The AWS Partner Transformation Program

Setting the stage to transform your business

By Brian Solis, Digital Analyst and Best-Selling Author
Every business needs partners to succeed. Your customers need you. And we’re here to help you help them. This is a unique B2B2B2C story of empowerment. Amazon Web Services (AWS) accelerates partner transformation and innovation through a customized Partner Transformation Program (PTP). This program accelerates the digital transformation of partner businesses to then serve public sector and commercial companies. The PTP offers a deep-dive, guided review of the partner’s organizational cloud readiness and target state. The resulting “Transformation Plan” offers a customized, detailed roadmap of activities that help partners achieve their goals to build, transform, and optimize their cloud business, boosting their overall AWS business potential.

Every so often, there are major technology waves that disrupt and change the world of business as we know it. Over the last few decades, those waves were periodic, but steady. For those organizations not resolved to dwell in business as usual, gradual improvements would keep them in the game. Everything changed though when we ushered in the 21st century in 2001.

For those who remember contending with the Y2K bug—the switch between 1999 and 2000—it wasn’t just a flaw in dealing with dates. It was a taste of disruption and the beginning of a new millennium in both time and genre. Since 2000, the rise and shifts of Web 1.0, Web 2.0, social media, mobile, and more that have accelerated technology waves and amplified their effects.

New technologies displace previous generations of solutions at a blinding pace. New businesses and models seemingly rise out of nowhere to disrupt incumbents. Legacy experiences, processes, and mindsets are now inhibiting transformation and innovation.

I call this digital Darwinism, the evolution of technologies and organizations as markets and people evolve. It’s how you adapt now and over time that counts for everything. The opportunity here is to adapt your business to then drive the evolution of your customer’s business.

In an era of digital Darwinism, quick wins might buy time, but they’re not going to keep any organization safe or successful between waves. Transformation and innovation are needed to survive and thrive.
The consumerization of technology did more than change how companies work. Social media, smartphones, pervasive and real-time connectivity, hyper-localization, on-demand, and integrated apps and services, card and cashless transactions combined have radically transformed customers and markets. More so, their standards for doing business have also shifted away from more traditional products and services.

Now, customers want the Uber for banks, the Lyft for healthcare, the Airbnb for government programs, and an Amazon for basically everything else. This is digital Darwinism in its rawest sense. The latest technology waves are changing customer preferences and behaviors away from business as usual toward new expectations that weren’t really accounted for on many IT roadmaps. At some point on every horizon, disruption occurs. Oftentimes, reacting to disruption is already too late. This means that your customers need more help than they realize. And, their transformation is dependent on your transformation.

This is why every business needs partners to succeed. Your customers are facing challenges they may not yet realize. And you need an ally to help you modernize your business, too, even if you don’t fully realize it. Modernization is just the beginning. This is about gaining access to insights, skills, and capabilities to help you and your customers thrive against digital Darwinism.

This is the inspiration behind the AWS Partner Transformation Program (PTP). The PTP is a comprehensive assessment, training, and enablement program designed to help cloud technology partners build successful AWS Cloud businesses. The program provides partners working with public sector and commercial companies a highly customized path to accelerate the development of AWS skills and expertise to better serve customers. The needs of commercial and public sector organizations are unique. How we help partners approach each market opportunity is also unique. Through the PTP program, partner businesses, capabilities, and strategies are assessed and a transformation plan is then customized to accelerate their transformation with purpose. When it comes to the public sector specifically, transformation gets an additional layer of specificity. Here, digital transformation is procured differently. The PTP helps partners learn how to gain the necessary competence and develop dedicated business models that account for the unique needs, processes, and the interworking of public services and public enterprises. This includes a comprehensive review of the public sector sales cycle, optimizing for successfully participating in the tender, RFP, and procurement processes, and how to focus services and where to deliver value as they grow.
Digital Transformation is a Gateway to Innovation

Technology, markets, customers, and employees continue to evolve. It’s not enough for businesses to simply keep up.

One of the more prolific (and buzzworthy) business trends now is digital transformation (DX). Digital transformation is one of those terms that’s thrown around quite a bit. But, it doesn’t make it any less consequential in an era of digital Darwinism.

I recently defined digital transformation as the evolving pursuit of innovative and agile business and operational models—fueled by evolving technologies, processes, analytics and talent—to create new value for customers, employees, and stakeholders.

What started as a coordinated series of upgrades to aging technology systems has since evolved to something truly transformative. With the right partners, DX is driving total business transformation. For example, progressive companies are now investing in new agile and cross-functional operational models to more effectively compete. Said another way, digital transformation is directly tied to business modernization powered by the implementation of critical, scalable technologies and innovative leadership.

