

**BUSINESS TRANSFORMATION: ACCELERATING
BUSINESS GROWTH IN THE DIGITAL AGE**

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BUSINESS TRANSFORMATION: ACCELERATING BUSINESS GROWTH IN THE DIGITAL AGE

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ABSTRACT

This paper explores and analyzes some of the crucial points of business transformation in the fast-paced digital age, emphasizing the focus on its role in how it can help accelerate business growth during this technological era. With the current innovation continuing to evolve rapidly and the accelerating market growth, organizations shifted toward surviving mode by any means possible. Companies face unprecedented challenges and opportunities, and many organizations are increasingly turning to business transformation strategies to adapt, innovate, and thrive in the ever-changing digital landscape. The COVID-19 pandemic has also significantly transformed the landscape of commerce in retail business, with approximately 70-80% of decision-makers now favoring remote or self-service methods for making purchases (Mattila, Yrjölä, & Hautamäki, 2021), which led to many changes and adaptations for companies for them to grow. This paper particularly underscores the significance of the business transformation concept, with a focus on two factors; the first is an agile and adaptive organizational culture, and the second is effective change management and leadership, which these two can drive accelerated growth and sustainable success for traditional retail business.

This thematic paper uses a qualitative research methodology and examines a case study of Decathlon, a traditional French sports retailer who was recently has undergone a business transformation and continues to grow its business. The paper also draws insights from a wide range of scholarly literature. The insights garnered from this research can serve as a valuable guide for business leaders looking to drive their organizations toward increased growth and competitiveness in the digital era.

KEY WORDS: BUSINESS TRANSFORMATION/ AGILE AND ADAPTIVE/ ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE/ CHANGE MANAGEMENT/ LEADERSHIP

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

In the current advanced technological world, everything is hyper-connected and rapidly evolving; this created an unprecedented range of challenges and opportunities for businesses. The reign of the digital age has brought forward an era of transformative information and technology, reshaping and disrupting the old way of life, including traditional business models. Companies must strategically position themselves to thrive in this modern business world, where competition is ferocious, and customer demands are ever-evolving. Especially during this innovative time, businesses must adapt to the rapidly changing market dynamics. It is a critical component of any organization to have an effective strategy, which leads to the business transformation concept of how organizations could reinvent themselves to fit in with the present market environment. Therefore, as companies try to maintain a relevant edge and competitiveness, they are increasingly turning to the concept of business transformation as a strategic imperative. In this context, this paper drives into the topic of Business Transformation: Accelerating Business Growth in the Digital Age.

The digital age, which can be characterized by technological advancement, has changed and transformed the traditional way of working, including the company's operation, the interaction with the customers, and the decision-making process on the strategies (Cambridge University Press, 2023). Organizations adapt quickly to the evolving landscape or risk falling behind their agile competitors. The crucial question is not whether to transform but rather how to undertake the transformation effectively in such a manner that drives accelerated growth and ensures sustainable success. This digital age has fundamentally altered the global business landscape, bringing advancing technologies such as artificial intelligence, big data, cloud computing, and the Internet of Things rapidly into the mix. The traditional business models are being continually challenged; organizations are compelled to remodel and reimagine their operations to survive and thrive. However, the journey to digital transformation is far from straightforward.

It requires a comprehensive understanding of the dynamics of the digital era and a strategic approach to capitalize on the opportunities it presents. Therefore, in this era of digitization, businesses worldwide face an exciting yet daunting task - transforming their operations to accelerate growth and remain competitive. This transition, however, isn't merely about adopting new technologies. It requires a holistic shift in how organizations operate and view themselves, profoundly influencing their culture, leadership style, and change management processes. This paper will explore how business transformation can help accelerate business growth in the digital age, focusing on two crucial facets: adopting an agile and adaptive organizational culture and effective change management and leadership.

As the world progresses into the heart of the 21st century, the accelerating rate of technological advancements has become a necessary tool for businesses across the globe, demanding a reassessment of traditional norms and encouraging the implementation of digital strategies, hence business transformation. Therefore, organizations must cultivate an agile and adaptive culture that embraces innovation, fosters a growth mindset, and encourages continuous learning for them continuously develop along with the market. This led to the first sub-topic of "Agile and Adaptive Organizational Culture." This concept goes beyond buzzwords and enters the realm of practical, tangible strategies that any business can apply. The digital age requires companies to adopt an agile mindset if they want to be successful. This means being open to change, experimenting, and having a growth mindset is very important to every organization that wishes to improve its performance continuously. An agile mindset involves understanding, collaborating, learning, and staying flexible to achieve high-performance results. Rather than struggle with the changes and new technology, this concept helps both individuals and teams adapt to changes and focuses on customers, teams, and operating as a network. Businesses that embrace an agile mindset can increase the chance of success rate and become better equipped to handle changing market dynamics. An agile and adaptive organizational culture is one of the most essential parts of business transformation.

The focus of the agile and adaptive organizational culture is to investigate how businesses can foster an environment that encourages innovation, risk-taking, and continuous learning. This emphasizes the value of an agile mindset in rapidly changing market dynamics, where businesses need to be responsive and resilient. It explains how

it enhances an organization's capability to nimbly pivot strategies in response to market trends and customers' evolving needs. Agility and adaptability have become pivotal attributes for businesses seeking to harness the full potential of digital technologies. By fostering a culture that embraces change, encourages innovation, and values continuous learning, companies can be better equipped to navigate the complexities of the digital era, expedite their transformation processes, and, ultimately, drive growth. The paper discusses the importance of adopting an agile mindset and fostering a culture of innovation. And other awarenesses of this topic, such as: How can organizations cultivate a conducive environment that encourages risk-taking, experimentation, and continuous learning? And how can businesses adapt to the uncertain, complex, and ambiguous market dynamics today? This segment will provide insights into the concept and more.

Another crucial part of any success of a business transformation initiative depends on the ability of leadership to guide the organization through the complex change process. Effective change management requires clear communication, a compelling vision, and a well-defined strategy that aligns with the organization's core values and goals (Oakland & Tanner, 2007). This sub-topic will explore the methods employed by successful leaders in accomplishing the transformation and building a shared sense of purpose among employees. This paper examines the role of effective leadership in successfully steering transformation initiatives and overcoming associated complexities. The importance of change management is one of the critical roles of business transformation; companies must understand this concept, orchestrate effective leadership, and ensure that stakeholders embrace new methods of operation.

