

DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION

6 key areas of your SME to digitalise

yeoply



Index:

1. Introduction to digital transformation	4
Main objectives of digitalisation	5
Obstacles to digital transformation in SMEs	5
2. Technologies to digitalise your business	8
3. Key areas for your SME's transformation	11
Customer relationship	12
Sales and distribution network	13
Supplier management	15
Internal relations	16
Process management	17
Administration and management	19
4. Launching your digital transformation	20
Getting started	20
Having the support of an experienced technology partner	21
Yeeply wants to lend you a helping hand!	22

Digital transformation: 6 key areas of your SME to digitalise

Digital transformation remains an unresolved matter for many SMEs. A lot has been said about digital transformation already, yet it is a term that is often used incorrectly or not fully understood.

Digital transformation is not just about **acquiring a specific piece of software**. It goes much further than this. It is also not about simply replicating old processes with technology incorporated.

Digital transformation involves **reinventing a company and its processes by employing new technologies**. It means a change in corporate culture, in-house processes, and the way of doing business.

Digital transformation is a process that offers the tools required to make smart decisions to **maximise a company's benefits**: easier access to data, greater responsiveness and efficiency, coordination of the company's different departments, and many other things.

If it's a transformation you're after, start by reconsidering your way of doing business.

1. Introduction to digital transformation

Technology is advancing and becoming increasingly widespread and affordable. This means SMEs can take advantage of the path opened by large companies that have already undergone a transformation and resort to solutions that don't necessarily require tailor-made development.

It must be noted that digital transformation is a **cross-departmental process within companies** that may affect all divisions.

The figures arising from the **estimates for digital transformation investment** of companies worldwide underpin its importance. According to the latest estimate by consultancy firm IDC, global spending on technology and communications in 2020 will rise to **\$ 4.3 trillion**. This means an increase of 3.6% compared with 2019 if such expectations are met.

[Yeeply](#) encourages you to become fully aware of the importance [of addressing your company's digital transformation](#). We'll now get to see examples stemming from different industries. Most importantly, we'll also show you how to get started and set objectives, which areas of your company can benefit from it and, above all, we'll help you **establish a roadmap** so that you can get going as soon as possible.



Main objectives of digitalisation

The goals set for your digital transformation process must be **in line with your company's objectives**, i.e. they should all be pulling in the same direction. Some examples of these goals are:

- ▶ To increase turnover and improve your customer relationships.
- ▶ To expand and improve the channels employed for user acquisition.
- ▶ To improve productivity by reviewing and adjusting in-house processes.
- ▶ To have better control over your infrastructure.
- ▶ To take better advantage of business data and information.
- ▶ To promote training in new technologies and refresher courses for employees.
- ▶ To create (or improve) internal and external communication channels.

These goals **may differ for each company**. The key idea is to have them defined before starting to deploy a digital transformation strategy.

Obstacles to digital transformation in SMEs

Putting this process in motion is not always an easy task. All companies face certain challenges when addressing their digital transformation.

Would having someone to show you the way come in handy?

Yeeply has helped plenty of SMEs in their digitalisation projects. Don't hesitate to tell us what you need and we'll put our expertise to work for you.

GET STARTED RIGHT AWAY!

◆ Resistance to change

The fear of employees towards **losing their jobs** or the distorted view that a newcomer is trying **to impose new work methods** might be some of the reasons for this resistance.

Digital transformation entails a deep change in mindset, which ideally should be promoted from the top management down. **Transparency is the best weapon** available to tackle this resistance.

The importance of having every employee understand the reasons behind this digital transformation strategy, the steps that are going to be taken to achieve it, and the advantages to be drawn from it cannot be overemphasised. Likewise, the company must offer the necessary **training** and support to ensure that all employees find their feet as to the recent changes and internalise the new work processes.

◆ Lack of a clear vision regarding digital channels

Some companies have barely landed in the digital world, and others **have already taken some steps that have not yielded proper results** because they are not sure about what they want to achieve by growing digitally.

Digital channels have their own rules and that is why you must reconsider many aspects of your way of doing business: take stock of your situation, **study your market** and the technological trends that prevail in it, and establish a buyer journey (i.e. the path that any user will follow until he/she becomes your customer).

◆ Inherited business model

The changes required by digitalisation **may need to be extended to the business model itself**. After having analysed the market situation and their customers and rivals, some companies find out that **offering a free service** is a good way to attract leads or that offering **new digital sales channels** can help them differentiate themselves from their competitors and increase their turnover.

