



# Operating model and the Digital Backbone

The fundamental blueprint for how your organisation's structure, processes, governance and culture combine to deliver value to customers, stakeholders and society.

CGI Business Consulting and Advisory insights



# An end-to-end digital framework to power your success

In today's complex and competitive business landscape, it is common for organisations to embed digital technologies that enable their growth strategies. For many, this involves implementing IT throughout their organisation, but few develop a holistic business case or transformation roadmap covering everything they do, or have a comprehensive strategy that aligns their IT with broader strategic goals.

At CGI, we believe that true digitalisation isn't just about adopting new technologies; it's about embracing a holistic mindset. As a leader in IT and business consulting, we help organisations unlock their full potential, driving our clients' growth through the power of "digital".

But digital transformation isn't simple. That's why we developed our value-led, technology-enabled Digital Backbone framework, which delivers best practices and lessons learned to inspire your journey.

The Digital Backbone offers the fundamental building blocks to drive your transformation success. It helps you envision secure and sustainable solutions that combat your challenges and support your ambitions. Combined, your new capabilities will create a robust, IT-enabled structure – a digital backbone – that transforms everything you do, enabling your organisation to thrive in our ever-evolving world.



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# The evolution of operating models

As organisations navigate through the complexities of the digital age, the need for innovative and adaptable operating models has become critical.

## A shift from traditional to flexible

In response to an increasingly dynamic and interconnected business environment, organisations must continuously adapt to meet evolving customer demands and economic fluctuations.

To overcome these challenges, many organisations are shifting from traditional, hierarchical operating models to more agile and adaptive frameworks. These flexible operating models allow them to quickly adapt operations to support changes in demand, reducing operational costs when demand is low and increasing them only when necessary.

Whilst traditional, fixed operational costs were often too rigid to cope with fluctuating demand or capitalise on new market opportunities, these agile models prioritise flexibility and speed. This enables organisations to respond quickly to changes and focus on continuous innovation and improvement.

### The benefits of embracing a flexible operating model are:

- **Enhanced efficiency**  
By eliminating inefficiencies and redundancies, an optimised operating model improves overall operational performance.
- **Agility and scalability**  
A flexible operating model allows your organisation to scale operations seamlessly and adapt quickly to new opportunities or challenges.



- **Improved customer satisfaction**  
Efficient processes and a customer-centric culture ensure that your organisation consistently meets or exceeds customer expectations.
- **Risk mitigation**  
Strong governance and compliance frameworks reduce the risk of operational failures and legal issues.

An effective operating model not only supports your current operations, but also provides a scalable foundation for future growth and innovation on your digital transformation journey. It ensures strategic alignment between your organisation's goals and day-to-day operations, driving both immediate efficiency and long-term success.

# Operating model and the Digital Backbone

Unlocking your organisation's full potential – **transformation done right**

## What is a digital backbone?

A digital backbone goes beyond simply applying IT to areas of your organisation as a support mechanism. When designed effectively, a digital backbone becomes the cornerstone of a successful modern organisation; it embeds technology throughout all operations, using the power of IT to create a robust structure that enables continuous innovation and transforms everything you do.



Increased **efficiency and productivity** across streamlined operations.



Increased **revenue** alongside more cost efficient processes.



Greater **agility and growth** with a faster time to market.



Better **regulatory compliance**, including empowering sustainability initiatives.



Improved **service and product quality** for customer, employee and stakeholder satisfaction.



