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Navigating a multi-year cloud transformation



An industry-leading multinational software corporation was embarking on its transformation from on-premise, perpetual license models to SaaS and cloud – a shift that required new ways of thinking and working across every part of the company. Over the course of four years, the company partnered with BTS to bring its transformation to life. Throughout this journey, BTS acted as a true transformation partner, from strategy alignment to culture transformation and execution enablement.

Aligning and enabling the leadership team

To begin laying the groundwork for the transformation, leaders needed to internalize not only what leading in the future state would look like, but also how to successfully navigate their talent, customers, and the business through a complex transition that would require managing multiple models in parallel. Adding to the complexity, a lot of what this shift would look like was unknown – leaders needed to be equipped to figure things out as they went along.

BTS began by partnering with the organization's executive team over multiple working sessions to help them codify objectives and assumptions around the transformation, and what was required of their leaders to execute the shift successfully. These sessions culminated in the design of an experience for mid-level and senior leaders that simulated the company's transition from its current to future SaaS state. The simulation immersed leaders in the change and allowed them to "practice" running the business through the transition. This experience included:

- Managing trade-offs around delivering results in the short term while investing in the platforms, systems and organizations required for cloud
- Internalizing the critical business drivers, new metrics, and inter-relationships of the SaaS and cloud models that were necessary for the shift to be successful
- Letting go of old ways of thinking about the business and developing new instincts

A simplified version of the experience was developed and cascaded throughout the organization to the manager and individual contributor levels to drive similar understanding of the new business model fundamentals.

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Shifting the culture

As the leaders made progress laying these foundations of the strategy and business model, it became clear that culture was going to make or break the transformation. Shifting a highly product-centric organization to being centered around the customer success was critical in a fully subscription-based model. To enable this shift, the company partnered with BTS to roll out a "road show" to all employees across the globe – a half-day experience to drive rapid mindset and behavior shift.

First, teams explored what it means to be a customer-centric company by drawing upon personal experiences and market shifts to define what it really means to be centered around making customers successful. They then examined the current customer experience along each phase of the customer journey and created a picture of what these experiences must look like in the future cloud state. A mini simulation followed, which focused on internalizing the shifts and mindsets that are required to bridge the gap and build the desired customer-centric culture. Teams worked through scenarios exemplifying the daily pivotal moments that would require new ways of thinking and acting on the job, in real-time.

Upon the success of the first program, BTS partnered with the company to roll out two additional interventions targeting subsequent shifts that were required around speed, decision-making, simplicity, and security.

Supporting the field

The company realized, in order to successfully transform, they had to bring their partners along with them and support them through their own respective transformations. Thus, BTS partnered with the company to create an experience at the company's sales kickoff for the leaders of its partner resellers, to similarly equip them around the critical business model, strategy, and culture shifts required to make the transformation themselves.

As the time came to drive the full transition to subscription, it was clear that there would be no element of the execution more pivotal than the conversations with customers articulating the benefits and opportunities of the new models. If done poorly, the transition would pose an enormous risk of significant customer attrition. BTS created simple enablement modules to equip all sales leaders and reps to have these pivotal conversations, and a custom "deal calculator" to be able to run scenarios with customers in real time. This web-based, mobile tool helped to make the challenging conversation of shifting from licensing to subscription an easier one, as well as the actual shift from on-premise to the cloud more seamless with its use.

Looking to the future

The company's thoughtful, deliberate approach to strategic alignment, shifting culture, and equipping their people for execution has been a lynchpin in their successful transformation. To date, they have successfully completed the transition to new subscription models and made dramatic progress on their pure cloud and cloud-connected offerings. The company has been consistently meeting and exceeding its transition plans which are communicated to Wall Street, further positioning themselves for ongoing success.

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