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STRATEGIC BENCHMARKING AS A CATALYST FOR TEAM DEVELOPMENT IN THE DIGITAL ERA

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As the process of business digitalization accelerates across industries, organizations increasingly tend to prioritize investments in technological infrastructure while underestimating the necessity of parallel development in human capital. Such an imbalance contributes to the formation of a "digital maturity gap," characterized by a discrepancy between the availability of advanced digital tools and the actual capacity of teams to utilize them effectively. In many cases, employees continue to operate within entrenched managerial paradigms, relying on hierarchical coordination, synchronous communication patterns, and limited data-driven decision-making. As a result, even highly sophisticated software systems fail to deliver their full strategic value, leading to suboptimal performance outcomes and constrained organizational adaptability.

This paper proposes a strategic benchmarking framework specifically oriented toward team management development (TMD), addressing the need to align technological advancement with human and organizational capabilities. In contrast to traditional operational benchmarking, which primarily evaluates firm-level outputs and efficiency metrics, the proposed approach focuses on the underlying drivers of team effectiveness in digital environments. It emphasizes the transformation of behavioral routines, the reconfiguration of cognitive models related to problem-solving and collaboration, and the redesign of structural interaction mechanisms within teams.

The research explores a four-phase implementation model: (1) Internal Assessment of digital fluency and "shadow IT" behaviors; (2) An external horizon scan of "gold standard" digital leaders; (3) A gap analysis utilizing modern digital KPIs such as async-to-sync ratios and psychological safety indices; and (4) Integration strategies focused on 70-20-10 learning models and leadership as "systems architecture."

The study argues that successful digitalization is 20% technical and 80% cultural. Strategic benchmarking serves as the critical diagnostic bridge, allowing leaders to move from "status update" management to "outcome-based" empowerment.

By treating benchmarking as a dynamic, continuous loop rather than a static audit, organizations can foster teams that are not only digitally literate but strategically agile. This framework provides a practical roadmap for leaders to align human potential with the rapid velocity of the contemporary digital economy.

Key words: Strategic benchmarking, team management development, digital transformation, asynchronous communication, psychological safety, agile leadership.

Левченко А. О., Левченко О. М. Стратегічний бенчмаркінг як каталізатор розвитку команди в цифрову епоху

Оскільки процес цифровізації бізнесу прискорюється в усіх галузях, організації дедалі частіше схильні надавати пріоритет інвестиціям у технологічну інфраструктуру, недооцінюючи при цьому необхідність паралельного розвитку людського капіталу. Такий дисбаланс сприяє формуванню «розриву в цифрових компетенціях», що характеризується невідповідністю між наявністю передових цифрових інструментів та реальною здатністю команди ефективно їх використовувати. У багатьох випадках працівники продовжують функціонувати в межах сталих управлінських парадигм, покладаючись на ієрархічну координацію, синхронні моделі комунікації та обмежене прийняття рішень на основі даних. Як наслідок,

навіть надскладні програмні системи не спроможні реалізувати свою повну стратегічну цінність, що призводить до субоптимальних результатів діяльності та обмеженої організаційної адаптивності.

У цій статті розглядається структура стратегічного бенчмаркінгу, спеціально орієнтована на розвиток управління командами (TMD), що задовольняє потребу в узгодженні технологічного прогресу з людськими та організаційними можливостями. На відміну від традиційного операційного бенчмаркінгу, який переважно оцінює результати на рівні фірми та показники ефективності, запропонований підхід зосереджується на фундаментальних чинниках ефективності команди в цифровому середовищі. Він акцентує увагу на трансформації поведінкових рутин, реконфігурації когнітивних моделей, пов'язаних із вирішенням проблем і співпрацею, а також перегляді структурних механізмів взаємодії всередині команд.

У дослідженні обґрунтовано чотириетапну модель впровадження: 1. Внутрішня оцінка цифрової вільності та поведінки «тіньових ІТ». 2. Зовнішнє сканування горизонту цифрових лідерів «золотого стандарту». 3. Аналіз розривів з використанням сучасних цифрових KPI, таких як коефіцієнти асинхронності та синхронізації та індекси психологічної безпеки. 4. Стратегії інтеграції, зосереджені на моделях навчання 70-20-10 та лідерстві як «системній архітектурі».