As only the most flexible companies can corroborate, innovation brings in higher margins. The downside is that these come in exchange for undergoing changes and taking risks.

◆ Resistance to investment

Digital transformation requires **investing not only money** but also time and effort. Depending on the areas to be digitalised, the process can be long and the results don't necessarily have to be immediate.

Fortunately, the unstoppable digitalisation trend we're witnessing has rendered **the cost of many tools** affordable for SMEs. This is mainly because these tools no longer need to be custom-made.

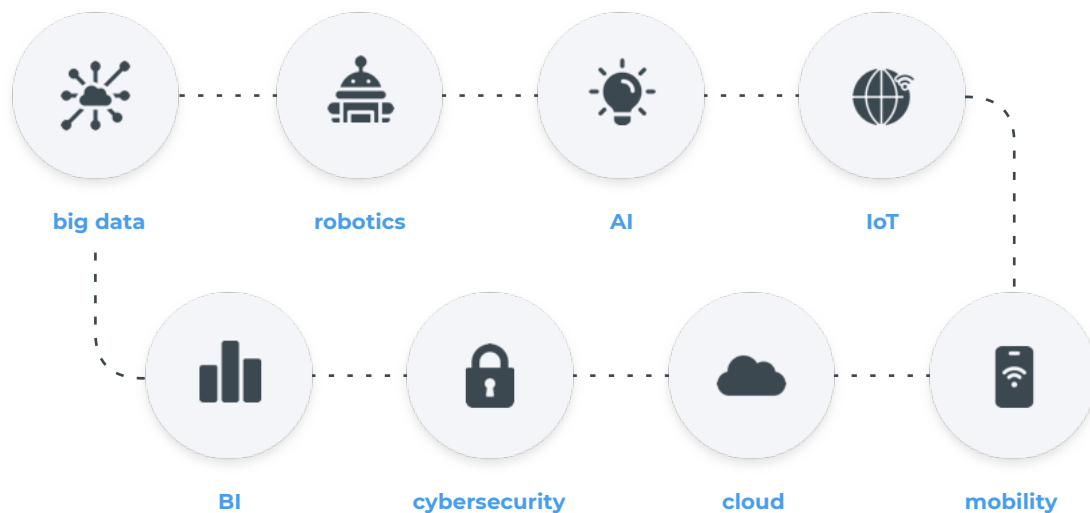
Nevertheless, a roadmap can always be established to **deploy measures progressively** and give priority to those whose positive impact on the company is bigger.

You may be interested in reading the following article: [Top 5 digital transformation challenges \(and how to overcome them\)](#)



2. Technologies to digitalise your business

You may already be using some of the following technologies. Applied to certain tools, they can very well be a real **driving force for your company's digitalisation**.



Big Data

Data is and will be fundamental. The more data you can collect, the greater your analysis, prediction, and projection capabilities. Don't let the word "Big" in Big Data intimidate you: as far as SMEs are concerned, it would be more appropriate to talk about "**Small Data**".

The truth is that it's not necessary to have access to massive amounts of data; **understanding what is happening in the company** and how it can be solved will suffice.

Robotics

This technology is especially relevant for SMEs with production lines. Robotics enables you to have **connected devices and equipment** in your lines. It can be used to eliminate repetitive tasks and improve productivity.

Artificial Intelligence

AI can help you cut costs and **improve user experience**. Chatbots, which can be used to automate customer support, is a clear example of how this technology can be used.

You may be interested in reading the following article: [Artificial Intelligence vs Machine Learning vs Deep Learning](#)

Internet of Things

This technology that involves connecting devices can be deployed almost anywhere: from retail and agriculture, for instance, to the manufacturing industry, where it can be used to carry out **predictive maintenance** for factory equipment.

Mobility

Having mobile devices in the company allows you **to relocate employees** and make their conditions more flexible. Employees whose jobs have been forcibly relocated require appropriate devices to be able to be more efficient.

These devices are also a key channel for **communicating with your target audience**. So make sure you have a [mobile-friendly responsive website](#), or maybe even an app if necessary.

Cloud

This is closely related to the previous point. If your documents, information, and even your tools are hosted in the cloud, your employees **will be able to access them** from any device and regardless of where they are physically located.

