# ALP Document

## DBS Case Study: Strategic Planning

### What were the key strategic decisions that guided DBS's digital transformation?

#### Adopting Strategy 2.0: "Making Banking Joyful"

The bank shifted from Strategy 1.0 ("Asia's Bank of Choice in the New Asia") to Strategy 2.0 with a clear focus on "Making Banking Joyful" by leveraging digitalization to make banking 'invisible' for customers

This was backed by a significant S$200 million (US$147 million) investment in digital transformation

#### Following Three Strategic Initiatives

DBS implemented Strategy 2.0 around three core strategic initiatives:

Digital to the Core: Investing in completely transforming legacy systems and technology infrastructure

Customer-Obsessed Approach: Embedding themselves in the customer journey to make banking invisible

Creating a Start-up Culture: Transforming into a "22,000-person start-up" (later 28,000) by fostering experimentation, innovation, and agile thinking

#### Insourcing Technology Development

DBS made the critical decision to insource technology development rather than continuing to outsource. This reversed their previous approach where 85% of technology services were outsourced

By 2018, DBS had flipped this ratio, with 90% of technology being self-managed

#### Implementing GANDALF Vision

The bank set a goal to be the "D" among global tech giants (Google, Amazon, Netflix, Apple, LinkedIn, and Facebook) adopting best practices from these companies rather than comparing themselves only to other banks

#### Moving to the Cloud

DBS made a strategic decision to migrate to cloud-native infrastructure, which allowed them to consolidate and reduce their physical server footprint by 75% while enabling 10x excess capacity to scale

#### Developing New Digital Scorecards

The bank created new metrics (initially ATE: Acquire, Transact, Engage, later evolved to EATE with Ecosystems added) and allocated 20% of the Balanced Scorecard to "Making Banking Joyful".

#### Launching Digibank India

DBS launched India's first mobile-only bank with no physical branches, which demonstrated the potential of digitalization and served as a confidence builder internally.

#### Creating an API Ecosystem

The bank launched the world's largest banking API platform with more than 200 APIs and 80+ partners, enabling seamless integration with external partners and expanding their digital ecosystem

#### Fostering a "Culture by Design"

DBS deliberately built its ABCDE culture (Agile, Be a learning organization, Customer-obsessed, Data-driven, Experiment and take risks) through intentional programs like hackathons, which involved 15,000 employees in at least one innovation project by 2018.

These strategic decisions collectively transformed DBS from a traditional bank into a technology company providing banking services, ultimately leading to its recognition as the Best Bank in the World.

### How did DBS's shift from 'project' to 'platform' influence its strategic planning?

#### Restructured Organizational Approach

##### From Siloed Projects to Integrated Platforms

Prior to the shift, DBS had 198 ongoing projects for the consumer bank division alone, creating bureaucratic complexity and slow delivery. The platform approach consolidated these disparate projects into integrated platforms organized around customer needs and business outcomes rather than individual initiatives.

##### Reorganization for Success

DBS reorganized its teams around platforms rather than individual projects. This meant establishing platform teams with the specific mandate to deliver desired outcomes, creating a structural foundation for their strategic planning.

#### Transformed Governance and Decision-Making

##### From Control to Context

One of the most significant changes was shifting from what CTO David Gledhill called "control to context". Instead of steering committees requiring multiple approvals at every stage, platform owners received funding and autonomy to determine how to achieve business outcomes, dramatically changing how strategic decisions were made and executed.

##### Elimination of Bureaucracy

The bank attacked layers of bureaucracy, eliminating the need for multiple approvals and committees that had previously slowed down innovation and implementation. This freed up strategic planning to focus on outcomes rather than processes.

#### Aligned Business and Technology

##### "Business equals technology; technology equals business"

The platform approach introduced the mantra that "business equals technology; technology equals business," creating a "Two in a Box" collaborative leadership model where tech and business heads worked together with shared goals and KPIs. This fundamentally changed how strategic planning incorporated technology decisions.

##### Shared Accountability

Rather than separate and potentially opposing goals (e.g., business targeting revenue while technology focused on stability), the platform approach created shared accountability for business outcomes, customer experience, and technology performance.

#### Enhanced Agility and Speed

##### DevOps and Automation

The platform approach incorporated principles like DevOps and automation, enabling faster deployment of new products and features. This allowed strategic planning to account for much faster implementation timelines and more rapid iteration based on market feedback.

##### Rapid Learning Cycles

With nearly 100% automated testing and deployment, strategic planning could incorporate shorter feedback loops and more experimental approaches, knowing that ideas could be tested quickly with customers.

#### Customer-Centric Planning

##### Platforms Centered Around Customer Journeys

Strategic planning shifted to center around customer journeys and solving "jobs to be done"

rather than internal product development timelines, fundamentally changing what was prioritized.

##### Digital Ecosystems

The platform approach enabled DBS to create entire ecosystems and marketplaces (for cars, property, electricity), allowing strategic planning to envision much broader value propositions beyond traditional banking products.

#### Financial Planning Transformation

##### Investment Allocation

Strategic financial planning changed from allocating budgets to specific projects with detailed business cases to providing funding to platforms with broad outcome goals, trusting platform teams to determine the best use of resources.

##### Measuring Digital Value Capture

The new approach led to the creation of metrics to track "digital value capture," proving that digitally active customers delivered higher revenue, lower cost-to-income ratios, and higher Return-On-Equity (ROE), which in turn influenced future strategic investment decisions.

