team members as you set a path to your own digitally transformed world together.



06.

We have to develop a tolerance for anything that isn't instant. There is a deeper ripple effect that is starting to eat into traditional IT budgets, marketing investments and even how we think about supporting products or ideas. In most every instance, people are developing a sense of expectation for near-instant gratification. Think about how impatient we now are for results and how that's wrong. The science behind successful digital transformations argues that speed comes from spending twice as long in planning while working with four or more departments for deeper levels of collaboration. This takes patience. If you feel frustrated because results are not coming at the speed you want this year, take deep breaths and ask yourself if the process is right. Digital done right is incredible, but it isn't instant just because you can buy technology instantly.

## 07.

Marketing learns to let go more as customers want to roam free. In case you have not recognized it by now, customers have 100% control on what they see, hear and even feel in their worlds. This means that a whole new way to plan and think is vital. Customers rarely fit into neat little journeys any more. To succeed, you have to examine every single moment of intersection in the customer experience and decide how you play there. This is really uncomfortable as it requires looking at new themes for interaction and new streams of data. But, we can see it more and more with brands who are working this way and succeeding, and no one wants to be the last one to figure it out.

## 08.

Agile is more than a training tool. Agile is a way to think and design experiences for colleagues, customers and partners. You can't be agile unless you embrace it at an organizational and cross team level. Making this change now will help you be better set up for the future more than nearly every other investment you can make this year. Make 2018 your agile learning year.

DATA

09.

AI is not big data and big data does not mean you have an AI strategy. Everyone is drowning in data. So much so that most are desperate to find any pattern out of the noise and extract long term value from their collection efforts. But, the issue is not the data. It is finding it or even revealing the few correct insights and using them to dramatically change your processes and thinking to successfully evolve and drive sustainable value.

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10.

Some retailers now understand what it takes to be transformed and it is right in front of the rest of them. Pain is invariably the catalyst for change. The brutal demise of many retailers is forcing a new clarity about what retail experiences need to be. Many brands have recognized the DNA to build retail success: 24/7 experiences, in-store delight (Apple), fast-fashion as the raison-d'être (H&M), supply chain mastery (Zara) and educational values (Beta). But others need to look deeply into their own industries to see how brands have started to form their Digital DNA for success. In most cases, the answer is in front of you if you look and ask the right (new) questions, instead of the same ones that may have worked years ago.

# 11.

Your supply chain becomes a unique combination of ideas. There is one discussion now with the best digitally transforming supply chains and it is: "What do we need to supply?" At a deeper level, this makes everyone think beyond the bounds of traditional answers. In fact, sometimes supply should be in-store (3D printing, re-fabrication of materials or self-construction). Other times, the customer gets it directly or does it themselves (via on-site machinery). When you look at it like this, with an eye towards mass customization, it becomes a radical re-think of how to deliver in the new world.

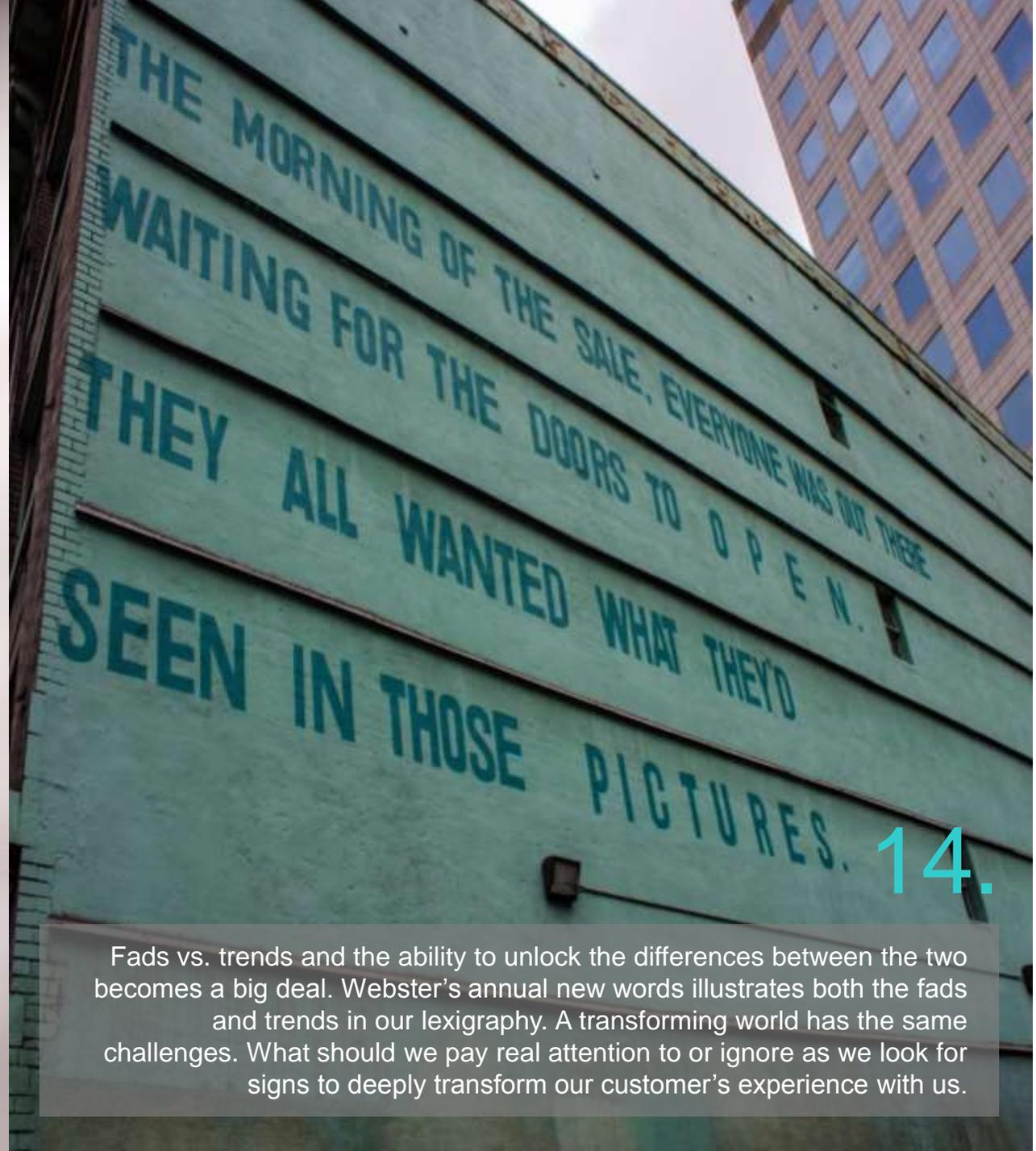
# 12.

