The New IT Professional

Contents

Our focal question:

What will it take to succeed as an IT Professional in the near future?

1. Executive Summary

More than ever, organisations are compelled to leverage technology. The forces of competition, customer expectations and technological advancement make technology a cornerstone of an advancing business. It follows then that IT professionals will increasingly find demand not only for their technical expertise but also for their influence in business decisions.

This whitepaper examining the new IT professional, draws upon the research and expertise of Omdia, Forrester, Picnic Customer Intelligence and interviews with Telstra customers to put forward recommendations for IT professionals who want to prepare their organisations, their teams and themselves for the future.

IT professionals have already been significant to transformation efforts. They have a multi-dimensional role that balances the needs of the present-day organisation with creating a forward-looking technology vision. As emerging technology drives further digital transformations, this balancing act will face more challenges and opportunities.

In the years ahead, we anticipate large-scale changes to the nature of work. Automation will ripple through organisations while the office ceases to be the focal point of the workplace. As times change, IT teams may need to go to greater lengths to understand the varied needs of end-users.

We also explore the potential and necessity for the IT profession to reinvent and disrupt itself to meet future challenges. 'New IT' is an outlook and mindset that sees IT professionals leverage both their influence and technical expertise within an organisation. They will also need to lead in their knowledge of end-users and the practical workings of their organisation. Ultimately, New IT will transcend what has been known as 'the IT department' to become enmeshed across teams that solve business problems and bring a forward-looking technology vision to their organisation.

2. Technology drives an organisation's future

Every organisation's success will be deeply influenced by IT capabilities.

> "Soon, nearly every company will operate as a digital entity. **A company's fate and fortune will be determined by its ability to exploit technology to its highest potential.** The need to be customer-led will endure but powerful forces are in play that will compel IT to take on a larger role."
>
> - Forrester [1]

IT's complex future demands constant examination. Technology was once considered a 'means to an end' – a way to better meet business needs and improve processes. This view is shifting. Technology now solves business problems by imagining and creating new possibilities. IT professionals are incredibly busy delivering on today's needs, but if an organisation's success is to be deeply influenced by IT then the mindset, approach and skills of IT professionals is pivotal.

Defining 'transformation'.

The terms digital and IT transformation are used frequently by CEOs and CIOs to signal change and ultimately improved outcomes. While the exact meanings can vary, some key themes are consistent across most definitions:

- **Digital transformation involves the integration of digital technology into all aspects of a business**, fundamentally changing internal processes and delivery to customers. While often associated with extensive overhauls such as new CRM systems or shifting to the cloud, digital transformation also encompasses anything that is technology-led – for example, delivering new laptops and updating cyber security practices. Digital transformation also necessitates cultural change, and it introduces new ways of working. As such, it requires buy-in from all levels of management and staff to succeed.

- **IT transformation is generally seen as an element of digital transformation.** It focuses on specific IT solutions. Our interviews with customers suggest that these lines are blurred, however, and IT professionals are often tasked with managing broader digital transformations.

[1] Forrester (2019), The Future of IT.

Managing vast possibilities.

> " It's one of those spaces that I think I know everything one day, and the next day it's all different again. **So, it's accepting that you're never going to know everything.** You've got to constantly be reading, researching, keeping your eyes open. You never know where you're going to see a source of inspiration.
>
> **Stuart, Transport and Logistics IT**

The role of an IT professional is already multi-dimensional. One customer we interviewed described today's role quite simply: "my role balances keeping the lights on with BAU (business as usual) requirements and introducing new technology to win customers".[2]

IT professionals will increasingly provide technological forward-thinking to their organisation. They will identify and gain buy-in for appropriate technologies that otherwise would not have been seen. It is a continuous juggling act between choosing the right technologies to adopt, adding value to the business and identifying potential pitfalls and the impact on staff and customers. If handled well, this could provide a decisive business edge.

Outside of IT, many senior managers 'don't know what they don't know' and the introduction of technology can present new possibilities to the business and its staff – for example a Customer Relationship Management (CRM) platform that produces new insights or Augmented Reality (AR) / Virtual Reality (VR) tools to compare 3D designs.

Without a full understanding, the benefit of new technologies can easily be understated or too esoteric. Our customers often describe cases where the C-Suite do not realise that many businesses and workflow problems can be solved with technology.[3] It falls to the IT professional to use their technical knowledge and influence to guide expectations.