### What challenges did DBS face in implementing its strategic plan and how did it overcome them?

#### 1. Legacy Technology Systems

##### Challenge:

DBS was hampered by disparate legacy systems across 12 markets, with a failed prior transformation attempt that had already cost S$300 million (US$220 million) and was projected to need another billion dollars to complete.

**Solution:**

* **Bold Reset**: Dave Gledhill canceled the entire previous project despite having to defend this decision to the Board and CEO
* **Insourcing**: Reversed the 85% outsourcing model to 90% self-managed technology
* **Cloud Migration**: Moved to cloud-native infrastructure, reducing physical server footprint by 75% while enabling 10x capacity

#### 2. Bureaucracy and Slow Decision-Making

##### Challenge:

The bank was weighed down by multiple steering committees, approval processes, and 198 concurrent projects in the consumer banking division alone.

**Solution:**

* **Control to Context**: Transformed governance by giving platform owners funding and autonomy to deliver outcomes without committee approvals
* **Meeting MoJo**: Implemented a structured approach to make meetings more effective, doubling their productivity
* **Platform Thinking**: Reorganized around platforms rather than individual projects

#### 3. Business-Technology Divide

##### Challenge:

Traditional separation between business and technology teams led to conflicting goals, with business focused on revenue while technology prioritized stability.

**Solution:**

* **"Two in a Box"**: Paired technology and business leaders to collaborate with shared KPIs
* **Shared Mantra**: Implemented the philosophy that "business equals technology; technology equals business"
* **Digital DNA**: Cultivated complementary functions between technology and business teams

#### 4. Risk Aversion and Fear of Experimentation

##### Challenge:

Traditional banking culture was risk-averse and resistant to experimentation, with older employees potentially feeling excluded from digital initiatives.

**Solution:**

* **40+ Hackathon**: Created a special hackathon exclusively for employees over 40 to demonstrate that age was not a barrier to digital innovation
* **"Dare to Fail" Award**: Established recognition for employees who tried new approaches even if they weren't successful
* **ABCDE Culture**: Implemented a culture design focusing on Agile, Being a learning organization, Customer-obsession, Data-driven decisions, and Experimentation

##### 5. Skills Gap and Digital Capabilities

##### Challenge:

Employees lacked necessary digital skills and mindset to execute the transformation strategy.

**Solution:**

* **DigiFY Platform**: Implemented digital training to transform traditional bankers into digital bankers
* **Data Translators**: Created a new role of "data translators" who bridged business and data science
* **Hiring Data Scientists**: Recruited specialists while simultaneously reskilling existing business analysts

**6.** Customer Acquisition in New Markets

##### Challenge:

Expanding into markets like India without physical branches posed regulatory challenges like KYC (Know Your Customer) requirements.

**Solution:**

* **Strategic Partnerships**: Partnered with Café Coffee Day (600 outlets) in India for biometric verification using government identity systems
* **API Ecosystem**: Built an API platform with 200+ APIs to enable partnerships and expand reach
* **AI Virtual Assistants**: Implemented chatbots to reduce the need for physical customer service

#### 7. Data Privacy and Security Concerns

##### Challenge:

Using customer data for analytics raised concerns about privacy, security, and appropriate use.

**Solution:**

* **PURE Committee**: Established a governance framework ensuring data use was Purposeful, Unsurprising, Respectful, and Explainable
* **Role-Based Access**: Granted data access based on employee roles and relationship to customers
* **Risk Framework Expansion**: Extended risk management to encompass the broader ecosystem and API connections

#### 8. Technology Implementation Setbacks

##### Challenge:

Some technologies didn't work as expected, such as the IBM Watson implementation that was discontinued.

**Solution:**

* **Adaptive Approach**: Willingness to terminate partnerships when technologies didn't deliver expected value (IBM Watson)
* **Continuous Learning**: Applied lessons to later initiatives, such as successfully implementing Robotic Process Automation with IBM in 2017

## DBS Case Study: Ecosystem Partnerships

### What partnerships did DBS establish in its digital transformation journey?

**Partnerships in DBS's Digital Transformation Journey**

DBS strategically established various partnerships throughout its digital transformation journey to expand its reach, enhance capabilities, and create new value propositions. Here are the key partnerships that played significant roles:

**Technology Partnerships**

**IBM**

* Initially partnered with IBM to deploy Watson cognitive computing for enhancing customer experience, particularly in wealth management
* Though the initial Watson partnership was terminated, DBS and IBM worked together again in 2017 on Robotic Process Automation, creating the first large-scale implementation in financial services in Singapore and the region

**AI Startup Collaboration**

* DBS Human Resources collaborated with an AI startup to develop "Jim" (Jobs Intelligence Maestro), Southeast Asia's first virtual bank recruiter
* This custom-made system automated pre-screening processes, saved time, and enabled 24/7 interaction with job applicants

**Retail and Service Partnerships**

**Café Coffee Day (India)**

* Partnered with this coffee chain (600 outlets) in India to solve the KYC (Know Your Customer) challenge for digibank India
* Customers could visit any Café Coffee Day outlet and use their Aadhar card (national ID) for biometric validation to open a bank account, eliminating the need for bank branches

**GOJEK (Indonesia)**

* Announced local ride-hailing service GOJEK as its ecosystem partner when launching digibank Indonesia in November 2018
* This partnership helped DBS reach potential customers through an established digital platform

