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Whitepaper

Digital Resilience: The New Leadership Imperative

How organizations are redefining enterprise leadership in an era of uncertainty.

Authors

Sahil Dhawan (Tech Mahindra)

Shane Hill (Third Eye Advisory)

Executive Summary

For CIOs delivering value for their stakeholders, success is no longer measured solely by the speed of transformation. It is increasingly determined by how effectively the enterprise can anticipate disruption, maintain critical operations, and recover without compromising customer trust or business performance. Digital resilience has therefore evolved into a board-level strategic priority that shapes technology investment, governance, and operating models.

As CIOs of enterprises pursuing resilience-focused transformation in IMEA, targeting greater digital resilience it is critical to:

- Grasp the gap between expectations and reality for digital resilience
- Focus on digital resilience as the new leadership imperative
- Invest in 4 pillars to build a resilient digital operating model
- Model these generalized examples when building the case for resilient change

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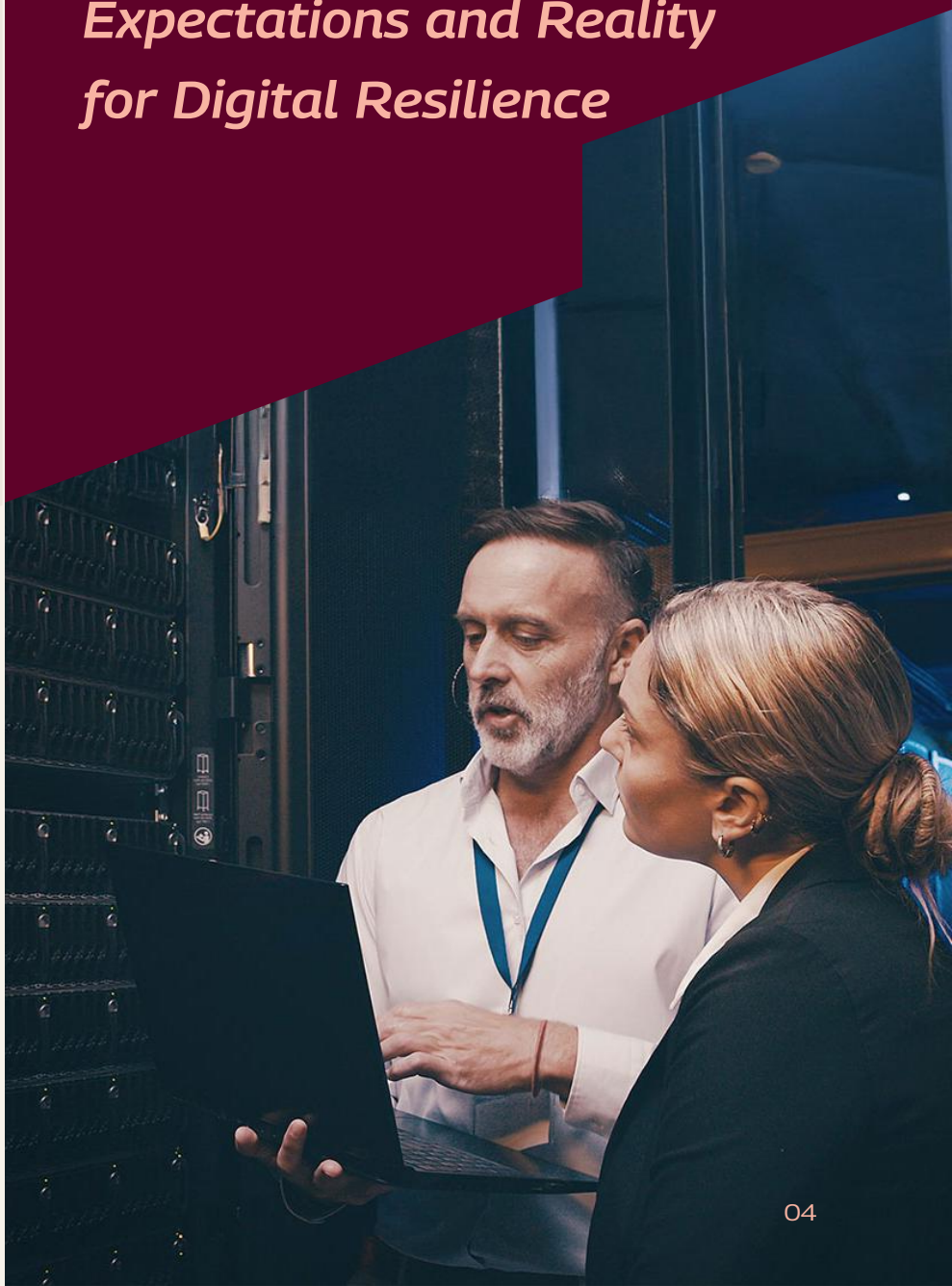
Grasp the gap between Expectations and Reality for Digital Resilience

