

## USER FRIENDLY

### Business leadership in an age of disruption

**Host:** Hanish Patel, User Friendly host and digital transformation leader, Deloitte Consulting LLP

**Guests:** Jessica Kosmowski, Consulting Ecosystems and Alliances leader, Deloitte Consulting LLP  
Jason Girzadas, managing principal - Businesses, Global, and Strategic Services, Deloitte LLP

**Hanish Patel**

The past decade has brought extraordinary and foundational shifts, and businesses today are faced with several major discontinuities that will likely occur to alter leaders' perspectives and inform the actions that they take in the future.

So, with that backdrop, how can leaders sustain growth and shape a better future in

the years ahead? And what does the future business leadership hold?

Joining me today to discuss the critical discontinuities and priorities leaders should embrace are Jason Girzadas, managing principal - Businesses, Global, and Strategic Services; and Jessica Kosmowski, Consulting Ecosystems and Alliances leader. Jason, Jessica, welcome to the show.

**Jason Girzadas**

Thank you. It's great to be here.

**Jessica Kosmowski**

It's great being here. Thanks for having us.

**Hanish Patel**

So, let's just kick straight into this one. Now, many leaders have begun preparing for the future of business post-COVID, but what

## Business leadership in an age of disruption

are the key trends or forces that are really shaping future businesses in the years ahead?

And Jason, I'd like to start with you; given your responsibility for Deloitte's four businesses and leading the global strategy for the US Member firm.

### Jason Girzadas

Yeah, thanks. And I think the question of post-COVID, I think, is an important area to start at the beginning because it's clear that we're not through with COVID and COVID's not through with us. I think we're still rapidly evolving. All organizations of all sizes are adjusting, each and every day, and I think preparing for the next chapter of what COVID has to bring.

But in the background, there are a set of discontinuities, as you say, or fundamental changes that are afoot. And I think COVID in many ways has exacerbated those or accelerated those. But those five systemic issues, in my view, are what we hear from all of our clients across all the businesses.

And they include, first and foremost, the radical innovation of science and technology and the impact in the business environment, and our many other domains in our lives. And sort of keeping pace of what happens next in those two areas is a challenge in and of itself.

There is a significant move also, and we hear constantly the drumbeat around, stakeholder capitalism, and how are we shifting from what has been the historical view on the shareholder emphasis to a broader array of stakeholders. And I think that is profound and pervasive across business and society.

What is the role of globalization? Again, COVID has influenced that in a big way, potentially slowing or changing the definition of globalization. And then in parallel with globalization is a rise in the role of governments, not only here in the US but around the world, given the amount of intervention and spending and investment

that governments are making.

We're also seeing a real fundamental shift towards what we call ecosystems, meaning, how do I collaborate with other parties and other stakeholders to achieve and address a complex and new issue? And that is a rapidly accelerating dynamic.

And then lastly, I would say a lot of recognition that there are new and different sources of power and influence, where we're moving from a hierarchical world to one where there's much more distributed sources of power.

So, COVID has, in many ways, put a spotlight on these systemic drivers and issues, but I think all businesses of all sizes and frankly, all organizations are dealing with those big shifts.

### Hanish Patel

So Jason, as you mentioned around the shifts, and this is kind of where I'd like to bring you in, Jessica. Given how close you are to the market, how it's evolving, what's your perspective on those shifts that Jason has just outlined as well?