У дослідженні стверджується, що успішна цифровізація на 20% є технічною та на 80% культурною. Стратегічний бенчмаркінг служить критичним діагностичним містком, що дозволяє лідерам перейти від управління «оновленням стану» до розширення можливостей «на основі результатів».

Розглядаючи бенчмаркінг як динамічний, безперервний цикл, а не статичний процес, організації можуть сприяти формуванню команд, які не лише володіють достатніми цифровими компетентностями, але й є стратегічно гнучкими. Таке бачення надає менеджерам практичну дорожню карту для узгодження людського потенціалу зі швидкими темпами трансформації сучасної цифрової економіки.

Ключові слова: стратегічний бенчмаркінг, розвиток командного менеджменту, цифрова трансформація, асинхронна комунікація, психологічна безпека, гнучке лідерство.

Introduction. In the extremely rapid development of the digital economy, the main competitive factor has shifted from the possession of technologies to the ability to use them effectively. As organisations fill their ecosystems with generative AI, autonomous agents and sophisticated asynchronous platforms, the digital maturity gap has emerged, characterised by paradoxical friction. While infrastructure is upgraded in cycles of months, human management paradigms often remain tethered to legacy twentieth-century frameworks. This "socio-technical friction" suggests that many teams are merely applying digital tools to antiquated, synchronous, and hierarchical workflows that stifle the very agility digitalization is meant to provide.

Current scholarship has frequently succumbed to the "tool-first fallacy," a reductionist view that equates technological acquisition with organizational evolution. While the literature on digital maturity models (Westerman) and individual technology acceptance (TAM) is robust, there remains a distinct scholarly silence regarding the behavioral architecture of the team unit [16]. Specifically, how do we benchmark the "rituals of collaboration" that allow a team to transition from being passive users of technology to becoming "architects of augmentation"?

This paper argues that the remedy lies in a fundamental reimagining of strategic benchmarking. Moving beyond the traditional focus on operational firm-level outputs, this research proposes a behavioral and cognitive framework designed for team management development (TMD). By shifting the benchmarking lens from "what the competitor does" to "how the digital leader collaborates," organizations can identify the precise "capability delta" hindering their progress [3].

The proposed study explores a sequential, recursive four-phase implementation model:

1. Internal assessment: A diagnostic "X-ray" of digital fluency and cultural readiness.

2. External horizon scanning: An cross-industry search for “Gold Standard” digital management rituals.
3. Gap analysis: The quantification of structural and behavioral friction using modern indices like async-to-sync ratios and psychological safety levels.
4. Integration & action: The application of the 70-20-10 learning model to foster a shift from “command and control” to “context and outcome.”

This paper contends that successful digitalization is 20% technical and 80% cultural. By treating benchmarking as a dynamic catalyst for team evolution rather than a static audit, leaders can bridge the execution gap, ensuring that human potential remains the primary engine of value in an increasingly automated world.

Literature Analysis: The Convergence Gap in Strategic Benchmarking and TMD. Historical literature on benchmarking, pioneered by Robert Camp and the Xerox models, primarily defines the tool as a quest for operational excellence. The focus has traditionally been on “hard metrics” – cost reduction, cycle times, and manufacturing outputs [3].

Contemporary research often fails to translate these macro-organizational benchmarks into micro-level team management development (TMD). While scholars like Watson argued for benchmarking as a learning process, the literature remains largely focused on the *firm's* performance rather than the *team's* behavioral evolution. There is a “missing link” in how a benchmarked digital strategy should dictate the specific leadership competencies required to manage a digital-first team.

Much of the current literature on business digitalization focuses on the “digital maturity” of an organization. Research frequently utilizes the technology acceptance model (TAM) to explain how teams adopt new software [16]. The difference between the “traditional view” and the “contemporary digital view” of benchmarking role in team development process stated in table 1.

Despite a decade of research into digital maturity models Westerman and technology acceptance models (TAM), a critical “execution gap” remains in the organizational transition to the digital era. Conventional scholarship has largely treated business digitalization as a technical acquisition phase, focusing on the firm’s infrastructure rather than the team's behavioral architecture. This “tool-first fallacy” assumes that high-performance digital tools automatically produce high-performance digital teams.

