How Blazent Delivers Transformative Value Through Actionable Intelligence

Prepared for:

BLAZENT

EMA™

*IT & DATA MANAGEMENT RESEARCH,
INDUSTRY ANALYSIS & CONSULTING*

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Executive Introduction

It's no longer news that business performance and IT performance are more closely linked than ever before. This is not only changing how businesses and organizations are evolving in terms of effectiveness, outreach, and business model; it's also impacting IT organizations as they struggle to play a more proactive and strategic role in supporting and even redefining business needs. These changes are being accelerated by technologies such as mobile, cloud, big data, and the Internet of Things (IoT), as well as initiatives like agile and DevOps. But above all they are being driven by a new population of consumers who have become comfortable with making digital services an integral part of their everyday lives.

As many in the industry have observed, this is no small transition. As shown in EMA's Q3 2015 research, "Digital and IT Transformation: A Global View of Trends and Requirements," the very role of IT is changing from a reactive, back-office citadel to a more informed business partner seeking to optimize technology to business, organizational, and personalized outcomes.

The term most often applied to this transition as viewed from a business perspective is "digital transformation"—as businesses leverage digital services for everything from improved internal efficiencies and customer and partner outreach to brand visibility and market loyalty. In fact, digital services are themselves increasingly becoming "products" across a growing number of verticals. In parallel, when an organization is focused on IT becoming more effective in and of itself in support of the business, the term most typically used has been "IT transformation." This typically means achieving a more cohesive, fluid, automated, and data-enhanced way of working across all critical stakeholders.

Perhaps the single most dominant finding of this research is that digital and IT transformation are closely related and complementary—a necessary handshake rather than two separate worlds. In other words, an initiative targeting digital transformation without strong investments in IT transformation is significantly less likely to be effective than a 50/50 partnership between the business and IT.

This white paper will examine key requirements for enabling superior business-to-IT alignment through best practices, technology investments, and metrics for visibility and insight. The report will also highlight Blazent's unique capabilities in data quality management, data integration, and advanced analytics to provide a compelling foundation for the "digital intelligence" needed to make digital and IT transformation a reality.

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Demographics

This white paper leverages data from "Digital and IT Transformation: A Global View of Trends and Requirements." In August 2015, EMA surveyed more than 300 business and IT professionals across the globe. Nearly half were based in North America; the remaining 50% of respondents were evenly split between the Asia–Pacific (APAC) and Europe–Middle East–Africa (EMEA) regions. All companies represented had 250 or more employees, with the majority of respondents from organizations with between 1,000 and 10,000 employees. The leading industry verticals were manufacturing, finance/banking/ insurance, retail, high-technology software, and healthcare.

What Is "Digital Intelligence" and Why Does it Matter?

EMA defines "digital intelligence" as the data-driven insights shared among IT and business stakeholders to support common transformative goals. Digital intelligence can enhance change management and agile software development by providing superior guidance for development, service management teams, operations, IT executives, and business stakeholders seeking to improve the speed, quality, and relevance of IT service delivery. Similarly, digital intelligence might be directed at IT asset optimization in support of business goals and business needs by providing a common interconnected fabric of insights across IT domains, IT service consumers, and business planners. Other examples might span everything from service performance to optimizing cloud for IT and business efficiencies, to security, to IT operations, as well as compliance and risk management requirements.

