



BEYONDER

DIGITAL STRATEGY IN 2025:

GENAI INTEGRATION AND ADOPTION IS THE NEW NORM

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WHITEPAPER WRITTEN BY BERT MAAS; SUMMARISED BY AI:

- Digital Strategy in 2025 involves a high-level approach for long-term sustainability and digital acceleration towards the company vision or purpose. It covers areas like data strategy, processes, automation, customer experience & journey, technology implementation and employee & customer onboarding.
- Key trends shaping the digital landscape in 2025 include the rise of AI, the importance of data value, ownership and curation, geopolitical influences, the growth of specific AI-agents and the renewed importance of 'the human work'.
- The value of a digital strategy is in aligning technology and business objectives to drive growth and success, transform operations, and deliver increased value to customers.
- The Beyond model is a simple way to segment a strategy into achievable chunks: (1) catching up with today's challenges, (2) getting ahead of the competition, and (3) reaching beyond your imagination.
- The digital strategy creation process involves a combined team of strategists, architects and analysts, and requires the involvement of decision makers and process experts from all levels of the organisation.
- The process starts with understanding the current situation, then creating a vision based on identified problems and potential opportunities, and finally formulating a plan to achieve the vision.
- Continuous measurement, creating appealing visuals, overcoming limitations, and engaging the entire organisation are critical success factors in implementing a digital strategy.
- The digital strategy journey is one of continuous pathfinding and improvement, and doesn't end with the formulation of the strategy.
- External assistance can offer a fresh perspective, creative ideas, a neutral sparring ground and help overcome limitations.





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01.

INTRODUCTION

In the coming years there will be an incredible boost in human potential. As the calculator and computer boosted the field of mathematics, so will the advance of technologies like AI and smart automation propel human potential, productivity and creativity to new heights. Leading businesses and early adopters have already forged the pathways and there is an ever-growing array of powerful tech available to everyone. We are living in the future. This document discusses Beyonder's perspective, insights and approach to Digital Strategy in this extremely turbulent future.

Authors

This document is written by Bert Maas (digital strategist at Beyonder) with input from Wouter Outersterp (Architect). Both of whom have years of experience in digital innovation and strategy, supporting CTOs and CDOs from strategy to implementation. Not as consultants; but as sparring partners. That is the beauty of Beyonder; we don't consult and fly. We are there for the implementation too, which means vision and pragmatism go hand-in-hand as there is accountability and responsibility beyond a powerpoint.

02.

THE ESSENCE

What does Digital Strategy even mean in 2025?

Digital Strategy in 2025 is a high-level approach for long-term sustainability and digital acceleration towards the company vision or purpose. Now more than ever it is important to formulate or evaluate your organisation's digital strategy as it should indicate how the organisation will respond to, utilise and thrive in this technological rollercoaster of possibilities. This strategic blueprint covers areas like data strategy, processes, automation, customer experience & journey, digital technology implementation and employee & customer onboarding.



03.

THE TRENDS

There are 5 main trends that we view as pivotal in 2025

1. AI / LLM / genAI awareness changed the game
2. Data governance and ownership is at an all time importance
3. Geopolitical influences become a major factor in decision making
4. Specialised AI-agents are the future and intercommunication between them will be the new norm
5. The importance and value of 'the human work' rises once more.

3.1 | AI, LLM and genAI awareness changed the game

The hype around AI is not unfounded but the pragmatic approach to implementation is often missing. AI is one of many solutions that need to be integrated in a solid digital strategy and has been part of the suite of automation options for many years now [\[1\]\[2\]](#). The difference is that the general awareness around the topic has skyrocketed (along with the easily available options). The meteoric rise of genAI solutions like LLMs forced an awareness, acceptance level and sudden 'need' to also adopt AI [\[3\]](#). In 2024 we already see a 72% AI adoption rate among organisations according to McKinsey's reports [\[6\]](#).