However, contemporary research from 2021–2026 reveals that technical integration often outpaces team management development (TMD), leading to “management debt” and socio-technical friction. While we have robust frameworks for benchmarking a company’s software stack, there is a distinct scholarly silence regarding the strategic benchmarking of team rituals. Most models fail to account for collective digital efficacy or the nuances of human-agent teaming (HAT), leaving managers without a diagnostic tool to measure the gap between their technical potential and their team's procedural reality [4]. Consequently, teams often become “passive recipients” of technology rather than a dynamic unit that must be benchmarked against “best-in-class” human collaboration models. The literature tells us what tools to buy, but stays silent on how to benchmark the team management rituals necessary to survive the digital shift.

Table 1

**The contrast between the "traditional view" and the "contemporary digital view"
of benchmarking role in team development process**

Research Focus	Traditional Perspective (Pre-2021)	Contemporary Digital Perspective (2021–2026)	The Benchmarking Gap
Primary Goal	technology acceptance (tam).	collective digital efficacy	measuring team fluency, not just individual use.
Team Structure	hierarchical/synchronous	modular/asynchronous (hat).	lack of benchmarks for "decision velocity" in ai-agent teams
Success Metric	software implementation rate.	value velocity & contextual agility.	failure to benchmark "management rituals" against digital leaders.
Human Element	employee as "user."	employee as "system architect."	absence of metrics for "trust calibration" with autonomous agents.

Source: Developed by author based on [4]

Traditional management literature treats benchmarking as a periodic, static event (annual or bi-annual). However, the literature on agile management and digital transformation emphasizes "continuous iteration." There is an emerging theoretical gap regarding dynamic benchmarking. Contemporary research has not yet fully explored how teams can use real-time digital data (from Slack, Jira, or AI analytics) as a continuous benchmarking tool for team development. We have a wealth of data on individual performance management, but a scarcity of research on team-level strategic benchmarking in high-velocity digital environments.

Problem Statement. Traditional management models, built for synchronous manual labor, are increasingly obsolete in a world defined by human-agent teaming (HAT) and high-velocity digital workflows. While the software stack has evolved into high-velocity, autonomous systems, team management rituals remain tethered to legacy, synchronous paradigms. This socio-technical misalignment results in increased digital friction, lower "value velocity," and an erosion of psychological safety. Furthermore, existing benchmarking methodologies focus almost exclusively on organizational-level metrics (ROI, uptime), leaving a significant scholarly and practical gap in how to benchmark and develop the meso-level team rituals necessary for human-agent teaming (HAT). Without a structured framework to audit, scan, and bridge the gap between technical potential and team behavior, digitalization remains a technical burden rather than a competitive superpower.

Research Objective. This paper proposes a strategic benchmarking framework designed specifically for team management development (TMD). Unlike traditional operational benchmarking, which focuses on firm-level outputs, this approach targets the behavioral, cognitive, and structural shifts required for high-performance digital collaboration.

Strategic Benchmarking Process for Team Development. In this paper is presented a reimagined Four-phase strategic benchmarking model (Figure 1.) designed to transform managers from "supervisors of tasks" into "architects of augmentation"[8].

This model succeeds where traditional benchmarking fails because it moves beyond "hard metrics" (like ROI or output) and focuses on "Dynamic Capabilities" – the ability of a team to integrate, build, and reconfigure internal and external competencies to address rapidly changing environments.

This process is sequential and recursive, designed to link digital strategy directly to team behavioral evolution:

Phase 1: Internal assessment (The reality check). Before looking at others, you need an honest "X-ray" of your current team. In the digital age, this goes beyond just asking if everyone can use Zoom.

Phase 2: Identifying external best practices (The horizon scan). Strategic benchmarking looks for the "why" behind the "what." You aren't looking for a company that uses the same software; you're looking for one that solves the same team dynamic challenges.

