



Navigating the digital experience landscape.

Insights from marketers and developers.



In this fast-paced digital age, the pressure is on to continuously improve and push the boundaries of what's possible. This pressure can be felt by brands of all sizes in all industries. Consumers now demand personalized and convenient experiences across an unprecedented number of channels and devices. Meeting these expectations is no simple feat, as companies must consistently deliver engaging content while dealing with shrinking budgets and staff. Adding to the complexity, business leaders must measure the value of each investment and drive profits without compromise.

Digital experience teams—the marketers and developers responsible for building and supporting digital experiences for customers—bear the responsibility of fulfilling heightened customer expectations amidst intense competition and the diminishing attention spans of their target

audiences. These teams navigate this complex landscape while adhering to tight timelines and scaling efforts to reach more people with personalized, timely, and relevant content. The demands placed upon them are formidable, requiring lightning-fast delivery and remarkable efficiency.

To gain insights into these challenges, we conducted a global industry-wide survey of 928 professionals ranging from practitioners to executives. We asked questions about their biggest pain points, priorities, tech needs, and operational roadblocks. Analyzing their responses unveiled both shared struggles and unique obstacles, shedding light on the most pressing issues. This report presents the findings and offers actionable insights for business leaders to improve their content supply chain and provide better experiences for both employees and customers.

62%

of survey respondents believe their organization has been impacted by increased demands for productivity.

40%

believe that budget freezes or reductions also had an impact.

Digital experience teams need a solid content supply chain.

A content supply chain refers to the streamlined process of planning, producing, managing, and delivering content in a strategic and efficient manner. It aims to simplify complex and disjointed content workflows, optimize spending, and demonstrate the impact of content.

The four key parts of a content supply chain:



Plan

Streamline operations



Produce

Increase throughput



Deliver

Activate at scale



Analyze

Optimize for impact

The state of digital experience teams.

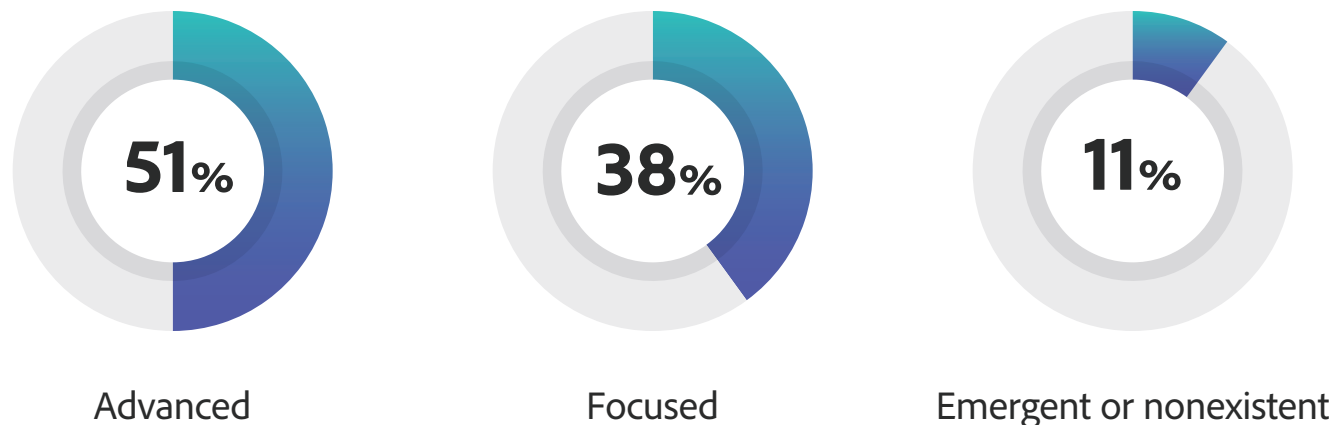
What marketers and developers have to say.



Digital maturity evaluation —a positive outlook.

Most survey respondents are feeling optimistic about their organizations' digital maturity and competitive advantage.

