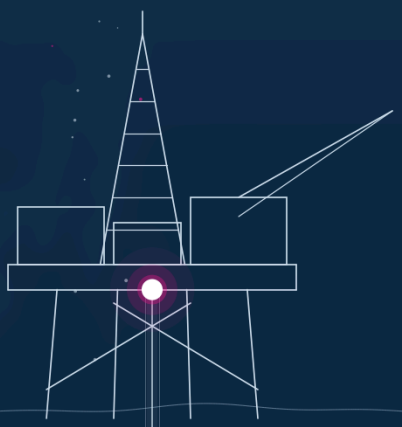
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Beyond Digital Pilots

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Beyond Digital Pilots

Balancing Technology Push and Market Pull for Enterprise Transformation

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Takeaways

- Successful digital pilots do not necessarily translate into enterprise-scale transformation: McKinsey (2022) reports that 70% of oil and gas companies have not moved beyond the pilot phase.
- Market Pull (MP) can demonstrate that a digital application works. Yet when transformation is organized around individual initiatives, application-level outcomes tend to be prioritized over the shared foundations needed to scale.
- Technology Push (TP) creates the conditions under which applications can transform an enterprise: shared data, interoperability and reusable technology foundations.
- Neither mechanism is sufficient on its own. The right balance depends on the type of investment, the maturity of existing foundations and the uncertainty about future applications.
- Applications and foundations must co-evolve, and the balance must be adjusted as capabilities mature and new opportunities emerge.
- Finding the right TP/MP mix is not a one-time decision. It is a continuing responsibility of digital transformation leadership.

Abstract

Digital transformation presents a persistent paradox: organizations successfully demonstrate the value of digital applications through pilots yet struggle to translate these successes into enterprise-wide transformation. This paper examines the paradox through the complementary mechanisms of Technology Push (TP) and Market Pull (MP). It argues that business-driven innovation, while essential for identifying needs and validating applications, can favor investments with directly attributable benefits over shared technological foundations whose value extends across multiple initiatives. Building on innovation theory and digital transformation research, the paper proposes an investment-level framework that differentiates the appropriate TP/MP emphasis across business applications, shared technological foundations and technological exploration. The framework further considers how this balance should evolve with technological maturity, changing requirements and uncertainty about future applications. Three propositions are advanced for empirical investigation. The paper contributes a conceptual perspective on the pilot-to-scale challenge, positioning deliberate TP/MP calibration as a proposed approach to aligning immediate business value with the technological capabilities required for enterprise-scale transformation.

Keywords: Digital transformation; Technology Push; Market Pull; digital pilots; enterprise scalability; digital infrastructure; innovation management; enterprise architecture.