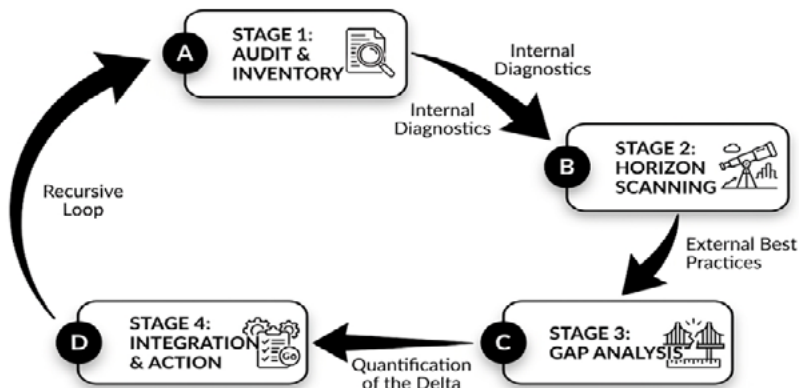


Fig. 1. Four-Stage Strategic Benchmarking Process for Team Development Scheme

Source: Developed by author based on [8]

Phase 3: Gap analysis (The distance measurement). This is where you quantify the "Capability Gap." It's the bridge between where you are and where the digital leaders sit.

Phase 4: Integration & action (The transformation). This is the hardest part: moving from "knowing" to "doing." Benchmarking without action is just useless.

Phase 1: Internal assessment (The reality check).

Phase 1 is the "mirror" phase. Before you can look at the industry giants, you have to be brutally honest about your own backyard. In a digitalized context, this isn't just an IT inventory; it's a deep dive into the intersection of human behavior and technology.

The foundation of strategic benchmarking is a comprehensive internal audit. To develop a team for the digital era, management must first understand the "Baseline Reality." This phase moves beyond surface-level metrics to evaluate two critical pillars: Human Digital Fluency and Operational Tool Utilization.

1.1. The Human capital audit: beyond "digital literacy"

Digital literacy (knowing how to use a tool) is no longer enough. Phase 1 assesses digital fluency – the ability to use technology to create new value and solve complex problems.

- Cognitive adaptability: Measuring the team's "Learning quotient" (LQ). How quickly do team members adopt new software updates or AI-driven workflows?
- Virtual collaboration skills: Assessing the team's ability to maintain trust, clarity, and social cohesion in a decentralized, digital environment.
- Data-driven decision making: Evaluating whether team members at all levels can interpret basic analytics to guide their daily tasks, or if they remain reliant on top-down instructions.

1.2. Digital tool utilization: The "utility vs. noise" audit

Companies often suffer from "SaaS overload." This part of the audit determines if your digital stack is an accelerator or an anchor.

- The feature-function gap: Identifying tools that are paid for but only used to 10% of their capacity. (e.g., using Microsoft Teams only for chat while ignoring its robust project management integration).
- Shadow IT discovery: Uncovering unofficial tools (e.g., personal WhatsApp groups or unsanctioned AI tools) that the team has adopted. Note: Shadow IT is often a signal of a gap in official corporate tools.
- Workflow bottlenecks: Mapping the "Digital path of a project." Where does information get stuck? Where is there manual data entry that should be automated?

1.3. Cultural and psychological baseline

Digitalization fails when the "Human Operating System" rejects it. An internal assessment must gauge the team's psychological readiness for a shift in management style.

- Digital fatigue levels: Using pulse surveys to measure burnout related to "always-on" digital culture.
- Psychological safety audit: Do team members feel safe reporting a digital error or suggesting a technological pivot? High-performance benchmarking requires a culture where "failing fast" is a data point, not a career-ender.

1.4. Establishing internal KPIs (The baseline)

To measure the "Gap" in Phase 3, you must record current performance metrics today. These should include:

- Cycle time: The average time from project inception to completion.
- Meeting-to-output ratio: How many hours are spent in synchronous meetings versus time spent on "Deep work."
- Employee net promoter score (eNPS) for tools: How satisfied is the team with the digital tools they are forced to use daily?

The goal of Phase 1 is to create a "digital maturity map." This map highlights that the problem is rarely "we don't have enough software," but rather "we haven't developed the team's capabilities to match our software's potential."

By starting with a rigorous internal audit, we prevent the common mistake of "benchmarking for the sake of benchmarking." We are ensuring that the development plan created in Phase 4 is a remedy for actual internal pains, rather than just a copy of a trendy corporate fad.

