




A common-sense guide to

Digital Transformation

Get traction, not hype

 Citizen development

 Process automation

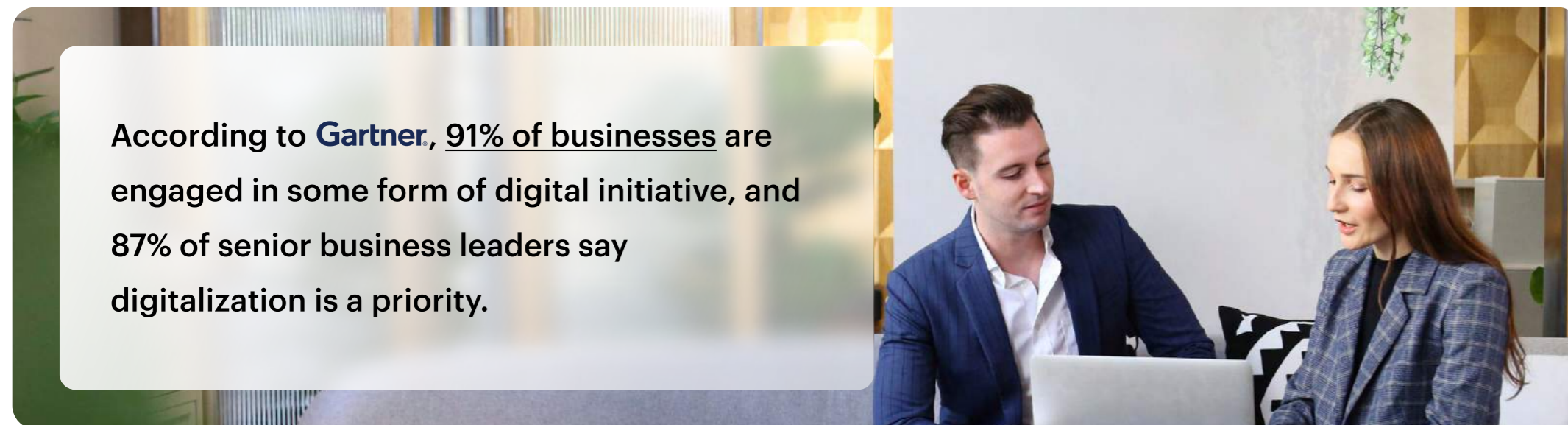
 Data integration

 Time-to-market

The digital transformation imperative

Digital transformation has been under way for decades, but it is now a relentless force that has swept through every corner of the business landscape, reshaping industries and redefining the rules of the game.

The urgency of digital transformation cannot be overstated. Enterprises that fail to adapt will become relics of a bygone era.



According to **Gartner**, **91% of businesses** are engaged in some form of digital initiative, and **87% of senior business leaders** say digitalization is a priority.

Consider, for a moment, the factors compelling businesses to undertake this challenging journey

- Customers now demand seamless online experiences at their fingertips
- Streamlined processes are table stakes to maintaining modern operations
- New technologies open fresh products, services, and business opportunities
- Operational agility enables rapid response to changing industry trends
- Generative AI's rise helps businesses with enhanced innovation

And yet, despite the compelling case for digital transformation, many businesses find themselves adrift in a sea of uncertainty. The weight of existing workloads, the pressing need to address lingering issues, and the overwhelming complexity of the journey can leave transformation leaders feeling lost.

Even if they find themselves on the path, when the organization fails to experience the true impact of transformation, the blame game begins. What makes this journey particularly challenging is the gap between how organizations often perceive digital transformation and the reality they encounter. It is not a quick fix, nor is it solely about adopting the newest software or tools.

Digital transformation is

- A holistic strategy that affects every facet of an organization
- A cultural shift and change in mindset from both IT and business
- A progressive ecosystem within which the business must thrive

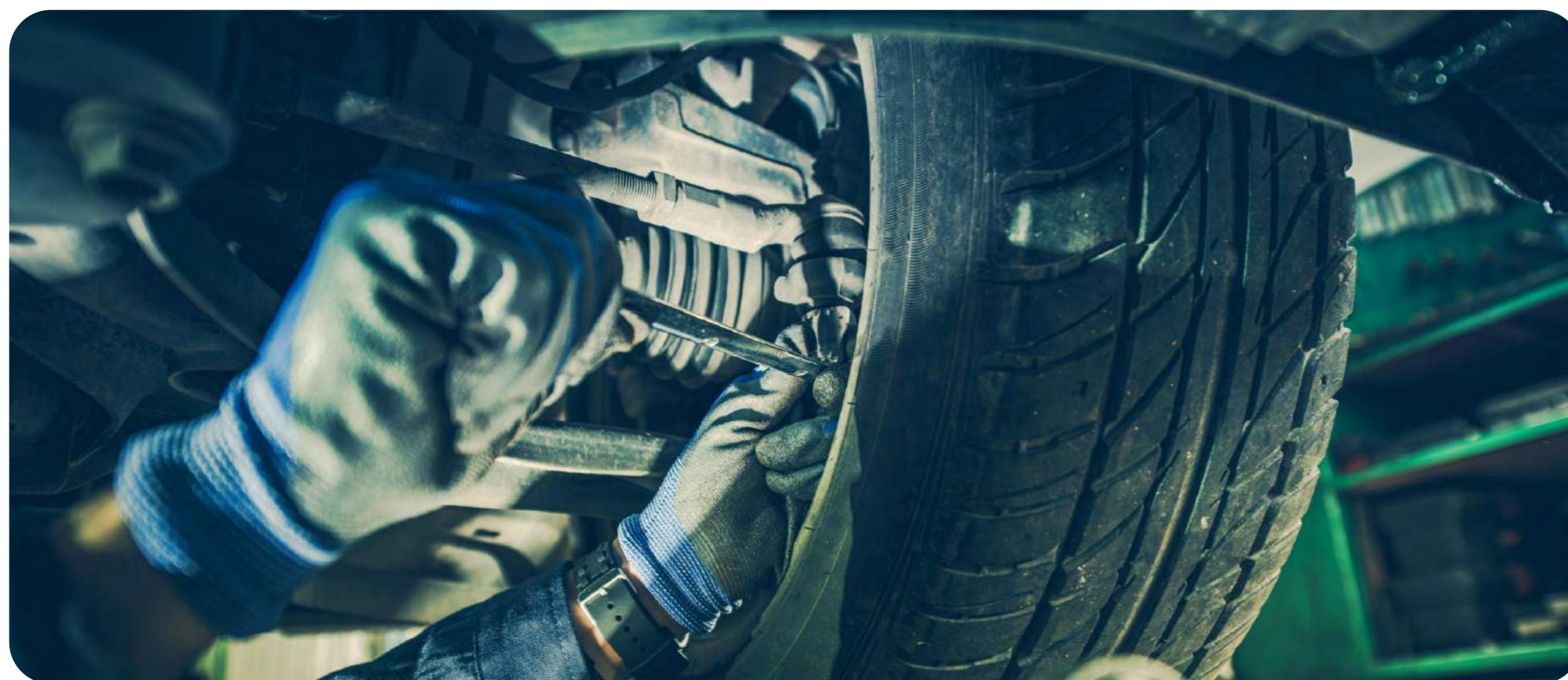
It is no longer a choice but a necessity in a world where the only constant is change.