Furthermore, organizations should recognize that successful change management requires an understanding of the impacts of change on people, processes, technology, relationships, and organizational structure. Effective leadership should also be established to ensure that the company is ready to adjust to changing market dynamics. Leaders should advocate for change, articulate a vision, and provide the support necessary to ensure success. By analyzing real-world case studies and drawing insights from change management theories, this sub-topic will offer practical guidance to business leaders seeking to navigate the human aspect of transformation and drive growth through effective leadership.

Change Management and Leadership go hand-in-hand in accelerating business growth, as both are essential in successfully implementing a company's vision. Effective leadership is critical to the success of a company, as it provides guidance, direction, and support during periods of transition or transformation. Through the thoughtful implementation of change management and leadership tactics, companies have successfully implemented modifications and achieved the desired outcomes. In the digital age, acceleration of business growth requires the development of an agile and adaptive organizational culture and the implementation of change management and leadership tactics to execute a company's vision successfully. In the ever-evolving digital landscape, understanding and leveraging digital transformation for business growth is not just a competitive advantage but a survival imperative. Therefore, this research is poised to contribute significantly to comprehending business transformation in the digital age. The findings and knowledge of this research could help guide business leaders and policy-makers in understanding the critical elements of business transformation during the digital era and fostering a business environment that optimizes growth opportunities while mitigating potential risks.

Overall, it is certain to refer to the core of business transformation as a holistic and profound change within an organization, encompassing strategy, processes, culture, and technology. This goes beyond any typical change management approach, as it involves not only reacting to external shifts but proactively driving innovation and repositioning the business for the future. By embracing transformation, companies can harness the potential of digital technologies, data analytics, artificial intelligence, and other cutting-edge innovations to unlock unprecedented opportunities and elevate performance. This paper attempt to understand the connection between digital transformation and accelerated business growth. More specifically, the research aims to identify the drivers of business transformation in the digital age and analyze the strategies employed by successful businesses to leverage digital technologies for growth. With two significant sub-topics, first, adopting an agile and adaptive organizational culture, and second, effective change management and leadership strategies, which could be crucial factors of the transformation and the ingredients of exponential growth.

In conclusion, companies can stay ahead of their competitors in the digital age and remain a successful player in the industry by embracing an agile and adaptive organizational culture, effective change management, and leadership practices, which are both significant parts of the business transformation. Agile methods focus on speed, resulting in more efficient decision-making and better customer service. At the same time, adaptive approaches enable the company to be flexible and respond to changing market dynamics. Strong leadership is essential for successfully leading the organization through changes, while change management and stakeholder engagement processes facilitate successful change. By leveraging these practices, an organization can accelerate its business growth and further establish itself as a digitalization market. As digital technology continues to revolutionize the business world, the ability to adapt and transform has become a critical survival skill. Ultimately, this paper aims to be a comprehensive resource for business leaders, entrepreneurs, and professionals seeking to thrive in the digital age through strategic business transformation. By combining the existing knowledge, using real-world cases example, and offering the proposal's best practices, this research provides the readers with the knowledge and tools necessary to help navigate the complex area of business transformation successfully.

1.1 The Company

Decathlon, founded in 1976 by Michel Leclercq in France, has become a prominent sporting goods retailer known for making sport accessible to many. Begin with a simple and effective concept to ensure everyone can enjoy and benefit from sports; the company has built its reputation on inclusivity and affordability. Decathlon specializes in selling a wide range of sporting equipment and apparel for various sports and outdoor activities. The company operates on a unique business model called "all under one roof," where it designs, produces, and distributes its products. With this vertical integration, Decathlon can offer affordable prices while maintaining control over quality and innovation. The company now operates over 2,000 stores in more than 55 countries worldwide, with a diverse product portfolio of over 70 sports and outdoor activities. (Decathlon.co.uk) Decathlon has molded a unique identity within the corporate landscape. The company emphasizes a strong alignment between individual passions

and organizational values, particularly focusing on a love for sports. Through numerous training sessions and induction programs, both existing teammates and new recruits are educated on the importance of Decathlon's core culture and values. This enables Decathlon to develop a connection between the company's culture and its team to work toward a common goal, fostering a strong culture workforce. As a result, the company thrives on synergy and creates a bond of individual passions and commitment to the company's shared vision, demonstrating how a profound sense of purpose can drive success in the business world. With a sense of profound passion, commitment to the culture, and a strong bond of personal values to the company, Decathlon was named #15 World's Best Employer in 2022 by Forbes (Forbes.com).

The COVID-19 pandemic has expedited the global digitalization of business transformation, where every company now genuinely need to be agile and adaptive just to survive. Same as Decathlon, the company shifted toward online and swiftly itself into digital transformation by first hiring Barbara Martin Coppola as the new CEO. She was a Chief Digital Officer from IKEA who converted the furniture stores into an online success. The new CEO wasn't the only thing that changed at Decathlon; as the company is marching into the online platform, so does the strategies and organization structure. By comprehensively analyzing Decathlon's case, including its strategy, organizational culture, and people management practices, many can gain valuable insights into the factors that have contributed to the company's success and continue to grow during its transformation in the digital era.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

The connection of the idea between business transformation and accelerated growth in the digital age can be heavily reliant on two factors which are: the adoption of an agile and adaptive organizational culture and effective change management and leadership. The evolution of digitalization and its impact on business transformation is an expanding area of academic and professional discourse. There is an extensive range of literature exists that examines the transformational shift of businesses in the digital age, starting from identifying key drivers of this change to the strategies employed for successful digital integration in business transformation and how organizations accelerate during this period. Many studies, theories, and articles have been published on these topics, offering varying perspectives on the subject's essential factors.

2.1 Definition of Business Transformation

The concept of business transformation has been studied and researched many times over the years and has gained significant attention from both researchers and practitioners alike. Many academics have attempted to put an ideal definition of this concept as a process that goes further than just the typical changes and involves a fundamental shift in a company's strategies, structures, processes, and culture to achieve a new and improved state of operations (Ismail, Khater, & Zaki, 2017). This shift is often driven by external factors such as technological advancements, changing customer expectations, and disruptive market forces (Mubako, 2017). Business transformation is seen as a proactive response to the challenges and opportunities presented by the digital age, enabling companies to enhance their competitiveness and accelerate growth.