Phase 2: Identifying external best practices – The Horizon scan

Phase 2 is the "inspiration" stage. In strategic benchmarking, you aren't just looking for someone who does what you do you are looking for someone who does a specific

function (like remote collaboration or AI – integration) better than anyone else, regardless of their industry.

While traditional benchmarking focuses on direct competitors, Strategic Benchmarking in the digital age requires a "Horizon scan." This involves looking beyond industry boundaries to identify "digital north stars" – organizations that have mastered specific team dynamics that your organization aspires to achieve.

In a digitalized landscape, your biggest threat or your greatest lesson rarely comes from a direct rival.

Phase 2 requires Functional benchmarking, which isolates specific team management processes.

- Process isolation: Instead of asking, "How does our competitor manage teams?" ask, "Who manages asynchronous communication best in the world?"
- The "Unrelated industry" pivot: A traditional manufacturing firm might look at a video game studio to learn about "sprints" and "agile leadership," or a hospital might look at an airline to learn about "digital safety protocols."

Selecting the "Gold standard" leaders. In this stage, we should highlight specific organizations that have defined the modern digital workforce. These serve as the "Benchmarks" against which your team will be measured. (Table 2)

Table 2

Organizations that have defined the modern digital workforce

Digital Leader	Benchmarked Capability	Unique company experience
GitLab	Extreme Asynchronicity	Handbook-first approach; every process is documented, eliminating the need for status meetings
Google	Psychological Safety	Project Aristotle proved that high-performing digital teams require an environment where members feel safe to take risks
Amazon	Micro-Team Autonomy	The "Two-Pizza Rule": keeping teams small enough to maintain high velocity and ownership in a digital ecosystem
Netflix	Radical Candor & Context	Moving away from "Control" to "Context," allowing remote/digital teams to make high-stakes decisions without a manager

Source: Developed by author based on [18–21]

The Role of digital intelligence (DI) in scanning. In 2026, the "Horizon scan" is no longer just about reading annual reports. It involves leveraging digital footprints to understand how these teams operate:

– Open-source culture – many digital leaders (like GitLab or Basecamp) publish their internal "Team Handbooks" online. Benchmarking involves a deep dive into these public repositories of culture.

– Digital sentiment analysis – using AI tools to analyze Glassdoor reviews, LinkedIn "Life" posts, and developer forums (like Stack Overflow) to understand the actual lived experience of teams at these benchmarked companies [1].

– Networking in digital hubs – engaging in global digital communities to gather qualitative data on "unwritten" best practices.

Defining the "Ideal state". The output of Phase 2 is a detailed profile of the "Ideal

digital team." This profile is a composite of the best practices found during the scan. It serves as the "yardstick" for the rest of the strategic process.

The goal of the Horizon scan is not to mimic Google or Amazon. It is to identify the underlying principles (e.g., trust, data-transparency, automation) that allow their teams to thrive, and then adapt those principles to your specific organizational DNA.

Mention that the "Horizon scan" must be continuous. Because digitalization moves so fast, a best practice from 24 months ago might already be obsolete. Encourage the idea of "dynamic benchmarking," where the horizon is scanned at least twice a year.

Phase 3: Gap analysis – Measuring the digital "delta"

In this phase, we are moving from observation to calculation. Phase 3 is the analytical "bridge" where we quantify the friction between our team's current reality and the digital high-performance standard we identified in Phase 2.

If Phase 1 is the diagnostic and Phase 2 is the vision, Phase 3 is the quantification of the distance between them. In the context of digital transformation, a gap analysis must go beyond identifying missing software; it must identify the "capability delta" – the difference between a team that *uses* digital tools and a team that is optimized by them.

The first layer of analysis involves mapping the team's current performance against the benchmarked KPIs.

Measuring the difference between basic tool usage and advanced digital fluency. For example, if the benchmarked "gold standard" uses AI for 40% of code documentation, but the internal team uses it for 0%, the gap is clearly defined in terms of missed efficiency.

Comparing the speed of decision-making. In a digitalized environment, "speed is a feature." If the benchmarked organization makes decentralized decisions in hours, while the internal team requires three layers of manual approval taking days, the gap is a structural bottleneck.