How respondents rate their organizations' digital maturity:



- 50% of respondents say their organizations are holding steady compared to other organizations in their industry.
- Of the respondents that rate their digital maturity as advanced:
 - 45% claim they're outperforming their competitors.
 - 54% believe their organization's digital experiences have set them apart from competitors.

Tech talk—the systems powering digital experiences.

We asked respondents to tell us what content management tools their organizations use. Here's what the numbers say:

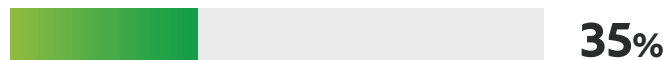
Digital asset management (DAM)



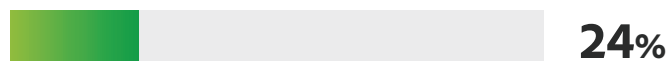
Hybrid content management system (CMS)



Traditional CMS



Headless CMS



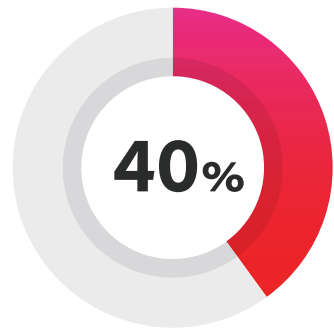
76%

of people who rate their organization's digital maturity as advanced mainly use a hybrid CMS.

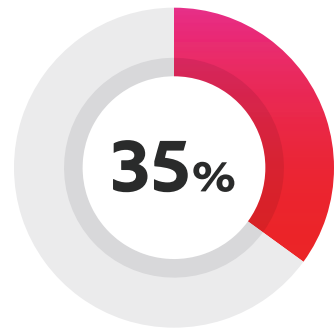
The balancing act—managing day-to-day functions and transformational activities.

Most teams spend less time on activities that push for digital progress than they do on regular day-to-day duties.

Time spent on transformative work:



IT and development



Marketers



Meeting the challenge— respondents report increased responsibilities and resources for digital transformation efforts.

90% of both marketing and IT respondents said their responsibilities have expanded in the last 3 years.

Fortunately, 89% say they've received more resources to meet these demands.

Pain point prioritization

The percentage of respondents who ranked these pain points in their top 3:



54%

Skills gap/lack of specialists



49%

Lack of time or resources



43%

Lack of standardized
processes/defined responsibilities

Better together—survey finds the majority value collaboration between marketing and development teams.

The percentage of respondents who rated the importance of collaboration between marketing and development teams:

36%

Critical

52%

Important

11%

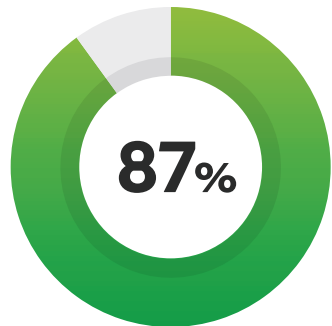
Nice to have

Unlocking the power of content for lightning-fast digital experiences.

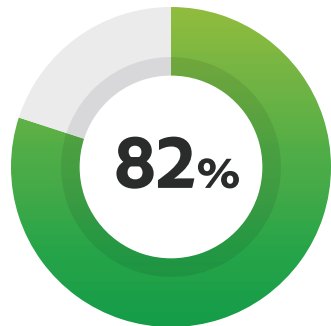
86% believe investing in content is a key strategy for rising above the competition.

But that's easier said than done.

- 59% say they're not equipped to reuse content and it's slowing them down.
- 82% would like more education and training to effectively use their systems.



Vote for investments in self-serve and marketer-friendly tools.



Believe atomic content is critical for creating countless variations for each customer.

DID YOU KNOW?

Atomic content is a content creation approach that breaks information into smaller, self-contained pieces or modules that can be combined and reused in various ways to create multiple personalized versions of a larger content asset.

Insights from marketers.