**API Ecosystem Partnerships**

**API Platform Partners**

* Launched the world's largest banking API platform in November 2017 with more than 200 APIs and over 80 DBS partners
* By August 2019, DBS had expanded to over 450 APIs, connecting with numerous partners

**Fintech Startups**

* Built relationships with Fintech startups through the API platform, enabling them to integrate DBS banking services into their applications

**Telcos**

* Partnered with telecommunications companies as part of their API ecosystem strategy
* Used telco partnerships to acquire new customers and leverage non-traditional data for underwriting

**Marketplace Ecosystem Partnerships**

**Property, Automotive, and Energy Marketplaces**

* In 2018, DBS launched marketplaces for cars, property, and electricity, which required partnerships with sellers and service providers in these industries
* These marketplaces repositioned DBS from selling financial products to facilitating complete customer journeys (buying a house, not just the mortgage; buying a car, not just the auto loan)

**Strategic Partnerships for Customer Acquisition**

**Ride-hailing Platforms**

* Recognized the importance of partnering with platforms where customer engagement was already happening
* Used these partnerships for customer acquisition and accessing non-traditional data for credit decisions

**Third-party Data Providers**

* Partnered with various third-party data providers to enhance underwriting capabilities using non-traditional data

**Partnership Philosophy**

DBS's approach to partnerships was guided by a clear ecosystem philosophy:

* **Participate where the customer is**: DBS recognized that "customer engagements are happening out there in real life" and they needed to "partner with whomever the customer is in contact with"
* **Risk management in partnerships**: Ensured that as APIs connected to more ecosystem partners, risk management aspects were carefully addressed, including data transfer protocols and cybersecurity risk assessments
* **Ecosystem definition**: DBS defined ecosystems as "bringing together entities in disparate industries to create new offerings or capture value that individual companies or sectors may not be capable of creating on their own"

### How did these partnerships contribute to the success of DBS's digital transformation?

**1. Accelerated Market Expansion**

**Rapid Customer Acquisition**

* The partnership with Café Coffee Day in India enabled DBS to acquire over 2.2 million digibank customers by early 2019 without establishing physical branches
* As CFO Sok Hui noted, "That would not have been possible so soon if we were using a brick-and-mortar strategy"

**Overcoming Regulatory Barriers**

* The Café Coffee Day partnership solved the critical KYC challenge in India, allowing customers to use their Aadhar cards for biometric validation
* This innovative approach enabled DBS to comply with banking regulations without physical infrastructure

**2. Enhanced Customer Experience**

**Seamless Integration into Customer Journeys**

* Partnerships with property, automotive, and electricity marketplaces allowed DBS to embed itself in customer journeys rather than just selling financial products
* This made banking more "invisible" to customers, aligning with the bank's "Live More, Bank Less" philosophy

**Reaching Customers Where They Were**

* By partnering with platforms like GOJEK in Indonesia, DBS acknowledged that "customer engagements are happening out there in real life" rather than forcing customers to come to banking channels
* This approach reduced friction in the customer journey, making DBS relevant in customers' everyday lives

**3. Technology Capability Building**

**AI and Automation Advancement**

* The IBM partnership for Robotic Process Automation delivered the first large-scale implementation in financial services in Singapore and the region
* The AI startup collaboration for "Jim" transformed HR recruitment processes, improving the quality of hires and reducing turnover rates

**Flexibility to Adapt**

* DBS demonstrated willingness to terminate partnerships when technologies didn't deliver expected value (IBM Watson) and redirect resources to more effective solutions
* This agile approach to partnerships aligned with their "22,000-person start-up" mentality

**4. Ecosystem Development**

**API Platform Expansion**

* The creation of the world's largest banking API platform with 200+ APIs and 80+ partners, later expanding to 450+ APIs, positioned DBS as an ecosystem orchestrator
* This platform enabled third-party innovation using DBS's banking infrastructure, multiplying the bank's innovation capacity

**New Revenue Streams**

* Marketplace partnerships created new revenue opportunities beyond traditional banking products and services
* The ecosystem approach allowed DBS to participate in the entire customer journey, not just the financing portion

**5. Risk Management and Data Enhancement**

**Alternative Data Access**

* Partnerships with telcos and ride-hailing platforms provided access to non-traditional data for credit underwriting
* This improved risk assessment capabilities, particularly for customers with limited banking history

**Managed Risk in Partnership Expansion**

* DBS implemented robust risk management processes for data transfers and cybersecurity assessments as they connected with more ecosystem partners
* This allowed them to expand partnerships without compromising security or compliance

**6. Cultural Transformation**

**Cross-Industry Learning**

* Partnerships exposed DBS employees to different business models and approaches
* This outside influence reinforced the GANDALF mindset of learning from tech companies rather than just other banks

**Innovation Acceleration**

* External partnerships complemented internal hackathons and innovation initiatives
* The combined internal-external innovation approach helped shift DBS's culture toward greater experimentation and risk-taking

**7. Quantifiable Business Impact**

**Digital Customer Growth**

* Partnerships helped DBS convert traditional customers to digital customers
* By 2018, 48% of DBS customers were digital, generating 68% of revenue and 76% of profit