In the past, success was measured through growth, efficiency, and the speed of innovation. But in an increasingly interconnected and interdependent economy, that's no longer enough. What matters now is the ability to remain resilient even when systems and suppliers are compromised.

Despite years of sustained investment in digital transformation, many organizations continue to struggle with translating technology initiatives into resilient business outcomes. McKinsey similarly notes that although AI adoption has become widespread, only 39% of organizations have realized measurable enterprise EBIT impact.[3] The challenge is therefore no longer technology adoption. It is the organization's ability to absorb disruption while continuing to create business value.

The financial implications are equally significant. According to IBM's Cost of a Data Breach Report 2025, the global average cost of a data breach has reached approximately USD 4.9 million.[4] Gartner also estimates that the average cost of IT downtime for large enterprises can exceed USD 5,600 per minute, depending on the industry.[2] These numbers illustrate why resilience is increasingly viewed as a value-preservation strategy rather than purely a risk-management function.

As a result, leadership conversations are shifting from "How quickly can we transform?" to "How resilient, adaptive, and secure is our digital enterprise when disruption strikes?



Focus on Digital Resilience as The New Leadership Imperative

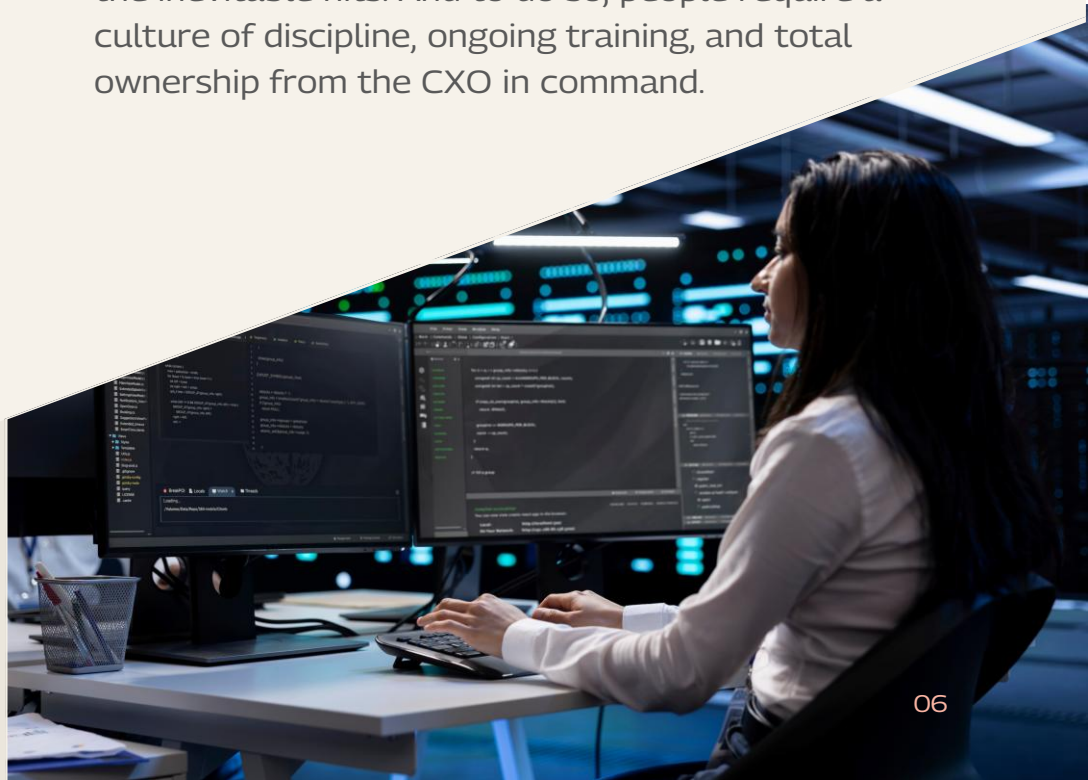
In an environment shaped by cyberattacks, AI disruption, geopolitical uncertainty, and evolving regulations, digital resilience has become a measurable business priority rather than a technology objective. The average global cost of a data breach reached USD 4.88 million in 2024, while prolonged outages can cost large enterprises thousands of dollars per minute in lost revenue, operational disruption, regulatory penalties, and reputational damage.[5] For CIOs and business leaders, the question is no longer whether disruption will occur, but whether the enterprise can continue operating with minimal financial and customer impact when it does. Digital resilience is therefore emerging as a strategic lever for protecting enterprise value, sustaining growth, and maintaining stakeholder confidence.