In this whitepaper, we'll examine what causes most of the failures in digital transformation and give you practical advice on how to move forward with your plans.

Why do most digital transformation projects fail?

Imagine you set out to give your 40-year-old car a complete overhaul. You start with adding a lot of power with a brand-new engine. You update the car's body to a sleek, contemporary design. However, when doing a major car transformation, one crucial part often remains unchanged: the drivetrain. The drivetrain transmits power from the engine to the wheels, ensuring the car's movement.

No matter how powerful the engine is, no matter how fabulous the car looks on the outside, the performance will always be limited to the quality of the old drivetrain. This scenario parallels what frequently occurs in organizations.



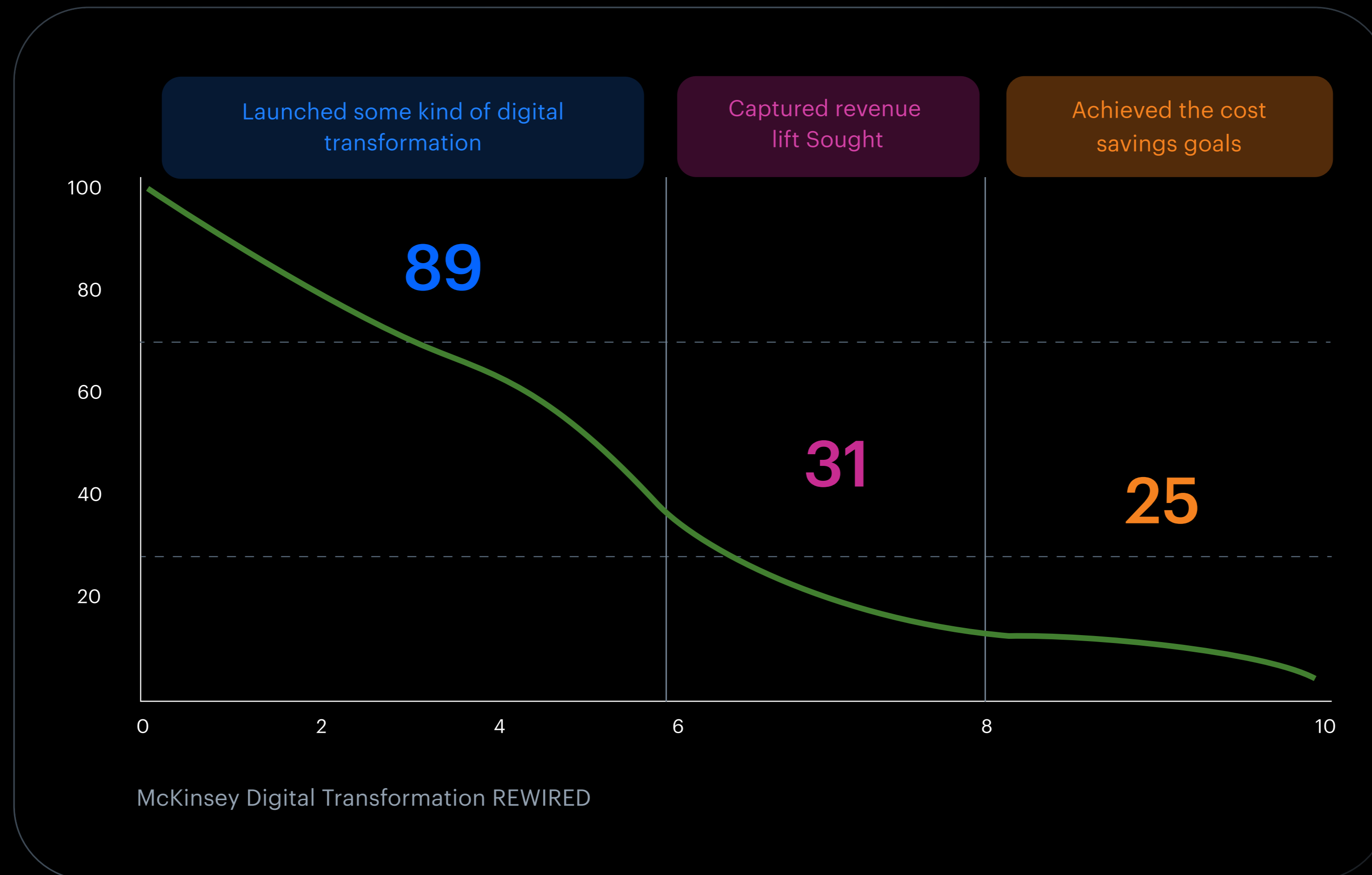
The engine is similar to the core systems that drive your business. Changing the body is like updating all your customer-facing applications and systems that make you look highly modern. The drivetrain represents all of your internal operations. These are the hundreds or thousands of applications, workflows, forms, processes, and spreadsheets that keep things moving. They are invisible to the outside world and unnoticed by everyone until you actually try to rev up the engine. With the same old drivetrain, the car will never reach the peak performance you imagined.

Just like the drivetrain, internal operations usually get ignored in digital transformation. It's less fun or impressive than rehauling your entire ERP, or building an entirely new customer-facing portal or website. But when the promised performance is never realized, it's easy to see why.

79% of digital transformation projects fail.

