



EXECUTIVE TRENDS FOR 2020 TECHNOLOGY

PageExecutive

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INTRODUCTION



Our Page Executive [Eight Executive Trends](#) explain that more than sectorial knowledge and network, adaptation and innovation can make or break the CEO in today's tech-torqued environment. Decision-makers and recruiters must look outside the traditional arena for new leadership that doesn't just follow, but drives, digital transformation.

2020 was the year of digital transformation. I dare say that companies that have not digitally transformed in such a scenario as the one we faced, maybe won't anymore. Businesses had to maintain their survival through technology in all senses and those companies that were pending transformation had their plans accelerated with the pandemic. Since then, all angles of work relations, client relations, and market relations have become digital.

CHANGE HAPPENS

Either a kick start or a full-speed journey, CEOs had to face digital transformation as an emergency step in their paths. However, not many businesses changed CEOs during the early months of the pandemic – probably because the change of command generally does not happen suddenly. Many other C-level positions did change though. But now, as the insights on the future of businesses has become clearer, changes in high command are starting to happen to meet new leadership visions – most including fast paced digital transformation / consolidation plans.

THE NEW CEO

The new CEO is a small adjustment to the old CEO. They are increasingly demanded to work on their ability to make swift / agile decisions. If there is anything that we have learned during this time is that the market changes fast and testing new possibilities and pivoting is key.

The new CEO must have a strong set of analytical skills to base decisions on. We are searching for leaders that are focused less on intuition and more on concrete data analysis – finding the best use of data analytics to leverage new technologies for the business.

Our new CEOs must have a willingness to change and adapt to internal and external/

market changes. Some of the traits that we look for are openness and creative problem solving.

Today, with many companies moving toward a direct to consumer approach, customer experience becomes key. B2B, B2C or B2B2C businesses – all of them - will have to increasingly focus on the client experience and not only on the quality of products/ services offered.

NEW WORLD, NEW FRONTIERS

Regardless of countries and cultural differences, CEOs will have to get used to all types of needs for change in much shorter cycles – technologies evolve fast and permeate all businesses, everywhere. 2021 brings the challenge of a new way of operating companies. For example, how can businesses create company culture (and keep it alive) with remote structures? How can the CEO promote engagement and growth in a new operating remote/mixed way? How do we leverage new technologies available to improve businesses as a whole? A whole new world offers a whole new set of questions and challenges. You will now read articles from our technology practice partners from around the world where they will share their observations about the trends in technology this year and what you should keep in mind for the future.



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ROCK, SCISSORS... APP

Why the Asian CEO needs to go digital, fast



Sonal Nayyar | Hong Kong

The Digitized CEO trend we highlighted in our [Eight Executive Trends for 2020](#) was underway before the COVID-19 outbreak. But there's no doubt that the demand for bold leaders who drive digital transformation has accelerated and intensified in the past few months.

FROM THEORY TO PRACTICE

Rewind to last year and CEOs across a spectrum of industries were experimenting with digital solutions and ramping up cyber security. Here in Asia, digital development has typically followed the US and the EU rather than spearheading the trend. Technology was long seen as a back-office support function rather than the backbone of an organization. Now, every company that wants to remain competitive must scale up its tech functions across all departments, in order to sell its products and services, offer its customers an immersive experience and engage its workforce.

Tech is transforming the way we shop, pay and manage our health. It's clear that there will be an app for everything in the coming months. In Asia, the revolution is in full throttle, from developed markets like Japan, Singapore, Hong Kong to emerging markets like Malaysia, Indonesia, Thailand and India.

The CEO's role in the metamorphosis is crucial and elicits the courage to invest in technology and in data-smart teams. Today's CEO must broker all business units. Major companies in Asia are already taking the plunge: The Standard Chartered bank in Hong Kong has launched a digital bank, while Grab in Singapore has applied for a digital banking license.



FROM FACE-TO-FACE TO THE INTERFACE

Asia is traditionally a face-to-face culture, but this is rapidly changing. The CEO who once measured team engagement by office hours, must adapt to a work-from-home, school-from-home culture. It's a double-edged sword... teams that once endured long commutes have extra time and energy to spend working, but work-life balance is proving complex: they don't want to be "ever-on."

There is also a desire to revive the human touch and CEOs must find ways to transmit empathy and positivity. To gain speed, companies and their CEOs can "lose" contact. Relationships with clients and employees can be maintained through digital communication, but igniting new ones is more complex.

