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Digital Transformation Workshop Canvas – Short-Term Rental (STR) Providers

Develop and implement your digital STR strategy

Marc K. Peter, Reto Baumgartner & Michael Fux





Marc K. Peter, Reto Baumgartner & Michael Fux (2026):
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HES-SO Valais-Wallis School of Management, Sierre/Switzerland

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STR Digital Transformation Workshop Canvas

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1 Customer centricity

For STR providers, customer centricity means understanding the needs of different guest segments and designing a reliable, personal and distinctive guest journey from discovery and booking through arrival, stay, departure and rebooking.

Key STR topics from research
- Target guest segments and travel occasions
- End-to-end guest journey
- Quality, cleanliness and listing accuracy
- Personal service alongside automation
- Comfort, property features and accessibility
- Experiences and additional services
- Reviews, loyalty and repeat bookings
- International and multilingual guests

Strategy questions
- Which guest segments and travel occasions offer us the greatest potential?
- What do these priority guests expect before, during and after their stay, and where does our guest journey create uncertainty, effort or disappointment?
- Do our listings, photos and descriptions set expectations that we consistently meet?
- Which quality standards must be consistent across all properties?
- How should we communicate with guests and which interactions should remain personal while others are automated?
- How do we respond when something goes wrong and who is empowered to fix it immediately?
- Which property improvements would create the greatest guest value and commercial return, such as interior design, renovation, air conditioning, energy efficiency, remote-work facilities, accessibility, wellness or family amenities?
- Which experiences and additional services should we offer?
- How do we systematically capture and use guest feedback beyond public reviews?
- How can we increase guest loyalty, recommendations and repeat bookings?

2 New technologies

For STR providers, new technologies should reduce repetitive work, improve speed and service quality, strengthen security and support profitable growth without creating an unmanageable collection of disconnected tools.

Key STR topics from research
- AI-supported guest communication / guest-experience platforms
- Automated task and workflow management
- Property Management Systems and Channel Managers
- Smart locks and digital check-in
- Cybersecurity and system reliability

Strategy questions
- Which technologies could reduce our greatest operational workload?
- Where can AI improve service, efficiency or decision-making?
- Which activities can be automated, and where is human review required?
- How well do our PMS, Channel Manager, pricing, payment and operation tools integrate?
- Which technology could improve check-in, access and the in-stay experience?
- How will we evaluate technology fit, cost, interfaces and vendor dependency?
- What cybersecurity and business-continuity measures do we require?

3 Data and the cloud

For STR providers, data and cloud capabilities mean creating a reliable and secure basis for understanding guests, controlling profitability, improving operations, enabling automation and meeting regulatory obligations.

Key STR topics from research
- Guest, market, channel and booking data / performance indicators
- Pricing and demand analytics
- Data quality across platforms
- Cloud-based operational information
- Regulatory and compliance data

Strategy questions
- Which data do we need to manage our STR business professionally?
- Do we calculate our performance indicators using consistent definitions?
- Can we determine profitability by property, segment and channel?
- Do we know our direct-booking share and acquisition costs?
- How can data improve pricing, forecasting and operations?
- Is our data reliable and structured enough for AI and automation?
- How will we protect guest, operational and compliance data?

4 New strategies and business models

For STR providers, new strategies and business models mean developing a distinctive and resilient market position, reducing avoidable dependencies and identifying profitable growth opportunities through new segments, services, partnerships, pricing and accommodation concepts.

Key STR topics from research
- Positioning and differentiation
- Direct booking and platform strategy
- Workation, long stays and seasonal offers
- Dynamic pricing and revenue management
- Partnerships and local ecosystems
- Sustainability and resilience
- Regulatory scenarios

Strategy questions
- What makes our STR offer distinctive (for guests and property owners)?
- Which business model fits our risk appetite, capital and margin goals?
- Which guest proposition offers the greatest future potential?
- Should growth come from more properties or better performance from existing ones?
- How can we reduce platform dependency while benefiting from platform reach?
- Which new stay, pricing or service models should we test?
- Which partnerships could enhance our offer and generate revenue?
- How resilient is our model to lower demand, higher costs and regulatory change?

5 Process management

For STR providers, process management means documenting, simplifying, standardising and selectively automating the activities required to deliver a reliable guest experience and profitable operation across every property.

Key STR topics from research
- Guest communication and escalation (booking-to-checkout process)
- Standard operating procedures (incl. cleaning and quality control, maintenance and issue management)
- External service providers
- Accounting and administration
- Tourist-tax and reporting processes

Strategy questions
- Which core STR processes must we document and standardise?
- Where do work, delays, errors or handover problems occur?
- Which process steps can be eliminated, simplified or automated?
- How can bookings trigger communication, access, cleaning and reporting tasks?
- How will we ensure consistent cleaning and quality control?
- How will responsibilities and escalation paths be organised?
- Which processes must be improved before we expand?

6 Digital leadership and culture

For STR providers, digital leadership and culture mean building the competencies, responsibilities, partnerships and working practices required to combine personal hospitality with professional, technology-supported operation.

