



CUSTOMER SUCCESS STORY

# How M1 Assesses and Trains Internal Tech Skills to Drive Successful Digital Transformation



**Codility**<sub>—</sub>



## Nathan Bell

Chief Digital Officer at M1

Nathan Bell joined M1 in August 2019 with the primary objective of leading the telco's business transformation across digital, product, and systems. The company's overarching goal of becoming a true digital telco means Nathan must lead a widespread overhaul of operations and technology. To ensure his digital transformation initiatives are successful, Nathan has worked with the HR and Talent functions to make sure the right people are in the right roles.

“Our goal is to become a true digital telco, leveraging cloud-based architecture to deliver best-of-breed solutions for B2C and B2B customers both in Singapore, the wider region of Southeast Asia, and more global markets.”



## Sundi Balu

Senior Advisor to the Digital Officer at M1

Sundi Balu has been working with M1 as an advisor since its digital transformation journey began. Recognized as a leading technology innovator by Hong Kong and Asian IT Telecoms Media, Sundi brings a deep background of experience and technical knowledge to the team. He believes that digital transformation is about the optimum use of technology to fundamentally transform the business model, driving greater outcomes for the organization and its customers.



## Ng Chow Yong (CY)

Senior Manager, Special Projects at M1

CY manages the Learning and Talent Development portion of M1's HR department. He has been working with Nathan and Sundi on the digital transformation initiative with a focus on internal skills assessments and hiring. Especially as more and more processes change, CY aims to guide the existing employees toward the best new roles for their individual skills and strengths.

“Now that M1 has a 5G license, we have to continuously capitalize on what's next in the telecom industry. That's why it's so important that we run digital initiatives that future proof our systems and set our workforce up for success.”



## SUCCESS STORY

# About M1

- After launching in 1997 with commercial services, M1 has become Singapore's most vibrant and dynamic communications company, providing mobile and fixed services to over two million customers.
- M1 was the first operator in Singapore to offer nationwide 4G service as well as ultra-high-speed fixed broadband, fixed voice, and other services on the Next Generation Nationwide Broadband Network.
- In addition to a wide range of B2C mobile and fixed communications services, M1 delivers an extensive suite of services and solutions to corporate customers, including symmetrical connectivity solutions up to 10Gbps, managed services, cloud solutions, cybersecurity solutions, Internet of Things, and data center services.

# Becoming a Self-Sufficient Telco Starts with Internal Employees

Companies like M1 that have existed for decades have persisted through all kinds of market changes. However, this age of digital transformation and Industry 4.0 may represent the most demanding shifts in business operations. Becoming a true digital telco is critical to long-term success. That transformation starts with organization structure and internal skills.

“Like many telcos, M1 had long been reliant on systems integrators to piece together different aspects of the tech stack,” says Bell.

“But when you’re taking a holistic approach to transformation, you aren’t just implementing one or two new technologies with a systems integrator. We’ve already introduced 12 new software platforms and have four or five more to go. We had to become self-sufficient.”

If M1 wanted to successfully adopt all of those new software platforms in a way that would truly transform the business, they needed to reorganize internal roles and responsibilities based on the strengths of each employee.

M1 saw that it needed a solution that would provide a data-driven baseline of existing skills so that they could identify gaps and reorganize accordingly. This is when they turned to Codility.

“I’ve had positive experiences with the Codility platform during other advising engagements,” says Balu. “I was already familiar with its capabilities and the Codility team provided great customer service while understanding technical requirements in ways competitors didn’t. Even though the platform is usually used for external recruiting and hiring, I was confident M1 could use it for internal skills assessments.”

Starting in September 2019, M1 created a skills benchmark for its entire staff of developers and software engineers and gained a deeper understanding of how best to move forward with its digital transformation initiatives.

# Lessons Learned from Skills Assessments

01

Unlike a skills assessment during the recruitment stage, creating a baseline was met with some level of fear and anxiety in the workforce. Making it clear that the process was meant to assist career development rather than a hunt for layoff candidates was key.

03

Flexibility is critical to effective internal assessment because each employee may have different technical skills under the broad umbrellas of developer and software engineer.