Currently we are at the height of the hypecurve, which presents opportunities and risks. On the one hand there is enthusiasm, optimism and even a sense of urgency. On the other hand there is also still a lot of confusion and misunderstanding about the technologies and their risks, possibilities and limitations. This wave of new tech adoption and optimism means that Digital Strategy is more important than ever [\[4\]](#), because acceleration needs control and a clear path.

**"DIGITAL STRATEGY IS MORE
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For many businesses it will be the motor and driving force in unprecedented capability and value creation. This will heavily impact their future relevance and sustainability. To refer back to the calculator analogy; you won't be overtaken or replaced by AI, but you will be competing with organisations utilising AI and automation to its full potential. In the long run the calculator completely replaced the abacus and paperwork; but not the mathematician. It is a



tool. GenAI is a tool in the same way but it can be integrated into or execute the organisation's processes and workflows, which makes it part of a good digital strategy.

3.2 | Data value, ownership and curation is at an all time importance

We are coming from an era where every organisation wanted "digital transformation" in order to deliver a digital version of themselves or their product and processes. During this process most organisations adopted arrays of SaaS solutions to digitise many of their processes. Now with the AI data goldrush we see this movement falter as the multitude of solutions make for a very segmented, sometimes polluted and often fenced data landscape. Clean data that is properly governed and has a clear lineage is required for automation. A good digital strategy has always considered data curation and ownership as one of the core pillars but the importance is currently at an all time high. Your proprietary data is valuable so it is vital to ensure your digital strategy evaluates data ownership and curation/quality.

3.3 | Geopolitical influences become a major factor in decision making

The shift in the geopolitical landscape has made many organisations reconsider their globalised strategies. The global distribution of technological innovation, data privacy regulations, and cyber security standards vary greatly across different regions, and these differences can significantly impact the implementation and effectiveness of a digital strategy [5]. Especially now that the shift towards digital self-sufficiency and protectionism has started. For instance, data sovereignty laws, which govern how data is collected, stored, and transferred across national borders, can greatly affect a company. Digital protectionism, where countries place restrictions on the flow of data or the digital services that can be accessed within their borders, can also influence a company's digital strategy. Ask yourself; where is our data stored? Under which legislation are our ownership rights protected? Who delivers and owns the Software that we use? What if the above trends continue? The companies that have vendor and solution independence are more resilient. Being digitally resilient, flexible and self-sufficient brings value throughout the entire organisation and mitigates/minimizes risks from these external factors.

A comprehensive digital strategy in 2025 must take these geopolitical influences into account. It should be flexible enough to adapt to changing regulations and policies, and robust enough to withstand potential disruptions.

3.4 | Specialised AI-agents are the future and intercommunication between them will be the new norm

These are AI systems designed to excel in particular tasks rather than possessing a broad, general intelligence. The advantage of specialised AI-agents lies in their ability to perform their designated tasks with a high level of precision and efficiency. The adoption of these agents has seen a steep increase. A very recent study from Forum Ventures showed 48% of organisations are already adopting agentic solutions, with an additional 33% of organisations already exploring the solution implementation possibilities [7]. The steep adoption curve is due to the effectiveness of these specialised AI-agents. The proof is in the numbers as organisations see (1) meaningful cost reductions from AI use in HR, (2) revenue increases in supply chain



management, (3) cost reduction in service operations and (4) revenue increases in marketing and sales [6]. In the long term we see AI agents remove the need for traditional user interfaces by taking over tasks that users would typically perform with software.

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This becomes a more realistic future with the development of multi-agent networks, where different AI agents, each specializing in a particular task, collaborate to achieve common goals that no single agent could accomplish alone. This in turn means that a shift will happen towards goal-oriented system development instead of software packages. For example; if the goal is to log customer calls; one agent transcribes the phone call, another agent summarizes the phone call and yet another agent logs the actions discussed. This collaboration allows the goal to be achieved with speed and precision.

