

# How can the digitalized, agile organization of the future still be rooted in human values?

Global Business Services  
(GBS)



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Building a better  
working world

**Global Business Services will soon be the engine for a transformation based on technology and value – firstly of processes, and then of the entire organization. And while software robots will manage a huge proportion of both routine and cognitive work, people won't get outsmarted.**

Imagine your organization in 2025: your purpose and your Global Business Services (GBS) have intertwined and evolved together to drive stakeholder value. With a robust governance model in place, GBS has become a key pillar of the organization; it is the main keeper of processes, data and technology, and hothouses innovation and talent.

Software robots now handle every back-office process, and self-learning cognitive computers answer customer queries, support business areas such as marketing and make mission-critical decisions.

This leaves your human employees to focus on value-adding, relationship-based and strategic activities, always working closely with technology. New career paths have opened and in-house talent pools are continually developed and upskilled.

The transformation has achieved enormous efficiency, harnessed automation and innovation, and enabled your organization to pursue ever-greater value – both financially and emotionally. You have leaner cost structures, greater competitiveness and agility, and more control over disruption. Your customers (whether employees, consumers or clients) enjoy exceptional service – deeper relationships, seamless interfaces and faster workflow.

We foresee several key themes in this future. Wherever you are on your SSC or GBS journey, now is the time to start making them happen.



## **Trend #1:** Global integration – a single superorganization

Organizations of all kinds can now behave just like start-ups. This is because GBS has delivered on all its promises of efficiency: processes, governance and IT architecture are clearly defined and standardized globally, so companies can operate in a more agile way.

Process design is going beyond end-to-end, and now addresses how people engage with the organization one-to-one, drawing on a vast catalog of services. Global IT architecture is integrated across an ecosystem of specialist suppliers, and a constantly evolving set of rules governs how technology and processes combine to deliver a consistent experience to customers, wherever they are.

Within a new “hybrid” operating model, the balance of captive and outsourced services shifts constantly according to demand; in some places outsourcing is disappearing as intercompany sourcing models are established and technology enables every process to be brought in-house or in-country.

## **Trend #2:** Interaction technology – rewriting the DNA of future businesses

Cumbersome ERP dinosaurs are a distant memory – organizations no longer spend years and fortunes on vast platform integrations that are obsolete by the time they're deployed. Instead, plug-in robotics solutions have acted as middleware to fill the gaps where legacy platforms and technologies are not delivering, on the way to a completely new bespoke platform that can constantly evolve. There is a proliferation of technology vendors all vying for the opportunity to co-create new and agile outcome-based solutions to build into overall platform.

All this technology resides in the cloud, the primary data and communications infrastructure. The cloud enables intelligent, actionable realtime analytics and bespoke plugin apps that help increase agility. It also enables mobility in every area of operations – customers and employees can complete any process or transaction seamlessly via a mobile device, creating value through convenience.

## **Trend #3:** Automation and innovation – performance through perfecting processes

Every process that can be automated, has been: transactions are fulfilled without touch; tax returns are completed automatically; audit robots analyze complete sets of corporate data. As software robots have become even more advanced and, at last, trusted, organizations are deploying them extensively to support higher-value activities. In this way, cognitive technology and the automation of everything is the foundation for efficiency.

Disruptive trends can be predicted and harnessed because GBS is setting up experience centers with co-innovators to test new methods and approaches. This is critical particularly for older organizations, competing against “born digital” emergent disruptors.

## **Trend #4:** Intelligent analytics – from decision support to decision-making

Intelligent analytics continuously feed self-learning computers: and AI is capable of making huge decisions by mining vast oceans of data and considering millions of possible outcomes.

That data is coming from transactions, blockchain, social media, the IoT and elsewhere in the ecosystem – and it's all housed in GBS. As the data gets deeper and more disparate, real-time analytics as a service is pulling out new insights and make them instantly actionable. Decisions are made faster than ever before – and with certainty.

## **Trend #5:** Customer – seeing the individual in the crowds

By showing the wider enterprise how customers can be uniquely served, and the value this creates, GBS has redefined CRM for the whole organization.

Customer experience – whether for consumer, client, employee or candidate – is now a key differentiator and driver of value for organizations. Individualization is key: everyone is understood and their needs met, interfacing via their own preferred channels. The fully integrated digital GBS enables consistent transparency in customer interactions, anywhere in the world, and employees can leverage automation and cognitive computing to nurture more attuned individual customer relationships.

## **Trend #6:** People – still a valuable resource

GBS is the hothouse for talent, finding and developing people, particularly in emerging markets, to bring into the main organization. This is redesigning career paths – rotational trainee programs include extensive GBS exposure, and future leaders are forged in its agile, innovative environment.

Widespread automation is, contrary to initial doubts, actually creating more value for employees: it is facilitating a focus on accelerated, high-value work. The ecosystem model is the norm, so collaboration and networking is key; where there's chemistry there's differentiation. And there's satisfaction too: an end-to-end view of the organization's processes and performance helps employees see the importance of their own role.

