

DIGITAL EDGE

MARCH 25



ISSUE 001



DRIVING THE FUTURE OF DIGITAL MINING TECH

*Exclusive Interview with Gillian Tomlinson,
Group Chief Data and Digital Officer.*

NISHA PATEL

*Digital Transformation
and Industry 4.0 Vision*



Special Feature:
**'BELOW THE
LIGHTS'**

*Digital Transformation
at Picadilli Circus*

*Talking future tech
and past gamechangers
with ISG's WAYNE
BUTTERFIELD*



The Manufacturing Technologies Association (MTA)

The MTA exists to promote the interests, and be the voice of the manufacturing technologies sector in the UK.

The expanding scope of engineering-based manufacturing has seen the MTA broaden the range of its support to the sector with the formation of a new cluster of trade associations and events.



The MTA represents the core of engineering-based manufacturing and aims to promote the use and innovation of advanced technology in manufacturing.

To find out more about the MTA, please visit our website at mta.org.uk, email us at info@mta.org.uk or call us on 020 7298 6400

EDITOR'S NOTES

WELCOME TO DIGITAL EDGE



It's finally here — welcome to the very first issue of Digital Edge! We're thrilled to bring you this brand-new publication, crafted for technology leaders, innovators, and forward-thinkers who are shaping the digital future.

In this landmark launch edition, we've assembled a spectacular line-up of industry pioneers. We kick off with an exclusive from Gilliam Tomlinson, Group Chief Digital & Data Officer at Weir Group, who shares insights on harnessing data to drive industrial transformation in the global mining industry. Mary Alfheim, VP of Data at Scribd, dives into the evolving landscape of data strategy in the world of e-learning and online books, while Wayne Butterfield explores the impact of Generative AI and Intelligent Automation on business innovation and strategy, from the perspective of the global research and advisory firm, ISG.

Plus many more interviews and insights from our growing network of leaders and innovators.

But that's not all. We take you behind the scenes of one of London's most exciting digital art projects, 'Below the Lights' at Piccadilly Circus, where James Game

reveals the 'Spectacular Vision' redefining immersive experiences.

Alongside these deep dives, you'll find all our regular features—industry news, expert opinion, lifestyle, and upcoming events—keeping you ahead of the curve.

And speaking of events, we're excited to announce our brand-new partnership with Game Changers. Their UK debut is set to electrify London this May, featuring over 40 visionary speakers who will push the boundaries of technology, leadership, and digital transformation.

With Digital Edge, we aim to inspire, inform, and challenge the way you think about technology. This is just the beginning—we can't wait to grow with you and become the go-to platform for educating, entertaining and inspiring a new generation of technology focused business leaders and entrepreneurs.

Enjoy the issue! JP

Editor-in-Chief, Digital Edge

DIGITAL EDGE

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FRONT COVER:

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Wayne Butterfield - ISG
Nisha Patel - Ocorian

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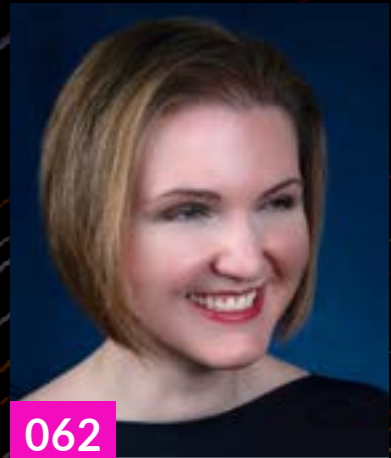
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Driving the future of digital mining tech

GILLIAN TOMLINSON

Chief Digital and Data Officer at Weir

With two decades of global data and digital transformation expertise, Gillian Tomlinson is playing a pivotal role in Weir's transition to delivering innovative mining technology solutions that accelerate the journey towards smart, efficient and sustainable mining.

The harsh conditions and metaphorical headwinds that challenge the mining industry demand robust strategies along with multiple platforms and technologies to enable a safer and more sustainable future.

Gillian talked us through the organisation's strategic vision, the tech leading the transformation and how Weir is driving a digital-first mindset for the future in a business that already has a century-and-a-half history.

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I believe I was one of only 250 in the world when I joined Whitbread as their first Chief Data Officer.



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Reimagine **proc**

Transform

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technology

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experiences

» A DATA-RICH FOUNDATION

Hailing from South Africa and having worked globally before permanently landing in the UK 14 years ago, Gillian has an economics and banking academic background, starting her early career in the credit bureau industry with Dun & Bradstreet supporting Africa and Middle East credit bureau development and implementation.

While there, she worked with the central bank stakeholders and banking institutions to develop roadmaps to establish the credit bureau and product offerings, facilitate changes to the law and the wider environment, and conditions that would allow for data sharing, and model development for effective credit risk management. Plus, she helped technology teams to develop the tech and data environments accordingly.

Ever since, data has been a strong focus in her career as she moved into leadership roles at companies including Deloitte, RBS and HSBC before securing her first CDO position.

» ONE IN 250+

Gillian explains her early entry into the emerging role of Chief Data Officer for the Whitbread group, which owns Premier Inn, restaurant chains and, at that time, Costa Coffee, "I believe I was one of only 250 in the world when I joined Whitbread as their first Chief Data Officer with an end-to-end remit to maximise value of data to enable smart hotels, smart coffee shops and smart restaurants."

Since then, she has been back to the financial sector and also worked in telco at Three to lead the digital and data transformation for enabling 5G, including implementation of the IoT environment, driving the change to cloud-based architecture, setting up the centre of excellence for data analytics and data monetisation, and enabling real-time applications across the board.

Then, in 2021, Gillian joined Weir as their Chief Digital and Data Officer, where she

leads both portfolios from an Enterprise strategy, governance, platform and transformation perspective across this global business.

As a cross-industry data and digital practitioner, she's seen that there's a lot to be learned from sharing knowledge between different industries. And now she's bringing her wealth of expertise to Weir, a business with an 150-year history that provides engineering solutions to the mining industry, and that's always had a seam of innovation running through it.

» MINING TECHNOLOGY FOR A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE

As a global engineering organisation serving the mining sector, Weir's primary product has been supplying industrial heavy equipment, but when Gillian joined, there was intent to evolve the organisation to become a productivity partner that provides smart products and solutions for mining customers.

This demanded a strong focus on digital strategy across the entire company to drive the transition to becoming a mining technology organisation for a more sustainable future.

Gillian was placed to lead the digital future-back strategy working collaboratively with the Executive team and strategic leaders across the organisation.

Together, they baselined where they saw Weir in five to 10 years, considering everything from external market changes and internal operations through to how they can develop smart products for customers with a strong lens on the use of digital technologies, AI and data to support customers in driving optimised performance across the mine sites. And of course, Gillian then developed the data strategy that underpins this.

Success in achieving the vision and strategy lies in working collaboratively with the business stakeholders, robust ongoing



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Mining, like most industries, is becoming an incredibly data-rich, digital-technology-based environment.

tracking and management of the digital and data roadmap, and risk management through strong governance. The strategy and roadmap are

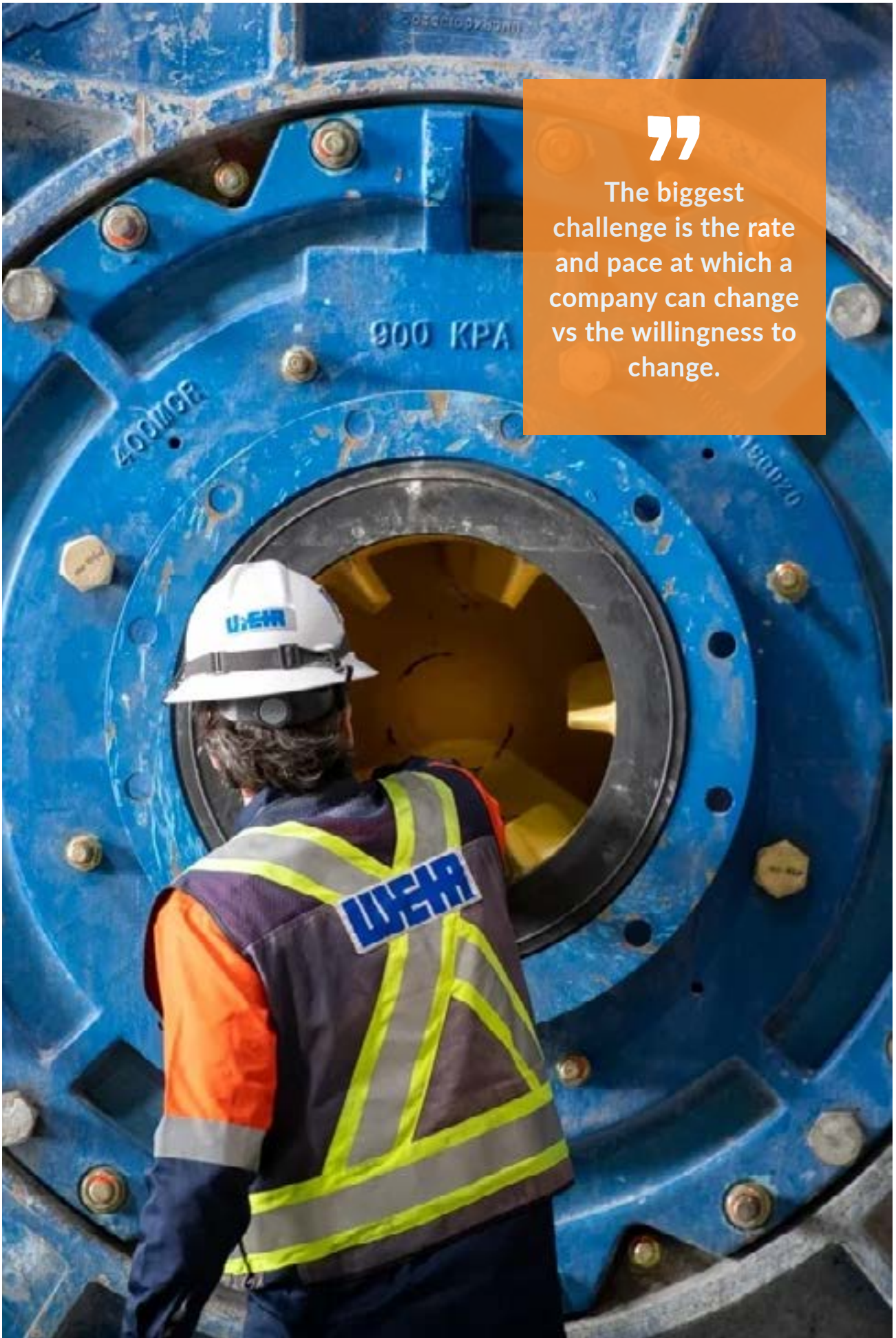
refreshed annually to maintain focus on value and value tracking, agile delivery, enabling the appropriate cloud based digital and data architecture , and the platforms and products to enable the organisation from an enterprise perspective – including the digital experience platform, integration and automation platform and products, common data platform, analytics toolkit and AI solutions.

» SUCCESSES SO FAR

Through a strong digital and data enterprise strategy, robust governance and roadmap management, collaboration and capability delivery has helped Weir to deliver smart products to customers by enabling sensors across product ranges to provide real-time streaming of key data that provides highly

valuable insight on the performance of that product. And they’ve also taken it a step further. They’ve enhanced their strategy to understand more about the data around the operational process that the product operates within, so Weir can support their customers with their biggest sustainability challenges, such as how to use less energy, use water wisely and create less waste, in line with ESG commitments.

Weir continues to accelerate its strategy for sustainable digital mining to support customers who want ‘digital everything, everywhere, all at once’. And continues to build and strengthen its capability through acquisitions, including Motion Metrics (AI and vision technologies to improve mine safety and energy efficiency) and SentianAI (AI solutions that optimise performance in minerals processing). At the end of February, Weir announced it has agreed to acquire Micromine (intuitive mission-critical digital solutions across the upstream mining value chain from exploration through mine design and planning, operational scheduling and mining operations in hard ore, soft ore and underground applications) – providing advanced integrated digital and technology solutions.



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The biggest challenge is the rate and pace at which a company can change vs the willingness to change.

» ACCELERATING WEIR'S STRATEGY FOR SUSTAINABLE DIGITAL MINING

Gillian expands on this, "Mining, like most industries, is becoming an incredibly data-rich, digital-technology-based environment and the performance of your products need to reflect that, so they need to be smart."

This transformation from vendor to productivity partner has involved not only determining and building the digital architecture but also delivering change management and a culture shift.

"We've established agile ways of working to enable time to deliver the digital agenda, the platforms and the products in the right way," Gillian shares.

This cultural shift is ongoing with a view to augment individual's expertise through the use of data, AI and digital technologies. Gillian reassures, "It's not about removing jobs, it's about enhancing roles."

More on this soon but first let's talk about the realities of transformation at such a scale.

» THE CHALLENGE OF CHANGE

With any transformation comes challenges – some foreseen and others resulting from a rapidly changing business and digital environment.

Gillian shared, "The biggest challenge is the rate and pace at which a company can change vs the willingness to change, it's a balance as servicing our customers and ensuring operational stability is critical whilst driving the enablement of platform and products and the change needed to tech, data and process architecture to support future ambitions"

Of course, one of these changes is harnessing the power of data and AI.

» DRIVING INNOVATION WITH AI

With a keen eye for what's ahead, the company's AI agenda has seen Weir not only drive the enablement of AI internally but purchase two AI organisations over the last three years – meaning Weir offers digital/AI solutions alongside their core industrial equipment all of which support the optimisation of a mine's performance.

The team also recognised early that generative AI was a solution they wanted to enable within their organisation. Weir's business leaders identified where value could be unlocked by generative AI, and what the use cases would look like across the various domains from marketing to manufacturing and beyond before developing a return on investment model.

In 2024, they rolled out an enterprise version of Microsoft Copilot across the organisation and blocked other AI applications to create tighter security. The benefits so far? "Huge benefits from productivity gains in knowledge management. And 365 is really interesting because we could develop strategies based on documents that we've created over a number of years."

Focusing slightly further ahead, Gillian is looking at the possibilities of generative AI to address health and safety and help drive down total incident rate – an industry standard indicator that measures lost time and medical treatment injuries per 200,000 hours worked..

The team also has a strong focus on driving Hyper automation (Intelligent automation) across the business through the combined and mindful use of automation software, AI including ML, AI, gen AI, ,UX, Process mining, automated workflows, low code software and integration software, etc.

Gillian explains that from ever-changing regulations to ensuring data quality for digital and AI propositions, working to put the right control framework in place and defining what their architecture needs to look like to embrace generative AI has been and remains a big focus.



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» A STRONG FRAMEWORK FOR GOVERNANCE

Of course, governance and risk management are critical components of any digital transformation, so how are Gillian and the wider team working to ensure security, compliance, and ethical AI adoption?

Gillian explains that the strategy they baselined at the beginning gave rise to more robust digital risk management aligned to the strategy. The team track digital risk appetite and KRIs monthly supported by robust regulatory management governance.

Gillian is focused on continually upskilling herself and mentions she has studied for and obtained a certification in ethical AI last year. This is something that sits under her remit and she's also recently hired a Head of Data & AI to support her in working with business stakeholders to enable global compliance.

The challenge now? "We've got really tight governance around AI. Like other organisations we recognise the need to strike the balance to enable innovation in our business while ensuring we're compliant with changing global AI regulations, adopting a balanced risk approach."

» MINING MORE METALS FOR THE FUTURE

Innovation is going to be key in an industry that needs to increase production, fast, and more sustainably.

Gillian builds on this,

The mining and metals industry is embracing ESG-driven business models, which include adopting big data, supply chain automation and AI. Long-term mining projects are focused on the impact on local climate and communities, balancing financial objectives with societal value.

With this in mind, Weir is focussed on developing technology solutions for a sustainable future. Gillian shares, digital

technology, data and AI play a key role in this space. Having transparency and real time data and insights of operations and products' ESG status is critical to meeting objectives.