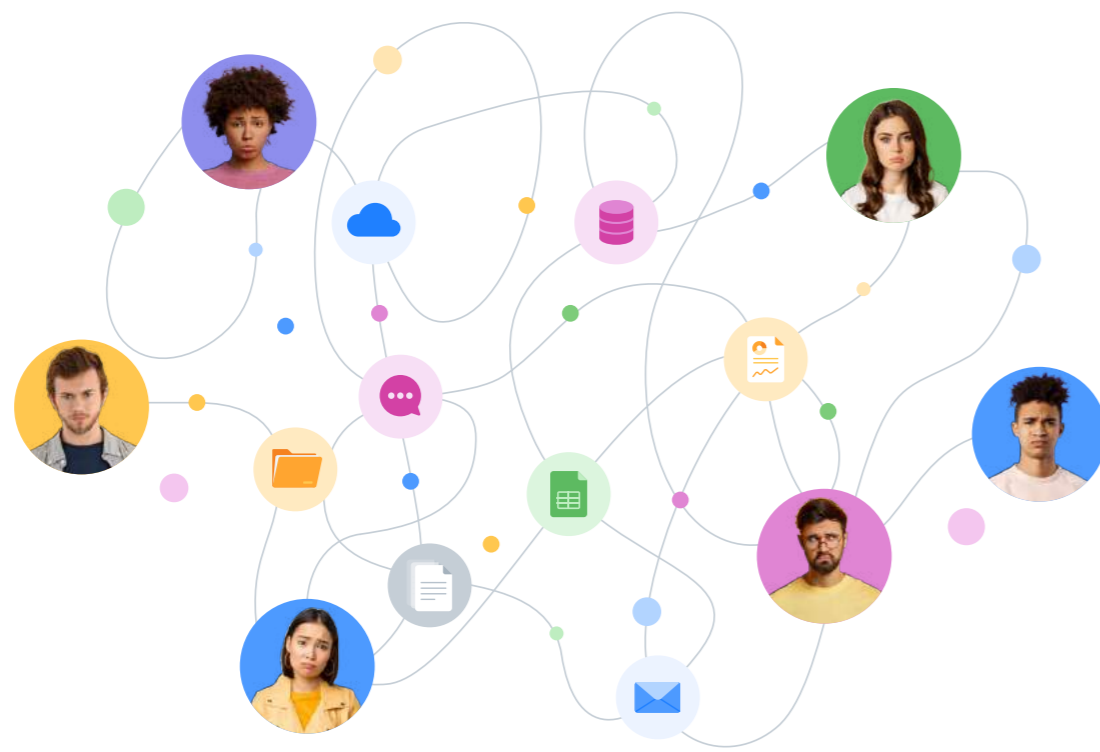
In research as quoted by Infoworld, 92% of respondents had application modernizations in progress with an average project duration of 16 months, costing **\$1.5 million**. Worse, nearly 80% of software leaders and architects admitted to one or more app modernization failures.*

According to research by McKinsey, contained in their handbook for Digital transformation REWIRED, they found: 89% of companies have launched some kind of digital transformation. But only captured 31% of the revenue lift sought. Even worse, they achieved only 25% of the cost savings goals.



Why the middle gets ignored

The middle is the last area to get attention during transformation. Budget constraints, a lack of awareness, implementation complexity, resistance to change, legacy system challenges, and transformation fatigue all get in the way. However, the middle layer is a critical facilitator for communication and data exchange among core systems. This not only enhances data integration and orchestrates workflows but also bolsters security.



Resistance to change

When a business decides to reinvent how it works, it can be challenging to get everyone on board. Resistance to change can come from employees, middle management, and leadership. Sometimes, people are afraid of losing their jobs or having to learn new skills. Other times, the company culture stays the same, and making new ideas stick is hard. Some people like their paper forms, email threads, and overused spreadsheets because they are comfortable, even cumbersome.

To overcome resistance to change, leaders need to explain

- Why changes are happening
- What benefits they will bring
- How they will affect everyone

If changes are made too often or without good planning, employees get tired and won't believe in new ideas. To help people accept change, businesses use change management strategies that focus on communication and engagement. These strategies help create a culture open to innovation and encourage people to embrace change.

The divide between business and IT

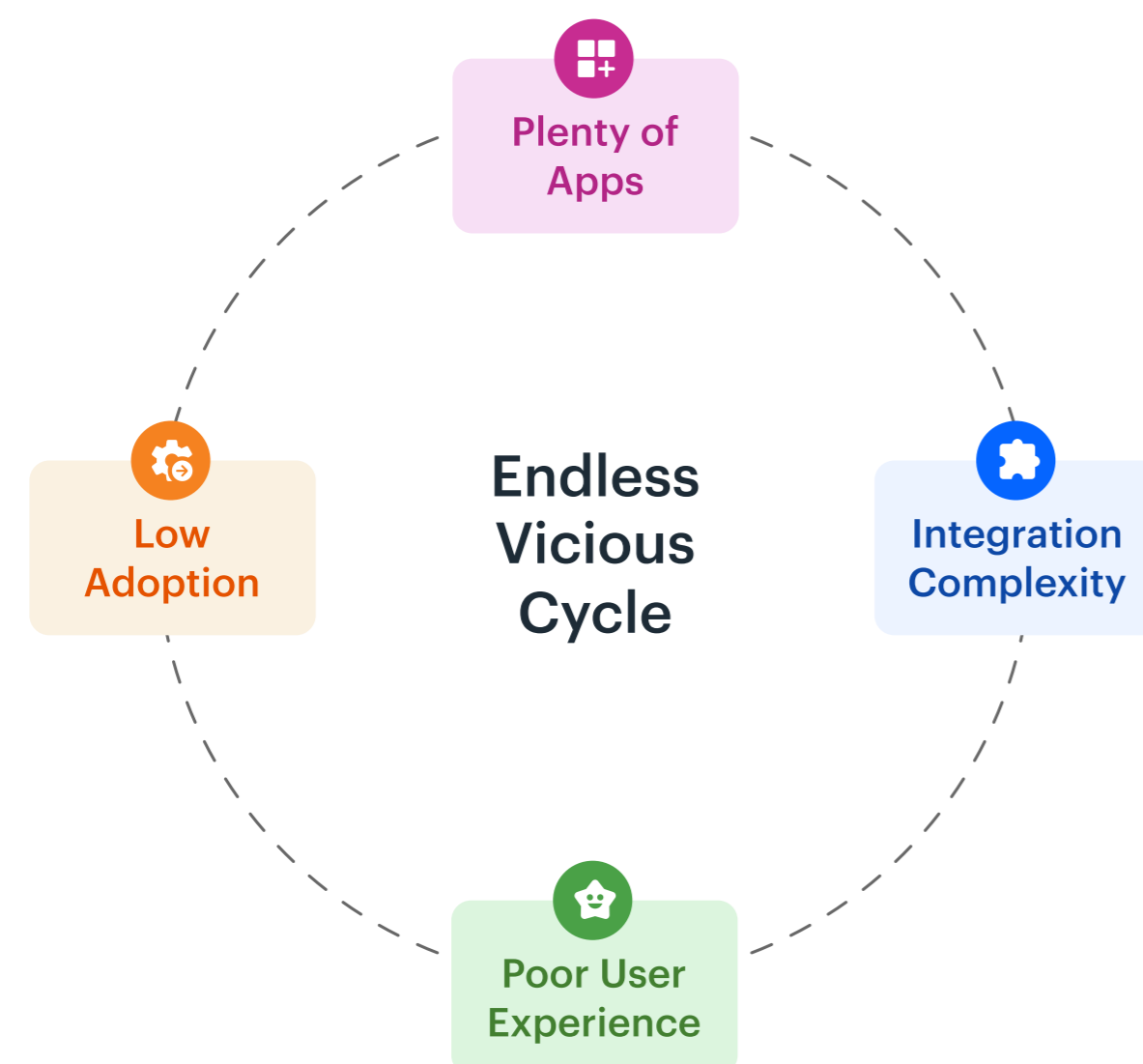
Business and IT aren't natural enemies. The divide between the two is a natural consequence of differing priorities. IT's main concern is the primary functioning of the entire company. They focus on the core backend systems and critical, strategic applications. Most business functions assume these systems are taken care of and want to focus on things they experience daily. They want to see transformation down to how their team functions. IT simply doesn't have the resources to make this happen, and most requests get added to the Q5 backlog.

