

Digital Transformation in Montenegro – opportunities, challenges, and recommendations for improvement?

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Abstract:

WHAT IS Covid-19 teaching us?

Chinese word CRISIS consists of two ideograms: the first means DANGER, the second means OPPORTUNITY. Most people perceive the coronavirus as a DANGER manifesting itself in its worst forms. It causes drastic behavior change, quarantine and social isolation. It creates panic, shortages and anxiety. It dramatically reduces economic activity, destroys stock markets and paves the way for recession.

Schools, colleges, even kindergartens are closed. Sport events, concerts, competitions and championships are canceled. An overstretched health system is bursting at the seams. Borders are closed, traffic has stopped, airlines, cultural institutions, tourism and the entertainment industry are suffering huge losses.

Concerned heads of government hold press conferences on a daily basis to portray the murky reality, offer increasingly drastic measures and increasingly restrictive solutions. Immersed in such a deep crisis, is it at all possible to see the coronavirus as an OPPORTUNITY?

We should stop and rethink. We should question our values and try to get rid of false myths we are surrounded with. We should also question personal priorities, the meaning of life, work and all our activities. We should better understand the risks of global connectivity and the complexity of all the consequences.

We should better grasp the necessary balance between personal freedoms and restrictions that are imposed on us by the interest of common good. We should compare how a deep crisis is addressed by different political regimes and learn from the mistakes. Finally, we should draw lessons from all this by initiating faster and deeper reforms of the (global and local) political, educational, health, social and, of course, economic systems.

Apart from these abstract and philosophical gains, there are a number of concrete positive consequences of the coronavirus crisis. The trend of teleworking will accelerate. The need for openness and transparency in media and political discourse will grow and the tendency to produce "fake news" will be reduced.

Sensitivity for older and more vulnerable sections of the population who are neglected and marginalized will increase. The perception of "private space" will change and the overall hygiene habits will improve.

Key Word: information technology, e-business, digital business transformation, education, technology

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I. Introduction

The covid pandemic has significantly affected the functioning of the economy, people and society, and at the same time empowered companies to start digitalizing their business, as a way of adapting to the new business environment, on the VUCA times: Volatility, Uncertainty, Complexity & Ambiguity. In the global market, security, stability and continuity have been replaced by uncertain and disruptive changes, which have recently taken place in all fields - a decline in trust in governments from 85% to 15%, in business leaders from 65% to 18%, in the media from 78% to 27%, religious from 82% to 44%, the time to reach 100 million consumers has now been reduced from 75 to just 1 year.

Simply, it digitally manages the world in which we live and do business - a professional sends and receives an average of 121 emails every day, people spend 3h:23min on social networks, 3.03 billion people are active on social networks, 63.000 google searches are realized every second, 1.57 billion people watch 5 billion Youtube videos every day, currently operating 2.1 billion Facebook accounts as well as 270 million fake profiles. These changes must encourage us to think, perhaps because we have been accustomed to the traditional business model characterized by product ownership, and now there is a current shift towards mediation and exchange, leadership and harmony.

That is why companies and individuals now need rapid and efficient change in order to survive in the global market. Leaders need to put consumer needs at the center, create quick decision-making, clean and transparent communication. Another important characteristic of a leader is the ability to execute imaginary and

approved business activities. Business ideas are meaningless until they are executed. Execution is everything, especially at the moment when you reduce everything to one of two possible extreme outcomes - success or failure. In addition to execution, the ability for leaders to make efficient and productive decisions quickly is very important, because otherwise they cannot be competitive in the global market - "act fast or you are dead".

Digital transformation must be viewed in the context of leadership and culture, which is why it often implies changes that result in different thinking, strengthening innovation and new business models, increased use of technology to improve the performance and experience of employees, customers, and suppliers of the company.

First of all, it is necessary to explore where there is room for improvement and increase the efficiency of processes in the company. In recent years, a large number of digital technologies have emerged such as business cloud services, artificial intelligence, data management, IT services. The impact of technology on the company can be great, but in addition to technology, it depends on the specific needs and the team of employees, who implement these changes.

