



DIGITRANS - DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION IN THE DANUBE REGION

O 6.1 Blended Learning Training of DIGTRANS method

VERSION 3

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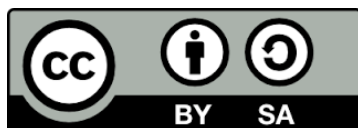


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1. Introduction

The Output 6.1 aims to present the DIGITRANS blended learning concept development and implementation within the partner regions. It provides a detailed description of the DIGITRANS blended learning concept, including training and consulting models for assisting SMEs through the process of developing a new digital business model. It covers both the innovation and transformation phase of the DIGITRANS method, focused on supporting SMEs in the development of their innovative digital business models.

The DIGITRANS blended learning training (BLT) is based on the DIGITRANS method. The DIGITRANS method is a combination of already existing and proven methods like Osterwalder's Business Model and Value Proposition Canvas, Design Thinking and the Blue Ocean Strategy offering free valuable tools to SMEs. Additionally, handouts, tools and models have been developed focusing on the digital transformation, new technologies description and others, assisting SMEs through the BLT process.

The DIGITRANS BLT concept defines an efficient learning and consultation process for SMEs, combining both online and face-to-face tools and models of interactions. It ensures that every training participant has access to online tools in a time and cost efficient way and it is adapted to SMEs working schedule.

Following the agile methodology, the DIGITRANS BLT method framework ensures that it can adapt and implement the lessons' learned, following the participants' feedback and trainers' observations. Therefore, various tools are developed to ensure the quality assurance process, organised after every step, providing tools for trainees' feedback, trainers' self-evaluation, and lessons' learned. These feedback loops did not only serve the refinement of the DIGITRANS method framework, DIGITRANS BLT process, but also supported the transfer of methodological knowledge. The input from various sources of feedback was implemented where adequate in the present version of the BLT method, as well within the Train-the-trainers' guidelines.

The DIGITRANS blended learning trainings were organised by project partners between May 2018 and June 2019 in the seven partner regions. The DIGITRANS e-learning platform assisted the process, providing access to training content in the partners' local languages on the DIGITRANS method as well as the method tools to SME representatives, trainers, consultants or business support organisations. All method materials are included on the DIGITRANS e-Learning platform being the main hub for SMEs to find all necessary information and supporting tools to work with the DIGITRANS method.

2. DIGITRANS BLENDED LEARNING CONCEPT

The DIGITRANS blended learning training is a mixture of online and offline training elements allowing SMEs to deepen their knowledge in a flexible and attractive way. It is designed in a way to be easily adapted and provided in different training contexts. The DIGITRANS method has been tested and continuously improved during the overall project lifecycle, adapted to SMEs needs to figure out their future in the new digital realms.

The DIGITRANS blended learning concept aims to support trainers to offer the DIGITRANS method to SMEs by combining e-learning and offline/onsite training. In the next section is presented the DIGITRANS method outline, the BLT concept and the BLT phases, defined and validated within D 6.1.1.

2.1. DIGITRANS METHOD OUTLINE

The DIGITRANS blended learning training (BLT) method framework adopts innovation methods and tools into SMEs' digital transformation. The DIGITRANS method is a combination of already existing and proven methods like Design Thinking, Osterwalder's Business Model and Value Proposition Canvas, the Blue Ocean Strategy, as well as other common methods as e.g. Stakeholder Map, Brainstorming or Prototyping.

The DIGITRANS Method Framework consists of two main phases. The first phase covers the innovation processes (analysis, design, and testing). The second phase includes transformation processes (implementation and evaluation). All elements of the developed blended learning training concept are following this structure in order to enhance companies to apply on practice these methods in their own context. The instruments, guidance and additional materials for both the Innovation phase (DIGITRANS training offering) and the Transformation phase (individual consultations) are available on the [DIGITRANS platform](#). A detailed description of the method and tools are provided on the [DIGITRANS project website](#).