This shifts resilience beyond the remit of IT. Decisions around technology architecture, AI adoption, cloud strategy, third-party ecosystems, and governance increasingly influence revenue continuity, regulatory compliance, and shareholder value. As a result, digital resilience must be embedded into enterprise strategy by design rather than introduced later as a corrective measure. Success should be measured not only by the speed of innovation, but by how effectively new capabilities sustain business operations, recover from disruption, and preserve customer trust under pressure.

Invest in 4 Pillars to build a Resilient Digital Operating Model

A resilient digital operating model is built on four interconnected pillars that help enterprises withstand disruption. They are:

- A **resilient core** moves away from a rigid, monolithic system and builds microservices architecture to improve operational visibility. In cases of component failure, the component automatically self-isolates to avoid crashing the entire system. It is designed with the expectation that compromise will occur and to encode the relevant contingencies from the start.
- **Adaptive operations** combine intelligent automation, workflow orchestration, and real-time operational visibility to fuel continuous resilience during disruption. Instead of relying on manual coordination, enterprises establish continuously adapted playbooks, automated escalation paths, and cross-functional collaboration that activate dynamically during incidents.
- Policy-driven automation and **governance as code (GaC)** ensure that compliance, security controls, and operational guardrails remain consistently enforced even as systems scale rapidly or respond to unexpected events.
- The final pillar is **workforce readiness**. As technology cannot protect itself, resilience relies on well-governed, adaptive process, with smart people incentivized to find and flag holes before the inevitable hits. And to do so, people require a culture of discipline, ongoing training, and total ownership from the CXO in command.



Resilient Digital Operating Model

A broad - level model for balancing innovation, governance, adaptability, and scale

These pillars come together as a comprehensive framework, which is depicted below:

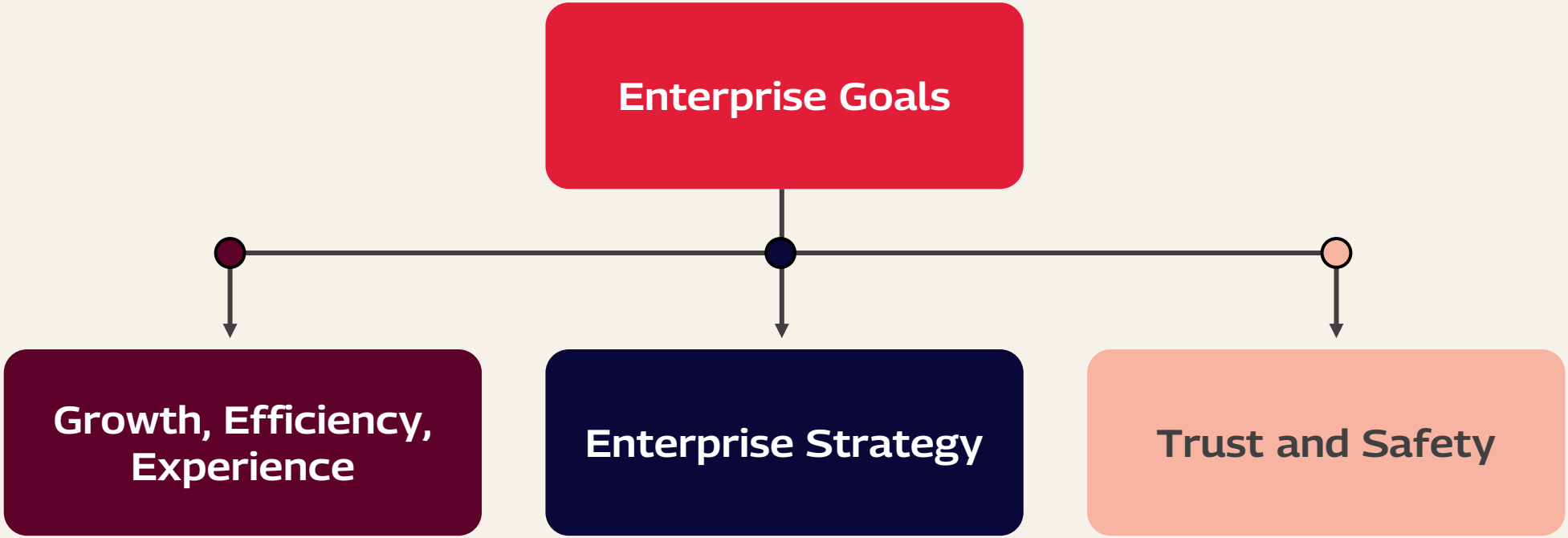
Figure 1: Digital Resilience Framework

Model these generalized examples when building the case for Resilient Change

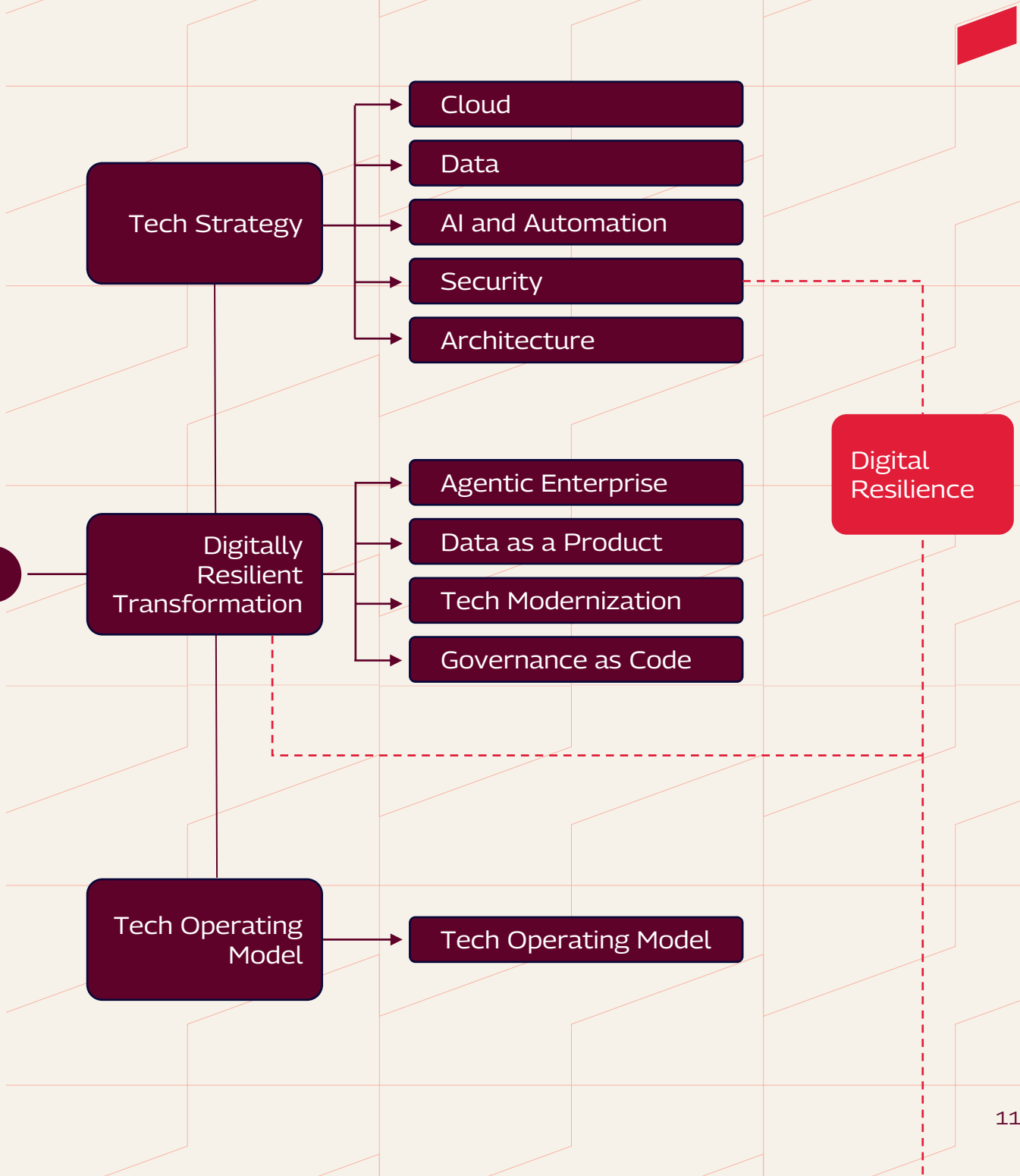
Resilience can no longer be added as an afterthought to transformation. It must be embedded from the start. By embedding it across technology, governance, operations and leadership, this change will enable the enterprise to remain viable even amidst significant disruptions. A few generalized examples can illustrate this point:

- Global Manufacturing: A global manufacturer expanding into Southeast Asia designed its ERP modernization with region-specific data residency controls, alternate cloud deployment options, and diversified supplier integration. As a result, production continued uninterrupted despite regional regulatory changes and supplier outages.
- AI-enabled Banking: A retail bank embedded explainability, human oversight, automated model validation, and governance checkpoints into its AI lending platform before deployment. When new regulatory guidance emerged, lending operations continued without service disruption because compliance controls had already been built into the operating model.
- Digital Supply Chain: A logistics provider operating across multiple regions reduced dependency on a single IoT platform by introducing redundant telemetry providers, offline operating procedures, and automated failover capabilities. This enabled uninterrupted shipment visibility even when one technology partner experienced an outage.

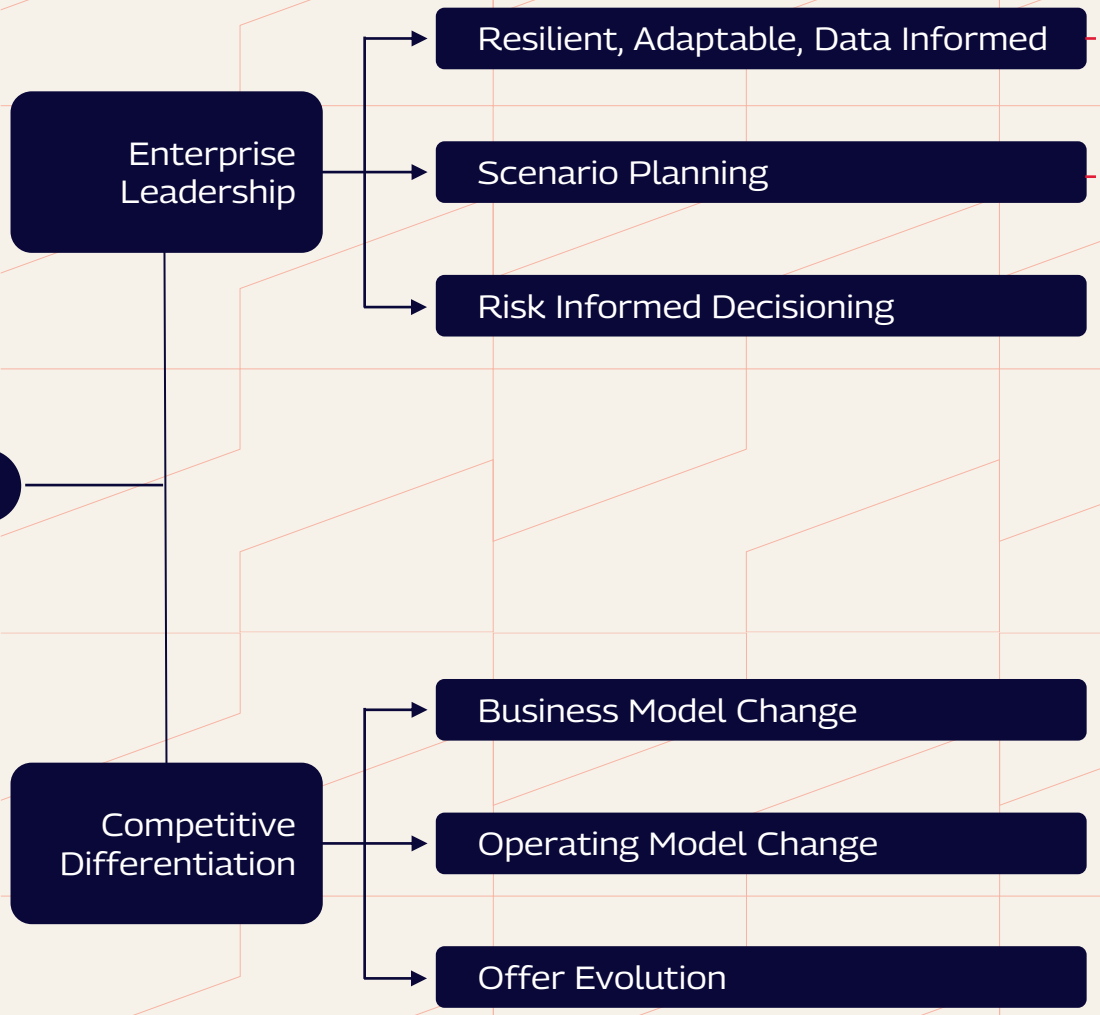
Because the application of digital resilience must span the enterprise, it must also cut through the technology, strategy, and governance layers. That is visualized below



