

Adept at Adapting

How Transformational DNA Enables Businesses to Adapt to an Ever-Changing Landscape



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Executive Summary

Businesses must adapt to ever-changing landscapes, no matter what unexpected events, disruptions, or new conditions occur. A structured approach for transformation, applied to unstructured dynamics, can help companies of any size become adept at adapting.

Almost three years ago, I joined AT&T Business to lead the customer experience and operations organization with a vision for change, engagement, and service. Having developed large-scale technology transformation frameworks, it was my mission to evolve the frameworks to transform business. At the center of it all: OUR CUSTOMERS.

Meaningful change at this scale doesn't happen by chance. It requires a very thoughtful, multi-dimensional approach. Perseverance and stamina are a must. Most of all, it requires engaging everyone, their minds as well as their hearts. It is incredibly valuable for your business and your customers.

It is my hope that the following white paper serves as a helpful guide on how to build Transformational DNA at the core of your company, no matter what your company's "new normal" looks like today or where you lead your business in the future.

Transformational DNA ensures you are **"Adept at Adapting"** and is the only safe harbor as breakneck, unpredictable change is constant.

Sorabh Saxena

Executive Vice President – Customer Service & Operations, AT&T Business

Building Blocks of Transformation

Transformational DNA

Change is vital to a company’s success. Too often, a structured, yet flexible change management framework is not in place or is not fully implemented with great dynamism and focus. As a result, change can be daunting, appear as an insurmountable challenge, or overwhelm teams causing confusion, and is demotivating even before they start.

Perpetual change is the **new normal**. To successfully stay ahead, businesses must build a framework that supports continuous motion, incorporating all aspects of the organization: people, process, technology, and culture.

Everyone in the organization – North to South and East to West – must participate in building and exercising the transformation engine. Continually practicing these motions fosters the development of Transformational DNA similar to elite athletes training to anticipate, proactively calculate, and respond to a host of unexpected scenarios. Transformational DNA produces the exceptional ability to respond to highly unexpected and disruptive changes.

Below are the **five key characteristics** of Transformational DNA:

1. **Customer success obsessed culture:** Everything starts and ends with the customer
2. **Continuous learning and improvement:** Comprehensive and practiced as a matter of fact
3. **Commitment to data and facts:** Scientific approach and deep engineering expertise
4. **Collective vectors of genius:** Management serves and enables while teams are empowered to make decisions and innovate
5. **Celebrate:** Recognition of one another regularly and freely



Ranked highest in customer satisfaction for large enterprise wireline service

3 years in a row¹

If practiced continually, Transformational DNA has significant **strategic advantages** by better preparing teams to successfully deal with the unknown or unexpected. In parallel, it equips businesses to drive meaningful change and disrupt the industry as opposed to constantly being disrupted and forced into a reactive stance.

The following describes the building blocks of transformation success.

Leading with Listening

The cultural value of a service organization must embody humility. That means **leading with listening**. AT&T Business has always made it a priority to listen, but now after sharpening our approach and applying finely tuned scientific methodologies centered around data analytics, we are ‘hearing’ more. We developed our plans based on our findings and maintained a tight feedback loop to ensure customer satisfaction.

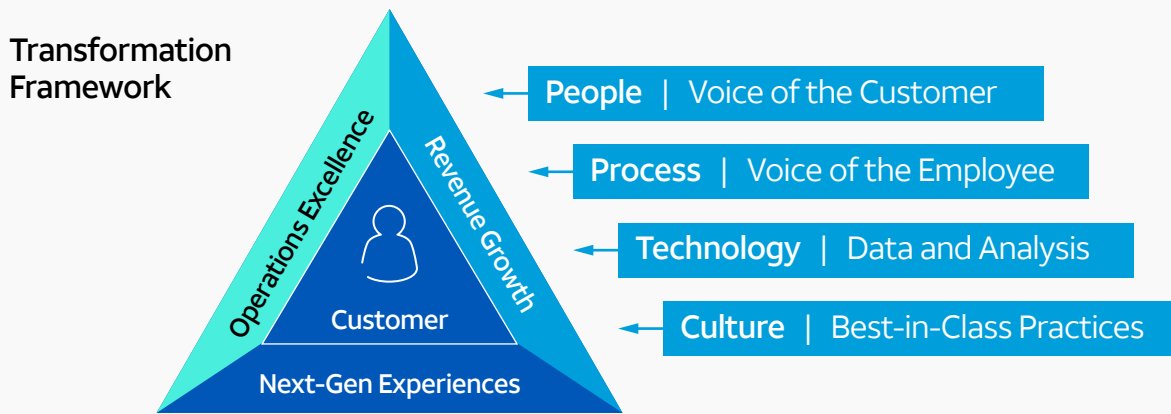
In 2018, we performed a comprehensive diagnostic of the **customers, sellers, and operators** to capture the end-to-end processes and scientifically identify areas of opportunity.