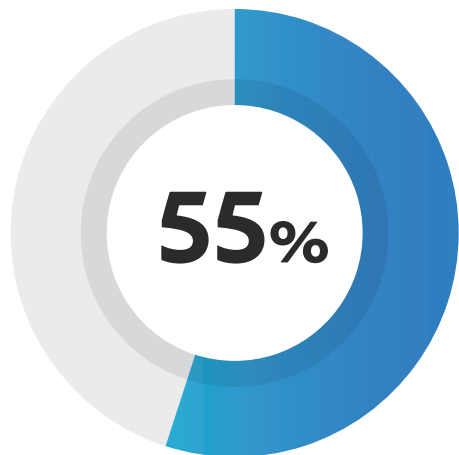
Defusing the pressure of personalization with content management tools.

Speed and efficiency emerge as key factors influencing the success of personalization efforts.

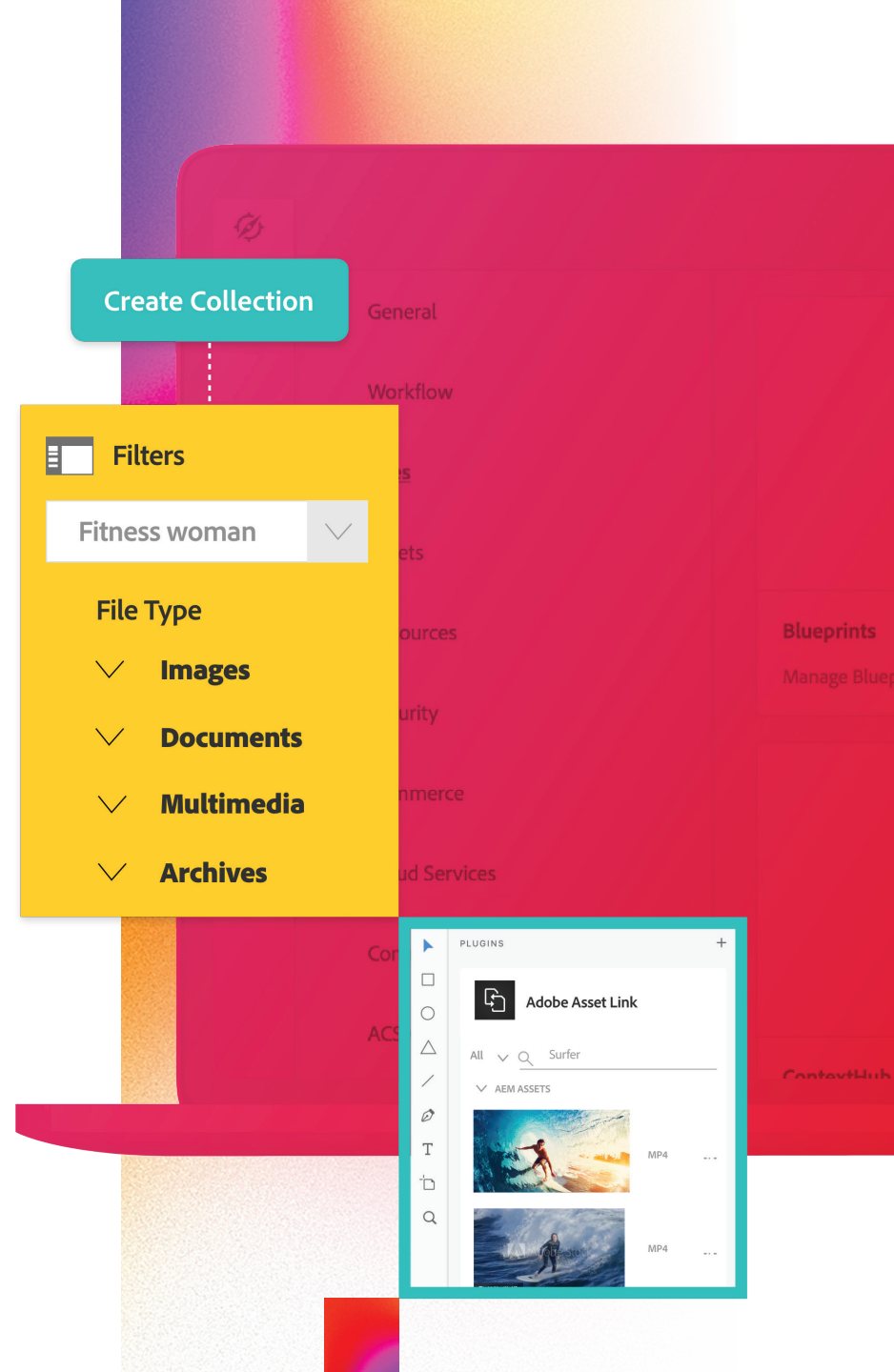


Marketers say campaigns launch too slowly.