Cybersecurity

All the technology we have previously been discussing must be kept under a **protective umbrella**. Cybersecurity must safeguard the data shared between devices and users to ensure that your company is safe from any attacks.

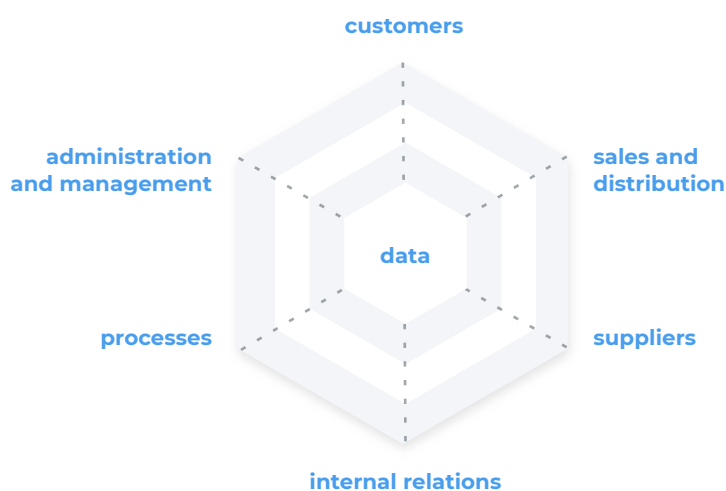
Business Intelligence

This concept involves the use of data and information to make **business decisions and generate predictions**. Combined with artificial intelligence, this can be used to create powerful predictive models.



3. Key areas for your SME's transformation

Digital transformation is a cross-departmental process in a company. However, this **does not mean that you have to deal with all areas at once**. Yeeply has identified 6 areas that you must take into account when handling your digital transformation process.



Any department within your company must address at least one of these **six main pillars**. The level of digitalisation of your business may very well not be the same for each of these areas. This is something you can identify by carrying out a prior assessment.

It's also possible that, after having read this eBook, you identify which areas you should start digitalising or maybe even discard some of them.

Have you noticed that “data” is right in the centre? This is because it is essential.

Digital transformation is data-centric and data-driven.

We'll now review each of these 6 areas, discussing the advantages to be obtained from their digitalisation and seeing examples of technologies that you can embrace to achieve your objectives in each of them.

Customer relationship

It may be the case that you have not digitalised your business yet but your customers have. **What is your current relationship with them like?** This digital transformation area is especially relevant for B2C SMEs, that is, for those who sell directly to the final consumer.

◆ Reasons to digitalise customer relationship

- ▶ **To improve your customer's shopping experience** and interaction with your company. This translates into greater customer satisfaction and may result in recurring sales or positive referrals to other users.
- ▶ **To increase turnover** by activating new sales channels and optimising existing ones.

◆ Tools to digitalise customer relationship

The first step is to **strengthen your digital presence** by having a website (adapted to mobile devices), social media profiles, online communication channels, and so on.

Having established this digital presence, launch a proper **digital marketing strategy** to interact with your customers, improve your positioning, and create new opportunities.

You can also [activate online sales](#) (if your business model is compatible with them) and offer an **omnichannel experience**, i.e. getting your customers to perceive all sales channels as being only one. The shopping experience must be the same, regardless of whether your customer is contacting you by phone, buying online on your website, or in your physical store.

Customer care offers many possibilities when it comes to its digitalisation. You can opt for a **ticket system**, for instance. Every time a customer sends a message, the system tags it so a specific person from a certain department can be assigned as responsible for answering it.



These ticketing systems are integrated with **CRM** tools. This integration enables all these interactions to be recorded in the customer's file for better customer tracking and to ensure that all messages are answered.

Customers are used to having their matters looked after right away. Why not assist them 24/7? **Chatbots** powered by **Artificial Intelligence** technology can help you carry this out. Chatbots can be programmed to answer the most frequently asked questions naturally, regardless of whether these come through your website, e-commerce store, social media profiles, or messaging application.

And if your business is a B2C with a **point of sale**, your physical store can't sneak away from digital transformation either. The customer must be at the centre of your actions, thus the importance of making improvements to the shopping experience like:

- ▶ **Touch screens** that streamline searching for products in the store or provide information to the customer to help him/her with the purchase.
- ▶ **Information screens** that catch the attention of users with special offers.
- ▶ **Self-service checkouts** that minimise lost sales due to checkout queues, for example.
- ▶ **Augmented reality** solutions that help answering customer potential questions by allowing things like testing products virtually or simulating how larger products will fit in the real world.