Voice of the Customer: This came through millions of surveys, advisory boards, and direct interactions. Service matters. Everything we do starts and ends with our customers. We’re using Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Machine Learning (ML) to anticipate their needs – identifying issues and opportunities before our customers report them.

Voice of the Operators and Sellers: In the parallel, we looked inwards because the employee experience directly reflects customer experience. We analyzed cycle-time distribution, end-to-end processes for complex networks, productivity variability, and customer lifecycles among many others. We conducted hundreds of management interviews, journey mapped 11 functions, and shadowed 40+ employees across nine global sites. We uncovered 600+ roles across our organization, 50+ operating systems, and 30% of an employee’s time was spent validating work.

All of this data was evaluated through exhaustive diagnostics which uncovered an undeniable need for more: **more speed, more simplicity, and more flexibility**. For our operations to mirror the evolving customer preferences, we developed a transformation framework. We needed to build upon our current processes while actively transforming operations to proactively meet customer demands.

¹ AT&T received the highest score among large enterprise and small/medium businesses in the JD. Power 2020 U.S. Business Wireline Satisfaction Study of customers’ satisfaction with their business wireline data and voice services. Visit jdpower.com/awards for more details.



Transformation Framework

It is no simple task to streamline operations for one of the world’s largest businesses. The first step was building a transformation framework with repeatable motions to continually infuse change into the business. Below are key elements to a successful transformation framework:

Triad of Value: Foundational to this framework are three simple, yet highly critical goals: transform the customer experience **and** grow revenue **and** drive operational excellence across the business. Often times, large corporations take one of these three goals and charge hard, but this invariably generates clashing waves inside of the organization. The operative word is **“AND,”** meaning it is not about executing on one or two of those goals but addressing all three simultaneously. The “Triad of Value” continues to serve as the **North Star** or guiding light for transformation.

People, Process, Technology, and Culture: To deliver on the “Triad of Value,” every transformation initiative stands on four pillars: people, process, technology, and culture. Like the legs of a stool, all are needed to maximize the value of transformation.

Bi-Modal: Previously, our primary focus was to be best-in-class operators, however, we realized we needed to add another focal point to be future forward to proactively delight our customers. In other words, we needed to bi-modal: best-in-class operators and change agents to drive the continuous improvement of the operational daily functions.

As the business has progressed, every initiative and motion exercised in our foundational culture aspires to deliver in a balanced manner across this framework. Our

teams are performing as bi-modal agents: best-in-class operators and transformation change agents. This framework now upholds the entire organization and is key in guiding the transformation.

Transformation Tip #1 Customer Success Obsessed

We are living in the age of the customer. Embrace it. Analyze how actions benefit the customer and look for ways to improve the process, technology, and solution to be best-in-class for your customer.

Transformation Management Office

We were extremely intentional in our pursuit of these goals and thoughtful in structuring for success. One fundamental shift was moving away from a traditional Project Management Office (PMO) and investing in a next-generation entity called the Transformation Management Office (TMO).

PMO vs TMO: A TMO transforms entire processes, technology landscapes, and people structures for fundamental change. It also drives complete value derivation beyond a traditional PMO which considers the completion of a project as success.

Through this dedicated office, the business achieved significant results with:

- **Democratizing innovation** by putting the structures that enable taking ideas from anywhere and at any level in the organization

- Building an **agile execution engine** for the end-to-end lifecycle from ideation to deployment
- Developing a grass roots **change agent network** that participates in initiative development, drives frontline adoption, and gathers continuous feedback
- Bringing process engineering and technology closer to operations in a motion we call **OpsDev**

Growth, for any business, requires investment and subsequent focus. In fact, one of the first areas we applied our TMO was scaling new products. We needed to logically carve people/process/technology functions out of the existing environment and scale those specific to growth. Our TMO was able to isolate and focus the efforts that supported the target products and invest without recoding the embedded base and avoiding unnecessary cost. Over the course of five quarters, we scaled our Software-Defined Wide Area Networking (SD-WAN) service by 16x and today we support thousands of endpoints across the globe.

This new structure positions the business to drive enhanced productivity rates and speed-to-market changes while delivering an exceptional, best-in-class customer experience.

Transformation Tip #2 Define your North Star

Clear goals, free from interpretation and laid out without contradiction, eliminate distractions for your organization.

People, Process, Technology, and Culture

Transformation begins to take shape by addressing the foundational pillars of the people, process, technology, and culture previously mentioned. What follows is how we addressed each of these pillars and how any business can take steps to do the same:

People: Every business is a people business, so breaking down organization barriers and creating a common set of customer-focused goals is a key first step in enabling transformation. Marshaling, managing, and aligning resources in service of decisions and stakeholders can become “make or break.”