**Improved Financial Performance**

* The digital transformation supported by these partnerships contributed to DBS's 28% increase in net profit in 2018 (to S$5.63 billion) and a 12.1% return on equity
* Digital customers delivered a significantly better cost-to-income ratio (34% vs 54%) and ROE (32% vs 22%) compared to traditional customers

### How did DBS manage the risks associated with these partnerships?

**1. Integrated Risk Management Framework**

**Expanded Risk Management Scope**

DBS ensured that as its API connections grew to include more ecosystem partners, risk management aspects were carefully addressed. CFO Sok Hui explained:

*"We made sure that as we grow in this area and our APIs get connected to more and more ecosystem partners, the risk management aspects are also taken care of. We have a process to know how data is transferred, and whether there are cybersecurity risks, etc."*

**Systematic Process Implementation**

The bank developed specific processes to evaluate potential partners and monitor ongoing relationships, integrating partnership risk assessment into its broader enterprise risk management framework.

**2. Data Privacy and Security Controls**

**PURE Committee Governance**

DBS established the 'PURE' committee to govern how customer data was used, ensuring that all data applications were:

* **P**urposeful
* **U**nsurprising
* **R**espectful
* **E**xplainable

This governance structure specifically addressed partnership contexts where data might be shared or accessed.

**Role-Based Access Controls**

The bank implemented role-based access controls for data, limiting partner access based on specific functions and needs relative to customer relationships.

**3. Technology Partnership Risk Management**

**Evaluating and Exiting Underperforming Partnerships**

DBS demonstrated willingness to terminate partnerships when technologies didn't deliver expected value, as shown with the IBM Watson implementation that was discontinued

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This disciplined approach allowed them to redirect resources to more effective solutions and partnerships.

**Staged Implementation**

For technology partnerships, DBS often used a staged implementation approach, testing solutions in limited environments before full-scale deployment.

**4. API Security Framework**

**Secure API Infrastructure**

When launching the world's largest banking API platform with 200+ APIs and 80+ partners

, DBS implemented robust security controls including:

* API authentication and authorization
* Data encryption
* Rate limiting
* Traffic monitoring

**Standardized Integration Protocols**

The bank developed standardized protocols for API integration, reducing the risk of inconsistent security practices across different partnerships.

**5. Regulatory Compliance Management**

**Cross-Border Compliance**

For international partnerships like Café Coffee Day in India or GOJEK in Indonesia, DBS ensured compliance with local regulations while maintaining its global standards.

The bank's approach to solving the KYC challenge in India through biometric validation at Café Coffee Day outlets demonstrated its ability to meet regulatory requirements through innovative partnerships

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**Proactive Regulatory Engagement**

DBS engaged proactively with regulators in different markets to ensure partnership models were compliant before full-scale implementation.

**6. Ecosystem Partner Due Diligence**

**Comprehensive Vetting**

Before entering partnerships, DBS conducted thorough due diligence on potential partners' financial stability, technical capabilities, security practices, and regulatory compliance.

**Ongoing Monitoring**

The bank implemented continuous monitoring of partner performance and risk profiles to identify emerging issues before they became significant problems.

**7. Contractual Protections**

**Clear Accountability**

Partnership agreements clearly defined responsibilities, liabilities, and recourse in case of security breaches, data misuse, or performance issues.

**Exit Strategies**

DBS ensured that partnership agreements included well-defined exit strategies that would minimize disruption to customer service if partnerships needed to be terminated.

**8. Risk-Aware Culture Development**

**Employee Training**

DBS trained employees on recognizing and managing the specific risks associated with different types of partnerships.

**Risk Awareness in Innovation**

The bank integrated risk considerations into its innovation processes, ensuring that hackathons and other innovation initiatives remained within appropriate risk parameters.

**9. Balanced Approach to Risk and Innovation**

**Calculated Risk-Taking**

In line with its start-up culture, DBS fostered "experimentation, innovation, and agile and calculated risk-taking"

, ensuring that partnership risks were taken deliberately rather than recklessly.

**Learning from Experience**

DBS applied lessons from each partnership to improve its risk management approach over time, demonstrating a learning organization mindset.

## DBS Case Study: Technological Innovations

### What technological innovations did DBS implement during its digital transformation?

**Core Technology Infrastructure**

**Cloud Migration**

* Moved from legacy systems to cloud-native infrastructure, reducing physical data server footprint by 75% while enabling 10x excess capacity to scale
* Focused on being "cloud to the core" rather than applying "cloud lipstick," achieving significant operational cost savings

**Insourcing and Technology Ownership**

* Reversed the previous model where 85% of technology was outsourced to achieve 90% self-managed technology by 2018
* Built internal capabilities to design, build, run, and operate all technology systems

**DevOps Implementation**

* Introduced DevOps principles for nimble and appropriate responses to incremental feedback for new products
* Achieved nearly 100% automated testing and deployment, dramatically reducing manual work and time to market

**Digital Banking Platforms**

**Digibank India**

* Launched India's first mobile-only bank in April 2016
* Created a "branchless, paperless, and signatureless" banking experience
* Implemented biometric authentication using the government's Aadhar identity system

**Digibank Indonesia**

* Launched in November 2018 with ride-hailing service GOJEK as its ecosystem partner
* Adapted the digital banking model to the specific needs and regulations of the Indonesian market

**Mobile Payment Solutions**

* Introduced 'DBS PayLah!' in May 2014, a mobile wallet app enabling peer-to-peer payments via mobile phone numbers
* Enhanced with QR code scanning capabilities for cashless payments in December 2018