As this report will show, digital intelligence requires the effective assimilation of many different data sources into a common trusted fabric of insights to support more effective collaboration across all key "digital" stakeholders. Digital intelligence also requires team building and alignment from a process and organizational perspective. Figure 1 shows how similar IT and digital transformation are in terms of their organizational drivers.
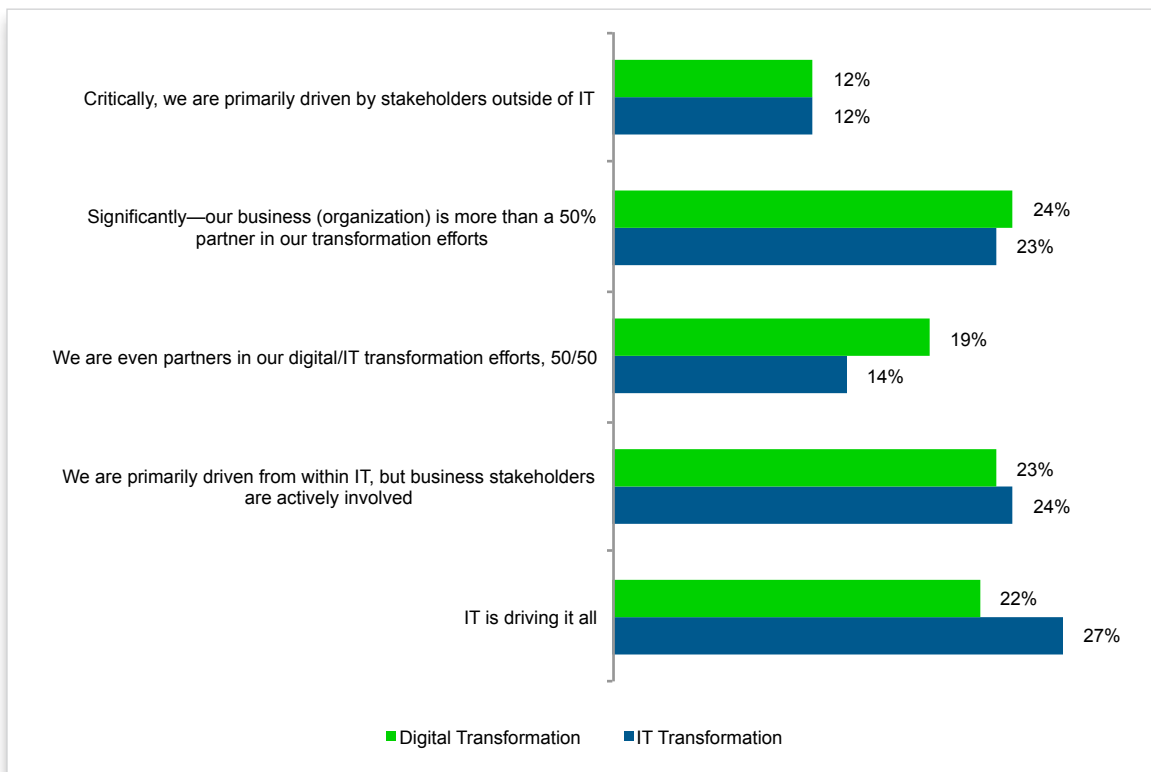

Figure 1: Digital and IT transformation show strikingly similar patterns in terms of "who drives the intitiave?"

The need for business and IT-to-business alignment was suggested throughout EMA's research. For example, initiatives with a 50/50 ownership between IT and business stakeholders were more likely to be successful than initiatives for which ownership was skewed toward one group or the other. In parallel, the research showed that a 50/50 division between IT and digital transformation reflected a more progressive model than when transformational directions were skewed to favor predominantly IT or predominantly digital transformation separately. This 50/50 group was also more likely to:

- Be slated for IT growth
- See benefits from best practices
- Leverage technologies in support of transformation
- Leverage metrics for public and private cloud
- Have a balanced focus between DevOps and agile

A Brief Introduction to Blazent

Blazent's Integrated Data Analytics solution offers a powerful and proven history of supporting transformational initiatives as this report will examine in more detail. But by way of introduction, the following are three critical use cases highlighted by EMA in the report "Optimizing the Unknown: Making IT Data Work for You with Blazent's Integrated IT Analytics" (November 2014).

- **Optimizing existing management investments** – Understanding how and where your toolset investments are working—where you are covered and where you are not covered—whether for effective risk management, security management, performance management, change management, automation efficiencies, or capacity optimization.

- **Optimizing IT hardware and software assets and services** – Insights into IT hardware and software assets, where they are, and what their vulnerabilities are. How can you optimize your software license usage by minimizing penalties and automating audits? How can you ensure that the infrastructure you need is there for introducing and assuring critical new services?