To accelerate time to market, practitioners require accessible tools and processes that can democratize content and automatically adhere to brand guidelines.



55% believe it takes too long to launch campaigns.



User-friendly authoring tools are in high demand.

79%

of marketers find it easy to locate, manage, and use assets.

81% of this group is using a digital asset management (DAM) system.

76%

76% would prefer to use intuitive content authoring tools like Microsoft Word and Excel that can be imported into their content management system (CMS).

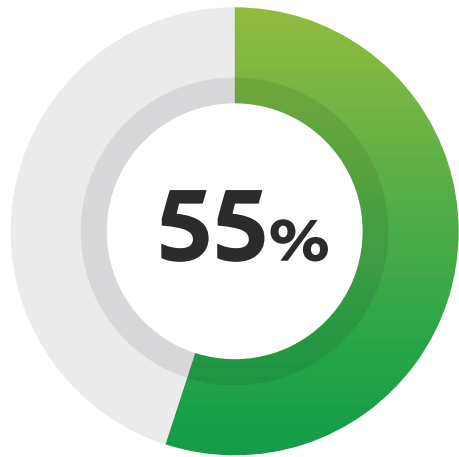
77%

77% seek easy-to-use tools like templates and WYSIWYG editors.

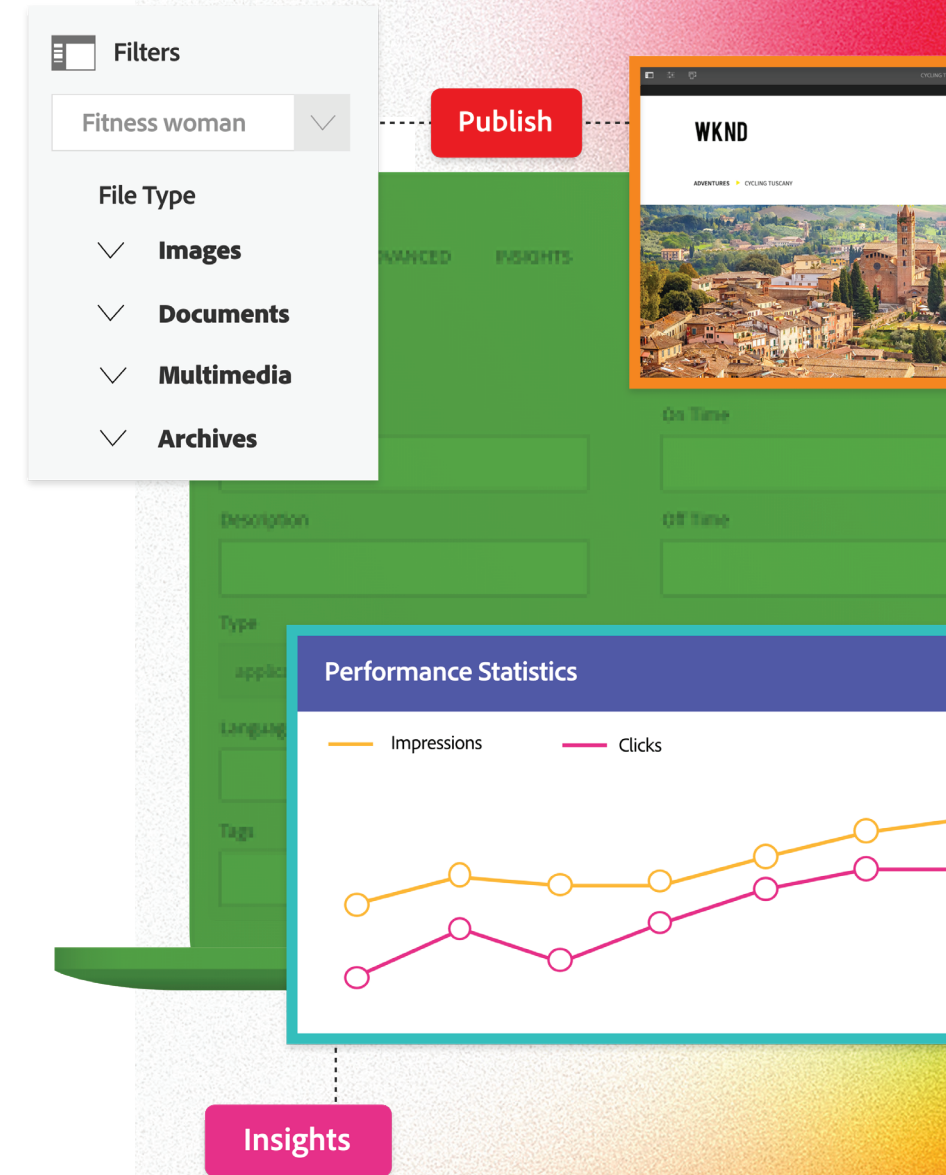
80%

80% want to make a change once and have it automatically updated across all tools and channels.

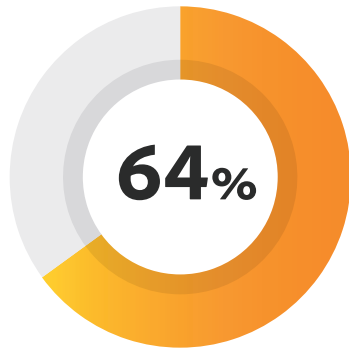
The type of CMS/DAM isn't a dealbreaker.



55% say they don't have a preference for the type of CMS or DAM they use, as long as they can easily locate assets and generate content quickly.

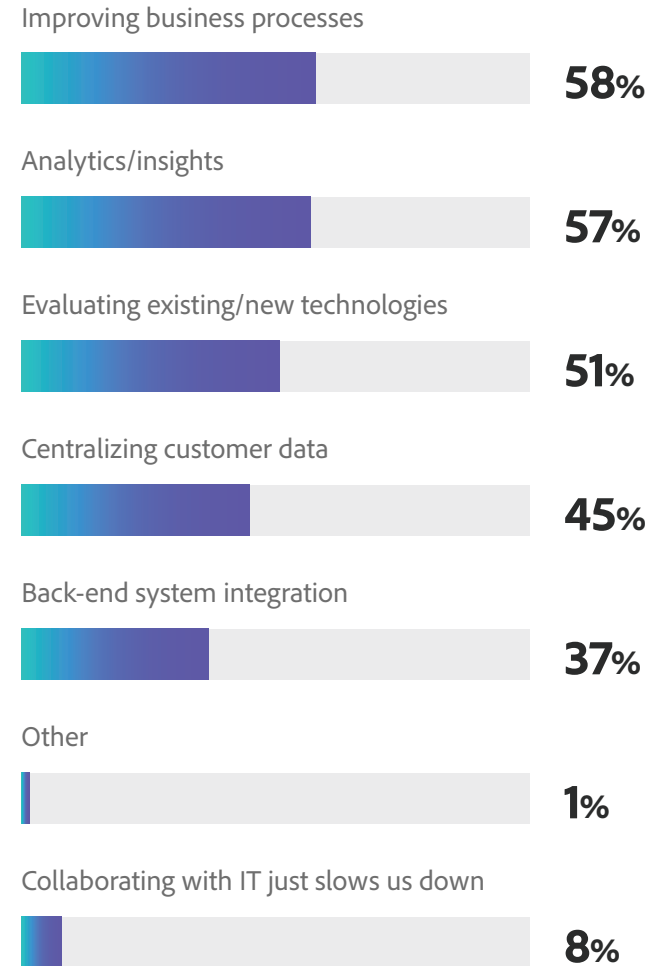


Collaboration between marketers and developers is gaining momentum.



