

View Point

Role of QA in Strengthening Digital Transformation

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A close look at the global financial services industry reveals that existing business models are under tremendous pressure on account of falling income rates, reducing service lines and competition from new age players. Digital transformation is no longer a differentiator for organizations, but a key mandate that determines the difference between existence and elimination. Recent researches and surveys also point to the fact that businesses that effectively adopt digital technology grow faster and deliver higher growth profits.

“UAE’s banking sector is about to take a giant digital leap with the launch of the Emirates Digital Wallet, which is scheduled to take place within the next few months” as per Gulf News report dated July 30, 2017.

The first-of-its-kind wallet, developed and implemented under the aegis of the UAE Banks Federation (UBF) and fully supported by the country’s banking sector, marks a true milestone in the country’s push towards a cashless future.

Emirates NBD has launched Liv mobile app in February 2017, which is aimed at providing a differentiated digital banking experience for 2.5 million millennials in the UAE who account for about 26 per cent of the country’s population. The UAE Millennials’ annual spending is estimated in the range of Dh20 to Dh24 billion.

According to McKinsey’s report In United Arab Emirates, 70 to 80 percent of the population is carrying a supercomputer in their pocket, placing the country in the top ranks of global smartphone penetration. On this metric Bahrain, Qatar, and the United Arab Emirates score higher than the United States (100 percent vs 80 percent).

Digital technology, in particular, has fuelled the growth of the global economies and positioned them the forefront for future development.

Software quality is Key

Sustaining digital growth is as big a challenge as initiating a digital transformation or setting up a digital business, if not more. With rapid digital technology advances, came the increased risk of threats that have plagued global digital businesses and effectively prevented the industry from cashing in on its initial momentum.

3 major challenges awaiting those failing to address underlying software risk issues are - system outages, data corruption and cyber security. Irrespective of whether the company is large or small, hackers are becoming a big problem, and it is an issue that is here to stay. We recently witnessed the Tesco Bank hacking case which revealed its vulnerability to the recent cyber raid on its customers’ accounts, and they are far from alone.

We have also seen other recent IT outages at leading organizations that have indicated a systemic weakness in global businesses. Regulators are threatening huge fines for organizations that get it wrong. The reputation risk alone should be enough for companies to take the problem more seriously. When businesses have so much on the line i.e. customer experience, brand reputation and costly fines, they must increase their focus towards software quality.



As a priority, global businesses must take security seriously and be aware of the modern-day innovative cyber threats as well as the faulty code quality that can lead to such attacks. It is found that 50% of security problems occur in the software design and architecture. The challenges are magnified by many software weaknesses not being detected by our traditional testing methods. Also, when the written code gets longer and complex, the exposure to glitches and faults increases. Complex code also results in businesses taking twice as long to get to the root cause when a glitch or outage happens.

Poor software quality, if unaddressed, will continue to let global businesses down in the digitally enabled world we live in today. Hence, there is a burning need for an in-depth analysis beyond the traditional code analysis, which can help the organizations detect the dangerous structural flaws in their enterprise systems.

Two of the approaches that can be adopted to ensure Best Quality Software are:

- a. Integrated Quality Assurance Strategy – Continuous integration and delivery of software must be supported by continuous testing. An integrated test strategy should be implemented to cover all aspects across the end-to-end software development lifecycle, be it waterfall or agile methodology. The validations and verifications should span from requirements to production, functional to non-functional, APIs to user experiences across channels and devices etc. Automation is key!
- b. Quality Assurance Governance – An integrated test strategy must be supported by an end-to-end QA Governance which would ensure that each and every entry and exit criteria is well-defined and met for each step i.e. starting right from ensuring Testability, Consistency, Completeness, Unambiguity, Maintainability and Comprehensiveness of the requirement up to ensuring complete code coverage, percentage automation, final signoff, etc.

The success of these 2 approaches lies firmly in the establishment of a Digital Enterprise built on sound Strategy and Mission that outlines the path for future growth. While organizations may be optimistic about digital, many of them lack confidence in their vision for the future. They need to take a conscious effort to address any existing gaps in the organizational and technical infrastructure in order to adequately address user needs. This has to be backed by a digital strategy with clearly defined business objectives with measurable Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) that provide a clear understanding of audiences.

Conclusion

While a sound software quality strategy is essential in strengthening a business's digital growth, equally important is building a digital enterprise that addresses the obstacles of shortage of follow-on funding, lack of talent, and expensive infrastructure, in order to provide a suitable environment for the Digital and Technology sector to thrive.

If we continue to DO what we always DID, we will only GET what we always GOT. We often speak of a much-needed change, but a change usually uses external influences to modify actions. This is not enough to achieve what Digital has set out to achieve. Organizations should strive for transformation which is actually about modifying beliefs so that the actions become natural and thereby, achieve what they are striving for.

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Started in 2000, Maveric Systems is a leading provider of IT Lifecycle Assurance with expertise across requirements to release. With a strong focus on the Banking and Telecom sectors, Maveric has built a business on the principles of deep domain expertise and innovation. Maveric's client portfolio includes a wide array of renowned banks, financial institutions, insurance companies, leading software product companies and telecom companies.

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