II. Material And Methods

DIGagCOV: Measures to support enterprise in the fight against COVID-19 digitalization

If we approach the transformation partially, there is a great chance that we will pass without success. That is why, in addition to the purpose and significance, it is very important that the whole society shows preparedness for change. Specifically, the covid pandemic has only accelerated the need for digitalization, so the main goal is to identify the main gaps in education, daily life and work, which make it impossible for us to make prompt decisions, implement changes and respond effectively to challenges.

Scientific research project DIGagCOV: "Support to small and medium enterprises in the fight against Covid-19 digitalization and digital payments", was realized by a research team from the University of Donja Gorica, with the support of the Ministry of Science of Montenegro. The research was conducted in over 400 companies through questionnaires as well as in ten companies through interviews, with the aim of gathering real challenges faced by companies, customers, universities and society, as well as opportunities for digitalization in the future.

Researching through questionnaires and interviews, the project team came to reliable results that are important for the development of further steps to support the digitalization of business in terms of changes in the company, employee education, education reform. The aim of the research is to examine whether employees, customers and the entire population have enough knowledge, skills and equipment to be able to adapt to digital procedures, although they show high preparedness for necessary changes, more precisely learning and acquiring new skills and knowledge at work due to covid-19 pandemics.

The DIGagCOV project was conducted with an aim to point out a large number of challenges and problems currently facing the business sector in Montenegro, which are mainly related to insufficient knowledge and skills possessed by employees, insufficient technology and equipment to digitalize processes in the company and financial support from institutions and professional support from universities to employees and customers who need to accept a digital offer that is going to be presented by companies.

Based on the results of the research, a set of recommendations and measures will help companies and other actors to digitalize activities, so the digitalization society plan will include clear guidelines for companies on how to digitalize the economy, departmental institutions how to digitalize administrative processes and professionally and

financially support the economy, as well as how to implement the educational program through quality education to the academic sector. More precisely, the research should result in the conclusions that companies need financial support and additional education to employees, to use digital procedures, regardless of the company's activity. On the other hand, customers - the population are not able to use the platforms without technology.

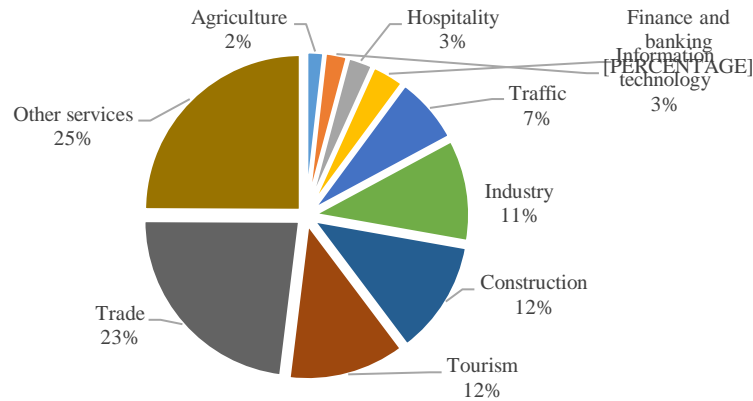
III. Result

DIGagCOV Interview: Measures to support in the fight against covid digitalization

The second phase of the research was conducted on a sample of 10 companies, in which quantitative research was conducted through interviews. The interview conducted in the companies aimed to gather the real problems and challenges faced by companies due to the covid pandemic, as well as the ways in which business activities and procedures in these enterprises could be digitalized.

The interviewed companies operate in the activities of industry, construction, IT and banking sector, trade and tourism. The companies are located in the central, coastal and central part, some of them are large with 50-250 employees, and the rest are medium-sized companies with 11-49 employees, or mini-enterprises with up to 10 employees. The interviewed enterprises are predominantly oriented to the domestic and foreign markets, most of the companies are privately-owned, and a smaller number of them are state-owned.

Table no 1: Shows distribution of enterprises by sectors of activity



When asked what are the real challenges that companies faced during the covid pandemic, answers depended mainly on the type of business that companies are engaged in. Thus, companies in the field of industry generally had uninterrupted production, while on the other hand, trade and tourism companies completely stopped their business. In addition to the activity, the impact on business also depends on the market in which the companies operate, so companies in the IT and financial sector have lost turnover due to the loss of the international market.