64% of marketers report a positive relationship with development teams, but junior staff are less optimistic about this relationship.

When marketers say it's important to collaborate with their development team.



Insights from developers.

Transforming digital experiences with integrated solutions.

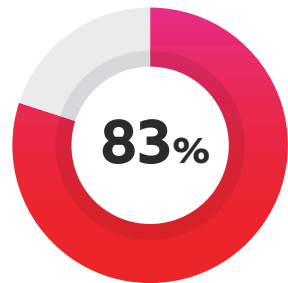
49% of developers believe IT/development teams need the most support for building digital experiences, while only 16% think marketing and sales teams need the most support.



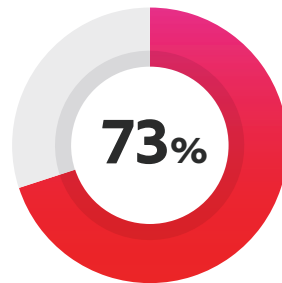
There's a preference for a cloud-based hybrid CMS.

66% of developers prefer a hybrid system, with cloud-based systems being 72% of respondents' top choice.

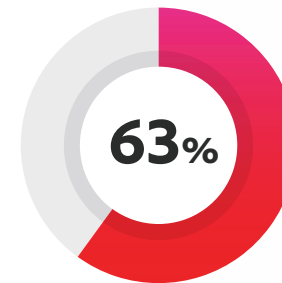
Why respondents prefer a cloud-native CMS.



83% say it has better performance and reliability.



73% favor its security features.



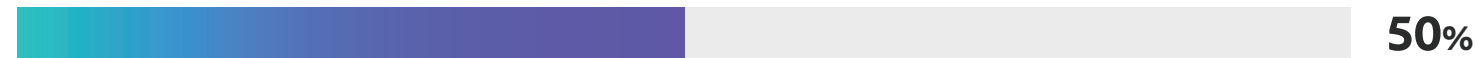
63% believe it's more scalable and always current.

A need for vendor flexibility.

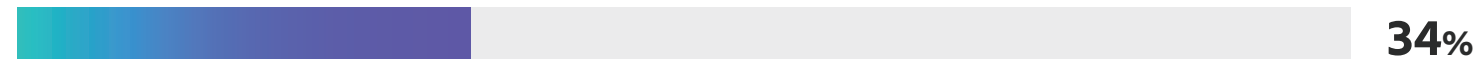
Given that the bulk of the responsibility lies with IT and developers to construct exceptional digital experiences, it is imperative to give them their preferred tools with seamless integration capabilities.

Key considerations for digital experience creation tools:

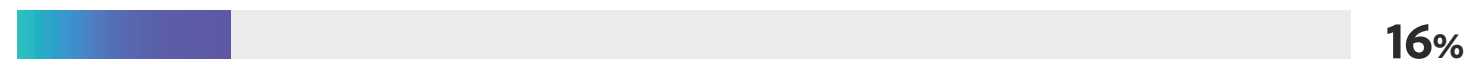
We want to select the best tools from multiple vendors and have them integrate well.



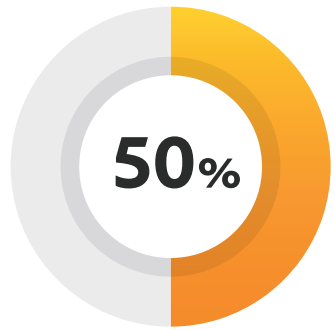
We don't mind using separate systems because our team can integrate them manually.



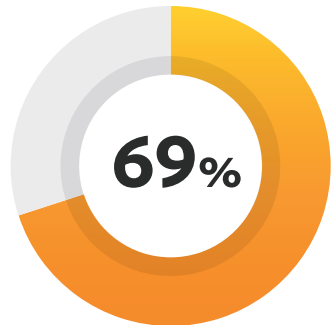
We want tools from a single vendor that are natively integrated.



A desire to keep collaboration across IT and business teams going strong.



50% of developers think IT works closely with business teams for tech vision and implementation.



69% feel there is a positive and equal collaborative effort, where everyone shares responsibility.

Three steps to managing digital experiences with success.

