



# Avoiding Digital Pitfalls for the New Generation of Managers

Insights from “3 Mistakes First-Time  
Managers Make with Digital  
Transformation” by Vijaya Sunder M





# Case of Lucy: A First-Time Manager

Right out of grad school, Lucy was hired to lead an operations team at a service-sector company with a background in Artificial intelligence (AI) and other digital technologies.



## ► Striving for Success

Lucy with her team:



Developed Chat-Bot for customer service issues



Piloted robotic automation for low-volume production tasks



Digitised quality control using AI

## ► Unexpected Results

Lucy's team noticed:



Declining Service delivery and employee productivity

# 70%

**of digital deployments  
fall short of their  
objectives, as per BCG**



# First Trap: Digital Curiosity



## Lucy's Mistake

Trying to solve every problem with digital solutions, overlooking the need for human intervention.

### Example

Implementation of AI-powered systems for quality control led to strained relationships with high-impact merchants due to the lack of human cognition in decision-making.

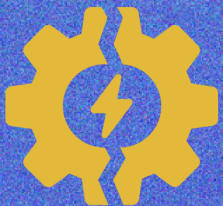




# Digital Curiosity Consequence



Previously case-by-case penalty decisions was made due to complex merchant and supply issues



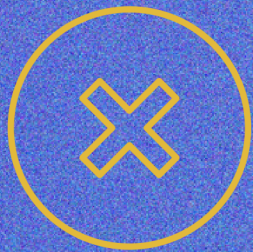
AI system led to disruptions and delays



Diverting Lucy's focus from long-term solutions to firefighting operational issues



# Second Trap: Digital Readiness

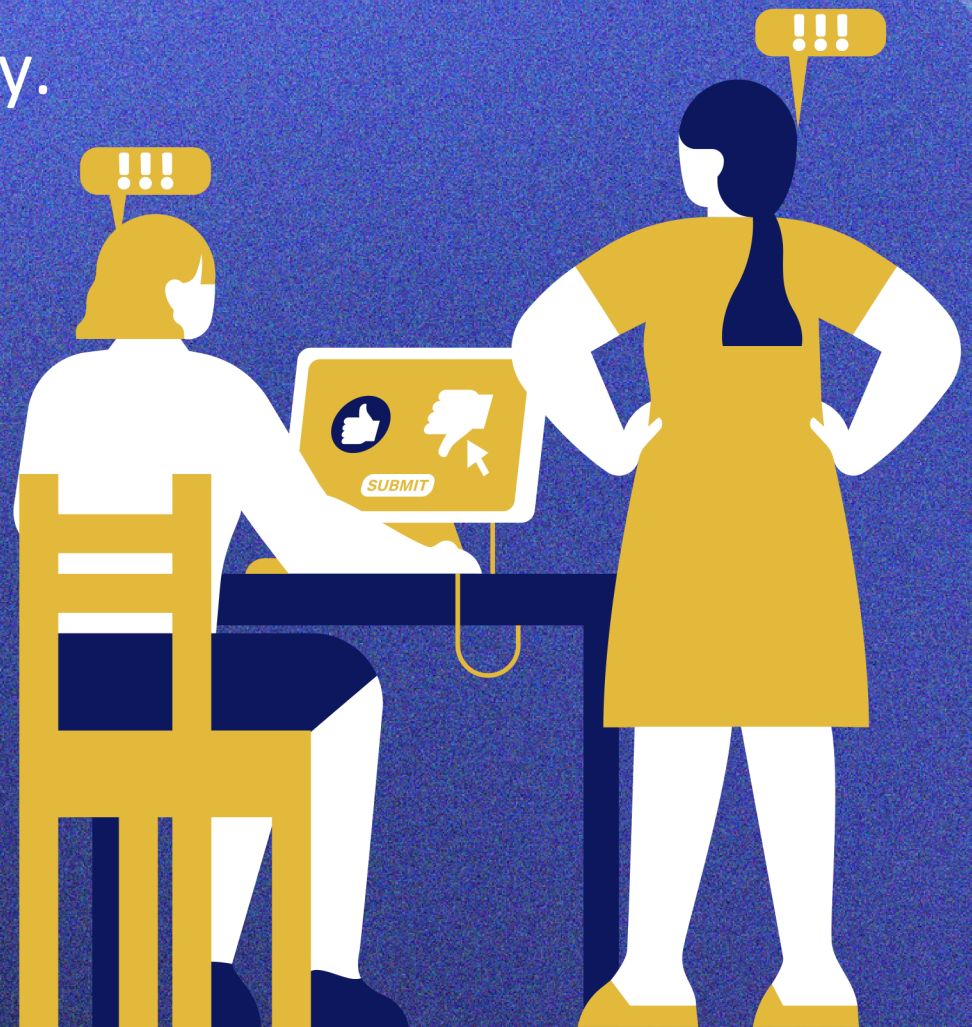


## Lucy's Oversight

Neglecting evaluation of her team's preparedness for digital changes, and failing to streamline the existing process before digitising them, resulted in resistance and decreased productivity.

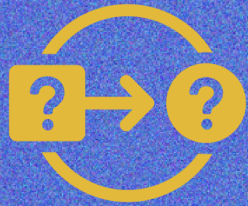
### Example

The automated queuing system did not take into consideration urgency, impact, and complexity, leading to increased customer dissatisfaction.





# Digital Readiness Consequence



Lucy's team ended up with a long list of unresolved customer queries



Lower productivity



Resistance to embrace digitalisation





# Third Trap: Replication



## Lucy's Mistake

Trying to replicate successful digital solutions without assessing their fit for her organisation.

## Example

Lucy's attempt to replicate a successful AI-based matching system for reconciliation, was not relevant to her company's context, making it unsuitable.

## Consequence



The lower reconciliation activity volume in Lucy's company resulted in technology costs outweighing benefits.



# How to Avoid Mistakes Made by Lucy



## Thoughtful Consideration

Evaluate digital initiatives meticulously to determine their relevance, feasibility, and potential impact.

## Readiness Assessment

Assess the organisation's readiness for digital transformation in terms of culture, resources, and capabilities.

## Avoid Blind Replication of Solutions

Customise digital solutions to fit the organisation's unique needs, objectives, and operational context.



# Lessons for First-Time Managers

1

Identify the issue's root, then categorise it into solvable by: humans, digital technology, or human-machine collaboration

2

Digital transformation emphasises "transformation" over "digital," remember that success relies more on people than on technology

3

Clear training and communication outlining the purpose, significance of the change, and their role would alleviate concerns and enable successful change management



# Leading Through Awareness and Avoiding Pitfalls

The digital world opens an exciting chapter for a new generation of leaders and managers. When you are asked to solve a problem, start by validating its appropriateness for digitalisation. Gauge whether your team is ready for the changes you want to make and avoid replicating solutions without customising them. Indeed, avoiding the traps is often more efficient than trying to escape them later.

**- Dr. Vijaya Sunder M, Assistant Professor (Practice), Operations Management**

