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Navigating Business Transformation in a Hyperdigital Era

Faisal Hoque

Fast Company Press (304 pp.)

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BOOK REVIEW

A discussion of organizational transformation that goes beyond quick fixes.

In these pages, Hoque describes some of the mechanisms of the “ongoing pilgrimage” of corporate transformation in a “hyperdigital” era. As Hoque points out, e-commerce was growing by leaps and bounds even before the world changes brought on by the Covid-19 pandemic, which turbocharged the process by hundreds of billions of dollars and, according to the author, fundamentally changed many aspects of commerce and society. These changes can lead to a “disconnect” in which sections of the workforce resist the new realities for a variety of reasons (Hoque cites a survey that indicated many people who’ve shifted to remote working miss the impromptu face-to-face time and social elements of the in-person workplace), and the book addresses this with suggestions like periodic unplugging, broadening networks to talk about things other than work, and interspersing remote work with in-person days. In these and other sections of the subject, Hoque advocates “digital maturity,” which involves “flexible, secure infrastructure,” “data, mastery,” and “intelligent workflows,” and must be embraced by both workforces and customers. In clear and fast-paced prose, the guide describes the seismic changes represented by things like digital transformation, artificial intelligence, and machine learning—always stressing that such developments are inevitable and potentially hugely valuable but also complex. Transforming business, he writes, “involves a great deal more than unplugging this and plugging in that.” Rather, it paradoxically has less to do with the technology than with the culture of the organization itself. “Leadership,” Hoque writes, “planning, thoughtful execution, and a commitment to a fresh mindset are every bit as critical to success as the right technology.” Hoque’s writing is briskly paced and includes plenty of inset lists and other graphics, which is perfect for beginners and experienced hands alike.

A lively, cleareyed assessment of the ways Covid has forever altered commerce.

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