Demystifying Digital Transformation – Identifying Opportunity

We are rethinking the way we do business... because we have to. Today, digital transformation is not just a strategic nice-to-have, it's a real-world requirement for companies to continue to compete. Organizations that continue to operate with old ways of working will be rendered non-competitive while those organizations that truly embrace digital transformation will be the winners. Achieving genuine digital transformation is a top priority for all organizations as a result.

We face both a daunting challenge and an incredible opportunity. Now more than ever, organizations need to embrace disruption as a springboard for competitive advantage and adopt new ways of working that invigorate organizational performance. But making the transition isn't just about the technology involved; success requires the ability to effectively manage the transition itself.

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That was the subject of a recent interview on AIIM On Air with Cliff Madru, Vice President of Global Solutions for Iron Mountain. We examined a new five-phase digital transformation model from Iron Mountain that is designed to help us step through the best practices toward success. The steps are: *Identify, Scan, Store, Automate, and Unlock*, and in our discussion, Cliff reviewed how to use the model effectively and ensure that our strategies and solutions make a difference.

Identifying Opportunity

In this article we will be focusing on the first element: "identify." I asked Cliff to describe exactly what is entailed in the identify phase and why this stage is such a powerful first step to digital transformation.

"The identify stage is really all about getting a handle on the current state of your information, both from a digital and physical perspective," said Cliff. "This becomes really a critical component to set you up for success in the long run as you go through the journey. It's understanding what

you have, understanding the current risks, and considering how current policies around access, retention, and privacy are being managed."

Rooting out the ROT

It became clear in our discussion that most organizations suffer from severe "ROT" and this affliction is often the first thing you find in a thoughtful assessment. Cliff and his teams at Iron Mountain have discovered in the field with their customers that about 40% of all corporate information is redundant, obsolete, or trivial, and that ROT is often the first barrier to digital transformation. "There's a lot of opportunities to reduce risk and realize savings just from identifying all that content," says Cliff. "Once you've identified the ROT you begin to understand where you stand, and that is half the battle. From there you can create a go-forward strategy to take advantage of new technologies, approaches, and insight."

Combining Technology and Consulting

It seems that successful digital transformation requires one part process, one part technology. I asked Cliff to point to an essential technology or approach that he feels really makes a difference, and what we should look for in a good solution. "There are quite a few different technologies that are out there that enable the analysis of your environment to do data mapping and content analysis and classification. But I think a critical component of this step is around experience and having a framework as a guide; a defined methodology that allows you to have a process-oriented view of how you can approach and prioritize areas that you're going to get the most value from. At Iron Mountain, we focus a lot on Advisory Services as a result; a plan in partnership with our customers, and really bringing in that consulting component."

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Awareness is Essential

What is the real value of following a formal model for digital transformation...and especially for the effort needed in the identify phase? Cliff says it boils down to the critical component of awareness.

"As a result of leveraging the identify phase you have experienced individuals building out a strategic approach and then bringing in technologies that can help support that effort at this particular phase. This is critical because the insight is coming from the analysis that you're performing: Where do these records live? What types of records are living there? And how much of this content is sitting structured somewhere or unstructured? You get a handle on where the information silos are being formed and where data is not necessarily governed by policies. All of this can be achieved through the right methodology."

Moving Forward

In part two of my interview with Cliff, we explore the "scan and store" elements of the new digital transformation model from Iron Mountain. But for now, Cliff asks us all to consider the tremendous power of working to identify your information, where it lives, and what value it provides to the organization as the first step toward digital transformation. "When you really start digging in, especially on the unstructured content, you start to get a real understanding of the overall sprawl of content today. It's incredible. From there you can implement cloud products and software-as-a-service (SaaS) solutions to get a good handle on the actual content that's being maintained in those systems and how it's being governed."

[Listen to Part 1 of the interview here](#).

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