A QUESTION OF BALANCE

It's clear that today's CEO in Asia must be decisive and adaptable. No CEO is an island. Today's business leaders must be prepared to take advice and listen, in close collaboration with their CEO and CIO. These are challenging times for everyone, and there are often more questions than answers. Savvy leaders will open their minds, invest in tech and people, and move over to online platforms and apps – to take a company to the next level.

CEOs who are moving from one world to the other, can propel their careers by pursuing online courses in AI and digital transformation, in order to stay relevant. We're living and working in an historic moment: one in which the bravest, smartest and most flexible companies and leaders will thrive.

I hope you've enjoyed this article. If you'd like to chat about the role of the digitized CEO, don't hesitate to get in touch!



Sonal Nayyar
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DIGITAL IS THE NEXT NORMAL

Now is the time to invest in technology



Tom Ferguson | UK

Covid-19 forced organisations to implement a remote working strategy to enable their workforce to work from anywhere, at any time. The challenge was that a lot of businesses were not equipped for this switch. Many didn't have the networks, the right hardware, or the right software.

Taking another look at our [8 Executive Trends for 2020](#), it is clear that while much has changed in response to the pandemic, Covid-19 has been a catalyst for rapid changes that were already on the horizon.

A SHIFT IN FOCUS TO DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION

It was highlighted in our recent article, *The Digitalized CEO [8 Trends]*, that 'executive leaders must leverage tech to fulfil business needs, team ambitions, and consumer demands.' This is reflective of recent market trends.

- Businesses are choosing to structure their digital and technology teams differently, recognising that digital should sit in technology.

- There has been a big drive in the sector for more diversity, with a clear focus on female technologists.
- Finding technologists that worked in business services environments has also been a focus.
- There has been a shift in what CIOs are looking for from a position, including taking on more CEO responsibilities.
- There has been a rise in the role of Chief Digital Information Officers (CDIO).
- More than ever, CEOs are better enabling their digital technology leaders to excel in response to the rapid change in the market and to drive business continuity.



TECH EXPERIENCE OVER SECTOR EXPERIENCE

Historically when considering a role, executives - a CEO, CIO or CDIO for example - would tend to stick within the market that they had worked in previously, and equally, boards wouldn't look to hire anyone from outside their sector. However, I think this is a big mistake and has seen businesses miss out on exceptional talent.

When recruiting digital technology leaders, hiring decisions must be based on the technology experience that a professional has. This is going to be key moving forward.

INVESTMENT INTO TECH MUST CONTINUE

When a client advises me that their CIOs, CDO, or CDIO has done a bad job, I always ask why have they? Typically, it is down to a lack of investment and organisations are at fault for not enabling their digital technology leaders.

Technology is often viewed by businesses as a cost centre because digital technology leaders ask for more money to implement new technologies. But it is so important to recognise and understand how much that investment will save in the longer term.

While CEOs are providing the investment now, this should not just be the case in response to a crisis. Those organisations that were already operating with the right technology in place have done well in responding to the changing landscape.

Businesses need to continue to back their digital technology leaders and show investment, particularly in the current landscape.

If you'd like to discuss the ins and outs of the Digitalised CEO, please don't hesitate to drop me a line.



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WITH TALENT AT A PREMIUM

How can tech CEOs ride the wave?



Zuca Palladino | USA

It's been a surreal year: retail, energy and leisure industries have been hit by the COVID-19 curve-ball. But it's a totally different story in the tech sector, as demand surges for rapid, convenient solutions to consumer and employee needs.

In our [Eight Executive Trends for 2020](#), we tapped and tracked the rise of the Digitized CEO, before any of us knew what was about to hit. Nine months on, and this reality has dawned bigger and brighter than ever, especially for leaders in the tech sector.

PUSHING THE DIGITAL ENVELOPE

The pandemic has changed everything from consumer behaviour to profits, personal to professional interactions. Socially distanced and territorially bound, everyone wants a digital solution. Talent is at a premium as tech firms consolidate and other sectors see salaries slide.

Keen to anticipate the next trend, successful tech companies are pushing the boundaries – leapfrogging logistics like relocation challenges. International firms are hunting and hiring disruptive talent from the US when they don't even have an office here. It's not rocket science: growth in value from an equity perspective will see shareholders flock towards firms that boom and abandon flat-liners.

SURVIVAL OF THE FITTEST

The key to post-pandemic prosperity lies in how a company can evolve its relationship with its clients and employees remotely. Many boards are asking themselves (and



their CEOs) how to change their relationships with their clients to maintain loyalty. The heat is on for the CEO – who has to run a tight ship and ensure that everyone is engaged.

