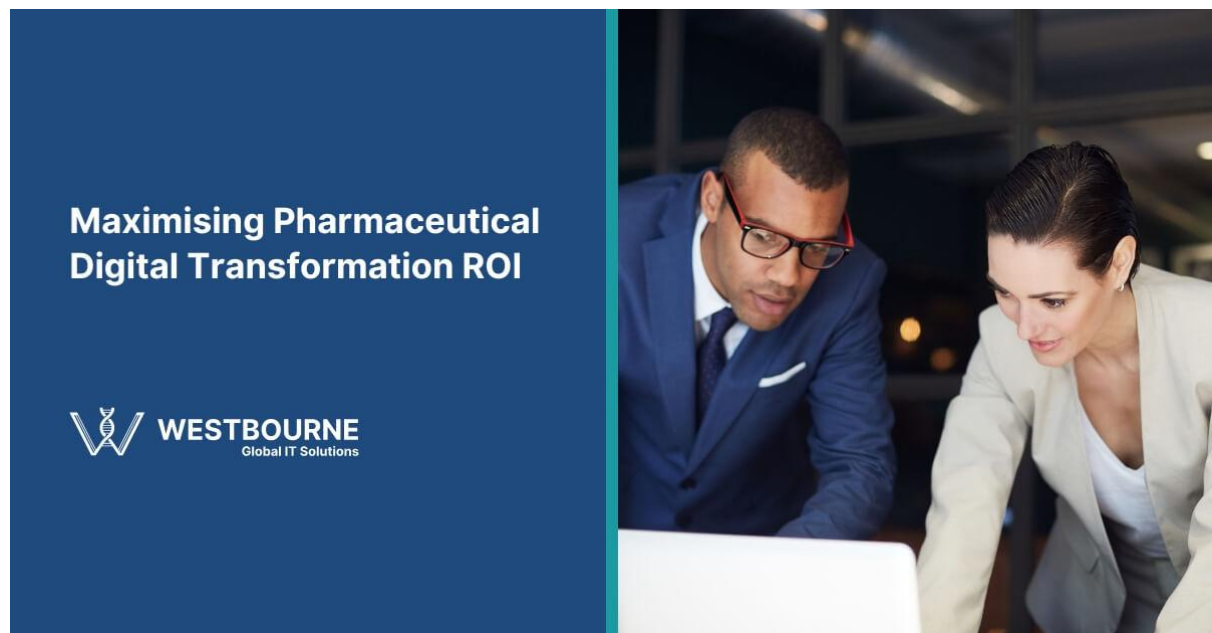# Maximising Pharmaceutical Digital Transformation ROI

Digital transformation is changing the way pharmaceutical companies run their businesses, manufacture products, and develop new therapies and treatments. These changes are positive, but it is essential that modernisation initiatives are justified by maximising ROI.