- **Optimizing and empowering the CMDB** – Optimizing your CMDB for accuracy, currency, and relevance through industry-unique analytics. Blazent can support the full range of CMDB use cases, from change management and asset management to performance and service impact management. Moreover, Blazent can drastically improve the way you update and administer your CMDB by improving efficiencies and accuracy. Currently, Blazent's most in-depth support is for the ServiceNow CMDB, with growing support for BMC's Atrium CMDB.

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Three Key Areas of Digital Differentiation in Aligning IT with the Business

EMA looked at a number of areas in its research on digital and IT transformation, but three in particular stood out:

- Attention to best practices
- Investment in good technologies
- Insight and visibility as delivered through good metrics and KPIs

Not surprisingly, good shared data was an underpinning for success in all three areas.

Process, Best Practices, and the Digital Future

Good processes are central to making IT more effective in and of itself, as well as supporting more effective ways of working between IT and the business. In fact, 79% of the respondents in EMA's research linked their transformational initiatives to best practices, and those who did not were significantly less likely to be successful. Figure 2 shows the range of best practices for both IT and digital transformation. The data once again reflects a strong commonality between digital and IT transformation—this time in context with best-practice priorities.
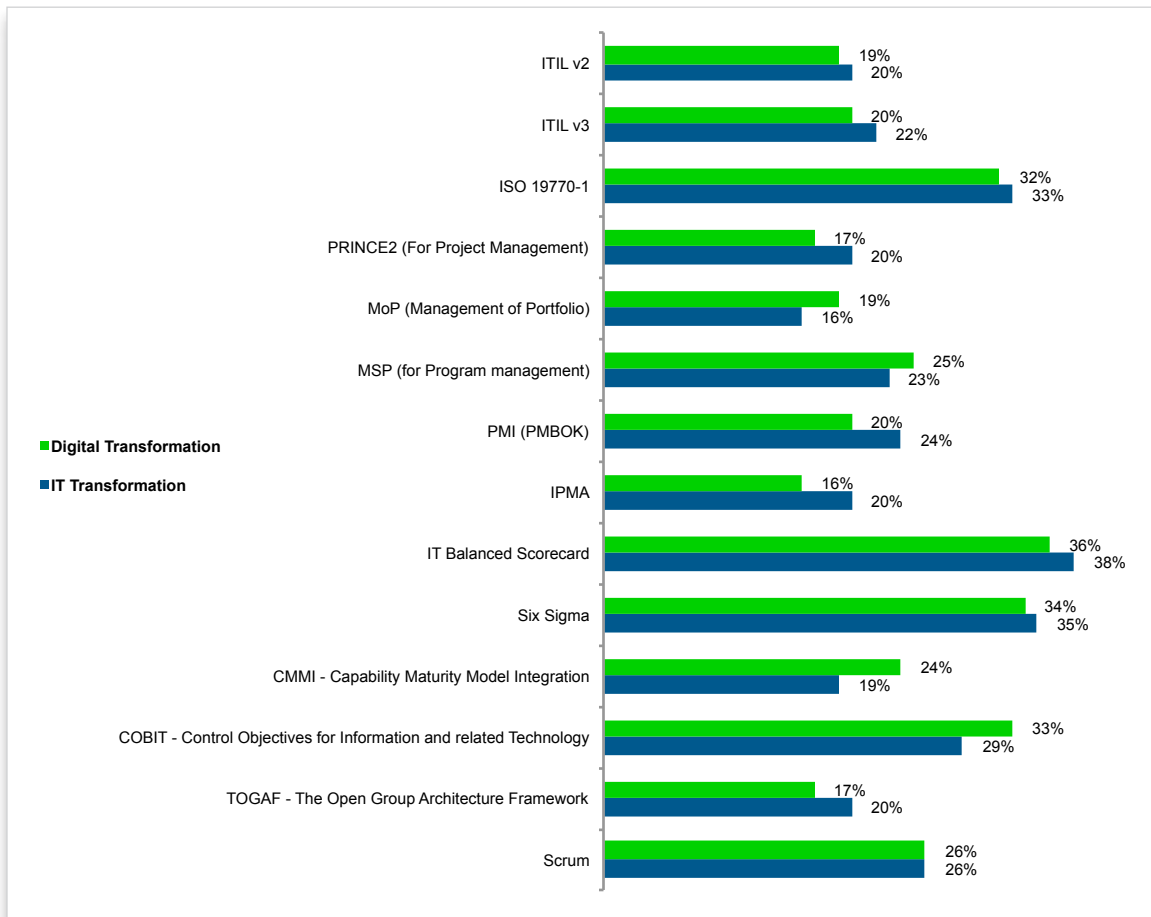