"In addition, we have been working with key mining customers to mature the use of our digital/AI solutions so that it's not only useful to drive performance of mining equipment and operations, but it can also be used to generate key actions to achieve ESG objectives."

» INTELLIGENT PLATFORM INTEGRATION

Gillian also has responsibility for enterprise digital platforms including the digital experience platform, DLS, cloud data and AI platform, data integration platform, digital apps and automation platform and products. We wanted to understand the strategies she has implemented to ensure seamless integration and adoption across business units.

We have adopted a best practice approach recognising that developing and migrating to a cloud based digital architecture that includes the critical applications, digital and data platforms and products is essential to enable the digital and data ecosystem to meet business objectives "

Gillian points out at a detailed level, "We recognised the need to remove point-to-point integrations between systems and replace them with reusable APIs across the business to enable data interoperability, eliminate duplication and support enabling our target information architecture and single source of truth.

"This has been very successful in reducing our legacy reliance on data flowing between point-to-point systems and also in supporting our digital strategy, because we need data that looks a different way in different forms at different times to enable the intelligent product lifecycle."

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Partners are critical to our journey. Their clients are also our clients.



» CHANGING MINDSETS

With so much change happening, fostering a digital first mindset has been key for the business. A crucial part of this has been a top-down definitive drive.

Gillian points out, "It can be a challenge, but you must drive the change management. I think having communities of practice are important. We have these set up for agile ways of working, data analytics, AI and more – we've got quite an extensive range.

"I think those are critical to educating areas across the business on our literally new ways of working, the application of new standards, protocols and solutions. They've been invaluable, and they still prove to be invaluable."

She notes that many of Weir's people are interested in new tech and want to be part of the change. And while people are experts in their role, the company has also run a digital fitness programme to help increase data literacy and support employees to gain a deeper understanding of the digital propositions the company now offers. This is also helping those in client-facing roles to support customers with getting the correct technology for their needs.

» PUTTING A TEAM AND PARTNERS IN PLACE

To this existing team of motivated individuals and leaders, Gillian has also built out her own team with new hires, including through bringing in former coworkers from other sectors she's previously worked in.

For Gillian, what's important is not necessarily their background in terms of sector, but their expertise in understanding digital and data solutions and how to drive them out across organisations. And the characteristics she considers crucial within the team are people who are change agents and who have a thirst for knowledge.

But at a time when there's a shortage of talent globally, selecting the right partners has also been crucial as an add-on to both the knowledge within the business and capacity it has. Gillian explains, "We have domain expertise internally, and we've got very strong bases – such as Bengaluru in India – which we've been building out.

"But we also flex with a small number of partners globally that bring digital data skills to the table which augment our existing teams with burst capacity resource."

These partners are not just supporting the

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We've established a number of community practices, which we are scaling out across our business.

team but are also providing new business opportunities. Gillian states, "Partners are critical to our journey. Their clients are also our clients, so it's not just a vendor relationship, but rather there could potentially be go-to-market opportunities as well."

» THE NEXT PHASE

Clearly, the digital and data transformation journey is well underway. We wondered what steps are next for Weir? Gillian fills us in on the three key areas of future focus.

"We've established a number of community practices, which we are scaling out across our business. Driving digital and data fitness is a strong focus to ensure our workforce are equipped and empowered to further support our customers as we enhance our digital product offerings.

Scaling our cloud platform and products whilst maintaining an eye on emerging technologies is key.

Hyper automation is another area of focus for Weir and, in their case, enabling the automation of business and IT products through maximising the value of the application of digital and data solutions such as UX, RPA, automated workflow software, digital apps, machine learning, integration platform services, AI including generative AI and more. This approach supports the development of smart factories, for example. Gillian also adds, "The other very interesting area is the roadmap for AI, quantum computing and quantum AI. The ability for that to solve really big, complex problems in the mining industry is an area to watch."

» A LAST THOUGHT

When we asked Gillian for one last thought to leave our readers with, she remarks on the disruption in the market, changing business models and the information highways opening up.

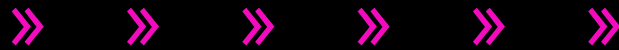
"If you look at the new ERP systems they're completely different propositions to what have come before – these are cloud-based data AI solutions.

"So, I think the landscape in terms of data and analytics, digital practitioners, people resource, how you partner, is fundamentally changing. It's going to be very interesting to see how these roles morph, because I think there's a lot more lens on innovation."



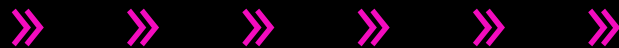
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The other very interesting area is the roadmap for AI, quantum computing and quantum AI.



news

Latest Industry
News in Technology,
Supply Chain &
Manufacturing



1

Levi's Uses AI to Navigate Tariff Challenges

Levi Strauss & Co. is leveraging artificial intelligence to mitigate the impact of a new 10% tariff on Chinese-made goods. The fashion giant is utilising AI-powered predictive analytics and inventory optimisation tools to simulate financial impacts, adjust forecasts, and streamline sourcing decisions. This strategic shift is part of a broader industry trend to enhance supply chain resilience amid trade uncertainties.

2

Apple and Dell Accelerate "Anything But China" Strategy

Apple and Dell are intensifying efforts to shift manufacturing operations away from China in response to ongoing US-China trade tensions. Apple has increased production in India and Vietnam, while Dell has expanded partnerships with suppliers in Mexico and Malaysia. The move aims to diversify supply chains and minimise geopolitical risks.

3

UK Invests £11.5 Million in Semiconductor Manufacturing

The UK government has announced an £11.5 million investment in semiconductor research and production, with support for companies like Pragmatic Semiconductor and IQE. The funding aims to boost the UK's position in the global chip market and enhance supply chain resilience amid rising demand for advanced electronics.

4

GE Aerospace Pours \$650 Million into US Facilities

GE Aerospace has committed over \$650 million to expand its US manufacturing operations, strengthening its supply chain to meet growing demand from both commercial and defence sectors. The investment will enhance production capabilities in locations such as North Carolina and Ohio, ensuring a steady supply of critical aerospace components.

5

GME Expands Workforce to Meet Demand for Australian-Made Radios

GME, Australia's leading manufacturer of two-way radios, has significantly increased its workforce in response to a surge in demand for domestically produced communication devices. The expansion aligns with the Australian government's "Future Made in Australia" initiative, supporting local manufacturing growth.

6

Sumitomo Electric Invests £2 Billion in Scottish Subsea Cable Factory

Japanese conglomerate Sumitomo Electric has announced a £2 billion investment to build a subsea cable manufacturing facility in North Ayrshire, Scotland. The project will play a key role in expanding the UK's renewable energy infrastructure and is expected to create approximately 900 long-term jobs.

7

Hemlock Semiconductor Secures \$325 Million for US Expansion

Hemlock Semiconductor has received a \$325 million grant from the US Department of Commerce to expand its high-purity polysilicon production. The investment supports the Biden administration's push to strengthen the domestic semiconductor supply chain and reduce reliance on foreign chip manufacturers.

8

Hanwha Qcells Invests Nearly \$2 Billion in US Solar Manufacturing

South Korean solar giant Hanwha Qcells has announced a nearly \$2 billion investment to establish a solar panel manufacturing plant in Georgia, USA. The move is part of a broader effort to expand US-based clean energy production, though concerns have been raised about the company's supply chain links to regions associated with forced labour.

INTERVIEW » » » » » »

CYBERSECURITY IN FINANCIAL SERVICES.

Nisha Patel,
CISO at Ocorian

1 > TELL US ABOUT YOURSELF <

Please share a bit about your professional journey, your current role as CISO at Ocorian, and what inspired you to focus on cybersecurity in financial services.

I am currently the Chief Information Security Officer (CISO) at Ocorian, where I oversee the cybersecurity strategy, risk management, and overall security posture of the organisation. Ocorian is a global provider of fiduciary and administration services and safeguarding sensitive data and maintaining trust are central to our operations.

My professional journey in cybersecurity began with a strong foundation in Technology, specifically Infrastructure. Over the years, I've accumulated experience across various sectors, including Government, Transport, Finance, and Entertainment, which gave me a comprehensive understanding of how different industries approach security. This cross-sector exposure helped me develop a holistic view of cyber risk, which I now apply in my current role.

I was drawn to cybersecurity in the financial services sector because of the unique challenges and high stakes involved. Financial institutions, like Ocorian, handle vast amounts of sensitive data, which makes them prime targets for cyber threats. I was inspired by the opportunity to contribute to protecting such critical assets and ensuring that businesses can operate securely, even in the face of evolving cyber threats. The dynamic nature of the cybersecurity landscape, coupled with the need for proactive defence strategies, has kept me passionate about this field.

Working in cybersecurity within financial services presents distinct challenges, from regulatory compliance to the complexity of protecting financial transactions and client information. I'm committed to helping Ocorian navigate these complexities by fostering a strong security culture, implementing cutting-edge security technologies, and ensuring that cybersecurity is deeply integrated into the organisation's strategic goals.

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2. THE ROLE OF AI IN CYBERSECURITY

How is AI transforming cybersecurity in the financial services sector, and what are its key benefits and challenges from a leadership perspective?

AI is having a significant impact on cybersecurity in the financial services sector, and I believe it's really reshaping how we approach both threats and risk management. From my experience, AI offers several key benefits but also presents unique challenges, especially when viewed from a leadership perspective.

Firstly, one of the major benefits of AI is enhanced threat detection and response. In financial services, we handle vast amounts of sensitive data, and AI-powered tools can analyse this data at scale to spot anomalies or patterns that could signal a potential cyber threat. This is especially important with increasingly sophisticated cyberattacks, such as advanced persistent threats or zero-day exploits, that are harder for traditional systems to detect. AI helps us identify these threats much earlier in the process.

AI also enables automation, which is a game-changer for efficiency. Many routine security tasks—like log analysis or vulnerability scanning—can now be automated using AI, freeing up our security teams to focus on more strategic priorities. This not only makes threat detection faster but also allows for quicker incident response, which is critical in minimising the damage caused by an attack.

Another key benefit is predictive risk management. By analysing historical data, AI can help identify potential vulnerabilities or risks before they're exploited, allowing us to take a more proactive stance in managing security. This is a huge advantage in the fast-paced financial world, where preventing a breach can be far more cost-effective than dealing with its consequences.

However, the introduction of AI also comes with its challenges, especially from a leadership standpoint. One of the first challenges we face is the complexity of integrating AI into existing cybersecurity systems. Many financial institutions have legacy systems in place, and

integrating AI tools with those systems can be a major hurdle. The implementation process can be disruptive, time-consuming, and costly, and leaders need to ensure they have the right resources and expertise to manage the transition.

There's also the challenge of data privacy. Financial services are highly regulated, and AI requires access to large datasets to function effectively. As a leader, ensuring that AI systems comply with data protection regulations like GDPR and other local laws is critical. We need to make sure that AI systems are secure and that sensitive customer information isn't inadvertently exposed or mishandled.

From a talent perspective, there's also a skills shortage. The demand for professionals with both cybersecurity and AI expertise is high, and it can be difficult to find the right talent to manage and oversee AI-powered security tools. As a leader, this will mean investing in continuous education and training to ensure that our teams are prepared to handle the complexities of AI.

Finally, as AI plays a larger role in cybersecurity, there's the potential risk of adversarial attacks on the AI systems themselves. Cybercriminals can attempt to manipulate AI models, which can have serious consequences. Leaders need to ensure that AI-driven systems are resilient and robust enough to withstand such attacks. We need to balance the immense potential of AI with the risks, ensuring that we deploy these technologies responsibly, with a clear focus on data security, ethical considerations, and continuous learning.

3. SECURING TRUST IN FINANCIAL SERVICES

Trust is critical in financial services. How do you approach building and maintaining client trust in an era of increasing cyber threats?

Building and maintaining client trust in financial services is more challenging than ever, especially with the ever-evolving cyber threats. As a CISO, I see trust as the foundation of everything we do. In this era

» "I FIRMLY
BELIEVE
IN THE
SYMBIOTIC
RELATIONSHIP
BETWEEN
DATA & AI"

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elif operation == "MIRROR_Y":  
    mirror_mod.use_x = False  
    mirror_mod.use_y = True  
    mirror_mod.use_z = False  
elif operation == "MIRROR_Z":  
    mirror_mod.use_x = False  
    mirror_mod.use_y = False  
    mirror_mod.use_z = True  
  