This requirement for maximum ROI is especially important given the fact that digital transformation in the pharmaceutical industry can't be achieved through one event or project. Instead, digital transformation is a journey, so investment decisions for future projects are dependent, at least in part, on the success of current and past projects.
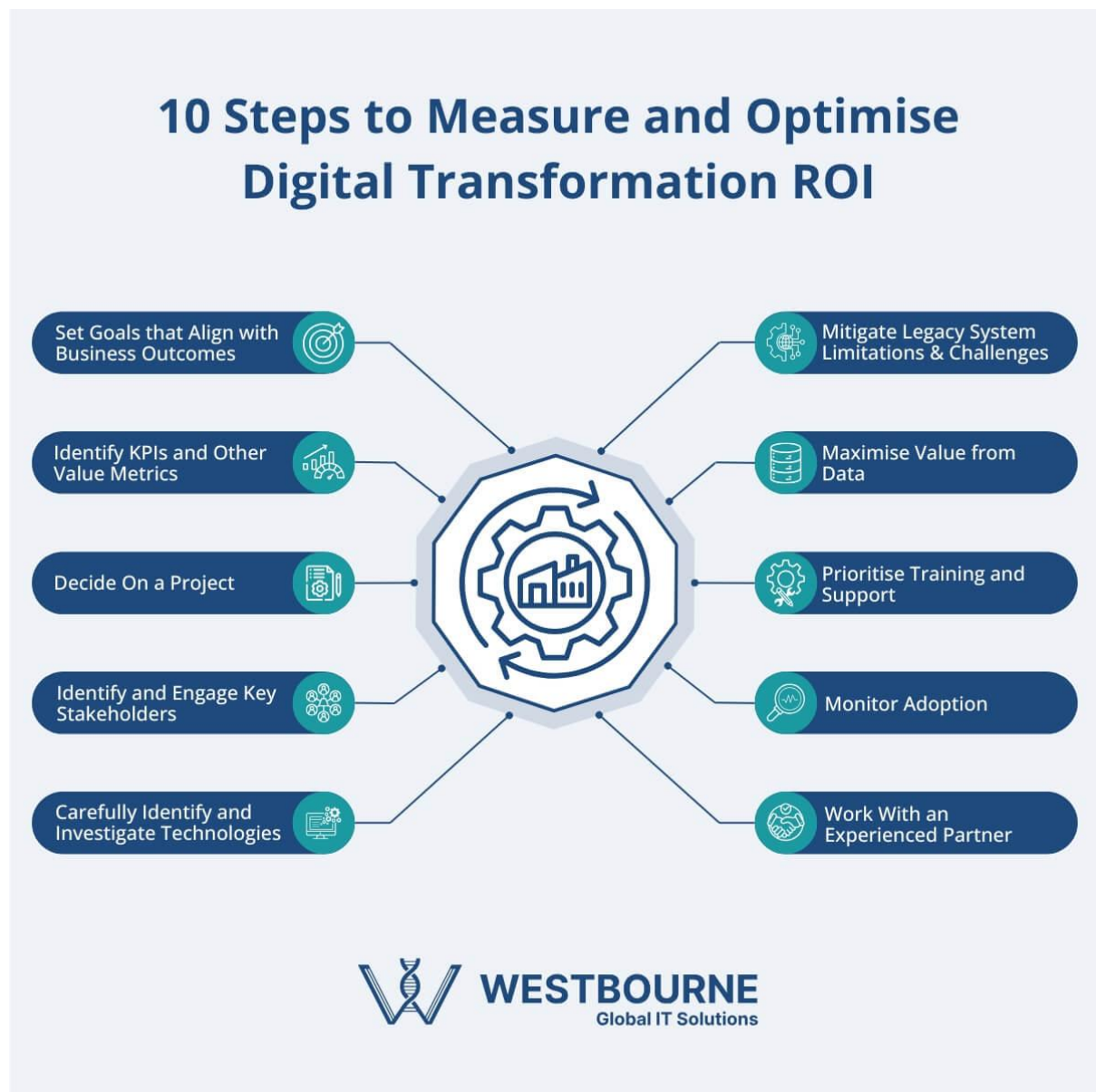
By taking steps to maximise digital transformation ROI, you will not only improve returns today but also improve your technical and business foundations for the future.

What is Digital Transformation ROI?

Pharmaceutical digital transformation ROI is about quantifying the business impacts of digital transformation initiatives. Examples of tangible and measurable impacts include cost savings, productivity gains, and efficiency savings.

While harder to quantify, there are also often other value metrics that are important to consider when assessing the ROI of digital transformation. Enhanced customer satisfaction and improved operational agility are two examples.

10 Steps to Measure and Optimise Digital Transformation ROI

10 Steps to Measure and Optimise Digital Transformation ROI

- Set Goals that Align with Business Outcomes
- Identify KPIs and Other Value Metrics
- Decide On a Project
- Identify and Engage Key Stakeholders
- Carefully Identify and Investigate Technologies
- Mitigate Legacy System Limitations & Challenges
- Maximise Value from Data
- Prioritise Training and Support
- Monitor Adoption
- Work With an Experienced Partner

WESTBOURNE
Global IT Solutions

Set Goals that Align with Business Outcomes

Setting digital transformation goals that align with business outcomes helps at both ends of the project spectrum. At the beginning of the project, setting business-aligned goals helps get buy-in from key decision-makers to ensure projects get the green light. At the other end of the process, business-aligned goals ensure project results deliver meaningful business benefits.

