

2021: Decoding the new recipe of success

Jan 3, 2021



What is your technology mix for 2021?

If I were to describe 2020 in three words they would be -disruption, digitization and collaboration. COVID has truly propelled us into an all-pervasive digital world. Co-creation and co-innovation, led by [stronger ecosystems](#) will continue to be key to sustained success going forward. We saw the emergence of a virtual network economy and new working models took shape swiftly. And holding all this together was the power of exponential technologies like Hybrid Cloud, AI, Blockchain and IoT - which acted as the Sutradhar (a unifying force) that kept us connected, economies functioning and our lives ticking. According to a recent, IBM Institute for Business Value (IBV) Study titled [Digital Acceleration](#), "Tech-savvy organizations outperformed their peers by 6 percentage points on average across key industries where technology acted as a performance differentiator." Organisations at mature levels of tech adoption achieved in 6-7 months what would have usually taken a few years to accomplish.

The other interesting point to note is that the 'technology mix'-recipe of success is changing. Hybrid Cloud and AI underpinned by security have emerged as key growth drivers. As per the Digital Acceleration report, over 74% organisations are likely to use hybrid cloud to improve agility, security and resiliency of their critical business processes.

Tech imperatives to strengthen organizational success in 2021

In 2020, technology emerged as a core strategic foundation for most enterprises. It became an important performance differentiator and a key determinant of organizational survival and success. As we move into 2021, I believe there are some key operational focus areas that will become core for enterprises in navigating the opportunities and risks as they reset, recover and revive post pandemic. Developing these capabilities involves building tech-driven operating models that will help build resilience and drive success in an ever-changing environment.

Agility will be the mantra in the new normal:

- Agility will be key to successfully adapt in the unpredictable and uncertain "new normal" without compromising efficiency.
- [Cloud](#) and AI will grow to support agile workflows and remote operations in 2021.
- Blockchain will be used to automate transaction processes across multiple organizations and geographies while driving cost efficiencies, data integrity, and embedding trust across digital supply chains.

- The value derived from a full hybrid, multi-cloud platform technology and operating model at scale is 2.5 times the value derived from a single platform, single cloud vendor approach.

Open Tech & Good Tech will become essential:

- As digital eco-systems become all pervasive, emerging business models will require enterprises to collaborate and network with each other to enable trusted, digital supply chains.
- This will require open architectures based on open source technologies like Kubernetes and containers, which will drive the next wave of Cloud based business innovation.
- Trusted technology - that is open by design & underpinned by enterprise-grade security - must deliver instant deployment, automated vulnerability management, and self-healing resiliency ... without vendor lock-in.

Deeper insights will help drive stronger customer engagement:

- Businesses need to get more out of their data to empower their customers and employees and enhance their experiences
- Increasing demands call for personalization while making marked improvements in efficiency and agility.
- In 2021, intelligent automation and data management tools coupled with AI will be extensively used to draw customer insights, real-time response and build trust.

Supply chains and operations will be hyper-responsive:

- The onset of the pandemic saw supply chains stressed, strained, or in some cases, shattered. Similar to 2020, majority companies will use Hybrid Cloud as a differentiator and turn to IoT, AI and automation to estimate and respond to evolving demands while driving new levels of efficiency and flexibility.
- 2021 will witness greater application of these insights to all core enterprise workflows to maintain a robust supply chain.
- Blockchain will help improve data provenance, to ensure it is clean, genuine and trusted, with an irrefutable audit trail across automated supply chains.

Workforce capabilities will be transformed:

- As we gear for back-to-work operations, employee safety is a key concern and will continue to be a high priority in the next two years.
- Organizations will reimagine work and the work environment at every level using AI for employee

communication, development, and training.

- [Technology will play a key role in support functions like HR too.](#)
- Employee skilling and upskilling will continue to remain as key priorities. 2021 will witness greater use of AI-driven insights to design training programs and influence decision functions (like candidate selection, compensation).

Business Continuity will ride on enterprise-wide cyber security and IT resiliency:

- During the pandemic, organisations witnessed massive challenges at scale like spike in digital sales, e-transactions and managing a remote workforce.
- As we deciphered new ways of working...cyber criminals found new opportunities.
- Within first quarter of the pandemic, [IBM X-Force](#) observed more than 6,000 percent increase in coronavirus-themed and phishing scams.

Going forward businesses will use Cloud platforms to improve resiliency of core business systems and run applications on multiple clouds to mitigate outages and threats to business continuity, while enabling automatic scaling in response to spikes in demand. We will witness 'build once, deploy anywhere' cloud approach. These platforms will also be leveraged to enhance security of applications and data and enable compliance with data privacy regulations and enterprise security policies. A mix of AI and intelligent automation will help monitor and detect security threats and respond to incidents.

The trends, with accelerated adoption of exponential technologies, will form the foundation of economic rebound in 2021. Adoption of technology is not a question of 'whether or not' anymore -it is about 'when' and 'how fast'. The opportunity is here and now – speed, agility and innovation will define winners as we transition to the new normal.

This blog is authored by [Sandip Patel](#), MD, IBM India / South Asia

Blog Categories

[Transform](#)