The intercommunication and collaboration between specific AI-agents will be a new norm in the digital strategy of organisations. It will require careful planning and management to ensure that these AI-agents can effectively work together while maintaining data privacy and security. Therefore, the digital strategy must consider the implementation and management of these specific AI-agents.

3.5 | The importance and value of 'the human work' rises once more

As the landscape of technology and AI continues to evolve, it's easy to become engrossed in the digital revolution. However, it's crucial to remember the invaluable role that human work plays in the success of any organisation. While AI and automation can process data and perform tasks with incredible speed and accuracy, they lack the human attributes of creativity, empathy, critical thinking and the ability to understand complex social dynamics. These are elements that are vital in areas such as decision-making, problem-solving, leadership, customer service, and team collaboration.

For example; we can automate 80% of a daycare planning but can't (yet) catch all edgecases. The societal and empathic aspect of for example personally assisting a parent to get daycare even though they have divergent work hours. By automating the 80% we free up time so the focus and attention can be spent on the human work with value. The social aspect, the management of feelings, the flexible creative planning required to achieve success. In Dutch we say "tijd vrijmaken voor het mensenwerk met waarde", meaning "free time for the valuable human work". The human role shifts towards tasks that require a higher level of cognitive function, creativity, and emotional intelligence [3]. Organisations should not only focus on



integrating digital technologies but also on employing, valuing and developing the human skills that can't be automated. This balance between technology and the human touch will be a key factor in the successful digital strategies of the future [\[9\]](#).

04.

THE VALUE

In the end it is almost always about aligning the technology and business objectives to drive growth and success.

The value isn't in using new technologies or creating an innovative product; it's about integrating digital knowhow into all facets of the business in order to fundamentally transform operations. This will -in the long run- deliver increased value to customers. A clear digital strategy can enable organisations to identify the optimal digital initiatives, streamline processes, improve customer engagement and foster a culture of continuous innovation. A great Digital Strategy motivates and guides the organisation as it acts a clear and desirable north star.



05.

THE METHOD

Over the years we have developed our own custom process for supporting the creation of a Digital Strategy, which is an amalgamation of existing methodologies (Design Thinking, the Lean Startup methodology, 3 horizon model, 10 types of innovation, etc.) and a healthy dose of pragmatism. This section goes quite in-depth, so keep the pragmatism in mind. Not everything is relevant for every organisation. If you find yourself thinking "this is too much information" or "I know what I am doing" skip to '[a fresh perspective](#)'.



5.1 | Beyond model

To prevent falling into the trap of creating massive strategy documents –with 10 year plans that are outdated after 1 year and have no clear pragmatic start point– we prefer to utilise simple methods. Our core method is the Beyond model. It is an incredibly simple way of segmenting a strategy into achievable chunks.

1. **Catching up** with today's challenges

Create rest in the organisation where needed. Fix the immediate pains and tackle the challenges that occupy today's mind and block the view. E.g. replace outdated/deprecated software, improve performance, improve cybersecurity, (re)claim data ownership, etc.

2. **Getting ahead** of the competition

Look forward and innovate, improve, automate and scale. Maximise efficiency and profitability. Perfect your buyer's experience and customer journey. Develop new opportunities, products and explore new business models.

3. **Reaching beyond** your imagination

With the speed of continuous innovation it is possible to move forward. Move into new markets, expand product, service offering and aim to move your industry forward; or even push into a new playingfield.

All three steps can be run in parallel with each other as long as the focus, weight and resources are prioritised on that which has the highest value towards reaching your organisation's objectives. As an organisation you can recognise and pinpoint which phase you are in. This is also a good indication on what to start with.

5.2 | Who to involve in the creation of a Digital Strategy?

This process is impossible without the direct involvement of your own organisation and its specialists.

