



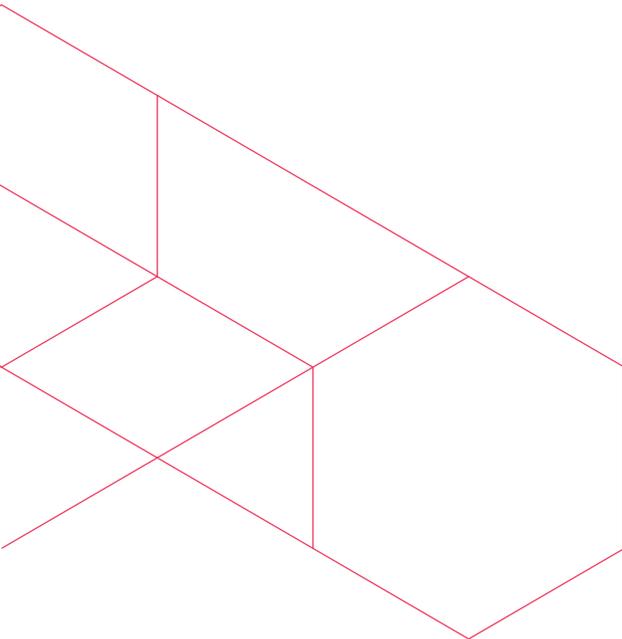
Re-imagining the CIO in the Next Normal: A Chief's Predictions for 2021



CIOs faced extraordinary challenges during 2020 as they worked to keep staff safe and productive while accelerating their organisations’ digital transformation. As they look into 2021 and beyond, many unknowns still lay ahead. How CIOs can identify and meet these challenges was the subject of the roundtable discussion hosted by Commvault and 6 Degrees Media: *Re-imagining the CIO in the Next Normal – A Chief’s Predictions for 2021*. The discussion featured Deloitte Australia’s Chief Edge Officer for its Centre for the Edge, Peter Williams, along with Commvault’s Area Vice President for Australia New Zealand, David Rajkovic; and Director of Pre-Sales Engineering, Paul Lancaster. Together with some of Australia’s leading cross-sector CIOs, they explored the critical learnings of 2020 and how these can be applied in the year ahead.



Top (left to right): Peter Williams, Chief Edge Officer, Centre for the Edge, Deloitte Australia; Paul Lancaster, Director of Pre-Sales Engineering, Commvault. Bottom (left to right): David Rajkovic, Area Vice President for Australia New Zealand, Commvault; Brad Howarth, Journalist/Moderator.



The year 2020 was one of significant disruption, as organisations responded to unexpected trials brought on by the COVID-19 crisis. However, amidst the chaos there have been standout examples of individuals and teams rising to the meet the unprecedented challenges.

One exceptional success story is that of the performance of CIOs and the technology teams they lead. Not only did they support their workforces that were suddenly directed to work from home, but in many instances, they also rapidly transformed their organisation’s business models to focus on digital communications and fulfillment.

The fact that so many organisations were able to continue functioning is testament to the talent and commitment of their IT teams – and the people leading them.

For this reason Deloitte’s Chief Edge Officer for the Centre for the Edge, Peter Williams, says one of the key trends to note from 2020 was the rise of the CIO. “If you’d said at the start of 2020 that CIOs were going to achieve what they did – and within the timeframe they did it in – nobody would have believed you,” Williams said. “But they did.”

Maintaining Acceleration

Looking ahead, Williams said one of the key questions for many executives was how they would build on the progress made in 2020, and harness cross-functional collaboration to solve evolving pain points.

“The CIOs had to lead the charge in terms of tearing down the walls,” Williams said. “I think it really drove that leadership opportunity for CIOs, to define the art of the possible and show

just how quickly teams can move if they’re given a bit of headspace.”

This was echoed in the words of one CIO attendee, who said the greatest accomplishment of 2020 was the trust that the IT team earned from the rest of the organisation. “What we’ve got to do moving forward is not lose that trust. You’ve just got to keep the momentum, build on that trust, and keep going.”