Designing Roles and Layers for Simplicity: Roles have been redesigned from 600 to less than 50, focusing on the core competencies of the work rather than unique instantiations. Aligning employee job families leads to a better overall experience for our customers. We heavily invested in training to develop skillsets and abilities to serve the customer. As a result, this increased our first call resolution, increased customer resolution time, and drove overall operational excellence.

Skills Transformation Training: Topics are rooted in technology, leadership, neuroscience, and various behaviors. The skills develop a growth mindset, catalyze innovation, spark positive disruption, and strengthen resiliency to change.

The Power of Performance (LIFT): The LIFT performance development initiative was established to “LIFT” employees through leadership accountability habits and enhanced metrics that matter. Over the course of the program, managers are continually assessed and evaluated, using **quadrant analysis** to drive each individual supervisor toward best in class practices of 1:1 coaching, team productivity, output quality, and premier customer experience. The program also instruments dynamic productivity models, establishing a **quartile system** for individual contributors, designed to identify attributes of a team’s highest performers. These performance traits, with focused application to develop individuals in the lower quartiles, create the “LIFT” for organizational productivity and increased capacity. Results to date have seen a 5% increase in overall team performance as managers partner operational metrics that matter with leadership accountability habits. Continuous improvement has been built into the program with a 4-phase LIFT maturity model guiding teams to realize individual professional growth and sustained business value.

Connecting by Closing the Loop: A **customer success obsessed**, best-in-class, closed loop program aligns with AT&T Business detractor alerts. Through this initiative, a survey is sent to customers within 24 hours of a service interaction asking if a problem was solved. If a detractor is identified, there is an automated alert to the coach of that representative/tech. Customer feedback is reviewed to resolve the issue at hand. Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) were put in place to reach out, respond within 2 business days, and publish those KPIs. Since implementing this program, there has been a **50% increase in completed surveys** and a **79% increase in verbatim comments**.



Process: Re-engineering and re-architecting processes for superior, frictionless customer experience are integral to a successful transformation. Previously, there were numerous processes that cut across different products, roles, solutions, and customers. This type of complexity stifled the ability to respond to customers' demands efficiently. A key enabler of transformation was pivoting away from just documenting for memorialization, to using the discipline of engineering for enablement of radical transformation.

Skills Pivot: With an intentional focus, we groomed **100+ process architects**. These individuals, paired with subject matter operations experts, applied six sigma and data-based analysis to identify multitudinal opportunities to eliminate waste, queuing delays, redundant efforts among many others. As more experience was gained, the process engineering discipline became a natural starting point for innovation across the entire landscape. A survey into the team identified **900+ individuals** with varying levels of six sigma skills that simply needed to be plugged into this energetic, dynamic approach to achieve even greater scale. We discovered existing talent, refreshed their skills, and harnessed their energy for exponential gains.

Process Re-engineering Pivot: Re-engineering for efficiency involves optimizing not just digital customer-facing assets, but equal focus on backend business and technology processes. We pivoted our SMEs to deeply integrate with our frontline operators, moving away from a structure which had the SMEs functionally and physically separated. We've found two primary paths to unlock big operational

improvements and realize the Triad of Value. First, **Solution labs** are assembled by bringing in cross-functional teams and then united with very purposeful intent. Here, our teams ideate and innovate freely, applying prototype solutions to 1%-3% of the production volume, quickly learn and continuously iterate. Initiatives that are approved for scale are industrialized and scaled through the transformation framework to address all three components of the Triad of Value. As an alternative path, **Co-located Test and Scale labs** work in reverse, where developers and engineers go into the field. They listen to real-time operators first, creating point solutions to apply directly in the field. One key difference – they observe the challenges the frontline is having before and after solution implementation, accelerating iteration with immediate exposure in production. This refreshing approach makes process re-engineering highly agile, pragmatic, and expeditious.

Over nearly two years, **180 key processes** have been re-engineered focused on strategic growth products and functional areas. These showcase opportunities all the way from tooling and automation needs to process-only changes, the latter being equally impactful. The following are a few examples:

Break Glass: How much of your service catalog can be described with “we’ve always done it that way?” What worked very well in the past is no guarantee it will work for your customers in the future. For AT&T Business, improving cycle time for multiple products and solutions has been an important focal point. An opportunity emerged following AT&T’s significant investment in its fiber network. Historically,

2 AT&T received the highest score among large enterprise and small/medium businesses in the J.D. Power 2020 U.S. Business Wireline Satisfaction Study of customers' satisfaction with their business wireline data and voice services. Visit [jdpower.com/awards](https://www.jdpower.com/awards) for more details.