When it comes to specific activities that are endangered in companies due to the covid pandemic, in addition to the type of activity, it largely depends on the way the processes are set up in the company. Thus, companies of all industries pointed out as one of the biggest problems the inability to perform work outside the office, due to insufficient access to documentation at work, insufficient technology and skills for working from home, as well as the inability to communicate effectively and make decisions during the covid crisis.

When it comes to employee reactions to drastic business changes during the covid pandemic, behavior as well as their willingness to digitalize, largely depends on factors such as the level of digitalization of the company, the type of market in which companies operate and market products, employee and management age, technology that is already present in the company, and the amount of funds that the company allocates for education. Thus, in the industry sector, we have mostly employees who respond very boldly to current challenges, show a desire to learn and improve, and are ready for changes that need to be introduced in order to be more effective and productive. On the other hand, there is a part of management and employees of older age - "old school" which has acquired inefficient habits for decades and now it is difficult to talk to them about any changes they have to make on themselves and then at work to increase efficiency and productivity.

This reaction of employees to changes due to the crisis largely depends on the level of digitalization that is already present in the company, given the specificity of the activities in which the company is engaged. For example, employees and management of companies in the tourism, IT, trade, and finance sectors have more knowledge, skills and preparedness for change and improvement, given that the mentioned activities already have platforms for online sales and ordering, online reservations, receipt of goods and monitoring supplies, business analytics, employee networking and communication. However, some employees are not ready for changes in the company and the main reason is that learning, and work are required, which they are not ready for.

When it comes to a company's decision on how it wants to promote its offer, it mainly depends on the business and market in which the companies operate and how they communicate with customers. Companies in the trade, tourism, IT, and finance sectors have a functional and clear website, where they offer the possibility of selecting the desired products and creating orders. Web technology is very important for trade activities, given that it is a retail market and that B2C communication and cooperation is important, but also an aggravating circumstance is the that the customer wants to come and physically see the quality of food and products - website is only used for promotion.

Table no 2: Shows problems identified by I&C companies and recommendations that could be applied:

Activity: Industry and construction	
Problems identified by companies:	Recommendations that could be applied:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inability to monitor the production process • Insufficient technology to work people from home • Unrelated production with other sectors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Modification of existing activities in the company • Investment in infrastructure for people to work from home

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unwillingness of employees for education and training • Insufficient funds for digitization of the process • Unable to contact existing users • Unusable data for business analytics • Resource duplication due to physical administration 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Education of employees for digital business • Financial assistance and electronic services of the state • Cooperation with universities and companies in the preparation of digitalization and employee training plan • Investment in technological solutions and digitization • Creating platforms for communication with customers
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In contrast, we have the IT sector and tourism, where based on the quality of web technology and solutions that the company offers, the client decides whether to hire that company. On the other hand, we have industrial companies that operate in the wholesale market, and the activities related to negotiations, concluding an offer and contracting payment details are realized physically, which is why they do not need a website to such an extent. What is true for most companies, regardless of the activity and market, is that electronic payment is not enabled in any of the companies, and the main reasons are complex solutions that are expensive and require huge, unprofitable fees.

Since in most cases employees and management have expressed the need for effective changes and reforms that need to be conducted in the company, there is a direct need for certain technological solutions that will properly support change and provide efficient procedures and productive employees. The need for digital technology depends mainly on the company's activities, the way of delivering products and services to interested customers, the market in which the company operates, and the knowledge and skills of employees who need to apply the same digital technologies. Thus, companies that operate in the field of industry and trade have a need to invest in Enterprise Resource Planning systems, which will enable efficient processes of movement of goods, and monitoring of supplies and sales. In these and other sectors, it is important to build centralized databases, which will enable monitoring of consumer habits and analysis of thousands of everyday transactions. An online platform for ordering, selling and delivering products is also needed. Companies need cloud systems for efficient data access.