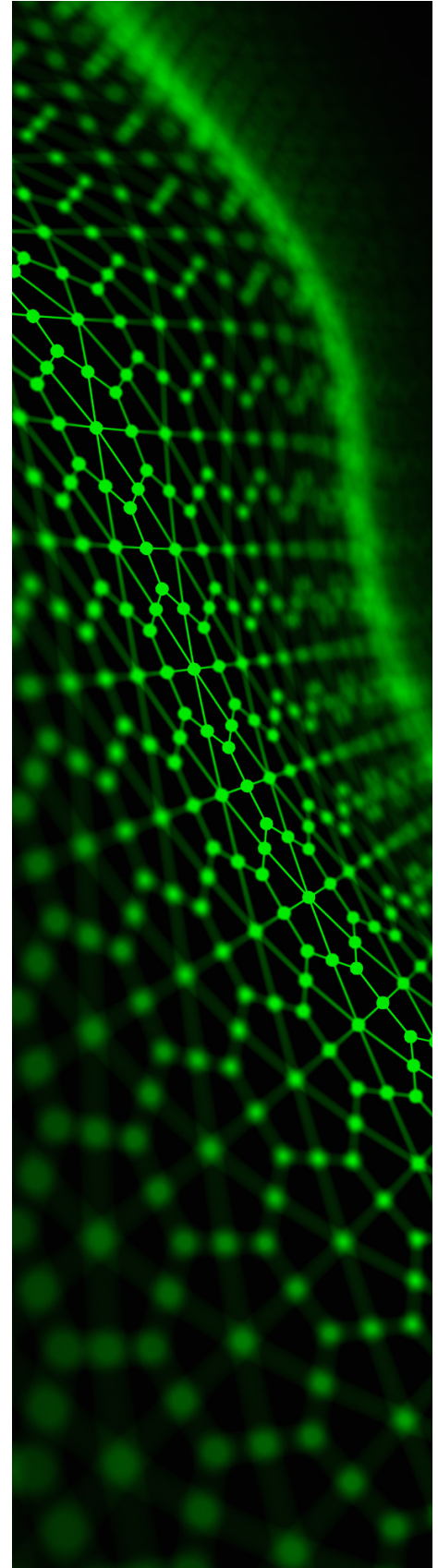
### Jessica Kosmowski

So, as Jason mentioned, one of these discontinuities is centered on exponential progression of technology. Digitization, datafication, advances in connectivity, and increasing specialization are dissolving old structures and blurring old boundaries across the board. And industries are really converging to form dynamic ecosystems.

Every business will continue to need its own strategy, but they will collaborate, compete, and evolve together across multiple boundaries, which of course makes it fun and a little bit more complicated than what we've seen in the past.

### Hanish Patel

So, you mentioned technology as a key discontinuity. How are tech, media, and telecom companies at the center of all of this?



## Business leadership in an age of disruption

### Jessica Kosmowski

Oh, they're at the center of it. That's for sure. So, over the last 60 years, maybe 70, the primary focus of technology has been in digital computing.

We were actually with my grandparents this weekend, and we were talking about the world that they lived in, and of course, that was a very different world. They didn't have electricity, etc. And now, think about the changes we see today.

Now, we're primed for truly unprecedented levels of technological innovation and the emergence of an entirely new scientific discovery model fueled by digitized data and increasingly powerful AI and machine learning algorithms. The learning is exponential, and it's going on every day, all day long.

That coupled with increasing customer expectations—of course, global connectivity, digitization, and data—are changing the way people behave and the way businesses compete every day.

Most of these advances are stemming from companies in tech, in media, and in telecom, and they are absolutely pushing the boundaries in every way possible.

### Hanish Patel

Fantastic. And then Jason, what's your perspective on that, as we were anchoring in on the tech, the media, and telecom companies?

### Jason Girzadas

Yeah, I think tech, media, and telecom are at the center of all these changes, as Jessica said. But what's interesting to me—and we see this in our own business—is the amount of convergence that is occurring, where the relevance of tech, media, and telecom to historic industries or traditional industries like health and well-being, what we're seeing in education, what we're seeing in energy or in national or other forms of security—the importance of tech media and telecom and their influence in these other industries.

So, executives and leaders in every other industry are really leaning in to understand how some of these emerging technologies, whether it's the direction of 5G or what we're seeing with the metaverse or advanced AI, what and how to leverage those technologies for the purposes of being more efficient certainly, but also being more consumer-centric and creating new, different business models in these other traditional industries.