2.2 Importance of Business Transformation in the Digital Age

In the digital era, innovation has become something that every company must update and embrace. This rapid technology change has brought unprecedented disruptions and opportunities with new features like artificial intelligence, big data analytics, cloud computing, and the Internet of Things; organizations need to learn and transform to continue growing along with the changes. Researchers focus on and emphasize the fact that it is necessary for all organizations to embrace business transformation to stay relevant and competitive in this changing business landscape (Hamel & Välikangas, 2003). Companies that fail to keep up will most likely find themselves left behind by agile competitors who leverage these technologies to enhance the customer experience, optimize operations, and innovate in their respective industries (Westerman, Bonnet, & McAfee, 2014). or eventually can't survive in this digital market. As such, business transformation is not just a strategic option; it is an essential survival strategy in the digital age and, obviously, for the company to grow.

2.3 Key Drivers of Business Transformation

The emergence of digital technologies is a critical driver for business transformation and has been widely acknowledged in the literature. Many scholars (Berman, 2012; Gimpel et al., 2018; McAfee et al., 2014) have argued that the rapid advancements in technologies such as Big Data and AI have started a movement in business models. Furthermore, a study by Bharadwaj et al. (2013) explored how the strategy in digital business is influenced by the convergence of the physical and virtual worlds. Additionally, customer expectations and market competition have been cited as significant drivers. Porter and Heppelmann (2014) emphasized the role of competitive pressure in motivating businesses to innovate their traditional processes.

Many researchers have found several vital drivers for organizations to undertake business transformation initiatives. Some of these drivers are important for the business to respond to the disruption of new technology, innovation, changes in customer behavior and preferences, and shifts in the market landscape (Sánchez & Zuntini, 2018). External changes like regulations, economic fluctuations, and globalization have also been part of the reason that push companies to transform. Lastly, the leaders' vision and ability to

see the potential of these new tools and changes play a crucial role in initiating and sustaining business transformation efforts. This led to the two critical factors of accomplishing the full potential of business transformation, which are agile and adaptive culture and change management and leadership, which result in the growth and sustainable success of organizations.

2.4 Strategies for Digital Business Transformation

Several studies have highlighted the importance of strategic planning in successful business transformation during the digital period. Scholars such as Matt et al. (2015) and Hess et al. (2016) argued that a successful digital strategy requires a holistic view, emphasizing a shift from a technology-focused approach to one incorporating business model innovation. The effect is particularly notable in the economic growth of these entities, improving their competitiveness through enhanced digital literacy and competencies necessary for informed decision-making (Struk et al., 2022). Moreover, other literature suggests that businesses must create an organizational culture that encourages experimentation and flexibility (Bughin and Van Zeebroeck, 2017). Similarly, the significance of leadership in digital transformation has been underscored, with Loebbecke and Picot (2015) stating that leaders play a pivotal role in managing change during the transformation.

2.5 Challenges in Implementing Business Transformation

Change in itself is always challenging; this also applies in business. Business transformation deals directly with change; therefore, it wouldn't be without any challenges, especially digitalization. Many researches show that lack of knowledge or digital literacy and resistance to change are some of the common obstacles businesses see in the transformation (Verhoef et al., 2017). There are various challenges that organizations face when attempting to implement transformative initiatives, and one of the substantial challenges that business leaders would have to go through is coupled with the need to secure sufficient resources and talent. Moreover, other considerations surrounding ethical issues like data privacy, security, and responsible use of technology also add to

the complexity of the transformation process. With these challenges, the success rate of business transformation could be lower and, as a result, have a direct effect on the performance and the growth of the organizations. Ethical considerations surrounding data privacy, security, and responsible use of technology also add to the complexity of the transformation process (Bughin et al., 2018).

2.6 Best Practices for Successful Business Transformation

Even though the chances of transformation can be very challenging, there are several practices that can enrich the experience and enhance the chances of success in business transformation. One of the main factors that could help the situation is to create a culture that fosters innovation, agility, and a willingness to experiment (Smith & Tushman, 2005). Moreover, effective change management that supports clear communication and strong leadership will definitely enable workers to adjust and understand the changes would ease the difficult time of changing period during the digital era (Beer & Nohria, 2000). Lastly, teamwork and support from the organizations that could build a strong collaboration across different organizational units and lead to empowering employees to take accountability and ownership in the process of transformation have also been recognized as essential elements (Cummings & Worley, 2014). The goal and progression of the transformation should also be measured and evaluated for companies to see and identify the areas of improvement and make decisions with data accordingly. With these points, organizations could have gone through the transformation easier and have a better chance of succeeding, which leads to business growth as a result.

2.7 Adopting an Agile and Adaptive Organizational Culture

In the context of digital business transformation, agile and adaptive organizational cultures have become increasingly relevant. The literature emphasizes the importance of such cultures in fostering an environment that is conducive to change and innovation, and the concept of organizational agility is increasingly becoming one of the most ideas in discussions that connect to the topic of business transformation. In

the article by Sull (2009), organizational agility is the ability of organizations to adjust and adapt quickly to the changes in the market, which could lead to more productive and efficient ways of working. Doz and Kosonen (2010) also imply this concept and argue that businesses must implement and foster a culture of strategic sensitivity, leadership unity, and resource fluidity to maintain agility in the digital era. Denning (2017) stated the critical role of an agile mindset in businesses' digital transformation, suggesting that agility enables organizations to respond to changes more quickly and effectively.

In addition, the importance of an agile and adaptive organizational culture in driving successful business transformation cannot be overstated. Companies that embrace this type of culture will likely have a tendency to adapt faster to changes in the markets and gain from rising opportunities. Many scholars also focus on the significance of a growth mindset, encouraging experimentation, and celebrating learning from failures. Moreover, this agile and adaptable culture will help with cross-function work and collaboration and facilitate the progression during transformation (Kane et al., 2015). Similarly, Denning (2016) conducted studies that concluded that an agile culture is more than just flexibility but involves creating such an environment that could encourage continuous learning, collaboration, and innovation. Further, expound on this notion by Worley et al. (2016), adaptability is critical in the face of digital transformation and disruptions; because businesses should not just react to the change yet utilize the opportunity by proactively seeking out and adapting to emerging trends and technologies in order for them to grow and prosper during the reign of innovation. Lastly, Tushman & O'Reilly (2002), in their work "Winning through Innovation: A Practical Guide to Leading Organizational Change and Renewal," stressed the significance of an innovative culture that endorses experimentation and risk-taking, thus reinforcing the ability to adapt to volatile market conditions.