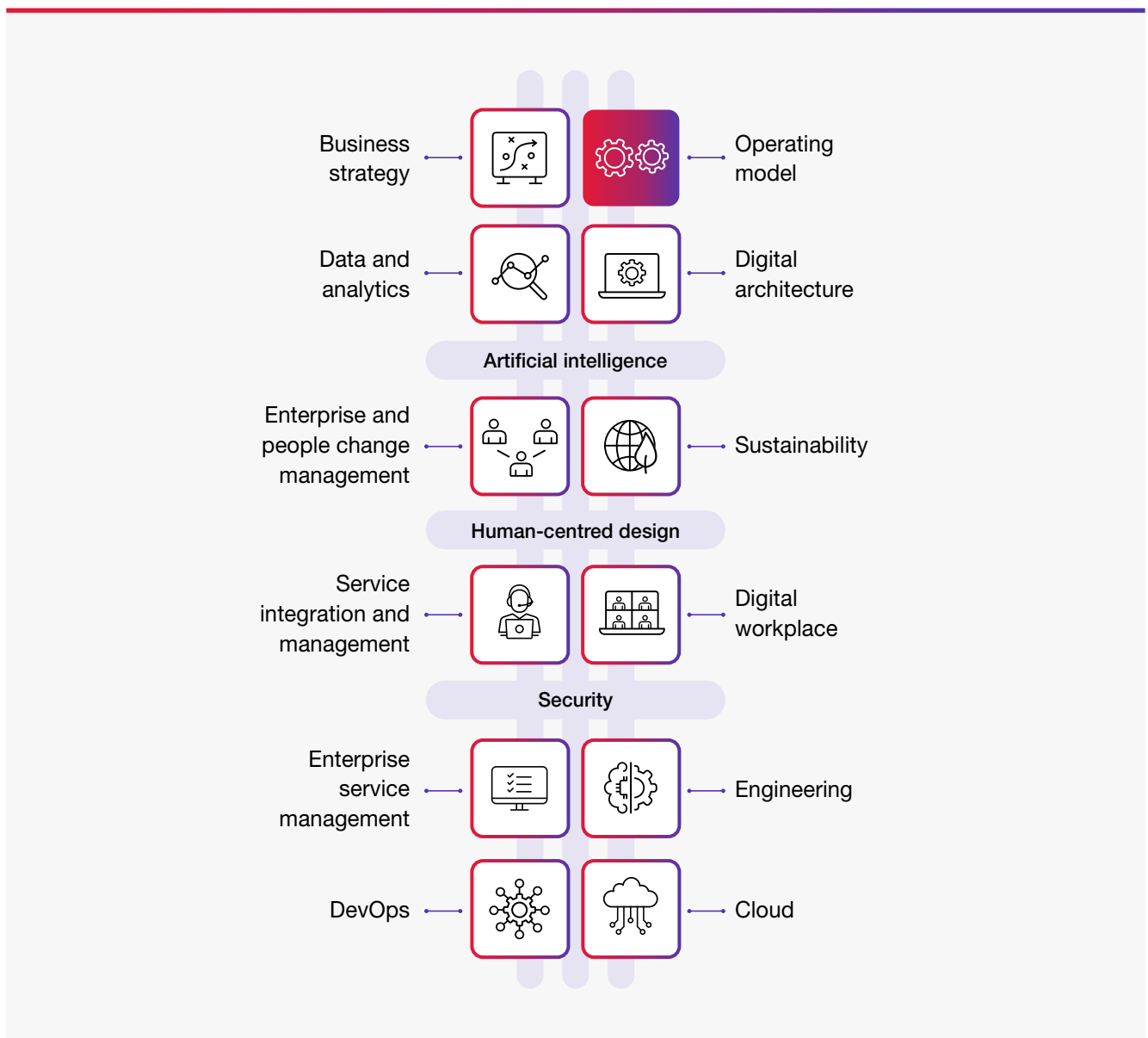
Improve **decision making** through data-driven insights.

# The Digital Backbone

Our end-to-end framework that will make IT the enabler of your success

The Digital Backbone delivers twelve fundamental building blocks to inspire digital transformation and unlock your organisation's full potential. These can be implemented either individually or as a whole programme, with every step strengthened by three embedded enablers – artificial intelligence, human-centred design and security – so no matter where you are on your journey, the Digital Backbone provides a comprehensive vision for your transformation strategy.