Figure 2: 79% of transformational efforts were linked to best practices. Best practice priorities between digital and IT transformation were surprisingly similar.

The benefits of following best practices were manifold. The top four were:

1. Improved IT productivity
2. Improved IT services in terms of quality and reliability
3. Reduced IT costs
4. Improved IT services in terms of relevance and business value

A few interesting distinctions emerged when looking at best-practice benefits through the lens of IT transformation versus digital transformation. For instance, those focusing primarily on digital transformation saw their benefits more in terms of "improved business productivity" as well as "reduced IT costs" and "improved agility in delivering IT services."

Blazent's Unique Role in Shaping Processes

Fragmented data sources lead to fragmented ways of working, which in turn inhibit more fluid and effective processes. The three comments below highlight just a few examples of how and where Blazent has empowered new and better ways of working with well-aligned processes across relevant stakeholders.

- **Change, performance, and configuration management**
  "Blazent is allowing us to streamline and focus the change, performance, and configuration management process by normalizing and reconciling many different sources (e.g., we had 21 different monitoring tools) so we can see the whole picture."

  – Large U.S.-based financial services company

- **Technology selection across silos**
  "We're actually engaging the tool owners in our organization proactively to let them know that we have a service we can provide [them] to help [them] see where [their] gaps are. This is a new process, but it's critical for us. We need good data, and in the end, so do they. And Blazent is making it possible."

  – Large credit-services corporation based in North America

- **DevOps processes between ITSM, operations, and development**
  "We are leveraging Blazent in our configuration management system to support DevOps provisioning. Right now we're automating support for development when they need a server. They have to feed back to us information about the application it's for based on a formalized request process—and all this is manually updated. In the future we'd like to be able to work with development to automate the whole process."