## **Trend #7:** Acute awareness – risk and cybersecurity as daily considerations

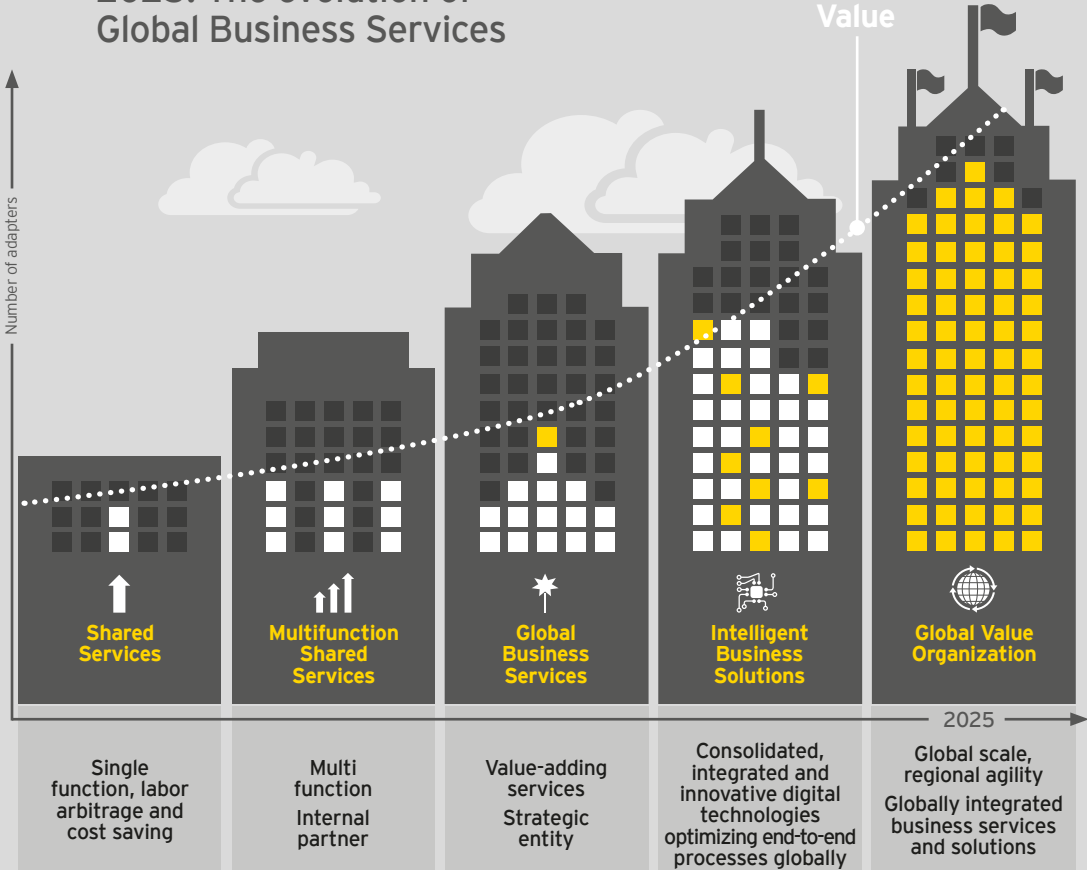
The most successful companies, those fully embracing the potential of GBS, get these fundamentals right from day one: all areas of risk (including digital, cyber and financial) are daily considerations. These companies take huge risks in their strategies – but decisions that are driven by intelligent analytics, and made by cognitive computers, are much less “risky”. However, organizations like this are mostly virtual, so security demands the tightest cybersecurity. Accordingly, GBS centers of excellence are developing security bots capable of automatically testing every fiber of the cloud infrastructure for vulnerabilities without downtime.



# Making this future happen

This is how EY sees the future of GBS: a highly effective, bespoke combination of automation, innovation, efficiency and technology, all tied together with human connections and insight, driving unique streams of value for the organization.

## 2025: The evolution of Global Business Services



# So how can you make this future happen?

There are three overarching steps in the GBS evolution:

## 1. Address maximum efficiency

## 2. Embrace automation and innovation

## 3. Drive value

The journey firstly achieves maximum efficiency, and via automation and innovation drives the organization's activities ever-further up the value chain – taking processes, technology and people with it.

However, there are no shortcuts. While it's not a linear A to B journey, each step has to be taken to yield all the potential benefits.

From the very beginning of the digital- and value-based transformation that GBS will drive, governance will be critical: organizations must map out SLAs and establish disciplined reporting lines for processes at the design stage so that GBS governance covers the whole organization; creating a GBS board that represents every function will avoid complications and enable GBS to focus on value-adding strategy.

And once again the key ingredient will be people: the transformation will rely on a strong corporate mandate, effective change management and collaboration. Working toward people excellence will become critical as roles (C-suite included) will be repurposed to become more business-focused.

There will be challenges, without a doubt. But they will be worth it. And it's now up to organizations to define their own transformation and yield their advantage – before their competitors do.



# GBS: from driving efficiency to addressing value

Processes – Operating model – Start-up behaviour  
Global integration

Efficiency

Develop & expand rapid process automation

Operationalize disruption

Automation & Innovation

Value

Acute awareness

Risk  
Cybersecurity

Interaction technology

Platforms  
The Cloud  
Mobility

Intelligent analytics

Data  
Analytics  
Artificial intelligence & cognitive computing

Customer

Customer experience  
Singular delivery

People

Employee enrichment  
Relationship management  
Talent sourcing and development

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