**That's why we made operating model a key component of the Digital Backbone**, empowering you to create a robust and scalable foundation for your organisation's everyday operations. By integrating our operating model best practices and strategic insights, you can effectively align your structure, processes, governance, and culture in a resilient strategy that empowers future growth and innovation.



A value-led operating model encompasses your structure, processes, governance, and culture, creating a blueprint for you to execute your organisation's strategy and achieve your goals.

### **Leveraging your external ecosystem**

As organisations strive for greater agility, they increasingly operate within external ecosystems. These ecosystems include suppliers, customers, regulators, and even competitors, forming partnerships, alliances, and networks of stakeholders to co-create value, access new markets and drive innovation.

External ecosystem operating models represent a shift in organisational design, emphasising collaboration, innovation, and value creation across interconnected networks. By leveraging these partnerships and alliances, you can prioritise flexibility, adaptability, and shared goals among diverse stakeholders.

### **Intelligent client functions**

To effectively navigate these external ecosystems, many organisations are developing intelligent client functions. These act as a crucial interface between your organisation and its external service providers, managing relationships and leveraging outsourcing opportunities.

Intelligent client functions enhance operational efficiencies, access specialised expertise, and drive innovation. Embracing these functions allows you to remain agile, competitive, and responsive to evolving market demands.



### **Adapting to digital technologies**

Digital technologies further support the transformation towards agile and flexible operating models. Cloud computing, artificial intelligence (AI), the internet of things (IoT), and blockchain are revolutionising how organisations streamline processes, enhance customer experiences, and drive innovation.

These technologies will enable you to replace traditional hierarchical structures and linear processes with more dynamic and flexible frameworks, ensuring your organisation can adapt quickly to new requirements and maintain a competitive edge.

# A vision for your operating model



The fundamental blueprint for how your organisation's structure, processes, governance and culture combine to deliver value to customers, stakeholders and society.

## The key steps

The shift towards flexible, ecosystem operating models is a transformational journey. Before you start, we recommend reflecting on the following questions, to help you develop a comprehensive and effective operating model that aligns with your organisation's goals and prepares you for the challenges of the digital age:

1

### **How can you maximise operations and business agility?**

By shifting from fixed to more variable and adaptable operations, your organisation can stay resilient during economic downturns and capitalise on growth opportunities.

This can be achieved by leveraging external ecosystems, adopting 'pay as you go' services, and embracing flexible technologies. A dynamic operating model enhances your ability to respond swiftly to market changes and fluctuating demand, ensuring sustained success.

2

### **How can you leverage data to understand shifts in demand, and adapt operations accordingly?**

Advanced data analytics and customer insights provide a deep understanding of market trends and consumer behaviours. By leveraging these assets, you can make data-driven decisions, predict demand patterns, and optimise your operations to meet changing needs. This capability is crucial for maintaining a customer-centric approach and ensuring your products and services remain relevant and valuable.

3

### **What services or activities can you perform internally, and what should you outsource?**

Deciding which services to keep in-house and which to outsource is a critical component of an effective operating model.

4

### **How can you strengthen your external partner ecosystem?**

Building a robust external partner ecosystem involves identifying and nurturing relationships with suppliers, customers, regulators, and even competitors. Strong partnerships foster collaboration, innovation, and shared value creation. By strengthening these connections, you can access new markets, drive joint innovation efforts, and enhance your organisation's adaptability and resilience.

5

### **How can you integrate digital technologies?**

Digital technologies such as cloud computing, AI, IoT and blockchain can streamline your operations and enhance efficiency. These technologies enable automation, improve data accuracy, and provide real-time insights, helping your organisation to operate more smoothly and respond swiftly to changes. Embracing digital transformation is essential for maintaining a competitive edge and achieving long-term success.