2.8 Effective Change Management and Leadership

Leadership and change management are often deemed critical in driving successful business transformation. As a crucial component of a successful business transformation journey, many scholars and researchers focus on the importance of aligning transformation initiatives with the company's vision and core values and

establishing a compelling case for change (Kotter, 1996). A study by Haffke et al. (2016) demonstrated the significant role of leadership in managing the complex digital transformation process. By suggesting that effective and influential leaders can steer organizations toward new opportunities, overcoming resistance to change. Skillful leaders have a remarkable ability to communicate; as a result, they gain support from stakeholders, address employees' concerns, and envision the transformation strategy for everyone (Oreg & Berson, 2019). Furthermore, leaders must invest in the people, provide training, develop a change-ready workforce, and offer support throughout the transformation process. In addition, engaging with stakeholders is another aspect that has been identified as necessary in change management literature. A research paper by Heracleous and Barrett (2001) highlighted the need to involve various stakeholders, such as employees, shareholders, and customers, in the change process to succeed.

In conclusion, the literature review provides some comprehensive highlights of the significance of business transformation as a strategic imperative for organizations seeking accelerated growth in the digital age. The importance of embracing new technologies and strategies to stay competitive and relevant in the dynamic market landscape was recognized by many studies and scholars. Key drivers of the transformation are compelling organizations to act, including digital disruption and changes in consumers' behaviors and preferences. However, given the dynamic nature of digital landscapes, the journey is challenging; this includes change resistance, cultural barriers, and resource constraints. There remains room for exploration, particularly in identifying effective strategies for leveraging digital transformation for accelerated business growth, and this literature review could only underscore some of the significance of agile and adaptive culture, effective leadership, and strategic change management in driving successful business transformation in the digital age. Nonetheless, implementing best practices, fostering an agile and adaptive culture, and embracing effective change management and leadership are instrumental in overcoming these challenges and driving successful business transformations. The following sections of this paper will explore a real-world case study and practical insights to illustrate the importance of these aspects in accelerating business growth in the digital age.

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter explains the research methodology adopted for this study on "Business Transformation: Accelerating Business Growth in the Digital Age." The research design explores the connection between business transformation during a particular time, especially in the digitalization period, and accelerated business growth. This focuses on identifying the importance of the two main factors, which are agile and adaptive organizational culture and change management and leadership, where these two could be the most contributed parts of the modern business transformation. This paper investigates the most effective look methodologies businesses can use to transform in the digital age and produce best practices for further development. The methodology is designed to provide reliable and valid findings through a mixed-method approach of focusing on qualitative methods and apply the information from a broad range of literary scholars.

3.1 Research Design:

Through this research, the author of this paper is focused on understanding what are the key factors that help businesses accelerate during the transformation in the digital period. Firstly, the research is designed as an exploratory and explanatory study. The aspect of this experiment research involves understanding the current landscape of digital transformation in businesses. For secondary research data, the paper will gather information via e-databases such as Emerald Insight, EBSCO, and other sites. Furthermore, for the primary data, the paper will use information gained from the qualitative research methodology through interviews with Decathlon's employees and stakeholders in order to gather more detail about the topic. This research techniques fall into a mixed technique category, where the combination of more than one style of research methodologies was used, which would help clarify the factors that could

support the business growth during the transformation in technological time. In contrast, the illustrative part examines how a firm like Decathlon has utilized digital transformation to accelerate growth by applying the two factors of agile and adaptive organizational culture and change management and leadership as the main components of its business transformation.

3.2 Data Collection and Methodology

Data for this research were collected through two primary methods: secondary data analysis and primary data collection through interviews.

Secondary Data Analysis: This involves reviewing existing literature, including scholarly articles, industry reports, and case studies of businesses that have undergone similar transformations. This serves as a basis for understanding the theoretical foundations of digital transformation and identifies gaps in some of the current body of knowledge, and links the two main factors that could help support business growth during the digital period, which are agile and adaptive organizational culture and change management and leadership.

Primary Data Collection: This is done through semi-structured interviews. The Semi-structured interviews were conducted with key stakeholders, such as Regional Leader, Country Leader, Local Project Leader, and all the way to Sale associate (Sports Leader) position to gain in-depth insights. The interviews aim to supplement and clarify survey and secondary data analysis findings.

The interview questions were developed to focus on specific topics; therefore, they are divided into three parts; the main subject is the business acceleration in transformation with two parts sub-topics of agile and adaptive organizational culture and change management and leadership. These questions were developed as open-ended questionnaires in order for the interviewees can express their thoughts and opinion freely on the topic of this paper.

3.2.1 Business Transformation

- How would you define 'business transformation' in the context of the digital age?

- How has the digital age impacted Decathlon's business model?
- What do you believe are the most important factors that influence the success of a business transformation in the digital era?

- What are the key challenges Decathlon faces when transforming its operations for the digital age?
- How vital is a customer-centric approach in digital business transformation and the acceleration of business growth?

3.2.2 Agile and Adaptive Organizational Culture:

- How does an agile mindset accelerate business growth in the digital age?
- How does Decathlon cultivate a culture encouraging experimentation and risk-taking, and how does this support business transformation?
- What challenges do Decathlon often face when creating an agile and adaptive organizational culture, and how can they overcome these challenges?
- How does a failure to adopt an agile mindset impact the success of digital transformation initiatives?
- How has the adoption of agile methodology impacted the decision-making process in our organization?

3.2.3 Change Management and Leadership

- Can you discuss the role of change management in successful business transformation initiatives?
- What are some typical change management strategies that businesses employ during a digital transformation? Which has proven to be most effective in your experience?
- How critical is leadership in navigating the complexities associated with business transformation initiatives?