To make the analysis actionable for team development, the identified discrepancies should be categorized into three distinct tiers:

1. *Structural gaps (Tools & Infrastructure)* – these are the "easiest" to fix but the most expensive. They include outdated hardware, lack of integrated software ecosystems, or poor data accessibility.

2. *Process Gaps (workflow & methodology)* – these represent how work moves through the team. A common digital gap is the persistence of synchronous "status update" meetings when the benchmarked standard favors asynchronous documentation.

• *Behavioral gaps (culture & mindset)* – the most critical tier. This includes the gap in psychological safety (the ability to fail fast and digitally) and leadership agility. Not every gap can – or should – be closed simultaneously. Strategic benchmarking requires a *prioritization matrix* to determine which gaps offer the highest "Return on Development" (ROD) (Figure 2).

– High impact / low effort: These are "Quick Wins," such as adopting a new communication ritual (e.g., "No-Meeting Wednesdays").

– High impact / high effort: These are the long-term strategic shifts, such as migrating a legacy team to a fully agile, data-driven workflow (Fig. 2).

The phase concludes with a risk assessment of inaction. By quantifying what the "Delta" costs the company in terms of employee turnover, slowed innovation, and lost market share, management creates the necessary urgency for the development programs in Phase 4.

In real cases, the gap is rarely just about technology. Most digital gaps are actually human-process gaps where old ways of thinking are being applied to new digital tools.

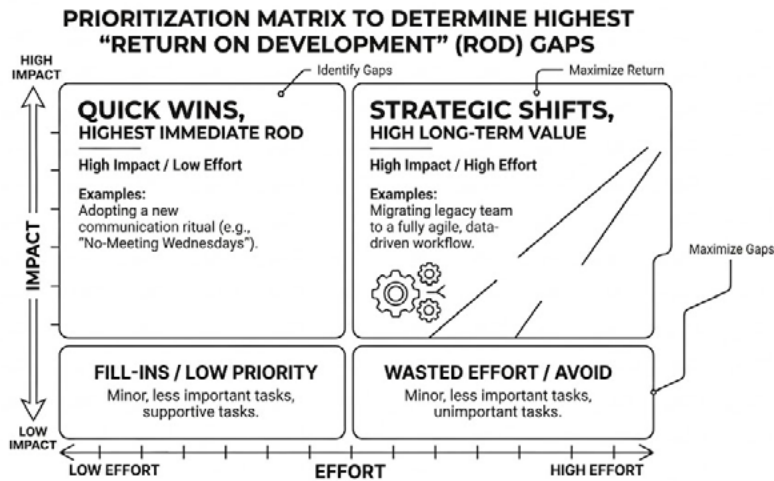


Fig. 2. Prioritization Matrix to determine which gaps offer the highest «Return on Development» (ROD)

Source: Developed by author

Your analysis should highlight that "paving over the cow path" (digitizing a bad manual process) doesn't close the gap – it just makes the inefficiency happen faster.

Phase 4 is the "make or break" moment. You've done the research, you've seen the "Gold Standard," and you know your team's gaps. Now, you have to actually change human behavior – which is significantly harder than installing new software.

In the context of *business digitalization*, Integration & Action must be as agile as the technology itself. Here's how you expand this section of your paper.

Phase 4: Integration & action – bridging the digital divide

This phase focuses on turning benchmarking data into a living development plan. It requires a two-pronged approach: Hard skills (The digital) and soft leadership (The human).

A shift in capability development is required, moving away from conventional "training" formats toward a more immersive and practice-oriented learning paradigm. Traditional corporate video-based instruction is insufficient for addressing strategic capability gaps, particularly when organizations aim to align with the performance standards of digitally advanced firms. Instead, emphasis should be placed on high-impact learning approaches that integrate experience, collaboration, and targeted knowledge acquisition.