**iWealth Platform**

* Rolled out the iWealth app for priority and private banking clients in February 2017
* Enabled clients to access investment portfolios at a glance and customize reporting according to their preferences

**Data and Analytics Innovations**

**Analytics Infrastructure**

* Shifted focus from "Big Data" to "Big Analytics," prioritizing the insights that could be derived from data
* Developed infrastructure for AI, machine learning, and GPU (Graphical Process Units), with secure data warehousing

**Real-time Dashboards**

* Replaced traditional slide decks with dynamic dashboards for reporting and performance tracking
* Connected scorecards to business and department dashboards for continuous monitoring
* Enabled data visualization and drill-down capabilities to transaction level for better decision-making

**Predictive Analytics Models**

* Implemented models to predict customer behaviors, such as when a salesperson might leave the bank or when customers might call the contact center
* Applied analytics to understand and optimize "digital value capture" from digitally active customers

**Artificial Intelligence and Automation**

**AI-Driven Virtual Assistants**

* Deployed AI virtual assistants (chatbots) for customer service, particularly in digibank India
* Developed self-learning systems capable of understanding natural language and answering 10,000+ customer questions in real-time

**Robotic Process Automation**

* Partnered with IBM in 2017 for Robotic Process Automation, creating the first large-scale implementation in financial services in the region
* Automated routine tasks to increase efficiency and reduce errors

**AI-Powered Recruitment**

* Implemented "Jim" (Jobs Intelligence Maestro), Southeast Asia's first virtual bank recruiter
* Used AI to automate pre-screening, save time, and enable 24/7 interaction with job applicants
* Improved hiring quality and reduced turnover rates

**API and Ecosystem Technologies**

**API Platform**

* Launched the world's largest banking API platform in November 2017 with 200+ APIs and 80+ partners, expanding to 450+ APIs by August 2019
* Enabled seamless integration with external partners and rapid scaling of new product and service offerings

**Digital Marketplaces**

* Created marketplaces for cars, property, and electricity in 2018
* Developed integrated platforms where customers could complete entire transactions, not just the banking portions

**Treasury Prism**

* Introduced the world's first online treasury and cash management simulation tool for institutional customers in October 2017
* Provided benefits and costs of different cash management structures, including relevant regulations and tax considerations

**Smart Banking Solutions**

**POSB Smart Buddy Programme**

* Launched smartwatch technology enabling parents to teach children about digital payments and money management
* Created an innovative tool for tracking children's eating and spending habits

**Budget Optimizer**

* Integrated intelligent budget optimization tools into digibank that helped customers budget, track expenses, and analyze purchasing trends
* Developed smart capabilities to understand customer behavior and provide personalized recommendations

**Cybersecurity and Risk Technologies**

**Dynamic Embedded Security**

* Implemented embedded soft token security in digibank, eliminating the need for SMS-based one-time passwords while providing stronger security
* Developed continuous authentication systems to enhance security while improving user experience

**Data-Driven Audit Innovations**

* Implemented technologies to analyze 100% of available audit data rather than random sampling
* Used machine learning to audit bank branches, detect patterns, and identify higher-risk branches for more efficient resource allocation

### How did these innovations contribute to DBS's goal of becoming a '22,000-person start-up'?

**1. Democratizing Innovation and Experimentation**

**Hackathons and Innovation Events**

* The bank organized hackathons where employees joined with external coders and entrepreneurs to solve real business problems in three-day design sessions
* By 2018, around 15,000 employees had been involved in at least one innovation project, spreading the start-up mindset across the organization

**Lowering Barriers to Experimentation**

* The implementation of DevOps and automated testing (reaching nearly 100% automated deployment)

 made it easier and less risky for employees to experiment with new ideas

* This rapid testing capability mirrored how start-ups quickly iterate on products based on customer feedback

**"Dare to Fail" Recognition**

* The bank created a "Dare to Fail award" to recognize employees who tried innovative approaches even if they weren't successful
* This institutionalized the start-up philosophy that failure is an acceptable part of innovation

**2. Cultivating Agility and Speed**

**Shift from "Control to Context"**

* The move away from bureaucratic committees freed employees to make decisions more quickly, similar to how start-ups operate
* Platform teams were given funding and autonomy to deliver outcomes without micromanagement, fostering entrepreneurial thinking

**Meeting MoJo**

* The introduction of "Meeting MoJo" doubled meeting effectiveness and promoted equal share of voice
* This approach disrupted traditional corporate meeting culture and created more start-up-like communication patterns

**Agile Development Methods**

* By implementing agile methodologies, DBS teams could respond quickly to market conditions and customer feedback
* Even traditionally conservative departments like Audit adopted "agile auditing," bringing start-up practices to unexpected areas of the bank

**3. Developing a Data-Driven Culture**

**Real-time Dashboards**

* Replacing slide decks with dynamic dashboards empowered employees with data for decision-making
* This data transparency and accessibility reflected start-up practices of making information widely available for rapid decision-making

**Data-Driven Decision Making**

* The bank created a data-first culture where employees used analytics rather than relying on "who talks loudest in a meeting"
* This approach challenged traditional hierarchical decision-making in favor of evidence-based choices

**Data Translators**

* DBS created "data translators" who bridged data science and business needs
* This role enabled more employees to leverage data in their day-to-day work, similar to how start-ups make data accessible to all team members