In the know.

> " I think the biggest thing with IT is it's one of those industries that **you're either in the know or you're not in the know.** You need to understand the technologies and see potential in things. The potential is not always recognised - **but those who realise its potential, and execute on it, will generally win.**
>
> **Andy, Construction and Real Estate IT**

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[2] Picnic Customer Intelligence (2020), Telstra customer qualitative interviews.
[3] Ibid.

Businesses that delay necessary digital transformations will fall behind. It is difficult, however, to establish a common benchmark to define whether a company is in fact ahead or falling back. Navigating this position is a unique domain for the IT professional.

Adding to the challenge is the array of new and potentially game-changing technologies that exist here and now. Creating value from data is now a proven business model. As a concept, AR is over 50 years old.[4] At the time of writing, Telstra has connected many thousands of 5G services that give rise to new ways of working. IT professionals need to look ahead while also understanding their organisations' technology position in a competitive setting. The benefits of specific technologies to a business may not be apparent at first, as their use cases may be unknown or idiosyncratic. IT professionals who are across these and can find applications for their business will likely come out on top.

Recommendations.

Managing a rolling tide of new technology.

The IT professional has the power to shape the future of a business. A vital part of the IT professional's role involves looking ahead at what's next and evaluating how to get there. Some practical ideas include:

1. **Think big and seek inspiration outside of the business.**
   Explore possibilities from other industries to build wider awareness of case studies.

2. **Leverage vendor relationships to understand emerging technologies.**
   Hold and attend showcase updates and welcome case studies from vendors, on a schedule that suits your team's cadence and planning cycles.

3. **Lead a tech-innovation cultural revolution within your organisation.**
   In many organisations, IT teams are the main group of 'technology people'. This makes them best placed to lead or introduce tech innovation touchstones like hackathons (or 'thinkathons') to generate and harvest ideas, and at the same time to generate engagement around how emerging technology can be used.

[4] Harvard Business Review (2016), The Mainstreaming of Augmented Reality: A Brief History.

3. Market forces compel leaders to engage with IT challenges

IT professionals lead more transformation activities while also educating senior management.

> "Profit margins and margin growth are both down sharply... **this challenging environment requires a new approach to margin and business improvement**, an approach that addresses multiple value levers and capitalises on emerging digital breakthroughs such as robotic process automation and cognitive technology to enable new business models and new levels of business performance."
>
> - Deloitte [5]

In many organisations, it is a natural reflex to look to IT transformations to reduce cost. Digital transformations can take many different forms, however – whether the focus is CRM, moving to an agile way of working, cloud computing, hardware or software. Similarly, market forces can come in various forms. They may be driven by the customer, the economy, process simplification, cost reduction or competitor behaviour. IT professionals need to be across all these.

Artificial Intelligence (AI) will ripple through the future workplace, as it is about much more than just automation. With this in mind, IT teams are fundamental to the 'new ways of working' because they are best placed to understand the technology. This chapter will explore some real examples of IT teams playing a central role.

COVID-19 places IT on centre stage.

COVID-19 became a use case for IT professionals everywhere. In the world of 'forced digitisation', policies in many organisations were re-written overnight. In others, teams were able to leverage pre-existing remote working protocols within short timeframes. Ultimately, an exceptionally rapid transformation occurred with potentially long-lasting impacts on policy.

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> COVID-19 showed from an IT perspective how quickly things can be done. People are now asking why did things take so long before? Is it because we're not really pushing or we're not prioritising?
>
> **Natascha, Healthcare IT**

For IT teams, one of the most notable side effects of COVID-19 lockdowns has been the forced implementation of working-from-home across industries. Telstra's research prior to the pandemic showed that the ability to work from locations outside the office was highly attractive to workers across Australian industries. Seventy-one per cent of workers found the concept of "a technology that allows me to collaborate more easily with colleagues remotely (including working from home, interstate or overseas)" to be extremely or moderately appealing.[6] Twitter and Square announced their long-term policies to allow employees to 'work from home forever'.[7]

While Silicon Valley can seem distant from Australian business, examples also emerge locally. We spoke to a logistics operator whose company has rapidly shifted from an office-based mindset to one which encourages working from home and the use of virtual machines. After breaking the ice with the introduction of remote working, the organisations' appetite for innovation in this area led to a further look at the optimisation of office space.