- Can you provide an example of effective leadership that led to a successful business transformation?
- What strategies can leaders use to effectively manage resistance to change during a digital transformation?
- How has Barbara (new CEO) navigated the challenges and complexities of business transformation during the pandemic?

Table 3.1 Interviewee information

Interviewee's Name	Interviewee's Profile	Interview method
Decathlon teammate		
Frederic Bichet	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • French • 16 yrs plus with the company • Regional APAC Leader 	Via Zoom Call (based in Singapore) July 30th (1 hour)
Dhiren Shetty	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Indian • 17 yrs plus with the company • Thailand Country Leader 	Via Face to Face July 31st (1 hour)
Thongkong Thongkongyao (Tao)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thai • 7 yrs plus with the company • Thailand HR Leader 	Via Face to Face July 31st (1 hour)
Helene Callewaert	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • French • 10 yrs plus with the company • Thailand IT/Digital Leader 	Via Face to Face August 4th (1 hour)
Theeradet Theeratatri (Job)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thai • 2 yrs with the company • Sports Leader (Bangna Store) 	Via Face to Face August 2nd (1 hour)

3.3 Validity and Reliability

To ensure validity and reliability, this paper used multiple data sources (literature reviews and interviews); the research can cross-verify the findings, increasing the study's credibility. Additionally, all of the interviews were conducted with the same questions, pattern, and script to ensure the best and most reliable data and credibility.

3.4 Ethical Considerations:

All participants were informed about the purpose of the study and their right to confidentiality.

3.5 Data Analysis

Data collected from the interviews were analyzed using a qualitative analysis method, transcribed, and analyzed using thematic analysis. This involves coding the data, identifying themes, reviewing and refining themes, and finally interpreting the data. The information gathered from these interviews could be subjective and based on the perceptions and understanding of individuals.

For many interviews in the environment to be considered successful, the interviewer must establish a minimum trust base with the interviewees where they are comfortable enough to express their thought freely during the questionnaire., However, for this particular paper, all of the subjects have experienced working with the author, which enabled them to feel at ease to be able to talk about the issue freely and with confidence. Also, the author asked and informed all of the interviewees about their rights and the purpose of this paper.

In conclusion, this chapter outlines the research methodology used to explore the implications of digital transformation on business growth with the two sub-topics of agile and adaptive organizational culture and change management and leadership. Combining qualitative data, the methods used offer a comprehensive exploration of the research questions, thus contributing valuable insights to the discourse on digital business transformation and business growth. Therefore, through a combination of these research methodologies, businesses can better see the customers' needs and develop strategies to take growth in the digital age with a focus on the agile culture and leadership as primary factors. The insights from these lookup methodologies can help companies to improve long-term sustainability and keep up with the current innovative market.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS

After an extended review of pieces of literature and several interview sessions, various points could have been explored in more detail on this topic of business transformation. In this chapter, the key themes and lessons of this particular topic at Decathlon will be analyzed; under the new leadership of CEO Barbara Martin Coppola, who took the position in 2022 with a robust and impressive track record from her previous experiences. The impact of COVID-19 also catalyzed for businesses to adapt and transform in response to the rapidly changing market dynamics. Decathlon realized and understood the significance of adaptation and agility in the face of unforeseen disruptions and the accelerated digital transformation that took place across industries.

Some primary factors, such as an agile culture, enable companies to respond swiftly to market shifts, seize emerging opportunities, and navigate through uncertainty. By empowering employees to experiment, take calculated risks, and learn from failures, businesses can foster a dynamic environment that encourages creativity and resilience. At the same time, other vital facets like change management and leadership could help guide the team to visualize the common goal and take ownership of the transformation for each individual employee. Furthermore, the paper will explore the significance of flattening hierarchical structures, promoting cross-functional collaboration, and nurturing a culture of openness to new ideas and feedback. Through this case study and analysis of a successful company like Decathlon, these sub-topics will highlight the pivotal roles of agile and adaptive culture and leadership in propelling business transformation efforts toward rapid growth.

4.1 Business Transformation in the Digital Age

As the business landscape continues to evolve rapidly, it is crucial for companies to adapt and transform in the digital age to maintain a competitive edge. Decathlon has recognized this need and embraced new technologies, strategies, and approaches to achieve accelerated growth. One of the first steps of this transformation is to get a new suitable CEO, and that is where Barbara Coppola came in. Throughout the history of Decathlon, it has been one of the companies this is privately owned by the Leclercq family and focuses on internal promotion where teammates are encouraged to do a zigzag (cross-functional) career path. The previous CEOs have been stepping up internally, and Barbara is the first externally hired CEO of the company. This transformation into the digital age of Decathlon was paved out with a profile that has been accomplished throughout her career and successfully showcased in her previous position as a Chief Digital Officer at IKEA, where she built a team of developers and shifted the traditional Swedish furniture store into an online platform that is now many customers can go as one of the main shopping channels (McKinsey & Company, 2023). As Barbara took office in 2022, she started by gaining information and drafted people from outside Decathlon to build a digitalization team to transform Decathlon into a new phase. Barbara's vision for Decathlon includes utilizing technology to create a seamless and personalized customer experience, optimizing supply chain efficiency through data-driven insights, and building a more substantial digital presence to reach a wider audience.

Decathlon has employed various strategies and approaches to transform its business in the digital age under the guidance of new CEO Barbara Martin Coppola. One key system has been to build a new structure in the company ecosystem. Previously Decathlon was proud of such a flat organization where everyone can connect to each other and is very approachable. With the growth the company excepted, Barbara knew that there would be a need for a new organizational structure in order for communication to be more efficient and effective. She implements her vision and the new organizational chart to define the work and responsibilities of individuals clearly. This shift created a new wave of change throughout the company, and people started to see the changes; however, with the skillful leadership of Barbara and the tech-savvy person she is, Barbara used the opportunity to launch a new project, "North Star," via communicate

with all the teammate around the world online. This has reassured all the teammates about her vision and how Decathlon has moved into full digitalization, which no previous CEO has done.

4.1.1 Analysis case:

- From the question: How has the digital age impacted Decathlon's business model?

Fred: Decathlon was built in a very traditional way; we were a sports store focusing on offline and customers' experience and how they buy things. Yes, we realized that we needed to move online, so we created an Omni channel and started building our platform. Yet, until COVID-19, I can say that the priority was our stores and offline channel. Now we get new CEO with fresh eyes from outside of the company with great experience; we should apply this transformation and grow more in the online business.