We fall in love with cybersecurity and it is good for us. Everything you connect to is vulnerable to cyber threats. Just read this report from the Chatham House (The Royal Institute of International Affairs). This is further compounded by the move to IoT. Now, everything connected requires cyber security mitigation in your digitally transforming enterprise. In fact, you can't move any data (from the edge with customers or partners to your internal systems) without it being secure. Embrace this truth and digital transformation becomes more about what you can imagine than what you are restricted by.



13.

We continue to expect more from organizations as customers, employees and citizens. Digital transformation is about delivering far better and being able to do far more for your customers and employees than ever before. It shouldn't be just about selling more or at a bigger premium. Consumers are constantly looking for different dimensions in regards to the brands they interact with, as well as the others that are out there. Successful digitally transforming organizations offer more than just selling to keep their customers engaged.



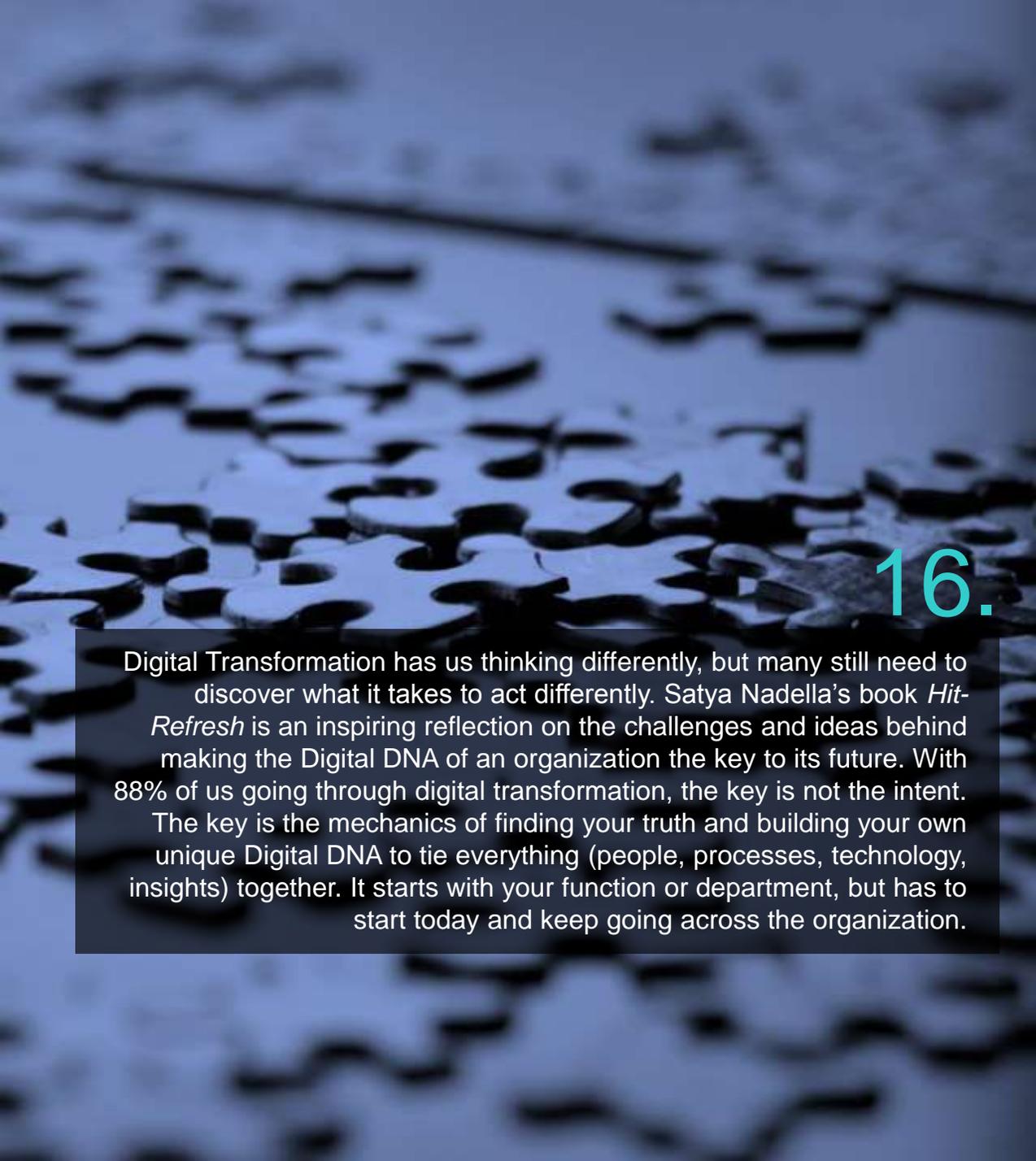
14.