GROWING PAINS

Adapting to a boom implies a series of challenges and the boss must make difficult decisions that may initially inflate company costs. It's a balancing act that requires careful delegation. Tech CEOs are under pressure upgrade internal talent. Hiring a more experienced VP and transferring responsibility are smart moves. Bases must be covered and the CEO can't be too stretched or lose sight of the competition. It's vital to envision two years from now while onboarding the talent to get a firm to where it wants to be. While everyone else looks at cost control, a booming tech company must ride the wave: acquiring and converting new business while maintaining talent in a competitive market. In a nutshell, the CEO must think three moves ahead.

THE LONG STORY SHORT

Tech is a key driver in 2020, and CEO candidates should look to firms that deliver the essentials and disrupt to develop tech that changes the way industries work. Work-life balance has also become a hot topic. The CEO of tomorrow needs an engagement strategy up his or her sleeve: tech talent is in high demand and employees want feel part of the company – even at a distance. The formula is simple but complex: transfer responsibility, engage your teams

and satisfy customers... and do all of this remotely. For the savvy CEO, the results could be exponentially rewarding.

I hope you've enjoyed this article. If you'd like to discuss the role of the digitized CEO, don't hesitate to drop me a line.



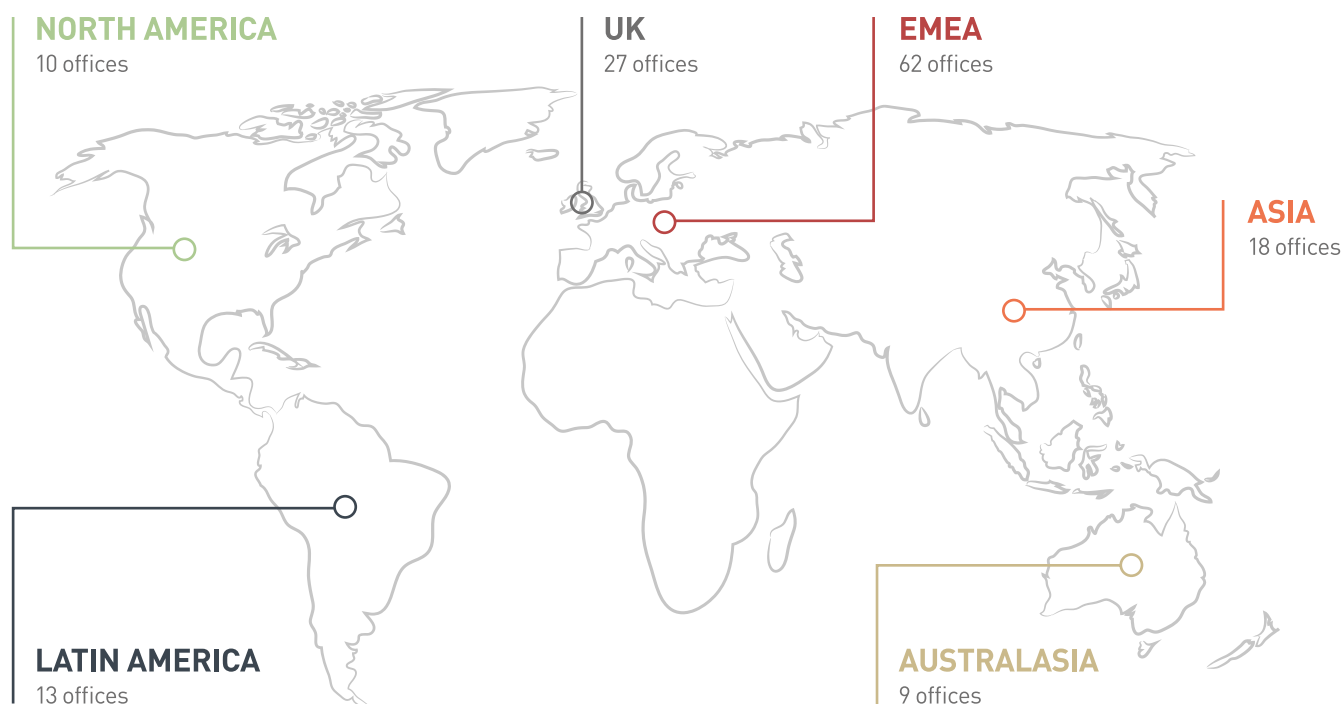
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