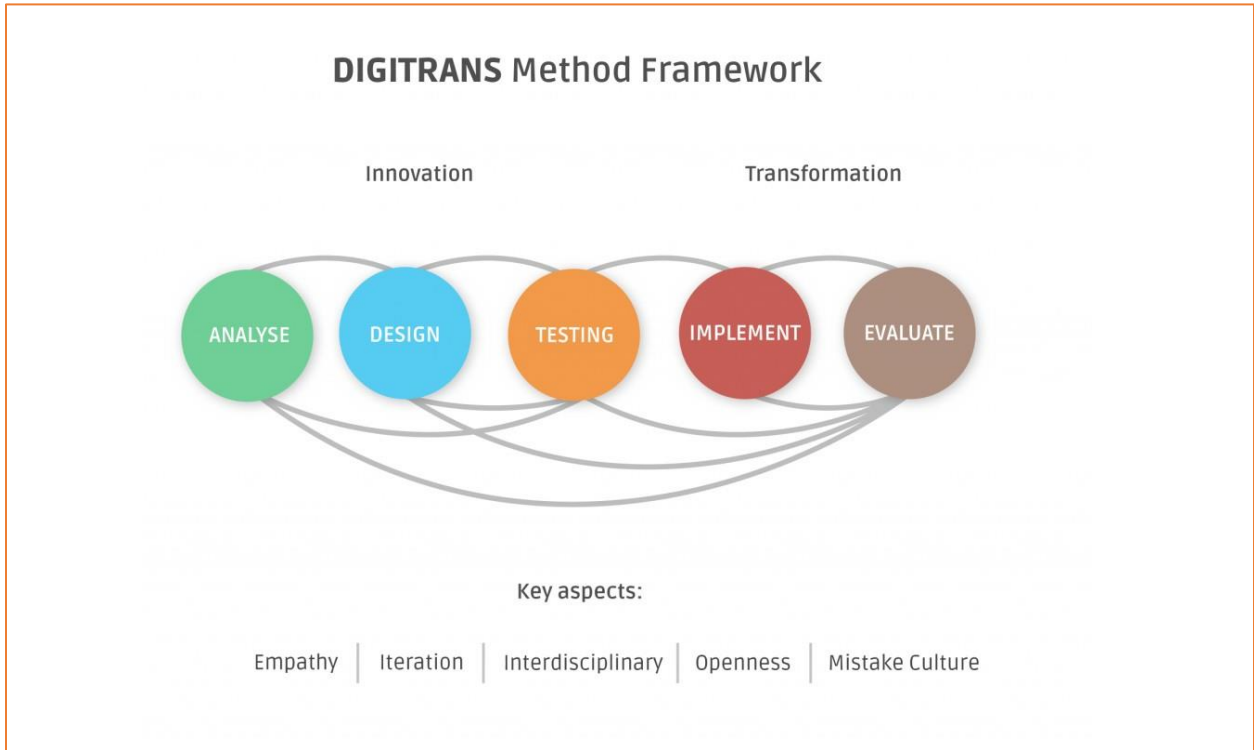


Fig.1. DIGITRANS method framework

2.2. DIGITRANS BLENDED LEARNING CONCEPT

As outlined in the graphic below (Fig. 2) the blended learning concept consists of three main elements:

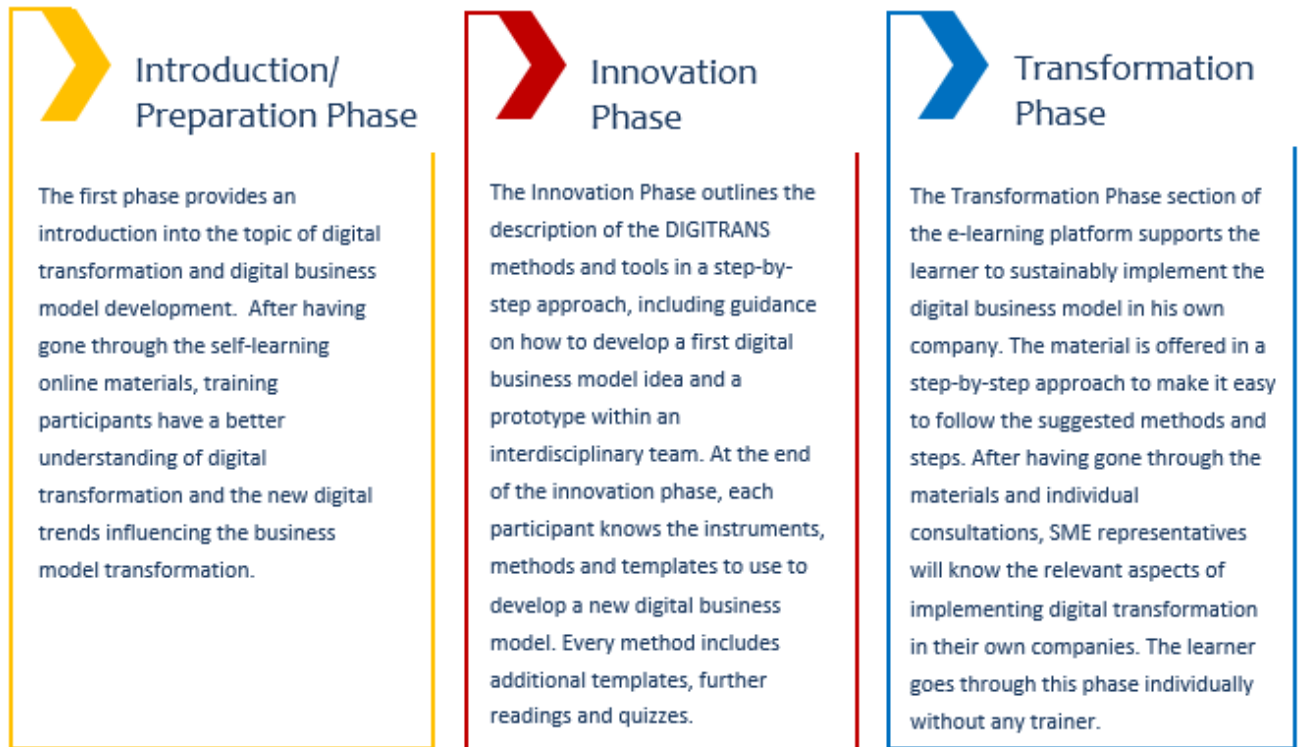


Fig.2. DIGITRANS Blended Learning Concept elements

2.3. DIGITRANS BLENDED LEARNING PHASES

The main three DIGITRANS phases are covering the following on- and offline training elements:

1. Online Preparation (Introduction/Preparation Phase)

The online preparation serves as preparation of face-to-face training. All training participants are asked to go through the introduction and preparation section on the DIGITRANS platform to have a common understanding of the topic of digital transformation and digital business model development as well as on new digital trends influencing the business model transformation.

2. Face-to-face training (Innovation Phase)

The face-to-face training has been set up as a one-day training of around 6-to-8 hours.

The training is targeting CEOs, representatives of the management or employees responsible to manage digital projects. The number of participants should not exceed 10-15 participants.

During this one-day workshop, the participants learn how to develop a new digital business model idea, following the DIGITRANS method framework and methods selected to support this process.

3. Online consultation (Innovation Phase)

After having participated in a one-day workshop, the participants have the chance to receive one online consultation of 30 min. with the trainers to discuss with them their own first digital business model idea. To better prepare this online consultation the SME representative will be asked to complete a template beforehand to outline their own digital business model idea as well as their first identified critical issues to be discussed.

4. Face-to-face business model workshop (Innovation Phase)

After having participated in the one-day face-to-face workshop as well as the online consultation and after having applied with a first formulated digital business model idea, interested SMEs have the chance to participate in an individual one-day workshop in the DIGITRANS incubator situated in their region. During this individual workshop, their own digital business model idea will be discussed and further elaborated following the DIGITRANS method framework.

5. Online Learning Community (Transformation Phase)

The SME representatives are invited to exchange and to share their own experiences or ask questions to other SMEs dealing with similar problems in the [DIGITRANS LinkedIn community](#) or in the [Social Community](#) on DIGITRANS.ME. During the transformation phase, SMEs can consult learning materials on the [DIGITRANS platform](#), ask for individual consultations, online support, and assistance.

3. The DIGITRANS Blended Learning Trainings

Between May 2018 and June 2019 the project partners organised 69 face-to-face trainings, reaching more than 637 training participants, and providing specialized online consultations to 66 SMEs and individual company trainings to more than 48 SMEs in the partner regions. All trainings, workshops and consultations followed the DIGITRANS BLT concept, and have been documented and evaluated with specific validation instruments as agreed.

