

6 CRITERIA FOR CHOOSING A FUTURE-PROOF DIGITAL EXPERIENCE PLATFORM

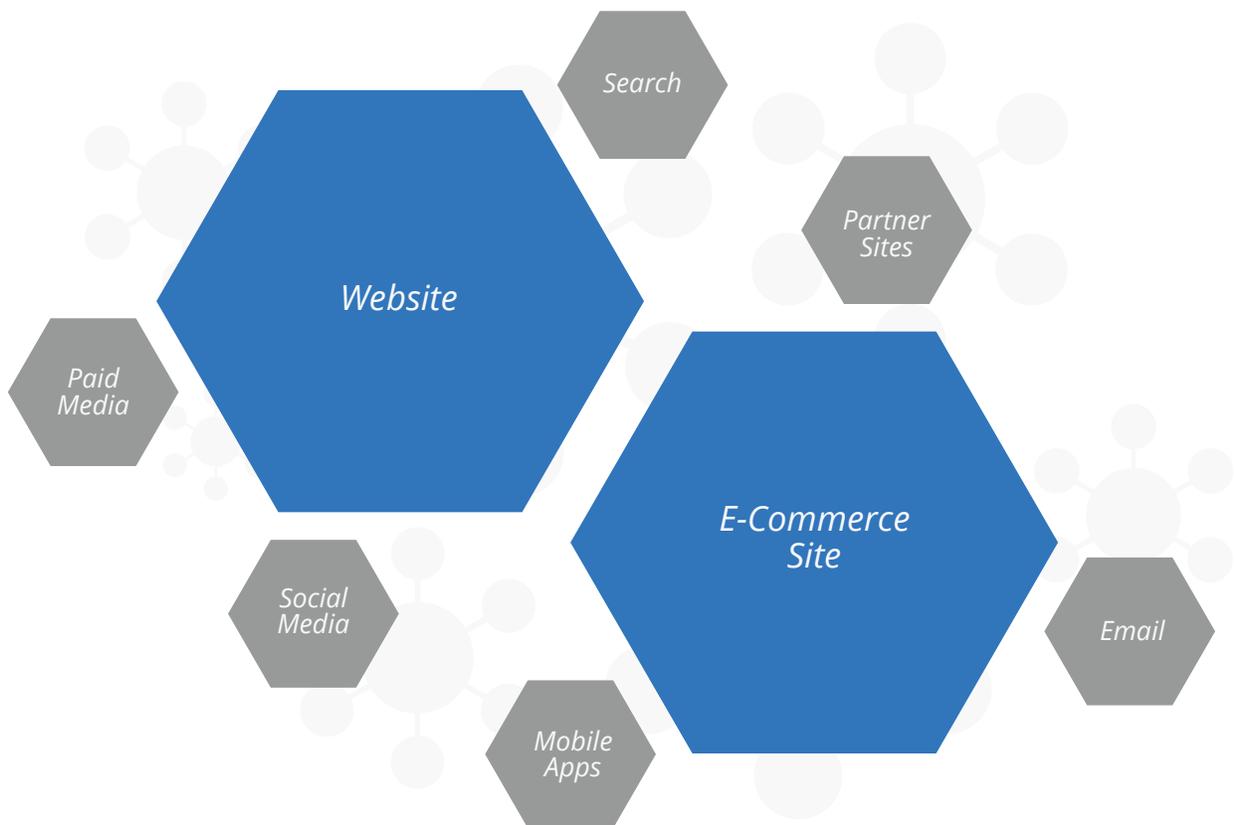
Learn the essential benchmarks to use in evaluating platform solutions for managing a multi-touchpoint, multi-market digital enterprise.



INTRODUCTION: UNDERSTANDING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN DIGITAL TOUCHPOINTS

If you're involved in trying to create a roadmap for digital transformation for your enterprise, it's important to see the forest for the trees. That means grasping the entire universe of touchpoints, looking beyond just websites to see how a litany of channels pave the customer journey.

For a long time, most marketers viewed the digital engagement "map" as being something like this:



Websites were the points of engagement where brands conducted the majority of digital interactions with their prospects and customers. So naturally, "managing digital experiences" equated to "managing websites."

