

## The business of platforms

The platform business model to survive in an ecosystem driven economy

Article 3: Part B

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# Foreword

In the initial paper of this series we unpacked the core business model archetypes and their strategic nuances. With the significant upside value for organisations to adopt platform business strategies in an ever more globalised economy, an understanding of how these strategies functionally operate becomes paramount.



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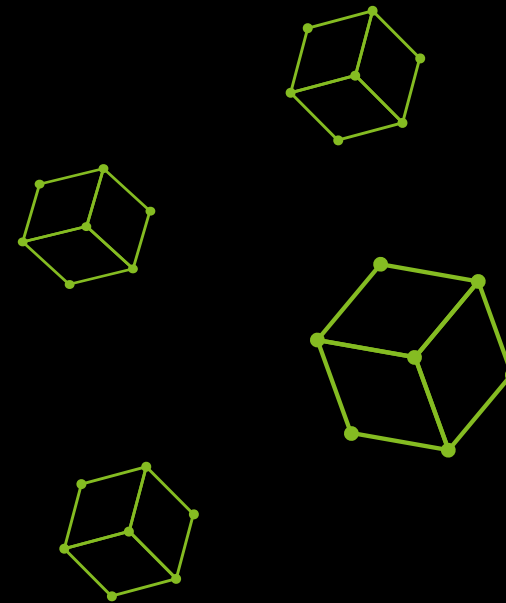


# Introduction

Today time to market and time to change is crucial and this is important throughout the value chain until value is delivered to the customer. The value chain must be in sync to ensure that there is a constant flow moving from the demand all the way to value.

Through this investigative journey, we have noted that there are a few overlapping features of the investigated platform business models. However, with an understanding of the platform archetypes core operational DNA we see that these overlaps are no longer as prominent.

What we can clearly see is that irrespective of the platform business model, each operating construct looks to bring Data and Technology closer to the business and its decision making. Considering this tech/business gap, there are several universal enablers that could be of great benefit during the platform operating model implementation journey.