The following tables (Tab.1, Tab.2 and Tab. 3) outline the summary of the training activities in detail:

Table 1. Face-to-Face trainings:

	Country	Number of trainings	Number of individual training participants
MFG	DE	10	122
AUPM	RO	18	197
IRP	SL	8	95
TICM	CR	10	44
ITD	BG	13	137
MAG	HU	10	42
ITG	AU	-	-
Overall		69	637

Table 2. Conducted online consultations

	Country	Number of online consultations
MFG	DE	11
AUPM	RO	10
IRP	SL	7
TICM	CR	8
ITD	BG	7
MAG	HU	8
ITG	AU	15
Overall		66

Table 3. Individual company workshops:

	Country	Number of Company Workshops	Number of Company workshop participants
MFG	DE	11	65
AUPM	RO	8	20
IRP	SL	2	4
TICM	CR	3	6
ITD	BG	6	10
MAG	HU	12	32
ITG	AU	6	42
Overall		48	179

4. DIGITRANS BLT Implementation, Lessons’ Learned and Success Stories

In order to ensure that all DIGITRANS trainings and consultations are implemented in high quality, the DIGITRANS partners developed an Evaluation strategy (D6.4.1.) and adopted unified evaluation instruments, covering all aspects of the quality assurance. The collected feedback is summarised in the evaluation summary report (D.6.4.2), making an overview of the DIGITRANS BLT Method implementation on practice.

The analysis of the DIGITRANS trainings outcomes includes both quantitative data (surveys and questionnaires) and qualitative data and lessons’ learned, collected from training participants and trainers. The project partners regularly reviewed the evaluation results, obtained during the three phases of the DIGITRANS trainings. This way they implemented necessary actions, taken to guarantee further improvement of the DIGITRANS concept, products, materials, methods and training environment.

The overall feedback and lessons learned have been frequently revised, and the most important conclusions and advices have been outlined in tips, checklists, and good practices within the [DIGITRANS Trainers’ Guide](#) (D.6.1.2). This way, the DIGITRANS trainers’ feedback served as a tool to improve the quality of the DIGITRANS method and practical implementation of all phases of the blended training. All the feedback results are summarised in comprehensive report, which also form part of the respective Quality Reports.

4.1. Feedback from DIGITRANS BL trainings implementation

All partners collected the predefined trainees’ feedback forms from the participants of the DIGITRANS trainings. Based on their detailed analysis, outlined in D.6.4.2, the general observation is that most of the DIGITRANS training participants are completely or largely satisfied with the training. Furthermore, trainees are satisfied with the workshop delivery, including methods, trainers and general workshop settings (fig.3 and fig.4).