#selection at the end -add back the deselected mirror modifier object  
mirror_ob.select= 1  
modifier_ob.select=1  
bpy.context.scene.objects.active = modifier_ob  
print("Selected" + str(modifier_ob)) # modifier ob is the active ob  
#mirror_ob.select = 0  
done = bpy.context.selected_objects[0]  
#any data -right click -> name, select = 1
```



of increasing cyber threats, it's essential that we not only focus on securing systems but also on communicating transparently and effectively with our clients.

One of the first things I always emphasise is a proactive, transparent approach to cybersecurity. Clients need to know that their sensitive data is being actively protected. This means implementing robust security measures, but also sharing those measures with our clients so they feel confident in the steps we're taking. Regular communication about the security tools we use, how we're monitoring threats, and our ongoing efforts to stay ahead of emerging risks builds that sense of security. It's not just about having security in place; it's about making sure our clients feel that we are genuinely invested in their safety. I am often invited to Client Boards to give updates, and I feel this is my opportunity to share how Ocorian is safeguarding the Client's data and drive discussion around what the Client expects.

Another key aspect is adherence to regulatory standards and compliance. In the financial services sector, clients trust us with their most sensitive information, and there are strict regulatory frameworks—such as GDPR and others—that govern how we manage that data. By not only meeting but exceeding regulatory requirements, we demonstrate our commitment to data security and client privacy. Clients need to know that their financial and personal data is in the hands of professionals who take privacy seriously.

4. CYBERSECURITY IN A DATA-DRIVEN WORLD

Data is at the heart of financial services. How do you balance leveraging data for innovation while ensuring it remains secure?

Balancing the need to leverage data for innovation with the imperative to ensure its security is one of the most critical challenges we face in financial services today. At Ocorian, we recognise that data is a powerful tool for driving innovation, but it also requires robust protection.

We are currently maturing our data governance framework to ensure that we are both innovating with data and maintaining the highest security standards. This framework is being designed to provide clear policies and processes around how data is collected, stored, accessed, and shared. By continuously refining and strengthening our

governance practices, we ensure that as we push the boundaries of data innovation, we do so in a way that protects our clients and adheres to industry best practices.

One of the fundamental components of this framework is data encryption and access controls. As part of our evolving governance, we continue to invest in strong encryption techniques to protect data both at rest and in transit. These encryption measures, combined with strict access controls, ensure that sensitive financial data is safeguarded while allowing for its secure use in innovation initiatives.

As we mature our data governance, we also focus on ethical data usage. For example, while data analytics and machine learning drive innovation, we ensure that the data used is anonymised or pseudonymised to protect personal information. This enables us to gain valuable insights and develop new solutions without compromising privacy. Additionally, we work closely with our teams to reinforce responsible data practices, ensuring that innovation occurs within clearly defined boundaries.

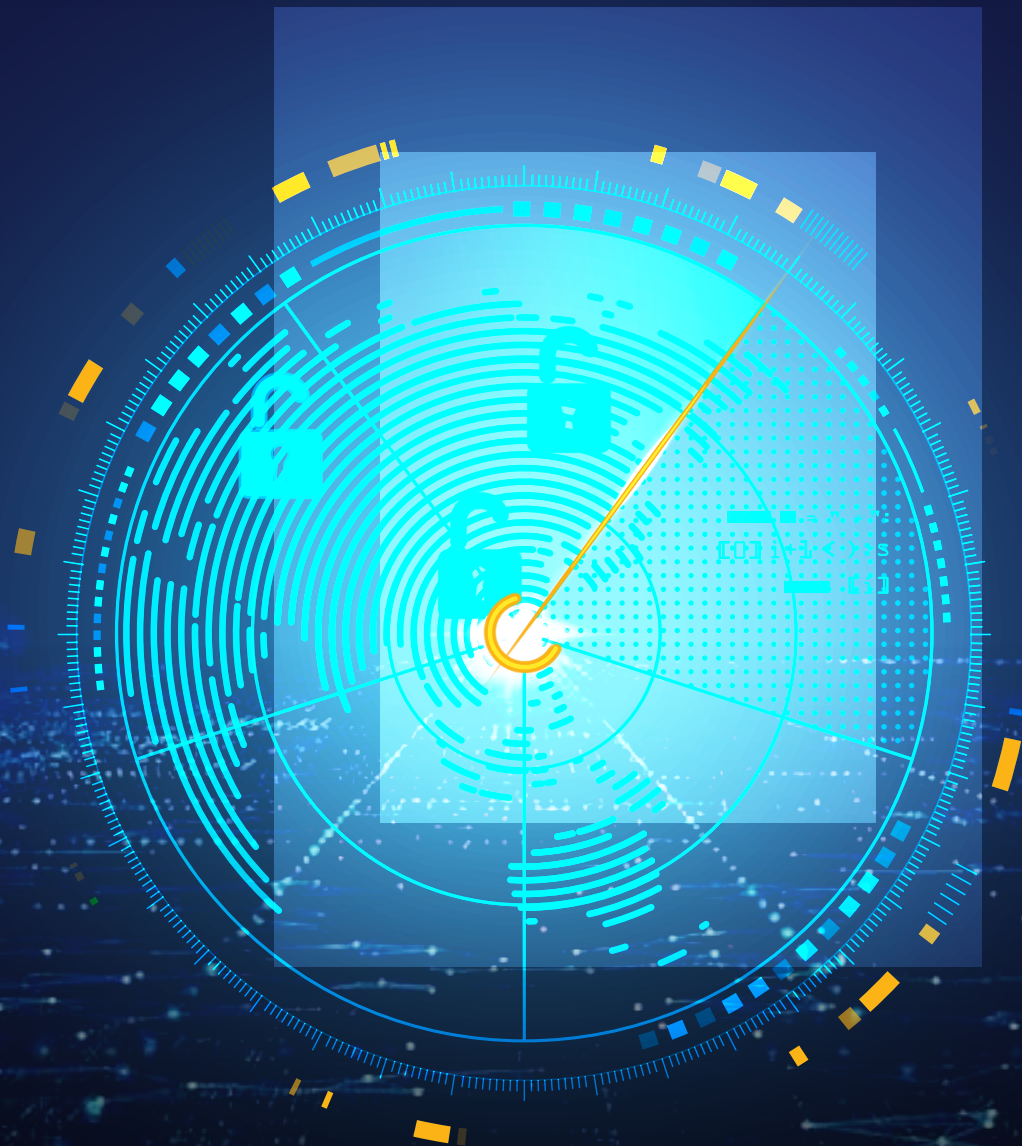
We also recognise the importance of continuous risk assessments and monitoring as part of our evolving data governance. By tracking data access and usage across the organisation, we can quickly identify and address any potential vulnerabilities before they pose a significant risk. This continuous oversight helps us remain agile and proactive in managing data security.

When it comes to third-party partnerships, we are careful to ensure that any external providers we work with align with our maturing data governance framework. Through thorough due diligence, including security audits, we confirm that their security practices meet our high standards before we integrate their services into our operations.

Lastly, regulatory compliance remains at the heart of everything we do. As our data governance framework matures, we ensure that we remain fully compliant with industry regulations such as GDPR, CCPA, and others. This commitment to regulatory adherence is not only a legal obligation but also a cornerstone of maintaining the trust of our clients as we innovate.

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5. EMERGING CYBER THREATS

What emerging cyber threats are you most concerned about, and how do you prepare your team and organisation to mitigate these risks?

Emerging cyber threats are constantly evolving, and as a CISO, staying ahead of them is one of my top priorities. There are a few key threats I'm particularly concerned about in the financial services sector right now:

As AI technologies continue to develop, we're seeing cybercriminals using AI to launch more sophisticated, automated attacks. AI can be used to generate realistic phishing emails, create deepfakes, or even find and exploit vulnerabilities in our systems. These attacks are faster, more targeted, and harder to detect. To mitigate this, we're investing in AI-powered defence mechanisms that can identify abnormal patterns and detect attacks in real-time, as well as training our teams to recognise the signs of AI-driven threats.

Ransomware attacks have become increasingly complex, often involving double extortion, where cybercriminals not only encrypt data but also threaten to release sensitive information unless the ransom is paid. This is particularly concerning in financial services, where sensitive customer and financial data is at stake. We prepare by maintaining a strong backup and disaster recovery strategy, conducting regular tabletop exercises, and ensuring that our incident response plans are robust and can handle such complex attacks.

As businesses become more interconnected, attacks on third-party vendors or service providers are becoming more prevalent. These attacks can be devastating because they allow attackers to bypass security measures by targeting trusted partners. To address this, we've implemented strict vendor management policies, conduct regular third-party risk assessments, and ensure that all suppliers adhere to the same cybersecurity standards we uphold.

While external threats get a lot of attention, insider threats—whether malicious or inadvertent—remain a significant risk.

Financial services organisations have high-value targets, and insider threats, whether from disgruntled employees or a lack of cybersecurity awareness, can be difficult to detect. We address this by implementing strong access controls, conducting regular security awareness training, and utilising user behaviour analytics tools to detect unusual activities or signs of potential insider threats.

With the increased adoption of cloud services, the security of data stored and processed in the cloud is a growing concern. Misconfigurations, lack of visibility, and data leaks are key issues. We mitigate this risk by ensuring strong encryption practices and maintaining a clear understanding of the shared responsibility model with our cloud providers.

To prepare our team and organisation to mitigate these emerging risks, we focus on a few core strategies:

Cybersecurity is not just the responsibility of the Security team; it's everyone's responsibility. We conduct regular training programs across the organisation to ensure that everyone understands the latest threats and how they can contribute to reducing risk. This includes simulated phishing attacks, security awareness workshops, and targeted training on specific risks like ransomware and social engineering.

No single security measure can protect against all threats, which is why we implement a layered defence strategy. This includes a mix of technologies such as endpoint protection, firewalls, intrusion detection systems, encryption, and a co-managed Security Operations Centre. By having multiple layers of defence, we increase the likelihood of detecting and mitigating an attack before it can cause significant damage.

We regularly test our incident response plan with real-world simulations and tabletop exercises, ensuring that our team is prepared to act quickly and decisively in the event of a cyberattack....

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WAYNE BUTTERFIELD

PARTNER AT ISG

Talking future tech and past gamechangers with ISG's Wayne Butterfield

» **"AS A FUTURIST, IF YOU'RE NOT MAKING MISTAKES, YOU'RE NOT THINKING FAR AHEAD ENOUGH"**

WAYNE BUTTERFIELD,
PARTNER AT ISG



"I feel like my career has been based on trying to utilise technology very early on," Wayne muses when we begin to talk about emerging tech.

Wayne Butterfield has been at the leading edge of deploying a series of technologies since the start of his career in the UK at O2, now Virgin Media O2. While at the mobile network, he was among the first people to deploy at scale robotic process automation and supported O2 to become one of the largest users of online messaging as long as 15 years ago.

After a stint at BT where he replicated the successes he'd been part of at O2, he moved to his current company, ISG, eight years ago.

He first headed up AI and automation at the global AI-centred technology research and

advisory firm before moving to Texas, USA, and also onto his current role as Partner.

Now Wayne is now concentrating on contact centre transformation, the future of the service provider industry, and the impact of Agentic AI on the future of work and software.

We began by talking about how Gen AI and Intelligent Automation are reshaping the business landscape (but what companies need to be aware of) in a conversation that also covered the risks and rewards of being early to adopt new tech, the shift in outsourcing models, ways in which customer experience roles are changing and much, much more.

So, grab a coffee and settle down for a read that could help you consider how you deploy new tech – or how you don't.





WELCOME WAYNE, WE'RE DELIGHTED YOU'VE JOINED US AT DIGITAL EDGE TO SHARE YOUR EXTENSIVE EXPERTISE.

Let's kick off this conversation talking about the tech that seems to be on everyone's lips – Gen AI and Intelligent Automation. Can you share what you think are the biggest misconceptions companies have about these technologies?

I think the biggest misconception is that these technologies are going to transform work without work being transformed.

What I mean by that is we have designed work with people at the centre. We humans are the world's greatest problem-solving machines. So, to add technology or to replace us with technology is far more difficult than people may imagine.

Intelligent Automation and Gen AI are still very narrow. They can be excellent at an individual thing but, in comparison, people are brilliant at everything. So, while technology can transform work, we need to transform work so it works better with technology.

I think it's a misconception that it's going to be easy to add this technology and find a return on investment without actually putting in the groundwork. And unfortunately, all of that groundwork is really boring, involving combing through your knowledge bases, making sure that your processes have endpoints and documenting tribal knowledge.

And the other misconception is that all this is going to be quick, whereas it takes six to nine months just to get your house in order for this technology to work well in your environment.

Technology can't easily fill in the gaps that are currently seamlessly filled in by people because we have the knowledge, the skills and the experience.

Little of that is written down – and if it's not written down, AI can't learn it.

How can companies overcome the barriers to achieving human levels of accuracy with Gen AI? And make sure everything is in place for the new and emerging technology to work effectively?

You've got to make knowledge management of strategic importance, rather than a necessary evil. That means keeping your processes up to date and making sure that you've got a good knowledge base so that any and every question has an answer written down.

At the moment, there's perhaps around a 25% gap which is filled by tribal knowledge and experience. That's what we need to fix in order for Gen AI

and Intelligent Automation to get to the levels of autonomy that marketeers are selling these Gen AI based tools on.

And we can't forget the adaptation we are going to have to help our employees make to work alongside our new Agentic colleagues. Your people are key in any change, and they can certainly make or break a Gen AI deployment. I've seen it firsthand.

If all an organisation's information is available to Generative AI, what does that mean when we consider the ethical concerns or any possible business benefits of keeping some information only available to humans?

Most organisations, I would suggest, when deploying any of these technologies are thinking about it from a cost-efficiency perspective. Very rarely at an individual stakeholder level are they thinking too much about IP, especially because the vast majority of the deployments these organisations will make are going to be in walled off secure environment.

And while people think the vast majority of their data is proprietary, the reality is there's often very little difference between most organisations within most industries when it pertains to a lot of the data that they have, especially for questions, answers and processes.

So, until you start utilising Gen AI with personal data or utilising these technologies to make decisions that could adversely affect a person or people, then the vast majority of the moral concerns are not something I think most people will focus on.

There are some areas where we have to think a little bit differently – when using personal data and when utilising the technologies to make potentially life-altering decisions, which could be anything from approving a loan to the diagnosis of a disease. But the majority of things that these technologies have been used for so far is cookie cutter across any industry or organisation, hence why the moral & ethical concerns have so far been quite limited.

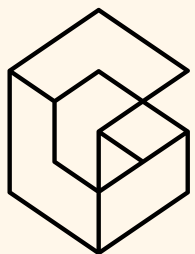
So, we know that today's technologies have tremendous potential. But what key innovations or breakthroughs have you witnessed during your career that have transformed business operations?

I think that until now, many of the Automation technology waves that I've witnessed have been what I call digital iteration (small incremental changes) versus digital transformation (wholesale changes). But perhaps those times are changing? It's been a journey for me with the internet first, then the advent of the smartphone and the

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**WAYNE BUTTERFIELD,
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App Store, which was a fundamental shift in how consumers interacted with technology, swipes vs typing.

I think the next interface that we're going to see is probably not VR or AR, the next iteration will be Agentic AI in some kind of form, utilising natural language vs our fingers.

If I think about the tech that is truly here and that has changed things, our ability to converse with a capability through either voice or text to get answers to questions has been transformational.



We've become more open to interacting with a non-human entity because we've been doing it for 15 years, and the cutting edge right now is ChatGPT. ChatGPT is generating responses as opposed to what we've done previously, which was hard coding in responses. So that capability over the past 15 years has gone from very basic to pretty amazing..

I also think about things like self-service and digitisation – they're not AI, but they're about our ability to do more ourselves as opposed to rely on people. We take that for granted now because it's been such a slow burn to get here, but that has been truly transformational. The point and click interface is now unrecognisable from when it first started and conversing between people and machines is becoming the norm.

Where we are now is a technology thinking through a problem and being able to take actions, propose solutions and in some future cases, do this all autonomously – This technology is becoming known as Agentic AI. It's not just a single technology, but a bunch of different technical capabilities that are used in combination to solve complex business problems.

Also, where we're going with language is absolutely amazing, including things such as the ability to smooth someone's accent. That means if I'm speaking to an offshore call centre, I can understand them significantly better, therefore, I'm more comfortable in the interaction. We are now also close now to real time translation from any language to any language,

which is fantastic, and this is just off the top of iceberg for how AI is being deployed in and around business operations, including the contact center.

Pioneering new solutions often involves taking calculated risks. You've taken bold technology decisions throughout your career. Tell us, have they always paid off?

I think most of the things that I do have a bit of risk associated with them!

In 2010 while at O2, I introduced robotic process automation with Blue Prism, replacing people doing transactional activities with technology that basically took over a desktop and was pointing & clicking to get work done.

That was embryonic in nature then and when I deployed it, I was one of the first five people in the world to do so. Now 90% of large organisations globally use that technology.

Was that a risk? Quite possibly. Did it pay off? Absolutely! Perhaps that technology is going to be replaced by Agentic AI, which is another technology that I'm deploying into production with my ISG clients really early on.

It wasn't just RPA either, Social Media, Self Service, Chat Bots and even Digital Messaging were all on my agenda at some point from 2009 onwards.

Generally, the risk is associated with adopting technology early, taking the gamble and hoping that there's an ability to prove that there's been a return on investment.