So, I think the intersectionality of TMT, if you will, with other mainstream historic industries is only going to accelerate. And it's a huge obligation of executives in every other industry sector to really be steeped in these emerging tech innovations. And that's going to be their challenge for the foreseeable future.

### Hanish Patel

So, there's something that both of you leaned in on, and Jessica, I'll use your example—you mentioned your grandparents and significant change over the years since their time, shall I say, and where we are today. I'm going to make it a bit easier. I'm not going to say that entire time frame.

Let's just talk the last decade. And if we look at the role in business, when it comes to ecosystems as a whole, how has that changed?

### Jessica Kosmowski

Absolutely. There's been huge breakthroughs in all kinds of technology trends, things like virtual reality, things like AI, things like 5G, etc. These things are coming together now to create more powerful business applications.

And so, it used to be that people could do things single-threadedly, but now that these things are all coming together in real life today, companies are coming together through an ecosystem play to drive things forward in new ways.

So, the *ecosystem* word has become a bit of

a buzzword, but how we think about it is it's about companies coming together to forge strategic collaboration moments, to help them see beyond technology, beyond their walls, and to sense and shape the markets of tomorrow.

So, it's multiple players coming together, maybe taking some of these technologies, adding them together to create markets for the future.

These connections give everyone a diverse experience and capabilities necessary to envision and shape the future of industries around changing demands and environments, which every day in the last decade, things changed in new ways.

It's a different way of doing business. Of course, in the past, companies often had different pieces of technology across different parts of their C-suite applications. So, they might have had a Salesforce S-type thing for their sales and marketing piece, they might have had something for their finance, etc.

But the problem was that those things didn't really link together in a way that we need now for the future. The data from each system usually sat in one system and didn't come together for the flow from top to bottom across the way that the business works.

In addition to ecosystems, we're also seeing companies pull together different players inside their four walls so that they can have a seamless understanding across the entire flow from a consumer perspective, not necessarily from a business function perspective.

So, we see these things happening sort of in two different ways, and that will really help unleash growth, with these companies as well.

The well-designed ecosystem strategy actually takes into case both of these types of ecosystems. One is bringing multiple

## Business leadership in an age of disruption

players together to create and shape new markets across that whole spectrum, but then also, inside their four walls, thinking about how these different systems come together from a consumer-centric perspective.

Business ecosystems really help companies realize new ideas, new growth areas, new value, and untold potential.

### Jason Girzadas

Yeah, from my perspective, I think the ecosystem imperative is really a function of the fact that the issues that organizations face are so complex and so multidimensional that a single organization can no longer solve them most times.

And so, what does that mean? That means that having a competency as an organization around integration, both integration with external parties and integration, as Jessica said, internally, is a core competency that's going to be essential.

And I think for a lot of organizations, it's a real stretch. It's not a common capability set and certainly not a common measurement set to evaluate the effectiveness of integration, the effectiveness of teaming, the effectiveness of co-collaboration, co-development, those sorts of things.

And so, it requires a new scorecard. It requires, frankly, some trust as well in relinquishing of control. But what we've seen in our own alliance relationships, where we as a firm team with third-party tech players, is that you open up a whole nother range of possibilities, and the whole breadth of scope of solutions is enriched dramatically because of ecosystem collaboration.

So, it is a requirement, it's a change. And I think it's going to be a differentiator for leading organizations.

### Hanish Patel

So, I want to dig in a little bit deeper in the direction where both of you are going, as

to kind of what organizations need to do. And let's pivot to our business leaders and our listeners out there who are business leaders, who are leading our organizations into the next decade and beyond.

What are some of the considerations that they need to take when they try and navigate these disruptive dynamics and really position themselves, their organizations to one, help define the future, but also sustain that success that they've had to date as well.