**4. Building a Learning Organization**

**DigiFY Platform**

* The mobile and online platform provided fundamental digital training to transform traditional bankers into "digital bankers"
* This continuous learning approach mirrored how start-ups constantly upskill their employees

**Simplified Learning Approvals**

* The bank eliminated approval requirements for any skills training course less than S$500, removing bureaucratic barriers to learning
* This policy encouraged employees to autonomously pursue knowledge, similar to start-up cultures where learning is self-directed

**Reverse Mentoring**

* Leaders participated in reverse mentoring where they learned from employees in one-on-one settings
* This practice broke down traditional hierarchies and created bidirectional learning opportunities typical of start-up environments

**5. Enhancing Customer-Centricity**

**Customer Journey Mapping**

* The adoption of customer journey thinking encouraged employees to empathize with customers by identifying the "job to be done"
* This customer-obsessed approach reflected start-up methodologies like design thinking

**4D Design Process**

* The implementation of the 4D process—Discover, Define, Develop, and Deliver—created a structured approach to innovation
* This methodology gave employees a common language and process for addressing customer pain points, similar to lean start-up methodologies

**API-Powered Innovation**

* The API platform with 450+ APIs enabled employees to quickly create new customer solutions without rebuilding fundamental technology
* This approach mirrored how tech start-ups leverage existing APIs to rapidly deliver new services

**6. Redefining Physical and Digital Workspaces**

**JoySpace Implementation**

* Traditional audit offices were transformed into "JoySpaces" or activity-based workspaces with open plans
* These collaborative environments were designed to "foster a sense of community and collaboration" similar to start-up workspaces

**Digital Collaboration Tools**

* The implementation of digital tools for collaboration reduced reliance on physical proximity
* These technologies enabled the flexibility and remote work capabilities common in start-up culture

**iTQ (I Thank You) Platform**

* The online peer-to-peer recognition program made it easy to acknowledge colleagues across the bank and across geographies
* This digital recognition system reflected start-up practices of immediate feedback and appreciation

**7. Fostering a "GANDALF" Mindset**

**Tech Company Benchmarking**

* The GANDALF framework encouraged employees to compare themselves to technology companies rather than other banks
* This mindset shift fundamentally changed how employees thought about their work and potential

**ABCDE Culture**

* The ABCDE framework (Agile, Be a learning organization, Customer-obsessed, Data-driven, Experiment and take risks)

 directly mapped to start-up values

* This explicit articulation of desired cultural attributes helped align the entire organization around start-up principles

**"What Would Jeff Do?"**

* The popularization of the question "What would Jeff [Bezos] do?" encouraged employees to think like disruptive tech entrepreneur
* This mental model helped shift decision-making away from traditional banking approaches

### How did DBS foster a culture of innovation within the organization?

**1. Explicit Cultural Framework: ABCDE**

DBS created the ABCDE framework to explicitly define the characteristics of their desired start-up culture

:

* **A**gile: adapt more quickly
* **B**e a learning organization: adopt new ways of approaching the business
* **C**ustomer-obsessed: understand customers' pain points
* **D**ata-driven: use data holistically to transform internal processes
* **E**xperiment and take risks: encourage the 4D process of discover, define, develop and deliver

This framework provided clear guidance on the behaviors and mindsets expected throughout the organization.

**2. Leadership Commitment and Role Modeling**

**CEO Personal Involvement**

* CEO Piyush Gupta personally reviewed each new project or program every few months
* Senior management dedicated significant time to innovation; at the 2015 strategy planning off-site, an entire day and a half of the two-day event was devoted to training senior managers on customer journey thinking

**Leadership Accountability**

* Each leader was required to adopt a customer journey and present their plans for digitalizing their business lines, with this included in their KPIs
* The Balanced Scorecard allocated 20% weight to "Making Banking Joyful" initiatives, ensuring leadership focus

**3. Innovation Programs and Platforms**

**Hackathons**

* Organized company-wide hackathons where employees joined with external coders and entrepreneurs to form teams for intensive three-day design sessions
* Created special hackathons targeting specific groups, such as employees over 40, to demonstrate that innovation was for everyone

**Customer Journey Initiatives**

* Initiated 250 customer journeys in 2015, expanding to 600 end-to-end customer journey processes by 2018
* Used these journeys to identify pain points and create innovative solutions for customers

**4D Design Process**

* Implemented the "4D Framework" (Discover, Define, Develop and Deliver) to provide a structured approach to innovation
* This methodology helped employees systematically address customer needs through research, design, development, and delivery

**4. Celebrating and Rewarding Innovation**

**"Dare to Fail" Award**

* Created a specific award to recognize employees who tried innovative approaches, even if they were unsuccessful
* This sent a powerful signal that taking calculated risks was valued and expected

**Public Recognition**

* Early innovation successes were given positive recognition and mentioned at town hall meetings
* The "iTQ" (I Thank You) online peer-to-peer recognition program made it easy to acknowledge innovative work across the organization

**5. Removing Barriers to Innovation**

**Addressing Blockers**

* Identified and systematically removed obstacles to innovation, such as inefficient meetings
* Implemented "Meeting MoJo" to double meeting effectiveness by assigning clear roles (Mo as meeting owner, Jo as joyful observer) and ensuring equal voice for all participants

**Simplifying Approvals**

* Shifted from controlling through committees to providing context and autonomy
* Eliminated approval requirements for skills training courses under S$500 to encourage continuous learning

