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REPLACING YOUR WCM: 7 ESSENTIAL FEATURES YOUR MARKETING & IT TEAMS WILL BOTH ENDORSE

Learn the key features to look for in a platform, and why Digital Experience Management may be an even better solution.



Evolving beyond WCM

Web Content Management platforms by themselves are becoming a relic of a different era, when a website was the only digital channel most marketers had to manage. Today, it's just a subset of the job a digital marketer must perform, as they scope and build comprehensive buyer and customer journeys encompassing multiple touchpoints.

While there are many platforms designed to coordinate the facets of an exponentially-growing digital landscape, finding a solution that offers built-in capabilities for marketing campaigns, **and** flexibly accommodates existing applications and the development of future ones is a priority.

One option that more and more global marketers are adopting (and IT is supporting) is a move from WCM platforms to Digital Experience Management (DXM) systems purpose-built to easily manage different touchpoints across multiple markets to a wide variety of audiences.

The DXM Advantage

As global enterprises expand across an ever-growing constellation of digital touchpoints in multiple countries, they've found that tried-and-true WCM platforms aren't an optimal solution for supporting hundreds, even thousands of digital experiences for millions of visitors.

Fortunately, the introduction of DXM platforms offer the editorial and business integration features of familiar WCM systems, in addition to most (or even all) of the crucial features a global enterprise requires.

Top-ranked DXM systems have been expressly designed to provide control of targeted digital experiences across the globe through a centralized interface, which empowers local marketers to do their jobs, while still giving corporate headquarters visibility and oversight.

Along with a DXM also comes the ability to personalize content for audience segments (or one-on-one) and run tests within the platform.

Another attraction? Digital Quality Management (DQM) capabilities are a built-in feature of some (though not all) DXMs.

These are just some of what separates the best DXM systems from your typical WCM solution.

In the following pages, you'll learn the must-have features for an enterprise looking to replace their WCM with an alternative that meets the modern global-scale challenges faced by both marketing *and* IT.

1. EASE OF USE

With the breakneck speed at which global marketers must publish content and respond to users across a myriad of channels and borders, they need the ability to manage their online presence without relying on IT.

That means finding a platform that offers user-friendly interfaces and WYSIWYG controls that even the most junior marketer can master.

They need a platform that makes it possible – without IT involvement – to:

- Edit content in-line or leverage form editing, preview on stage and push to live.
- Dynamically serve the right content to the right audience—on the right device, at the right time.
- Create and edit intuitively with simple business rules or complex data-driven criteria.
- Personalize content to targeted users based on ambient, behavioral, form or 3rd-party data.
- Quickly craft weighted A/B tests directly from the page editor.

IT won't miss the distractions of dealing with publishing, and your marketing team will own the opportunity to respond to prospects and customers with immediacy and agility.



2. INTEROPERABILITY

Today, your organization may be focused on producing and publishing content to a fixed number of channels; **tomorrow**, you'll be confronted with the accelerating pace of innovation as those channels evolve and multiply.

An enterprise needs to invest in tools and infrastructure flexible enough to both integrate its legacy systems today, but that can also meet the unknown technology advances of tomorrow.

To keep current, you want to integrate your digital marketing stack with all of the latest, most popular platforms, like Salesforce, Marketo, Demandbase and others. Beyond those, though, may lie more bleeding-edge or proprietary platforms that offer advantages too.

The reality is, achieving an ideal state of limitless interoperability takes **a lot of time and effort**, which may not be realistic with marketing's budget or IT's schedule. For example, there might be considerable overhead involved in painstakingly updating the integration code each time a third party makes an code change.

The solution? As-a-Service offerings

This is why enterprises that prioritize digital agility as a strategic advantage **seek out interoperable solutions offered "as-a-Service"**, allowing them to stay current on changing code bases without breaking the bank or eating up valuable development resources that should be focused on innovation, not upkeep.