Dhiren: I think it is not just online or offline transformation; it is more like the combination of the two and how Decathlon can combine these two into customers' experiences and expectations. It is essential to transform and keep up with the change and to see what we can do sure to change along with our customers.

Tao: I believe a lot of this transformation focuses on the data and how we implement the tools. This is the data-driven age where a lot of decision-making processes depend on how much we know and are able to use the data; this is what effect the transformation of our business model.

In conclusion, the digital age has brought about a fundamental shift in how businesses operate, and those that do not embrace digital transformation risk being left behind. Barbara Martin Coppola's leadership at Decathlon has demonstrated the crucial role of digital transformation in achieving accelerated growth in today's rapidly changing markets. Through her strategic approach to technology adoption and innovation, Decathlon has been able to enhance customer experience, improve operational efficiency, and increase profitability. However, the need for businesses to continue to innovate and adapt to stay competitive cannot be overstated. With technology evolving at an unprecedented pace, companies must be agile and nimble to keep up with changing customer needs and market trends.

One of the key lessons that could be emphasized in this case could have been that the company needs to embrace digital business transformation. Businesses must recognize the necessity of digital transformation to remain relevant and competitive in the digital age. This balancing and leveraging new technologies, strategies, and business models to drive growth and innovation. The shift in consumer behaviors and expectations, plus the ever-changing retail landscape, underscore the need for Decathlon to embrace digital transformation. With just the two simple steps of Decathlon transformation, according to the financial report for 2022, the company grew 12% (Decathlon United, 2022). However, the company must continue evolving and leverage cutting-edge technologies, innovative strategies, and progressive business models to stay competitive. This calls for a profound re-examination and remodeling of the traditional ways of conducting business and adopting a proactive approach to deliver enhanced value to customers. Embracing digital transformation is not just about technology adoption but a holistic revision of operations, where other factors like agile culture and change management come in. By doing so, Decathlon can drive growth, foster a new and innovative culture, and secure its relevance in the competitive sporting goods retail sector in this digital age.

4.2 Agile and Adaptive Organizational Culture

Decathlon is known to be one of the market leaders in sports retail around the world; one of the reasons is the company accomplished that through the ability to accept change throughout all these years. The company has internally changed many times in terms of its operation, ways of working, and systems it implemented. However, under the leadership of Barbara Martin Coppola, Decathlon is transforming into an agile and adaptive organizational culture of the 21st century. This presents a unique approach to business transformation, providing insight into the role of leadership and effective business strategies for the digital age. By implementing this culture, Decathlon is embracing new technologies, processes, and systems that will allow the company to adapt quickly and efficiently to an ever-changing business environment. Through this transformation, Decathlon is going through a period of radical innovation which enabled the organization to become an industry leader. By utilizing cutting-edge technology,

Decathlon will be able to respond quickly and effectively to business challenges while also gaining greater flexibility in operations. This transformation is crucial for Decathlon to remain competitive in this digital reign, and thus far, Coppola's leadership has been instrumental to the success of the initiative.

Cultivating an agile and adaptive organizational culture is essential to stay competitive in today's dynamic business environment. An agile mindset involves understanding, collaborating, learning, and remaining flexible to achieve high-performing results. This allows Decathlon to quickly and effectively respond to changes in the market and customers' expectations and preferences. Decathlon has adopted the agile mindset and incorporated it into its processes and tools to make rapid and efficient decisions. By encouraging collaboration and communication, the team has become more agile in order for them to corporate with each other. This is the start where the agile and adaptive mindset settles and grows into a company culture where all the teammates can be responded to when they have to go through something bigger like business transformation. Embracing the agile mindset provides a wide range of benefits to employees, such as improved performance and increased accountability. Decathlon strives to develop an agile mindset to help the company stay ahead in an ever-changing industry. The organization has stood out as a great example of a business that has successfully adopted the agile and adaptive organization culture, a strategy that other companies can look to in order to stay competitive.

4.2.1 Analysis case:

- From the question: How does a failure to adopt an agile mindset impact the success of digital transformation initiatives?

Fred: It's not adapt or not; it's how fast you can do it. If you are slow, all your competitors will pass you, and eventually, you can't keep up.

Dhiren: If we don't change, we won't survive. The fact is customers (most humankind) change; therefore, we as a company have to adapt and follow; if we can predict the difference, that would even be better, so we will know what to do and how to serve the customers' expectations.

Helene: I believe as an IT person, change and adaptation are normal. In the tech world, there is an update almost every day. This me you have to adapt and be agile

for all these changes and updates. For example, like on your phone, you update every time there is a notification.

4.2.2 Example from the case:

When Barbara took office in 2022, it was one of the dramatic changes in Decathlon. She was the first external CEO; previously, Decathlon only focused on internal promotion. She succeeded in the position of Michel Aballea, who has been there since 2015. He was one of Decathlon's most outstanding examples of genuine internal promotion; where he started working for the company in a Sale Associate position and worked his way all the way to Global CEO. Now, not only that Barbara is the new CEO of the company, but she is also an external candidate, which sends a shock wave throughout the company. But because Decathlon as a company has been known to change constantly and always has an agile and adaptation culture, this situation of the new CEO was handled with previous changes and applied the same strong company culture of open mindset and welcoming change as a new challenge. Decathlon has been through several major adjustments. In 2018, the company shifted the focus from customer-centric to user-centric to emphasis on sports users only. This strategy was unsuccessful, and within six months, the company quickly realized and moved back toward the customer-centric method. Another fast adaptation from Decathlon is in retail organization chart change. In 2019, Michel Aballea moved toward a total networking organization workforce, where he reduced the tier of the organization chart in the retail business, cutting out the Department Manager level and having a Sale Associates as a Sports Leader that reports directly to Store Leaders. These changes show the ability of Decathlon's culture to adjust and adapt to new things; with this, Barbara realized the opportunity that teammates in Decathlon can help foster the culture, which would help boost performance during the significant transformation. She communicated the strategy clearly and utilized this strong culture at Decathlon to accomplish a smooth transformation and ensure the company achieved peak performance during the change. Barbara encouraging this culture shows significant importance of how the agile and adaptive organization's culture can directly affect the chance of a successful transformation, which leads to better performance.