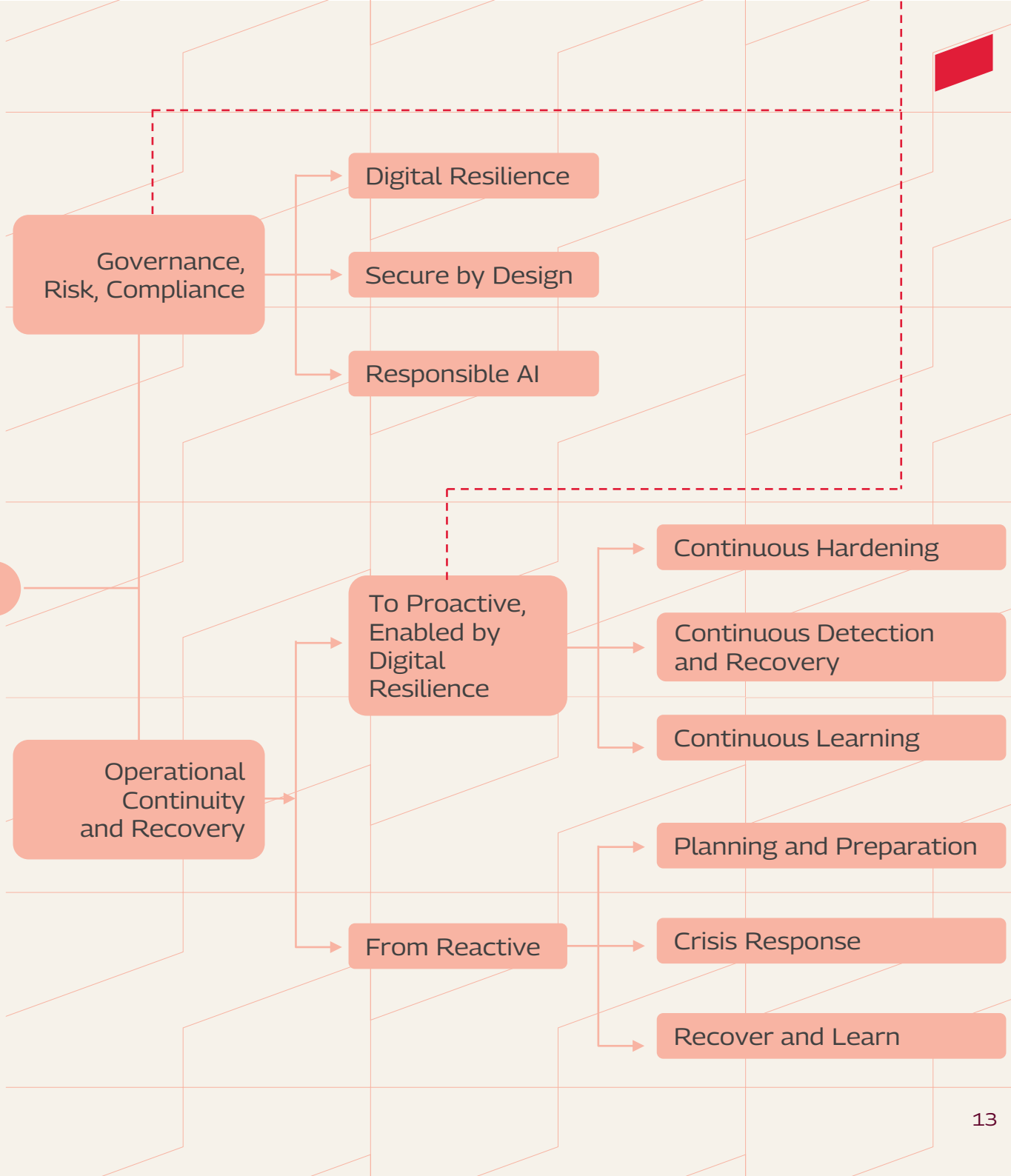
Growth, Efficiency, Experience



Enterprise Strategy



Trust and Safety

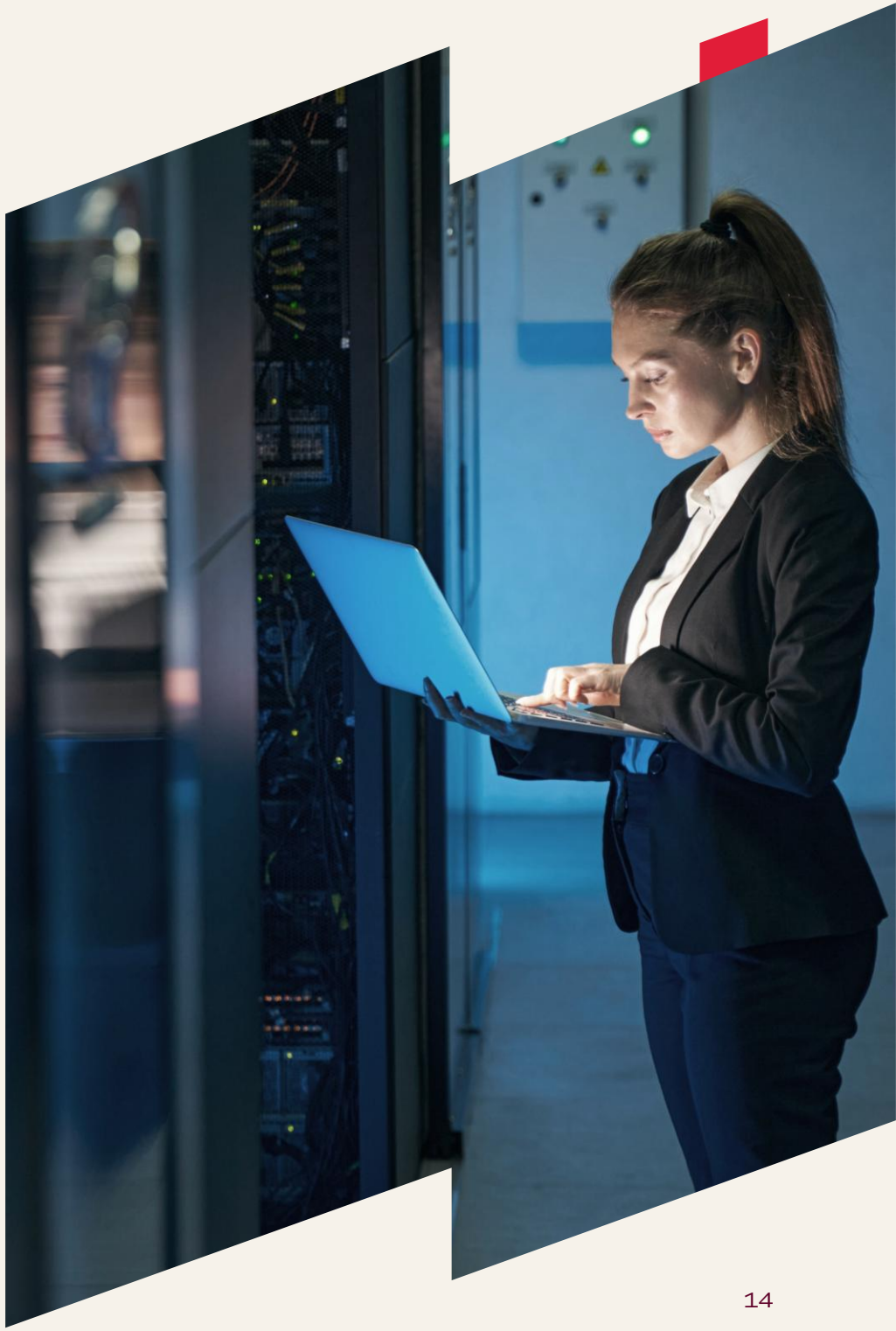


Executive Actions

The transition from digital transformation to digital resilience requires a step change in enterprise leadership. Digital transformation will remain valuable only if it is conducted with digital resilience at its core. Enterprises that invest in a resilient digital operating model that is secure by design, responsible throughout and can endure deepening market volatility will create decisive competitive advantages.

This means that digital resilience will ultimately differentiate leading enterprises. It is no longer a defensive countermeasure to be deployed reactively. Enterprise leaders should prioritize five immediate actions:Retrieve systems during OS failure

- Assess resilience maturity across technology, operations, governance, and workforce capabilities.
- Treat resilience as an architectural design principle rather than a post-implementation control.
- Define executive-owned resilience KPIs that measure recovery, continuity, customer trust, and operational performance.
- Embed governance, cybersecurity, AI oversight, and regulatory compliance into every transformation initiative.
- Continuously test resilience through simulations, cyber recovery exercises, and third-party risk assessments to strengthen organizational preparedness.



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Sahil
Dhawan

President and Head - India, Middle East, and Africa Business, Tech Mahindra

About the Author

Sahil Dhawan oversees business operations across all industry verticals, driving growth, innovation, and customer success throughout the region.

With over 22 years of rich experience in the technology industry, Sahil has built a reputation for establishing high-performance teams, cultivating robust business development engines, and delivering profitable and sustainable growth. He is known for crafting and executing go-to-market strategies and delivering transformational outcomes for global clients through innovative solutions.

