THE FACE OF DIGITAL LEADERSHIP

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Alphonzo Samuels
Chief Executive Officer,
Openserve

How would you describe your organization's enterprise-wide digital transformation strategy?
A few years back, we kicked off the initiative by looking at our network, IT platforms and technology ecosystem holistically and initiated a program of moving towards an all IP-led digital platform which enabled an innovative digital business operating model. We immediately unified the IT and networks groups under a single entity to ensure that we start the cultural journey to SDN [software-defined networking] as soon as possible.

What targets does your organization have to guide this strategy?
Cost Transformation: To reduce large capital expenditures, reduce risk of investing in less productive assets and focus on optimizing operating costs.
Agility Improvement: To reduce IT provisioning time significantly and improve process efficiency through standardization.
Innovation: To drive disruptive change in operating and business models, enable entry into new markets or customer segments and create a differentiated technology platform.
Security: To transform IT and network security to protect the ever-increasing threat footprint resulting from the all-IP network and to build security in from the start when designing and implementing SDN.

What are the biggest challenges you face in achieving your digital transformation aims?
There are many challenges that we are actively addressing, such as the significant associated costs, legacy systems and processes (reliance upon and migration plans) as well as dealing with the activation of cultural changes required to support the new way of working. At the heart of any transformation lies the adoption of change.

Leadership is clearly paramount, but what makes a good digital leader?
It is critical to ensure that the digital leader leads by example. A good digital leader has a mindset that thrives on innovation and consistently embraces the need for change. A disruptive digital leader is a risk taker and understands and embraces the idea that uncertainty is inevitable.

In terms of the wider societal impact of digitization, what are you looking forward to over the next decade?
Enablement of the Fourth Industrial Revolution is something that developing markets absolutely need to get right. The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) clearly warns that the digital divide will only widen if developing markets don't seize the opportunities that digitization brings. We are therefore excited, but also understand that we must get this right. It's a call to action that is founded in our desire to develop Africa.

In terms of the wider societal impact of digitization, what concerns you?
Digitalization always raises the concern of privacy of data. Some also view the introduction of the digital era as one that may cause the loss of jobs and create a further divide in society – ongoing dialogue should be encouraged to define the philosophical and societal guiding principles that are required. Digitization also encourages a 'winner takes all' scenario so it's imperative that developing markets keep pace with the Fourth Industrial Revolution.

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