02

Managing fear and anxiety meant giving every employee a seamless assessment process. This included a dedicated room and time to complete the assessment as well as an easy-to-use solution for taking the test.

04

Getting full visibility into the wide range of individual skills and capabilities was critical to optimizing the staff for effective transformation.



# What Changed After Implementing Codility?

## Accurate measures of an individual's skills

It's not enough to separate tech talent into two categories—developer and software engineer. While these may be the formal titles, individual capabilities vary greatly according to language proficiency, problem solving skills, and business acumen.

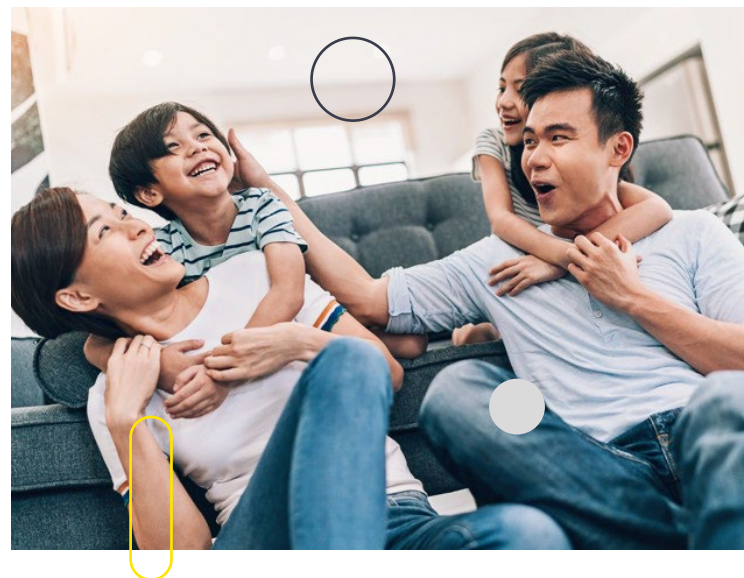
“You can't have any passive passengers in business transformation,” says Bell. “We need all of our employees actively involved in digital transformation, which is why we started the skills assessments. It's not meant to be a brutal, nerve-wracking process, though. Codility helped us get accurate assessments of each employee's skills so we could slot them into the best possible role for their abilities. For example, if someone isn't a great coder but understands the business extremely well, we can move them into a business analyst role”

## Assessments tailored for specific needs

Optimizing the M1 staff for digital transformation wasn't going to happen with a single generic

technical assessment. Actionable insight into internal skills and capabilities required more granular assessments that were tailored to specific use cases. Codility made it easy for M1 to adjust the assessment process for each employee.

“One of the biggest benefits of working with Codility was the ability to align with their experts to customize assessments,” says CY. “Codility went out of their way to ensure our assessments would run as smoothly as possible by working with us on extensive trial runs before we rolled out to employees.”



### Maximizing engagement with process

Any time you introduce this level of change within an organization, there's bound to be some level of pushback. And while the M1 staff is fully on board with the transformation initiatives being made, it's important for leaders to manage the fear and anxiety that comes with these changes.

“We have some people in our main office who have been with the company for 10+ years,” says CY. “It's easy for these people to feel like the company is doubting them when they're asked to take a technical assessment of some kind. Effective communication about our goals of training employees according to gaps we identify has been essential for quelling those fears. And using Codility to run the assessments gave employees seamless access to necessary materials that made the whole process seem more trustworthy.”



# Filling Gaps with New Hires

Now that M1 has created a baseline of existing skills and reorganized roles according to the strengths of each employee, they can focus on the next step of transformation-filling gaps in the workforce.

As new software platforms are implemented and 5G technology demands innovative projects, M1 must find the highest quality tech talent to boost its capabilities. Codility is helping them get ahead of external hiring.

“Despite the circumstances that have complicated business operations in 2020, we’ve continued to hire throughout the year,” says Bell. “When we were looking for a new Mobile App Development Lead, we were happy to receive over 30 quality CVs to review. Having experience with the Codility platform for our internal baseline will make it easier to shift focus to external hires and make sure that we’re making evidence-based decisions.”



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