Williams believed momentum could best be maintained by focusing on projects with shorter timeframes and looking for ways to reduce internal bureaucracy. “Because if you don’t do that, we’ll slip back,” Williams said. “We saw that to make things work we didn’t have to spend 12 months doing software selection and business cases. We said, we need to solve this problem quickly, we’re going to find technology that works, we’re going to get it out there. We understand that there’s going to be some sort of issues as we go along, but we’re going to learn and evolve.”

This same perspective needed to be applied to new challenges as they emerged.

“What are those new business models we need to be thinking about?” Williams asked. “If our industry is going to be disrupted, where will it come from? How can we experiment and play in that area and be ready for it?”

According to Commvault’s Area Vice President for Australia and New Zealand, David Rajkovic, one of the cornerstones of successful IT organisations was their ability to perform ‘elegant integration’ by pulling different technologies and applications together – quickly and easily.

“IT organisations are becoming curators or aggregators of services to their organisation,” Rajkovic said. “It’s not about building everything within your business, it’s about sourcing technology that exists out there and doing so in a way that you can introduce it rapidly.



Peter Williams, Chief Edge Officer, Centre for the Edge, Deloitte Australia

“That allows you to move quickly. You extract more value from your data, you’re able to integrate ‘system A’ with ‘system B’ and derive insights that you can’t get when they operate in isolation.”

Futureproofing

Attendees also discussed how it was vital for organisations that had undertaken rapid transformation to ensure that they had also done the work necessary to be digitally fit, rather than just implementing stop-gap solutions that would not withstand long term pressures.

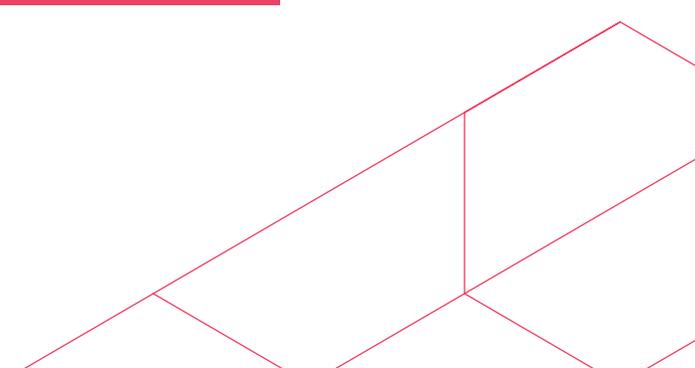
Williams said this would allow organisations to respond faster to competitive challenges and other unexpected events. Achieving this meant continuing to invest in what he considered to be the fundamentals of the digital era: cloud, mobile, social, data and analytics.

But he said it was also important for organisations to pay more attention to the design experience.



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"Let's make sure that the experience from an employee through to the customer at all levels is easy to use and looks great," Williams said.

"Because people aren't comparing you to others in your industry, they're often comparing you to the experiences they may have on Apple or Netflix or something of that nature."

For this reason, he suggested it was sometimes good to bring in different skillsets, such as those of anthropologists and ethnographers, who understood human dynamics and relationships with the technology.

"Don't ask them what they want, ask them: 'What's causing your life to be painful?'" Williams said. "And then, work with them: your customers and your employees, and you will create great experiences.

"But to be able to do that fast, you need a platform. You need to have things pre-approved and need to have ways of right sizing."

According to Commvault's Director of Pre-Sales Engineering, Paul Lancaster, futureproofing an organisation meant thinking along the three lines of business: strategy, disruptive technology and people, to create a technology roadmap.

"Having that technology roadmap should often lead to developing what you already have in the business, but sometimes it leads to a lot of disruptive technologies," Lancaster said. "And disruptive technologies should create more value on your existing technology platforms."

But while technology was important, it should never take precedence over people. "People are the heart of a business," Lancaster said. "Futureproofing your organisation means investing in your internal talent, to develop their internal career paths and their areas of expertise. That is definitely paramount."

The Hybrid Workforce

While many workers adapted well to working remotely, not all were able to participate with the same level of productivity.

Even though a range of workers may opt to continue working remotely on a full or part time basis, Williams said it was vital that all leaders took the time to really understand what was necessary to take their workforce on a digital journey into 2021 and beyond.