Tips for setting goals that align with business outcomes include:

- Focus on customer and operational pain points.

- Focus on time-consuming and costly manual processes.
- Areas of elevated risk are often another key focus area.
- Set realistic timescales within which ROI will be assessed.

Identify KPIs and Other Value Metrics

Identify essential KPIs (such as OEE and productivity) as well as value metrics like streamlined compliance as early in the process as possible. It is also important to determine how you will measure KPIs and value metrics, including those that are more subjective than objective.

Decide On a Project

The next digital transformation project to invest in is a big decision, regardless of the size or level of financial investment. Tips to help you select the next project include:

- Think about the customers and patients that use your products in addition to operational considerations.
- Start with a pilot project where lessons can be learned and concepts proven.
- Focus on achieving small wins that can be built on with future projects.
- Avoid FOMO – the fear of missing out. Just because other pharmaceutical organisations are going down a certain digital transformation path doesn't mean it will be the right decision for your organisation. The focus should always be on business goals, customers, and patients.

Identify and Engage Key Stakeholders

Imposing a new solution without collaboration is a fast track to failure as there are countless pitfalls.

On the flip side, identifying and then ensuring there is quality engagement with key stakeholders will help you overcome resistance to change. Those developing the solution will also get a better understanding of what needs to be done and how to do it.

Key stakeholders include senior management as well as the technicians and operators with the most knowledge and experience of not just workflows and processes, but also limitations and challenges.

Engaging key stakeholders facilitates collaborative decision-making that focuses on business goals while taking into account the opinions and experiences of those closest to the action.

Importantly, stakeholder engagement should not be a one-time activity. Instead, it should be ongoing throughout the entire process.

Carefully Identify and Investigate Technologies

There will almost always be a choice of technologies and solutions to implement as part of your digital transformation project. It is important that technologies are properly identified, investigated, tested, and compared.

It is beneficial to work with an experienced, technology-neutral partner. We take this approach at Westbourne when supporting our pharmaceutical industry customers in the delivery of digital transformation projects. With our expertise and technology-neutral approach, we can give expert, impartial advice with clear business, operational, and technical rationales for the recommendations we make.

Identify and Mitigate Legacy System Limitations and Challenges

Integrating legacy systems can be challenging. Therefore, it's important to identify all legacy systems and assess to what extent they can be integrated into the solution. Where significant limitations exist, workarounds should be investigated, including replacing the legacy system if that is a feasible approach.

Maximise Value from Data

The steps outlined in this blog are all about maximising digital transformation ROI. Therefore, it's important to avoid collecting data because it can be collected as doing so is unlikely to benefit ROI and could even be costly.