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> **It's a fundamental mindset change** for a traditional 'you've got to be in the office everyday' kind of company. We're now looking at working from home two to three days a week. Technology-driven companies have been doing this for a long time. Now more traditional companies like us have found it. The situation has made companies rethink the way they work and operate. It's exciting.
>
> **Stuart, Transport and Logistics IT**

COVID-19 has also shown how businesses have adapted to and become even more productive with working from home. This is one example (among many) of how market forces and technology can completely shift the mindsets, culture and habits of staff.

[6] Telstra (2019), Connected Work, Picnic Customer Intelligence - Survey of n=1150 Australian workers.
[7] The Verge (2020), Square announces permanent work-from-home policy.

Meeting the market forces head on.

Market forces such as competition, disruption, rising customer demands and rates of technological advancement vary by industry. IT professionals who can identify and capitalise on the key effects will ensure the most appropriate type of transformation is chosen to fully benefit the organisation.

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> It's a serious board topic to be more customer-centric and focus on the customer digitisation of our business. It is about what else we can give to the customer without providing discounts...in some cases it is providing more real-time data about their machines. In other cases, it is about making it easier to do business with us.
>
> **Anthony, Equipment Hire IT**

A customer we interviewed explained that they keep a very close eye on the technology adopted by their main competitor as a way to benchmark their own level of transformation.[8] This IT manager went as far as interviewing customers of that competitor to ascertain the customer experience and the assumed technology that was adopted to help facilitate this experience. The task of incorporating these market forces along with cost reduction and process simplification means the role of the IT professional will continue to evolve and become more complex over time.

Transformation is harder than it looks.

"In 2018, more than 50 per cent of digital transformation efforts failed or stalled as the sheer size, complexity and change of the mandate overwhelmed organisations."

- Forrester [9]

Organisations have immense appetite for the benefits of IT transformations, but they are not always successful. The biggest business challenge identified by Omdia was process efficiency and time to market.[10]

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[8] Picnic Customer Intelligence (2020), Telstra customer qualitative interviews.
[9] Forrester (2019), The Future of IT (global perspective).
[10] Omdia (2019), Digital Transformation in Australia.

The unique role of IT professionals.

> **There's a logical sequencing to a digital transformation that needs to occur.** And if you don't understand your business and the key dependencies of all the aspects of the digital transformation you're undertaking, you run the risk of spending a lot of money.
>
> **Stuart, Transport and Logistics IT**

Customers we interviewed told us that, based on their experience, there are signs of a potential transformation failure that can be spotted early.[11] IT professionals with firsthand experience put failures down to transformations that were too broad in scope, too fast in implementation or lacking in user centricity and depth of planning.

The impact of IT is amplified when managers combine organisational influence with technical insight. Customers we interviewed told us that deep understanding of their business, clientele and staff enables them to have a stronger voice at senior leadership meetings.[12] All this points to much a needed advisory and expectation-setting role that only IT professionals can fulfil.

> **Communication is my strongest asset.** Being able to listen, understand and then go away and break down those conversations and look for a solution is paramount. You can be a genius, but if you can't communicate, you get nowhere in business.
>
> **Andy, Construction and Real Estate IT**

The idea that transformations have a high failure rate is certainly not new for IT professionals. Interviews with our customers also reveal that gaining traction and buy-in from staff and other stakeholders is not always seamless. In the day-to-day role of the IT professional, it is paramount that they understand business problems and both manage expectations and communicate the benefits of digital transformation. Without an ability to communicate and influence, the benefits of deep technical expertise are lost.

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[11] Picnic Customer Intelligence (2020), Telstra customer qualitative interviews.
[12] Ibid.

Recommendations.

Are you transformation pitch-ready?

It is up to IT professionals to manage the mindsets of stakeholders. To do this, ask yourself this question: are you well prepared to shape and influence the conversation around transformation projects? If your answer is not a confident 'yes', consider improving your skills in pitching projects to senior audiences and holding board-level conversations.

Technical expertise is not enough on its own. Understanding business and commercial acumen also promotes trust and influence. Some practical ideas to do this include:

1. **Demonstrate the end-customer focus.** A board-level strategy focused on customers and markets. IT transformations, therefore, need to show line of sight to the end customer, with the ultimate benefits of the project contributing to customer experience, retention or acquisition.