There's also often a communication breakdown. Business leaders can describe vaguely what they want out of new applications, but because they have no experience building them, their requests may either be impossible or needlessly complicated. They see IT teams as magicians who use the dark arts in a back room to create what they need.

Overestimating the capabilities of existing legacy platforms

Organizations may overestimate the capabilities of existing legacy platforms for digital transformation due to familiarity bias, cost concerns, resistance to change, a lack of technical understanding, a short-term focus, and reliance on vendor promises.

For example, in the banking industry, overestimating legacy platform capabilities during digital transformation is often seen when a traditional bank attempts to compete with fintech disruptors. A traditional bank has relied on its legacy core banking system for decades. This system efficiently handles essential banking functions like loan origination, transactions, and account management. However, it needs the agility and customer-centric features that newer fintech companies offer.



The bank's leadership believes that the legacy core system, with some updates and integrations, can support digital banking initiatives. They hesitate to replace it due to concerns about high migration costs and potential service disruptions.

Instead of investing in a modern, cloud-native core banking system, the bank tries to retrofit its legacy platform to accommodate digital services. However, this system needs help to provide real-time transaction processing, seamless mobile banking experiences, and personalized services that customers expect.

No matter what is standing in your way, there's one common mindset shift that can help you move forward past all of these digital transformation challenges.

“Low-code has emerged as a solution to modernize legacy systems developed with a traditional perspective. The objective is not merely to copy or replicate the existing system but to create a modern version. To achieve this, low-code and no-code offer frameworks that are well-defined, already abstracted, and provide modern components. The value addition of this approach lies in the ability to quickly create a modernized system better suited for current business needs.”



Dinesh Varadharajan

Chief Product Officer of Kissflow

The digital-native approach to digital transformation

To be successful in a digital transformation journey, it's essential to shift your mindset and start thinking like a digitally-native organization. This means placing people, innovation and technology at the core of your strategy fostering a culture of adaptability and experimentation.

“Digital Transformation has become an integral part of business growth today. However, modernisation can feel overwhelming. In fact, digital transformation is beyond simply deploying new technologies. Rather, it is about maintaining a mindset of customer focus, and bringing the organization together in an approach, free of silos and, thus, empowering teams to work collaboratively.”



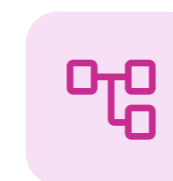
Mohan Madhurakavi

Chief Evangelist, Digital Transformation, Kissflow

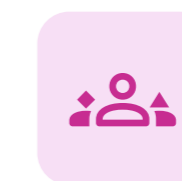
In a retail industry context, thinking like a digitally native organization entails developing internal operational apps that enhance efficiency and customer service. For instance, a traditional retail company aiming to emulate digital natives could create customized apps for their employees and operations. These apps might include inventory management tools, real-time sales analytics, and customer relationship management features. By leveraging data insights, they could optimize inventory levels, streamline order fulfillment, and improve in-store and online customer experiences through employee-facing apps that empower staff to provide personalized service and make data-driven decisions.

Thinking with a digitally-native mindset doesn't mean that only startups can solve big challenges. Instead, it means approaching significant challenges with an open mind and a fresh perspective, recognizing the influential technology trends available today.

Let's look at three clear signs of a digitally-native organization.



**Streamlining
internal operations**



**Building systems
to enable people**



**Driving cultural
transformation**

Three main markers of a digitally-native organization

1. A clear understanding of streamlining internal operations

A digitally-native organization recognizes that streamlining internal operations is not just a phase but a foundational step in the digital transformation journey.

These are forward-thinking organizations that set a strategic vision that includes digital transformation, highlighting the importance of improving internal operations to achieve broader digital goals. They champion initiatives for process streamlining, allocate resources, and embrace change management to prepare their workforce for adopting digital technologies. These companies prioritize automation tools that enhance efficiency and data management. They maintain a long-term vision, understanding that optimizing internal operations is not just a short-term fix but a fundamental driver of future growth and innovation.

This understanding distinguishes organizations from those that merely view digital transformation as an IT upgrade.

2. Building systems to enable people

Digitally-native organizations place people at the center of their digital strategy. They understand that technology is an enabler rather than an end in itself. Organizations invest in systems and technologies that empower their workforce. This means creating user-friendly interfaces, democratizing access to technology tools, and optimizing processes through automation and workflows. By doing so, they foster a culture of innovation, collaboration, and adaptability among their employees.

In digitally-native organizations, technology is designed to make work easier, enhance productivity, and enable employees to focus on value-added tasks, fostering a more engaged and effective workforce.

Difference between conventional and digitally-native organizations



“Conventional organizations define systems for people. While, digitally native organizations put systems in the center and define policy around it”



Dinesh Varadharajan

Chief Product Officer of Kissflow

3. Driving cultural transformation

Traditionally, many enterprises viewed digital transformation as a series of technology-driven projects to optimize operations or enhance customer experiences. While these projects are a part of the transformation journey, they are just pieces of a giant puzzle.