The focus should instead be on collecting and using useful data. It is also important to ensure data integrity.
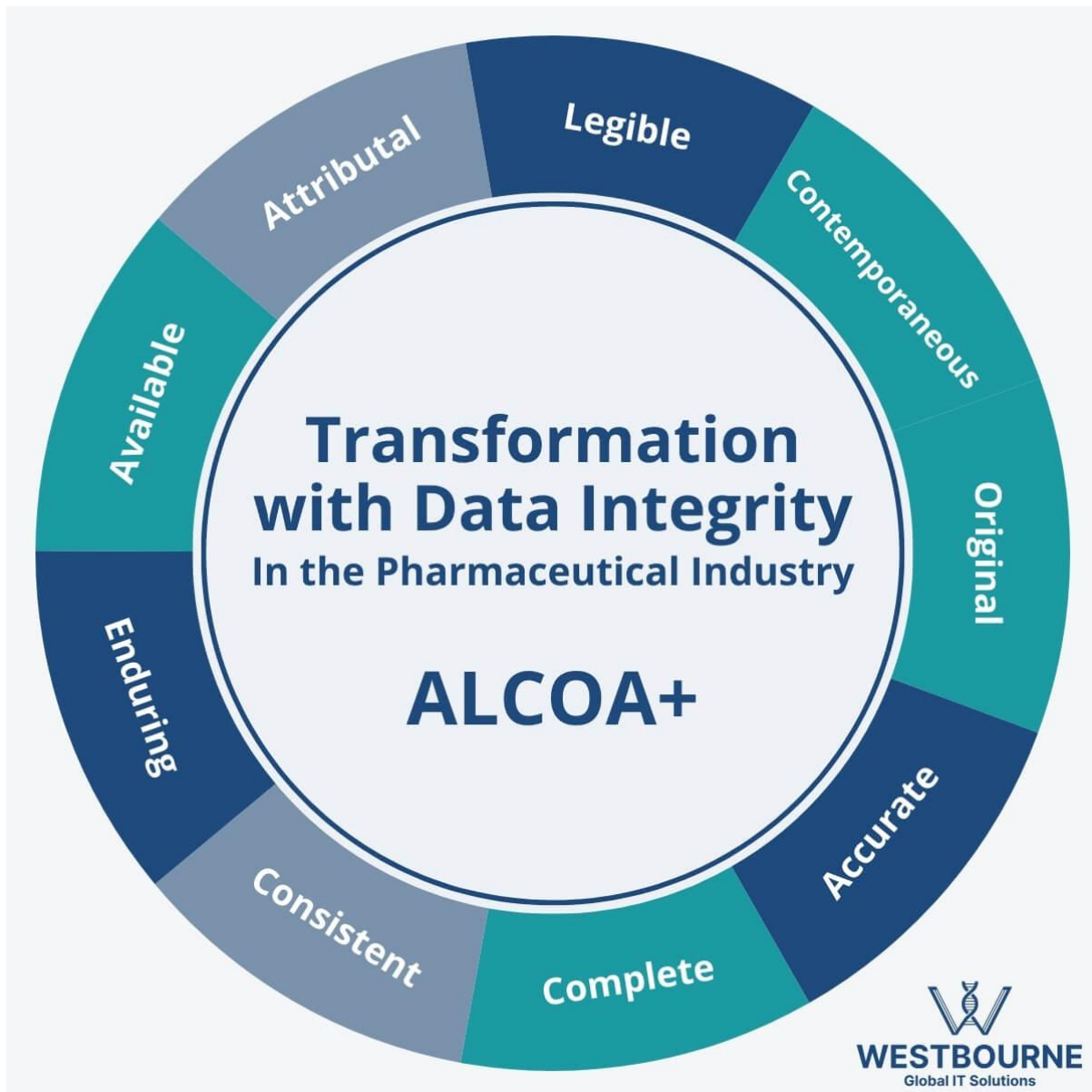
Quality and patient health must be at the centre of all digital transformation projects in the pharmaceutical industry. The principles of ALCOA+ (see image above) should be adhered to when conducting digital transformation projects within a regulatory environment, ensuring projects conform to 21 CFR Part 11 and EU Annex 11.

Prioritise Training and Support

The success of most digital transformation projects hinges on user adoption and the confidence, competence, and capabilities of users. As a result, training and ongoing support are essential for maximising ROI.

Monitor Adoption

It is also important to monitor adoption to ensure the new workflows and technologies are being used and not bypassed. Where issues are identified, investigate them and develop solutions with the involvement of key stakeholders.

Work With an Experienced Partner

Our final recommended step is to make sure you engage an experienced digital transformation partner to support your project. Ideally, the [digital transformation partner should have pharmaceutical industry experience](), and they should take a consultancy-led approach where the partner provides advice and guidance to minimise risk.

At Westbourne, we offer digital transformation consultancy, strategy development, and implementation services. We also specialise in the pharmaceutical industry, so can provide the support you need. [Get in touch to arrange a consultation]().