The challenge isn't just to provide the ability to work with new tools. Enterprises may be reluctant to totally unwind older solutions deeply embedded in their operations. **They know "rip-and-replace" updating can be costly** on a lot of fronts.

To avoid this pricey predicament, organizations evaluating a replacement for their current WCM systems should look for solutions architecture that can seamlessly bridge the old and new, able to integrate with even the oldest of legacy back-office applications or primordial databases, in order to update the experience of the end customer.



3. DECOUPLED ARCHITECTURE

To assure marketing can execute its plans with agility while your IT team can still develop and release features as freely as possible, look for a platform that **decouples content management from content delivery**.

Separating these lets marketers own the creation and publishing of content and brand experiences, while IT can focus on what they're best equipped to do, which is develop and deploy application logic in any technology or language. Each team, in other words, is set free **to do what they do best**.

Here are just a few advantages of finding a solution with decoupled architecture:

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- **Better experience management:** Many times, a marketing team's creativity can be constrained by the available time and resource limits of their development team. A decoupled system gives marketers much more latitude in getting the right message to the right audience.

 - **Improved evolution & enhancement:** Marketing has more flexibility to update the design and messaging of a website or other touchpoint in a decoupled architecture, while IT can independently determine the best content delivery technology or amalgamation of technologies, and evolve or replace them without disrupting marketing.

 - **Content publishing efficiency:** Decoupling also makes it more manageable to push content to multiple touchpoints and channels by streamlining the editorial, publication and syndication processes within an enterprise and making it easier to interact with external applications or services.
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4. CENTRALIZED MANAGEMENT WITH LOCALIZATION TOOLS

Customers now expect a single, consistent experience across the entirety of a brand's digital presence, even when it spans thousands of touchpoints. So a global marketer needs a platform that ensures every touchpoint is using approved branding, messaging and other assets.

The solution you choose to replace your WCM should enable a globally-distributed marketing team to access a centralized library of approved content, with the flexibility to localize appropriately.

It ought to be able to enforce a clearly-defined access control hierarchy, so teams can utilize only those assets permitted for their marketing initiatives and localization purposes while locking down those aspects important for enforcing global brand guidelines. That gives central managers control and oversight of the global brand, while still empowering local marketers with the tools they need.



5. DIGITAL QUALITY CONTROL

When a digital marketer footprint consists of hundreds (or thousands) of representations across scores of markets, the **risks and costs** of quality control of all those touchpoints and assets rise enormously.

So in assessing a WCM replacement, you should be sure it integrates **Digital Quality Management (DQM)** as a key part of its feature set. If it doesn't include DQM or compatibility with solid third-party DQM solutions, it won't help address one of the biggest challenges facing you as a global marketer.

What are some key **benefits** from a DQM capability that both marketers and IT staffers will swear by?

- **Consistency of digital branding and messaging:** A DQM system enforces branding and content rules that ensure you're delivering consistent digital branding and messaging across every single market, essential to your brand reputation.
- **Automated error detection and reporting:** Across hundreds of global touchpoints, there's a chance of literally thousands of errors, from simple misspellings and broken links to other problems, like accessibility and asset rights issues. An automated DQM system audits an entire networked digital presence and reports on errors, without the cost or efficiency issues involved with conducting manual quality control in each market.
- **Improving SEO:** Ensures every page of every site is optimized to improve your rankings and increase traffic, based on best practices.
- **Risk avoidance and regulatory compliance:** The internet isn't the "wild west" anymore, as more and more countries and localities draft laws and regulations to police how digital marketing is conducted within their borders. The penalties of non-compliance with those rules can be enormous, so a DQM system can help assure you're following local standards in each location and protect you from lawsuits.

