

## Don't Fear Transformation, Embrace It

By: Scott St. John

Transformation is scary. But, when you peel back the layers of technical jargon, transformation is nothing more than change. And people don't like change. Change has risk. Change is uncomfortable. But without change, everything stays the same. The simple fact is, if you want different results, you must change *something*.

Unfortunately, transformation is necessary to compete in today's marketplace. It's one thing to say that to get to where you want to be, you must leap over this deep, dark hole. But it's another thing to say, to get to where you want to be you must leap over this deep, dark hole—before the bus that is hurtling toward you runs you over.

But companies *are* people. Dozens, hundreds, or thousands of people. People that generally don't like or want to change. Now we have to say, to get to where you want to be, *we* must *all* leap over this deep dark hole—before the bus hurtling toward you runs over *all of us*. That complicates things.



## Getting to where you want to be

It's important to begin with the objective in mind. If you want to be successful, the goal is to seize high-growth opportunities with high profit margins. But those two things are as closely related as they are distinctly different. To be high growth, you have to be agile enough to capitalize on market opportunities and high-growth areas. You also need the tools and technology to be able to efficiently address these opportunities. This is how and where growth and profitability meet.

The better tools you have, the more agile and the profitable you can become. The difference, however, lies in that the investment in new technologies can be or seem expensive, resource-intensive, and even risky—in some sense, the opposite of high growth. Virtualization? Rip and replace? Scary stuff. The gap between the ability to capitalize on market opportunities and investments in technology to efficiently seize them can be mitigated by going with technology providers who have a proven track record of delivering tangible and innovative solutions to their customers, with minimal impact to their operations, in a very short time frame.

"We have been working closely with our customer globally to help them capitalize on

the latest high-growth trends by leveraging the very latest technology," Ramon Lopez, Chief Marketing Officer at Intraway, told *Pipeline*. "We focused on building solutions that can be rapidly deployed to expedite return-on-investment." Intraway is a leading provider of automation solutions and notable winner of *Pipeline's* annual Innovation Awards, an extensive evaluation of innovative products, companies and solutions. I recently had the opportunity to interview the team from Intraway following their awards win, to gain more perspective. Over the last 15 years, Intraway has helped service providers in 22 countries digitally transform in record time, leverage the latest technologies, and capitalize on emerging market opportunities.

To do this, Intraway ensures minimal operational disruption by including over 50 network adapters and support for cloud, container, microservice, virtual and hybrid architectures off the shelf. The company's Symphonica product also ensures interoperability with its standards-based design and open API framework. Symphonica is a flexible orchestration engine that manages complex orchestration processes, supporting high-volume transactions efficiently with zero-touch service order management. Essentially, Symphonica simplifies the management of existing services and increases service providers' agility to deploy new services. These are new services which just happen to be in the high-growth areas in which you probably want to be.

And there are significant growth opportunities at different stages of maturity in our industry today. The IoT, or Internet of Things, has been around for a while starting with machine-to-machine (M2M) offerings years ago. But the explosive growth in IoT has only just begun, with billions of connected devices coming online across enterprise, industrial, and residential segments. The next evolution of wireless services, 5G, is just getting started. Wireless spectrum has been acquired and limited production deployments have been successfully completed, laying the foundation for a plethora of new use cases and market opportunities. But capitalizing on these opportunities won't be easy. And easy is the name of the game.

It's also important to note today's high-growth, trillion-dollar market capitalization, and that mega-profit companies have it easy. Maybe not in the traditional sense of the word, but the new digital economy is built on a foundation where the company provides and maintains a platform, and the customer does the work with it.

Looking at it another way, when was the last time you called Google? When was the last time you used Google's services? If you're reading this article, you may have used them to get here. When was the last time you talked to someone at Amazon? On the other hand, when was the last time you bought something or used one of Amazon's *platforms*? Netflix? Microsoft? Apple? When did any of these company do anything *for you* other than offer their platform *to you*? The simple fact of the matter is that the new digital economy is centered on a build-and-expand platform experience backed by near real-time automation, hyper scalability and the very latest innovative technology. Or at least that is where the big money is.

Historically, complexity and cost multiply as new technologies, systems, and devices are added over time. This legacy approach is unsustainable in high-growth areas, and service providers need a platform that helps them bridge the old and new. Intraway does this by taking a bottom-up approach at service fulfillment, eliminating manual tasks and adding automation to streamline operations. In a cable environment, this removes the proverbial swivel chair traditionally associated with multi-system, multi-device, and multi-network management. Intraway, though, goes a step further by eliminating the need to pre-stage customer premise equipment (CPE), too. A field technician can install a CPE device on site by simply scanning a bar code and attaching it to a service order, which then runs a predefined workflow to automate the configuration, provisioning, and testing of the device. This is in stark contrast to the legacy approach, where the device has to be preconfigured and provisioned prior to a truck roll. This new approach solves a lot of real-world problems now but also lays a foundation on which cable service providers can transform from the analog network of today to the digitally distributed architecture of tomorrow. It also allows the service provider to leverage multiple networks and technologies within the workflow to provide high-demand services to their customers, such as HFC (Hybrid Fiber Coaxial) networks and GPON to offer increased bandwidth speeds.

# The deep, dark hole

The deep, dark hole is full of fear: fear of risk, and fear of failure. But the driving force behind transformation in today's market—between whether you should take the leap or not—should be the fear of missing out. Organizations simply won't be able to compete today or in the marketplace of tomorrow without it.

“We create value for our customers with mission-critical solutions that fit their current and future needs,” added Lopez. “By bridging legacy equipment with future-proof technology to automate and orchestrate processes in multiple environments, we support CSPs and MSO in their transition to virtualization to accelerate the digital transformation journey and capitalize on new growth opportunities such as 5G and IoT.”

Perhaps the single, biggest thing holding us back transformation is legacy itself: legacy people, process, politics, and systems. Or, in other words, the old way of doing things. It's comfortable, I get it. But failing to transform because it's simply the way we do (or don't) do things is like enjoying the lofty fall to the bottom. Remember, it's not the fall that kills you, it's the sudden stop.

The last factor restricting transformation is, well, slightly more productive. It's the web of disconnected, siloed and often manual processes that are costly, resource-intensive, and prone to error. Even the most reluctant to transform may be able to see that there is value addressing these areas, and adding automation into the mix. If nothing else, it frees up valuable and expensive human resources to do what they do best: to innovate and focus on growth initiatives.

# The bus that is hurtling toward you

While you're contemplating your own transformation initiatives, or whether you should invest in transformation or not, digital natives have already built their companies upon it. These web-scale companies, many of them previously mentioned in this article, were built upon the premise of automation and innovation. Do you think these companies don't have a telco play? If you did, you'd be dead wrong. Microsoft? Well, there's Skype. Facebook? Messenger and WhatsApp. Google? Well, everything from Google Hangouts to fiber networks. I'd even be willing to bet Apple sells more mobile and wearable devices than AT&T.

These companies are eating your lunch right now. And while your operational costs may expand by multiples to address emerging market opportunities and growth areas, theirs efficiently scale. Their people never had to change. In fact, their people *are innovators* and their companies are innovative as a result.

# Embracing transformation

Don't fear transformation. Embrace it. Sure, transformation can be risky, even scary. But so is failing to transform. Technology providers like Intraway, which has proven it can help, are here to help you take the leap, before that bus that is hurtling towards you runs you over.