### Jason Girzadas

Well, I think the first thing is to accept that these discontinuities are unsettling and stressful in many ways. And we have a responsibility as leaders, I think, to have a framework to understand them. And then also, importantly, to help an organization and those that are working with us to understand them and not be necessarily intimidated or frightened by the degree of change. Because I think the degree of change is significant.

I think the second consideration is realizing that there is, in these disruptions, significant opportunity. And so, often they're framed as threats, but I think the truth is, is that they represent massive opportunity.

And so, being intentional about where and how an organization intends to create opportunity in the face of these disruptions is, I think, a very energizing and positive responsibility and, I think, can be massively beneficial taking that mindset.

I think over time, organizations and leaders are going to have to develop the ability to adapt, the ability to recognize how the discontinuities that we've been talking about are going to evolve and change over time, and accept that as kind of an operating model and mode for how their organizations need to respond.

And I think the implication then also becomes looking at ways to prepare for and train and expose organizations to what the

possibilities are across these discontinuities in the way that they can be used for good, and for addressing some of the real serious issues that our world and society face.

So, I think business leaders have an opportunity and the chance to really take the high road with respect to these challenges that we've been discussing. What about you, Jessica?

### Jessica Kosmowski

Yeah, I agree. This is disruptive times, and the name of the game is being dynamic and being versatile and being agile. Many corporate leaders are used to working inside their own four walls, except for when they're talking to customers or suppliers. And here it's really about pulling together different leaders to come up with new ideas together.

Jason said it earlier: Trust is the name of the game. Outlining what the high-level intentions are—and not necessarily having a 5,000-page contract with a lot of T's and C's around it, because we don't know where things are going—is a new muscle that people are going to need to flex and use, as we think about these things going forward.

The other thing Jason mentioned was that this can be about doing things for good. What's interesting is we do see some of the world's most intractable problems as being intractable and no organization can solve them by themselves.

But by making some of these choices, they can actually come together to drive things into the world that are actually amazing for the future.

And I think that incorporating social responsibility around this is no longer a nice-to-have but is imperative as leaders think about what they need to do to drive towards the future for all of us.

### Hanish Patel

So, let's stick on that train around doing good. And we think about TMT companies,

## Business leadership in an age of disruption

as their leaders are moving us into the future, their businesses are moving in that way, while also trying to be pretty bold about how they make the world a better place. So, I'd love for the two of you to kind of dig into that a little bit more if we could, and starting with you, Jessica.

### Jessica Kosmowski

Sure. We're already seeing our clients' business models change based on consumer preferences. Anytime anybody clicks into any article or picks up the proverbial paper, you see these types of things. And we see that in spades.

For example, many tech companies are examining their operations and their supply chains in order to minimize carbon emissions. And when they do this, they're going to have huge ramifications across the rest of the world. The tech sector also has the added responsibility and opportunity of developing the products that support decarbonization and will help companies around the world achieve their sustainability goals.

By aligning this pursuit of innovative products with the bottom line, tech companies are not only discovering new opportunities for growth, but they're also helping the world make great strides needed to achieve these sustainability goals. So, it's pretty exciting.

One of my favorite examples of how TMT is leading the future of business is the decade-long, five-Games "partnership with purpose" we've formed with the International Olympic Committee, which is the IOC.

As a worldwide partner, Deloitte will support the IOC with this digital transformation strategy using our digital expertise to help advise areas like personalizing the fan experience, which is amazing, and connecting fans around the world and extending the appeal of the Olympic games between each edition.

Sustainability; diversity, equity, and

inclusion; and athlete career support are the key focus for this partnership.

And we'll use our environmental, social, and governance services to assist the Olympic Movement in driving progress on critical challenges identified in the Olympic Agenda 2020+5 related to corporate governance; strategy; sustainability; diversity, equity, and inclusion; and of course, athlete support and overall well-being.

