

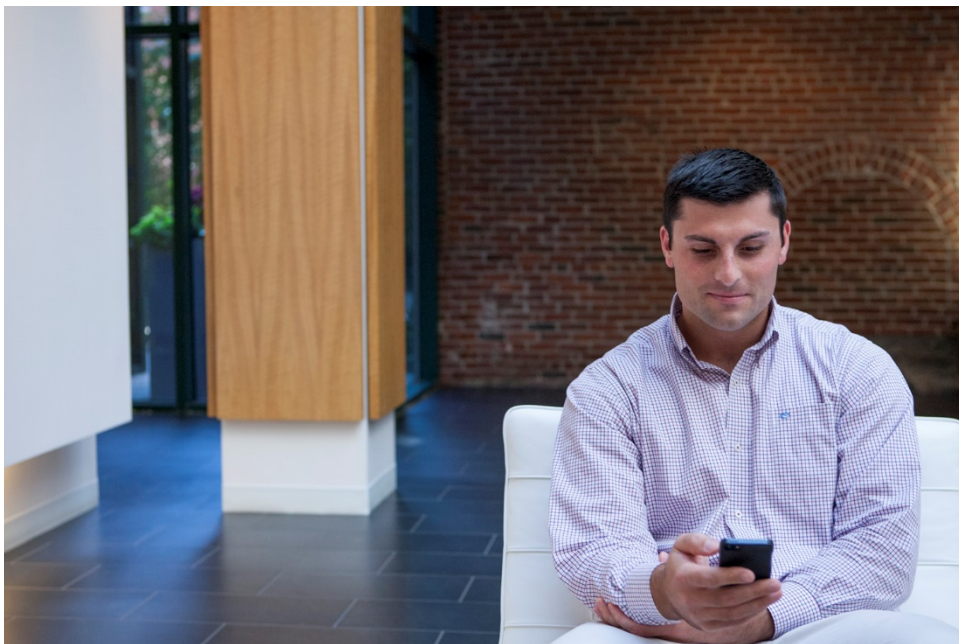


Embrace digital applications
to drive business

But How ?

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Where to start?

A simple question, but not necessarily a simple answer. You know the problem – or feel you do – and have a vision of how it could be solved. The challenge is getting your idea turned into reality within the constraints of your company. It could be seen as an impossible task, too difficult or just plain crazy. There is hope and you can solve your business problems.

You are not alone as we have assisted many clients to solve their business problems, challenges or thinking more positively – opportunities. Whether it's exploiting a new business opportunity as in the case of **Saga Healthcare** or improving employee engagement at **Clarks International**, I have seen a pattern emerging in how our clients take relatively small steps to not only solve problems but seize the



opportunity to make significant impacts in their business. I am not saying there is a magical formulae or a regimental process that if followed blindly to the letter will be a guarantee of success, but the pattern suggests it works more often than not.

There are 5 activities that our clients have identified that helps them to meet business challenges head on and to be successful.

The first is to have an idea – which means you recognize there is a better way of doing things. You also need to work out where the solution fits within your IT landscape. Gartner have produced research about Bi-modal IT which looks at the differences between systems that are well defined, change slowly and systems that are less defined and can change quickly - **agile**. Understanding where your idea fits in this model will help you be successful. I will focus on the **digital** or **agile** approach which is well established.

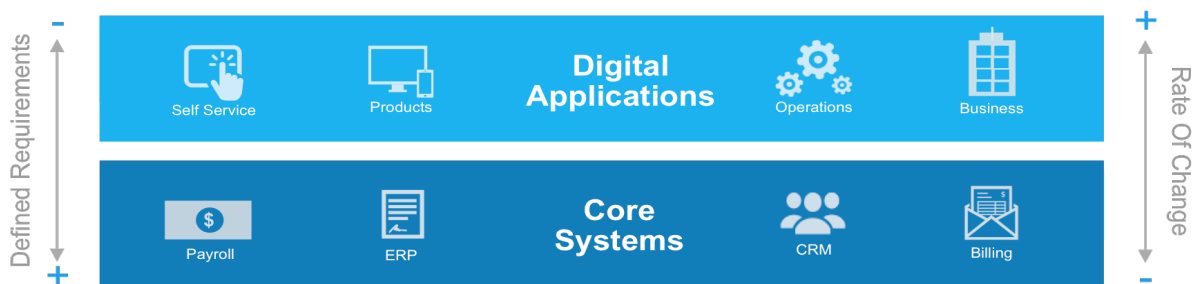
Secondly work out if solving the business problem or bringing a new process online will actually make a difference to anyone. Thirdly, start simply and evolve. Don't try to eat the elephant in one sitting.