In order to create that perfect Digital Strategy you need several skillsets, types of minds and personalities. We always approach this challenge with a combined team consisting of a digital strategist, architect and business analyst supported by designers if needed. During the process it is imperative to involve the decision makers and process experts from all levels of the organisation. This prevents running into the ever awkward 'ivory tower syndrome'. If you have (UX) designers, involve them in the brainstorm, as the different mindset might break through bias or thought barriers you didn't know existed.

5.3 | Our approach

1. **Current Situation**

We never start with solution thinking. We start by creating a clear overview of the current situation.



Often it starts with untangling the multitude of software systems, processes and data into legible maps to create a clear view of the current (IST) system landscape. The same can be done for the customer journey and processes. Stakeholders analysis and/or personas can complete the overview. This current situation overview is the basis and starting point for a digital strategy.

To give it direction we turn to the organisation's purpose, vision and mission statement as they can inform the ambitions and goals, without being solution oriented.

To create a way to measure success we prefer to formulate key results based on the objectives (OKR methodology). Add all currently existing initiatives, the timelines and budgets and you have a clear overview of where the business is at this point in time.

With this expansive overview and understanding of an organisation it is possible to determine problem and opportunity areas. On the basis of this one can define clear concise problem statements, which form the basis for the vision phase.

2. Vision

Problem statements are the perfect starting point for ideation brainstorming and collaborative sessions. The goal is to find a common ground and plan on how to tackle the defined problems, while achieving the objectives and key results. This when done well generally leads to initiatives that should result in win, win, win situations, where every party involved gets what they want (the business, employees and users/customers).

The ideation phase expands on ideas and possibilities by listing and creating a multitude of possible initiatives that could lead to the desired results. Not all initiatives need to be software oriented. They can also be process alignment or simplification or really any initiative that works toward the objectives. The initiative list should be cut down to a version that the decisionmakers agree on.

These are the ingredients for the Digital Strategy. With this one can cook up a "x in 2026" vision slide deck. If possible we like to create a single slide representation of the Digital Strategy that represents all the initiatives. The strategy has to be simple enough to be understood by everyone in the organisation. If needed, concept visuals or designs can help to explain initiatives.

Based on the initiatives a (SOLL) system landscape can be designed, which in turn acts as a technical feasibility review.

3. Plan

Even though a plan isn't normally part of a strategy we believe it is vital to indicate what the approach will be and what input will be required from whom. Otherwise it is a fun thought experiment, without action. This often creates more confusion in an organisation. A pragmatic approach also makes sure that the strategy does not become an abstract set of goals. Strategic decision making is possible because of the split initiatives. For all initiatives there is a possible value vs. effort estimation and potential ROI calculation, which in turn results in a



roadmap. We prefer a roadmap split up in NOW / NEXT / LATER / NEVER, where the phases are ±1-2 quarters.

06.

THE LEARNINGS

6.1 | The importance of measureability

If you don't measure you don't know. Setting specific, quantifiable goals and regularly monitoring key performance indicators ensures that the strategy is achieving its objectives. This allows for timely adjustments, and validates the return on digital investments. Without measurable outcomes, it's challenging to determine if a digital strategy is successful or needs refinement. Quantifying results is the #1 way to achieve buy-in and gain trust from all stakeholders.

6.2 | Visuals are paramount

We can't begin to express how effective it has been to involve creatives into the process. Not just for the creation of slides afterwards -as is often the case-, but in the process itself. They will not only bring new ways of thinking to the table, but also ensure a great looking end result. In order to inspire and convince the whole organisation there needs to be an easily understood visual aspect that breathes the strategy, vision and purpose. Psychologist Edward L. Thorndike coined the term "Halo Effect" in 1920. The principle boils down to; good looking things are perceived as higher quality and therefore will be more desirable.

6.3 | Overcoming limitations

Every CEO, COO, CDO, CTO and IT-manager is facing the same ~~challenges~~ opportunities. These can be grouped in two categories: People and Solutions.

People challenges Old thinking, 'set in their ways', skill-gaps, bias and assumptions towards new tech, resource constraints (time), a general struggle to keep up with rapid developments, etc. Often people are simply too close and entrenched into the existing processes and systems to be able to view past them.

