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Think like your customers.

WHAT HAVE YOU DONE WITH YOUR SMARTPHONE TODAY? Requested a taxi? Paid for a ticket? Found your car again? For millions of people, downloading a new smartphone app has become an almost daily ritual. That shows us two things:

- How quickly digitization brings new services to us 24 hours a day
- That there are already far more innovations than we can use

Some apps will be our constant companions for years. Others, we'll uninstall within two days. What does that mean for companies?

First of all, companies can treat technology as a given. Such as when they thrill their customers with new predictive services. The technology's already here – from IoT to the cloud, from data analytics to networks. These days, digitization focuses less on cutting costs and more on enabling new business models. However, enabling stands the best chance of success when our technology decisions start with our customers' needs. In other words, we ask ourselves, "What technology can I use to make it more attractive for my customers to purchase and use my products and services and strengthen their brand loyalty?" I think these decisions are easier when we really and truly understand our customers' needs and preferences.

In the automotive industry, new prototypes often generate tens of petabytes of data in the course of 150,000 km test drives. So what worries carmakers most? Answer: getting this much data transferred, imported and analyzed as quickly as possible. Today, the whole process takes only a few hours – all thanks to a T-Systems solution that's featured in this issue. It used to take several weeks!

Or take the food industry. Their value chains are fragile largely because – and this is hard to believe – nearly 60 percent of them depend on pollination by healthy,

industrious bees worldwide. And that's why T-Systems' Innovation Center asked an important question: How can we help the food industry and retailers reliably supply customers with food, vegetables or cosmetics? Its answer consists of a cloud-based IoT platform that will provide a form of preventive healthcare for the world's third most important domestic animal by making its life and work easier. Healthier. More reliable. More productive. Some of the ingredients were already in place: sensors, networks, computing power and algorithms. But they hadn't been supercharged by the critical services that sustainably supported processes at honey producers, farms, retail establishments and manufacturing companies – and, even more importantly, our environment. And that's my point. In the end, it's the underlying idea that makes an innovation an asset, and not just a gimmick, for companies, their customer relationships and potential new business models.

That's why we're blazing new trails at T-Systems – and not just in our Innovation Center, either. Over the next few months, we'll be building a new Digital Solutions unit, staffed by 4,800 people whose sole concern is to quickly add value for companies. Their top priority will be co-innovation, conducted in collaboration with our customers. They will provide fast solutions to issues facing today's organizations.

Obviously, digitization already provides a lot of what this approach demands. In and of itself, though, technology isn't what can swiftly pulverize a business model with a decades-long track record of success. Instead, the biggest threat to the continued viability of any business comes when you lose sight of your customers.

Best regards,

Adel Al-Saleh