That model doesn't hold water anymore. Today, engagement with audiences happens across an increasingly-diverse range of touchpoints. In simplified form, it can look like this:

Owned Touchpoints



Earned Media Touchpoints



Paid Media Touchpoints



Here are a few key points to bear in mind about this map:

- Audiences now build perceptions of a brand based on a broader swath of connected digital representations. So, one or two touchpoints is no longer head-and-shoulders above the rest in terms of importance or even engagement volume.

- Today's audiences move from device to device during the course of their day and expect a similar experience across touchpoints. The consistency of messaging, promotional offers, and overall look and feel reassures customers of the brand's ability to deliver on its promise.
- For a global marketer, this is still a very simplistic map, representing just one department or brand line in a single market, and not even taking every possible touchpoint into account.

Getting Control Over Every Touchpoint

Digital transformation for a large-scale enterprise is no longer about disproportionately focusing on websites or portals or any other specific engagement channel. To compete in today's digital marketing universe, there's a new reality in place:

- Enterprises need to deliver digital experiences to targeted audiences across a wide range of touchpoints, spanning every type of device.
- Those experiences need to be consistent, congruent, error-free, compliant with local regulations and company guidelines, and always on-brand.
- Companies need to be able to audit, analyze and update these touchpoints in real time.

The pressure of delivering an effective digital experience to your audience, no matter where they're encountering you, is exemplified by this excerpt from a recent Luth Research study that tracked the customer journey of a typical auto lease customer:

She made 139 Google searches and had a total of 900+ associated digital interactions before making her decision.¹

In 2015, Gartner published a study that found 89% of businesses expected to be competing mainly on customer experience by 2016, and companies that took customer experience seriously would gain ground over those who didn't.²

In short, you're now battling it out with your competitors in a very crowded arena, where creating and managing effective digital touchpoints is the key to success or failure – and at the core of achieving digital transformation for your entire organization.

Successful digital transformation begins with finding a single safe, flexible and future-proof platform to serve as a central hub for managing all your digital experiences.

In this guide, we'll explain how a **Digital Experience Platform solves this challenge, and why Digital Quality Management (DQM)** is an inextricably linked component.

Then we'll detail the **six essential criteria** you should use in evaluating competing platforms.

THE IMPORTANCE OF FUTURE-PROOFING



In today's rapidly evolving digital marketing climate, whatever solution a company adopts must have the flexibility to carry them well into the future. In an era where 24/7 responsiveness and agility are imperative, very few can afford the turmoil and high price tag of rip-and-replace updates.

In your search for a platform that simplifies the management of all your branded digital experiences, you should be accounting for some (or all) of the following:

- Your solution needs to function in the broader and more complicated context of digital transformation across the entire enterprise, with the ability to support integrations across departments.
- The need to maintain existing technology that functions well but needs to be modernized to meet today's customer demands for responsiveness, personalization, cross-channel integration and more. These might include legacy applications, databases, portals, websites, and so on.
- If you're planning to expand into omni-channel marketing, you will need tools that can manage new and emerging touchpoints, some not even yet known.
- If your organization is moving into new markets, new regions or countries, you need a solution with compliance and localization tools.

And lest we forget,

- You need to identify a solution to help with all of the above that's not only scalable and cost-effective, but future-proofed against technology changes on the horizon.

Digital **transformation** isn't a destination, it's a continual **evolution**. So it's important to mitigate the costs and disruptions it may bring to your enterprise over time by choosing something with flexibility.

That's what's steered IT managers in their search for digital experience solutions that cost-effectively adapt to their known needs of today and the unknown needs of tomorrow, for a smart and durable investment.

The pressures to spend (smarter)

The costs of technology changeovers are considerable, but firms are under enormous pressure to keep pace with competitors and, more critically, with buyers and customers who expect omni-channel access and personalization from every touchpoint. Here's a snapshot of what's happening across industries:

- In the **healthcare sector**, hospitals are increasing their spending on Cloud-based IT by 20% a year, and will spend at least \$5.7 billion on those platforms in 2020 alone – and that's just in North America.³
- In **financial services**, demand for digital banking services means firms must invest in digital compliance and security solutions; 89% of compliance execs expect costs to rise over the next two years, and the number of financial firms that spent more than 5% of net income on compliance jumped from 16% in December 2015 to 23% in December 2016.⁴
- About two-thirds of **insurance carriers** had, as of 2015, a detailed roadmap to upgrade their IT architectures; changing business requirements and outdated legacy systems were the leading reasons for updating.⁵

In a world where game-changing tech innovation is always around the corner (and difficult to predict), choosing a solution that is vendor-managed and automatically updated regularly, is one defense against enduring massive spend and resources trying to adapt to the next big thing.

