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# Top 10 Digital Transformation Trends For 2019



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CMO Network

*Exploring all things Digital Transformation*

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Over the past few years I have made the commitment to looking forward to the year ahead to predict some of the most significant digital transformation trends. Knowing that digital transformation is not only a technological shift, but an

organizational change at the intersection of technology, business and people, such reflection must take into account countless possibilities. In this year's predictions, I try to take a year's worth of technology and [digital transformation research](#) to better predict where are we going? Why are we going there? And what potential surprises are in store? Hopefully, these top trends can serve as a compass of sorts, for organizations looking to move their business and digital transformations forward. While a few of my top 2019 digital transformation trends build on the trends I predicted for [last year](#), there are definitely a few new additions as we round the bend of 2018. And as a note to everyone that reads this, remember, the technology in itself does not equate to digital transformation. The customer, culture and employees along with business continuity *must* be at the heart of every technology investment. Without further ado, here's my take on what to expect in the year ahead.

- 1. 5G Fixed to 5G Mobile:** Here's the thing about 5G: we've been talking about it for a while. And if you're a world traveler or on certain networks like Sprint, you know it's still possible to slip back into 3G zones from time-to-time without realizing it. So, what's the big deal with 5G now? In short, we're finally in a spot where we will start seeing 5G everywhere. If you have been following the tech community, you will have seen that there are a wide number of fixed and test deployments with companies like Qualcomm, Intel, Nokia, Ericsson, Samsung and Huawei all getting into the action. We are also seeing new companies like [Mimoso Networks](#) making it possible to roll 5G out to both rural and urban locations, paving

the way for bullish 5G mobile providers—i.e. AT&T and Verizon—to start offering new, cooler, faster, more innovative services for mobile users. It's an exciting time for 5G and mobile alike. While 2018 was the year that fixed 5G applications found their legs, in 2019 we are going to see 5G finding its way into the upper corner of our Mobile devices, albeit for you iPhone users it is more likely going to be 2020 or later.

2. **Chatbots Good to Great:** Hear me out on this one. I know we've all had extremely frustrating chatbot experiences as we round out 2018. But the good news is that [huge steps continue to be made](#) in the way of natural language processing and sentiment analytics—so many, in fact, that some believe NLP will shake up the entire service industry in ways we've never imagined. Think about all the services that could be provided without humans—fast food lines, loan processors, job recruiters! What's more, NLP allows companies to gather insights and improve their service based on them. Some [40% of large businesses](#) have or will adopt it by the end of 2019—which makes it one of our top 2019 digital transformation trends. Now, I know many are alarmed by where AI and Chatbots may impact the workforce, but I'm also bullish that companies are going to be upskilling their work forces rather than displacing them as machines may be good at delivering on clearcut requests but leave a lot to be desired when it comes to dealing with empathy and human emotion required to deliver great customer experiences.

3. **Connected Clouds (Public, Private, Hybrid):** Honestly, we can just file this as “the continued evolution and growing pains of cloud adoption.”

Basically, what's happening is that companies are realizing that going all public cloud, private cloud, or data center isn't the best option. Sometimes, they need a mix of all or both. Thus, connected clouds are continuing to develop to meet companies' changing needs—whether they want to cloud-source storage, networking, security, or app deployment. Major public cloud providers like [Amazon and Alibaba](#) are answering the call, offering private cloud (or in Google's case, container-based) options. We are also seeing Microsoft via Azure, HPE with their 2017 acquisition of Cloud Technology Partners and their consumable IT services as well as VMware with their recent acquisition of CloudHealth Technologies all show increased commitment to connecting clouds. The term, Multicloud will be the new buzzword for the cloud conversation and what I believe this movement means more than anything else is that no matter which workloads are being run in which cloud, the experience for IT and those that are utilizing the applications needs to be seamless, secure and streamlined. For most businesses this means a mix of workloads running in public, private and hybrid environments and this will be a big topic in 2019.

- 4. Blockchain Finally Understood and Flops (kind of):** Forget everything magical I ever said about blockchain. Just kidding—kind of, but bear with me here. As we continue to explore this technological miracle worker, we've come to realize that [blockchain is kind of a mess](#). It's too complicated for lay people to use right now, and there's no standard way to use it because we all want to use it different. The only way to get mass

blockchain adoption is to create a plug-and-play version that all of us can use and understand. I'm watching closely as leading technology firms like IBM continue to make massive commitments to the potential of Blockchain for applications beyond cryptocurrency. The financial industry are also looking at this closely as well as a mass of applications in transportation of goods and services. However, to this point, it seems more of a marketing ploy than a bonafide technology offering. My guess is a lot of smart developers will continue to work on realizing the potential of blockchain in 2019, but I'm of the mindset that it will be 2-3 more years before we start to see the traction that has been promised.