  – Global financial and travel services company

Data Management Technologies and Transformation Go Hand in Hand

When asked to indicate which types of technologies were associated with their transformation initiative, only 1% of respondents indicated that their initiative was "in no way technology related." The remaining 99% of respondents chose an average of nearly five different technology categories from the 19 listed. Moreover, a strong majority (73%) of respondents saw these technologies as *driving* their transformational initiatives, with the remaining 27% viewing technology as simply *supportive*. Figure 3 shows a wide spectrum of technology linkages, with **data quality management** and **data integration** both residing within the top five of the 20 technology-related choices.
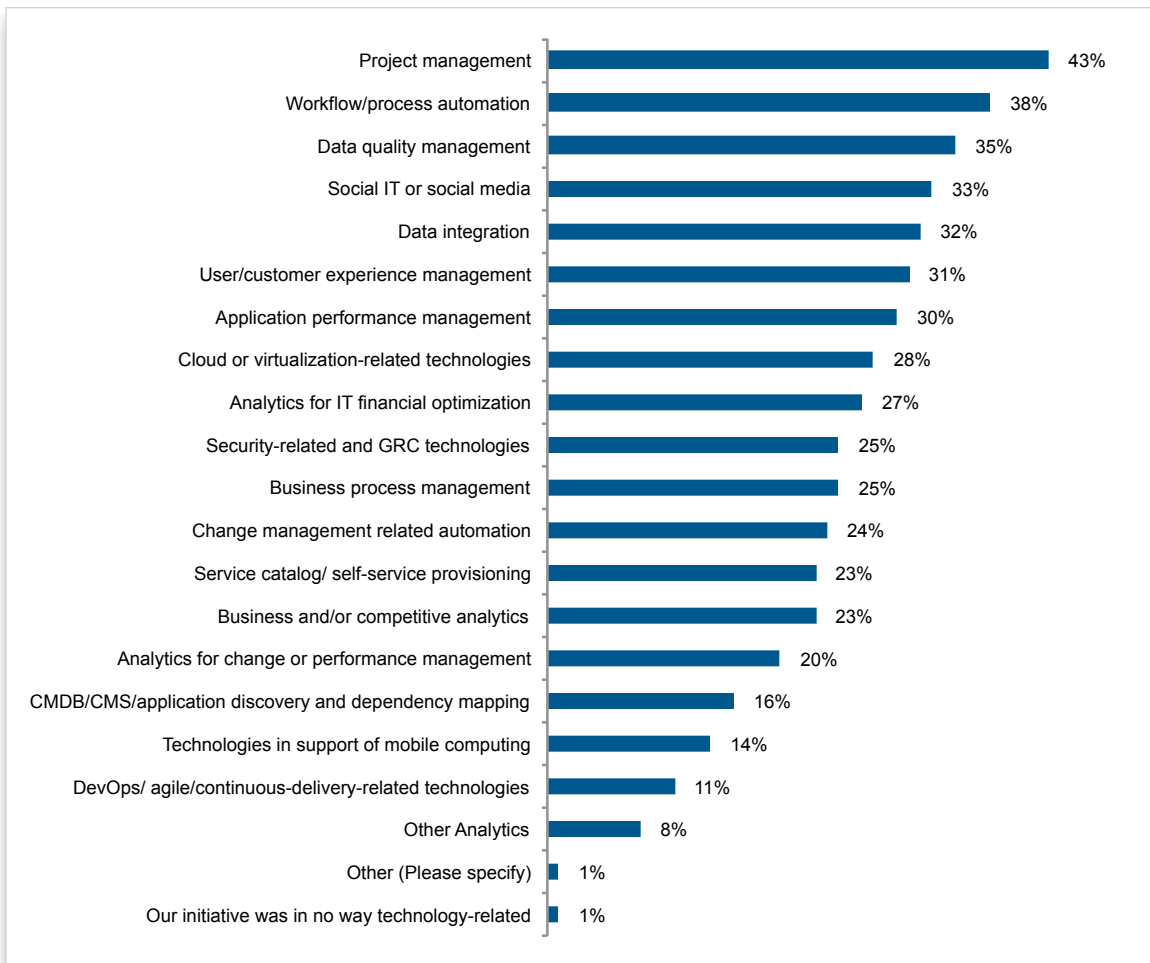
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Figure 3: Data quality management and data integration were in the top 5 technologies linked to transformational initiatives

The following comments from another Blazent customer in the financial services arena helps to underscore the relationship between good data and global stakeholder alignment.

> "We don't just bring data in because it's available and let it sit there. I like to see our data answer the five W's—who, what, when, where, and why. Who owns or is impacted by the CI? What is it? When was a change made, or when did an associated incident occur? Where—in terms of location or configuration/ component or application ecosystem—and why did the change occur? If it's disruptive, what caused it and how can it be fixed?"

> "Pretty much the entire IT organization consumes the data at some level. And we're global, so that means we have stakeholders in APAC, Europe, South America, and of course North America. How they use the data may vary, but with Blazent and the configuration management system you might say the mindset is 'think globally, act locally.'"

Transformational Values—Metrics, KPIs, Visibility, and Insights

Data is by itself only useful insofar as it can provide visibility and insights anchored in relevant and meaningful metrics. So EMA looked closely at metrics from multiple perspectives in its research on digital and IT transformation. Figure 4 is just one example of metric priorities—in this case operationally driven. It shows that *time to provision new services*, *security-related issues*, *change-related data,* and *incident and problem data* were at the top of the charts, although perhaps the most significant insight is that virtually all metric categories were fairly important and reasonably close in ranking.