Fads vs. trends and the ability to unlock the differences between the two becomes a big deal. Webster's annual new words illustrates both the fads and trends in our lexicography. A transforming world has the same challenges. What should we pay real attention to or ignore as we look for signs to deeply transform our customer's experience with us.



15.

Is CIO the right job title in a radically diffused, decision-making world? The future for the CIO is changing. It is going to be radically different as digital technology becomes ubiquitous at every level and function, down to the individual. The old mantra of thinking 80% of funds need to be used to keep the lights on is a Gordian knot that must be hacked. In successful organizations, the CIO is going to lead and facilitate this revolution from a position of strength and new knowledge. Or, in less successful ones, he/she is going to struggle to catch up with every department running in different directions and speeds. This is the moment the CIO needs to be the ship's navigator and not try to play captain.



16.

Digital Transformation has us thinking differently, but many still need to discover what it takes to act differently. Satya Nadella's book *Hit Refresh* is an inspiring reflection on the challenges and ideas behind making the Digital DNA of an organization the key to its future. With 88% of us going through digital transformation, the key is not the intent. The key is the mechanics of finding your truth and building your own unique Digital DNA to tie everything (people, processes, technology, insights) together. It starts with your function or department, but has to start today and keep going across the organization.



The best advice is to be an explorer. Every organization has a unique DNA that needs to be revealed digitally.

We wrote the book, [\*The Digital Helix: Transforming Your Organization's DNA to Thrive in the Digital Age\*](#), to be a rational map to navigate, re-engineer and drive success in a digital world.

We have laid out many key points in this post to help you ask the deep and challenging questions needed to succeed. This crosses everything inside the organization, from working practices to processes, to how we think about our sectors, to everyone's roles and priorities, and even to what to expect from our evolving, transforming world. 2018 is going to bring more dramatic changes for you to explore. Now is the time to create and architect a digitally transformed version of your organization for success, both today and in the future.



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As you are planning and working on your own digital transformation, consider these 16 things to test your mindset. These insights that have borne out in our partnerships, the hundreds of hours of intensive interviews with digital transformation masters and the primary research projects we have done for the book.

*The Digital Helix* as an explanation of how imperative it is to get this right.

## Chris Aarons

Partner  
Co-author of  
*THE DIGITAL HELIX*



## Michael Gale

Managing Partner  
Co-author of  
*THE DIGITAL HELIX*

88% of major corporations are undergoing major digital transformation initiatives. Few corporations are foolish enough to ignore the need. IDC estimated that more than \$1,700,000,000,000 (yes, \$1.7 trillion) would be invested in digital transformation during 2017. That is about the size of the GDP of the 10<sup>th</sup> largest economy of the world, our neighbor Canada.

Organizations in digital transformation fall into three basic groups.

16% are thriving with outrageous and measured economic and brand returns. 32% look like the 16% in nearly everything but get near zero back for their effort, and 40% are slowing down or in effect walking away. Be honest about where you are?

40%+ of executive leaders told us in the research that they have abandoned or slowed the process because it is incredibly difficult to keep doing the same things and expect transformation.

55% of major corporation executives told us that they are very threatened by digital startups in their segments. Despite (or maybe because of) this, they were personally investing on average 20+ hours a week on issues related to digitally transforming their organizations.

