

CTIOs need Telcos to be Tigers

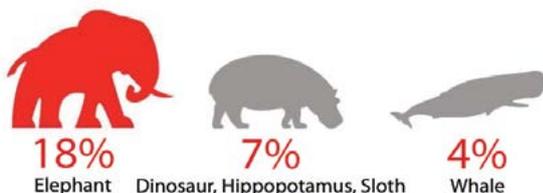
This article is an abstract from TM Forum report *CTIO Outlook 2020: Transforming operations to monetize 5G*

How do you think a roomful of global C-level executives from the telecommunications industry might answer this question: **If you had to describe the telecoms industry as an animal, what would it be?**

At Digital Transformation World in May 2019, we asked the question of more than 70 executives attending TM Forum's annual CXO Summit, which brings together representatives from some of the largest communications service providers (CSPs) in Europe, the Americas, Asia, the Middle East and Africa, and their key technology suppliers. Most attendees this year were CIOs, CTOs or CTIOs, although heads of consumer and enterprise lines of business within CSP organizations also participated.

We did not suggest animals for executives to choose from, rather we allowed them to be creative. The majority said they see telecoms as large, slow-moving and even extinct species (see graphic below). One attendee suggested a dodo. Conversely, when asked which animal the industry should be, people picked animals known for their speed, prowess, flexibility and cunning.

What kind of animal is telecoms?



What kind of animal should telecoms be?



TM Forum, 2019

The time is now

The annual CXO Summit gives industry leaders a chance to share experiences, ideas, challenges and best practices with their counterparts from other parts of the world.

Operating under Chatham House Rule, executives are able to speak freely, without fear of being quoted by name.

As the responses to the animal question indicate, telecoms leaders hold a collective conviction that profound transformation is necessary to improve agility and support deployment and monetization of 5G technology. This was evident throughout the day-long event. There was a tangible sense that now is the time to act rather than ponder and discuss. As one executive noted:

"Disruptors are coming in...and they might eat a lot of the revenue we have today. Everything we offer is wholesale, and we're offering it to some new kids out there [whose business] maybe doesn't exist today, but they know better than we do what to do with all this bandwidth."

Changing relationship

The relationship between CSPs and suppliers is more of a partnership than it ever has been. Both sides agreed they are "in this together", but CSPs want more. They argue that while vendors have the technology know-how, they need to work harder to ensure the success of their CSP customers, rather than defending and protecting their existing product portfolios and revenue streams.

Transformation, 5G and beyond

Participants discussed three key themes during the event:

- How mobile operators plan to roll out 5G and what the biggest challenges are
- How CSPs must transform their businesses and culture to compete and increase profits, and support delivery of 5G-enabled services
- How operators plan to use emerging technologies like artificial intelligence, machine learning and data analytics and what the challenges are in adopting them.