Solution challenges Old systems, widely dispersed software landscape built from various SaaS solutions, vendor-locks, etc. Often the current solution challenges are direct limitations to progress and innovative thinking.

Addressing and overcoming these limiting factors is part of the strategy and method we apply. By involving employees in the process they will be exposed to new opportunities, trends, techniques and technologies. This has to be approached from both employee and management level. It requires us to force all levels in the organisation to face and reevaluate their biases. In time and throughout the workshops we aim to change perspectives and mindsets to a more open outlook on possibilities. We will make you see your organisation, like you have never seen it before.



“YOUR ORGANISATION, LIKE YOU HAVE NEVER SEEN IT BEFORE.”

Breaking the mould of thinking is easy for some and difficult for others. Assume the process will take time at an organisational level especially if it is a cultural shift. The main barrier to overcome for agentic AI adoption is trust [7]. To gain traction, projects must not only deliver measurable value but also ensure transparency, reliability, and a strong commitment to data privacy and security.

6.4 | Engaging the organisation

Enthusiasm for change. The highest hurdle can be your own organisation. We apply the three golden rules of personal motivation to create enthusiasm across an organisation. Based on the Daniel H. Pink's; Drive: the surprising truth about what motivates us [x].

1. Autonomy – “The desire to direct our own lives.”

Make sure employees can be directly involved in the process wherever possible. Let them make their own choices and listen to their input. Make sure they feel a sense of ownership of the end-result. Lean on the fact that a proper digital strategy will free up time for them to work on the valuable work that they would like to do.

2. Mastery – “The urge to get better or develop skills in things that matter.”

Respect the skillsets depth of knowledge acquired by each employee. Everyone has their own expertise area so ask employees specific questions towards those areas and involve them in decision making if possible. Most importantly; show them how the digital strategy will help them get even better at what they do (or want to do).

3. Purpose – “The need to do what we do for reasons bigger than ourselves.”

The desire to be part of something great is part of human nature. Everyone has this to some extent; some out of more narcissistic motivations, others out of more altruistic and selfless concerns. Your organisation's purpose should be a good starting point for your digital strategy. If this is lacking there is also the possibility to unite employees in formulating a purpose on a lower level (e.g. project level or team level).



07.

A FRESH PERSPECTIVE

A fresh perspective from an external party can be a game-changer for your organisation's digital strategy. With our broad experience across various markets, we can introduce fresh insights and innovative analogies that might not have been considered internally. Learn from the innovations and learnings in other markets so you can adapt them to your own.

Our diverse expertise allows us to identify unique opportunities and challenges that might be overlooked by an internal team deeply entrenched in the organisation's existing processes. As a neutral party we bring an objective and unbiased viewpoint to the table, enabling us to challenge the status quo and propose transformative solutions. Don't forget, this is what we do on a daily basis. We are a digital strategy sparring partner for a broad spectrum of organisations.

08.

THE JOURNEY

A digital strategy doesn't end but it is a continuous process. The strategy defines the direction, the roadmap is the travel brochure and the plan is the route. The journey is one of continuous pathfinding and improvement. Make sure to measure progress towards the objectives (for example on a quarterly basis), so you can adjust course and make corrections as you go.

09.

CONCLUDING

Given the rapidly evolving digital landscape of 2025 and beyond it has never been more complex or more important to develop a digital strategy. This acceleration needs control and guidance. With the insights and strategies shared in this whitepaper, we hope to empower your organisation to thrive. The trends and developments we have discussed are not mere predictions or probabilities; they are already influencing our world and shaping the future of business. With an effective digital strategy, organisations can not only adapt to these changes but also leverage them to their advantage, transforming their operations and delivering enhanced value to their customers. Truly boosting human potential.

That excites us; we love this stuff. This is what we do. Want to pick our brains, talk about it or see what we can do for you? Let's have a coffee!



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