

The Complete Guide to a New CMS: Uniting IT and Marketing for Maximum Digital Success

WHAT THIS GUIDE COVERS:

- Aligning Technology & Business Needs
- Key Pre-Purchase Considerations
- Considerations for Selection, Implementation, Migration & Customization
- The CMS Lifecycle: From Testing to Continuous Improvement

Introduction: Aligning People, Processes, and Platforms

Creating engaging experiences for today's always-on customer demands the right set of technology tools, content and experience planning. The digital experience platforms (DXP) available today are feature-rich and increasingly integrate a full suite of tools.

Content management systems (CMS) are still the backbone of effective digital experiences and engaging customer journeys. While there is a dizzying array of enterprise platforms promising transformation, a CMS provides the critical content foundation on which to build personalized interactions across all of your organization's channels.

It's Time for a New CMS Platform

Among [hundreds of technology leaders recently surveyed](#), 84% said their current CMS was limiting their organization's ability to fully leverage content to drive digital experiences. Top challenges included difficulty with making changes, integrating new data types beyond simple content, and connecting the CMS with other critical systems.

The CMS Market Has Exploded in Recent Years

In 2011, around

76% of all websites were hand-coded

By 2022, this figure had fallen to just

33%

Source: 2024's CMS Market Share Report - Trends and Usage Stats



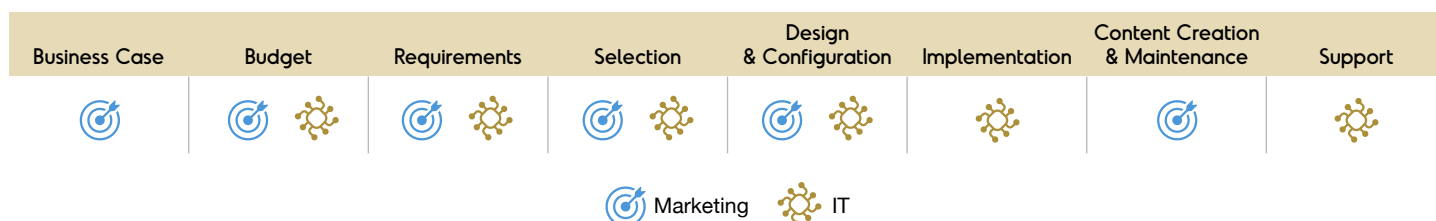
What *has* changed is the complexity of digital touchpoints and the need to enable meaningful experiences. No longer is a CMS merely used to populate a static webpage. Rather, content must be flexible, modular, and omnipresent to power personalization. That's why a CMS is a vital hub connecting your company's content creators, managers, and consumers. Put simply, it acts as a motor to drive the experiences underpinning digital efforts.

“Upgrading to a modern CMS can help you overcome the limitations of legacy systems and unlock a world of possibilities for your company's digital offering.”

Source: [2024's CMS Market Share Report - Trends and Usage Stats](#)

This guide provides a new perspective on CMS evaluation and selection **focused on cross-functional collaboration, with a specific focus to the synergy between IT and marketing teams.** It also covers the entire project journey needed to ultimately translate a platform into positive business outcomes. A CMS remains the experience engine for your digital approach – but fueling it requires a truly organization-wide perspective and planning.

Marketing & IT Ownership: Phases & Milestones of The CMS Journey



Platform selection is, of course, only the beginning. Optimizing a CMS long-term requires upfront alignment on objectives, roles, and success metrics to facilitate the organizational buy-in that is so critical for adoption and governance post-purchase.

Now let's get clear on some of the key considerations in the buying process to ensure the desired outcome for your new CMS.

Aligning Technology and Business Needs

1: Obtaining Buy-In

Before evaluating specific vendors and platforms, securing cross-functional alignment is critical for any organization assessing CMS options. CMS selection remains a mission-critical business decision requiring a substantial long-term investment of resources and budget.

While IT may be responsible for purchase decisions, your content creators and marketers should be key influencers given their deep user insights. **Design should be built from content and personas, not technology specifications.**

Obtaining buy-in across your IT, marketing, content, digital experience, and other digitally focused teams is essential early on. To this end, a selection committee representing both technical and business needs is a sensible move, gathering the most comprehensive requirements that balance security and integration priorities with authoring capabilities and analytics needs.

2: Change Management

When migrating CMS platforms, don't underestimate the change management dimension – new platforms, processes, and workflows all come with a measure of confusion that must be mitigated. Identifying a change agent to champion the project can ease the organizational impact of rollout and drive adoption. However, finding someone to take on this role internally is often difficult, even for larger organizations. Bringing in an outside consultant well-versed in CMS transitions can, for this reason, greatly aid your digital transition by fulfilling a neutral, focused advisory role.

Some companies choose to take these steps internally and others lean on their partner agencies to help shape the auditing and selection process. Partner agencies can help intermediate – introducing a certain “neutrality” and rigor into the process -- that internal teams often struggle with. In addition, an outside agency can help identify best practices and mitigate issues before they arise based on previous experience with similar projects.

On the technical side, IT teams should focus on non-functional priorities like reliability, security, scalability, and integration with existing infrastructure. Your marketing and content people, meanwhile, should be encouraged to emphasize functional needs around authoring abilities, collaboration workflows, and content insights. The trick is to get both parties pulling in the same direction.

Compiling a complete list covering both system and user requirements will ensure the chosen platform can deliver on expected functionality while aligning with enterprise technology standards. At the same time, understanding associated roles, like content authors, infrastructure owners, and cross-departmental governance team members, will clarify both workflow and administrative requirements.



3. Cost of Ownership

Vetting the true total cost of ownership is also critical before you sign any contracts.