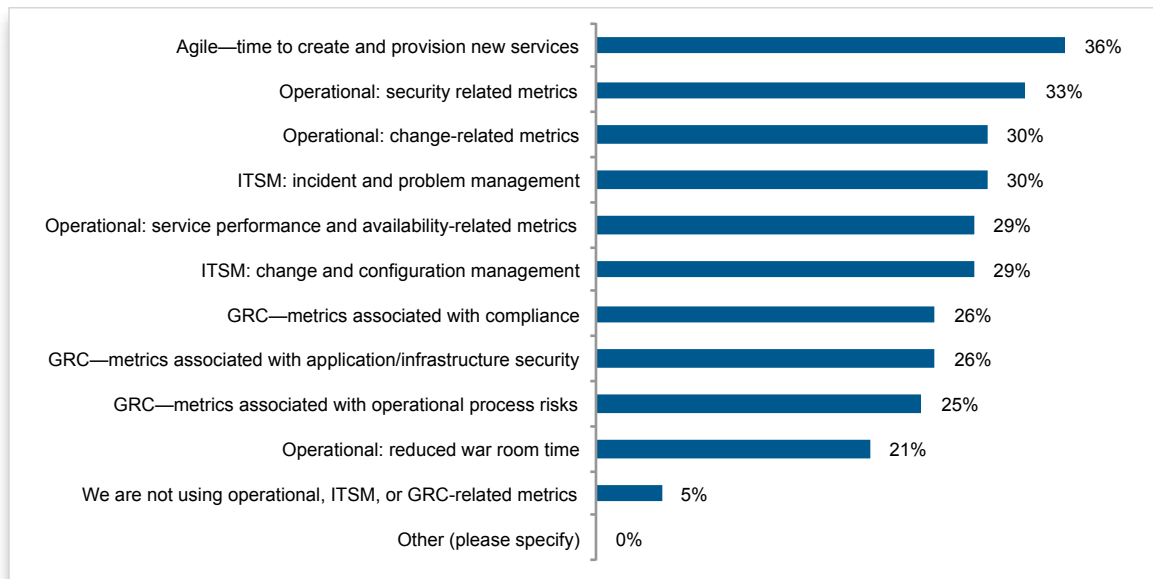| Metric	Percentage
Agile—time to create and provision new services	36%
Operational: security related metrics	33%
Operational: change-related metrics	30%
ITSM: incident and problem management	30%
Operational: service performance and availability-related metrics	29%
ITSM: change and configuration management	29%
GRC—metrics associated with compliance	26%
GRC—metrics associated with application/infrastructure security	26%
GRC—metrics associated with operational process risks	25%
Operational: reduced war room time	21%
We are not using operational, ITSM, or GRC-related metrics	5%
Other (please specify)	0%

Figure 4: Time to create and provision new services was the most pervasive operational metric

In looking at other metric categories, we saw that *internal costs for delivering IT services* was the most pervasive financial metric and that *business process efficiency impacts* led in business metrics for pervasiveness, with *improved efficiencies in dealing with partners, suppliers, and service providers* as the most critical business metric category when respondents were asked to choose their top priority.

The importance of data accuracy in establishing metrics was highlighted by an interview with a North American financial services configuration management system (CMS) deployment:

> "*We have linked a set of metrics to each one of the processes, but most of them right now are targeted at growing the system and looking at* **data accuracy***. Soon we'll be able to also measure how successful we are in minimizing unauthorized changes and other efficiency and value-related metrics. It's a phased deployment, a phased rollout, so the metrics will have to evolve and grow along with the broader initiative.*"

EMA has documented Blazent's impact in providing visibility and insights across a wide variety of metric categories. Two groups are presented below as examples:

- **Change and impact values**
  - More detailed and reliable insights for DevOps, agile, and accelerated application creation, provisioning, and deployment
  - More detailed and reliable insights for service availability and performance by minimizing or eliminating non-disruptive changes
  - More detailed and reliable insights in support of improved disaster recovery

- **Asset values**
  - Metrics that make a difference—improved IT credibility with lines of business when IT assets are charged or accounted for more accurately
  - Overall improved IT efficiencies in planning and managing services due to improved insight into "what's out there," "what it costs," and "how it can be used"
  - Improved billing resulting in savings for service providers and their clients leveraging IT assets

Digital and IT Transformational Success

Not surprisingly, transformational success is somewhat in the eye of the beholder. Figure 5 highlights a meaningful discrepancy between less-optimistic business stakeholders and their IT counterparts. When averaged out (with roughly 30% being business stakeholders) the percentages were as follows:

Extremely successful overall – 25%

Very successful overall – 46%

Successful in some areas but not others – 24%

Only somewhat successful overall – 5%
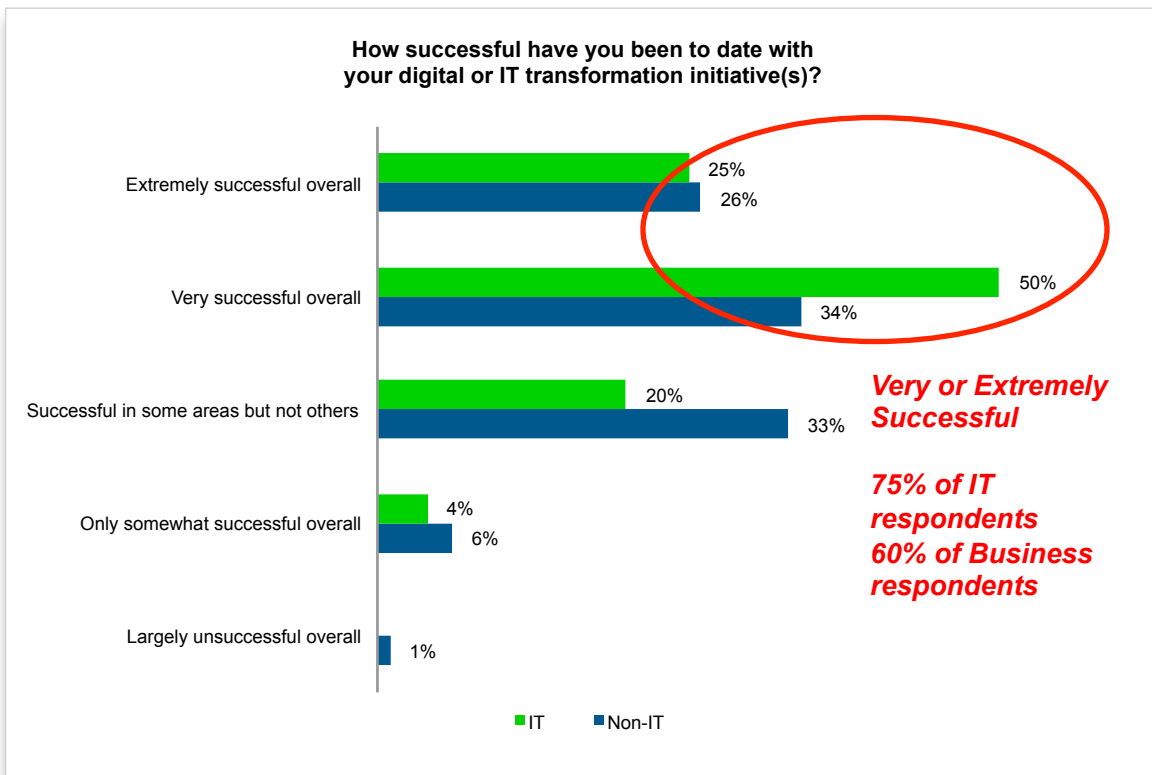
Largely unsuccessful overall – 0%.

Figure 5: Business stakeholders are harder to impress

In term of obstacles, *inaccurate or incomplete data* was tied for second place with *ineffective IT leadership* among IT stakeholders. The leading obstacle proved to be *organizational and political issues* overall.

When we looked at success characteristics across the entire questionnaire—comparing the "extremely successful" in both digital and IT transformation with "very successful," "successful in some areas but not in others," and "only somewhat successful"—the data showed what we believe are some meaningful patterns suggesting a prescriptive approach.

Stakeholder drivers – The most successful were those respondents who claimed a 50/50 partnership between IT and business stakeholders in driving their transformational initiatives. This underscores the need for what might be called the "digital dialog"—a shared interest and involvement between IT and the business.

Best practices – 97% of the "extremely successful" experienced benefits from best practices, in contrast to only 63% of those who were only "somewhat successful."