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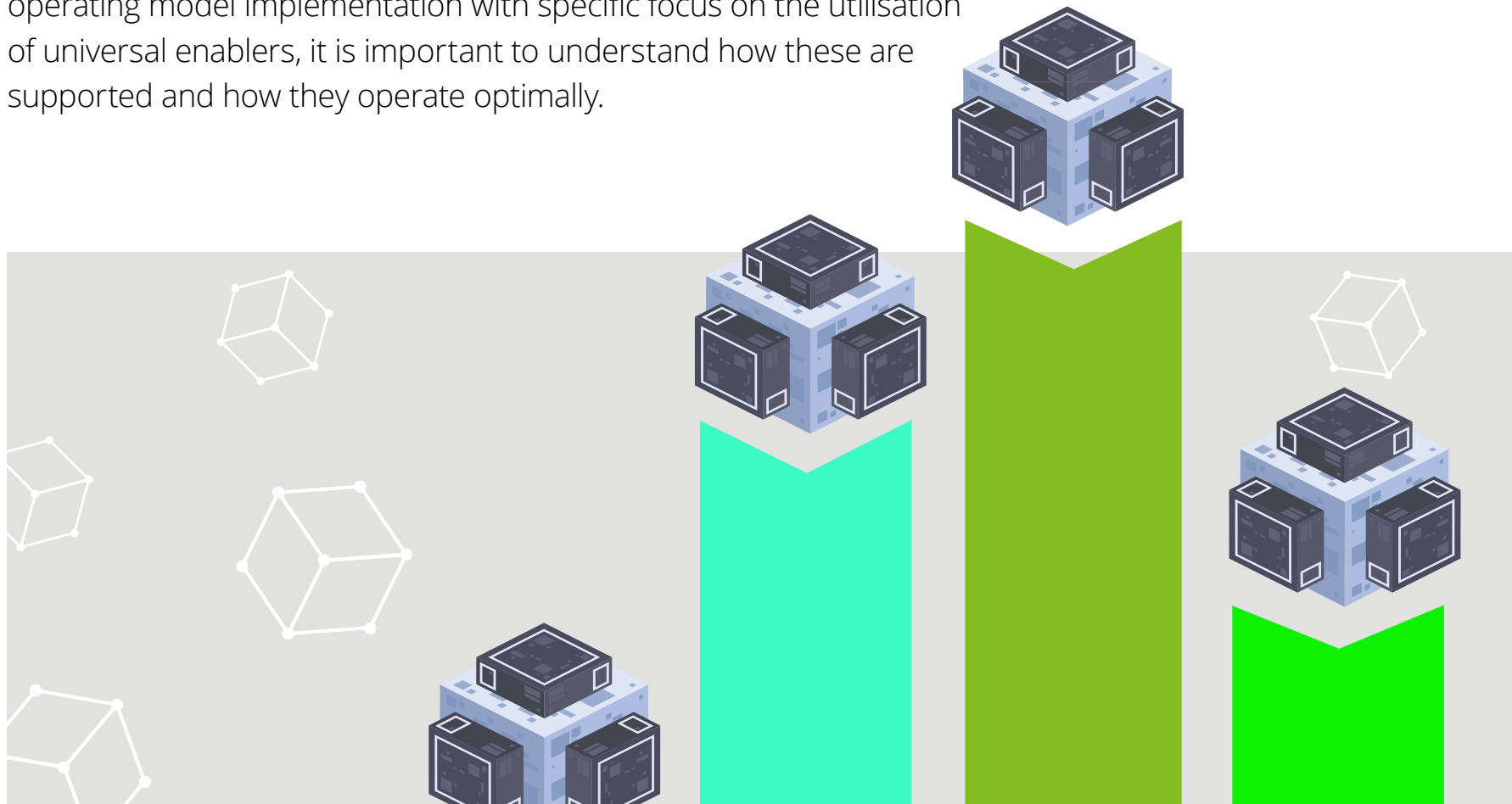
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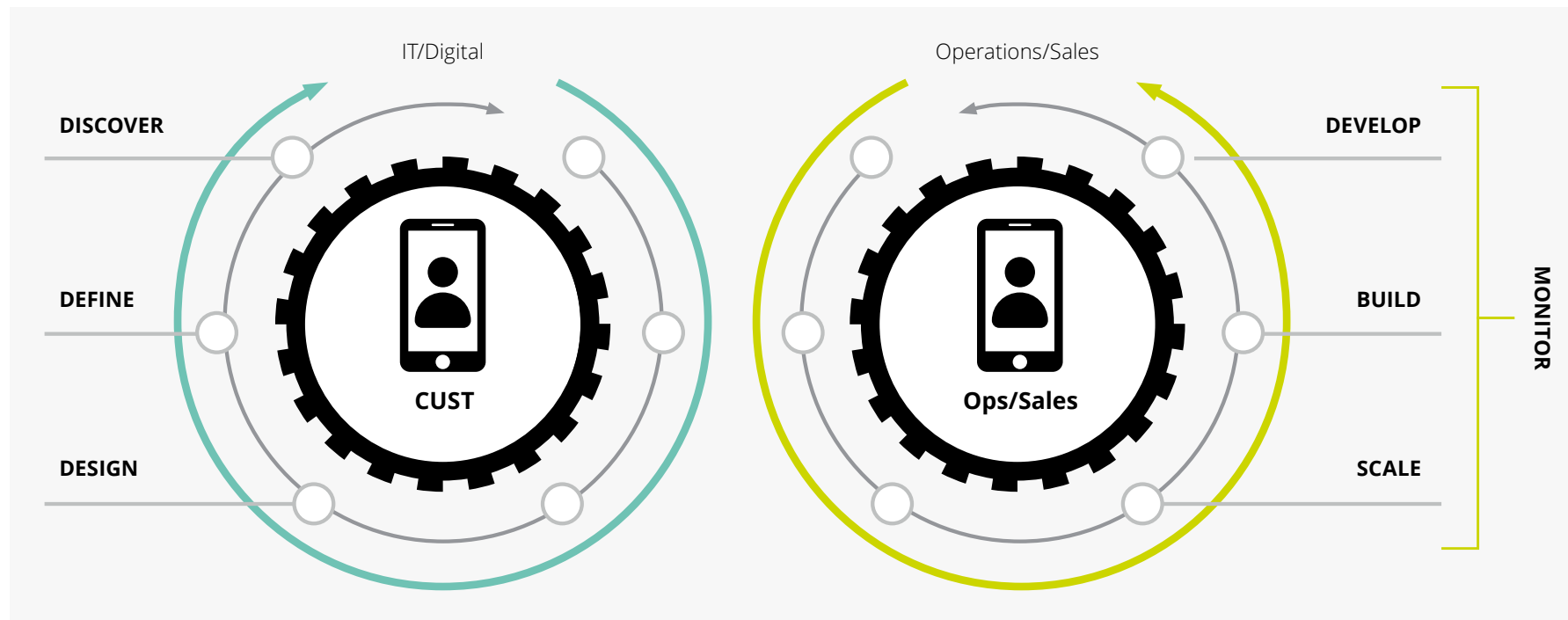
# Supporting, delivering, and growing functions