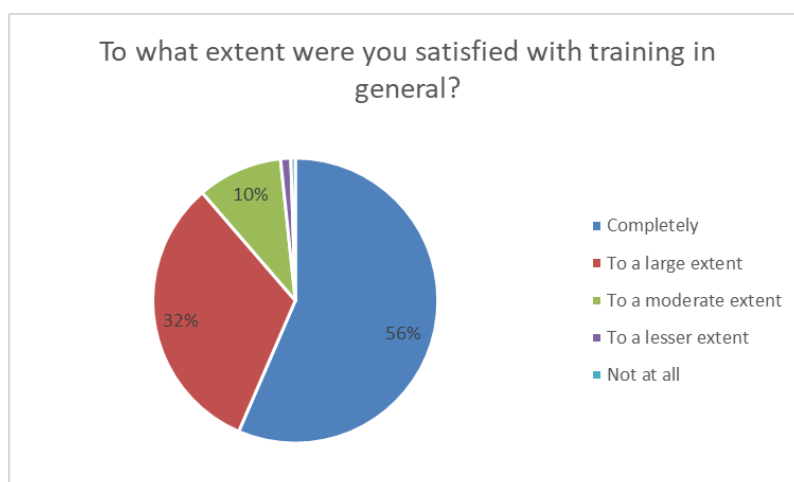


Fig. 3 Feedback for general training evaluation

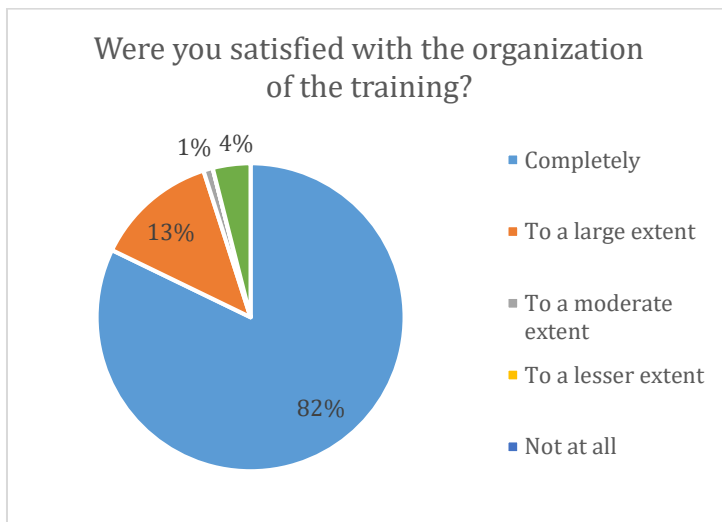


Fig. 4 Feedback for training organization

4.2 Lessons' learned

All DIGITRANS partners and training-providing organisations collected and analysed on a regular basis the trainers' observations, trainees' feedback analysis and lessons learned. DIGITRANS trainings' results have been regularly discussed, based on the feedback received. The partners continuously improved and fine-tuned it according to the end-users' recommendations and suggestions, partners' feedback and trainers' approaches for customization and user-orientation.

The following practical tips and recommendations can be highlighted:

Practical tips for assisting trainees before coming to the training:

- Sending out an email beforehand inviting participants to read the introduction part on digitrans.me;
- Distributing a list with digital technologies description beforehand;

Practical tips for training organisation:

- Training participants: It is recommended that at least one decision maker from one company participates in the training so that this person can also introduce the new method, working style into its own organisation;
- To shorten the introduction - Discussion on the overall introduction into the workshop setting: one proposed to introduce the method by presenting it based on a concrete case;
- Remember to use more interactive /funnier ppt presentation to grab and keep the attention;
- Prepare successful examples of implementing particular steps on whole digitalization process;

- Give specific examples to complete each step of the Value Proposition Canvas (VPC);
- Motivate participants by providing further activities and videos for presenting them the new possibilities in their sectors;
- Provide more background information on the method, e.g. describing the method more in detail during the introduction;
- Moderators/trainers should remember to work closer with the teams;
- Use a pre-defined Blue Ocean Strategy canvas to also consider the internal perspective of the company during the analysis/insight phase;
- Provide enough time to complete the Business Model Canvas;
- In case the group is not familiar with prototyping some examples at the beginning how prototypes can look like would be helpful, e.g. adding one slide with prototyping examples;
- Plan enough time to introduce the testing phase to the group and to organise the whole testing session;

Practical tips for training instruments and tools:

- Highlighting alternative methods in addition to the one using, e.g. before completing the customer segment of the Value Proposition Canvas indicate the aspect of conducting interviews in real situations to really get to know the customer group;
- Propose different case studies considering the participants' presentations and preferences in the introduction phase;
- Highlighting to work with assumptions on how the customer would behave, react etc. not including real ideas;
- Brainstorming: Distribution of a list with current digital technologies;
- Process of idea selection: Select the best idea using the following criteria - What is desirable?, What is worthwhile?, What is feasible?;
- Give the participants the hint that the prototype must speak for itself, must be self-explanatory;
- Thinking about ways on how to already integrate transformation aspects (cultural change, fast changes etc.) into the workshop structure;
- Highlighting the economic feasibility perspective in the different steps.

Following the comments, the lessons' learned and the feedback of the training participants, the DIGITRANS partners inserted the following changes in the training materials:

- Sending out the technology list beforehand and distribute it as well during the workshop so that participants with low knowledge on digital technology have a better idea which technology might be used for the development of a digital business model;
- To better explain the method, another fictive case has been introduced by the trainers used to explain the different steps in the method. The participants appreciated this improvement;
- Use some gamification approaches (competition & rewards) between groups.
- Individual company workshop: Invite one customer representative to the workshop so that the company can work with real company needs and not with assumptions.