This led to a discussion of the concept of the digital-ready worker. Williams said many workers already possessed the skills to work in a digital environment, as they were familiar with key tools such as video conferencing and communicating through social technology – but they still got frustrated with technology. "What we've seen in a lot of organisations is the difficulty in somebody having an idea which was related to technology or digital, and the battle that they have to go through," Williams said. "We came up with this term called 'learned helplessness'. It's almost like 'it's just too hard in my organisation to make these things happen'.

"So, what are we doing to bring our employees and our workforce and our fellow executives up to speed about the language of digital? What tools are out

there? More importantly, how they can be applied? People don’t need to learn to code to come up with a great idea.”

Williams had experience with this earlier in 2020 through an engagement at a tier 1 Australian insurer, where he assisted in bringing its whole workforce up to speed on the art of the possible with digital.

“So, really teaching the organisation to build a level of digital agency and capability so things can happen fast, and people can actually expand their thoughts,” Williams said. “It goes back to needing to have a digitally-ready organisation that can take ideas, get them out the door, learn fast and evolve.”

He said often that worked best when the siloes that surrounded specific technologies such as IoT and Artificial Intelligence (AI) and machine learning were torn down and the focus applied instead to working out how to combine technologies to solve a problem.

Williams spoke of how Deloitte was able to apply this thinking at the McLaren Formula One team, where it worked with McLaren’s software group to translate the gigabytes of data generated by its cars each minute and better predict performance and maintenance schedules.

“We call it “optimal reality,” Williams said. “Being able to run millions of simulations in seconds to then adjust and sort of solve problems before they occur.”

Security in the DNA

One of the consequences of moving quickly in 2020, however, was the potential to open holes in an organisation’s security strategy. According to Rajkovic, many customers now were working to rationalise and consolidate their actions to prepare for future requirements, and security had once again become a key priority.

“For a lot of organisations the speed at which we’ve had to operate in 2020 has meant that a lot of

governance frameworks that were previously slowing down organisations had to be bypassed,” Rajkovic said. “A lot of organisations are taking stock now, having moved so quickly, and looking at what the speed of operation in 2020 has exposed them.”

His colleague Paul Lancaster added that many CIOs now were also reviewing and adjusting their data sets and defining data management to determine who had control, and how these assets would be used in the future.

“With the discussion we’ve been involved in there’s been constant feedback around the level of governance within the business, and that encompasses not only just the data, but the people, the processes, security and the technologies that manage and protect these data assets,” Lancaster said.

“The message is clear. Constant validation is required, from knowing you have a secure data infrastructure that ensures privacy and confidentiality; and that those who are accessing data are the most appropriate.”

The Need for Speed

While attendees agreed it was difficult to predict all of the circumstances they would face in 2021, there was a consensus around the need to be able to move with greater speed than has been possible in the past; and with confidence that they could do so based on their experiences of 2020.

Rajkovic encouraged attendees to ensure they retained the positive progress made – particularly in emboldening their teams to come forward with ideas.

“That’s something that everybody needs to foster,” Rajkovic said. “In an organisation like Commvault here in Australia, we will continue to fully support an open-door policy – even if we’re not technically in the office every day.”

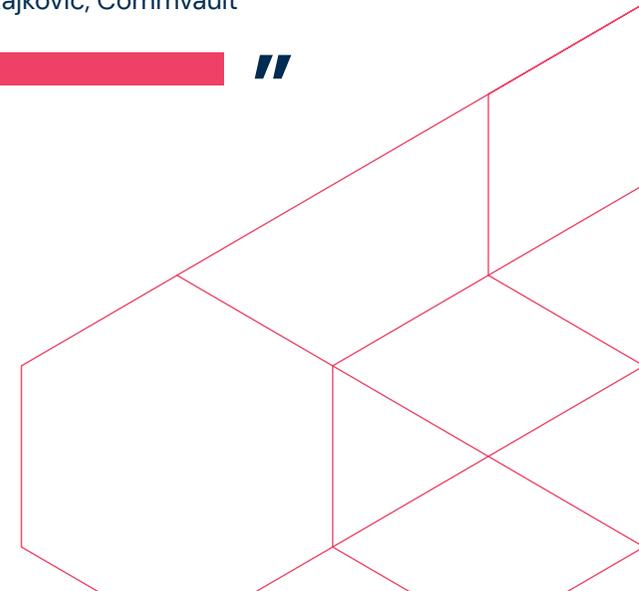


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