# CGI Business Consulting and Advisory

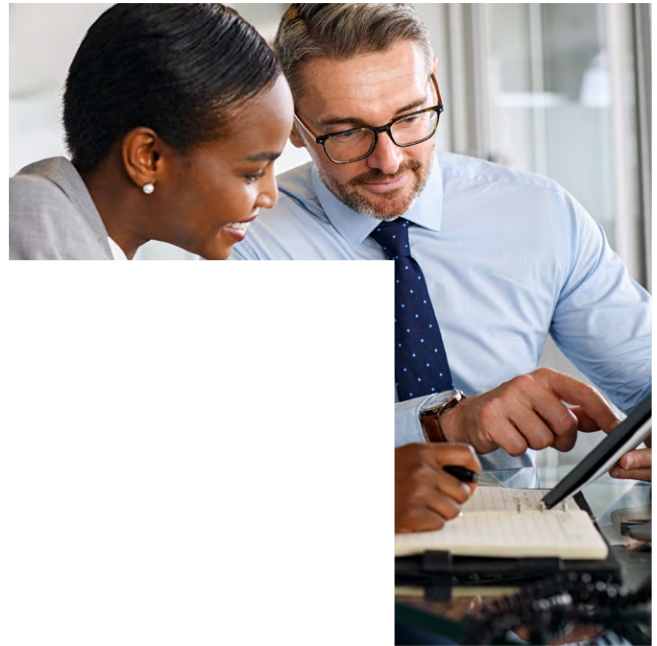
Built over 50 years, CGI is one of the world's largest providers of high-end IT and business consulting services. We are trusted to transform organisations with innovative solutions, so developed our Business Consulting and Advisory (BC&A) team to share our knowledge and experience with you.

## Offerings to support your organisation

Wherever you are on your transformation journey – whether you're looking to develop a forward-thinking business strategy, improve the effectiveness of specific processes, or implement an innovative solution – we're here to help.

We understand that transformation isn't simple. That's why **our experts developed all our BC&A offerings around the Digital Backbone's twelve key propositions**, embedding artificial intelligence, human-centred design and security throughout to support you with the right approach and solutions to address your challenges, achieve your ambitions and build your own digital backbone capability.

Whether you'd like to build a complete digital backbone that will become the cornerstone of your growth, or if there's one specific area standing in the way – perhaps that's operating model – we have the offerings and solutions to ensure your transformation project succeeds.



Our operating model offerings include:

- **Target operating model and organisation design** – Business model transformation that aligns to your overarching strategy, to maximise value realisation and sustain long-term change.
- **Process excellence** – Gain a clear understanding of the processes behind your change programme, aligning people, process and technology transformation with organisational goals and strategies to enable sustainable improvement.
- **Strategic benefits management** – Drive alignment between your investments, projects and strategies, with clarity on the benefits delivered to ensure you will realise your goals and achieve return on investment.

BC&A places you at the heart of our offerings. We work to understand your unique challenges and opportunities – whether you require strategy development, or solutions design and implementation – and we'll guide you every step of the way.

Our teams cover a range of sectors such as higher education and healthcare, as well as specialist areas including business consulting, technical advisory, service management, and sustainability.

We remain supplier agnostic, but also have teams designated to our **strategic alliances** with the likes of Microsoft, ServiceNow, Google, Dell, NetApp (and more), enabling us to design you the right solutions, working with the right partners to deliver the best outcomes.

So whatever your specific requirements, challenges or industry, with BC&A's breadth of knowledge and experience, we'll empower you with a team that is hand-picked to enable your success.



**To find out more:**

Explore the Digital Backbone and its twelve key propositions in more depth on [our webpage](#). Fill in [this short form](#) and we'll be in touch to discuss how our operating model offerings or our overarching Digital Backbone framework can support your specific needs.



## About CGI

### Insights you can act on

Founded in 1976, CGI is among the largest IT and business consulting services firms in the world.

We are insights-driven and outcomes-based to help accelerate returns on your investments. Across hundreds of locations worldwide, we provide comprehensive, scalable and sustainable IT and business consulting services that are informed globally and delivered locally.

[cgi.com/uk/digital-backbone](https://cgi.com/uk/digital-backbone)

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