I think it's probably easier to deploy any technology than it is to get employees customers or end consumers to be accepting of change. So, I don't think the difficulty is deploying the tech, I think it's getting people to adopt it and that's why you'll see some things succeed and others fail.

Thinking about AI, the reason why businesses have found so much value in Generative AI is because consumers accepted it in their personal lives, which meant that they took it back into the business.

Consumer acceptance is critical to any big innovation. And that is why the ChatGPT moment, for example, has driven this big AI revolution. Not because ChatGPT was so transformative on its own, but because it captured the imagination of consumers in their personal lives first before they took it into their working lives.

What have you learned from taking these tech risks?

I talk about my career basically being a car crash of learnings! I made the mistakes early on so other people didn't, but I'm accepting of that.

And a lot of my clients are accepting of me being

a risk taker because of my experience. We put guardrails in place where necessary, we work with the right vendors and we recognise there is value in going early, while there's secureness in going after because others have already made all the mistakes. If you never make a mistake, you're not pushing hard enough. And as a futurist, if you're not making mistakes, then you're not thinking far ahead enough, so that how I've lived my career. It's why I continue to push boundaries and work with new technologies. It's why I have this continued interest in what's next, then what's next and, after that, what's next?

People find what I do and how I think interesting, but there are only certain types of people who want to take these risks and do something for the first time.

And now it's even more difficult because handing over autonomy to technology is a next wave of risk. Where we're moving to in the future is that these technologies are going to try and think for themselves in the main. That is a very different place to where most organisations have ever been in the past.



The risk now is that everything's moving so fast that people are having to cut corners. An enterprise can only ever move at a certain pace. People can only ever change at a certain pace. Technology is exponentially changing much quicker now than most people can adapt and than most projects can deliver, so most people are also learning at the same time because they're worried about being left behind.

Moving on to the subject of outsourcing models. You've spoken before about the fundamental shift in these. How do you see AI reshaping traditional BPO services in the coming years?

I call this BPO 4.0 because we've already been through a number of iterations, starting in the 90s with a move to more global models. BPO providers became more competent. They became specialists in industries and experts in the work that they were

doing. Confidence grew, technology exploded.

If you think about 4.0, it is truly technology plus people as opposed to people plus technology world. Right now, it's 50/50, because most software is still very narrow, but there are a few reasons why I think service providers are going to be able to take advantage of these technologies.

One is because service providers are not doing it once, they're doing it 10 times, whereas every other organisation is doing it for the first time.

Organisations generally don't want to change something major every year or every six months – the enterprise cannot move that quick. Whereas a service provider has no choice but to move quicker, especially now when a lot of its work has been removed or automated, so it needs to continue to evolve.

The 4.0 world and beyond is utilising Agentic AI and the latest technology, plus the expertise of the people. The who and what is doing work is going to change. This is going to change the type of partnership and commercial constructs that are set up and worked between both the end client and the service provider, and as a result of that, we're going to have to change the way that we contract and govern.

There needs to be a different commercial construct. No longer should fee per hour be the key commercial driver for a successful partnership, it should be outcome focused or output focused. The BPO industry has struggled at times with a mess for less opinion for some 20 years, whereas now they really are on the cutting edge of technology and more strategic partnership is needed, and should be grabbed by both hands by the enterprise. I personally would be really surprised if the way we do work has not significantly altered within the next decade, and I'm not sure that most in house Teams are set up in a way that would enable them to change as quick as the service provider community can, so it's going to be a really interesting next few years

We saw that you partnered with Foundever, the global CX BPO service provider, to discuss in a whitepaper one of the ways in which customer experience roles are changing as a result of new and emerging technologies.

What are some of the most exciting applications of AI technologies that you've looked at?

I speak with Foundever and other service providers about this on a regular basis. The advancement that organisations like Foundever are making is the reason why I believe the BPO industry has a 4.0, 4.5 and a 5.0 future ahead of it.

One of the technologies that interests me is Customer Service Co-pilots. These Gen AI agent assistant tools and copilot technologies are a prime

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example of how using tech removes the heavy lifting from a human agent, allowing them to be quicker in an interaction and also to concentrate on who they're interacting with. I love that type of tool.

The second one is AI training.

Most people have a bad impression of service providers in comparison to internal teams and I believe that's mainly because the level of support that service providers receive in comparison to internal teams is often lacking.

Utilising AI to listen to queries, understand processes and create training scenarios and documents was never possible before in such an automated fashion, but now with Foundever's capabilities and that of others, you are able to recreate almost any scenario in any channel – text or voice – and have a generated conversation with an AI whose sole purpose is to train an agent on a query type, so that agents get to live and feel that interaction. It's groundbreaking for them.



Some of the other technologies where AI is assisting is through accent smoothing, enabling a smoother conversation with offshore advisors. That is another key capability that the service providers are really taking advantage of, in order to create a much clearly line of communication with the end customer.

And lastly the future is going to be very Agentic based, and so certainly the Service providers like Genpact who are really thinking through what and how this type of technology can benefit it's clients, set the benchmark for a Tech + Human mix that's both accurate and cost effective, and also do this in a safe and regulatory compliant manor, it's going to be a game changer in how the BPO's of the future are viewed by their clients.

One of the key reasons why I think the service provider community is head and shoulders above most silo'd organisations is that they have been early adopters and are using this technology at scale. They've already learned the rules and undertaken many of the risks much sooner and cheaper than

most organisations would ever be able to do it themselves.

And it doesn't stop there. That is going to continue with new models that have new capabilities. They're now at the cutting edge of so many different technology types that I can't see a world where most organisations will keep up with innovation better than the service provider community. Organisations like Foundever, Genpact and WNS have a big advantage.

With all that you've just mentioned in mind, how are service providers such as Foundever positioned towards the demands of this new digital future and why has ISG named them a global leader?

They've appointed a Chief AI Officer who is experienced in the utilisation and deployment of AI, and I think that is a required step. You need somebody like Guillaume Laporte who's been there, done that and got the war wounds, which I have a lot of respect for. The speed of Foundever's deployment and the quality of the technologies that they've been putting in place to assist their clients shows the benefit of that, hence why they are multi award winners with my company.

I do have to pay close attention to the rest of the Service Provider market also, as that is a key part of my role at ISG now. I love the collaboration with many of the service providers, and they all have their strengths. I really appreciate the partnership with Genpact, who to many are known as the go to F&A Service Provider globally, but that's not all they do, and they are really innovating in how they commercially construct transformations, and how they are linking up entire business journeys through an enterprise to create newer ways of working and extra value for their customers, as well as WNS who are winning new client logos through their use of AI, in areas like creating new insights in their Customer 360 capability, providing customers of other service providers incremental value and building trust without having to have won huge outsourcing deals for entire departments.

Many businesses struggle with balancing human expertise with automation. How do you advise leaders on the right mix of AI and human-led operations?

I was invited to speak at a CFO Dinner recently by Genpact, where this was discussed in depth to a very Finance focused audience. It was appreciated by the people, especially those in Risk & Compliance, that my view is that people are still super important, and that event with Agentic AI on the horizon, we are still years away from a major Finance Transformation for many.

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I think the key thing here is, for the vast majority of AI deployments I've seen so far, I would call augmented intelligence. While this may mean you need less people, there are very few instances in the history of humanity where a technology has completely replaced people in such a swift manner. The really important thing is to ensure that your people are brought in on this journey. As I spoke about towards the beginning of this conversation, if 25% of the answers are inside people's heads and not written down, then you need their collaboration to get AI working as optimally as your People.



One of the audience members brought up a great point at the dinner I mentioned, In that the regulations are not keeping up as quick as technology, and so even if an AI Agent was doing a lot of the work, you'd still need a named person to be involved and responsible in case something went wrong, and someone needs to be punished on behalf of the AI

Hopefully your people are assisted by these new capabilities and they're therefore happy to be teaching the AI technology to do what they do, always with the aim that people could do different work as opposed to no work. We've generally done a good job as a society to raise the level of our people versus removing them completely from work so far, this does need to continue for sure.

Do you think it's possible for society to do this in the future to the extent that we've been able to in the past?

Yes and no. I think we as a society need to think through how people still have structure and purpose in their lives as individuals if we no longer have the structure and rigour of work.

On the compensation side, people talk about universal basic income, which feels like something we need to investigate but I do not believe that is the answer. I do see the societal impacts through many different lenses and I do not believe that we have the answers yet.

But I do believe that as much as the optimists will say, "For every historical industry that has been automated, new roles have been created," we are going to struggle to continue to create new roles come the next 10, 20 or 30 years. And that's because of the way technology is changing and both physical roles and mental roles being significantly automated simultaneously

I don't believe we have the answers yet. But we have to remember that the worst AI is ever going to be is today, and it's already becoming better every day

We've covered so much ground, but with our conversation drawing to a close, can we ask you what one piece of advice you'd give to C-suite leaders looking to future-proof their businesses with AI and automation?

The first piece of advice would be to become AI literate yourself, so you understand the capabilities before you deploy it in your organisation. To make informed decisions for your organisation about AI and automation, you do have to get a grounding in them so that you are able to make the right decisions and not expensive mistakes.

And the second piece of advice is, while people say you have to deploy these technologies otherwise you're going to get left behind, outcomes should still rule.

If you don't truly understand what your outcome and end goal is and how technology aligns to it, then you are likely going to struggle for return on investment.

Therefore, you have to think through where you're going before you think how you're going to get there.

That's the big challenge, but there are people, organisations and service providers that are doing this type of thinking for you that you can leverage to become as informed as possible before you make any particular change. Then reformulate where you're trying to get to before you figure out how you're going to get there, and do that in an iterative way on a regular basis. Question what are the mechanisms you need in order to reach towards your ambition, what do you need to change to be able to hit those individual mechanisms and then how can technology support?

It's a methodical way of moving through and ignoring the hype and being able to achieve good change for the right reasons.

And with that, we'll have to end a conversation which we'd happily have continued for another hour – or two. Instead, we'll be closely following Wayne's sharing his future thinking at a range of conferences and online. A big thanks to Wayne and ISG for sharing this expertise with us.

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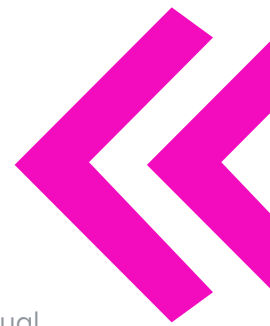
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LIVING ON THE EDGE



Q&A

AHMED HASAN

CSO & FOUNDER, OPENDATASOFT

BIO: Franck Carassus is Co-Founder and Chief Sales Officer (CSO) at Opendatasoft. In his role he drives global sales with a focus on the U.S. Since 2011, he has supported 100+ organizations in data sharing across sectors including government, utilities, and telecoms. With 20+ years of experience, Franck has led sales teams and partnerships at HP, Symantec, Novell, and Dassault Systèmes.

1. WHY IS DATA SHARING NOW SO IMPORTANT TO ORGANIZATIONS?

We live in a digital world, surrounded by increasing volumes of data. To succeed, every organization now needs to be digital, using technology to be more agile, innovative, and customer-centric. Data is the lifeblood of digital businesses, which means that harnessing data sharing and exchange at scale is central to creating value through increased collaboration,

innovation, better decision-making, and greater efficiency.

Businesses have always used data, but previously its use has been restricted to expert data analysts, who were responsible for creating specific reports and dashboards for senior management, either on a regular basis (such as quarterly sales reports), or in response to particular requests. This meant that data sharing was very much on a one-to-one basis, making



it resource-intensive and difficult to scale. Now, being able to share data through a one-to-many approach is critical - and has not yet been fully considered by many organizations at a strategic or tactical level.

Essentially, in a world where everyone's job and life revolves around information, data needs to be democratized and made available to all, whether internally within organizations, across ecosystems or with all audiences through open data.

2. DATA DEMOCRATIZATION SOUNDS LIKE AN OBVIOUS STEP, SO WHY AREN'T ALL ORGANIZATIONS DOING IT?

Providing access for everyone to the data they need is a simple concept - but can be very difficult to deliver in reality.

For a start, many organizations may not even have a record of all of their data, particularly if it is stored in different departments and multiple systems. Cataloging all of these data sources is time-consuming and involves everyone working together to break down departmental silos. And, of course, the volume and range of data is growing rapidly, with new sources and types continually being added.

Secondly, the company's technology infrastructure is often not designed for large-scale data sharing. It is designed to move data between particular systems, but doesn't enable data to flow around the wider organization easily or make it available in formats that non-specialists can easily understand and work with.

Finally, most employees are not used to working with data on a day-to-day basis, meaning they don't necessarily have the mindset to see the benefits of data democratization to their roles. They can feel that they don't have the skills to harness data or trust that the data they access is accurate or reliable, particularly if it comes from other parts of the business.

3. WHEN IT COMES TO TECHNOLOGY, COMPANIES HAVE SPENT CONSIDERABLE SUMS ON SOLUTIONS - WHY HAVEN'T THEY SOLVED THE DATA SHARING PROBLEM?

As data volumes have increased, organizations have invested heavily in a whole range of tools, such as data lakes, data catalogs and data integration and business intelligence solutions.

However, while these allow data to be managed, they don't deliver democratization, as they are simply not targeted at employees and businesses. Many tools are solely usable by experts, meaning they don't support data sharing at scale. For example, data catalogs provide an inventory of a company's data that is useful to technical administrators but difficult to understand by employees and managers. And, like an old-style library catalog, they just list the details of the data, without providing a direct link so that people can access and explore it.

