

## "Breaking the Myth: Digital Transformation is Possible for Organizations of Any Size"

Are you a small business owner worried that your organization's size is too small for digital transformation? Think again! The truth is, size is not a criteria for digital Transformation; it's survival. The ecosystem is evolving, and digital adoption is the key to thriving in the future.

Allow me to share with you a motivational story about a Paan-wala, who transformed his small business during the pandemic (Paan is an Indian mouth sweetener, freshener, and digestive made from betel leaves & Paan-wala here represents a small shop/kiosk) Before the pandemic, my wife and I often strolled up to his shop for paan after dinner. But when COVID hit, we stopped going out as much.

One day, out of the blue, I received a text message from the Paan-wala, offering to deliver my favorite flavor of paan to my doorstep. I was pleasantly surprised and curious about his business model, so I went to his shop to learn more.

He informed me that he had also started delivering daily essentials like milk, butter, eggs etc. to his customers during the pandemic. He also created a WhatsApp group for local news, where customers could share and discuss what's happening in the area.

I did not get the logic for this initiative. He said that he had a set of local customers who used to come to smoke a cigarette at his shop. The main reason was that his customers who wanted to reduce their smoking habit did not buy the packet but smoked a cigarette at the shop itself. While they were there they smoked they generally asked him about what is happening in the area (local gup-shup). WhatsApp group was created for this!

What's fascinating is that the Paan-wala is an eighth-grade dropout with little literacy, yet he was able to transform his business and survive in difficult times. I feel his success is because of the following reasons:

Firstly, it's important to note that the Paan-wala's success can be attributed to his clear strategy that aligned with his business objectives. He identified the need to pivot his business during the pandemic to adapt to the changing customer behavior and preferences. He saw an opportunity to expand his product offerings beyond just paan and started delivering daily essentials like milk, butter, and eggs to his customers. This allowed him to diversify his revenue streams and create new opportunities for growth.

Secondly, the Paan-wala demonstrated a customer-centric approach to his business. He understood his customers' needs and preferences and was able to deliver personalized products and services. For example, he was able to pick up my phone number from the UPI payment system and send me a text message offering to deliver my favorite flavor of paan to my doorstep.

This shows that he was proactive in engaging with his customers and providing them with a convenient and personalized experience.

Thirdly, the Paan-wala was open to change and experimentation. He was willing to try new ways of working and was able to adapt to the changing market conditions. For example, he created a WhatsApp group for local news to engage with his customers and create a sense of community. This allowed him to build a loyal customer base and establish a strong brand reputation.

Fourthly, the Paan-wala effectively used technology to engage with his customers and provide personalized products and services. He used UPI, SMS, and WhatsApp to communicate with his customers and provide them with a seamless experience. This allowed him to build trust and loyalty among his customers.

This example of the Paan-wala has demonstrated that size is not a limiting factor for digital transformation. Small businesses can thrive by adopting a customer-centric approach, embracing new technologies, and being open to change and experimentation. By doing so, they can not only survive but also grow and succeed in the future.

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