Digitally-native organizations recognize that technology alone cannot drive success. Instead, it comes from reshaping the way people think and work. They foster a culture of learning, experimentation, and innovation, enabling employees to challenge the status quo and embrace change. As culture is an integral part of their transformation strategy, they are better equipped to navigate the complexities of the digital landscape, seize opportunities, and achieve long-term success.

Law of cultural empowerment

“The digital transformation field is firstly an unknown field for most. Even if we know the technologies and successful use cases, what is relevant is difficult to arrive at. You may stumble upon it, and the thing to remember is that it is dynamic and may not work in the future. Success is likely to come only after considerable trials and tribulations, so organizations should reward continuous innovation, and encourage teams to learn from failures.”

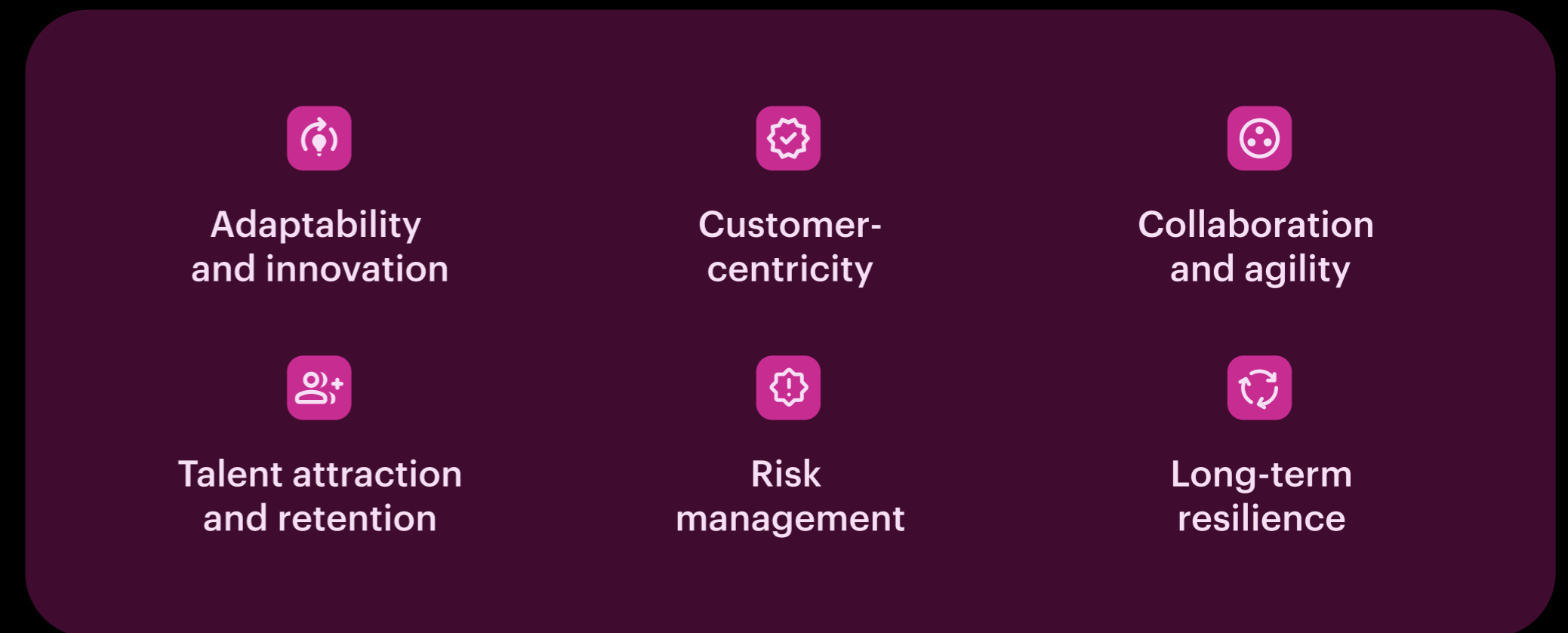


Mohan Madhurakavi

Chief Evangelist, Digital Transformation,
Kissflow



Why does cultural transformation matter to these organizations?



Let's look at a real-world example of how an automobile manufacturer - Lumen, leveraged technology to transform their businesses, creating innovative digital solutions that improved stakeholder experiences, automated 15+ processes, and eradicated data duplicated across systems, demonstrating a digitally-native mindset in traditional industries.

Lumen was able to take a digitally-native mindset and recreate the experience for stakeholders and employees.

Case study

Here's how Lumen took a digitally-native mindset using Kissflow

Challenge 1: Overcoming manual processes and legacy systems

Lumen faced significant challenges with their existing operations. Manual processes were the norm for every aspect of their business, except purchase order requests. The absence of automation meant time-consuming and error-prone procedures, hindering efficiency. Adding to their challenges was the presence of a hard-to-use legacy system. Over three years, they had managed to launch just one form using their existing solution, which severely limited their ability to adapt and evolve.

Challenge 2: Addressing dispersed data and achieving integration

Compounding the challenges was the issue of dispersed data. Their data was scattered across various locations, making it inaccessible to stakeholders who needed a unified view of critical information. This lack of data consolidation hindered their decision-making and operational efficiency.

Lumen also aspired to connect their applications seamlessly. They aimed to initiate sub-processes using information gathered from other processes. Achieving this level of integration and information flow was a key challenge they needed to overcome to streamline their operations and improve their overall efficiency.

Implementing a platform that aligned with Lumen's LEAN strategy

Lumen needed a platform that aligned with their LEAN strategy. A platform that focuses on optimizing workflows, reducing unnecessary steps, and maximizing value delivery through technology.

Kissflow serves as a central platform for streamlining and optimizing various processes at Lumen. The platform facilitates efficient management of form requests, reducing unnecessary complexities and fostering collaboration across departments. The LEAN Lead, Madhuri, leverages Kissflow to apply LEAN principles, aiming to eliminate waste in areas such as overprocessing, rework, movement, motion, and time within each process.

“Kissflow is one of our main systems. It lets everyone have any form request that goes through multiple departments for actions.”

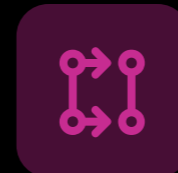


Madhuri Balimane
CI/LEAN Lead, Lumen

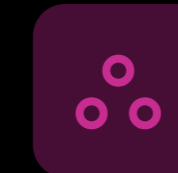


Lumen picked Kissflow because it was much easier to use and understand than their existing tool and other solutions on the market.