Key STR topics from research
- Digital and AI competencies / training
  Roles and responsibilities; staff shortages and recruitment
- Change management / human service versus automation
- Partner and supplier capabilities
- Responsible AI and technology governance

Strategy questions
- Which digital capabilities will our business require?
- Which capabilities should be internal and which can be external?
- How can technology address staff shortages without weakening hospitality?
- What AI and digital training do owners, staff and partners need?
- What rules will guide responsible AI use?
- How can we encourage experimentation and measure results?
- How will we reduce dependence on individual people and retain operational knowledge?

7 Digital marketing

For STR providers, digital marketing means attracting the right guests through an effective mix of platforms and direct channels while improving visibility, conversion, repeat booking and net revenue.

Key STR topics from research
- Platform and direct-channel strategy / channel profitability
  Bookable website and conversion
- Content, listing quality and photography / search and AI visibility
- Social media, targeted campaigns, reviews and reputation
- CRM and repeat-guest communication / marketing automation
- Regional and partner marketing

Strategy questions
- Which segments, source markets and travel occasions should we target?
- What should our optimal mix of platforms and direct channels look like?
- What direct-booking share should we target?
- How can our website generate more profitable bookings?
- How will we improve listings, content and search or AI visibility?
- How can CRM and automation increase repeat bookings?
- How will we measure channel performance based on net value rather than gross revenue?

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How to use the workshop canvas for digital transformation

The workshop canvas for digital transformation delivers quick results. In a one-day workshop, your team covers the seven action fields of digital transformation with the help of pre-defined topics and questions to compile and describe challenges, opportunities and project ideas. In this way, the organisation's management is intentionally using the collective knowledge of the organisation and ensures that the experiences, ideas and suggestions for improvement from employees are incorporated into the strategy development.

In three steps, the workshop canvas for digital transformation will enable you to develop your digital roadmap that will empower your teams and increase your competitiveness in the digital age:

Step 1: Workshops
In one-day workshops and by answering the workshop questions, the team identifies opportunities for the strategy, and countless suggestions and project ideas emerge. The results from the workshops are documented and the completed workshop canvas is recorded in a photo log or screenshot when workshopped with virtual teams. Then the results are communicated to those within the organisation and the employees thanked for their energy and ideas.

Step 2: Ideas and priorities
The project ideas (candidates) are collected and categorised by topic. For this purpose, either use the action fields for categorisation or create new, organisation-specific categories. Often, ideas are grouped into 'possible projects'. The project ideas are now discussed by the project team or by management. A second workshop day is held for this purpose. Afterwards, management can discuss and prioritise the proposals.

Step 3: The digital roadmap
Ultimately, the project candidates that are selected and supported by management or the board of directors lead to the digital roadmap. The digital roadmap is the lightest form of a digital strategy: it summarises and describes all strategic initiatives/projects that will support your success in the digital age. Visit www.the-digital-transformation-canvas.com for an example and template of the digital roadmap.



The workshop canvas helps an organisation to quickly and leanly arrive at a digital strategy, the digital roadmap.

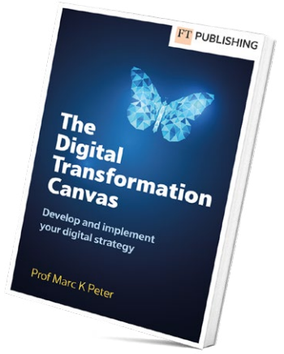
Partnership

In partnership with the Swiss Short Term Rental Association (SSTRA). Visit www.sstra.ch for further information.

The book

The practical book on digital transformation provides insights and the digital transformation canvas on how to tackle all important digital topics. Together, you and your colleagues will develop a digital roadmap with clearly described steps that will lead to your business strategy for the digital age.

Now available
in your bookstore!



The main author

Marc K Peter is Professor of Digital Business at the HES-SO Valais-Wallis School of Management (Switzerland) and faculty member at the University of Bern (Switzerland) and University of Rochester (USA) Rochester-Bern Executive Programs, at the University of Basel (Switzerland) and at Charles Sturt University (Australia).

He has over 30 years of professional experience in SMEs and large enterprises, including eBay, E*TRADE (ANZ) and LexisNexis in Europe and Asia-Pacific. Over the past decade, he supported many organisations in their pursuit of digital transformation, among others, Accenture, Amnesty International, BDO, Canon, Caritas, Lenovo, Logitech, Mayo Clinic, MSD, Sharp, Siemens, Swisscom and T-Systems.

Visit www.digitalprof.com to contact the author.



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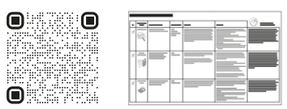
Online resources



Download the SME canvas for digital transformation:
www.the-digital-transformation-canvas.com/canvas



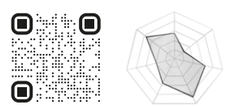
Download the ACT method – extended workshop canvas:
www.the-digital-transformation-canvas.com/act-canvas



Download the ACT method checklist:
www.the-digital-transformation-canvas.com/act-checklist



Download the digital roadmap template and SME example:
www.the-digital-transformation-canvas.com/roadmap



Complete the Digital Strategy Check
for an assessment of your digital maturity:
www.digital-strategy-check.com

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