How to Win at Customer Experience

High-Impact Digital Foundry
How do organizations maintain speed and agility to innovate digital platforms to meet evolving consumer behavior while optimizing cost?

Organizations large and small struggle to realize their digital and omnichannel ambitions with speed-to-market and the flexibility to deliver strategic priorities. Simultaneously, they must respond to market threats while attracting and retaining the right mix of business, creative, and technical talent. This struggle has become even more difficult recently as teams need to move fast to meet changing consumer behaviors and may find they lack the scale and skillsets to execute.

Employing a Digital Foundry to address these challenges through **scalable, industrialized delivery with the right talent** can unlock the promise of digitally-enabled, omnichannel customer experiences.

A Digital Foundry is predicated on the idea of **agile, capacity-based teams** (or “pods”) that prioritize speed-to-market and can **flex up or down according to business need**, and it is sometimes known by other names such as flex teams, digital factory, bursting teams, or retainer-based model. The focus is delivering on strategic roadmap goals, ranging from new features and enhancements to larger implementation projects, while also adjusting to immediate needs – both planned and unplanned. Effective Digital Foundry teams comprise on- and off-shore teams, employing a follow-the-sun strategy for continuous deployment.
Digital Foundries support an organization across the full development lifecycle, starting with support to define annual and long-term digital roadmaps and the capacity and budget required. From strategy and roadmap planning to user experience to operations, foundry teams scale to meet an organization’s demand while maintaining a baseline for operations and production support. As the need for more resources arises for roadmap projects like user experience refreshes, platform upgrades or complex integrations, Digital Foundry teams can add team members with specific skillsets, acting with more agility than typical recruitment and hiring processes can.

When projects end, delivery pods can scale back down to the core team, retaining the flexibility to scale up again in the future. Throughout all of this, a Digital Foundry team uses consistent standards and a common vocabulary that industrialize delivery while keeping teams efficient. This helps an organization achieve innovation and speed in today’s market while optimizing costs without impact from personnel turnover.

The evolution in ways of working for Digital Foundry emulates what tech companies have done for decades and helps organizations build technology to become a competitive advantage and a differentiator.

The Digital Foundry model is flexible and can be ramped up or down, so you have scalable support when you need it most – not paying for a full-time team when you don’t.
The Advantage of Talent, Industrialization, and Scale

Operating a Digital Foundry can have key advantages when compared to more traditional models. For organizations that may struggle to attract and retain top tech talent, engaging a partner to operate a Digital Foundry relieves the pressure to manage talent and results in a far lower total cost of ownership. A Digital Foundry’s capacity to flex in size allows an organization to focus on business priorities through blended delivery teams without the need to carry unnecessary fixed labor costs.

Digital Foundry Pod

A Digital Foundry also brings a set of delivery center standards, pre-built assets, and automation tools continuously refined based on project experiences across multiple Digital Foundries. All these capabilities would otherwise need to be built and maintained in-house. Development operations are industrialized to streamline the scaling of multi-brand or multi-site programs – e.g. across UI patterns, coding standards, testing automation, ADA compliance, and performance and security standards.

Specialty services, such as creative services (UX/UI), customer data platform management, search engine optimization (SEO), analytics, reporting, personalization, content production – including increased demand for 3D and augmented experiences – or digital marketing and campaign activation can also be added. At the end of the day, Digital Foundries help organizations make operating cost an ever-decreasing percent of growing revenue while increasing Return on Invested Capital (ROIC).
Strong, Empowered Product Manager:
Digital Foundry teams need an experienced Product Manager who drives the roadmap and aligns to company strategy. The Product Manager sets the direction and makes decisions for the team – ideally with both a sound functional and technical understanding of the product.

Clear Customer Personas & User Journeys:
Thoughtful personas and user journeys identify the “moments that matter” and help organizations align new features and enhancements to elevating the human experience with your brand overall – improving conversion, average order value, and lifetime customer value.

Product Backlog With Clearly Defined Priorities:
Plan sprint priority at least two sprints in advance when possible – aligned to a strategic roadmap – while allowing capacity for the unknown or just-in-time needs of the business.

IT Ownership:
Integrate IT ownership into corporate IT while allowing enough autonomy to run digital effectively and nimbly.

Cross-Functional Project Management:
Prioritize strong project management to coordinate across business functions for medium and large projects so delivery teams have clarity and can optimize capacity.

Engaged Stakeholders:
Key stakeholders need to actively partner with the Digital Foundry to own user acceptance testing and to be a strong partner to delivery teams and the Product Manager.

The Right Digital Foundry Partner:
Have a strong partner with a proven track record and an industrialized, follow-the-sun delivery capability that includes customer strategy, experience design/creative, business operations, SEO, analytics, marketing, and technology delivery skills.

Technology Relationships:
Engage a partner who has developed relationships with leading technology vendors as well as the broader ecosystem of point solution vendors, including the vibrant start-up community.

Elements of a High-Impact Digital Foundry
Deloitte has been helping one iconic New York brand evolve over the last 5 years to realize their digital and omnichannel ambitions. Over that time, foundry pods scaled up and down to meet the scope of this brand's large-scale projects. Projects ranged from a full redesign and re-architecture of the digital platform to globalization to major platform upgrades. All the while, the foundry maintained a core capacity for ongoing production support with no down time – transforming digital into a growth engine delivering 35% annual growth pre-COVID-19 and nearly 75% growth since COVID-19. It also improved metrics like traffic, conversion, and average order value. Operational costs, including the Digital Foundry, continually decreased as a percentage of revenue, helping to deliver the ROI organizations strive for.

In all, Deloitte has established and operated Digital Foundry teams with clients across industries and sectors to build high-impact delivery pods. We serve as a strategic partner focused on delivering business results across the customer journey – not just as a contractor blindly completing tickets and service requests. With our flexible, highly-skilled, capacity-based teams, Deloitte helps clients react to and anticipate the market while keeping sharp focus on strategic initiatives that deliver value. Working with the right Digital Foundry partner can have a profound impact on organizations both big and small, empowering them to operate complex platforms and to deliver customer experience innovation through flexibility and agility at the right cost.

Digital Foundry is More than Development
Thank you.

Contact us to learn how a Digital Foundry can help your organization realize your ambitions at speed.

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