In conclusion, Decathlon's business transformation incorporates the agile and adaptation culture as a part of its alteration. The new CEO, Barbara, has implemented strategies that foster a culture of growth and adaptability, including introducing new tools, processes, and training that make it easier to adopt and embrace new ways of working. In addition, Decathlon's culture also promotes collaboration and agility, allowing employees to become more involved in decisions and bringing fresh ideas and approaches to problem-solving. By empowering employees in this way and seeing failure as a part of growth, Decathlon has created a culture that encourages innovation and supports the company's goals of driving successful business transformation. Through the leadership and implementation of an agile and adaptive organizational culture at Decathlon, the company has set a new standard for business transformation and has demonstrated the power of effective leadership in the business landscape of the 21st century.

One of the greatest lessons from this case is to foster an agile mindset in an organization. The transformation journey at Decathlon offers a valuable lesson on the necessity of fostering an agile mindset for business resilience and growth. This French sporting goods retailer has skillfully incorporated agility into its operational fabric, enabling swift and efficient decision-making. In doing so, Decathlon not only improved performance and increased accountability among its employees but also fortified its position in a continually changing industry. The Decathlon case underscores that embracing an agile mindset is instrumental for any organization to navigate business transformation successfully in the digital age.

4.3 Change Management and Leadership

Barbara Martin Coppola assumed the CEO role at Decathlon and has transformed the organization through her visionary leadership and innovative change management strategies. In order to foster better communication and clarify the responsibility, she restructures the company, embracing a lateral organization structure that encourages free-flowing communications to drive innovation. With her leadership, she promotes trust culture, transparency, and accountability, plus the introduction of a new leadership framework. Her belief in the correlation between customer and employee satisfaction

and the company's success has been a guiding principle. To further foster a collaborative environment, Barbara introduced Workplace, a social media platform allowing employees to engage and offer feedback freely, creating a connected community within Decathlon. The changes have not only improved efficiency and effectiveness but have also solidified Decathlon's commitment to sports, accessibility, and sustainability, resulting in improved employee morale, productivity, and customer satisfaction (Decathlon United, 2022). Under her leadership, the company has seen positive changes in areas such as digital transformation and customer experience, resulting in improved sales and customer satisfaction. Additionally, Martin Coppola has focused on creating a culture of empowerment and collaboration, which has improved employee morale and engagement (Decathlon United, 2022). By fostering a work environment that values teamwork, initiative, and innovation, she has motivated employees to work towards Decathlon's ambitious goals. Overall, the changes brought about by Martin Coppola's leadership have been positively received by the company and have contributed to Decathlon's continued success in the sports retail industry.

The motivation behind these changes by the new leadership was to transform the company into a more sustainable and environmentally conscious business. Barbara emphasized the importance of innovation and digital transformation as a key driver of growth for the company. And with her leadership, the team can see how important this transformation which results in the success of the transition that eventually leads to better performance in 2022. Another critical aspect of Barbara's strategy was to foster a culture of collaboration and teamwork among the employees. She believed that the company's success depended on the collective efforts of everyone involved. Through her leadership, Decathlon is poised to become a leader in the sports industry, not just in terms of revenue but in terms of values and impact.

4.3.1 Analysis case:

- From the question: How critical is leadership in navigating the complexities associated with business transformation initiatives?

Dhiren: It is one of the most important parts; as a leader myself, I need to always be there for my team. I might not have all the answers, but I would never leave my team lost and be misdirected to something there is not aligned with the company's

goal and vision. Similar to Barbara, even if she just took the position, she used the North Star Project as a guideline for everyone to follow.

Tao: Very important since the leader would help guild everyone in the same direction while going through changes.

Job: It is very important to have good leadership since, during this transition, many people are lost and confused; they need direction and someone they can follow. Teammates who have no vision or leader would normally can't perform as best as they could.

4.3.2 Example from the case:

One of the new things Barbara implemented that helped Decathlon's internal communication was a new organizational structure. Previously the company prided itself in the flat organization where the focus was on networking way of work. The company believes that this help connect everyone together, and people are more approachable this way. However, as Decathlon grew more prominent, the number of teammates expanded, and it was harder to focus on communication and connecting to the right people become harder. Before Barbara, the company was led by CEO Michel Aballea, who took office in 2015. He led the company by himself with the help of other teammates as a leader of individual projects. Under him, all the Country Leaders report directly to him and mostly have the autonomous power to make decisions and work freely in the networking framework. This worked very well until Decathlon became a global company that expanded over 30 countries and had more than 100 project leaders. Also, Michel would generally do a more traditional way of work, like visiting countries, rather than online mass communication. With the human touch, he was one of the most outstanding leaders, and many teammates around the world got to talk to him in person. Even in that example, Michel couldn't visit all of the projects and reach out to all of his teammates. This leads to the transformation of the digital age, where technology comes in. Barbara saw the opportunity that she could have to reach more people with the help of an online platform. With the company's direction aiming toward digitalization, she introduced an online announcement (similar to a Townhall meeting), where she held the meetings and company announcement online and broadcast it all around the world for all the teammates to watch live and together. This was one of the leadership skills that

Barbara showcased during the transformation to ensure everyone could get the message from the management team and improve communication between the management team and all employees.

Another point was the company structure, as Michel was more like a one-man show who managed everything by networking and connecting all the dots together by himself. Barbara started off by building her management team, including new positions that Decathlon never had before, such as Chief People Officer and Chef Sustainable Office. Also, adding a layer into the company structure, which previously Decathlon was proud to say that it is indeed a flat organization. Now, rather than all Country Ledaers directly reporting to the CEO, there is a Regional Leader and Retail CEO who can help with local project decisions and goals. With these two points, Barbara creates a better environment for working and communicating between teammates and the management team where local problems can be dealt with faster and more efficiently. With this skillful leadership, Barbara implemented the transformation and applied it to show that this change could help and benefit Decathlon in a way that affects everyone. This was one of the examples that can be used to prove that with the company going through a transformation, it could still grow and improve internal performance, like communication and applying technology.

