CIO Insights

Migrating from
Analog to Digital

By David Berry, CIO, Daymon Worldwide

Many companies find themselves in the situation of having an IT organization that is well suited to the "analog" world while everything they read is about companies going digital. They wonder if they're missing something. They are. As a sitting CIO, we need to be aware of not only what we have to do to "keep the lights on," but more importantly, what were need to be doing to move to a digital world. It isn't always about the technology. It's about the people too. In fact, it's more than the IT people, but also the very users and customers that we serve.

A key element in moving to digital is figuring out what it actually means. Is it e-Commerce or mobile apps a new way to market or go to market? A new revenue stream? A brand new product? These are all key questions one needs to consider before embarking on the journey. Then there is readiness. Is the company ready, educated? Are company leaders ready to operate in this new paradigm called digital? If so, will we host it ourselves or use the cloud? There are many decisions to make about how it will be managed, nurtured, and extended. For example, will we host it ourselves or use the cloud?

At Daymon Worldwide, our first order of business was dealing with legacy. We outsourced our help desk and data center, which took six months. Then we spent another six months outsourcing our applications support and development. We resized the organization along the way. The team moved some 350 servers and 70 applications to third parties in less than a year. We established new process for this new way of operating and the IT team was now refocused on the future-digital.

We first focused on creating a business engagement team. Led by a VP, this team was challenged with putting forth the governance processes to manage what we already have. It introduced users to a new way of thinking about IT, its capabilities, and services. It also made excellent relationships with key internal users, as well as our customers. It was truly one of the key successes to taking the next step, which was to determine how digital solutions would be addressed. We decided cloud solutions would lead the charge because they're fast to succeed, offer little infrastructure investment and are easy to find and use.

Our Business Engagement team first implemented a "digital catalogue" for our import business. Previously done on paper, in three months we migrated the business to a digital platform that allowed customers to select products in a showroom with a tablet. It created a shopping cart, costed up the products and established the required cubes (hence containers). This was a "moon shot" for this business.

Most importantly, it demonstrated our ability to deliver cloud solutions quickly and effectively. Then came a lightweight CRM solution, followed by an Innovation Zone all based on cloud solutions. We got lucky. Our key business leaders embraced the new technologies and what they delivered to their part of the business.

We have since expanded our digital offerings to other parts of Daymon, including our international operations. While I consider Daymon to be in its infancy in migrating to digital, it's only going to get better and faster.

As for our legacy systems, we continue to run them, exploit them, and in several cases, shut down systems no longer deemed relevant or of business value in a digital world. **CR**

David Berry