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**5. Data to Analytics to Machine Learning to AI:** At the center of all of these technological trends and in the center of this list falls the linchpin to so many of these trends and to digital transformation as a whole. Data is key to companies being able to make good decisions about products, services, employees, strategy and more. We won't see a slowdown anytime soon. As recent data has shown we have created 90% of the world's data in the past year, research is also showing that we are only using 1% of the data effectively. While being in the top 1% is often a good thing, this is a

1% that most of us preaching the power of analytics should be ashamed about. With a plethora of companies like Microsoft, SAP, SAS and Salesforce (just to name a few) showing market leadership in the promotion of data being made into meaningful business analytics, there is much to be done by data driven organizations to realize the power of the data on hand and the data that they are collecting. With improved processing power that can increase machine learning, we are going to see digital leaders investing in making more of all of their data and this will be done with machine learning and AI and I believe that 1% figure will grow to 3 or 4% by 2020; which may seem small but is a massive increase in data utilization.

**6. GDPR Forces Brand Hands:** As of August 2018, about 1/3 of companies were still not compliant with the [Europe's General Data Protection Regulation](#) (GDPR), which aims to provide huge layers of data protection for users. In fact, at this time, about [1,000 U.S. news sites](#) still aren't available in Europe, generally because they [don't care enough](#) about data security to make the GDPR a priority. What does this mean in terms of 2019 digital transformation trends? It means informed customers will start to see which companies truly care about protecting their data, and which companies really don't. I believe that GDPR is the start of a more global trend that will hold companies accountable for how they treat privacy and personal data. While brands do not necessarily want to have to comply, this movement will serve as a warning to companies to figure out better ways to genuinely build relationships with their audience as

opposed to the often clear misuse and abuse of personal data in the name of marketing and selling.

7. **AR Yes, VR (Still) No:** I'm kind of starting to feel bad for [virtual reality](#) (VR) because it's so cool, but it just isn't feasible beyond gaming and highly specialized applications in today's marketplace—yet. Instead, augmented reality (AR)—VR's less sexy little brother—continues to be the name of the game in 2019 digital transformation trends. AR has found tons of use cases in enterprise workforce training, meaning it's not just cool, it's useful. And that's what technology is all about. In fact, even though [some think it will be slow](#), I believe AR's development will ramp up in 2019. I'm even bracing to hear something about a new AR or mixed reality product and/or developer kit on September 12 from Apple's big announcement. Hopefully something promising.
8. **Edge to Core and IoT Much More:** Last year, my first four trends were basically around IoT, AI, Machine Learning and Edge. This year, the four become one because they are so deeply interconnected. As the IoT grows—and the number of connected devices skyrockets—it makes sense that we need more space—and closer space—to process the data it's working to capture and process. The concepts of Smart Cities and Autonomous Vehicles have zero chance of being realized if data processing has to happen in the cloud. That means we'll be leading more and more toward edge computing in terms of 2019 digital transformation trends. Analytics and data won't just be for processing—they'll be for processing *in real-time*. And that's something only the edge can support right now. Now,

its important that I emphasize that edge and cloud are not mutually exclusive. Cisco refers to the interdependence of edge and cloud as “The Fog” as they recognize that critical data interactions that take place between the edge and the cloud to maximize data utilization. While their vernacular may or may not become ubiquitous with the connection between edge and core, you can be certain that the two will work together tirelessly to achieve the possibilities being sold to us with AI, IoT and Machine Learning.

9. **Consumption-Based IT Services for the Win (FTW):** This year, we did our homework, and asked the [CIOs and IT executives about their IT budgets](#) and trends in their consumption of cloud and overall, they are interested in creating efficiency, having more flexibility with their workloads (note trend 3) and having the ability to scale up and down quickly based on the business requirements. This means, much like we saw Salesforce become a heavyweight for CRM as a Service, that the idea of anything and everything as a service is highly desirable. With the as-a-Service industry growing, companies are becoming more sophisticated in choosing “a la carte” IT services to fit their needs. This [ITaaS allows for](#) scalability, the latest technology (without the latest tech price tag), shorter procurement cycles, and increased agility. It only makes sense that companies are leaning this way and they will be more and more in 2019.
10. **CEOs Take the Reins:** Honestly, it’s about time and while I’m putting this as my closing prediction, it is also the one that has me the most nervous. Countless studies have shown an overwhelming desire from

employees to see digital transformation start at the very top of the company, however, trends are still showing that the task is being too often delegated to IT, Marketing or HR departments. So even though we've seen a range of C-suite leaders charged with taking the reins of digital transformation, I believe that the CEO will (must) finally step up in 2019, realizing digital transformation isn't going anywhere. They'll be making it more of a **priority to hire** for digital transformation, recognizing the critical nature of building cultures that can change, and the value of reskilling employees and hiring for agility—learning to trust data more than ever before. That's good news for all companies in 2019.