2. **Understand market trends and competitors.** Knowing the state of play in your industry, locally and internationally, can increase the credibility of the technology narrative.

3. **Be thorough.** Do due diligence on claims and include product comparisons. Show a clear plan and metrics. Reference a historic track record or real case studies.

4. Technology reshapes work for everyone

IT professionals will continue to impact the lives of many.

> "Sixty years have elapsed since business guru Peter Drucker coined the term 'knowledge worker' to designate those whose purpose was to think for a living. In 1959, this meant someone sitting behind a desk. In the late-20th century, knowledge workers received the best technology tools, such as PCs, laptops, desk phones and business productivity software. So-called 'knowledge workers' were always first in line to receive new technology enhancements."
>
> - Omdia[13]

Digital transformation necessitates people adopt new behaviours. Its ultimate success relies on adoption and buy-in by employees, senior management and customers alike. IT professionals will play a significant role in managing this cultural change, which is likely to require shifting mindsets and mobilising re-training.

[13] Telstra (2019), Australia's 21st Century Workforce, Omdia – Analysis of ABS employment data.

A report by Omdia identified that "automation and artificial intelligence are already making serious incursions into the human workforce, and this includes eliminating jobs that previously employed white-collar knowledge workers; 5G – in conjunction with such technologies – will only amplify a ripple effect already in motion".[14] A report by McKinsey identified that, for six out of 10 occupations, 30 per cent of the activities are technically automatable,[15] even if they are not automated today. Our customers are experiencing automation firsthand. The businesses that anticipate this and adapt – for example, by redirecting resources and re-training – are the ones who inevitably 'win', both from a business and a people perspective.

The idea that everyone can become a 'knowledge worker' (which makes the term redundant) has vast implications, considering the scale of service and manual workforces in most economies. What's more, white-collar roles that used to be viewed as sedentary have become more mobile. Omdia's analysis shows that "just under half of the human workforce works outdoors on a regular basis. We are also an increasingly peripatetic, nomadic workforce working in different locations, and for different employers".[16]

> "
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> I'm very much an advocate for working with the people who are on the front line. If you're going to make a change that impacts them, it's critical to speak to those people about the changes and what impact it will have for them. Their input is invaluable.
>
> **Natascha, Healthcare IT**

The future is "not evenly distributed".[17]

The year '2020' has been a frequent topic of predictions and plans about the future of work. Some technology predictions have come true, but there are vast differences between the available technologies and those that have been widely adopted. While certain groups of workers are well served by technology, others are poorly served by it. A 2019 Telstra survey revealed that manual and service workers have the lowest satisfaction with technology at work.[18]