Table no 3: Shows problems identified by IT&F companies and recommendations that could be applied:

Activity: IT sector and financial services	
Problems identified by companies:	Recommendations that could be applied:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduction of the company's foreign operations • Inefficient cooperation with state institutions due to mandatory physical delivery of paperwork • Cancellation of agreed deals of companies in the field of digital marketing, with foreign clients • Insufficient competitiveness in the global market • Unwillingness of employees for education and training • Unable to contact existing users 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Digital cooperation between the state and companies • Increasing the company's projects in Montenegro • Financial help and electronic services of the state • Cooperation with universities and companies, on the preparation of digitalization and employee training plan • Promoting the importance of digital marketing • Creating platforms for communication with customers • Networking of companies in Montenegro

A very important dilemma for management is whether companies will employ IT staff in their company due to the use of the mentioned technologies, or whether they will hire an IT company for these services that will create, implement, and maintain digital technologies in one enterprise. This dilemma depends on several indicators such as the size of the company, the income it generates, the preparedness for digitalization, trust in the IT company and quality of its digital offer. Thus, the research showed that a large number of companies from the industry, trade and tourism sectors decide to outsource part of the activity, by hiring a company that performs IT activities, while the remaining number of companies do not need IT services. The reason for this is because they don't have the funds for technology and therefore daily transactions of sales, tracking, are performed manually.

In addition to insufficient resources and knowledge in digitalization, companies cited as one of the key problems the lack of trust in what IT companies offer in digitalization, especially in terms of data storage and secure access at all times, a segment that has been reformed and successfully digitalized in the smallest percentage in most companies. Also, enterprises require significantly less complex solutions from IT companies, so that they can be used without problems by employees with less knowledge and experience, and significantly cheaper and simpler e-commerce systems, which are now unprofitable.

Table no 4: Shows problems identified by TR&TO companies and recommendations that could be applied:

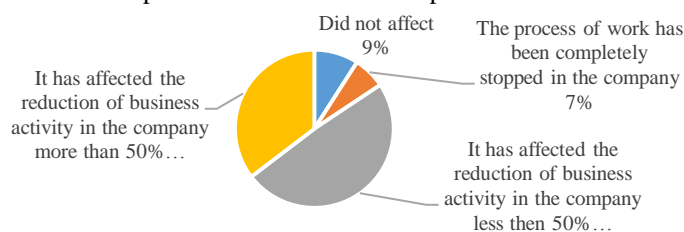
Activity: Trade and tourism	
Problems identified by companies:	Recommendations that could be applied:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partial or complete suspension of business • Inability to monitor the state of product stocks • Insufficient technology for people who from home • Disconnection between the sales sector and other sectors • Unwillingness of employees for education and training • Insufficient funds for digitalization of the process • Unable to contact foreign users • Unusable data for business analytics • Resource duplication due to physical administration 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Modification of the company's existing activities • Investment in digital technologies, ERP systems and centralized databases, cloud systems • Investment in infrastructure for people to work from home • Education of employees for digital business • Financial assistance and electronic services of the state • Cooperation with universities and companies in the preparation of digitalization and employee training plan • Creating a new offer for customers in Montenegro

Companies in Montenegro are not completely satisfied with the level of digitalization and services of the eGovernment portal. In particular, most objections relate to overly complex procedures that require the physical presence of employees in institutions, non-acceptance of digital procedures between networked companies and institutions, and the inefficiency of digital services that create problems - loss of documentation. Mentioned companies are forced to hire a part of their employees exclusively for daily communication and delivery of documentation to institutions - significantly higher costs, since all this documentation must be taken personally by employees, due to the storage of large paperwork, which takes up space and does not enter business analytics.

When it comes to the relationship of companies to customers during the covid pandemic, it depends mainly on the activities of the company and the market in which they place their offer. Thus, companies in the field of industry and trade operating in the domestic market have managed to preserve existing customers and maintain business. On the other hand, companies in the field of tourism and IT sector, which are predominantly oriented towards the international market, have lost most of their clients, and the main challenge before them is to conquer a new market in the future. They do this by redirecting an offer through short-term projects to the domestic market, while the industry employs agents from abroad to save the market. More precisely, for the company's survival and new successes, the ability to establish cooperation with successfully digitalized partners from the region is of great importance, which will help us introduce digital standards, procedures and activities, and thus try to win over demanding foreign customers.