It's high time you built your digital presence

Through Yeeply you will find all the professional profiles you need: web and app developers, digital marketing experts, UX designers, and many more.

START HIRING RIGHT AWAY!

Sales and distribution network

For B2B companies, sales depend to a great extent on their sales team and network. They also need digital tools at their disposal to be able to **reach customers properly**.

◆ Reasons to digitalise the sales and distribution network

- ▶ To improve the assistance offered by the sales network to the end customer.
- ▶ To record and centralise its activity.
- ▶ To increase the probability of closing sales and, therefore, increasing turnover.

◆ Tools to digitalise the sales and distribution network

CRM tools enable managing customer contact efficiently, tracking proposal submissions, and targeting customers.

If your sales network works outside the office, you can opt for a **CRM mobile app** from where all the customer, calendar, budget, or risk analysis information can be accessed from any location.

You don't need to build a custom CRM: there are affordable tools available for which you would have to pay a licence per user.

Marketing automation tools like HubSpot or Salesforce enable you to see information regarding e-mail campaigns or search engine or social media ads with which a prospective customer has interacted. This way you'll be able to contact the prospective customer in a personalised way and at the moment when he/she is most receptive to the sale.

In addition to the tools just mentioned, an **ERP (Enterprise Resource Planning)** system can come in very handy to your distribution network if it is made up of a chain of stores. Besides, such a tool will also allow you to control the distribution of your products.

Supplier management

If you work with multiple suppliers, whether they provide **raw materials** for a production line or already manufactured **products** that you later distribute, you may be able to improve how you manage your operations with them.

◆ Reasons to digitalise supplier management

- ▶ To improve the input process, planning, and cost control.
- ▶ To centralise orders to negotiate better prices and conditions with suppliers and reduce costs.
- ▶ To lower the risks associated with supplier onboarding.
- ▶ To have reliable and updated access to supplier-related information.

◆ Tools to digitalise supplier management

Product suppliers may use an ERP tool to keep commodity purchases under control, coordinate product delivery, or manage supplier onboarding from a single place.

This is a way to avert misplacing invoices or dispatch notes, or the possibility of having several departments of a company mistakenly make the same purchase.

You must train employees in the use of these tools: there's little use in having an ERP system if your employees continue recording orders in a spreadsheet.



As for service providers, [project management software](#) also helps in planning and monitoring tasks and projects correctly. You can select tools, based on the kind of project and its size, which will assist you in coordinating teams that are often not physically located within the same space.

These tools streamline the process of defining aspects like the project's stages, the tasks that make up each phase, or who will be responsible for completing these tasks, as well as finding out what is the project's state in real-time.

Internal relations

As for clock control, employee holiday management, assessments, etc., does your business still use spreadsheets for all these HR tasks? We'll now explain **why the change also has to start from within**.

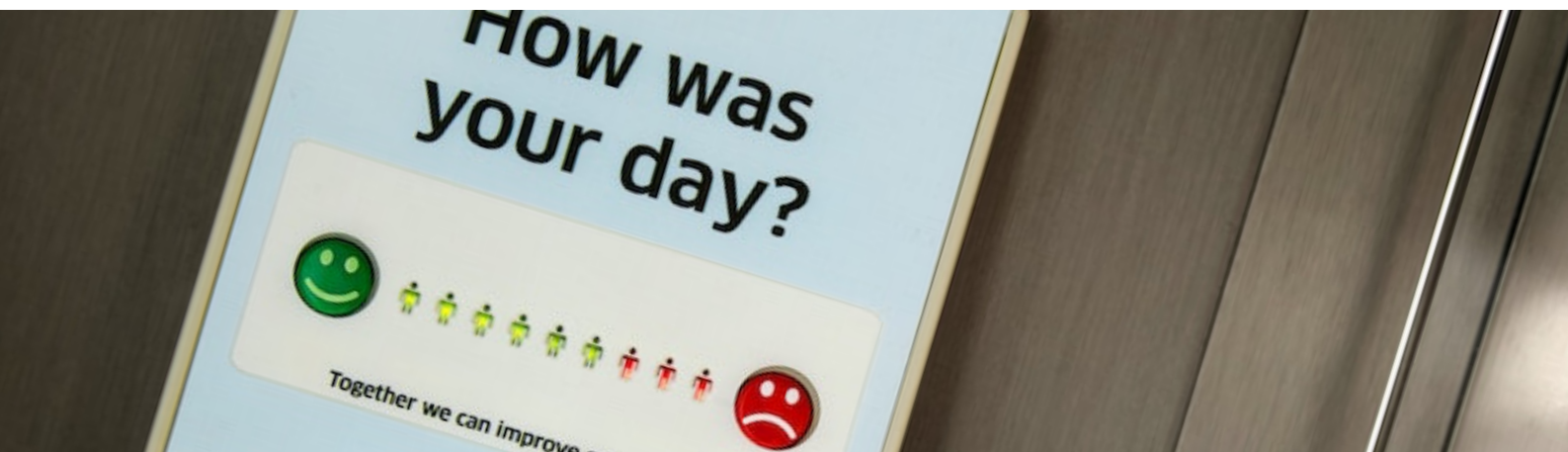
◆ Reasons to digitalise internal relations