customers are given a standard and reliable, but conservative, order delivery date for fiber services. This is in line with our culture of delivering on our commitments made to our customers, our employees, and our shareholders. However, the standard intervals did not factor in our expanding network reach. Analysis found we had the capability, and capacity, to deliver over 50% of the fiber orders with faster cycle time. Reinforced with our expanding culture pivot to customer-centricity and the need for speed, we redefined our delivery interval to include logic based on order category. On-net customer orders (i.e. customers where we already had connectivity into their location) could be quoted up to a 90% reduced delivery interval. Near-net customer orders (i.e. fiber infrastructure to their building which requires additional equipment) could be quoted up to an 80% reduced delivery interval. To scale this new process capability, we had to transform our technology, enhancing point of sale experiences with infrastructure design system data. The **“Fiber Fast Initiative”** stitched together systems to understand the delivery timing instantly and **reducing 64% of inaccurate order qualifications.**

Up-Skilling: Listening to the voice of the customer through our transactional survey process uncovered several dissatisfiers that needed to be addressed. Customers told us that our employees seemed to follow a very rigid workflow and were not empowered to immediately solve issues. This led to multiple handoffs, with numerous technical resources engaged, to eventually reach resolution. Working with the core process engineering team, we took several actions:

Instead of the traditional support model having tier 1 specialist simply performing triage (the gathering of information for directed handoff to multiple levels of tiered technical support), we collapsed those layers and upskilled our employees to resolve most items on the first contact. We had a cultural shift that focused on **First Contact Resolution (FCR)** instead of task pick up and hand off times. We also simplified our workflows and enabled employees to circumvent the standard workflow if they could immediately solve the customer issue. This program was widely successful and our FCR rate went from **less than 50% to greater than 90%**. More speed in resolving issues led to a dramatic increase in our customer experience survey scores. Employee job satisfaction also increased as a result of higher skills training and being empowered to resolve issues.

Transformation Tip #3 A (TMO) View of Success

It is not good enough to simply deliver a project (PMO), full value derivation is only truly realized when transforming people, process, technology, and culture (TMO).

“We Own It!” The second area we saw the opportunity to reduce handoffs and improve the customer experience was with our Service Management teams. They often are the frontline for escalated customer issues but were reliant on other organizations for action. We launched a culture program called **“We Own It!”** which simply stated that no matter the issue the Service Manager was the **single point of accountability** to the customer. We also reinforced with support teams that if a Service Manager was reaching out, they should be treated just like a priority customer escalation. Analysis was then performed on these engagements and categorized, leading to identification that a subset of tasks was administrative in nature. The **“Go-Direct”** program trained the Service Managers to go directly to the source of the issue to get resolution as compared to previously working through multiple organizations and handoffs. This empowered Service Management team continues to drive faster resolution for the customer and off-loads work from the support organizations.

Technology: Technology is absolutely critical to the core of every transformation. Too often digital transformation is confused with merely introducing a new portal web site, which in most cases is only the visible tip of the iceberg. Predominance of the total effort, as much as 90%, needs to be applied to what doesn't meet the eye:

- Re-engineering processes and harmoniously automating them
- Implementing scaled agile by bringing business unit development teams and operations teams as a single collaborative force of work with an emphasis on business-IT zero distancing
- Enabling teams with continuous development and continuous integration ecosystem fueling change adoption



- Identifying, selecting, and scaling new technology to propel to new heights of business value
- Driving an end-to-end platform vision
- Strengthening borderless collaboration with shared IT groups and suppliers
- Turning our frontline into citizen developers using no-code/low-code tooling

To achieve true transformation, we rolled up our sleeves and tackled the convoluted system flows and antiquated technologies. To deliver sustainable long-term results **and** provide immediate relief to the frontline and customers alike, we devised a **short, mid, and mid-long release train strategy**. We chose purpose-built technology, architecture, and team structures for each release train. These were supported by governance procedures to ensure full coordination and synergies across all three tracks.

Short-Term: The short-term keys on quick wins. This near-term solution builds the momentum and critical positive sentiment necessary to allow time for the other two release trains to deliver. Within this strategy, we introduce technologies such as Robotic Process Automation (RPA) and no/low code tooling utilizing model driven development. Our dedicated developers mentored business experts on these technologies, broadening our development pool with **“citizen developers.”** Together they started with simply automating tasks, then graduated to flow automation and ultimately implementing end-to-end processes. As these new resources contributed to the technical solution, their newfound understanding of what is achievable provided additional crowd-sourced opportunities. Business experts went from performing tasks to delivering innovations and collaborating to improve the overall architecture.

Mid-Term: Our mid-term strategy employs the use of Software-as-a-Service (SaaS) platforms with highly agile, low code technologies that leverage a scalable, cloud-native solution to continually extend and improve. These solutions aim to provide over-the-top automated experience leveraging technology stack and assets that already exist.