It’s not just about back office and front office infrastructure. It’s also about how and why businesses compete. Strategic partners are in demand and play a crucial role in helping public sector organizations and commercial customers adapt to how their markets are evolving.
DX strategy is focused on two different but complementary approaches: iteration and innovation. Iteration is employing new technologies and processes to improve existing work. Innovation is doing so to create entirely new value chains for modern markets.

In its “Spectrum of Digital Transformation,” IDC explores a similar perspective. Beyond cloud migrations, digital transformation is organized as two strategic parts (present and future states):

1. **IT-Business Improvement**
   - IT-enabled business processes; automating business processes
   - IT-enabled services; transforming business services

2. **Digital Business Innovation**
   - IT is the product; creating digitally-enabled products and services
   - Platform for the ecosystem; creating new connections and revenue streams

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1. IDC Next-Gen Partnering, Thriving in the Digital Economy,
   Margaret Adam, AWS Partners Summit – Plenary, London, 2019
Exploring present and future states helps partners think differently about their own business and the businesses of their customers. For instance, partners are serving different stakeholders to help customers iterate and innovate as DX matures within the organization. As IDC explains, in the present state, business and technology infrastructure improvement is managed through CIOs with CFOs. IT is focused on transforming and modernizing business processes and services with cost and risk as primary customer KPIs.

In a future state, DX then expands to include digital business innovation. Here, partners are focused on creating digitally-enabled products and services. New revenue streams become primary KPIs. In addition to partnering with CIOs and CFOs to manage evolution in the present state, digital business innovation involves participation from CEOs and CDOs. Managing present and future state programs integrate partners deeply into the C-suite making them invaluable partners.

**Present: IT-Business Improvement**
- Business process automation and transformation (internal)
- Cost and risk (KPIs)
- CFO and CIO (decision makers)

**Future: Digital Business Innovation**
- Innovation and ecosystem (external)
- New revenue streams (KPIs)
- CEO and CDO (stakeholders)
IDC identified three primary challenges that currently hinder the success of digital-enabled business transformation strategy:

- **Skills—expertise shortages within the organization** (33%)
- **Strategy—programs that are too tactical and not strategic enough** (30%)
- **Legacy—overreliance on traditional culture/work practices** (30%)

**Digital Transformation Creates Business Opportunities for Qualified Partners**

Here’s the good news. According to IDC, 57% of businesses want to make better use of external providers to get access to the right skills. Only 11% want to use internal resources for their digital transformation.

Even at 57%, the number of companies that need strategic partners to transform and innovate can only grow. Part of the solution is education. Education starts with partners. They have to understand their customer’s needs and opportunities, especially when customers don’t know what they don’t know to ask for. Partners also have to understand how their knowledge and knowhow compare to their peers to get the benchmarks and training needed to innovate across the spectrum.

Partners face numerous challenges when it comes to helping businesses help themselves. But it really comes down to a common universal truth: executives don’t know what they don’t know. It’s impossible to know what help they need if they don’t fully appreciate the scope, threats, and opportunities inherent in digital Darwinism.

The same universal truth also applies to partners. You don’t know how to add value if you don’t know where value is needed today and what’s possible tomorrow. Partners too must invest in their own growth. For instance, 38% of executives are unsure what real opportunities can be created by undergoing digital transformation.

Part of the story is helping companies adapt and modernize. The other important part is helping executives see what they couldn’t see before. As a strategic business partner, this comes down to how digital drives agility and growth. Partners can help customers push forward in iteration and innovation strategies.
The Partner of the Future Will Help Customers Compete for the Future… Today

There’s opportunity for growth on all fronts. A strategic partner must know how to help customers grow their businesses as markets are shifting. Iteration is the integration of scalable technologies to improve operations and enable new capabilities internally and externally. Innovation then is the result of new technologies combined with new skills, insights, and strategy. Together, they work toward developing best-in-class operational and execution models to transform work and also innovate across customer-facing products and services.

In its report, IDC also shared some insights on this front. The partner of the future is one who can help with the critical migration of infrastructure. This includes cloud, social, mobile, and big data and analytics. But, it’s more than applying new technologies to enhance existing models. As digital Darwinism evolves, the partner of the future is also helping public sector and commercial customers innovate at scale. They’re building a more agile and dynamic infrastructure to future proof organizations, introduce new thinking and processes, deliver more value-added experiences, and natively support ongoing innovation and disruption.