It's one reason, among many, why companies are turning to SaaS DXM platforms as the right solution for digital transformation.

*To be customer-obsessed, you will also have to be **technology-obsessed** and be prepared to invest heavily in technology systems, processes, and people.*

-Ted Schadler, Forrester

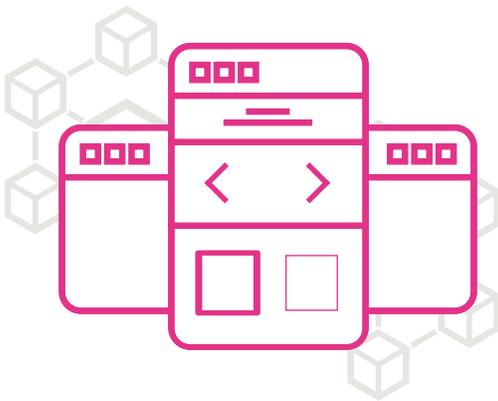
DIGITAL EXPERIENCE MANAGEMENT (DXM) AS A GLOBAL TRANSFORMATION SOLUTION

By 2018, 70% of siloed digital transformation (DX) initiatives will ultimately fail because of insufficient collaboration, integration, sourcing, or project management.⁶

With SaaS DXM, adoption can be quick and universal, even in large-scale organizations. And with a robust, flexible, and scalable solution that's able to integrate with legacy systems, digital transformation can take hold with minimal strains and delays.

Another benefit? DXMs give the C-suite what it wants most: centralized digital governance and reduced costs over time.

Other advantages that have led companies to choose SaaS DXM platforms in their digital transformation initiatives?



- SaaS DXMs have a far smaller operational footprint than old-line, in-house enterprise systems, and require no infrastructure investment. So you can build, deploy, and scale with agility.
- They integrate via API with existing systems or third-party providers with a minimum of IT involvement, further eliminating disruptions.
- A proof-of-concept implementation can be executed in just days, allowing quick evaluation and refinement.
- Since they're subscription-based, costs are contained and predictable.
- Rapid scalability allows for growth and for agile responses to sudden or unexpected spikes in traffic.

- Being Cloud-based, a single DXM platform can service multiple markets and regions.
- Omni-channel touchpoints can be centrally controlled, updated and analyzed, ensuring consistency and cohesion across them.
- Speed-to-market is accelerated, but costs are reduced as inefficiencies in areas like content publishing, approval processes, compliance and quality control are streamlined.

CHOOSING A DIGITAL EXPERIENCE MANAGEMENT (DXM) PLATFORM: 6 MUST-HAVE CRITERIA

What's the best-case outcome you'd like as a result of your digital experience investment?

That you've chosen the ideal platform, one that A) elegantly solves your immediate needs, and B) keeps solving them for years to come, with a minimum of headache and cost.

Here, then, are six critical criteria to use in assessing DXM contenders so you'll pick the solution that serves your needs both now and in the long run.

#1. It promotes agility

The agility and flexibility of a SaaS DXM should accelerate your content creation, approval and publishing process, and make real-time marketing across all your managed touchpoints an everyday reality.



The right DXM will have all the strengths and tools required to react quickly to changing category conditions, competitive threats or customer demand. Specifically, it needs to:

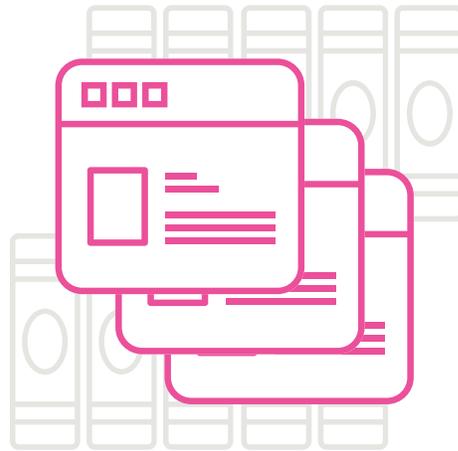
- Deliver solutions at market velocity, driving topline growth.
- Allow seamless expansion of your marketing channels and touchpoints.
- Provide global scalability of adoption within new markets, departments, or with new agencies/partners.
- Enable concurrency, letting disparate agencies and developers around the globe work in parallel on respective projects without disrupting each other's efforts.
- Streamline downstream technology integration to embrace new innovations and advances.