Our platform approach for leveraging a cost-effective and quick-to-market SaaS solution comprised of the below tactics:

1. Deliberately leverage native SaaS platform capability where possible for fast turnaround and low technical debt
2. Abstract custom logic by converting mission critical backend processes into cloud native microServices, containerized for CI/CD for agility and scalability
3. Expose systems through a consistent API framework for friction-free integration
4. Limit direct exposure to legacy systems through a seamless UI/UX consistent with the SaaS platform experience

Achieving a **platform-level approach** that includes microservices, APIs, and SaaS, we delivered technology at both speed and scale for our customers. This **plug-and-play** approach enabled us to deliver a modern CRM experience with **90% reusability** of our microservices and APIs.

Mid-Long-Term: Mid-long term capitalizes on our platform approach by looking at the holistic ecosystem to improve agility and reuse and drive legacy applications rationalization. It is in the service of reducing Total Cost of Ownership (TCO) by removing technical debt and creating modern platform-based capabilities. These not only address complicated application layering and data latency concerns, but also act as enablers to create intelligent solutions. Re-engineered operational and business support systems brought a fundamental uplift to our transformation by allowing incorporation of AI technologies and seeding our ability to implement additional short-term opportunities, creating a flywheel of innovation.

An example of technology implementation making a difference for our customers is the **Predictive and Proactive Intelligence Platform**. This platform leverages machine learning to track the lifecycle of a customer’s project.

Based on customer effort, cycle times, and retry rates, the platform will proactively predict if a customer will remain a promoter of AT&T or if they begin to start sliding towards neutral or detractor. Utilizing 30 terabytes of data, the system generates predictive alarms to drive next-best action either automatically, or with system assist, to ensure the customer remains a promoter.

Together, this multi-term approach allows for continuous automation and intelligence aligned to our 'Triad of Value.' By employing technology and architectural approaches to support different delivery horizons, AT&T Business has delivered **hundreds of millions in value**, while realizing short term and long-term strategic goals.

Transformation Tip #4 Different Problems Require Different Technologies

Technology plays a critical role. However, you have to select the technology very carefully (fit for purpose) and ensure it is in service of business and not a goal unto itself. Solutions should be solving problems, not looking for them.

Culture: One of the most integral responsibilities for a leader is to establish, foster, and sustain a high-performing culture. To move a large organization in a new, positive direction requires much more than a top-down approach. It's a **wavelike motion** starting at the top of the organization, but the movement quickly needs reciprocation from the bottom.

We achieved a strong cultural foundation by cementing a multilayered approach reinforcing three main elements – be the best that you can, help make everyone around you successful, and do something every day for no credit:

Personal Introspection (Be great at what you do): Individuals must be whole and transparent while being confident yet humble. With confidence comes the ability to handle adversity and with humility comes self-reflection, knowledge of areas of improvement, continuous learning, and up-skilling. The true art of self-awareness is always aware and always working on the self as we are all works-in-progress.

Individual Connections (Help make everyone around you successful): These are the extroverted qualities individuals aspire towards in their interactions with others. Individuals can establish connections with others by truly appreciating them, investing in relationships, promoting others' brands, and being a catalyst for reaching goals.

Teams (Do something for no credit): Team culture is the most powerful form of the cultural ecosystem. Teams must maximize the unique skillsets, resources, and expertise of the individuals to respond to a multitude of challenges. When individuals "lean in," together they are better and stronger for the customer and the business, becoming foundational to an organization's Transformational DNA.

Together, these are the ingredients for success. As leaders, it is important to constantly embody these cultural values moving throughout life.

In conclusion, there is a great deal of interdependency between each of these pillars, hence it is important to build a playbook that brings actions across the pillars, together in great harmony. Often, process optimization and simplification pave the way for technology automation, as well as elegant role definition and skills transformation. In reverse, a technology platform introduction could help simplify processes that were otherwise convoluted and relieve people from manual or cumbersome work.

At its core, this cultural foundation creates a halo effect that engender many other positive cultural values. Each day our teams aspire to these cultural tenets: borderless collaboration, continuous learning, signal-over-noise, fix-it-forward and extreme ownership, among many others. Bringing together individuals at all levels of the organization is crucial in driving positive change.

Transformation Tip #5 The Most Important Element: Culture

Individuals need to be engaged, and teams need to be high-performing. Extreme ownership and a mission to make those around you successful promote a "lean in" practice.



The Response to COVID-19 Pandemic: Accelerating Transformation

Pandemic: The Unexpected Crisis

In early 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic quaked throughout the world rippling waves of uncertainties and unknowns. The 'usual' has been shattered. The way we were is no longer the way we are. Governments have locked borders, businesses have sent employees home, and hospitals have halted all non-essential procedures. Cities and countries are implementing 'Shelter in Place' activities. What makes the world continue to tick? The internet.

We quickly recognized this crisis would need our Transformational DNA at its best while it will also, simultaneously, put it to the test. It would require ultra-fast action to ensure customers had capabilities to continue operations as surge in demand emerged overnight for communication services.