What is missing is the "last mile" connectivity - a solution that puts the right data into the right people's hands so they can confidently consume it through self-service. This centralized data marketplace has to connect to all data assets across the organization and make them available in the right formats for all audiences - such as through interactive dashboards for business users and APIs for technical specialists. Without a data marketplace, seamlessly sharing data at scale is impossible.

4. HOW DO YOU HELP TO MAKE DATA CONSUMPTION EASY?

At Opendatasoft we help organizations around the world in multiple sectors to build internal data marketplaces that enable them to share their data through self-service with their employees and other

stakeholders. This means that everyone has access to the data they need, through an intuitive experience that makes the whole process simple and straightforward, while keeping the data itself secure.



Our data marketplace solution scales the use of data, and enables organizations to turn it into a valuable business asset. As part of this, our solution helps companies to industrialize the creation of standalone data products to ensure that they can be quickly built, shared across the organization, and maintained on an ongoing basis.

We've spent over 13 years working with data sharing - and before that myself and my co-founders worked on some of the first data portals in the world, so we understand both the benefits and the challenges around industrializing data sharing at scale.

5. BUILDING A DATA MARKETPLACE IS ONE STEP, BUT HOW DO YOU GET PEOPLE TO USE IT?

That's a very good point - you cannot make the mistake of simply building a data marketplace and assuming people will adopt it. The user experience is vital - if you don't make it easy to use your data marketplace then people will ignore it, meaning you get no benefits from your investment in data sharing.

Everyone today is a sophisticated technology user, and they expect the same type of fluid experience provided by e-commerce marketplaces from the online business applications that they use.

All of this means adopting the same consumer focus for your data marketplace, centered around the user and their needs. To start, the interface has to be intuitive and inviting, without requiring extensive training, and it has to be easy for users to discover data through powerful search. Data should be available in different formats, such as maps and dashboards, to make it easily consumable. And, just like an e-commerce marketplace, users should have the chance to interact with data owners, asking them questions about data assets, and leaving feedback and ratings. All of this will help build trust in data sharing and encourage people to use your data marketplace on an ongoing basis.





6. CAN AI HELP?

Absolutely, AI can help across the board by acting as a co-pilot to help people get to the data they require in a much faster way. This begins with AI-powered semantic search that understands the intent of the query, rather than looking for specific, rigid keywords, and therefore provides much more accurate results, even if queries have been misspelled or are in a different language. AI-powered search can automatically suggest other, similar data assets, broadening access for users and giving them a more comprehensive view of the data that is available.

AI also makes it easier for users to visualize data in ways that best fit their needs. For example, in our solution, you can just ask a question when on a specific dataset and receive an automatically generated visualization that displays data in an intuitive, understandable way - such as a map, figure or graph. So, rather than being served raw data, if you asked for a comparison of sales across territories, you'd be provided with a graph or map clearly showing the information in a visual, understandable way.

7. DATA CAN BE SENSITIVE OR CONFIDENTIAL - HOW DOES PROTECTING IT AND MEETING REGULATIONS FIT WITH SHARING IT THROUGH A DATA MARKETPLACE?

Protecting data is vital. However, often concerns about regulatory compliance can hold back data sharing - these can be overcome with the right technology and processes in place. Essentially, it is about ensuring two things. First, you need to anonymize data to remove any personally identifiable information to safeguard privacy and meet regulations such as the GDPR and CCPA. Then, it is about controlling access, so that no-one sees data or even specific fields that they aren't authorized to view. For example, accounts staff clearly need to be able to access the financial details of customers in order to do their jobs. Marketing teams could have access to the same data, but be blocked from viewing sensitive information that is not relevant to their work.

All of this requires robust access management and governance capabilities in your data marketplace, with administrators able to easily manage user access rights and permissions at a granular level. They need to be able to grant access to individual users or larger user groups in line with wider policies, safeguarding data and ensuring compliance.

8. YOU MENTIONED THE IMPORTANCE OF BUILDING A DATA CULTURE. HOW DO YOU ACHIEVE THAT?

A lot of people are scared when you mention data, and see it as something technical and beyond their understanding. In fact, we all happily use data in our daily lives - it's just that we don't always think of it in those terms.

So, building a data culture is an education process, breaking down any preconceptions and overcoming their concerns. This involves training to a certain extent, but the best approach is to encourage people to experiment and build their confidence by accessing and using data themselves.

Easy to use data marketplaces are a key part of this, as they make it simple for users to find reliable data, create visualizations, and see how it helps them in their jobs. For example, at the Town of Cary in North Carolina, the planning department now uses census data collected and made available via its data marketplace when creating reports and plans. Previously teams had to search for this data externally, meaning they now save time while guaranteeing accuracy. Data has a huge range of uses - one way to encourage innovation is to share examples of how people have benefited from data on your marketplace to drive new ideas.

9. WHAT SORT OF BENEFITS DO DATA MARKETPLACES DELIVER?

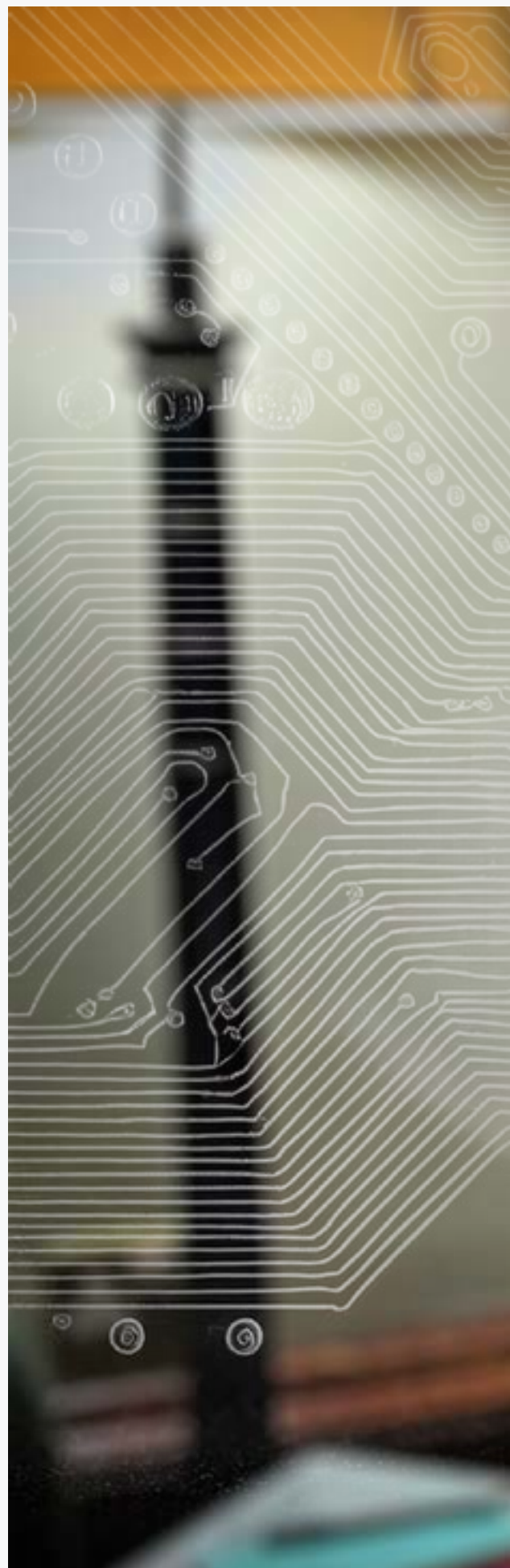
Data marketplaces turn data into business value by providing seamless access to information for all. In our experience this ROI breaks down into five areas:

- **Better decision-making:** Greater access to reliable, up-to-date information and insights delivers more informed, accurate decisions, at a tactical and strategic level.
- **Greater efficiency:** Having access to a centralized source of data helps to automate processes and removes the need for employees to manually look for and check data - or request it from data analysts. This increases efficiency and lets employees focus on their core roles.
- **Innovation and new services:** The availability of data is a spur to innovation and collaboration. Employees can use it to work in new ways and to create services that can be provided or sold to clients. For example, Internet of Things (IoT) sensor company Birdz by Veolia has used its data marketplace to automate the creation of new personalized monitoring dashboards for its clients.
- **Cost reduction:** In large organizations where data is not managed centrally there can be significant overlap between business units collecting similar data or buying the same datasets from external providers. Having a central source of truth reduces costs associated with creating or buying duplicate data.

10. GIVEN HOW MUCH DATA ORGANIZATIONS HAVE, CREATING A DATA MARKETPLACE MUST BE A TIME-CONSUMING PROCESS. HOW LONG DOES IT TAKE?

The good news is that by working with an experienced partner a data marketplace can be set up in a matter of weeks or months. Much of this time should be focused on understanding user needs and creating an intuitive experience that delivers an easy to use portal.

In terms of data, clearly adding every data asset you own to your data marketplace immediately is impossible. So start with those high value datasets that will be used most for specific use cases and will generate quick ROI. Often, this data is already being shared on a peer-to-peer basis, so requires less work to prepare and validate, and will drive usage and acceptance of your data marketplace. Build on this, and create a pipeline of new data to add to the marketplace, based on user requests and business needs, so that it grows over time. Adding data and visualizations is an ongoing journey, but the critical point is to get started and begin the process of transforming your data into value.





MARCEL KLEIN, CHIEF TECHNOLOGY OFFICER, AYVENS SHARES HIS STORY OF LEADING SIGNIFICANT CHANGE



MARCEL KLEIN

CHIEF TECHNOLOGY OFFICER, AYVENS

LEADING TECH TRANSFORMATION ACROSS TERRITORIES



Marcel Klein's passion for IT is clear. His career started with a 10-year stint at Lidl, which saw him rise through the ranks from IT support to his first leadership role, and he's since brought his extensive expertise and leadership experience to Café Nero, Amazon Retail, AWS and latterly LeasePlan, now Ayvens which is part of the Société Generale Group.

From defining the technology roadmap and the team's operating model to running three significant programmes concurrently, Marcel shares the standout moments of his time at Ayvens so far.

» STEPPING UP TO CTO

Marcel joined LeasePlan in 2020 during the first COVID-19 lockdown, a year that will stand out in many tech leaders' minds as a time when teams needed to pull together to deliver the ability to remote work, quickly.

He brought with him a wealth of experience and came direct from AWS, where he was a global launch manager for new regions. That role saw him directing programmes end-to-end for launching new data centres – from finding sites and getting permits through to working with architects and engineers to build the data centre and network and services teams to getting it up and running. A big success during Marcel's time there was launching AWS Sweden after just a 24-month programme.

Prior to AWS, Marcel was delivering sort centres and non-robotics warehouses for Amazon Retail across the globe, sometimes running 55 projects concurrently across different time zones.


At LeasePlan, he first stepped into the role of Head of Hosting and Network, which included end user computing, networks, cloud hosting and security. After LeasePlan was acquired by ALD Automotive, a subsidiary of the French Société Generale Group group, the combined company name was launched as Ayvens shortly after Marcel was named CTO in September 2023.

» HELPING 10,000 PEOPLE TO WORK FROM HOME

Marcel shares that starting a new role during a lockdown came with its challenges, but needing to deliver significant change, fast, gave him great focus.

He continues, "Lockdown was a testing time for everybody mentally, but also from a technical perspective it was testing because we weren't really built to work from home."

"At that time at LeasePlan, most people had desk phones and desktop computers and we were doing everything by email rather than Teams or similar. So, the first couple of months were hectic while getting everybody ready to work from home."

A close-up portrait of a man with a full, dark beard and mustache, looking directly at the camera. He is wearing a light-colored, patterned button-down shirt. The background is a solid, dark blue color.

**"LOCKDOWN WAS
A TESTING TIME
FOR EVERYBODY
MENTALLY...
BECAUSE WE
WEREN'T REALLY
BUILT TO WORK
FROM HOME."**

Backbone for digital society



For the team, that meant buying laptops and getting them set up with the necessary security, plus installing Teams over a weekend for 10,000 people.

Marcel remembers, “Getting a company that wasn't able to work from home, ready to work from home was quite a challenge, but also at that time, the digital leadership had secured significant investment for a full reinstall of all infrastructure and to build the next gen. applications for leasing.”

This meant the team were handling network, end-user computing and cloud projects in the same period.

» A TIME OF BIG CHANGE

Marcel recalls, “There was a startup vibe going on in terms of building fast and failing fast. We were seeing what the new landscape of an application looks like and building it all in the cloud. And we had to get ready from an infrastructure perspective for that at the same time.”

A further consideration was that LeasePlan had a banking license and had been governed by the central bank of the Netherlands, DNB, but they'd just reached a valuation threshold of over a billion Euros, so they were now to be governed by the European Central Bank (ECB). This meant everything the team was building had to be ECB compliant, demanding a next level of scrutiny and standards.



Marcel shares what the team was working on at this time, “We were rebuilding the whole infrastructure and rolling out laptops to 10,000 people, but we wanted to make sure that it was future-proof. If a laptop broke, we didn't want somebody to have to come into the office to have it replaced. We wanted it to be fairly intuitive while also being secure, so we could send out laptops and people could set these up themselves.”

Marcel continues, “We figured out an operating model around this in terms of how that would work. We were very federated within the countries in terms of IT, but we took that in centrally to within the core infrastructure team.

“We did the same for the networking side. We had very old MPLS networks, which were point-to-point networks between the open data centre and the offices. We put in a modern SD WAN that we could flex up and flex down bandwidth as people were using Teams more.”

But that wasn't all. They also decided to build a network intelligence platform around this to enable automation and be able to patch quicker due to the increased security risk of people working from home creating a need for extra security layers.

Marcel explains, “We also knew that the applications team were looking to go onto the cloud. To be able to move fast, we then decided to build a cloud landing zone based on AWS.”

That was brand new for LeasePlan, so they built up a cloud team within infrastructure and started building a landing zone that the applications teams could build on quickly – again to ECB standards and security.

Marcel notes, “We built it to be very cutting edge. AWS did an audit on us not long ago, obviously that's not independently verified, but according to that we were in the top 5% of companies who were using AWS to its max.”

» BUILDING A TEAM TO BUILD THE PROGRAMMES

While previously a lot of infrastructure had been outsourced, the decision was made to insource and scale up the internal team. Marcel explains, “When I joined, there was me and six permanent people. Now there's me and 180 people who are distributed across four locations from Dublin to Amsterdam and Bucharest, plus a small group in the UK.”

It was an exciting time in terms of what they were achieving together. Marcel shares, “Everybody was working towards this common cool goal of reinstalling the infrastructure. Productivity in the team was sky high because everybody was enjoying working on new tech and interesting projects alongside their BAU.

“We were doing a lot of cutting-edge stuff, so that really motivated people and they went the extra mile.”

» HITTING BARRIERS DURING TRANSFORMATION

Legacy systems can cause challenges during digital transformations, but some things thankfully were relatively simple, including networking end user computing: “It was easy because we just moved to the next layer – from desktops to laptops, from MPLS from point to point to SD Wan. We replaced the legacy items.”

Where things become a little more difficult was the servers while building up the cloud.

Marcel explains, “Moving workloads from data centre to the cloud is usually relatively easy, but while our servers are a recent model, the application which runs on them has origins from 40 years ago from a coding perspective.

“Of course, the technology works perfectly well for what we do but, because of the code, we went down the path of emulating it on the cloud in AWS.

“We did this with a few PLCs, but the emulators weren't quite at the level that they needed to be. So now, the leasing platform remains the same while the boxes infrastructure is newer. The leasing software will be replaced with the new applications that we're building in the cloud, so we will migrate to that in time.”

» FOLLOWING THE ROAD MAP

All of these projects fit the roadmap that Marcel begun developing in his first role within LeasePlan.

Security has always been a key part of the roadmap because of the need to conform to ECB standards – and this became even more important when the company needed to have the flexibility to be able to work from anywhere.

But there were also three other segments within this roadmap. Marcel explains, “We decided to work on network, end-user computing and moving to cloud programmes at the same time, so you have to cook the interdependency between them all – they work best together, but they can also all work independently.”

Because the network would be the quickest project to roll out, that's what they did first, connecting 120 offices to the same backbone. We wanted to know how simple that actually was?

Marcel shares, “While it's not simple, it's relatively simple. You only have 120 locations that you need to consider, and you can build that backbone fairly quickly once you pick the right partner.

“In comparison, rolling out laptops to 10,000 users across 29 countries was not as straightforward, especially while some of them were still in COVID lockdown. Plus, sometimes a country has an application installed in a completely different way to the country beside it.”

Marcel names modularity, flexibility, agility as key components, “The idea was to cut out complications. We had good partners that helped us with all those things. Our partners helped us learn how to ‘fish’ as opposed to ‘fishing’ for us, as we wanted to run the platform ourselves.”

» A FOCUS ON SECURITY

As Marcel mentioned earlier, security and compliance became even more critical with a distributed workforce.