[14] Omdia (2020), Making Enterprise 5G Pay: The Human Factor.
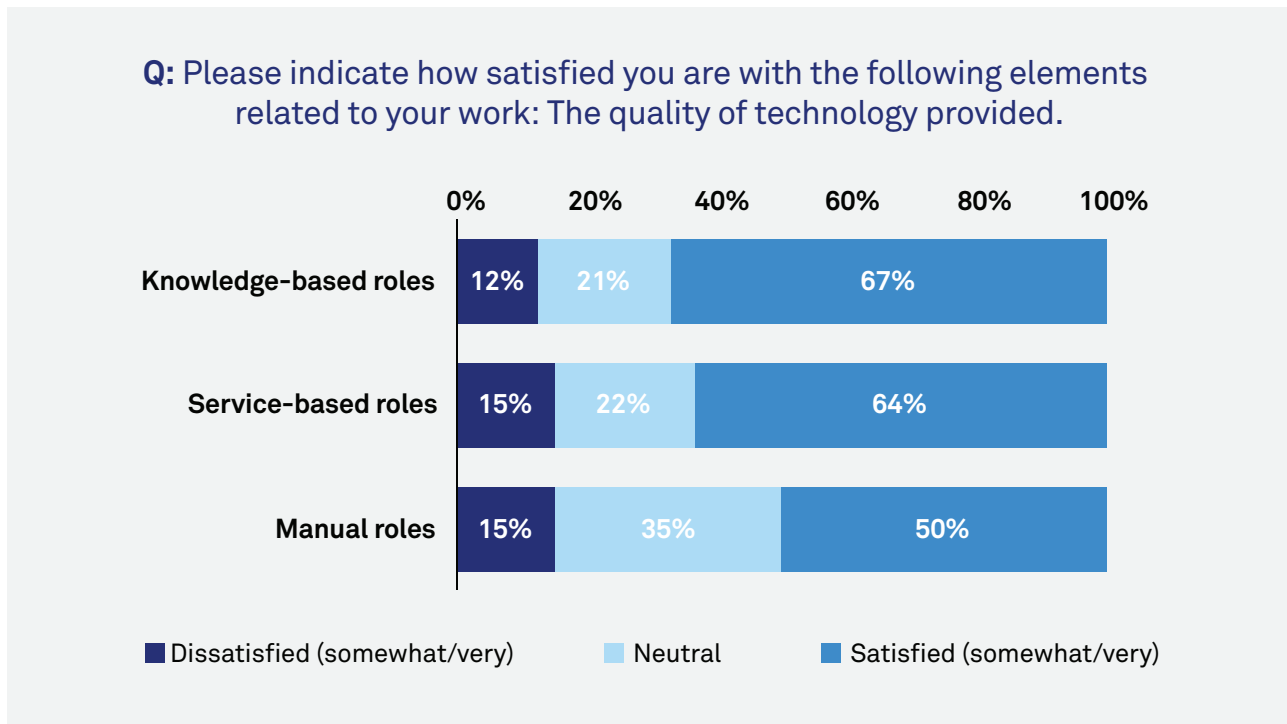[15] McKinsey (2017) Jobs lost, jobs gained: What the future of work will mean for jobs, skills, and wages.
[16] Omdia (n 14).
[17] William Gibson (1990), Conceptual idea.
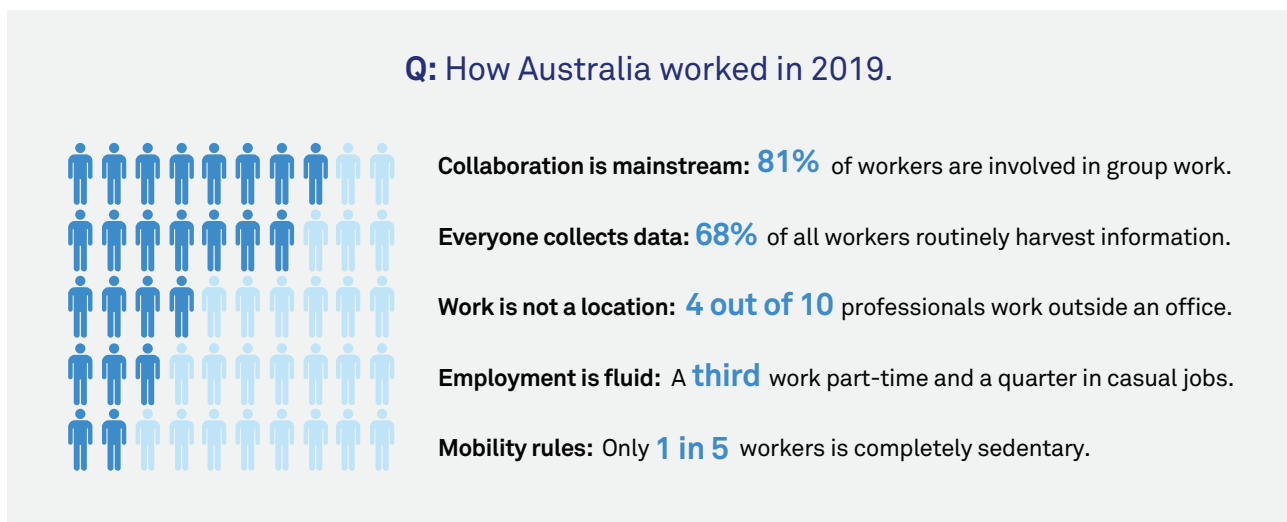[18] Telstra (2019), Connected Work, Picnic Customer Intelligence - Survey of n=1150 Australian workers.

Consider Forrester's view that "employee engagement is increasingly dependent on technology"[19] against dissatisfaction rates with technology at work. In the case of workers with manual roles, technology satisfaction is just 50 per cent.[20] This highlights potential IT challenges looming outside of Australian white-collar office environments.

Q: Please indicate how satisfied you are with the following elements related to your work: The quality of technology provided.