- Optimize your current campaigns and projects.
- Provide multi-lingual localization capabilities.
- Feature mobile content publishing and management.
- Facilitate improved and more consistent lead capture processes across your entire enterprise.

ROI becomes agile, too: Companies moving from on-premise systems to Cloud-based DXM see an almost immediate boost to ROI, while giving themselves the responsiveness and nimbleness to react to, or even get ahead of today's ever-faster digital marketing challenges.

#2. It performs at scale

Deploying digital experiences on a worldwide scale is critical for a global enterprise to stay competitive without having to rethink the systems they'll need when the landscape changes. For an aspiring company that plans to go global, choosing a solution that will accommodate growth efficiently is essential.



Your DXM should insulate you against the potential hazards of operating at scale. Missed deadlines or botched launches can cost lost sales and even market share. So, scalability and high availability need to be part of your DXM's DNA. You need a solution where:

- Digital footprints can be scaled up pronto to meet the demands of your business. If your DXM is Cloud-based, there's no need to procure additional hardware (or budget) to add new websites or microsites.
- You can leverage a template library to build new digital experiences, ensuring both efficiency and consistency.
- There's a dashboard interface accessible via your browser, allowing you to control branding and standardize messages and best practices at a corporate level.

- Local teams have the ability to add content, update assets and publish new pages using permission-based workflows that streamline the corporate approval process.
- It elegantly accommodates traffic surges without compromising the customer experience, handling demand spikes and balancing loads without expanding your datacenter, while providing the often rare peace of mind that comes with minimized downtime.

#3. It doesn't demand rip-and-replace

A top-shelf DXM solution should accommodate organizations looking to maintain legacy systems rather than replace them. A system with flexible architecture can enable them to upgrade their digital customer experiences without having to rewire their entire enterprise, and at a pace that works for them.



By using a decoupled architecture, a best-of-breed DXM lets you retain what's working and replace what isn't, while creating a slick new presentation layer that delivers a fresh and contemporized user experience for the customer. The right solution should enable you to do this over time. It should also:

- Integrate non-disruptively with an existing infrastructure, avoiding rip-and-replace of legacy applications if they're still delivering value.
- Manage and update all digital experiences and touchpoints from a single platform, even if they're written in different languages, built on outdated tech, or reside on different platforms.
- Minimize the need to write custom code or rely on a specific connector to push content to any channel, whether it's a website, mobile app, ATM, kiosk, or an IoT device.

#4. It provides enterprise-class content management and security features

The greater the number of touchpoints it operates, the more vital it is for an enterprise to find a solution capable of managing them all (and new ones that don't exist yet) while balancing centralized digital governance against localization and in-market responsiveness. Some capabilities to look for:

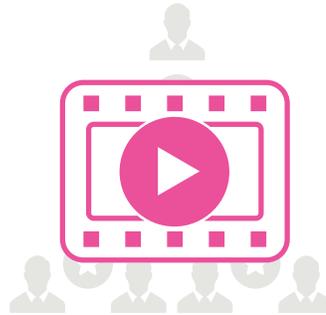


- Content can be published anytime, across any number or range of digital channels, while still under corporate control.
- Non-technical users are empowered with intuitive tools to create and manage enterprise websites, mobile sites, landing pages and more.
- Content localization and translation tools allow customization.
- Local teams can develop and publish market-specific content that's still in adherence to corporate standards and practices.
- Custom templates and models enforce consistency across the entire organization.
- Sophisticated A/B testing and targeting rules can be easily created in the page editor.
- It has the functionality to deliver personalized contextual experiences across all touchpoints based on ambient, behavioral, form submission or third-party data.
- Intuitive version control allows content recovery or review.
- Unified analytics tools allow top-down views of content performance and customer engagement, and integration with all major analytics platforms.
- Content management and analytics work in the same interface, allowing continuous improvement.

- Personalized dashboards are available for every user.
- Cybersecurity protections include secure hosting and backup using a top-tier service such as Amazon Web Services (AWS), and best-in-class network and application security standards including SSAE 16 SOC2 auditing, US FISMA certification, EU Safe Harbor, Safe Harbor and TRUSTe's Privacy Seal certification.