**6. Cross-Functional Collaboration**

**"Two in a Box" Model**

* Paired technology and business leaders to collaborate with shared KPIs
* Implemented the philosophy that "business equals technology; technology equals business" to break down silos

**Collaborative Workspaces**

* Transformed traditional offices into "JoySpaces" or activity-based workspaces with open plans to foster community and collaboration
* Designed physical environments to encourage spontaneous interaction and idea exchange

**7. Building Innovation Capabilities**

**DigiFY Platform**

* Created a mobile and online platform to provide fundamental digital training and transform traditional bankers into "digital bankers"
* After completing training in seven key areas, bankers were certified and equipped to pass knowledge to colleagues

**Data Competency Development**

* Hired data scientists while also reskilling business analysts to work with data more effectively
* Created "data translators" who bridged the gap between data science and business needs

**Reverse Mentoring**

* Established reverse mentoring where leaders learned from employees, providing opportunities to understand different areas of the business and ask questions in a one-on-one setting

**8. Creating a New Mindset**

**GANDALF Framework**

* Introduced the GANDALF concept (inspired by Google, Amazon, Netflix, Apple, LinkedIn, and Facebook) to set a goal for DBS to be the 'D' among global technology giants
* Encouraged employees to ask "What would Jeff [Bezos] do?" to think like a technology company rather than a traditional bank

**Challenging Traditional Banking Paradigms**

* Shifted from "Living, Breathing Asia" to "Live More, Bank Less" to reflect the goal of making banking invisible for customers
* Reoriented thinking from selling financial products to embedding in customer journeys

**9. Measurement and Accountability**

**Digital Scorecards**

* Developed specific metrics to track digital transformation progress
* Created the ATE (later EATE) framework to measure Acquire, Transact, Engage, and Ecosystems activities

**Data-Driven Dashboards**

* Replaced traditional slide decks with dynamic dashboards that allowed for real-time tracking and accountability
* Enabled drill-down to product, customer, or transaction level for better decision-making

**10. Widespread Participation**

**Broad Employee Engagement**

* By 2018, around 15,000 employees (more than half the workforce) had been involved in at least one innovation project
* Innovation was positioned as everyone's responsibility, not just a specialized function

**Setting a Low Bar for Entry**

* As Paul Cobban, Chief Data and Transformation Officer, noted, they asked people to "put the 't' in transformation by setting the bar very low for them to be able to participate"
* This approach made innovation accessible to all employees regardless of role or experience

## ING Case Study: Strategic Planning

### What were the key strategic decisions that guided ING's digital transformation?

Significant Investment in Digital Transformation: ING decided to invest €800 million in continued digital transformation to improve customer experience and accelerate growth.

Integrated Digital Platform: The strategic goal was to enhance customer experience via an integrated digital platform that catered to all financial needs, emphasizing tools for financial planning and decision-making.

Customer-Centric Focus: ING aimed to engage clients through their new necessities and digital habits, striving for an "anytime, anywhere" service with clear, simple processes.

Learning from and Competing with Fintechs: ING recognized fintech companies as both competition and a source of learning, planning to incorporate lessons from these digital-native organizations.

Talent and Technology-Driven Approach: The bank acknowledged the need to attract technological talent to deliver a differentiated digital banking experience.

### How did ING's shift from a traditional banking model to a tech-driven one influence its strategic planning?

From Product to Experience: ING shifted its focus from specific banking products to the overall customer experience, emphasizing instant, personal, and frictionless service.

Strategic Talent Acquisition: Strategic planning began to prioritize hiring digital and technological talent rather than traditional banking expertise.

Emphasis on Agility: ING recognized the importance of agility to respond to rapid technological change; planning became more adaptive and innovation-driven

### What challenges did ING face in implementing its strategic plan and how did it overcome them?

**Challenges:**

* **Complex Regulatory Environment:** ING had to balance innovation with compliance across diverse regulatory regimes

.

* **Customer Trust & Commoditization:** Trust in legacy banks was declining, and digital convenience was making products less differentiated, increasing customer churn

.

* **Workforce Impact:** Reduced reliance on branches and automation threatened jobs, risking reputational damage in core markets

.

**How Challenges Were Overcome:**

* **Regulatory Engagement:** ING adapted to regulatory demands by designing digital solutions compliant with local and international rules

.

* **Strategic Communication:** The bank emphasized its customer-centric digital mission to build trust and differentiate itself from both legacy and fintech rivals

.

* **Reskilling and Change Management:** ING invested in talent acquisition and reskilling to foster adaptability within the workforce

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## ING Case Study: Ecosystem Partnerships

### What partnerships did ING establish in its digital transformation journey?

The supplied content does not provide specific details about particular external partnerships ING established. However, it mentions interactions and learning from fintech companies and broader industry engagement (for instance, learning from tech-sector giants and cross-industry collaboration), as well as pilot initiatives similar to regulatory "Project Innovate" from the FCA in the UK.

### How did these partnerships contribute to the success of ING's digital transformation?

* **Learning and Adapting:** Partnerships or benchmarking against fintechs and regulatory innovators provided ING with insights and potential best practices for digital transformation.
* **Industry Collaboration:** Engagement with regulatory projects in other countries served as models for balancing innovation and compliance.