Digital Darwinism will only continue to evolve. Disruptive technologies are now constant. Emergent technologies will only push DX strategies into new territories such as blockchain, 5G, spatial computing, machine learning, AI, IoT and IIoT, digital twins, voice, edge computing, and, eventually, quantum computing.

This is a time for continuous growth, and that takes a growth mindset in your business and in that of your customer’s business. DX is the beginning of an ongoing journey. The partner of the future already sees around the next corner. For example, visionary partners are already starting to prepare the groundwork for helping customers create an autonomous and cognitive enterprise. These intelligent organizations are powered by AI solutions that unleash a new wave of capabilities and opportunities.

Strategic partners are the architects of the future. Customers need help more than they may include in their brief for services. It’s up to you to help them see and fulfill their potential!

Critical Areas of Investment Include:

- DX products, services, and experiences
- Digital innovation
- Co-creating IP
- Ecosystem solutions
- Continuous transformation
- Customer experience
- Marketplace development
- Collaboration with partners and startups
Becoming the Partner of the Future… Today: The AWS Partner Transformation Program (PTP)

Future-proofing public sector and commercial businesses starts with future-proofing partner businesses. The PTP is an accelerator to drive DX and business modernization from B2B all the way to B2C. The PTP provides partners with the guidance to accelerate the development of their AWS skills and expertise to better serve their government, education, or nonprofit and also commercial customers’ journeys to the cloud.

The AWS PTP Helps Partners:

1. Reduce ramp up time to AWS and the cloud by months
2. Design an AWS training pathway for the cloud business unit and expand a cloud team with training and accreditations
3. Develop the ability to handle next-generation solution design and architecture
4. Define an AWS service catalog
5. Define a unique, value-added cloud strategy, value proposition, and long-term vision
6. Develop the ability to more effectively answer public sector tenders and recommend new areas of opportunity
7. Set the stage to win contracts in public sector and deliver high quality work to end-customers
8. Grow along the AWS journey and unlock access to further programs
“The AWS Partner Transformation Program (PTP) is uniquely designed to help partners accelerate their specific path toward growth. We bring partner organizations together around a common purpose and help unify key stakeholders moving forward. More so, the PTP helps partners gain the processes, the tools and the skills needed to help commercial and public sector customers innovate in the cloud.”

Franck Welter, Worldwide Public Sector, EMEA Partners, AWS
Create Alignment Within The Organization, Assess Capabilities, and Define a Path Toward Partner and Customer Business Objectives

Digital native partners aren’t tied to legacy experience, mindsets or processes when approaching new digital solutions for customers. At the same time, many experienced partners have earned tenure. But to move forward, everything has to come together, leveraging past experience with growth in new areas of digital opportunity. Partners must assess their current cloud service experience and capabilities and benchmark them against industry standards and trends. These insights serve as an important level-set while also illuminating the way forward. They validate strengths, spotlight where to make improvements, and how to educate stakeholders to accelerate transformation.

More so, transformation offers an AWS-enabled business advantage. It enhances credibility through proven cloud capabilities and accelerates business growth by unlocking additional revenue opportunities.

“The Partner Transformation Program was a forcing function. It got everyone aligned.”

Sonu Singh, President and CEO, 1901 Group
Cloud solutions are synonymous with DX. The move from on-premises and labor-based models to the cloud is inevitable for modernization. Migration and monitoring can be seen as table stakes nowadays. The key is to define a cloud-specific strategy and vision that puts partners, and ultimately their customers, on course for differentiation and innovation.

Partners should start by bringing together disparate groups across the enterprise to align around goals, capabilities, opportunities, and needs. This helps companies move forward with a unified approach toward developing unique, customer-centric, cloud-driven solutions. These solutions should be framed as competitive differentiators that connect DX strategies and roadmaps to new customer business models and growth opportunities. Defining a value-added cloud strategy, value proposition, and long-term vision accelerates differentiation in competitive cloud services market and enables accredited partners to help clients and customers like never before. This is especially true in the public sector. Here, helping organizations adopt a cloud-first policy takes a much more direct and nuanced approach. Partners need a customized vision and services program, and internal systems, that specifically addresses the unique needs and processes of the public sector.

Then, tell the world. Attach the upgraded GTM and cloud vision to a targeted sales strategy and a marketing and communications plan to amplify new thinking and capabilities to attract public sector and commercial customers.

“The AWS Partner Transformation Program (PTP) provides the essential components of building a cloud services practice to differentiate and stay relevant. Digital transformation in the public sector is very different than what we see in commercial organizations. From RFPs and procurement to strategy and roadmaps to implementation and management, cloud partners will greatly benefit from learning the unique investments required to succeed in public sector transformation.”