IN TWO MONTHS...

we delivered

16,000+

service requests

with

**80%
IMPROVED**

cycle time

Agility in Action: Employee Mobilization

The health and safety of our global workforce is our number one priority. Located in hundreds of countries, navigating waves of changing governmental policies while keeping our employees safe was no small task. While experienced in crisis management given the mission critical nature of our role, COVID-19 introduced new, unique dimensions. Most obvious was directing hundreds of thousands of employees to quickly pivot to a work-from-home model. A new program was implemented within days, paving the way for an industry-leading response including:

- Reaching agreement with union leadership on conditions for represented employees to work from home, an action never been done before in the history of the company
- Activating a borderless team across Operations, Labor, Human Resources, Legal, Real Estate, and Corporate Communications to execute an emerging operational model of crisis and response
- Setting up cloud-based solutions from scratch, in two to three days at global scale, to enable call center employees to productively work from home

In a matter of 2 weeks, 90% of AT&T Business Customer Service & Operations employees were working at peak performance from the safety of their homes. While unprecedented, logistics alone was not enough. Supervisor training, based on higher empathy and demonstration of a greater emotional quotient (EQ), was conducted to equip managers during these stressful times. Having more empathy-based 1-on-1 conversations, checking on family health, and genuine interest in how they are taking care of themselves were a few of the employee well-being tips.

AT&T's purpose to **create connection** was top of mind as we established employee networks, counseling resources, and educational forums to pull everyone together and keep them connected.

Transformation Tip #6 Commit to a Framework

Technology cannot stand on its own. Any transformation requires interweaving people, process, technology, and culture.

Rapid Response to Customer Needs

AT&T was able to rapidly serve its employees across the globe by relying heavily on the Transformational DNA described earlier. Having embarked upon our transformation journey a few years ago, we had already developed significant collaboration, agility, and adaptive muscle.

There were four key demands that emerged for communication services including:

1. Massive remote working demands across the globe so all could work from the safety of their homes
2. Spike in hospitals, critical health care, public safety, and government services needs
3. Critical augments to communications services infrastructure for companies across all industries
4. Increase capacity and re-engineering of the core network to avoid wireless and wireline data and voice traffic congestion for AT&T as well as other carriers.

For our team, this meant delivering new connections, augmenting capacity for both data and voice networks, and where we have managed services responsibilities, ensuring changes were made across the end-to-end networking and IT infrastructure.

We saw the surge in demand coming early on, so we established virtual **Command Centers**. They have been key in organizing our efforts, bringing together AT&T and external partner teams across the end-to-end lifecycle into a single forum or what we call the **OneATTeam** to address our customers' demands. Three examples are:

Delivery Command Center – AT&T Core Network:

Established to handle higher demands across our infrastructure. As demands on the network continually evolve, this structure is keeping our network strong.

Delivery Command Center - Customer Needs:

Designed to organize all delivery functions across AT&T to expedite critical customer orders with high priority work volumes. Within one week of the pandemic, our teams had already completed hundreds of COVID-19-related customer orders across multiple industry segments. This effort is proving vital to not only our customers, but to the functioning of our society during these critical times.

Incident Command Center: Established recognizing that vital customer incidents need restoration faster than ever before. This center is prioritizing incidences with Telecommunications Service Priority (TSP) indicators above all else.

Together, these Command Centers have become the well-published single-entry point for all COVID-19 requests, thus providing laser focus on our customers' immediate needs. These customer-centric Command Centers were examples of **transformation in action**, designed to bring together our customers and employees, enabled by agile technology and simplified processes.

Transformation in Action

No modern business can operate without being hyper connected at all levels. So, how did the previously mentioned Command Centers quickly enable new approaches to flourish during a time of crisis? It all goes back to the foundational pillars of the transformation framework: people, process, technology, and culture.

People: Working virtually for many was a dramatic departure from our previous structure, which focused heavily on localized collaboration. Our Workspace 2020 design was purposeful, in that it allowed multiple functions to come together in collaborative pods and practice scaled agile principles. We also encouraged heavy interaction and face-to-face meetings in our center-based environment. This helped everyone feel connected and be part of the local AT&T family.

The Emotional Quotient (EQ): Once the workforce moved into their virtual offices, our managers had to get creative. They needed to help everyone feel connected and retain the team effectiveness and dynamics we had so successfully fostered. Side-by-side metric driven productivity coaching pivoted to conversations that were broader yet more meaningful. They focused on the employees and their families' well-being, the health of the organization, and rapidly changing strategies on how their work was directly impacting the success of our customers. In short, from being work coaches they became life coaches.

Real-Time, Integrated Virtual Teams: More than 40+ stakeholder teams and their subject matter experts partnered on the end-to-end management of various order types. In less than three days, a tool was developed to identify relevant members and automatically launched virtual collaboration spaces for them. Over 5,000 of these virtual rooms were formed. They were critical in hyper-focusing on each individual customer request.