### Jason Girzadas

Yeah. I love the IOC example, Jessica. I think that it is a testament of leveraging innovation to make a difference.

But if you take a step back and think about all of the discontinuities that we've been talking about here, I think the role of technology and the role of tech media and telecom players—they're going to have a massive impact in solutions to some of the most intractable problems that society faces, whether it's increasing access to health and well-being (which is an issue we started at the beginning talking about COVID), increasing access to education and affordability of remote learning.

What we're seeing around providing information security and protection is a technology-driven challenge. And then as Jessica was talking about the energy crisis and our pivot to renewables, as well as addressing the climate-related challenges, is also going to be inextricably related to technology innovation.

So, the opportunity here is for TMT organizations and solution providers of all sorts to recognize that their solutions are going to be instrumental to some of these most difficult and, I think, timeless challenges that our society faces.

### Hanish Patel

So, firstly, thank you both for going through that at a really nice detailed level in terms of what organizations are doing, what's happening within the industry, how that kind of internal integration is so integral to

success along with what's happening with ecosystems. Frankly, giving our leaders who are listeners some real pointers there to what they need to think about.

With that said, I want to close with just a general question to the both of you. And that's really kind of just getting your final thoughts that you want our listeners to really walk away with after listening to this episode, and what do you want to share with them?

### Jessica Kosmowski

Very quickly, this is not theoretical. This is happening today. We see this with our clients across the spectrum, and if you're a leader and haven't thought about these things, it's time to do so. And if you're a leader in the middle of doing these things, and it seems hard, it's because it is hard, but it's going to make a huge impact. So, it's real, it's happening.

### Jason Girzadas

Yeah. I think for me, the point to emphasize is that business leaders have a role to play. We, I think at times, have shirked some of the responsibility or maybe haven't embraced the fact that we have agency relative to these issues, that these challenges that society faces can be addressed through business leaders in leadership. And we don't need to be observers to these changes.

To Jessica's point, this is not abstract, this is real. These issues are real. I think we've learned through COVID that we can respond to immense challenges and take on the next set of challenges, and business will play a key role. So, I think the time for bold leadership and for recognizing the opportunity as a way for businesses to really step forward and lead is critical.

### Hanish Patel

Brilliant. So, I'm going to try and wrap this one up, because we've covered a lot. But it is certainly clear that as we look to the future, businesses one, will need to change and evolve more frequently, more rapidly, and

## Business leadership in an age of disruption

more dramatically than they've ever done in the past.

And two, the ability to experiment, scale rapidly, focus on societal and environmental impacts as well as profits will really better position themselves as organizations and, frankly, *leaders* of organizations to really bring success during times of uncertainty.

And with that, I want to thank the both of you, Jason, Jessica, for joining me today. And with everything else, until next time, happy listening.

Explore more episodes of  
User Friendly at:

[userfriendly.deloitte.com](https://userfriendly.deloitte.com)

This podcast contains general information only and Deloitte is not, by means of this podcast, rendering accounting, business, financial, investment, legal, tax, or other professional advice or services. This podcast is not a substitute for such professional advice or services, nor should it be used as a basis for any decision or action that may affect your business. Before making any decision or taking any action that may affect your business, you should consult a qualified professional adviser. Deloitte shall not be responsible for any loss sustained by any person who relies on this podcast.

### About Deloitte

Deloitte refers to one or more of Deloitte Touche Tohmatsu Limited, a UK private company limited by guarantee ("DTTL"), its network of member firms, and their related entities. DTTL and each of its member firms are legally separate and independent entities. DTTL (also referred to as "Deloitte Global") does not provide services to clients. In the United States, Deloitte refers to one or more of the US member firms of DTTL, their related entities that operate using the "Deloitte" name in the United States, and their respective affiliates. Certain services may not be available to attest clients under the rules and regulations of public accounting. Please see [www.deloitte.com/about](https://www.deloitte.com/about) to learn more about our global network of member firms.