The identified universal enablers have their own implementation journeys and supporting constructs. Thus, when looking at the platform operating model implementation with specific focus on the utilisation of universal enablers, it is important to understand how these are supported and how they operate optimally.

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# Customer Experience (CX) design

Customer Experience (CX) design aligns directly to the core of all platform operating models namely, the client. This places customer experience as a critical function in the operating model implementation journey.



Utilising an agile-based implementation methodology experience design is the discipline of crafting the “front-stage” experience for a customer/ user and orchestrating the “back-stage” capabilities and activities needed to deliver on that experience. It is inherently holistic and integrates the needs of people, the possibilities of technology, and the requirements for business success to create superior customer experiences and deliver meaningful business outcomes. With platform operating models having varied customer types the experience design approach provides a method to ensure the unique customer requirements are catered for in an agile and effective manner.



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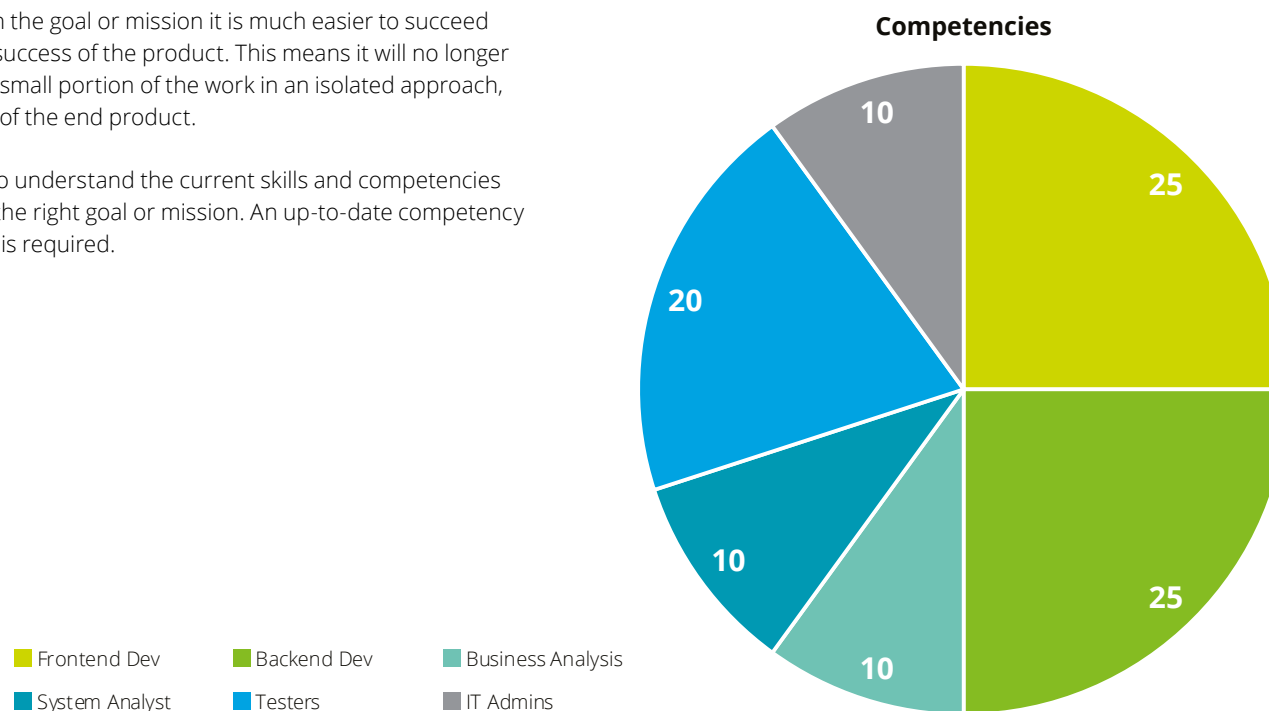


