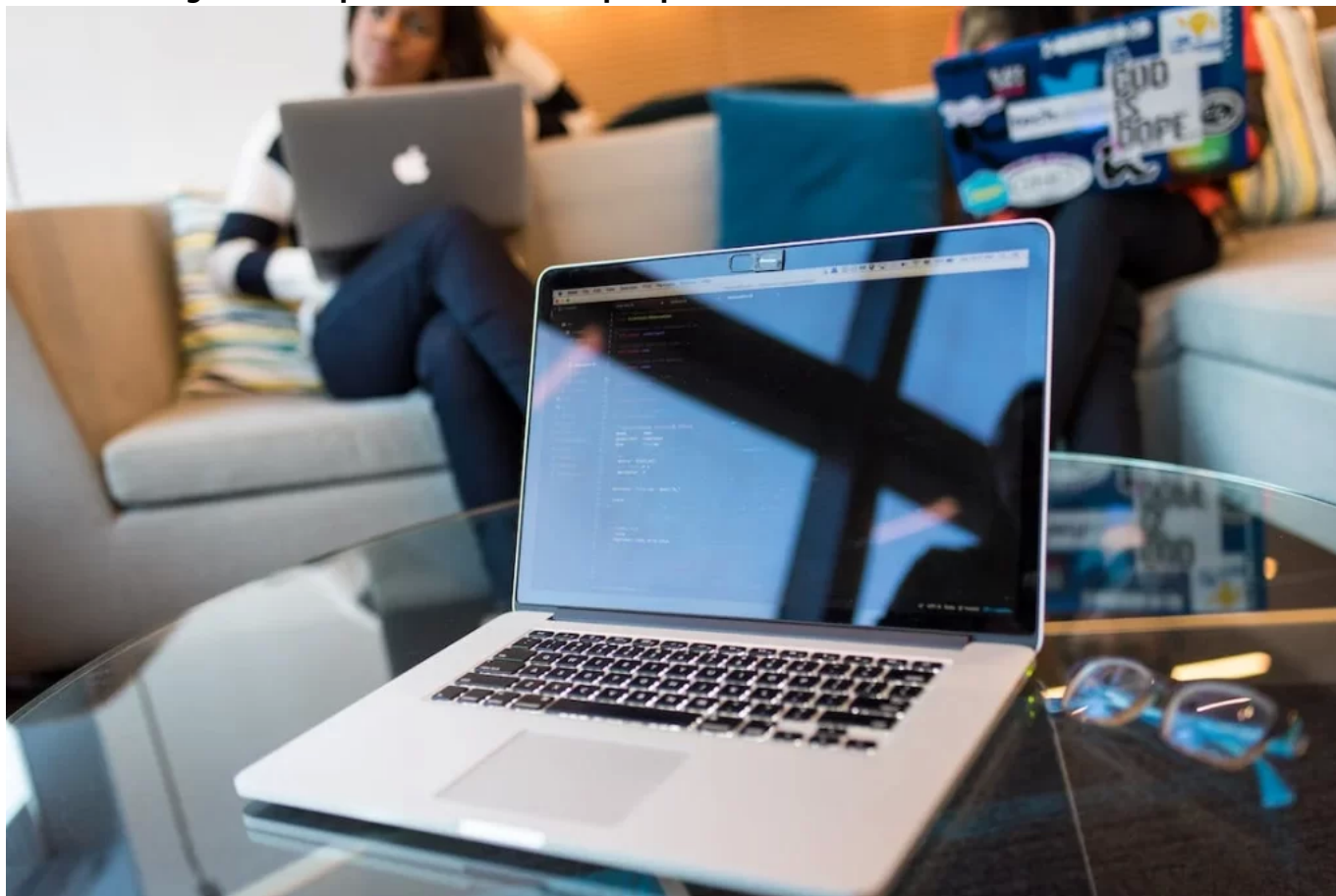## Accelerating the adoption of tech in people

Did you know what the biggest challenge organisations face when designing their digital or mechanisation transformation strategies? No, it isn't deciding what technology to include. It's getting people to adopt and embrace that tech.

According to research by Third Stage Consulting Group that assessed data from over 1000 digital transformations over the last two decades, the most frequently cited challenge was the "people part" of the organisational change.

Technology will almost always outpace organisational change, but there's a very real risk attached to not getting your people on board with this change – quickly and wholeheartedly. Without the buy-in of your people, your carefully-planned digital or mechanisation transformation strategy might fail. In fact, according to a report by McKinsey, 70% of digital transformations do not succeed.

There is no doubt that tech has had a dramatic impact on the mining sector, with massive safety benefits, clearer reporting and improved efficiencies. We can capture information effortlessly and access that data at the touch of a button, making decision-making easier.

So why the hesitance in adopting new technologies?

There are many reasons. For someone who has a lot on their plates, there is often a sense of a new piece of machinery or process being just *another* thing to do, and so there is a reluctance to learn the ins and outs. For others, it stems from a fear of failure. One research paper on organisational trust revealed that a fear of failure was a key factor in employees who struggled to adapt to change. Others may not see the

value in the technology or perceive it to be easy to use or useful.

Among our clients, we often see that these transformations are often wide but not deep. What I mean by that is we often see new technologies implemented broadly and rolled out widely across the mine, plants, remote control centres etc. But there's little emphasis on how it touches the individual. Why we are doing this? Without this why, all we have is a very superficial understanding.

As consultants that specialise in building frontline leader capacity to the mining sector, one of our clients is a prime example of this. They have all the latest technology, and their site is completely modernised. Yet they still engage us to work with their supervisors and facilitate the understanding needed for this tech to be effectively utilised.

How do we do this? By helping people understand the *why.*

Everyone needs to understand what the change will bring them. *What's in it for me?* This tech or machinery will make things safer, allow me to get out more (financial incentive) or make some aspect of the job easier for me. Now that I see value, I am one step closer to embracing that change.

Everyone should be aligned with the organisation's strategy and purpose. They need to be shown the bigger picture and see how their efforts contribute to this. Trust and respect are a two-way street.

You need to start with the supervisor – the person who carries your culture, engages the team and ensures they are on board with any new changes. You can have all the technology in the world, but without gearing the organisation towards a new way of working, you will not be able to consistently deliver on your strategy.

Change will always be hard. To accelerate the adoption of tech among our people we need to gear our organisation towards this new way of working, and that entails working closely with our employees to get their buy-in. This might involve some handholding in the beginning and while you might see a lag in productivity initially as people get up to speed, your efforts will soon reap reward.