Smita Roy, Worldwide Public Sector Partner Leader, APJ, AWS
“Having a program like this, getting best practices and getting comparisons, let’s us really dial in where we can bring the most value to our customers and, in turn, where we can bring the most value to our partners.”

Jonathan King, VP of Strategy, Data Center and Cloud, Worldwide Technology
DX might often start with CIOs, but partners will gain regard and trust as they become strategic business allies to key stakeholders across the organization. Eventually, as customers mature in DX, the stakeholder group for partnership success expands to include those responsible for innovation and growth. CEOs, CDOs and even emerging roles such as Chief Growth Officers (CGOs), Chief Technology Innovation Officers (CTIO), and Chief Innovation Officers (CINOs) will need strategic partners in vision and enablement. Each of these stakeholders has unique needs and business objectives to achieve. They can’t do that alone. And, they can’t do that with legacy-based partners and technologies. They need accelerated, approachable, agile solutions today and a realistic yet innovative roadmap to drive further transformation and growth.

This requires partners to apply what they experienced in their own transformation to that of their customers and their specific challenges and requirements. The key is to help public sector organizations and commercial businesses balance economy and agility with security, compliance, and reliability. Furthermore, balance must also factor in technology and skills to support long-term, robust success that flourishes in an era of digital Darwinism.

Partnership takes on an entirely new proposition at this point. Beyond DX, strategic partners now become enablers of constant business evolution to compete for the future... every day.


"The Partner Transformation Program (PTP) helped us determine areas we needed to invest in, examine new tools for better efficiency, determine the number and types of individuals we would need, and re-examine the processes to guide those people and tools. The 100-day plan that we implemented with the assistance of the PTP will provide us with the core competencies, processes, and the organizational chart needed to accelerate cloud adoption in the US public sector."

Danny Climo, Vice President, Enterprise Platforms, DLT
Future-proof Your Business to Future-proof Your Customer's Business: The AWS Partner Transformation Program (PTP) Accelerates Your Transformation

The PTP is a comprehensive assessment, training, and enablement program focused on helping you build a successful and profitable AWS Cloud business. Whether you are new to the cloud or in the advanced stages of building your cloud business, the program provides partners with the guidance to accelerate the development of your AWS skills and expertise to better serve your customers’ journeys to the cloud.

Through the PTP, AWS helps partners expedite cloud readiness in key business areas and the development of critical skills and expertise to in turn help customers migrate to the cloud.

The result is partner transformation, together, building an innovative cloud business for partners to better serve the ultimate customer.

The PTP is open to partners that are either new to cloud and need help with planning for cloud migration or have started the process but need help in accelerating their journey. Every PTP partner receives a customized transformation plan to accelerate their journey to AWS and support the execution of identified activities.
Additionally, the PTP includes opportunities to:

- Understand evolving public sector and commercial challenges and opportunities to succeed.
- Define or refine their AWS cloud vision, strategy, and offerings for commercial companies and the unique needs of public sector organizations.
- Acquire dedicated skillsets and experience and develop business and operational models to specifically serve public sector companies.
- Partners exit the PTP with expert knowledge in how to help public sector organizations adopt cloud-first policies through unique services, manage procurement and strategic labor, and financial investments necessary to effectively respond to RFPs and scale client growth.
- Develop a deeper relationship with AWS and promote their business among AWS stakeholders.
- Become eligible for advanced resources, programs, tools, and support.
- Access to up to $25k in cash and AWS Promotional Credits to support activities in their transformation plan.

PTP advantages:

- Receive a completely personalized transformation program that is customized for each partner’s current state and ideal future state.
- Develop a strategic GTM plan that differentiates the partner’s AWS practices for a competitive edge in commercial and also public sector markets.
- Generate demand with AWS marketing that attract new customers.
- Connect with AWS commercial and public sector teams.

The program is global and open to both Consulting and ISV Partners serving public sector and commercial customers. Partners should work with their AWS Partner Development Manager (PDM) to help them sign up for the program.

Your cloud transformation starts here.
About the Author

Brian Solis is a world-renowned digital analyst, anthropologist, and futurist who has been called “one of the greatest digital analysts of our time.” Based in Silicon Valley, Brian studies disruptive technologies and its impact on business, as well as innovation, experience design, culture dynamics, and digital behaviors. Through his advisory practice, research, and published work, he humanizes disruptive trends to help leaders understand how technology, markets, and people are evolving and how to drive innovation and growth.