Technology (general) – Those respondents who were "extremely successful" were more likely to view technology as a "driver" and had significantly higher adoption rates of technologies overall. This was a consistent pattern based on levels of success, with "extremely successful" averaging six technologies affiliated with their initiative compared to 4.7 for the "very successful," 4.3 for those "successful in some areas but not in others," and 3.7 for those "only somewhat successful."

Technology (specifics) – Two of the technologies for which uptake was most dramatically different between the "extremely successful" and the other groups were *data quality management* and *CMDB/ CMS/ADDM*. The two other most differentiated technologies were application performance management and social media for improved communication.

Metrics for transformational success – This same pattern of *more is better* also applied to questions regarding transformational success for operational metrics, financial metrics, and business metrics. As an example, "extremely successful" respondents had, on average, 4 business metrics compared to 3.3 for the "very successful," 3 for those who were "successful in some places but not others," and only 2 for those who were "only somewhat successful."

How Customers Are Using Blazent to Make the Digital Difference

- *"In the three years since Blazent has been in place, our ability to optimize our IT infrastructure assets has improved 100%, and we have not failed to meet any of our critical SLAs."*

  – Large European-based financial firm

- *"You don't know what you don't know. You may think you're at 100% data quality because you don't have any evidence to the contrary—until it's too late. Blazent helps us address this issue head on."*

  – Global credit-services firm

- *"Blazent remains a trusted source of IT data and the ultimate source of truth for our organization and customers."*

  – Global IT-services provider

- *"Blazent has been a game changer for us by providing IT visibility and insights across thousands of configuration items."*

  – Large North American–based insurance company

- *"This trustworthy IT data intelligence is at the heart of our large-scale organization, with across-the-board effects that are transforming our company from the inside out."*

  – Global climate-control solutions provider

EMA Perspective

Perhaps the single thing that stands out from this research is the need for better dialog, communication, and shared processes across IT and between IT and business stakeholders. However, the next salient observation would have to be that this dialog, along with the enhanced processes that set the stage for improved levels of automation and efficiency, depends on a solid data-driven foundation. And this means not only bringing data together from many different sources, but also ensuring that this data is of the highest quality in order to break through the siloed walls that still fragment IT today and fracture its effectiveness.

From conversations with Blazent customers, EMA can safely say that Blazent offers:

- Industry-leading data assimilation and data-quality management
- Unique and industry-leading support for toolset evaluation, including toolset coverage as well as toolset discovery and supported KPIs

- Unique insights on change management, asset and inventory management, performance management, and performance-related interdependencies
- Enhanced visibility to support governance and audit requirements
- Integrated data assimilation to deliver an effective "source of actionable intelligence" and automate CMDB/CMS currency, accuracy, and efficiency

Beyond all this, the good news is that Blazent is evolving in the direction of advanced analytics for IT—to make the very most of its already compelling data management efficiencies. EMA looks forward to watching Blazent's transformation and the impacts it has on digital transformation across the industry as it introduces new use-case-focused values through an enhanced big-data platform designed to deliver a wide range of automated, analytic insights.

About Blazent

Blazent is the leader in IT data intelligence. The Blazent Data Intelligence Platform is powered by the company's big data engine and patent-pending 5-step Data Evolution Process. The platform transforms and validates all IT data, enabling enterprises and Managed Service Providers to make business decisions based upon complete and accurate data. Blazent is headquartered in Silicon Valley. For more information, visit www.Blazent.com or follow us on Twitter @Blazent.

About Enterprise Management Associates, Inc.

Founded in 1996, Enterprise Management Associates (EMA) is a leading industry analyst firm that provides deep insight across the full spectrum of IT and data management technologies. EMA analysts leverage a unique combination of practical experience, insight into industry best practices, and in-depth knowledge of current and planned vendor solutions to help EMA's clients achieve their goals. Learn more about EMA research, analysis, and consulting services for enterprise line of business users, IT professionals and IT vendors at www.enterprisemanagement.com or blogs.enterprisemanagement.com. You can also follow EMA on Twitter, Facebook or LinkedIn.

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