#5: It enables adult supervision (via Digital Quality Management)

Today's multinationals create a lot of content. In the thousands, tens of thousands, even hundreds of thousands of pages, from corporate websites, microsites, campaign landing pages to blogs, downloadable PDFs and more.



The result? A percentage of wasted content that doesn't get engagement because it's plagued with problems like broken links, misspellings, slow-loading pages, not being optimized for search engines (so it never gets discovered), or it's inaccessible to some audience segments.

Why? Because:

- Content authors responsible for producing and publishing content are expected to manually QA content across dozens -- or even hundreds -- of websites and digital touchpoints, a nearly impossible undertaking.
- Disparate teams in different locations are building sites using different content management systems (CMS) and production platforms.
- Digital marketers are confronting a maze of regulatory and legal requirements that become more intricate by the day.
- There are countries mandating their own distinct policies on web accessibility that most marketers aren't aware of until there's a legal issue.
- Junior teams are operating under pressure to publish new content rapidly across channels without any checks and balances.

Without centralized governance, there's a resulting loss of quality control over branding, content and compliance. Besides brand reputational damage, companies face compliance risks and regulatory hurdles often without even realizing it. And in an era where customers increasingly prefer to do their own self-guided research, rather than speak to a sales rep, the need for content will just keep growing.

All these concerns are compelling Global 2000 firms to demand that **Digital Quality Management (DQM)** be a feature of their DXM solution.

Digital Quality Management crawls an organization's digital touchpoints scanning for errors, SEO issues, accessibility violations, regulatory compliance and off-brand elements, automating the entire QA process.

#6: It can be updated with the click of a button to embrace new feature sets without requiring IT resources or risking downtime.

To keep up with the ever-increasing number of touchpoints and digital marketing tactics, a platform needs to offer upgrades to its functionality on a frequent basis, **and** make it easy for an organization to take advantage of those upgrades.

While most enterprise vendors release regular updates with new bells and whistles, many companies remain on older versions of a system for months or years due to the fear of rocky updates and forced downtimes. So although they may have chosen a solution based on a vendor's promise of constant innovation, the company can find itself stuck in the past, unable to compete against their peers when it comes to leveraging the latest marketing approaches.

The solution to maintaining an edge even as technology changes is choosing a **SaaS Digital Experience Management Platform**, where the core functions and processes are safeguarded from tampering or accidental corruption.

While you will lose some potential for customization and flexibility by going with a SaaS solution, when the vendor advances to a new version, you can too, without the concern of breaking some critical application or feature your developers have added, or worse exposing some harmful security chink.

It's a trade-off that's well worth it for companies that understand that importance of staying ahead, and in essence, future-proof. This single benefit is a huge reason why SaaS systems have surged into the ubiquity we see today.

SUMMARY

Finding a future-proof solution for managing digital experiences begins with identifying the right technologies to enable it. As we've pointed out, those platforms and products need to pull off a profound hat trick:

- They must centrally govern a huge universe of touchpoints that extend across an increasing variety of channels in a broad swath of markets and locales
- They have to deliver seamless customer experiences, personalized in real time, across all those points of contact
- They need to rationalize and integrate the content workflows, processes, localizations and collaborations that underpin it all

For the C-leader charged with finding the right product to meet the need, there's one more mandate: the answer they find needs to be future-proofed enough to serve for an extended time, while meeting daunting scalability, integration and ROI demands. At a cost that doesn't break the budget.

DXM solutions are the ultimate answer to all of the above. By applying the stringent criteria we've outlined in this guide, you'll be able to identify the best possible DXM platform for your needs. It's the one that's equal to your digital transformation challenges as a global (or soon-to-be-global) enterprise. Not just now, but in the increasingly complex and competitive years ahead.



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crownpeak

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Crownpeak provides the leading, enterprise-grade, cloud-first Digital Experience Management (DXM) platform. The Crownpeak DXM platform empowers Fortune 2000 companies to quickly and easily create, deploy and optimize customer experiences across global digital touchpoints at scale.

Besides featuring content management, personalization, search, and hosting, it is the only digital experience platform that includes built-in Digital Quality Management (DQM) to ensure brand integrity, best practices, and web accessibility compliance.

Recently, Crownpeak acquired Evidon, the leading provider of simple technical solutions to complex digital Governance, Risk & Compliance (GRC) challenges, including a new Universal Consent Platform, designed to help companies comply with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).