- ▶ To maintain employee involvement, motivation, and performance.
- ▶ To bring your recruitment process more in line with your corporate culture.
- ▶ To improve in-house communication.

◆ Tools to digitalise supplier management

There are plenty of **digital HR management** tools available that will help you achieve the objectives we mention above. You can employ them to eliminate repetitive tasks and centralise the most important employee data.

An example of these tools is **payroll management platforms**, which also often offer holiday follow-up and communication channels with the public administration. Another example is **electronic signature tools**, which make receiving signed documents a lot easier while also saving time and paper.



To control employee clock-in and clock-out in a centralised way, you can opt for **time control software** or, if you are willing to invest more in technology, install a **fingerprint system** or a **biometric system** to record these times.

You can also consider incorporating **in-house communication tools** like an intranet. This way all employees can keep updated with company communications, contact colleagues, or consult the organisation chart, among other options.

Some tools, such as **Yammer**, **Socialcast**, or **Slack** work in a similar way to a social network and allow you to avoid having to resort to tailored software development.

Your employees' training should not be neglected. You can develop your training portal with **LMS (Learning Management System)** tools or offer your employees online courses or **MOOCs (Massive Open Online Courses)**.

Platforms like **Tutellus**, **Udemy**, or **LinkedIn Learning** can also prove very useful to grant your employees access to continuous training.

Process management

Process management affects all the areas we have previously been discussing and some of the tools that we have mentioned already address it. Thus, in this section, we will focus on managing [Industry 4.0](#) processes.

Industry 4.0 (also known as the fourth industrial revolution) combines advanced production techniques with smart technology. It's not necessarily limited to the manufacturing industry and can be applied across all industries and sectors.

◆ Reasons to digitalise process management

- ▶ To avoid equipment failure leading to production line downtime.
- ▶ To access the state of equipment in a centralised and direct way.
- ▶ To save time on repetitive tasks.
- ▶ To increase production output capacity and cut costs.

◆ Tools to digitalise process management

Equipment failure can force a production lockdown and result in economic and time loss. Nowadays, modern equipment can incorporate sensors that provide real-time information about their condition.

The **Internet of Things (IoT)** technology helps to ascertain aspects, such as whether there is currently a problem, when a given part needs to be replaced before it fails, or what the reason is behind a given failure. This enables embracing **predictive maintenance** as a means to improve efficiency and save costs for the company.

Present-day equipment can also take advantage of recent breakthroughs in **robotics** to optimise repetitive tasks. Every second matters on a production line! Also, technologies such as **Machine Learning** enable us to keep on constantly improving processes.

Manufacturing Execution Software (MES) allows you to track and record the transformation of raw materials into finished goods in real-time. These programs focus on the product and are fundamental to be able to make informed decisions in the factory.

Incorporating this new technology must, however, come hand in hand with **industrial cybersecurity** systems to avoid external interventions in the manufacturing plants.

You may be interested in reading the following article: [Meet 5 companies shaping the future of Industry 4.0](#)

Administration and management

An SME's management can obtain a lot of information by digitalising the five previous areas. With the appropriate tools at their disposal, **managers will be able to access this information more simply and smartly** than before.

◆ Reasons to digitalise administration and management

- ▶ To improve decision-making processes by gaining access to real-time business analytics.
- ▶ To lower the risk of undergoing downtime.
- ▶ To facilitate loss identification in the system.
- ▶ To increase business insight.