We understand that creating unique experiences in such a fiercely competitive market is a demanding pursuit. Fortunately, there are many ways to establish a resilient content supply chain, optimize workflows, and amplify the collective impact of these efforts.

To help businesses address the challenges faced by digital experience teams, we've distilled the survey findings into three actionable steps. Follow these steps to amplify your organization's digital experiences, become more digitally mature, and empower marketers, IT, and development professionals to achieve impactful outcomes.

STEP 1

Give everyone access to content creation and management tools.

Having a strong content supply chain unlocks efficiency so digital experience creators can produce the high volume of experiences necessary to reach their customers. To make the planning, production, management, and delivery of content run smoothly, all teams need appropriate access to content creation and management tools.

When content is stored in a central place, assets and variations stay up to date and organized, so teams can find them quicker and don't have to worry about wasting time on duplicative work. And when work is managed from a single location, all team members can keep an eye on strategy, progress, approvals, and performance—and pivot when necessary. These tools should have automation built in so teams can hand off repetitive tasks—like resizing assets—to AI and concentrate on higher value endeavors.

Content creation and management tools work better when they're connected and when asset governance is established. Integrate your DAM and CMS so approved assets are in one place and teams can manage the entire content creation and delivery process in one ecosystem. That way, users don't have to jump from one platform to another, which ultimately hinders creativity and speed.

PRO TIP

Many marketers struggle with locating approved assets quickly. To reduce time spent searching, prioritize governance when setting up your DAM.

If you have the resources, designate “content librarians” to maintain clean metadata and taxonomy, and train others to do the same for easy asset retrieval. By establishing a unified approach across the entire organization, you'll provide a consistent customer experience that aligns with your understanding of your target audience and translates effectively to the digital assets you use.

STEP 2

Give your teams the tech and training that work for them.

Many respondents (54%) believe their organization struggles with a shortage of qualified professionals who have the necessary skills to effectively build digital experiences for their customers. This is proving particularly problematic in today's rapidly evolving digital landscape, where companies need to stay current with the latest technologies and strategies to remain competitive. Your teams need the right tools for the job and the appropriate training to be able to get the most from the capabilities.

Marketers and developers have different requirements when it comes to the systems they need to accomplish their tasks. Marketers want to use familiar authoring tools like Microsoft Word that allow them to import the content directly

to the CMS. They also want WYSIWYG editors and ready-made templates—any tool that allows them to publish content as fast as possible. Having a DAM system in place is an added advantage since it helps them find their assets quickly.

Developers prefer to use solutions from multiple vendors and have them integrate seamlessly. That may just be why many developers also prefer a hybrid CMS—it gives them the freedom to use the tool in a way that suits them best. And when it comes to building digital experiences, having headless capabilities in a hybrid CMS is especially attractive because it allows developers to connect their own frameworks and tools, making their work easier and more efficient.

The key to bridging the gap between marketers and developers is to use a CMS that satisfies the unique requirements of both teams while connecting with your existing content and data systems. This integration forms the backbone of an intelligent and interconnected martech stack that can support an advanced content supply chain.

Better tools and processes can expedite day-to-day functions, freeing up more time for transformative projects and testing. Give your teams the training they need to get the most from the systems and solutions driving your content supply chain.

PRO TIP

Foster effective collaboration between marketing and development by promoting mutual understanding. Developers should learn marketers' needs, and marketers should understand the development process.

This helps developers build user-friendly frameworks, reducing confusion and marketers' reliance on technical support. Implementing a connected martech stack and establishing a feedback loop for continuous improvement empowers both teams to work harmoniously and independently.

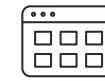
STEP 3

Use composable content to scale personalized experiences across channels.

Digital experience teams want to be able to make changes that update instantly across all channels. This is where the power of atomic content becomes essential. With atomic content, you can break down content into its smallest individual components.

To illustrate the process, let's consider an example. By utilizing a robust DAM system equipped with advanced AI and automation capabilities, teams can create atomic content elements. For instance, a website banner can be made up of various components like an image, title, description, and a call-to-action button. These individual elements can be stored and managed within the DAM. The true magic lies in the automatic assembly of these atomic elements to generate countless asset variations to meet different channel requirements.