If there's one thing I know for sure, it's that digital transformation will continue to change how we do business—in every industry. While it may be hard to see the inroads some of these technologies are making right now, their potential to change how we work, socialize, and interact is tremendous—and their implications will continue to land far beyond the year ahead.

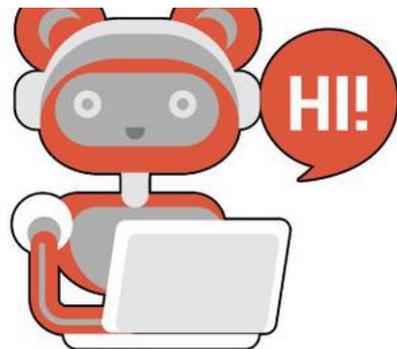
For those that prefer a Graphic to share. Here is a visual of the 10 trends for 2019.

# TOP 10 DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION TRENDS FOR 2019

Every year around this time, technologists like me begin to ponder the future of digital transformation. Where are we going? Why are we going there? And what potential surprises are in store? While a few of my top 2019 digital transformation trends are the same as last year, there are definitely a few new additions as we round the bend of 2018. **Here's my take on what to expect in the year ahead.**

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**1**  
**5G FIXED  
TO 5G  
MOBILE**



2  
**CHATBOTS  
GOOD TO  
GREAT**

**Hear me out on this one.** Think about all the services that could be provided without humans—fast food lines, loan processors, job recruiters! Some 40 percent of large businesses have or will adopt it by the end of 2019—which makes it one of our top 2019 digital transformation trends.

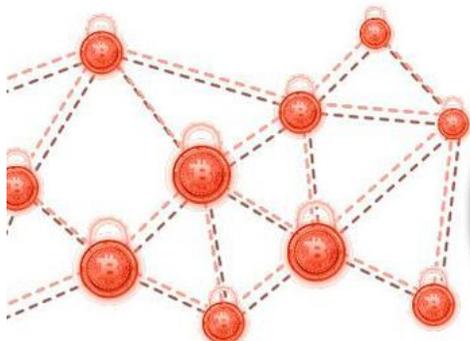
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3  
**CONNECTED  
CLOUDS  
(PUBLIC,  
PRIVATE,  
HYBRID)**

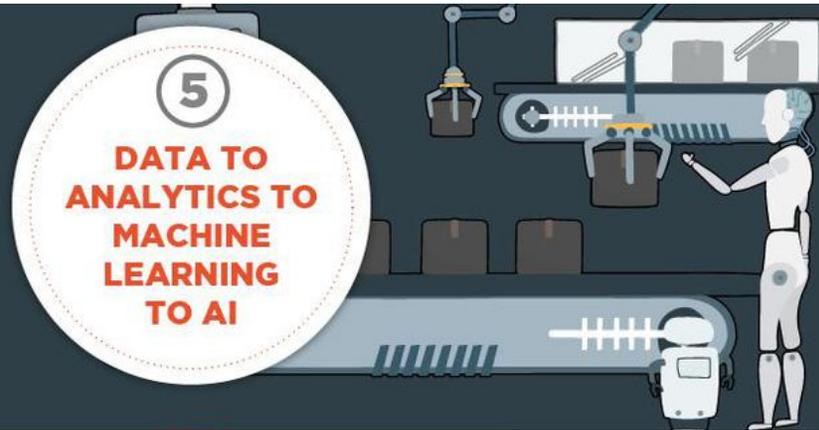


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FINALLY  
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### EDGE TO CORE AND IOT MUCH MORE

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Again, I'd call this a "correction" more than one of the 2019 digital transformation trends. Still, it's worth noting. With the as-a-Service industry growing, companies are becoming more sophisticated in choosing "a la carte" IT services to fit their needs. T

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### CONSUMPTION IT FTW



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### CEO'S TAKE THE REIGNS

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Top 10 Digital Transformation Trends - Infographic FUTURUM RESEARCH

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I am a principal analyst of Futurum Research and CEO of Broadsuite Media Group. I spend my time researching, analyzing and providing the world's best and brightest companies with insights as to how digital transformation, disruption, innovation and the experience economy ar... **Read More**

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