While the ECB guidelines clearly state what is necessary, Marcel and the team dedicated time to translating that end point into actionable steps for the business.



He covers what this means, “For example, their guidelines say you have to have encryption, but they don't state what level of encryption or where. Together with our security team and security specialists, we looked at each requirement and then worked out what that meant for each of the three programmes we wanted to work on.

“So, for the laptop programme, it means we're going to have encryption on the device and multi factor authentication to log into the device and so on. For the network programme, it meant having encryption throughout. And for the cloud programme, we decided it wouldn't just be a UI, it would be coded.”





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“We decided people won’t be able to deploy onto the cloud if they don’t fulfil certain security parameters in terms of being part of a backup, the patching process, encrypting data and so on.

“So, while we’re now developing that platform, we’re putting effort into what does security look like for us to make sure that we’re secure when its deployed, as opposed to having to do remediation.”

“We don’t want to have a big team of compliance and governance people that have to check if each country is compliant and try to help them remediate it. We want to put the horse before the cart.”

» SUPPORTING PEOPLE THROUGH CHANGE

With so much happening at once, supporting non-tech teams has been of real importance. A change and adoption team has been key to this.

Marcel tells us how the two teams are collaborating to make the transition smoother for the wider workforce, “For example, on the end user computing side of things, we were very keen to have the change and adoption team in from the start.



“During the entire development process, they would catch up on a regular basis with the laptop development teams to make sure that if the dev team had made a change, the change team’s documentation was updated at that time too.

“They also built documentation for the laptop programme to explain the reason for multi-factor authentication and so on – which is to be compliant with ECB standards.”

“The change and adoption team rightly queried everything, including what happens if a laptop breaks or if support is needed. We’d decided to set up kiosks in our offices so that people can visit them in person to get support, and we also had a central support desk.”

» CHANGING METHODOLOGY

The non-tech team aren’t the only ones actively adapting. Marcel had been used to using PMP, PMI, PRINCE2 and Waterfall project management methodologies, which were right for the necessary strict sequence of events that come with building a data centres. But because of the different type of programme at Ayvens, different methodologies were in use – they were building agile and doing scrum.

Marcel expands on this, “We implemented the agile way of working into an infrastructure team which usually would only be used for software teams, but it worked really, really well.

“We made sure that every team was part of the new way of working too, so they did their PI (Program Increment) planning of events and so on at the same time, so the interaction between the teams and the interdependencies between the teams are addressed as they’re planning their work.”

As well as running all projects in this agile way, they recognised that they could use that same approach to run BAU.

“Now we have PI planning events every couple of months, where people plan out their next three months of work, obviously leaving a little bit of space for flexibility. It’s worked really well. And we also had a scrum team embedded within all the infrastructure teams.”

» ENVISIONING AND EMBEDDING AN OPERATING MODEL

The operating model was a big focus for Marcel and the team while they were undertaking the three large projects.

They were heading towards a lot of self-service, automation and auto-remediation, “So that if a problem came up, specifically on the network side, our intelligence platform would detect any anomalies.

“Depending on the size of the anomaly it would either auto remediate it itself or isolate that network device, lock it down and raise a ticket so that the network team could look at it.”



It was important to think about what operating model would best fit their expanded team, something decided in consultation with teams in the various countries they operated across.

Communicating the operating models to end users was key here to set clear expectations of what hours they would be available for support.

Plus, they invested time in recategorising the incident severity levels. Marcel points out, “For users, a SEV1 might be not being able to log into their laptop out of normal hours, but it’s not necessarily a SEV1 for the business. While it’s annoying for the user, they can come into the office the following day or contact the team to raise a ticket for them and then we’d phone them to work on the issue.”

» LIFE AFTER ACQUISITION

Another big change during Marcel’s tenure has been the acquisition by Ayvens we mentioned earlier, which was completed in 2023. Integration is ongoing, having begun in 2024 and due to finish this year.

Marcel shares what this has meant for his role, “When I started in LeasePlan, obviously though in a different role, I was very heavily involved in all the technical decisions and the teams were already growing and maturing.

“But with the acquisition my role became more relationship led, because there are counterparts on the ALD Automotive side, so it’s important to start getting to know people, building relationships, understanding their technologies, figuring out the differences and bringing people together.”

Of course, there were technical consideration too. Marcel continues, “From when the planned acquisition of LeasePlan was announced, people wanted to be able to message between LeasePlan and ALD, which you’re not allowed to do from a legal perspective because we were single entities. That meant we had to get legal dispensations to be able to test things.

“There were also questions from our people about whether we’d use LeasePlan technology or ALD technology? We’re actually using neither of those and are opting for Softgen technology instead.”

Plus, as CTO, Marcel was part of the leadership team responsible for creating the new Ayvens culture and considering how to bring the best of both companies together.

» WORDS OF ENCOURAGEMENT

With so much experience so far in his career, we asked Marcel what advice he would give to other CTOs navigating large-scale digital transformations – especially in industries with legacy systems and regulatory constraints?

Marcel first points out, “I don't actually see them as constraints, I see them a foundational level that people are implementing for the wider good that you can embrace. I think we’re probably most creative when we have constraints, it makes you think about the problem a little bit differently and can help different teams look at the constraint from different angles and work together.”

In terms of large-scale digital transformations, he again encourages people to choose to embrace them head on, “If you get the chance to be part of digital transformation, most of the time that change is good.

“I'm very aware of how privileged I was to do so many transformations at the same time. Most companies don’t do these projects in parallel, they do them in a sequence with some slight overlaps.”

While Marcel enjoyed being part of four or five different projects at the same time and having to think about how they all work together, he recognises that's not necessarily going to be the same everybody but, the benefit is, those transformations are really interesting.

Another thing he mentions, “While we are techie nerds, don't forget the human element.

“And take the opportunity to look at the problem in a different way, because sometimes the way you've always done things isn't the way it should always be done. Be open to that challenge.”

In terms of legacy systems, he suggests, “Don't be scared of them. Try something new, like we tried to go down the emulator route with our servers for our cloud programme. Ultimately it didn't work, the emulators weren't at the right level, so we had to keep the legacy systems for another while, but we’re on that trajectory.”

Marcel explains the mindset that’s helped him see growth in his career, “I see everything that I do as a learning opportunity. Sometimes people have other opinions, and you need to learn from those. Don’t let yourself be stifled and don't always think you're right, because nobody is always right!”

Which takes us back to the point Marcel made earlier about having the opportunity to build fast and fail fast. There’s clearly more successful building than failing in Marcel’s career, and we for one can’t wait to see what he does next.





Q&A

DAX GRANT

We sat down with Dax Grant, a member of the Forbes Technology Council and influential technology leader and innovator to discuss key issues around Leadership, Culture and Change Management in driving organisational change and setting the foundations for a digital transformation.

» ENTREPRENEURIAL LEADERSHIP:

JP: As a member of the Forbes Technology Council and a leader across industries, how do you define entrepreneurial leadership in the context of driving meaningful change?

DC: Entrepreneurial leadership involves vision, adaptability and relentless execution. It requires challenging the status quo, taking calculated risks and fostering a culture of innovation. For instance, during my tenure as Global CIO at HSBC, I led significant

digital transformations that enhanced customer experiences and streamlined operations. This experience underscored the importance of anticipating change and empowering teams to deliver impactful solutions.

» VISION AND IMPACT:

JP: What core principles guide your leadership approach when balancing innovation, strategy, and long-term impact for large-scale organisations?

DG: Balancing these elements requires a thoughtful and strategic approach.

First and foremost, customer-centricity should be at the heart of any innovation. It's not enough to create something new—it must solve a real-world problem and add tangible value to the customer's experience. Companies that succeed in this area listen closely to their customers, gathering insights that shape their products and services in meaningful ways. Innovation should never be driven purely by technology or trends; it must be anchored in addressing genuine needs.

Equally important is agility and adaptability. Markets are constantly evolving, and businesses must be prepared to pivot when necessary. The most successful organisations embrace change, testing new ideas and refining them based on feedback and shifting conditions. Being too rigid in execution can lead to missed opportunities, whereas a flexible mindset allows companies to seize emerging trends and stay ahead of competitors.

Finally, sustainable growth is essential. While short-term wins are important for momentum and morale, they should always be aligned with a clear

long-term vision. Businesses that focus solely on immediate success risk losing direction, whereas those with a sustainable strategy ensure that every step forward builds toward a greater goal. Striking a balance between innovation, adaptability and longevity is the key to lasting success.

In the global and international organisations and functions that I've led, these principles help organisations pivot, grow and innovate through digitisation and super connectivity. This approach ensured that innovation was scalable and impactful across the organisation.

» BUILDING INCLUSIVE CULTURES:

JP: How can leaders effectively foster a culture of inclusion and collaboration in global organisations, especially during times of transformation?

DG: Inclusion is more than just representation—it's about fostering an environment where diverse perspectives actively shape decision-making and drive innovation. When individuals feel valued and heard, organisations benefit from richer ideas, stronger collaboration and better outcomes.

To achieve this, leaders must take deliberate steps to create an inclusive culture. One crucial aspect is establishing psychological safety, where employees feel comfortable expressing their thoughts without fear of judgement or retaliation. Encouraging open dialogue, actively listening to different viewpoints and normalising constructive feedback are key ways to build this trust. When people feel safe to contribute, they are more engaged, creative and willing to take risks that can lead to meaningful progress.

Additionally, leaders must lead with transparency, particularly during times of change. Whether implementing new policies, restructuring teams or navigating uncertainty, clear and honest communication is essential. Employees should understand not only what decisions are being made but also why they are being made. Transparency fosters trust, reduces anxiety and helps individuals feel like active participants rather than passive observers in their workplace.

Finally, true inclusion requires more than just good intentions—it must be embedded in the core of an organisation. Integrating diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) into business strategy ensures that it's not just a side initiative but a priority woven into hiring practices, leadership development, product design and customer engagement. By making DEI a foundational aspect of the business, leaders create a workplace where inclusion isn't just encouraged—it's expected and sustained.

In my leadership roles, fostering such an environment has been crucial. For example, at Visa Europe's digital business innovation unit, I inspired teams to high performance by valuing diverse perspectives and encouraging collaboration.

» EMPOWERING TEAMS:

JP: What advice would you give to leaders looking to empower their teams to think entrepreneurially and drive innovation from within?

DG: Encouraging entrepreneurial thinking within an organisation requires more than just ambition—it demands a culture of trust, ownership and empowerment. When employees are given the space to think and act like entrepreneurs, they become more engaged, innovative and motivated to drive meaningful results.



**“I'M A BIG
BELIEVER
IN USING A
STATISTIC THAT
STICKS AND
BENCHMARKS.”**



One of the most important aspects of fostering this mindset is encouraging experimentation—what can be called a “learn-faster” approach. Instead of fearing failure, organisations should embrace it as part of the learning process. Leaders can create an environment where employees feel safe to test new ideas, iterate quickly and refine their approach based on real feedback. This not only accelerates innovation but also helps teams develop resilience and adaptability in the face of challenges.

Equally crucial is providing autonomy while ensuring accountability. Entrepreneurial thinkers thrive when they have the freedom to make decisions and take ownership of their projects. Leaders should empower teams by giving them clear objectives but allowing flexibility in how they achieve them. At the same time, accountability remains key; employees should understand the impact of their work and take responsibility for their results. This balance between independence and responsibility drives both creativity and performance.

Finally, to sustain entrepreneurial thinking, organisations must recognise and reward bold ideas. When employees take risks, challenge the status quo and push boundaries, their efforts

should be celebrated – whether the outcome is a success or not. By highlighting innovative thinking and rewarding initiative, leaders reinforce a culture where taking smart risks is encouraged rather than avoided.

By fostering a mindset of continuous learning, granting teams the autonomy to act and celebrating bold thinking, organisations create an environment where entrepreneurial spirit thrives, leading to long-term success and innovation.

Working within and leading executive leadership teams and boards reinforced the definite balance of innovation and rewarding bold steps with accountability and retaining stability with both FTSE, Fortune and Investment backed firms.

» CHAMPIONING DIVERSITY:

JP: How does diversity influence decision-making and innovation, and what practical steps can leaders take to embed it into the fabric of their organisations?

DG: Diverse teams consistently outperform homogeneous ones, particularly in innovation-driven industries where fresh perspectives

and creative problem-solving are essential. When employees from different backgrounds, experiences and viewpoints come together, they challenge assumptions, generate unique ideas and drive stronger business outcomes. However, diversity doesn't happen by chance—it requires intentional effort and commitment from leadership.

To embed diversity into an organisation's DNA, it's crucial to make it measurable. What gets measured gets managed, and tracking diversity metrics helps ensure progress is being made. Organisations should assess representation across all levels, from entry-level roles to leadership positions, and report on key diversity indicators transparently. Regularly reviewing hiring, promotion and retention data helps identify gaps and opportunities for improvement, turning diversity from a vague goal into a tangible, trackable initiative.

Another critical step is investing in mentorship and sponsorship programmes, particularly for under-represented groups. Mentorship provides guidance and career development support, while sponsorship goes a step further—leaders actively advocate for high-potential employees, opening doors to new opportunities. When employees from diverse backgrounds have access to mentors and sponsors, they are more likely to advance within the organisation, creating a more equitable talent pipeline.

Finally, to truly integrate diversity, organisations must diversify leadership and decision-making tables. Representation at the top matters—when leadership teams reflect the diversity of the workforce and customer base, decisions are more inclusive, innovative and effective. This means not only hiring diverse leaders but also ensuring that voices from different backgrounds are heard, valued and influential in shaping company strategy.