Some of the **specific features** of state-of-the-art DQM include:

- **Automation** of DQM processes to crawl content and flag errors.
- **Integration** with a company's existing platforms and publishing workflow.
- **Centralized monitoring and control** of sites and assets, so brand image and messaging are consistent across a company's entire digital presence.
- **Quick response** to quality and compliance issues as a result of easy to understand reports with URLs that can be emailed directly to content publishers.
- **Routine checking** to detect inconsistencies, brand adherence, UX issues, SEO opportunities, outdated assets, or prohibited words and phrases, and flag concerns for immediate attention.
- **Enterprise-wide visibility** of the issues across multiple locations on hundreds of sites, even across geographies, viewed from a central dashboard.
- **Flexible reporting** with advanced analytics and KPI reports to expedite and simplify management in complex, multi-stakeholder environments.

6. SCALABILITY AND HIGH-AVAILABILITY

As a global enterprise, you've undoubtedly put the right tools and infrastructure in place to scale your business and product lines as driven by a very deliberate expansion and growth strategy.

That's why global enterprises need to also embrace unfettered digital agility as a key pillar of global growth. The **speed-to-market and scalability of your content management platform is paramount**, so make certain any contending product offers a subscription model that enables you to add an unlimited number of websites without hidden or additional costs.

It should be able to scale up to meet the demands of both planned and unplanned (or malicious!) traffic peaks, without risking downtime or a big bill.

Features that ensure scalability and high-availability:

- Look for a **Cloud-first/managed platform**, as these provide not just scalability but quick ease of adoption across multiple locations and regions at more agreeable pricing.
 - Be sure it's **elastic from the ground up**, enabling you to sustain website traffic even during the most intense traffic surges.
 - Be sure it includes **feature set scalability**, too, with plug-ins or modules that are easily installed to extend the functionality of your sites or other touchpoints.
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7. SECURITY

No one wants to grab global headlines as the latest victim of a security breach. So you should select a platform where security is a core product focus. Whether the user is an author within the content management system or a customer visiting a website, they need to be protected from the hazards every company dreads.

So any vendor should be able to make a point of how its platform is built around...



- An **independently-certified, regularly-tested set** of information security policies and standard operating procedures.
- A focus on **resilient, scalable infrastructure and architecture** that can withstand events such as DDoS attacks.
- **Flexible system access controls** enabling administrators to easily control advanced permissions management of large teams, right down to the level of individual asset permissions.
- **Audit trail capabilities** that help InfoSec teams keep track of internal vulnerabilities.

Summary

As omni-channel marketing takes hold, mandating seamless digital experiences across every channel, it's going to be more challenging than ever to deliver those experiences across the globe .

To do so, a content or digital experience platform needs to satisfy both the **needs of your marketing team**, who want to enforce brand consistency, empower localization and expedite content publishing, and those of your **IT staff**, who want it to deliver scalability, availability, interoperability and more.

So a global marketer doesn't really have the luxury of picking and choosing from among the seven essential capability sets we've just outlined. **Every one of them is compulsory** if an enterprise hopes to digitally compete on a bigger marketing map effectively.

But any due diligence on their part needs to include **evaluating DXM platforms**. Since these systems were designed from the ground up to answer the needs for broad interoperability, ease of adoption and centralized control of global omnichannel marketing, their best-of-breed already integrate many of these critical features, and promise an **essential evolution** beyond WCM.



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Positioned as a Visionary 3 years in a row in the Gartner Magic Quadrant for Web Content Management

Founded in January 2001, Crownpeak was the first company to offer web content management through a SaaS solution. Today, leading brands trust Crownpeak's cloud-first Digital Experience Management (DXM) platform to quickly and easily create, deploy and optimize customer experiences across digital touchpoints at scale.

Crownpeak provides a complete solution for DXM featuring content management, personalization, search and hosting, in addition to fully integrated Digital Quality Management (DQM) to ensure brand integrity and meet compliance requirements. More than 180 customers including Unilever, BNY Mellon, Thomson Reuters, Eli Lilly, and Aflac rely on Crownpeak to deliver engaging experiences that delight customers, promote loyalty and deliver results.

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