Role	Dissatisfied (somewhat/very)	Neutral	Satisfied (somewhat/very)
Knowledge-based roles	12%	21%	67%
Service-based roles	15%	22%	64%
Manual roles	15%	35%	50%

■ Dissatisfied (somewhat/very)　　■ Neutral　　■ Satisfied (somewhat/very)

Source: Telstra (2019), Connected Work, Picnic Customer Intelligence. n=1150.

Work is not a location.

Omdia's behavioural analysis of ABS employment data also makes a case for thinking well beyond premises-based work.[21] Even with pre-COVID-19 census data, the idea that work is not a location is clear – four in 10 professionals work outside an office.

Q: How Australia worked in 2019.

Collaboration is mainstream: 81% of workers are involved in group work.

Everyone collects data: 68% of all workers routinely harvest information.

Work is not a location: 4 out of 10 professionals work outside an office.

Employment is fluid: A **third** work part-time and a quarter in casual jobs.

Mobility rules: Only **1 in 5** workers is completely sedentary.

Source: Omdia (2019) Australia's 21st Century Workforce: Analysis of ABS employment data.

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[19] Forrester (2019), The Future of IT.
[20] Telstra (2019), Connected Work, Picnic Customer Intelligence - Survey of n=1150 Australian workers.
[21] Telstra (2019), Australia's 21st Century Workforce, Omdia – Analysis of ABS employment data.

Walking in the user's shoes.

> **❝**
>
> When you leave users out of the process, you'll find that you have a lot more problems, and that it's going to be a lot harder to keep that satisfaction up. Which, I'd say, is one of the most important parts of IT.
>
> **Aimee, Government IT**

Customers we interviewed described high trust and user-satisfaction helping to stave off 'shadow IT' behaviours (bypassing the IT team) and reduce resistance in adopting new IT initiatives. Efforts made to understand, engage with and design for end-users may have a payoff for the IT team directly.

Recommendations.

'New IT' is built on user insight and user trust.

IT must win the hearts and minds of users to succeed. IT teams should consider whether they are sufficiently engaging with users, gathering intelligence about user needs and understanding distinct user groups. Some practical considerations include:

1. **Looking beyond the traditional classes of technology users.** Traditional IT has focused on office-bound workers. How much of your workforce is mobile? Who are the underserved groups?

2. **Understanding the connections between employee engagement and technology in your sector.** With the disparity in user satisfaction across different types of work, IT could improve employee experiences.

3. **Engaging with user groups and analysing their needs.** Techniques like customer journey mapping and user research can help understand current pain points and solve the right problems.

5. A new 'IT department' emerges

You probably won't call it the IT department.

"IT roles have historically been built based on the context of specific expertise and hierarchies. **The future is less clear but brighter:** IT, as a whole, will be dynamic to the task, pulling capacity and competency from a broader range of sources, including traditional employees, robots or expertise-as-a-service from members of the growing gig economy."

- Forrester [22]

What is the outlook for IT teams?

> We will always have that caretaker or orchestrator role, but that's not where our biggest value is.
>
> **Andy, Construction & Real Estate IT**

> IT is becoming more recognisable as a critical function in the business. We've started to get a lot more accolades for what we do.
>
> **Natascha, Healthcare IT**

Historically, many have seen IT as 'the department that fixes your computer or printer'. The common perception is of a team reactive to requests for support. In 2019, our research with Australian workers told us there was still much discontent with IT among

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end users. A majority of employees (80 per cent) contacted IT support each year, and 90 per cent of IT-supported workers said they'd lost time to IT problems each month. These issues cause drops in business productivity, with 1.4 hours lost on average per employee, per month among IT-supported workers.[23]

IT professionals have challenged and often moved well past this stereotype. Yet there is still desire for a conversation with the organisation that is proactive and less driven by these caretaking aspects.

Signs of change.

> "
> IT is becoming more recognisable as a critical function in the business. We've started to get a lot more accolades for what we do.
>
> **Natascha, Healthcare IT**

Omdia believes the traditional IT management team roles and responsibilities need to be reviewed. In larger or more advanced digital businesses there may be up to 6 possible roles:[24]

- **Chief Digital Officer** → Focuses on the customers' digital experience
- **Chief Capabilities Officer** → Internal capabilities and culture of the organisation
- **Chief Technology Officer** → Responsible for the tech platform
- **Chief IT Operations Officer** → Focused on delivery of IT platforms
- **Chief IT Financial Officer** → Ensures IT runs 'as a business'
- **Chief Architect** → Models and informs organisational decisions

Businesses may not have the budget or scope to hire the above-listed six high-level roles, but these roles provide insight into the types of tasks and responsibilities for more streamlined IT teams. Depending on the transformation activity in focus for an organisation, the IT professional may toggle between the various roles. One day they may act as the Chief Digital Officer, looking at operations externally to deliver a superior customer experience. The next day they may be the Chief Capabilities Officer, reviewing the rollout of training for a new CRM platform. This versatility of IT professionals requires a fluid mindset but also a wide network of experts, vendors and partners to call upon for assistance.