4.3 Success stories of DIGITRANS implementation

In every partner region, there are outlined success stories of companies, implemented the DIGITRANS method. This way, company representatives present themselves how DIGITRANS BLT contributed to their digital transformation.

All case studies and multimedia case studies are available on the e-learning platform.

The multimedia use cases are available online as well as on DIGITRANS' YouTube channel:

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCzd68NabwVxEzNUiqO6VaPg>

5. Sustainability of the BLT - Train the Trainers' Guideline

In order to ensure sustainability of the DIGITRANS Method and to enhance a bigger group to support SMEs in the development of a new digital business model based on the DIGITRANS BLT, the consortium published the train-the-trainers' guideline. The DIGITRANS Trainer's Guide aims to support trainers and lecturers who want to provide a training on the development of new digital business models using the DIGITRANS method and training materials.

It is available on the DIGITRANS e-learning platform <https://digitrans.me/psm/fortrainers>.

All documents for BLT training implementation such as detailed trainers' programme, lessons' learned, tools, useful outcomes of the training are provided in the Guideline.



Fig. 5 DIGITRANS Trainer's Guide

DIGITRANS

DIGITRANS TRAINING OBJECTIVES

The main DIGITRANS training aim is to enable company's executives and staff to become capable to develop and implement in practice new competitive digital business models as well as to sensiblise SMEs in continuously transforming their company into an agile organisation ready to cope with the constant digital evolution.

The EU funded project DIGITRANS is a cooperation project of 15 project partners from 7 countries from the Danube area. Here trainers, lecturers as well as business support organisations dealing with digital transformation can find hands-on training material and guidance, complementary to the DIGITRANS platform

TARGET GROUPS FOR DIGITRANS' TRAINING

The DIGITRANS training addresses primarily SME representatives from creative industries, health, and advanced manufacturing sector. They can be divided into the following groups:

- SME owners, SME managers, decision makers;
- SME employees - Digital champions, Digital transformation actors;
- Transformation actors - people with relevant knowledge about company processes, IT, marketing and customer support, local ecosystem.

The DIGITRANS blended learning training method is designed to provide practical outcomes and to prepare SMEs to digitally transform their business models.

DIGITRANS LEARNING OUTCOMES

After having participated in the DIGITRANS training SME representatives will know easy to use methods for developing new digital business model ideas and will have skills and competencies to apply them in practice in their companies.

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DIGITRANS

DIGITRANS TRAINERS

The DIGITRANS trainers can come from business support organisations, training organisations and universities, research institutions, local administration, start-up and innovation community, business consultancies and others.

DIGITRANS trainer can be anyone who has the following competencies and skills:

- in promoting innovation,
- in moderating bigger groups and
- in working with CEOs or representatives from the management board.

DIGITRANS trainers should have some preliminary knowledge on Design Thinking and business modelling and feel confident about the current digital trends.

 <p>A. Business support organisations</p> <p>DIGITRANS method supports business support organisation trainers to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Add new services to their portfolio; Design space and premises where to host creative seminars and workshops; Develop specific business models. 	 <p>B. Training organisations</p> <p>DIGITRANS method provides training organisations (universities, university of applied science, vocational training organisations etc.) with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> New, flexible and out-of-the-box training methods and tools; Ready to use case studies 	 <p>C. Business consultancies</p> <p>DIGITRANS method provides business trainers and consultancy experts with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Extend the scope of their services; Improve training offerings with innovative training
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Ideally, DIGITRANS training is delivered by a team of trainers combining both business and ICT background knowledge and expertise.

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Fig. 6 DIGITRANS Trainer's Guide – DIGITRANS trainers

6. Conclusions

For the whole DIGITRANS BLT concept implementation, it is crucial to progress iteratively not only within one phase but also between the innovation and the transformation phases. This means that feedback loops are highly recommended and after each step it should be considered to jump back for changes or adaptations. This will further support training organizations and SMEs to match the aforementioned demand for agility to react more quickly on new developments to remain competitive. It is inevitable to understand that the digital transformation is not going to stop and companies will find themselves on an everlasting journey with the need to adapt, rethink and reshape the company constantly.