# Mission-based teams

As organisations move away from a “traditional Plan, Build and Run” technology operating model, where most of the capabilities were grouped around specific core skills and specialists to a more product centric focus model where multiskilled teams now take on more responsibility for the products they plan, build, test, deploy and operate. To break down silos there must be a unified focus towards the same goal or mission and teams that will share in the reward.

If everyone in the team has got the same focus on the goal or mission it is much easier to succeed as everyone in the team would contribute to the success of the product. This means it will no longer be a case where teams are only responsible for a small portion of the work in an isolated approach, rarely seeing the completion or even the success of the end product.

To staff the mission-based teams it is important to understand the current skills and competencies within an organisation that could be allocated to the right goal or mission. An up-to-date competency database of the resources within an organisation is required.



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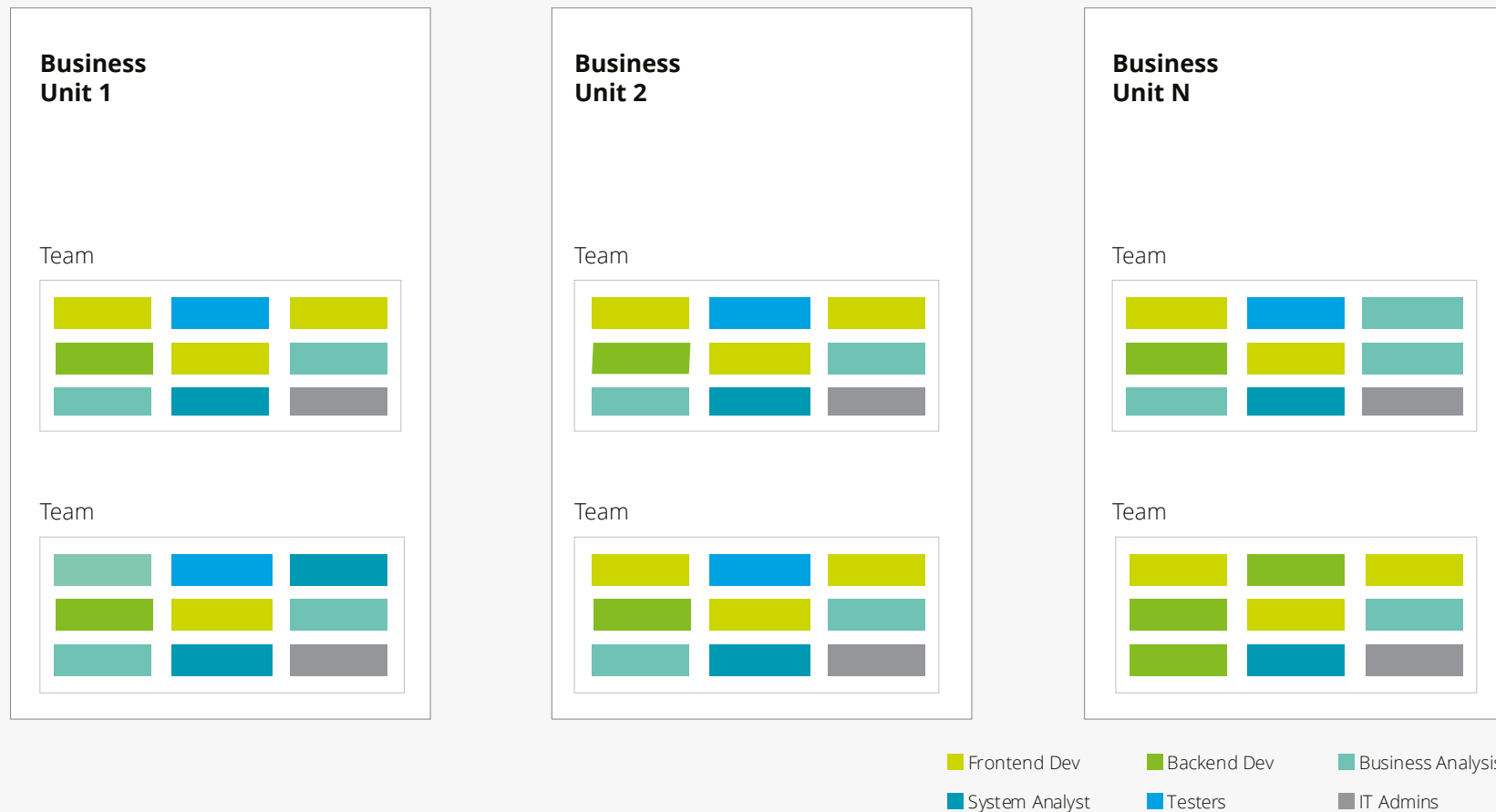
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Once there is an understanding of the required skills and competencies the required roles can now be assigned to a mission or goal based on the business requirement. Not all missions are the same and each mission would require a different mix of competencies to complete the required mission or goal.