[23] Telstra (2019), Connected Work, Picnic Customer Intelligence - Survey of n=1150 Australian workers.
[24] Omdia (2019), Managing the IT Department in an Agile World.

Teams that understand the organisation.

> " If your core business is driving trucks, you need to spend some time in the truck, and at the depot. Walk around and understand what they do. How do they do it? You might attend the toolbox meetings and really understand what the pain points are, getting it firsthand from the business. And when you're there, you can hear what the business is crying out for. And then you can respond accordingly.
>
> **Stuart, Transport and Logistics IT**

The New IT Department will be embedded in the organisation rather than act as a standalone central function. Forrester believe "a healthy tell is if one can no longer easily recognise who is from IT and who is not; both work on the same team".[25] A customer we interviewed was often involved in pitches and even taking calls directly from clients – another sign that IT is treated as an integral part of the project team. Ultimately, New IT won't feel like a separate department.

Trust and influence.

> " You need a clear plan with targets and milestones. You also need to show you have done your due diligence, considered other players and taken other market factors into account.
>
> **Andy, Construction & Real Estate IT**

Customers we interviewed identified that, to attain buy-in from the C-Suite, an IT team needs to build trust – trust in the technology, trust in the process and trust in the people executing the plan.[26] Further, Omdia have highlighted the need for leadership teams to buy into the transformation program and to see digital innovation as the way to solve business problems.[27] This trust is built over time through the success of previous programs, and a thorough business case approach with any transformation pitch is required to win over senior management.

[25] Forrester (2019) The Future of IT.
[26] Picnic Customer Intelligence (2020), Telstra customer qualitative interviews.
[27] Omdia (2019), Digital Transformation in Australia.

New performance measures will be necessary.

The traditional performance metrics of an IT department don't adequately reflect the emerging role of IT. Omdia's view is that "performance measures should change to reflect the pervasive role of digital business services in organisations".[28] IT departments have traditionally measured performance through quantitative measures such as costs, user satisfaction ratings, time to serve, productivity and utilisation levels. Meanwhile, other departments tend to evaluate performance based on qualitative measures – meaning they judge success based on benefits rather than processes.

Omdia have suggested a new set of IT measures of success,[29] these include:

- Emerging technologies and their adoption
- Digital culture and capability within the organisation
- Cybersecurity
- Leadership and strategy
- Co-delivery with stakeholders and partners

Recommendations.

New IT teams: A discipline for solving business problems.

New IT teams will bring a commercial understanding and make departmental boundaries seem to disappear. Here are some steps we believe leading IT teams will take:

1. **Understand how the organisation works** and find problems that technology can solve. A deeper understanding of processes, roles, tasks and customers requires an investment of time but is likely to be an essential characteristic of New IT. New IT teams may sharpen their frontline knowledge by undertaking 'ride-along' activities.

2. **Initiate new kinds of conversations.** For New IT to be perceived differently, teams need ways to break out of the reactive, request-driven dialogue. Engaging in non-standard, early and proactive conversations with other departments may uncover opportunities. In doing this, New IT considers the cultural facets of transformation.

3. **Influence organisational culture** - IT teams need to monitor organisational culture pertaining to technology. New IT teams have a cultural radar and a set of change management strategies targeting cultural change.

[28] Omdia (2020), Modern IT needs new ways of measuring performance.
[29] Ibid.

6. The New IT professional

What will it take to succeed as an IT Professional in the near future?

"Part venture capitalist, part architect, part orchestrator, the CIO will move from caretaker to disruptor and from technocrat to business visionary.

Forrester estimates that no more than 20 per cent of current CIOs can fulfil this expanded mandate."