◆ Tools to digitalise administration and management

ERP tools are essential for anyone wanting to achieve this. This software, which we have already mentioned, enables integrating the operations of the company's different departments (manufacturing, logistics, inventory, accounting, shipping, etc.) into a single tool.

ERP tools facilitate data-based decision-making since many incorporate dashboards that render the use of **Data and Business Intelligence** affordable to SMEs of all sizes.

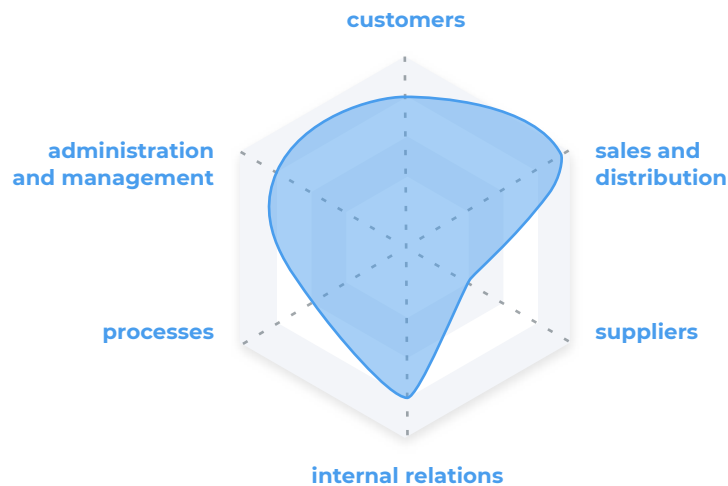
These are just some examples of how such tools can help you make the right decisions at the right time thanks to having data automatically stored in real-time: seeing billing charts and comparing them by period, or making estimates and contrasting them with results, manufacturing costs, and margins.

On the other hand, investing in **cybersecurity** can't be emphasised enough since many of these digital tools are cloud-based.

4. Launching your digital transformation

You can carry out a self-diagnosis of your company's digitalisation state by internally analysing each of the six areas we have previously discussed.

This will help you decide where to start.



Getting started

Managing your company's digital transformation properly is as important as having decided to tackle it.

One of the keys to success is having **all your employees participate** in the process. The changes entailed will affect all company departments, so it's important to get all employees involved and rely on them, asking them for ideas and suggestions. This way, the transformation plans will achieve greater reception and better results.

Incorporating new digital tools is inevitable in any digital transformation process. A common mistake is to invest in tools that do not complement or integrate. This is easily avoided by having the right digital partner to advise you.

SMEs need to choose the technological solutions that suit their kind of business and company size best and that also can be expanded as their businesses grow. **Obtaining the most suitable tools**, which must also be easily scalable, is another aspect in which an experienced consultant will prove very helpful.

Having the support of an experienced technology partner

When lacking experience in the matter, a digital transformation process **can be overwhelming**.

Working with **consulting companies or other technology providers** is undoubtedly a perfect option for SMEs. These companies and providers already have experience in collaborating with companies like yours and, also, add value and are well acquainted with the latest digital tools.

Having a good technology partner at your side is a true asset to achieve a successful digital transformation and avoid basic mistakes.

If you are worried about investment costs, you should consider that you can also find solutions that range from **free consultancies** (promoted by administrations and public bodies) to free training (offered by digital tools such as HubSpot or Salesforce, for instance).

Beyond these options, you can opt for **digital partners specialising in small and medium-sized enterprises**. They know the specific needs of SMEs and focus on making your business more profitable.



Yeeply wants to lend you a helping hand!

[Yeeply](#) is a platform that brings together **professionals from all the areas** that you need to digitalise in your company. With us, you can address your digital transformation with the support of a single technology partner.

Depending on your company's sector and needs, **we'll choose the most suitable team** to carry out your digital transformation project successfully, always taking your budget into account.

What is more, we do not limit ourselves to initial consultancy services by just providing you with a road map: **you will be accompanied by us during every step of the whole process.**

We put all our efforts into every project to **guarantee a comfortable transition** with minimal risks while avoiding having to interrupt your business. Yeeply [can manage the entire process](#) so that you can face your company's digital transformation with full confidence.

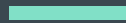
Do you want to speak to one of our experts?

Please don't hesitate to do so: it's free from any obligation. Let us know a little bit about your requirements by filling in our form and we'll contact you to see how we can help.

TELL US WHAT YOU NEED

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