By measuring progress, supporting under-represented talent and embedding diversity at all leadership levels, organisations can move beyond surface-level efforts and create a culture where diversity isn't just present—it's a driving force for innovation and success.

Throughout my career, I have prioritised diversity, recognising its critical role in driving innovation and better decision-making.

JP: What would you say to aspiring leaders from under-represented groups about navigating their path to success in the tech and entrepreneurial world?

DG: To aspiring leaders: Own your uniqueness - it's your strength, not a barrier. Seek mentorship, build networks and create impact where you are. The most successful leaders don't wait for opportunities; they create them. My journey from humble beginnings to leadership roles in global organisations exemplifies the power of embracing one's unique background and leveraging it to drive success.

» INNOVATING AT SCALE

JP: What are the biggest opportunities—and challenges—for leaders driving technology transformation in large-scale organisations?

DG: One of the biggest challenges organisations face is ensuring that as they grow and move quickly, innovation doesn't get diluted. Rapid expansion and scaling efforts can sometimes lead to bureaucracy, rigid processes, or siloed thinking, all of which stifle creativity. To maintain a culture of innovation while achieving speed and scale, leaders must take intentional steps to balance efficiency with experimentation.

A key strategy is to foster cross-functional collaboration to prevent innovation from becoming siloed within specific teams or departments. When different functions—such as product development, marketing, and operations—work in isolation, they risk missing out on diverse insights and fresh ideas. Leaders should create spaces for collaboration, whether through cross-team innovation labs, regular knowledge-sharing sessions, or integrated project teams that bring together people with different expertise. By encouraging open communication and breaking down silos, organisations can ensure that innovation remains a shared effort rather than a fragmented one.

Another critical factor is leveraging AI and automation as tools to enhance human creativity, rather than replace it. Technology should be used to handle repetitive tasks, streamline workflows, and provide data-driven insights—freeing employees to focus on higher-value, creative problem-solving. The best innovations come from the intersection of human ingenuity and technology, where automation amplifies human potential rather than diminishing it. Leaders should encourage teams to experiment with AI-driven solutions while keeping the human element at the centre of decision-making.



Finally, as technology adoption accelerates, organisations must ensure that it aligns with ethical and responsible business values. Innovation at scale should not come at the cost of privacy, security, or social responsibility. Leaders must establish clear guidelines for responsible tech use, ensuring AI and automation are deployed in ways that are fair, unbiased, and aligned with the company's broader mission. This not only builds trust with customers and stakeholders but also ensures long-term sustainability in an increasingly digital world.

By promoting collaboration across teams, using AI to complement human creativity, and embedding ethical considerations into technological decisions, organisations can scale without sacrificing the spirit of innovation.

At HSBC, leading global technology transformations provided insights into balancing these factors to drive successful outcomes.

» LEADING THROUGH CHANGE

JP: How do entrepreneurial leaders inspire teams to embrace change and stay resilient in the face of evolving technologies and business environments?

DG: Entrepreneurial leaders play a crucial role in building organisational resilience, ensuring that companies can navigate uncertainty and turn challenges into opportunities. In times of transformation, success depends not just on strategy but on mindset—leaders must inspire confidence, foster adaptability, and create a culture where change is embraced rather than feared.

One of the most powerful ways to drive resilience is by communicating a clear “why” behind the transformation. Change can be unsettling, but when employees understand the purpose behind it—whether it's to stay ahead of market trends, improve customer experiences, or drive long-term growth—they are more likely to support and engage with the process. Leaders should articulate not just what is changing, but why it matters and how it connects to the organisation's larger vision. Transparency and consistent messaging help teams stay motivated and aligned during times of transition.

Beyond communication, leaders must create change champions across the organisation. These are individuals at all levels who advocate for and embody the transformation, helping to bridge the gap between leadership and frontline teams. By empowering key influencers, providing them with the right tools, and encouraging peer-to-peer support, organisations can drive adoption from within rather than relying solely on top-down directives. Change champions inspire confidence, address concerns, and help sustain momentum throughout the journey.

Finally, true resilience comes from embedding adaptability into the company's DNA—where change is seen as an opportunity, not a disruption. Organisations that cultivate a culture of continuous learning, experimentation, and flexibility are better equipped to navigate shifts in the market. Leaders can encourage this mindset by rewarding curiosity, normalising iteration, and ensuring teams have the autonomy to adjust strategies when needed. When adaptability becomes second nature, companies don't just react to change—they proactively shape their future.

By clearly communicating purpose, building a network of change champions, and fostering a culture of adaptability, entrepreneurial leaders create organisations that are not only resilient but positioned to thrive in an ever-evolving world.

In my experience, leading teams through significant transformations has highlighted the importance of clear communication and fostering a culture that embraces change.

» PHILANTHROPY AND LEADERSHIP

JP: How does your work at Global Transform inform your perspective on the intersection of philanthropy, entrepreneurship, and leadership?

DG: True impact happens at the intersection of profit and purpose. In today's world, businesses are no longer evaluated solely by their financial success but also by their societal contributions and ethical footprint. The future of leadership lies in social entrepreneurship—where business success and social responsibility go hand in hand.



Through my experience as a CEO, COO and CIO I witnessed firsthand how businesses that integrate philanthropy into their core strategy create sustainable, long-term impact. This is not about one-off donations or CSR initiatives - it's about embedding purpose into business models to drive economic, environmental, and social change.

» KEY LESSONS FROM MY EXPERIENCES AS A CEO TO APPROACHING PHILANTHROPY AND LEADERSHIP

Over the years, I've learned that leadership isn't just about driving profits—it's about creating lasting impact. The intersection of business and philanthropy offers a unique opportunity to build sustainable, purpose-driven enterprises that benefit not only shareholders but also society at large. Here are some of the core lessons that have shaped my approach:

» ENTREPRENEURIAL LEADERSHIP AS A FORCE FOR GOOD

Great leaders understand that business and philanthropy are not separate worlds; they are deeply interconnected. Companies that embrace social responsibility don't just contribute to the greater good—they gain a competitive advantage. Purpose-driven businesses attract top talent, foster deeper customer loyalty, and build long-term brand trust. Employees and consumers alike gravitate toward organisations that stand for something beyond profits.

More than ever, leaders have the power to drive meaningful change. By integrating philanthropy into business strategy—not as an afterthought but as a core pillar—organisations can create value for all stakeholders, proving that success and impact go hand in hand.

» SUSTAINABLE BUSINESS MODELS DRIVE SCALABLE IMPACT

Philanthropy shouldn't be seen as a cost centre—it should be viewed as an investment in long-term resilience, innovation, and profitability. Companies that embed social and environmental impact into their operations not only future-proof their businesses but also open doors to new markets and opportunities.

When businesses align their financial goals with social impact, they create scalable solutions that endure. Whether it's through sustainable sourcing, ethical supply chains, or inclusive hiring practices, organisations that integrate purpose into their core strategy drive both longevity and meaningful change.

The most successful companies of the future will be those that measure success not just in revenue but in the positive contributions they make to society.

» LEADERSHIP WITH A GLOBAL MINDSET

The challenges we face today—climate change, economic inequality, digital inclusion—cannot be solved in isolation. They require leaders who think beyond borders, who understand that collaboration and innovation at a global scale are necessary to drive systemic change.

Technology and strategic partnerships offer unprecedented opportunities to scale solutions that benefit both businesses and society. A prime example is how fintech innovation is democratising financial services, providing millions of unbanked individuals access to banking, credit, and economic opportunities. When companies harness technology for social good, they unlock new markets, empower underserved communities, and contribute to a more inclusive global economy.

Leaders must embrace this interconnected world, fostering relationships across industries and geographies to create solutions that address pressing global issues while also strengthening their own organisations.

» THE POWER OF GIVING BACK

True leadership is about creating value for others. The most impactful leaders are those who use their influence to uplift their communities, support meaningful causes, and inspire the next generation. Businesses that actively invest in their communities don't just improve lives—they strengthen local economies, cultivate brand loyalty, and set an example for others to follow.

Philanthropy isn't just about writing cheques—it's about rolling up your sleeves and contributing time, knowledge, and resources in ways that create lasting impact. Whether through mentorship, education initiatives, or social enterprise programmes, giving back should be an essential part of leadership.

Ultimately, the greatest legacy a leader can leave behind isn't just financial success—it's the impact they've had on people's lives. The true measure of success is the difference we make, the lives we touch, and the opportunities we create for future generations.





BelowtheLights

JAMES GAME

CEO, DIGITAL MEDIA TECHNOLOGIES

A Conversation with James Game, CEO of Digital Media Technologies

The art of the possible is a phrase often spoken about but rarely articulated although advances in technology appear to be narrowing the gap between achievement and desire. As the reach of Artificial Intelligence extends ever further into every aspect of society, the reality is that the means to bring a vision to life is no longer the obstacle. The real challenge now is the creation of original concepts that stand apart from the mainstream. AI can provide the technological horsepower but without invention it's like having the world's most powerful game's machine but no software to run on it.



THE SPECTACULAR VISION

In this rapidly evolving landscape, where visual storytelling has become a powerful tool for engagement, Digital Media Technologies (DMT) stands as a pioneer in delivering immersive digital experiences. From iconic city landmarks to interactive customer solutions, DMT specializes in crafting spectacular display solutions that leave lasting impressions. Their approach is a seamless blend of creativity and technology, designed not just to advertise but to amplify brand narratives and captivate audiences.

At the core of DMT's success lies a unique service framework built around four key pillars: Design, Build, Run, and Amplify. Each step is carefully crafted to ensure clients receive tailored solutions that not only meet their immediate needs but also evolve with future demands. From conceptualisation to ongoing performance optimisation, DMT's holistic approach and end-to-end process guarantees that every project delivers maximum impact.

BUILDING A LEGACY IN LIGHTS

For CEO, James Game, the picture is very rarely just about seeing screens; he sees stories waiting to unfold. With over two decades of experience in the technology

solutions space, his career is a tapestry woven with ground breaking projects, from global rollouts for automotive giants to iconic landmarks like Piccadilly Lights and Ascot Racecourse.

"Throughout my career, I've always prioritised work culture and innovation," James begins. "Good ideas rarely emerge from familiar concepts. To be new means to be different. I encourage my team to push boundaries and not be afraid to slip up. You mustn't run away from mistakes but learn from them. It's how you understand the world and in more specific terms how you come to fine tune your offering so that it meets your customers' needs."

This fearless approach has driven DMT to deliver projects that aren't just displays but spectacles. Take Piccadilly Lights, for instance. Arguably the world's most famous billboard, it's more than just an advertising space; it's a cultural icon that leaves a mark on millions every year.

"It's probably the pinnacle of my career," James admits with a smile. "Piccadilly Lights has an impact on the London skyline and is one of the greatest attractions in the UK. Being part of that legacy is incredibly rewarding."



**"THROUGHOUT
MY CAREER, I'VE
ALWAYS PRIORITISED
WORK CULTURE AND
INNOVATION"**

BELOW THE LIGHTS - JAMES GAME - CEO OF DIGITAL MEDIA TECHNOLOGIES



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BELOW THE LIGHTS - JAMES GAME - CEO OF DIGITAL MEDIA TECHNOLOGIES



THE DMT SERVICE FRAMEWORK:

Design, Build, Run, Amplify

DMT's success stems from its holistic approach to delivering digital display solutions through four interconnected phases:



DESIGN

At the heart of every project is a deep discovery phase. DMT collaborates closely with clients to understand their goals, audience, and desired outcomes. By challenging briefs and exploring creative concepts, the team ensures that each display solution is both visually stunning and strategically sound.

BUILD

Once the design is refined, DMT moves into the build phase, leveraging cutting-edge technology to bring ideas to life. From large-format LED displays utilising real-time graphics engines to interactive technology and immersive experiences, their technical expertise ensures seamless execution.

RUN

Post-installation, DMT manage the ongoing operation of their displays and related systems, ensuring optimal performance. Their proactive approach includes monitoring, maintenance, and updates to keep displays, content and technology fresh and relevant.

AMPLIFY

Beyond simply running a display, DMT focuses on amplifying its impact. This includes data-driven insights to enhance and fan engagement, content optimisation, and exploring new ways to elevate the client's brand message.

James emphasises that this process isn't about technology; it's about outcomes and how we exceed requirements and expectations for clients and audiences. We take a wider view where we seek to integrate and blend technology and content with the architecture and environment, whilst ensuring maximum impact and engagement for the audience. "We don't just put up a screen and hope it works"

"People often mention the phrase "future-proofing" and that isn't just about putting in the highest specification of equipment and services so it will remain technologically relevant in years to come. It's also about anticipating the changing attitudes of customers and users by assessing wider trends that may have an impact on the solutions we specify and install. I encourage my team and our clients to look beyond the measure of their reach in terms of behaviour and often say the same thing to my clients. Look at every space your customers inhabit, the journeys they take, their interactions, how they engage and what they demand. Learn from that behaviour because very often what is adopted positively in one area will inevitably spill out into another, connected environment. Above all else, if you get the foundations right, you'll always be in the best position to facilitate future change and innovation."

FROM AR TO INVISIBLE TECHNOLOGY

As technology races forward, keeping up isn't enough—you have to stay ahead. For James, the secret lies in providing technology foundations can evolve and adapt as needs and audiences change.

"Technology should never be a barrier to creating an experience," he explains. "We aim for technology that can be seamlessly integrated and invisibly—where the systems are just enablers, and the users don't focus on the delivery mechanism but remember instead the brand or story they've engaged with."

This philosophy resonates in DMT's projects, where cutting-edge solutions like augmented reality blend effortlessly into everyday environments, enhancing rather than overshadowing experiences alongside AI driven, real time graphics initiatives.

THE HUMAN ELEMENT OF INNOVATION

While DMT's installations are truly dazzling, James emphasises that their true strength lies in their people. Continuous improvement isn't just a buzzword—it's embedded in the company's DNA.

"We're a business built on people," James says. "We invest in nurturing, mentoring, and personal development. Behavioural analysis tools help us to understand each other's strengths, ensuring everyone is in a role where they can flourish."

This empathetic approach extends beyond the office walls. By tailoring their recruitment and management strategies, DMT fosters a culture of collaboration and understanding, which in turn benefits their clients.

"It's about empathy," James explains. "Understanding how individuals communicate and interact underpins our business, our clients and their audiences ensuring we deliver the best time and again."