This approach has set Lumen on a scalable digital transformation journey by allowing it to integrate various digital tools and technologies to:



Automate processes



Improve collaboration



Enhance overall productivity

Kissflow's capabilities enable a LEAN approach by enhancing workflow efficiency and contributing to tangible results in terms of process optimization and waste reduction.

Ready to trade legacy systems for Kissflow's excellence?

[Get started](#)

How to tackle digital transformation like a digitally-native organization

Digitally-native organizations recognize that digital transformation is not a standalone initiative but an integral part of their DNA. They approach it with a system-centric mindset, acknowledging that technology, processes, people, and culture must harmonize to drive meaningful change.

What sets them apart is not just their access to cutting-edge technology. It is their profound culture shift, an unwavering commitment to change, and a holistic approach that touches every aspect of their operations.

Here are **6 ways to approach digital transformation** that mirrors the success of digitally-native companies:

6 ways to approach digital transformation

- 1 Start in the middle
- 2 Use a unified platform to orchestrate processes
- 3 Rethink processes, policies, and people
- 4 Risk management and security
- 5 Identify change agents
- 6 Promote continuous improvement

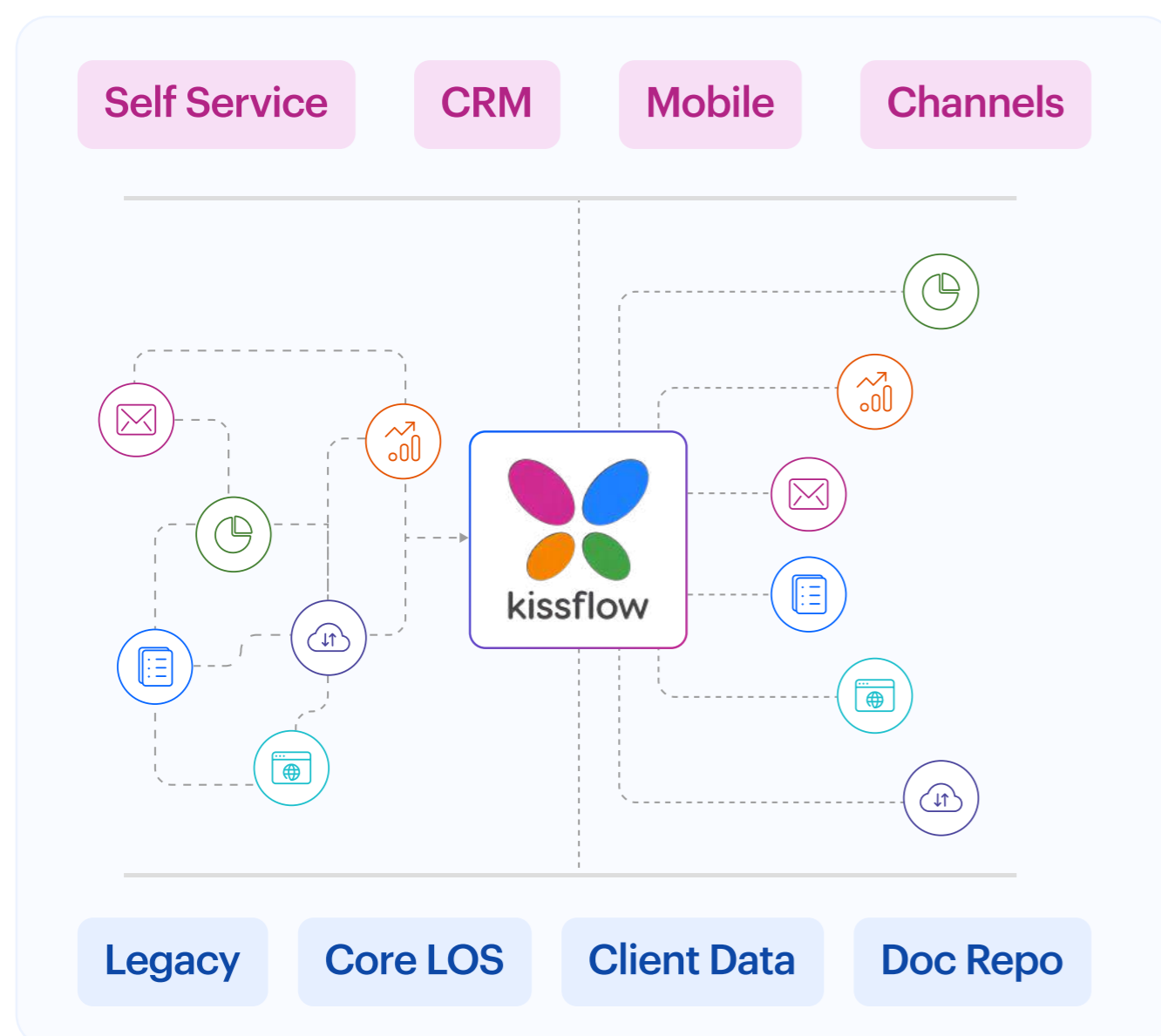
1 Start in the middle

As an initial part of digital transformation plans, tidy up the organization's internal operations. Think of it as decluttering your workspace before a major project. Streamlining and optimizing existing processes and workflows can lay a strong foundation for digital transformation success.

How can you clean up internal operations?

- Find bottlenecks, redundancies, and inefficiencies in your current operations
- Conduct a assessment to pinpoint areas where processes can be automated
- Invest in technology solutions that can enhance operational efficiency

This initial cleanup sets the stage for a smoother transition into a digitally-native approach.



2 Use a unified platform to orchestrate processes

One of the hallmarks of digitally-native organizations is their ability to seamlessly integrate and manage their digital tools and systems. They leverage a single platform that acts as the central nervous system, connecting disparate functions, systems, and teams into a cohesive whole.

Thinking in parallel

Consider the process of customer onboarding. In a digitally-native organization, this process seamlessly spans across multiple departments (sales, marketing, operations and customer support), and also tools.

With a unified platform in place, customer data flows seamlessly

Initial point of contact



Sales pipeline



Customer onboarding process

This level of integration and automation extends to every facet of the organization. Tasks that were once manual and time-consuming are now executed with precision and speed. For a digitally-native organization, agility is not a buzzword; it's a reality achieved through the platform's flexibility and adaptability.

How can you leverage a unified platform?