When it comes to the possibilities of helping and supporting companies during digitalization, companies cite the networked activities and cooperation of key actors as crucial. Thus, companies expect financial help from the state in digital transformation, through digitalization of administrative procedures and cooperation with enterprises, as well as in terms of quality information on available national and international funds that will financially and professionally support company in digitalizing business processes.

Table no 5: Shows the impact of the Covid-19 virus pandemic on business activities



On the other hand, companies expect support from the IT sector in taking into account real problems and procedures that need to be simplified and made efficient and accessible for employees, instead of expensive and complex digital technologies that are completely unprofitable. In addition to the state and IT companies, it is important to cooperate with the economy - companies from the same or other industries, which have already digitalized processes and which with their knowledge and experience can accelerate the processes of digital transformation. Thus, companies from the IT sector in Montenegro have created a common network to help each other in educating employees, digitalizing and creating a competitive offer for the international market.

Companies in Montenegro expects special support through cooperation with universities that will provide education, experience and profiling of employees who will be able to research, learn and improve on a daily basis, instead of mechanically performing activities that have been largely replaced by digital

technologies. Also, companies expect the support of universities in creating a plan and strategy for digital transformation, which can only be implemented by networking key actors, more precisely the network and cooperation with IT companies, the economy, universities.

In the research, companies also pointed out the problems of insufficient knowledge and experience in the field of digitalization of business processes, especially in the process of searching for problems, inefficient procedures and employees who are ready for changes, but seek instructions. That is why it is of great importance during the digital transformation of business, to get to know management and employees with experiences and strategies that are successfully applied in many companies abroad, created by numerous digital companies, consulting companies and global organizations and actors that approach digitalization from many different angles and the need for changes.

International strategies mostly show that the digitalization of business is insufficient if the company does not implement effective changes concerning its employees, established procedures, ways of working, communication, decision-making and other.

When researching problems, it is very important to looking for the gaps, which we will fill with digital procedures. This approach requires the identification of key competencies needed, where in addition to daily education, the ability to train oneself, the introduction of agile projects, soft skills and the smart, brave, and responsible leaders are required.

IV. Discussion

Recommendations to support the digitalization of companies and employees:

1. The period during the COVID19 pandemic in a way completely stopped the operation of most activities. That is why it is important that companies after the crisis think about the possibility of survival of these activities without modification of existing ones, more precisely changes in the way of promotion, sale and delivery of products, decision-making.
2. In addition to production, companies must provide other sectors with the necessary conditions for telework in case new crisis appears. More precisely, it is necessary to provide employees with networked computers, access to important data and documentation, and efficient internal communication of employees as well as external with customers.
3. Employees in all companies, regardless of industry, must be ready for change - learning and training, and management is to provide education that will bring employees closer to the importance of digital technologies not only for the success of the company but also the efficiency of employees - digital technology is opportunity and not danger?
4. Companies operating in the B2C market should have a very functional site as a platform for viewing and ordering products, while companies in the wholesale B2B market should have a website because of strengthening the brand and global position of their company.
5. Companies need, depending on the activity, various digital technologies, for industrial software solutions that will increase production and other sectors, for trade in ERP systems that will monitor the movement of goods and enable efficient orders, and tourism and trade need centralized databases, in order to track the habits of clients.
6. Companies often do not have enough knowledge to be able to decide which technologies to invest and how to find quality IT staff, so they need the help of the economy and the university, which will provide professional support to the company in digital transformation.
7. The state must enable companies to submit documentation to the institutions, the Tax Administration and the Customs Administration electronically, and thus avoid more than unnecessary archiving of paperwork. Also, through eGovernment and portals, it is very necessary to create a network of companies that will cooperate electronically.
8. The company must create an online platform for communication with customers, through which it will collect requests from customers during the crisis and correct its offer.
9. Companies must focus on the global market and foreign partners, which are crucial for adapting to digital standards as well as world practices and digitalized companies.
10. The state must help all companies by providing them with financial and professional help in the framework of digital transformation, as well as information on all available national and international funds, which will enable global competitiveness.