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Application Scenarios



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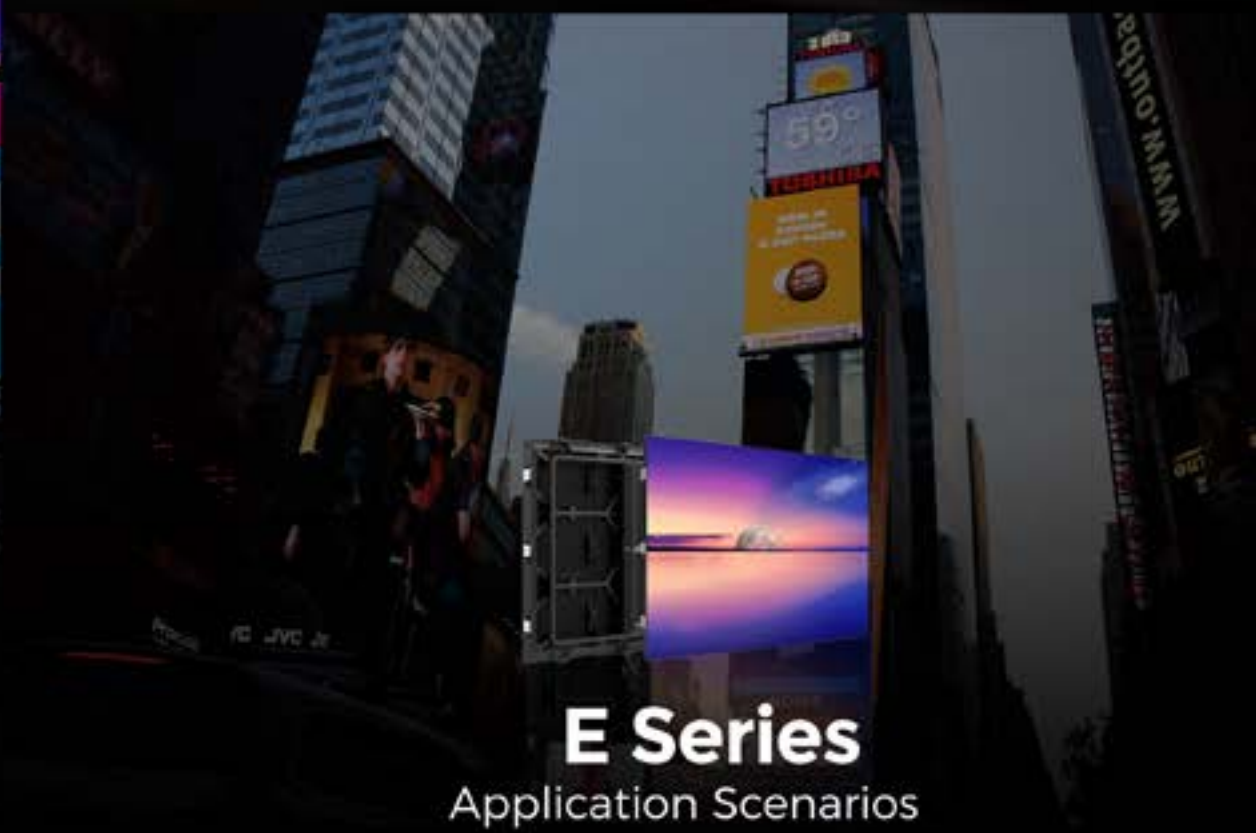


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AF Series

Application Scenarios



E Series

Application Scenarios



SPECTACULAR PROJECTS AND BEYOND

DMT's portfolio reads like a greatest hits album of digital display projects. Beyond Piccadilly Lights, they've been the LED partner for Royal Ascot, transforming the historic venue with interactive solutions that engage and entertain.

"At Ascot, it's not about fans or spectators; it's about customers," James shares. "Our solutions provide real-time race updates, interactive experiences, and even lyrics for the famous bandstand singalongs. It's all about understanding the audience and delivering value."

"When you look at what was delivered for that specific project, it was the creation of a different format screen, something that immediately resonated with the smartphone generation who visit the venue. We repurposed a space, integrated content and provided the racecourse with the ability to deliver something truly unique."

Another huge success for the brand in 2024 was their work on the newly launched Below The Lights experience centre that has now become one of London's premium digital spaces. Nestled in the bustling heart of the West End, Below The Lights is a state-of-the-art experience centre redefining brand activations, immersive events and opportunities for customer engagement.

"This was another example of us trying to understand not just the customer or brands but more importantly their audiences by assessing the general demographic needs across our society and by measuring how this differs across different verticals, including retail, sports and entertainment. This is a venue based on frequent change and the ever present

need to do something that's never been done for every activation. We are delighted with the flexibility offered from the technology foundations we have provided for new brands looking to use the space. A total solution comprising various screen technologies was delivered, a real time content platform, event, broadcast and interactive technology with managed services to compliment and streamline the events.

"In some ways it has similarities to the Ascot installation because both locations rely very heavily on their history and traditions to sell their brands. Adding modern technology to culturally relevant spaces does requires thought. With Below The Lights, we were looking to embody the spirit of technology evolution that Piccadilly Circus has been delivering for over 100 years."

THE FUTURE OF DIGITAL DISPLAYS

And what's next for DMT? James hints at exciting projects on the horizon.

"2024 was a spectacular year for us," he says enthusiastically. "But we are not resting on our laurels. We have some incredible projects and initiatives lined up for 2025, 2026 and beyond that I believe will capture the imagination and further our ambitions to be the number one innovation player in this space. I'm looking forward to the next 12 months with enthusiasm."

"The future is about integrated audience-focused solutions," he predicts. "Whether it's fan engagement at a sports venue or a brand activation in a city centre, our technology will enable spectacular experiences that leave lasting impressions."

George R Vaughan





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BIO.

DR. VANJA LJEVAR

Chief Data Scientist and Co-Founder
at Kubik Intelligence

Dr. Ljevar is a data scientist, a Board Member at University of Nottingham Business School, a keynote speaker, a published author, and a serial entrepreneur. She holds a multidisciplinary Ph.D. in Computer Science and Psychology and specialises in customer profiling using psychological and behavioural theories and patterns in big data to generate best-in-class customer insights. Vanja has carried out over 50 international projects across multiple sectors, including retail, telecommunication, healthcare, fashion, and media. She has published multiple peer-reviewed academic papers, mostly on topics related to the use of big data for social good.

Founders of Ku

Kubik Intelligence, a data
is partnering with Game Ch
focusing on AI, Cybersecurity
in London on



BIO.

PATRICK FAGAN

Chief Behavioural Scientist and
Co-Founder at Kubik Intelligence

Patrick is an applied behavioural
scientist with 15 years experience
turning minds into money.

He is a university lecturer at top
universities like UCL and Sunday
Times bestselling author: as well
as published academic work and
the marketing classic *Hooked*,
Patrick's insights are featured in
The Guardian, *The Economist*, and
beyond. He's a renowned speaker,
appearing at events like Nudgestock
and Talks at Google. Patrick used
to be the lead psychologist at
Cambridge Analytica.

Kubik Intelligence

psychology consultancy,
Game Changer London, a tech event
series, and Big Data taking place
May 8, 2025





WHY GAME CHANGER?

Following the success of our tech events
GAME CHANGER across CEE Zagreb (Croatia)
-Ljubljana (Slovenia) - Tivat (Montenegro) and our
Aftermovie from the event in Zagreb in October 2024

We are now expanding to two
new iconic locations:

LONDON:

Our debut event in May 2025.

VENICE:

As part of the Venice Biennale
side program in September 2025.

GAME CHANGER LONDON



OUR MISSION IS TO:

Promote cutting-edge technology and innovative business practices.

Connect local and global tech communities. Inspire digital literacy, creativity, and entrepreneurial spirit among emerging talent.

With a strong track record, we previously partnered with global leaders like Visa, Uber, Nestlé, Samsung, and MasterCard.

We already secured support from Crypto UK, One Tech, Digital Edge and other tech leaders and media partners.



VP of DATA & ANALYTICS AT SCRIBD INC.

MARY ALFHEIM

We sat down with Mary Alfheim, VP of Data & Analytics at Scribd, Inc., to discuss her career journey, the evolving role of data in business, and the intersection of analytics, leadership, and creativity.

With over 15 years of experience in data and analytics, how has your perspective on the role of data in driving business success evolved over time?

My perspective on data's role in business success has evolved dramatically alongside technological advancements and shifting business priorities. Early in my career, data was primarily seen as a reporting mechanism—a way to track key metrics and generate dashboards for leadership. The focus was on historical reporting, which, while still valuable, often

led to reactive insights. As an early data scientist, I spent much of my time here, interspersed with occasional predictive work, such as basic propensity models or media mix models that were updated sporadically.

As businesses began recognising the value of data, the conversation shifted from simple reporting to data-driven decision-making. Data became a strategic enabler. I witnessed the rise of self-service analytics, cloud-based platforms, and AI-driven insights.



My role expanded from generating reports to fostering data-driven cultures, ensuring teams could trust, interpret, and act on insights in real time.

Today, I see data as more than an enabler—it is a core differentiator. Companies leveraging advanced analytics, machine learning, and real-time decision intelligence are outperforming those relying on intuition. The best businesses don't just collect data; they use it to predict, personalise, and innovate.

Additionally, data ethics, governance, and AI responsibility have become critical discussions. As a leader, I prioritise data trustworthiness, security, and bias mitigation as much as I do insights and automation.

As part of Scribd, Inc., what has been your most rewarding challenge in transforming complex data into actionable strategies?

Scribd operates at the intersection of content, user behaviour, and engagement analytics. With millions of users consuming books, audiobooks,

documents, and more, the challenge was to move beyond surface-level metrics and uncover deep behavioural insights that unlock new user experiences.

This challenge is incredibly fulfilling because it's not just about optimising numbers—it's about creating a more immersive, user-centric platform. Our users have distinct motivations: some are students creating study materials, others are professionals drafting presentations, and some simply seek entertainment in the latest bestseller. Understanding these motivations allows us to tailor experiences to their specific needs.

The ability to bridge data science with storytelling and content accessibility has had a tangible impact. Seeing how these insights translate into business success has been one of the most rewarding aspects of my career at Scribd. Ultimately, this experience reinforces my belief that data isn't just about numbers—it's about understanding human behaviour and creating meaningful, scalable experiences.

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By partnering with **BlueSky** DataWorks, data executives gain the tools and confidence to make strategic decisions, overcome self-doubt, and drive professional and organizational success.

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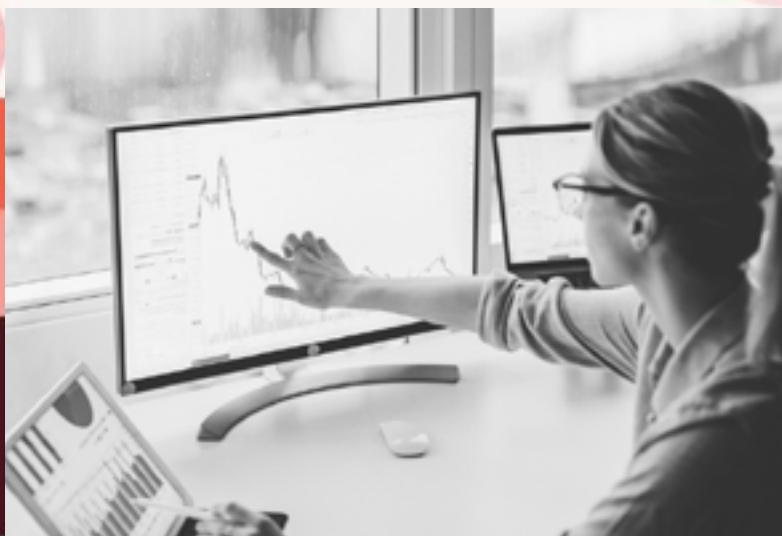
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What are the key traits a leader in data analytics needs to succeed in today's competitive landscape?

The role of a data leader has evolved beyond number crunching—today, it's about orchestrating data-driven transformation across an organisation. Here are the key traits I consider essential:

Visionary Thinking & Strategic Alignment:

A data leader must connect insights to business strategy. Instead of just answering “what happened,” they must anticipate what's next and influence decisions accordingly. Key questions to ask include:

- How does this insight drive revenue, retention, or efficiency?
- How can data improve customer experience and personalisation?
- Are we solving the right business problems with data?

Strong Storytelling & Communication Skills:

Data alone doesn't drive action—compelling narratives do. Translating complex analytics into clear, impactful stories influences stakeholders and fosters a data-driven culture.

Technical & Analytical Mastery:

While leaders don't need to code every model, they must stay fluent in modern data technologies, including:

- AI & Machine Learning for predictive insights
- Cloud & Big Data Platforms for scalable infrastructure
- Data Governance & Privacy for trust and compliance
- Data-Driven Culture & Influence:

Success isn't just about technology—it's about empowering teams. Leaders must:

- Foster a culture of experimentation and learning
- Champion data literacy across all departments
- Ensure teams trust and use data in decision-making

Adaptability & Continuous Learning:

The data landscape evolves rapidly, from AI advancements to new regulations like GDPR. Leaders must remain curious and adaptable.

Ethical Responsibility & Data Governance:

AI and automation bring ethical challenges. Leaders must prioritise:

- Bias mitigation in AI models
- Transparency in decision-making
- Privacy and security to maintain user trust

The best leaders don't just manage data—they drive transformation, innovation, and business impact. And we don't have to do it alone! Data leaders should engage with peers, ask for guidance, and share insights to stay at the cutting edge.

What's your approach to using data to enhance customer engagement and retention at Scribd?

We leverage data to create personalised, frictionless, and value-driven experiences across our brands. Our approach includes:

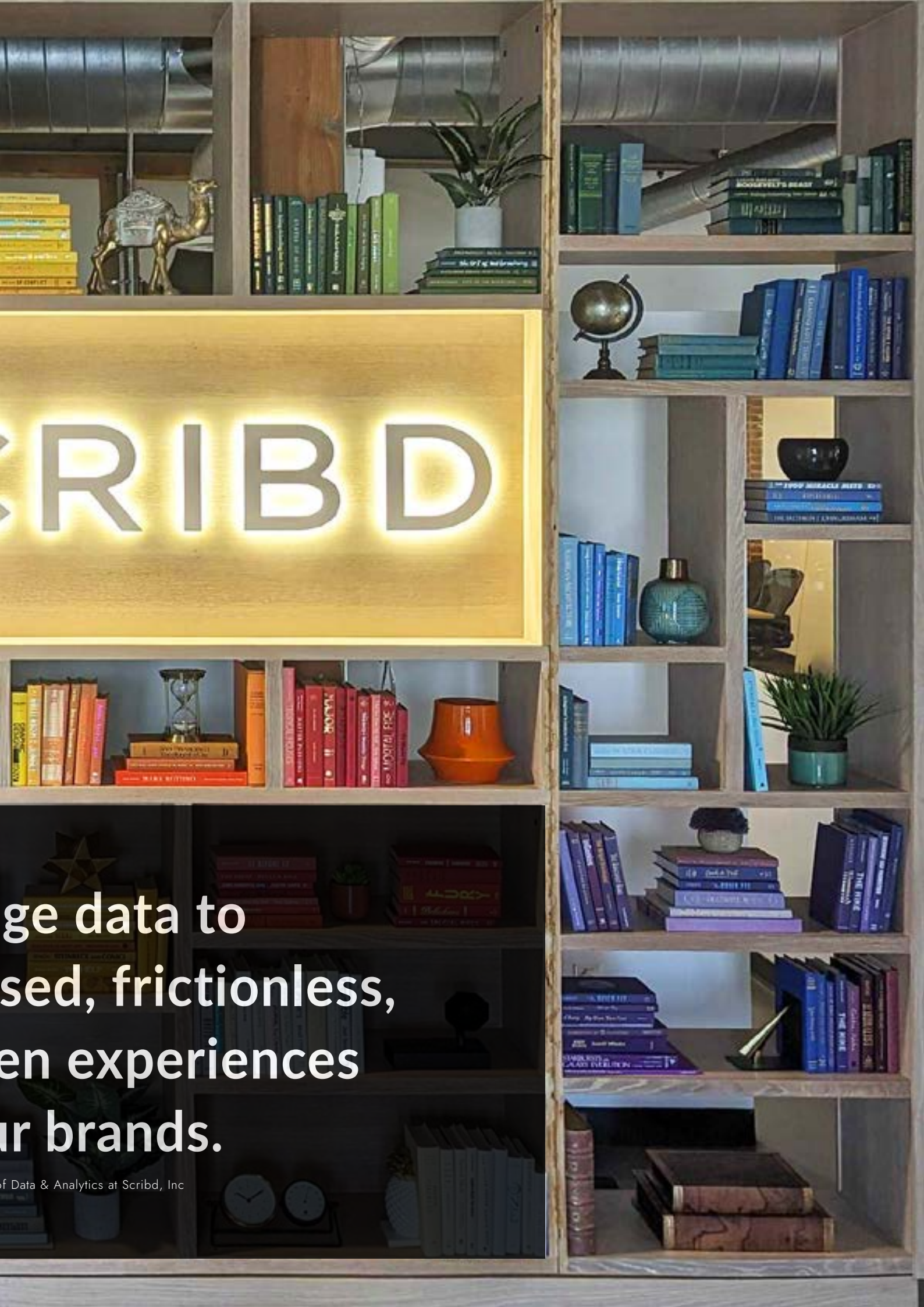
- **Behavioural Insights:** Analysing past interactions, session lengths, and drop-off points helps us optimise user journeys. We track metrics like content discovery rates, session duration, and conversion rates to measure success.
- **Predictive Analytics for Retention:** We use machine learning to identify at-risk users before they churn, activating insights through recommendations, notifications, and personalised outreach.
- **Content Strategy:** We analyse completion rates, bookmarks, and reader sentiment to determine what content resonates most with users, providing valuable insights to content partners.
- **UX Enhancements:** Continuous A/B testing ensures seamless reading experiences, improving navigation and audiobook interaction.



SO


We leverage
create personal
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MARY ALFHEIM - VP of



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of Data & Analytics at Scribd, Inc



DATA ISN'T JUST
ABOUT NUMBERS—
IT'S ABOUT
UNDERSTANDING
HUMAN BEHAVIOUR
AND CREATING
MEANINGFUL,
SCALABLE
EXPERIENCES.



How do you simplify and communicate complex data insights to non-technical stakeholders?

My approach centres on storytelling, actionable recommendations, and collaboration:

- **Storytelling:** Spreadsheets don't inspire action—stories do. Instead of stating, "Users with app bugs churn at twice the rate," I might tell a story: "Imagine a mystery novel lover who reads daily but experiences app issues. They disengage. We can prevent this by doing X, Y, and Z."
- **Actionable Recommendations:** Data without direction leads to paralysis. Every insight includes a proposed action step to initiate discussion.
- **Driving Collaboration:** If teams don't trust or understand data, they won't use it. We promote self-service tools and co-create solutions with stakeholders to foster confidence in data-driven decision-making.

Looking ahead, how do you see the role of data analytics evolving in industries focused on customer engagement and digital products?

I see data analytics becoming even more central, driving real-time intelligence, hyper-personalisation, and AI-driven automation.

Future success will depend on:

- Real-time decision intelligence
- Ethical AI and data governance
- Customer-centric, data-driven product development
- A balance between data-driven decision-making and creative intuition

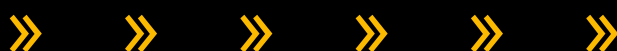
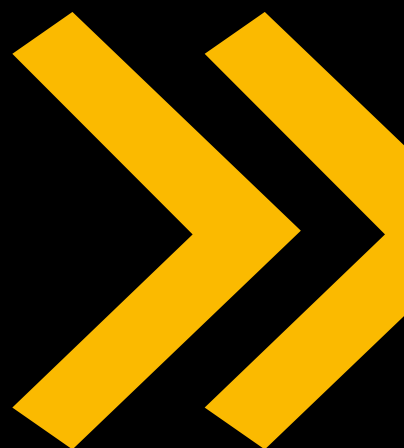
That said, the industry will continue to evolve in unexpected ways. The key is to remain adaptable, open to new approaches, and committed to both innovation and ethical responsibility.

Final Thoughts...

What advice would you give to professionals aspiring to a career in data and analytics?

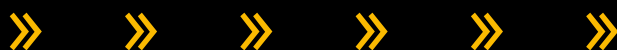
You've likely heard the advice to master the fundamentals, stay curious, and build your network. I'd emphasise one more thing: storytelling. Data is only valuable when it drives action. Work on communication, design compelling data visualisations, and tailor your messaging for different audiences. And most importantly—stay curious!





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EUROPE

RAI, Amsterdam

24-25 September 2025



AI & BIG DATA EXPO

DISCOVERING THE INTELLIGENT FUTURE
THROUGH AI & BIG DATA

Join us for the AI & Big Data Expo 2025 on 24-25 September 2025 at the RAI, Amsterdam. Industry-leading speakers from various sectors will come together to discuss the latest advancements in AI and Big Data.

www.ai-expo.net

**10 APR 2025**

Machine Building North

MACHINE BUILDING NORTH

The machine building and factory automation landscape is evolving faster than ever. Are you confident your organisation is equipped to keep up?

[Visit Website](#)

24 APR 2025

PROCUREMENT LEADERS SUMMIT 2025

Procurement is evolving at an unprecedented pace, driven by technological advancements and the increasing need for strategic value creation within organizations. As procurement transforms from a transactional function to a strategic partner, professionals in the field must stay ahead of the curve. [Visit Website](#)

3-4 JUN 2025

ProcureCon MARKETING

PROCURECON MARKETING EU 2025

The Queen Elizabeth II Centre, London

Marketing procurement is now a strategic partner for marketing and media teams. As focus shifts away from just cost reduction how can sustainability and supplier diversity among other strategic sourcing goals be achieved?

[Visit Website](#)

**3-5 JUN 2025****EU MONEY
20/20**

Business leaders and visionaries across all technology verticals attend Tech Show London to shape their digital future.

<https://europe.money2020.com>

9-13 JUN 2025**LONDON TECH
WEEK**

Innovators. Investors. Tech giants. The visionaries applying new tech to solve the world's biggest problems. Enterprise tech leaders who are creating solutions to enrich every aspect of our lives..

<https://londontechweek.com>

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20/20**

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TECHNOLOGY | MANUFACTURING | PROCUREMENT | SUPPLY CHAIN

DIGITAL EDGE

MARCH 25

ISSUE 001



DATA TRANSFORMATION AT WEIR GROUP

Exclusive Interview with Gillian
Tomlinson, Group Chief Data and
Digital Officer.

NISHA PATEL

Digital Transformation and
Industry 4.0 Vision



Special Feature:
'BELOW THE
LIGHTS'
Digital Transformation
at Procell Circle

WAYNE
BUTTERFIELD

BPO 4.0: A New Dawn for
Sourcing in an Agentic World



MARCEL KLEIN, CTO & Founder • MARY ALPHEIM, VP Data and Analytics at Scripted

Coming Up in Issue 02 of Digital Edge

The next issue of Digital Edge goes live on April 14th, and it's packed with exclusive insights from industry leaders who are shaping the future of technology, procurement, supply chain and manufacturing.

If you're passionate about AI, data, digital transformation, cybersecurity, cloud, and the latest in supply chain and manufacturing tech, you won't want to miss this!

Inside Issue 02:



Exclusive Interview:

Martin Bernier, CIO at the University of Ottawa, on leading digital innovation in higher education.



Ullyana Fitsa, Chief Supply Chain Officer at Kormotech, on harnessing technology for global supply chain resilience.



James Fudge, Head of Operations at the Manufacturing Technologies Association (MTA), on the future of smart manufacturing.



Special Feature:

MTA Members Spotlight – Discover the latest innovations from the leaders in manufacturing technology.

PLUS, expert insights, tech trends, and strategies for business leaders navigating digital transformation.

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We inspire, shape and deliver your Data & AI capabilities of today... ...and tomorrow!

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