- Streamline and automate workflows, making processes more efficient and transparent
- Facilitate collaboration amongst teams with features like task assignments, discussions, and document sharing within a single interface
- Gain insights into processes with real-time analytics and dashboards
- Track performance and identify areas for improvement to make data-driven decisions

The Kissflow Advantage

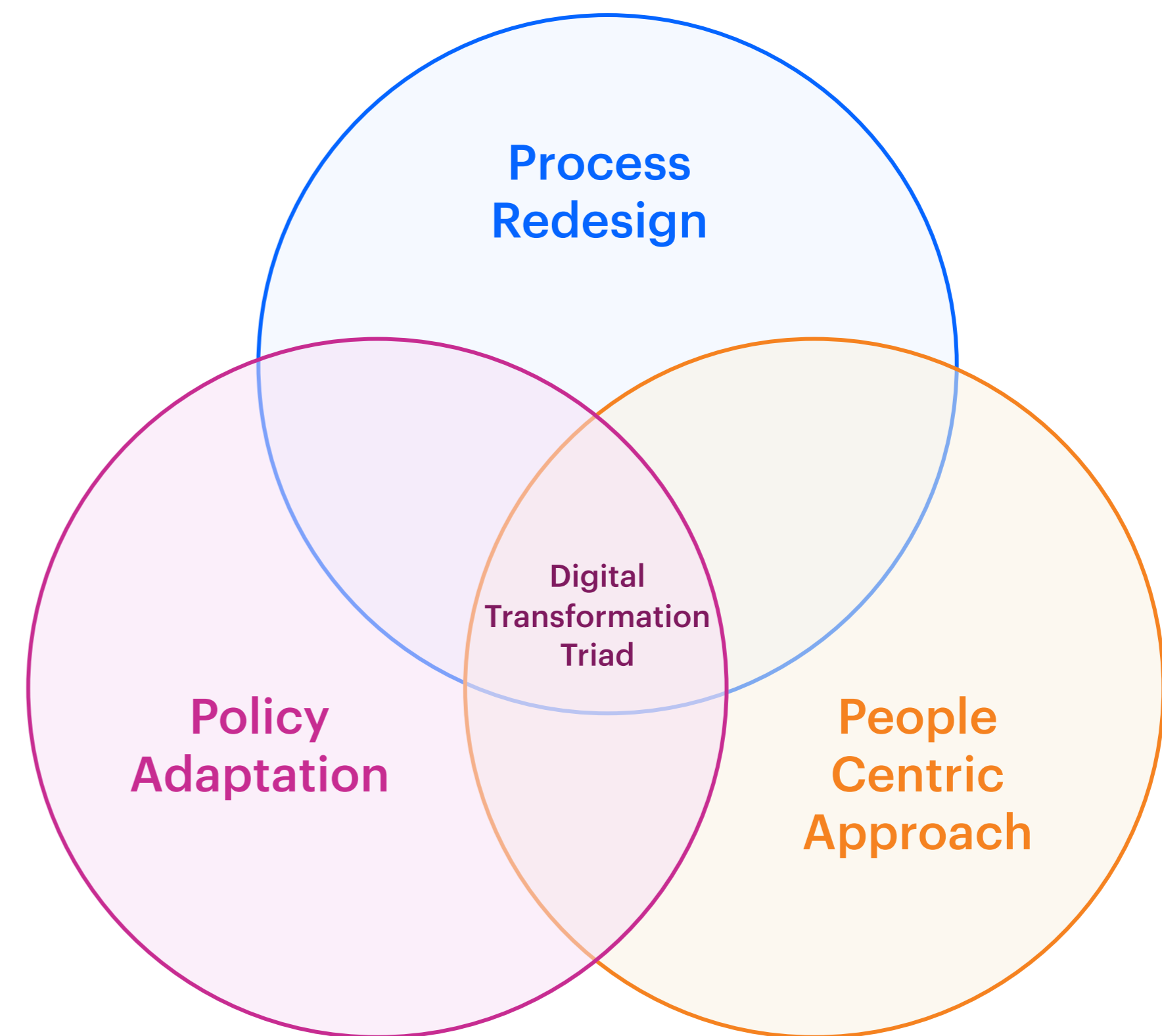
Consider adopting a unified platform like Kissflow, which orchestrates end-to-end processes, simplifying workflow management and collaboration.

- Predefined criteria trigger automation rules to ensure that each step is executed promptly and accurately
- Data analytics capabilities provide invaluable insights into the performance of processes
- Key performance indicators (KPIs) monitor in real-time, allowing for swift adjustments and improvements
- Collaborative capabilities facilitate real-time communication among teams, addressing any issues without delay

3 Rethink processes, policies, and people

Digital transformation is more than just technology. Technology is just the last piece that enables the other changes you want to make.

There are three main shifts an organization needs to make in order to embrace the full effects of digital transformation.



Process redesign

The reengineering of processes lays the foundation for digitally native organizations to be more agile, responsive, and customer-centric.

How can you redesign processes?

- Redesign processes with a customer-centric focus to optimize workflows
- Break down the processes silos to promote cross-functional collaboration
- Implement agile methodologies to respond promptly to market shifts

Policy adaptation

The digital age brings new challenges, particularly in data security and compliance. Digitally native organizations proactively review policies and establish stringent data privacy measures to address emerging concerns.

How can you establish secure policies?

- Regularly update and enhance privacy policies for data protection
- Implement robust cybersecurity protocols like advanced threat detection
- Conduct regular audits to ensure industry-specific compliance
- Engage with regulatory bodies to shape policies that align with technology

People-centric approach

Technology is only as effective as the people who wield it. Digitally native organizations foster a culture of innovation and encourage employees to experiment, innovate, and take calculated risks.

How can you implement a people-centric approach?

- Set up innovation hubs for employees to experiment with new digital solutions
- Create channels for employees to share insights and concerns on digital initiatives
- Reward employees who demonstrate exceptional digital capabilities



4 Risk management and security

As organizations dive deeper into digital transformation, they must be aware of its increased risks. A single breach can have far-reaching consequences and can paralyze the whole organization. Digitally-native organizations don't have risk and security management as merely a protective measure but a strategic imperative.

How can you mitigate risks and keep data secure?

Implement comprehensive security measures that cover a broad spectrum of defences in the events of cyber attacks, disasters, and data breaches.

The Kissflow Advantage

The governance layer in Kissflow provides a digital footprint of all user activity within the platform. It empowers IT to monitor and manage user activities while enabling citizen developers to innovate and confidently create applications.

- Get visibility into different processes and apps that are created by the users
- Eliminate data leaks and compliance violations when dealing with sensitive data
- IT can monitor adoption rates by tracking processes created and identifying top users



5 Identify change agents

Every revolution requires champions, and digital transformation is no exception. Change champions are visionary individuals who not only embrace change themselves but also inspire and lead others.