Sample initial assignment of available competencies in a new product operating model



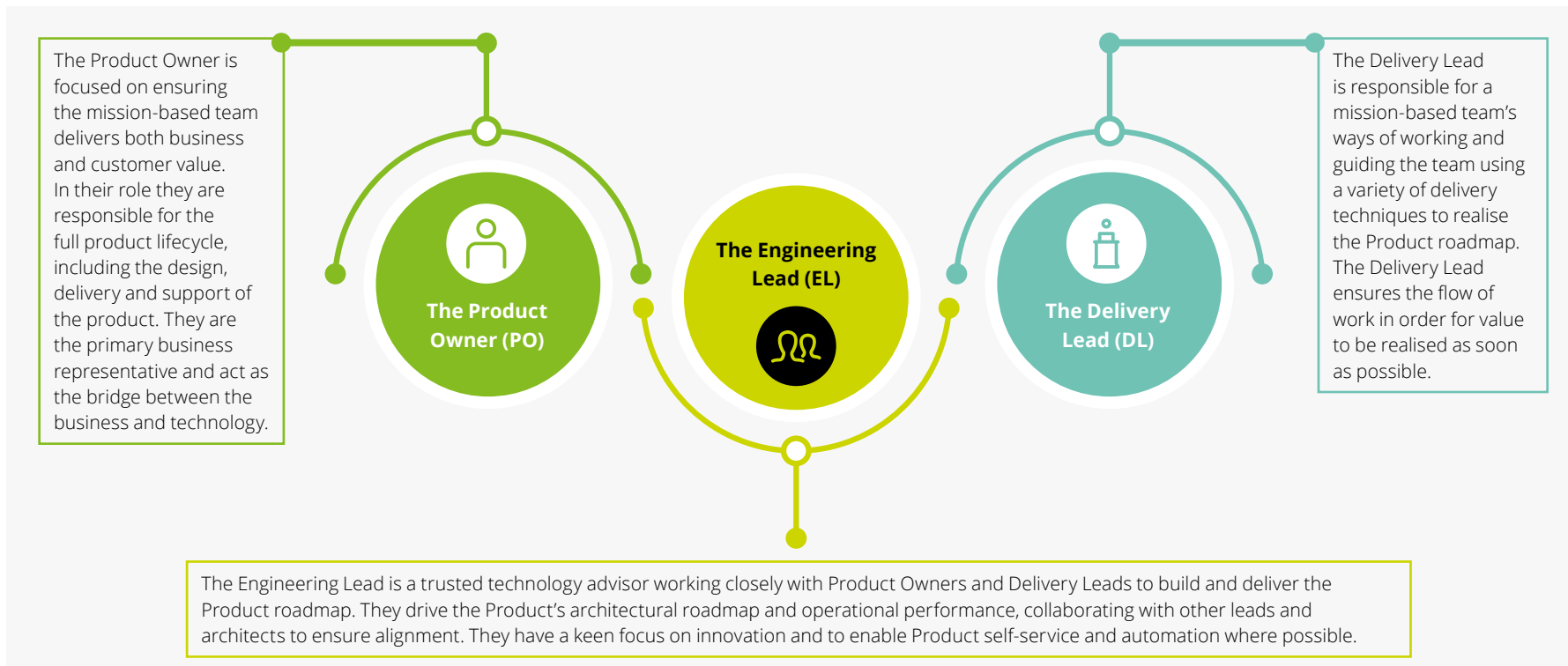
A big shift will require an ongoing process to determine if the organisation has got the right skills and capabilities to execute on the missions which could be on the horizon and if not how to train the required resources or source outside the organisation and would require an up to date “portal” where external resources could be accessed to be assigned to missions or goals.