Fourthly, collaborate with your colleague. You may be surprised where the support and encouragement will come from, and lastly, celebrate success and tell the world.

Activity 1

Recognize why digital apps are different and see if your idea is digital.

This could be a long debate and time could be spent arguing about technical and functional definitions, so I will provide a reference point which I feel is valid. This is not my own definition, but taken from work done by Gartner.



Source: IT Future is Now. Gartner, John-MacDorman

Applications that sit at the core level are typically well defined and their rate of change can be slow. They are very important to the organization as they address areas such as compliance, predictability and accuracy – people want to be paid the right amount and on time. Digital applications are aimed at managing uncertainty, less defined requirements and maybe subject to rapid change.

The key take away is how you develop applications in these two areas. Core systems use large teams, waterfall methodologies for development and multi-tiered landscapes. Digital systems have small teams with close business collaboration, quick and regular developments (in days) and a single development environment. They do not need the solution to be fully defined before you start – it evolves during the project. This is where we see great success as it enables Business Users and IT to collaborate

Activity 2

Secondly work out if solving the business problem or bringing a new process online will actually make a difference to anyone.

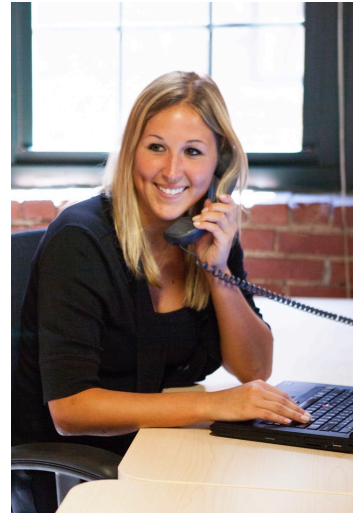
It's an obvious question to ask and must be asked. What I have seen is that organizations that are new to agile development underestimate, or even do not believe the speed at which applications can be developed and the approach to building an application is also sometime alien. The feeling or belief is that before the project starts:

- They should know exactly what they want
- We know exactly how to build it
- Nothing changes along the way

In reality what happens is:

- They learn what they want as the project progresses
- We learn how to build it along the way
- Change happens

A business case is sometimes hard to build when you know where you want to get to, but don't yet fully know the route! The good news is you should start small and then grow.



Activity 3

Start simply and evolve.

A component of the agile approach is to collect user stories. These form the basis of the functionality that will be developed in days and replayed back to users for feedback. This is a great way to build an application as it evolves from user input during the development phases, rather than right at the end. After all, seeing is believing.

The danger is to try to implement too many user stories and to try to get all the functionality you may ever need in the first deployment. This may have arisen from past experience of if it's not there when the project is finished, you will never get it. As digital applications are aimed at loose definition and rapid change, resist the temptation to build big. Go for a minimal viable product and enhance over time.

Activity 4

Collaborate with your colleagues

The best person to know how your organization works is you, and if collaboration is something that can happen. When we have run workshops about the approach and structure of projects, it has always been warmly welcomed by the project team and business users.

Ideas flow backwards and forwards between project team members and business users, people get excited and they get very creative – people genuinely want to help and be successful. But remember Activity 3 - Start simply and evolve. A bit of change management goes a long way.

The key person from the Business in the whole process is the Product Owner. They decide which user stories are implemented and maintain the backlog for subsequent phases. It's an exciting role but has its pressures.



Activity 5

Celebrate success and tell the world.



We have silly tradition. When ever we go live with a new client we celebrate with a beautiful cake. It brings together everyone who has been involved with the project and is a chance for everyone to come together and talk about their experiences.

To date, it has been very positive and word gets around the business very quickly. The cake is usually big enough for people who were not

involved in the project to join in. We have had pictures placed on LinkedIn, Twitter and Facebook by client employees.

This publicity makes the next phase, or new idea easier for our clients to sell to the business and IT



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Thank you for taking the time to read this paper.

If you would like discuss the projects undertaken by **Saga Healthcare** or **Clarks International** or if you have an idea that you would like to explore please get in touch.



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