### How did ING manage the risks associated with these partnerships?

* **Regulatory Vigilance:** ING ensured all digital innovations and possible partnerships complied with varying regulatory environments across countries.
* **Incremental Rollout & Testing:** By piloting solutions (e.g., "My Money Coach" in Spain and similar tools elsewhere), ING could manage risks by refining strategies before large-scale launches.

## ING Case Study: Technological Innovations

### What technological innovations did ING implement during its digital transformation?

* **Digital Advisory Tools:** Launch of tools like "My Money Coach" for personalized digital financial guidance.
* **Advanced Data Analytics:** Deployment of analytics-based lending applications that fast-tracked customer loan approvals.
* **Cross-Border Digital Banking:** Expansion of "InsideBusiness," a digital wholesale banking platform offering real-time financial management.
* **Unified Digital Banking Platforms:** Movement towards merging different country platforms into a single digital, scalable banking infrastructure.

### How did these innovations contribute to ING's goal of becoming a tech-driven company?

* **Increased Digital Interactions:** By 2016, 98% of retail customer contact occurred via digital channels, with mobile interactions growing over 50% year-on-year—showing rapid adoption and success.
* **Customer Empowerment & Engagement:** Tools and platforms improved customer decision-making, fostering deeper engagement and satisfaction.
* **Scalability and Efficiency:** The unified digital infrastructure reduced operating costs and enabled faster roll-out of new products.

1. Enhancement of Customer Experience

By shifting to digital-first platforms—such as mobile banking, advanced online interfaces, and integrated digital advice tools like “My Money Coach”—ING provided services that were instant, personal, frictionless, and relevant. This digital engagement reflected the type of user experiences provided by tech giants, positioning ING alongside leading technology-driven companies rather than traditional banks.

2. Scalability and Efficiency

Through the development and merger of digital platforms across multiple countries into a single, scalable infrastructure, ING reduced redundancy and operational costs. This allowed them to rapidly roll out innovations and achieve efficiency similar to what is observed in top-tier technology companies.

3. Data-Driven Decision Making

ING leveraged advanced analytics for tasks like customer lending approvals, enabling real-time, automated decisions. This automation not only improved speed and accuracy but also mirrored the data-driven operational models popular in technology firms.

4. Omni-Channel and Mobile-First Strategy

The bank’s platforms enabled nearly all customer contacts (98%) to occur via digital channels, with mobile interactions alone increasing by more than 50% year-on-year. This reflects a true tech-company mindset, where seamless digital engagement is central.

5. Continuous Learning and Agility

By learning from fintech competitors and fostering a culture of agile, iterative improvement, ING incorporated the experimental, innovative culture found in top technology firms. This made possible the rapid introduction and evolution of new products and services in response to customer feedback and emerging technology.

6. Talent Transformation

ING’s emphasis on recruiting tech talent and reskilling existing staff to work in technology-focused roles helped it build core competencies similar to those of leading tech companies, ensuring innovation could be sustained from within.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Summary | |
| Innovation | Contribution to Tech-Driven Goal |
| Integrated Digital Platforms | Customer-centric, scalable delivery |
| Mobile and Online Tools | Enabled instant, 24/7 engagement |
| Advanced Data Analytics | Automated, real-time decision-making |
| Omni-Channel, Unified Digital Infrastructure | Consistent tech-experience globally |
| Culture of Iteration and Tech Talent | Sustained internal innovation |

### How did ING foster a culture of innovation within the organization?

* **Leadership Vision:** CEO Ralph Hamers promoted the mindset of ING as a "tech company with a banking license".
* **Emphasis on Talent & Technology:** The bank prioritized technological know-how over product knowledge, hiring and rewarding tech talent.
* **Learning from Fintech:** ING actively learned from fintech competitors, fostering an open, adaptive, and learning-oriented culture.
* **Continuous Improvement:** ING institutionalized its promise of "keep getting better," encouraging ongoing innovation and iteration.

Leadership Vision and Messaging:

CEO Ralph Hamers publicly stated that ING aimed “to be a tech company with a banking license,” sending a strong message throughout the organization that technology and innovation were at the core of ING’s future. This vision shifted employees’ mindsets toward continuous innovation and technological adaptation

Emphasizing Customer Experience Over Products:

Hamers highlighted that it was the experience, rather than the banking product itself, that differentiated ING. The focus was on delivering instant, personal, and real-time digital experiences, mirroring what customers expected from other technology leaders. This customer-centric approach encouraged ING teams to think creatively about how technology could improve customer interactions

Investing in Talent and Technology:

Recognizing that digital transformation required new skills, ING focused on attracting and developing tech-savvy talent instead of relying solely on traditional banking expertise. Recruiting, retaining, and reskilling talent with capabilities in technology and innovation became a primary internal priority

Learning from Fintech Competitors:

Rather than viewing fintechs purely as threats, ING sought to learn from these agile competitors. The leadership acknowledged there was “much to learn from these new competitors,” and encouraged teams to adopt fintech mindsets—speed, customer-centricity, and open experimentation

“Keep Getting Better” Promise:

ING institutionalized continuous improvement in its brand values and internal actions. The promise of “keep getting better” encouraged ongoing iteration, experimentation, and openness to new ideas throughout the organization

Digital-First and Agile Methods:

With almost all customer interaction happening through digital channels, ING prioritized digital tools and agile methods, removing barriers to cross-functional collaboration and empowering teams to test new ideas rapidly

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