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# Roles

When organisations adopt a product/platform-based operating model with mission-based teams, there are leadership roles which are critical in ensuring that all product lines and products are led by a joint leadership trio namely: the Product Owner who is responsible for the ownership of the product, the Engineering Lead who is responsible for technical leadership and lastly the Delivery Lead which provides leadership to ensure delivery flows.



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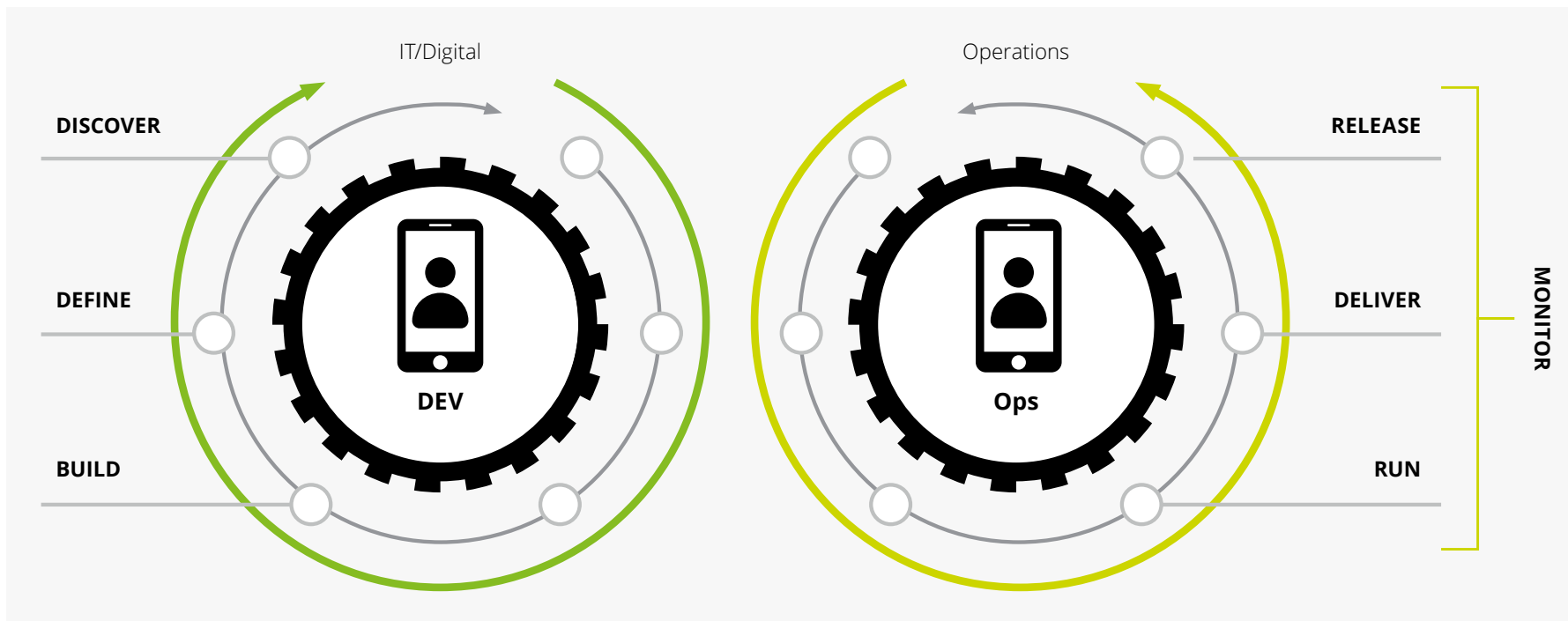
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# DevOps

To achieve a common business goal, a DevOps approach is recommended that aims to improve the flow of value to customers by focusing on the Culture, Automation, Lean, Measuring and the practice of Sharing.