Most of the conclusions and proposals come from the analysis and indicate the directions of action. However, the proposal is to single out the suggestions as a **"program" of activities:**

1. Since every tenth company plans to apply digital technologies in business, it should take all measures to raise awareness for the introduction of technology in the companies.
2. It is necessary to provide employees with networked computers, access to important data and documentation, internal communication of employees and external - customers.

3. It should be possible for companies to submit documentation to institutions (tax and customs administration) electronically, thus avoiding the archiving of paperwork.
4. It is necessary to create a network of companies through eGovernment and other portals that will cooperate electronically and without physical submission of invoices.
5. As 98% of companies indicated this need, it is urgent to design and enable stronger connection of the academic and scientific research community with the business sector.
6. The state should provide support to all companies in the form of financial and professional help in the direction of digital transformation, as well as quality and timely information on available national and international funds, which they could use.
7. Since companies often do not have enough knowledge about which technologies to invest in and how to find IT staff, the development of a network of institutions in the economy and at the university should be encouraged, which will provide professional support to the company for digital transformation.
8. In order to strengthen the preparedness of employees in all companies, regardless of the activity, management should be encouraged to provide education that will bring employees closer to the importance of digital technologies and the ways of use in business.
9. Companies should be encouraged to think about the survival of their own business after the crisis, with modifications to existing activities, ie efficient ways of promoting, selling and delivering products as well as a new way of communicating with customers.
10. As most companies established before 1990 lag behind in digitalization processes due to a lack of staff, their more significant cooperation with support institutions, such as academia, should be encouraged, which will provide education and digital technology.
11. Companies should be encouraged to create online platforms for communication with customers, through which they will collect requests from regular customers even during the crisis, and correct the offer, which can be one of the steps in their digital transformation.
12. All companies must focus as much as possible on the global market and foreign partners, which are crucial for adapting to digital, as well as world success practices.

V. Conclusion

Key digitalization challenges of the company, customer, community, society?

Is digitalization resulting from the struggle with invisible influences in the market? The digitalization of business should be seen as the need to apply technology, adapt to the dominance of the invisible that begins to govern the global market, and which can best be explained by a covid pandemic that completely paralyzed the world, stopped the economy, threatened the business of many companies, educational centers. We are currently operating in an environment where extreme uncertainty has become a key characteristic of the “normal” business environment, so let us forget the possibility of going back to the old - the crisis will result in many turnovers in the future, and only those companies that have begun to prepare for challenges the invisible tends to survive.

In addition to changes in tech, digitization includes changes in organizational culture?

Digital technologies have created a new mindset, an organizational culture open to new challenges and technologies. It is important to note that when creating the strategy, we keep in mind that the obstacles that previously prevented the economy and society from effectively adapting to innovations, were not only related to technology, but mainly to bureaucracy and unwillingness to disrupt traditional processes and models of functioning. However, due to the pandemic we are all forced to adapt to teleworking, teams become more agile, leaders search for soft skills, organization becomes fluid, teams and employees become innovative machines, consumers and customers become partners, suppliers and competitors, business systems become platforms.

Can educational and other reforms be implemented when the huge problem occurs?

Almost all economic and social actors currently have a vision of digitalization on their radar, but a number are still "delaying", believing that the situation is not so urgent as to react. It is also a big problem in Montenegro, the attitude "let it be as long as it gives results" is simply no longer sustainable, nor can we as a society be guided by it, but we must come to terms with the fact that change is inevitable and that we will digitalize processes only by applying a proactive, not reactive approach - it is necessary to constantly research and look for changes and not react only when changes happen and the huge problems occur.

Should short or long-term strategies be developed when implementing digitalization?

When creating a digitalization plan, it is very important to keep in mind the real time it takes for the changes to be implemented. That is why it is of great importance how we will react to the crisis, and there are strategies for short-term or long-term success. More precisely, if you cannot fail fast enough, it means you are

functioning in a culture that doesn't tolerate quick experiments and lessons learned that can make us smarter and faster. In that case, a strategy based on slow changes and long-term success is needed.