Within this context, the widely recognized 70–20–10 framework offers a relevant structure. The dominant share of learning, approximately seventy percent, should be embedded in practical activity. This implies assigning team members, particularly those with an affinity for digital innovation, to lead initiatives that apply new methodologies, such as the integration of artificial intelligence in analytical processes. A further twenty percent of development emerges through social interaction, where knowledge exchange becomes reciprocal. One effective mechanism is reverse mentoring, whereby digitally proficient junior employees support more senior staff in mastering contemporary collaborative tools and platforms. The remaining ten percent is associated with formalized learning, including specialized training programs, certifications, or workshops that

directly address previously identified competency gaps [17].

In parallel, organizations must prioritize the development of AI-related competencies, given that digital transformation is increasingly inseparable from the adoption of artificial intelligence. The objective is not substitution but augmentation of human capabilities. Employees should be equipped to leverage AI-driven tools and agents to automate routine and repetitive tasks, thereby reallocating effort toward more complex, creative, and value-generating activities that require human judgment and insight.

Leadership shifts: The manager as "architect". In a digitalized environment, the manager's role moves from "supervisor" to "systems architect." To meet the benchmarks of companies like Netflix or Google, leaders must change their behavior:

- *Outcome-based management* – stop tracking "Green Lights" on Slack and start tracking "Value Delivered."

- *The "context, not control" pivot* – instead of giving instructions, provide the digital context (data, goals, constraints) and let the team determine the "how." This is a benchmarked practice from high-performing tech firms.

- *Radical transparency* – use digital dashboards to make all team goals and progress visible. If the benchmark is "high-trust," the leader must lead by making their own work and failures visible.

Implementing "Digital rituals". To make the change stick, you must bake the benchmarked behaviors into the team's daily routine.

Recent studies in agile management (2024-2026) suggest that in a digitalized environment, Rituals are the infrastructure. Newman & Wright argue that the "Gold Standard" of digital management isn't the software stack, but the Communication Rituals (Table 3).

Table 3

Implementing "Digital Rituals"

Ritual	The Benchmarked Goal	How to Implement
The Async Stand-up	Reduce meeting fatigue	Use a tool (Slack/Teams) for daily updates; save meetings only for complex problem-solving.
Deep Work Blocks	Increase productivity	Designate 10:00 AM – 12:00 PM as "No Notification" zones across the entire team
The "Failure Post-Mortem"	Psychological Safety	A monthly digital meeting where the team analyzes a mistake without blame, specifically focused on a digital process that failed.

Source: Developed by author based on [22]

Continuous Iteration (The "closed loop"). Strategic benchmarking isn't a "one-and-done." Integration must include a regular re-assessment.

In general, digitalization is 20% technology and 80% mindset. Strategic benchmarking provides the *target*, but Phase 4 provides the *fuel* to get there. Without a shift in leadership and the creation of new "Digital Rituals," the benchmarking report will not be able to be an effective tool for transformation.

Conclusions. In digital era high-performing organizations do not view benchmarking as a static "to-do" list. Instead, it is a continuous loop of measurement, analysis, and refinement. By shifting the perspective from a one-time project to an evergreen operational cycle, teams can remain agile enough to pivot when market conditions or internal dynamics shift. Competitive advantage no longer belongs to the teams that simply work "faster." Today, the gold standard is found in teams that work smarter and more connected. The most effective benchmarks are those that prioritize collective intelligence and seamless collaboration over only raw speed. There are following ideas should be taken into account regarding influence of Strategic Benchmarking on Team Management Development under conditions of intensive business digital transformation:

1. Benchmarking must shift from competitive analysis (tracking rivals) to capability analysis (tracking team potential).
2. Digitalization is not just a technical upgrade but a management paradigm shift that requires its own set of benchmarked "soft" KPIs (psychological safety, asynchrony, etc.).
3. Strategic benchmarking is the diagnostic bridge that connects high-level digital strategy to the ground-level development of human teams.
4. The "human-centric" pivot: Digitalization is a human problem solved with technical tools. Benchmarking should focus 70% on behaviors and 30% on tools.
5. "Teaming" in 2026 like in 2022 requires digital psychological safety – the freedom to experiment with AI and fail without being penalized by the "always-on" monitoring of digital platforms [9].
6. The "transparency" requirement: For strategic benchmarking to work in a team setting, the results of the Gap Analysis (Phase 3) must be shared with the team. You cannot develop a team that doesn't know where it's failing.

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