Fix-it-Forward: Along with these collaboration rooms we launched management dashboards creating transparent visibility of the full order's lifecycle. This provided in **real time to all involved** work activity details and issues being encountered. Instead of rejecting a task because of incomplete or erroneous information, the teams operated in a new mode: "**Fix-it-Forward.**" The collaboration allowed teams to accept the task, correct the information as necessary with others help and continuously move towards customer request fulfillment.



Extreme Collaboration: Each workspace was assigned a Collaboration Lead that provided oversight across the delivery continuum. They expedited critical delivery milestones by pivoting from picking up tasks in an allowed interval which can run up to multiple days, to completing as soon as possible. This proactive oversight diminished the seams and removed queuing delays. Extreme collaboration was realized on the bedrock of technology.

Process: To meet the urgent needs of our customers during this pandemic, we had to deconstruct our own processes and recreate them to enable hyper fast service delivery.

Handoff Process Redesign: We implemented a single pane of glass for the team obviating the need to go to multiple systems. Additionally, two-way handoffs took place live using the collaboration workspace, thus ensuring that the next team had all they needed and the handoff was seamless and immediate.

Serial to Parallel Processing: Our real time handoff structure allowed us to run a number of these steps in parallel, starting a task before the prior one was complete. As an example, we started the build functions to the customer location, even before the order was released, saving us up to two weeks.

Task Elimination and Process Simplification: Our technology implementations have provided significant opportunity for simplification. As an example, a task required assistance from sales to coordinate with the customer to activate equipment at their site. However, our modern tooling made this task redundant, allowing for a no-touch automated activation. We were able to eliminate this and a number of additional manual tasks.

Creating More “Hours” in the Day: Our end-to-end flow has hundreds of applications and platforms. Scheduled weekend maintenance is common, resulting in down time for core systems. However, when minutes matter and teams needed to work 24x7, these maintenance windows were impermissible. We identified the most critical applications that would be needed to maintain productivity, and by enhancing our code deployment procedures, reduced their downtime an additional 25%. This expanded capacity, so the work for our customers may continue.

Across these four categories over 30 multi-disciplinary processes were reengineered and an additional 20 more are identified for future changes.

Technology: Over 200 technology innovations were delivered within weeks to meet COVID-19 demand. From mid-March through May, we delivered over 16,000 communication services requests for businesses, and we did so rapidly – at **80% improved cycle time** vs. business as usual.

The Technology Transformation Jump Start:

Technology doesn’t operate in a vacuum. COVID-19 resulted in the need for dramatic changes to plans of record. Technology was necessary to achieve these changes instantaneously. Because we were already transforming, the virtual teams existed and were aligned on goals. Therefore, the planning, set up, and logistical efforts were bypassed.

Transformation Tip #7 OpsDev

Make it a continual practice to have developers sit directly with operations teams, observing fast-paced flows in real time, then deploying highly effective enhancements and fixes.

OpsDev in Action: We implemented an agile execution engine with a difference: a model where Ops goals lead and developers follow to serve them. With the development teams fully integrated with customer operations, we were able to support the increased COVID-19 demand and compressed timeframes. Enhanced dashboarding of COVID-19 orders was setup within hours which provided heightened error handling, triggering on-demand support. Orders were owned and managed by a specific work group from sales to provisioning, eliminating hand-offs and collapsing five to six layers.

Walking in the Customers’ Shoes: Expert technologists became secret shoppers and journey mapped the entire customers’ lifecycle. Over 25 customer experience improvements were identified and 45% were implemented within 30 days. For example, a large healthcare service provider needed more bandwidth to handle expanded COVID testing. This required multiple orders across different product lines. The operation teams were ready to process them business as usual i.e. process orders in sequence, building product layers one at a time.

Because the technology teams were observing all the chat rooms, they realized the need for breakthrough given the customers' need for hyper speed. They proactively intervened, developed in near real time scripts to automatically orchestrate the build-up of multiple products while managing for dependencies. This saved multiple days of cycle time.

Productivity to the Max: New workmanagement tooling was created to segment and streamline assignment, accelerating order intake by four to six hours. We maximized productivity with RPA by creating BOTs in less than 24 hours, **saving hundreds of hours on manual tasks**. Natural Language Processing (NLP) was utilized to analyze text for next best action identification and automated execution. Over 400 different fallouts were processed daily from our access providers. Our automation was able to decompose the issue and take immediate action or pull in an SME to solve the problem real time. For example, we applied NLP and ML to the chat taking place in all our collaboration rooms. If any particular group was not taking appropriate action, it recommended the next best action. Another example: if a particular order started falling behind, the system alerted the SME group to intervene.