In conclusion, Barbara Martin Coppola's leadership and change management at Decathlon has been pivotal in shaping the company's future. Decathlon's renewed focus on innovation, technology, and sustainability has helped it become more competitive in the marketplace. As a leader, Barbara has embodied Decathlon's core values of teamwork, commitment, and customer service, inspiring her team to work towards a common goal. Her focus on empowering employees through training and development programs has helped build a robust and skilled workforce that is better equipped to adapt to the ever-changing market trends. Moreover, her transparent and collaborative leadership style has ensured that decisions are made in the best interest of the company and its stakeholders. The changes implemented under her leadership have not only improved Decathlon's financial performance but have also positively impacted its reputation. As the company continues to expand globally, Coppola's leadership and vision will undoubtedly play a crucial role in ensuring its success. Overall, the changes implemented by Coppola have both strengthened Decathlon's competitive position in

the market and its commitment to its core values; and understanding the importance of change management, effective leadership, and stakeholder engagement will lead to successfully navigating the challenges and complexities associated with business transformation initiatives.



CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

5.1 Conclusion

In the digital age with such a dynamic market, businesses need to adjust to change in order to survive. Business transformation emerges as a pivotal strategy for organizations seeking to thrive and accelerate growth. Business transformation goes beyond just the implementation of technology but takes into account a holistic viewpoint of adapting to changes and innovative ways of leadership. Embracing transformative technologies and strategies becomes imperative for companies to remain competitive and relevant in the ever-evolving digital landscape. Key drivers, such as disruptive innovations and changing customer preferences, push organizations toward transformation as a strategic imperative. Nevertheless, the journey of business transformation is never without challenges; Resistance to change, cultural barriers, resource constraints, and ethical considerations surrounding data and technology usage demands careful consideration. However, effective change management and leadership, as well as fostering an agile and adaptive organizational culture, emerge as critical success factors in overcoming these challenges.

This paper offers a conceptual framework, drawing from existing literature and an analysis of a case study of Decathlon, explicitly focusing on the context of Business Transformation: Accelerating Business Growth in the Digital Age, especially emphasis on the two primary factors that affect which are agile and adaptive organization's culture and change management and leadership. The paper combined several pieces of information and data from both existing work and interviews that could shed light on how other business leaders or companies can engage in the transformation with better understanding. The purpose of this paper is to have a better understanding of how business can accelerate during the transformation of the digital era and to show that the two facets can have direct coordination, which could boost the performance of the organizations during the transition period of transformation in technological time.

In conclusion, Business Transformation: Accelerating Business Growth in the Digital Age is not just a theoretical concept but a strategic imperative for organizations aspiring to thrive in the dynamic digital landscape. By adopting an agile and adaptive organizational culture, organizations can foster innovation, responsiveness, and a customer-centric approach. Effective change management and leadership are crucial in steering the transformation journey, while best practices provide practical guidance for organizations to overcome challenges and leverage digital advancements for accelerated growth. Decathlon can be used as one of the examples company that has gone through a transformation and thrived into these two factors and come out as a successful process.

5.2 Recommendations

Based on the comprehensive information and data gained from this paper on Business Transformation: Accelerating Business Growth in the Digital Age, the following recommendations are offered to business leaders, entrepreneurs, and professionals seeking to embark on successful business transformation initiatives:

First, embrace an agile and adaptive organizational culture; this is one of the first steps that would help companies build a winning team that can deal with any changes. The companies can develop a culture that fosters agility, innovation, and a growth mindset. Encouraging teammates to try, take risks, and learn from failures. Furthermore, promote cross-functional collaboration and openness to new ideas and feedback in order for teammates to grow and connect with each other. This will enable the organizations to be prepared and respond to any fluctuation in the dynamic market. From the data and interview, the paper shows that without adapting to the new change, many businesses will be left behind and eventually can't survive in this ever-changing market.

Second, prioritize effective change management and leadership by understanding the importance of the role of change management and leadership in driving successful business transformation. Align transformation initiatives with the company's vision and core values, and develop a compelling case for change. Clearly communicate and be transparent with the employees about the transformation. Provide

support and necessary skills through this journey; skillful leadership will inspire commitment, resilience, and ownership among team members.

In addition, companies have to measure and evaluate the progress of the transformation. Establish clear metrics and Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) to track the progress and impact of the transformation journey. This also encourages teammates to focus on the performance where they can see it as a transparent communication of how the change is going. Regularly evaluate the effectiveness of transformation strategies, change management practices, and organizational culture. Data-driven insights will provide valuable feedback and enable the organization to make informed adjustments to optimize transformation efforts continually.

Lastly, to make sure that the organizations have enough resources both financially and in terms of human. From the data and study case of Decathlon, one factor that arises during its digital transformation is that the company realized that it needed new talents in order to develop this innovation transition. As Decathlon goes through this, it becomes clear that the market has minimal resources for people who can lead, perform, and be skillful in technological advancement. Therefore, it is one of the recommendations that the company that wants to be successful in the transformation must be equipped with personnel that can take the organization to that goal.

5.3 Limitations in the scope of the study

The objective of the paper is to understand and get inside the topic of Business Transformation: Accelerating Business Growth in the Digital Age, especially emphasizing the two primary factors that directly affect which are agile and adaptive organization culture and change management and leadership. While using Decathlon as a study case would have been some of the excellent samples to apply to this case, with a personal connection with the company, the author can gain valuable information. However, several limitations might affect the study.

First, the reach of the new CEO, Barbara Martin Coppola, since she is based on working in France and her new organizational structure makes it more effective to communicate with her team, but not for everyone. The invitation email was sent for the interview by the author but was rejected and referred to other personnel.

Second, all of the interviewees are in the local project (Thailand team), which might have a different perspective from other people that might have a chance to work directly with Barbara. Also, we imply this paper as the study case of Decathlon. Yet, the majority of the information gathered was in Thai, which could be less accurate than gaining more pieces of information all around to reflect better results, as Decathlon is a global company.

Lastly, a board subject that took more work to pinpoint the focus. Since the topic is business transformation, the author is focusing on the acceleration of business growth. This made the search of literature result in a broader range. Even if the inquiry was defined with two other factors, still the information was overwhelming. As per technology, this topic is consistently changing, and there is a lot of information to go through; time is a necessity for the author to rearrange thought and data into a legitimate output paper.

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