- Forrester [30]

Forrester describes a significant evolution of the CIO, highlighting that "no matter who sits in the chair, the CIO and his/her team will be core to business design and take the lead role in technology-driven innovation".[31] It follows that the role of all IT professionals will evolve accordingly to help lead technology-driven innovation. When IT leaders will have more strategic involvement in organisations, naturally, their teams will too.

[30] Forrester (2019), The Future of IT.
[31] Ibid.

> **"**
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> It's a question I think about at night: How will this role change? And what do I need to do differently?
>
> **Anthony, Equipment Rental IT**

We have presented views on how the IT profession will evolve, and some recommendations on how to adapt to this ever-changing landscape. The most challenging question of all remains: what to do next? Which steps should IT professionals be taking next? Ultimately, we expect the New IT professional to mobilise differently in the following areas, both at a personal and a team level.

New IT fuses commercial and technical skillsets.

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> By understanding the business strategy, I can have meaningful conversations with staff. We can talk on the 'same page'... rather than me being seen as the IT guy.
>
> **Andy, Construction and Real Estate IT**

IT teams earn a seat at the strategic table through commercial acumen, alongside technical skill. As one of our customers highlighted in the previous chapter, this can be developed by getting to know how the business works through direct immersion.

Meet the New IT Professional.

Example actions

- Mobilises team training to increase commercial, leadership and collaboration capabilities
- Undertakes 'ride-along' type activities to understand front-line operations
- Joins pitch efforts for key clients where tech-driven solutions are required
- Able to articulate the business value of new technology use-cases (beyond simple cost reduction).

New IT teams will be known for customer and user focus.

> **"**
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> Focus on the customer experience should be pivotal in IT, regardless of your role. Whether you are a developer, in infrastructure or security, working with your customers is key to driving a successful and positive outcome.
>
> **Natascha, Healthcare IT**

"Digital transformation is about people, not technology",[32] to quote Omdia's Digital Transformation Report. Besides technical expertise, communication is the next significant asset that IT professionals can use to increase understanding and buy-in. New IT professionals also require – more than ever – an understanding of end-user problems. Deepening user focus can mean increasing expertise in areas such as user research and customer journey mapping.

Meet the New IT Professional.

Example actions

- Makes use of available customer journey maps and user research to solve the right problems and pain points
- Able to make a conceptual or financial connection between IT transformations and how the company competes for, wins and keeps customers
- Can communicate the end benefits of a transformation to the user, whether it be a colleague or a client
- Incorporates user (or customer) feedback as part of IT stage-gate processes.

New IT is known for genuine technological vision.

> "IT should focus on identifying problems that don't necessarily link immediately to technology. Take a business problem or a workflow problem and look to apply a system or technology solution to fix it. **It's introducing people to technology when they didn't know they actually needed it in the first place**."
>
> **Andy, Construction and Real Estate IT**

Technological vision is proactive, not request-driven. IT professionals are uniquely placed to understand available technologies and make the link to internal problems. Vision is not just about introducing 'shiny' new ideas. The high rate of failure for digital transformations suggests that the insight IT professionals need to bring to the table should moderate, simplify, avoid pitfalls and manage expectations.

Meet the New IT Professional.

Example actions

- Able to moderate expectations that senior management have of transformation activities through due diligence, influence and real-world case-studies
- Grows and manages the funnel of internal tech-innovation ideas (e.g. via hackathons or idea up-voting)
- Inspires a technology culture by hosting senior management showcases including case studies and possible future-technology scenarios
- Develops a problem-finding mindset as a starting point for technical solutions
- Challenges colleagues to derive commercial value from technology platforms and data
- Mobilises and connects with partners, vendors and other external experts for advice.

7. Contributors & Sources

Our network of technologists, industry analysts and researchers.

We would like to thank all of the Telstra customers who were interviewed as part of this report. These honest, local perspectives have been invaluable.

Picnic Customer Intelligence is a Melbourne-based consultancy and research agency.

Picnic CI is a co-author of this report, contributing primary research, customer interviews and desk-research.

Omdia is a global technology research firm that combines the expertise of more than 400 analysts covering 150 markets and thousands of technology, media and telecommunications companies.

Omdia's predictions for IT teams and analysis of the Australian workforce are used extensively in this report.

Forrester is a global market research company that provides advice on the existing and potential impact of technology to its clients and the public.

Forrester's outlook and their report The Future of IT (2019) has been a key source and an inspiration.