How can you identify change champions?

Look for individuals who are:

- Genuinely enthusiastic for new ideas, technologies, or processes
- Open to change and adaptable in their approach to work
- Ready to experiment with new methods even before they become organization standard
- Able to articulate the benefits of change and influence others
- Able to collaborate effectively across different departments or teams



6 Promote continuous improvement

The path to sustainable digital transformation is to enable continuous improvement. The importance of continuous improvement cannot be overstated, as it ensures the initial success of a transformation and its enduring impact on the organization's DNA.

How can you promote continuous improvement and keep adapting?

- Commit to continuous improvement through actions, decisions, and resource allocation
- Define a clear vision for your organization's future state and establish core values that align with continuous improvement
- Encourage employees to voice their ideas, concerns, and suggestions for change
- Create cross-functional teams focused on improvement initiatives
- Map existing processes and identify bottlenecks for elimination and areas for optimization
- Use data to identify trends, track progress, and measure the impact of improvement initiatives
- Stay open to adopting proven approaches and adapting them to a unique context

A path forward with Kissflow: Enabling resilient digital transformation

Transforming into a digital enterprise is a massive undertaking. It's a journey with no finish line and with unlimited possibilities and gains. The changes you make as part of your transformation will traverse technology, people, and processes. Done right, your enterprise can be resilient in a fast-moving digital future and better aligned with customer demands.

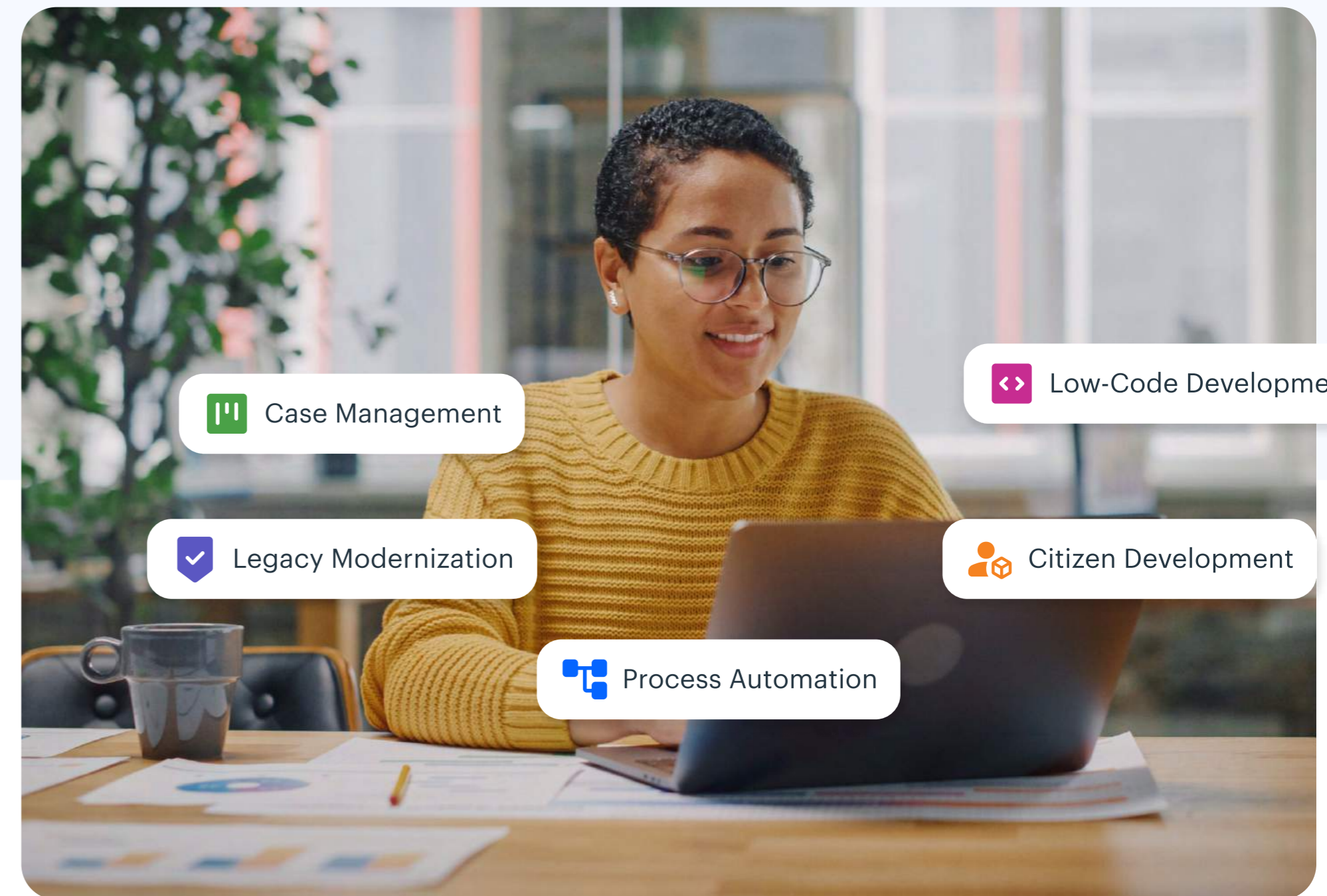
In the path towards becoming a digitally-native enterprise, Kissflow plays a pivotal role in not just navigating but helping you take your digital transformation from a crawl to a sprint.

The Kissflow Advantage

Kissflow is a low-code application development platform that brings business users and IT closer in order to simplify work management and accelerate digital transformation. The platform takes a proactive approach and offers a rich array of essential capabilities for a digitally-native transformation.

One platform with limitless possibilities

A simple platform for business users	Empower business users to build apps with a few clicks using customizable templates
A comprehensive platform for pro developers	Enable developers to build full-stack, enterprise-grade apps from scratch in weeks
A governable platform for IT leaders	Facilitate IT leaders to oversee app creation and management across teams on a single platform



Closing thoughts

Digital transformation is a long-term commitment to a new way of doing business. The weight of existing workloads and the complexity of the journey can leave transformation leaders feeling lost. It's not just about pointing fingers when things don't go as planned; it's about moving forward with practical advice and actionable insights.

Kissflow has been helping many enterprises navigate their digital transformation efforts to meet evolving business needs. The platform focuses on transforming businesses from the inside out, providing you with the features and functionalities to make the change you need for lasting success.

Take the first steps towards a smarter digital transformation journey with Kissflow and turn challenges into opportunities.



Low-Code No-Code Platform

Schedule a Demo

Brands that trust us