Sahil has been an integral part of Tech Mahindra's growth journey, playing a pivotal role in shaping the organization's strategic direction and driving its success across key markets. His deep understanding of the technology landscape, combined with sharp business acumen, has been instrumental in fostering innovation and delivering measurable outcomes. With a proven track record in P&L management, strategy formulation and execution, and building strategic partnerships and alliances, he brings a wealth of experience and insight into his leadership role.

Shane
Hill

Expert Advisor - ESG,
Data & AI Strategy,
Third Eye Advisory

About the Author

Shane Hill is an internationally minded expert advisor based in Australia. For over two decades he has been involved in technology decisions across Asia-Pacific and Europe. Having delivered scores of workshops, keynotes, executive engagements and fact-based research to tech executives, Shane is well versed in what matters for building resilient market advantage with tech-enabled change. Shane spent about a decade in tech delivery roles in the UK and Australia with organisations including Centrelink, LPA Legal, Telstra and Colliers International before transitioning to expert advisory.

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Tech Mahindra (NSE: TECHM, BSE: 532755) offers technology consulting and digital solutions to global enterprises across industries, enabling transformative scale at unparalleled speed. With 146,000+ professionals across 90 countries, Tech Mahindra provides a full spectrum of services including consulting, information technology, enterprise applications, business process services, engineering services, network services, customer experience & design, AI & analytics, and cloud & infrastructure services. It is the first Indian company in the world to have been awarded the Sustainable Markets Initiative's Terra Carta Seal, which recognizes global companies that are actively leading the charge to create a climate and nature-positive future. Tech Mahindra is part of the Mahindra Group, founded in 1945, one of the largest and most admired multinational federation of companies.. For more information on how TechM can partner with you to meet your Scale at Speed™ imperatives, please visit https://www.techmahindra.com/.

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