Considering the significant success technology divisions have had through the adoption of the DevOps modality in promoting innovation, rapid changes, and agile ways of working it is plausible to look at this as universally applicable across all the platform business operating models.



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# DataOps

The importance of data has evolved in the shift of technology operating models and data is now seen as “the oil of the digital economy”.

The dependency on data was mostly consumed for reactive reporting with limited insights, and have evolved where data is being used for better predictions (although it is based on data that could be more than a day old) whereas in the product or platform operating model the dependency on real-time data is required for predictive and prescriptive analytics.

By applying the principles of agile and the technologies of DevOps like a Continuous Integration (CI)/Continuous Deployment (CD) pipeline to the data domain will provide organisations with an increase in the flexibility of data and will accelerate time to value as the right decisions can be made through the relevant and up-to-date data.

The majority of organisations have a traditional data integration and partial adoption of agile development and DevOps practices but business require on-demand insights, and traditional delivery models are slow and have challenges in responding to the changing needs which could result in delays in getting the right product/ message delivered to the consumer at the right time and place.

One of the most important goals of DataOps is to alleviate the bottlenecks affecting data and analytics development as well as operations teams, by creating better flow and to ensure quality data that is up-to-date and ready to be consumed by the business through self-service mechanisms. This is a huge shift as the data is readily available to be analysed and manipulated through built-in governance.

As with many emerging practices, DataOps is based on four key areas namely:



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# Maturity – How far on the journey are you?

With an increased focus on customer experience, organisations need to keep up with relevant changes and stay relevant to the market they serve. Those who can adapt to change faster and deliver faster will survive in the digital age.

For organisations to move faster they would need to improve their existing delivery capabilities to ensure better flow between development and operations and ensuring quicker feedback loops to address the backlog and continuously improve responsiveness to new business demands and opportunities.

A clear vision is important to ensure organisations can achieve the benefits of DevOps adoption and mature the right capabilities:

- DevOps adoption is crucial to keep up with an everchanging world and should not be adopted in pockets or silos as it will create a disconnect and the benefits of enterprise transformation will be lost.
- Limited or no end-to-end visibility in development teams hinders DevOps alignment, and good governance would be key to understand how products and features are being planned, built, deployed and the progress in the Software Development Lifecycle (SDLC) process.
- DevOps is so much more than just technology; however, organisations focus more on the technology aspects of development while still maintaining archaic team structures, delivery methodology and alignment with business.

Traditional organisational structures and operating models are not innately collaborative and create many dependencies and complexities when adopting DevOps to increase productivity. To ensure an organisation can accelerate through digital technology where the time to market, time to customer, time to change and speed is crucial from innovation through development and operations until value is delivered to the customer.



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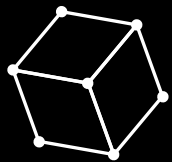


# Conclusion

The approach discussed here provides a high-level view of the key potential enablers across the platform archetypes. This is not an exhaustive listing of capabilities but what is clear is that across all platform operating models data and technology are vital components and critical for the success of these models is the narrowing of the gap between these areas and traditional business areas.

The utilisation of universal enablers to support the narrowing of this tech/business gap, could accelerate your platform implementation journey and provide for a streamlined operation.

Beyond the initial key core capabilities and supporting universal enablers businesses need to unpack the industry specific capabilities to their desired platform future state, by maintaining focus on the client type to which value is being delivered and overlaying industry insights. This approach will allow for a clearer understanding of the capabilities required to support industry specific customer needs. With a more detailed view of the required capabilities needed to deliver your platform business, a clear implementation roadmap will be critical to effectively manage the organisational impacts that the journey will have.



*"It is not the strongest of the species that survives, nor the most intelligent that survives. It is the one that is most adaptable to change."*

– Author unknown



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