Can and to what extent can digital technologies compete with humans, when and why?

What is predicted as a great danger due to the covid pandemic is the fear that digitalization will completely erase traditional ways of functioning, extinguish people's physical cooperation, introduce work and education from home, and that it will digitally replace man in everyday activities. That is why it is very important that we look at digitalization in the context of the application of digital technologies that will enable people to do business more efficiently, learn, gain new experiences and become globally competitive. So, digital functioning instead of a threat can only be a help to a person, to recover more easily in the period during and after the crisis and to establish efficient procedures, a person now verifies the processes!

Can the results of our education also depend on the level of digitalization of education?

Digitalization should be viewed in the direction of helping man, who will now have greater freedom of action, because the digitalized way of working will provide him with a resource that everyone lacks today, and that is the time! Now, employees will be able to use the time they used for stenciled activities for learning and improvement - a space for everyday education at work and in the family, which is why we come to the conclusion that our educational achievements depend mostly on how successfully we digitalize everyday ways of working and functioning. What is certain, on the other hand, is that digital will be a competitor to man if there are still occupations in which employees mechanically perform activities.

Can the education of the digital age be based on the occasional trainings organization?

When we have education in the plan, it is important that we all have the ability to learn and adapt, that we are aware of the opportunities that are offered to us to strengthen our strategies and protect the iterative directions of efficient work. This means that results in education and training must no longer be based on periodic training, which is certainly essential for quality, but also on the ability to develop a culture of everyday learning, experimentation and iterativeness. So it is not a goal for the company, family, state, to have trainings that will provide us with education for a few days, and then bring us back to the dead system of work, it is necessary that trainings be a daily part of work, life.

Does digitalization always mean everything that suits a person, his needs?

Digitalization brings us free time that now needs to be used well, but now the aggravating circumstance is the lack of motivation to work, since due to the covid crisis we are not able to agilely manage activities, meet people and create a network, socialize and make friends. Therefore, the biggest challenge will be how to move the value of physical interaction into a digital context. This should be borne in mind by leaders, employees, who face difficult decisions during the crisis. It is necessary to develop a new mindset that will give new perspectives on everyday learning, life and work of people, and in addition to looking for new talents to work on the development of existing skills.

Is business digital only if we carry out a complete digital transformation?

Digitalization is just one important part of digital transformation, we must never forget that, especially when creating a digital strategy. Very often we define technology that will meet our needs, but significant investments are needed in education, training and adaptation that we cannot provide due to insufficient financial resources, knowledge and staff. One solution in this case is to outsource business activities - to hire partners who can offer us financial support, technology and people with the required skills. However, it is also possible to digitalize certain processes without the comprehensive application of digital technologies, so digitalization should be viewed in terms of digital opportunities that will allow us to make work, education and life as high quality and productive as possible by implementing the necessary changes, introduce efficient procedures, provide education and leaders and lower costs.

Is the goal of digital technologies greater cost efficiency or customer satisfaction?

One of the main dilemmas that the DIGagCOV research team encountered during the project implementation, is the dilemma between the two key strategies: does digitalization aim at higher cost efficiency or customer satisfaction? More precisely, there is an intention to introduce digital processes that will replace man - inside out strategy, which brings greater cost efficiency but does not provide additional benefits for customers, and therefore no competitive advantage. On the other hand, we have an outside - in digital strategy, characterized by a much greater degree of involvement of individuals in decision-making and action. I believe that it is necessary for us as a society to turn to economic development in a participatory decision-making

model, in which we will include young individuals who are connected and mobile - the starting point for creating interaction, implementing change, successful and effective digitalization.

Is the use of technology and/or smart scientists crucial for successful digitalization?

When applying digitalization, we should not be guided by the fact that only artificial intelligence technologies or smart scientists are crucial for the success of digital processes, the main strength of the best is something completely different - data-driven organizational culture! Data without a conclusion is insignificant and a conclusion without a concrete action is meaningless. That is why it is crucial to research the existing situation, look for challenges and new ways of functioning - solutions for the same, test technology, introduce effective changes and try to meet needs and expected results, without fear of failure.

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