IT leaders rightly concentrate on hard costs around licensing, hosting fees, and vendor maintenance. But the wider business should analyze softer expenses as well – things like content population, optimization, governance, ongoing maintenance, and updates to the CMS/DXP needs that can quickly balloon beyond initial budget expectations.

Accounting for scalability to support future content volume and digital experience maturity should also factor prominently into your platform evaluation process, as should the customization efforts likely required to appropriately integrate any solution into your organization's unique existing IT environment.

4. A Shared Vision

As the content experts and voice of the customer, marketing plays an essential advisory role to ensure technology investments map to both authoring and delivery needs. But an overly ambitious digital experience strategy also needs grounding against development realities. By establishing a shared vision through regular cross-functional check-ins, both user and technical requirements can be met in a balanced way that serves the customer at both ends.

Beyond software, don't make the mistake of downplaying the "people impact" when introducing new platforms. User coaching and training accelerate proficiency and addresses expected learning curves. Empowered marketers can then self-manage campaign iterations while your IT specialists are freed from basic content maintenance. Furthermore, establishing governance policies and content standards early on codifies these new efficiencies into ongoing operations.

CMS migration and customization take time but realizing the platform's full potential rests on these foundational efforts. IT and business collaboration combined with balanced technology tradeoffs at the outset lead to smooth day-to-day management and a unified digital experience that meets the needs of all.

CMS Technology Selection Criteria

- ☐ **Customization and Extension**
Understand how much customization is required to the CMS itself and what custom applications need to be built and integrated to extend the CMS' capabilities.
- ☐ **Pricing and Feature Set**
Determine a budget based on your needs, but don't pay for features you won't use.
- ☐ **Developer Suitability**
One of the first questions to ask is, does the CMS fit within the company's technology stack?
- ☐ **Hosting Strategy**
What is the hosting structure and support available?
- ☐ **Maintenance and Support**
Based on your team

Source: [Technology Considerations for CMS Selection, Implementation, and Data Migration](#)

Implementation: From Migration to Customization

With a CMS platform picked out, your focus turns to implementation – a notoriously tricky process that hinges on effective data migration and customization. Handled correctly from the outset, these two elements set the stage for smooth governance and solid adoption moving forward.

Data Migration

Starting data migration early is vital to populate your new CMS with minimal business disruption. Your first step should be to compile detailed content inventories across key properties, such as web pages, documents, media assets, and campaign templates. Also, analyze how assets are interconnected through links and dependencies.

This content audit then allows the creation of a clean taxonomy outlining the types, structure, relationships, and metadata required in the new CMS. Repeatable, scripted import routines should then programmatically transfer assets from legacy systems using consistent, stageable processes focused on the preservation of links, keywords, tags, and taxonomy.

Concurrently, you should build modular templates for high-velocity assets like campaigns and landing pages. This facilitates self-service creation post-launch without ongoing IT support. Involving marketing teams in this process ensures templates meet omnichannel content needs from the start. Collaboration across IT and marketing users during the migration stage also prevents data silos down the road.

“Ideally, the new system should align with a company’s current technology platforms and systems, an alignment that helps facilitate a more seamless CMS integration and implementation to minimize technical friction and roadblocks.”

Source: [Technology Considerations for CMS Selection, Implementation, and Data Migration](#)



Customization

CMS customization requires a balance between leveraging out-of-the-box features versus building custom integrations tailored to your organization's specific needs. While turnkey solutions simplify governance, heavy customization provides complete flexibility – but at the price of extended implementation timelines, complex maintenance, and reliance on proprietary code.

Most adopters land somewhere in the middle – using base platform capabilities where possible, but interfacing core systems, like CRM, eCommerce, and DAM solutions, through custom data and experience connectors. API-based CMS architectures accelerate this best-of-both-worlds approach.

Testing and Continuous Improvements

The work doesn't stop once a CMS is selected, and implementation has been completed. Success after launch requires ongoing collaboration between marketing and IT throughout a CMS's lifecycle. Some key points to consider:

- Pre-launch: Testing ensures smooth operation (performance, content workflows, etc.) before rollout.
- Launch: Analyze user behavior and optimize for better experiences.
- Training: Provide comprehensive training for different user roles.
- Continuous Improvement: Regularly review performance, gather feedback, and adapt the CMS to evolving needs.

This collaborative approach ensures the CMS meets both technical and user experience goals, and scales effectively with your business.

“A collaborative approach [between IT and Marketing] not only streamlines the implementation process but also ensures that your new CMS is optimized to support your business goals.”

Source: [How a New CMS Can Revolutionize Your Digital Presence](#)

Conclusion: Achieving CMS Success Through Cross-Functional Collaboration

An effective content management system remains the foundation of any digital experience stack. As both customer expectations and technology options continue to rapidly evolve, selecting, and implementing the right CMS for your business is essential – but also increasingly complex.

The answer is a cross-functional approach.

Achieving a high degree of interdepartmental coordination isn't always easy, however. CMS excellence starts with cross-team unity. Maintaining this synergy through launch and beyond via governance models, improvement checkpoints, and user training delivers an adaptable and well-rounded platform – one that is ready to tackle all your digital content needs.

About Stellar

Since 2013, Stellar has brought to life complex business strategies by developing digital experiences and products for clients through brand, UX, design, technology implementation, and managed services. With our Digital Hygge ethos ingrained into every step of the journey, we take the chaos of the complicated to create harmonic, elegant solutions that garner positive business outcomes. From transforming the customer journey to developing platforms for the enterprise, we bring a focus and expertise for executing complicated products, experiences, and services that few can deliver. With presence in California, Copenhagen, and India, some of our long-standing clients include Hewlett Packard Enterprise (HPE), KB Homes, The Port of Long Beach, and AEG.

Learn more at [Stellaragency.com](https://stellaragency.com).