Culture: Our foundation is rooted in service, accountability, integrity, and greatness toward our customers and employees. Our people have a powerful, latent, "rise to the challenge" drive that is activated in times of crises which was evidenced by our response to COVID-19.

The Cultural Network: There was relentless collaboration across 40 different teams including

marketing, sales, order writers, designers, testers, and customer service teams whose single goal was to remove friction, ensuring that we delivered on our commitment to our customers with speed.

Shrinking the Distance: With everyone's safety and health top of mind, we heavily pivoted to a virtual organization, getting creative around how we stay connected both on work and non-work-related tasks. Using online social tools and video conferencing, we found many different activities that helped us come closer in this new environment. We virtually organized frequent huddles, happy hours, recognitions, and COVID-19 heroes. We also created a portal through which our employees could share ideas, health tips, stories, and photos as a way of shrinking physical distance.

Continuous Learning and Improvement: Never let a good learning opportunity go to waste. This pandemic gave us an opportunity to reassess our skills and training roadmap. It accelerated us further in our journey towards being frictionless, faster, simpler, all digital, and a customer obsessed culture of greatness.

All for One, One for All: COVID-19 reaffirmed that basics mattered to our customers. There were an incredible number of steps to enable from customer intention to fulfillment. AT&T was able to re-organize our people, process, and technology because of our culture. A culture that obsesses over customer's success, turning thousands of individuals into a finely tuned orchestra. Each of our Command Centers reflect the organization's Transformation DNA in action firing on all cylinders.

Transformation Tip #8 Recruit Everyone

Recruit everyone's minds and hearts. A broad and deep collection of transformation-minded individuals can be the difference between collective execution as opposed to endless stakeholding.



The Ever-Changing New Normal – Be Adept at Adapting

Discussing the “new normal” is a very trendy topic, but the term is a misnomer. Change is not new, in fact, the only constant we can rely on is that there will be change.

Leadership: One thing that should be obvious ... thriving through change requires strong leadership. A framework for leadership, it's not just for the so-called hierarchical heads, but for the inclusion of any leader anywhere in the organization. You set the tone at the top for continuous improvement and continuous motivation, building a connected team of corporate athletes.

Here are some key elements of leadership:

- **Always be a continuous learner:** The more you learn, the better you are at setting and adjusting the course correctly
- **Be great at strategy and execution:** Develop board level strategy and translate into execution at the frontline and vice versa, take frontline challenges and help influence board level strategies. "Make the complex simple."
- **Be decisive:** Your teams are relying on you
- **Be hands off yet omniscient:** Empower and enable teams while observing, staying connected, and intervening early
- **Create vectors of collective genius:** Inspire excellence as opposed to demanding it

In our case, the exciting journey continues. The stellar performance by the team to serve the surge in demand has helped stage our next transformation chapter: applying the methods used to serve the COVID-19 volumes at scale to the full book of work. We have broken down the work into three focus areas:

1. **Restructuring:** We are fundamentally reshaping and rethinking how we look at our customers' needs and how we serve them. We are continuing to transform our operating model to drive focus on execution, with a culture of accountability and decision-making closer to the customer, by flattening our company/organization.
2. **Holding onto the Gains:** Prior to the pandemic, we were already making great progress on our transformation roadmap. COVID-19 was an accelerant. We had 200+ innovations in a period of eight weeks. We are now hard at work industrializing those innovations: changing methods and procedures, communicating, training

the larger teams and productionalizing the technology innovations that were done on the fly.

3. **Re-architecting for the Future:** Our innovation framework is designed to quickly bubble up opportunities from the frontlines and deliver transformation in 30, 60, 120 days. We are quickly reallocating capital dollars towards the opportunities that we couldn't address during the pinnacle of COVID-19 volume surge. We are re-architecting our flows and putting new programs in place that will help us keep this positive trajectory. We anticipate creating 20% capacity while being ready to deliver services materially faster.

Coding Transformation into the DNA: As many businesses emerge with new priorities and purpose, AT&T Business is committed to serve. Armed with new learnings from our response to COVID-19, our transformation has never been stronger. We are here to serve our customers.

At AT&T, we must continue to transform to win and the importance of connections, and connectivity is more important than ever. Our teams are not daunted by change. They are energized and excited! That's because they have developed Transformational DNA. They see meaningful progress which creates for a virtuous cycle

Businesses of any kind can infuse Transformational DNA into their organizations. To do so, in our experience: building a transformation engine is a must. Keeping it running in perpetuity is also so. This codes transformation into your DNA which in turn helps you be "**Adept at Adapting**".

Why AT&T?

AT&T delivers highly secure networking solutions for businesses of all sizes. As a leader in emerging technologies, we offer custom solutions in Internet and Networking Services, Cybersecurity, Internet of Things, Cloud Solutions, Mobility, Voice and Collaboration, and DIRECTV for Business. We also provide expert consulting and support to meet your needs.

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