When it's time to turn those assets into personalized digital experiences across channels, look to composable content services. Composable content services are a suite of tools, such as headless capabilities and what we call "experience fragments," that work in conjunction with atomic content. By utilizing these flexible delivery mechanisms in your CMS, content authors can update one part of a fragment—a web banner, for example—and have that same change reflected across all instances it's used.



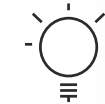
Thousands of assets



Different teams



Different channels



Different ideas of what works

STEP 3 CONT.

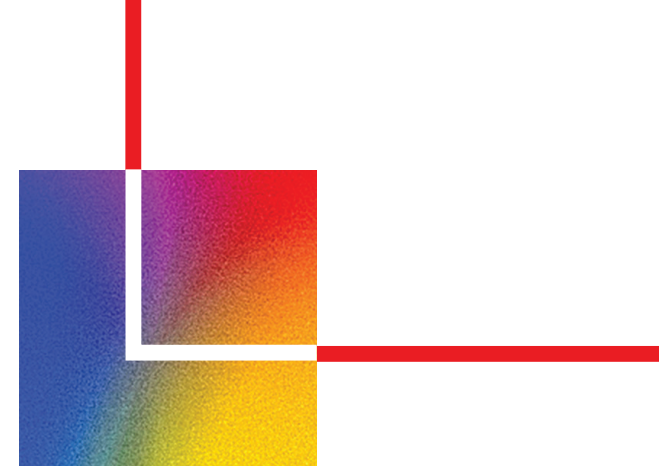
Now, let's bring a hybrid CMS into the picture. By having the option to use headless architecture, developers can future-proof their content strategy for emerging channels. This allows them to use composable content across a wide range of platforms. It also keeps things organized and makes it easy to manage and deliver content quickly and smoothly.

By implementing these systems and processes, companies can bridge the gap between customer expectations and experiences, leading to growth, competitive differentiation, and customer loyalty. Experience-led growth is the key to success in the digital economy, and companies that deliver exceptional and human experiences now while preparing for future business and customer needs will come out on top.

PRO TIP

Embrace the future of personalized content by creating more variations tailored to smaller audience segments. To achieve a 1:1 level of personalization, focus on making the content authoring journey efficient and scalable for teams. This means breaking things down into modular pieces, maximizing the use of reusable content components to save time and resources.

Experts weigh in on digital experience best practices.



“ An oft-forgotten group of users is the content authors, but the reality is without them, the customer wouldn't have a site to visit in the first place as these are the people who create the content meant to engage the customer. As designers and developers, we need to ensure we think about and design for both groups of users. If we make components hard to use or complex to configure, how can we expect the content authors to create the best possible experiences for our customers?



Martin Noble
CTO at ecx.io Ltd
IBM iX

“ To build a strong content supply chain, it's critical to solidify collaboration, education, and training plans for all teams involved. Ensure your leadership, data architects, development teams, designers, administrators, authors, and marketers understand best practices and have a collaboration model or blueprint in place. That blueprint could include work share meetings, authoring guides, feature and update showcases, and a collaborative workspace that includes documentation with usage guidelines.



Greg Dimeris
Web Content Manager
T. Rowe Price

Empowering teams to meet today's content challenges.

The only constant is knowing that customers expect more everywhere. As the industry leader in content management, Adobe is perfectly poised to give teams the tools and services they need to overcome today's content challenges and create epic customer experiences. Adobe Experience Manager allows users of all skill levels to create, edit, manage, and publish content easier and faster to help you build a powerful content supply chain.

Empower your digital experience teams with AI-powered content management solutions. Learn more about [Adobe's flexible CMS](#) and [cloud-native DAM](#).



Methodology

This survey was conducted by Advanis on behalf of Adobe in the US, Europe (covering the UK, France, Germany), and Asia (covering India, Japan, Australia, and New Zealand). A total of 928 digital experience team members completed the survey. Surveys were collected between March 21 and March 27, 2023. To qualify for the research, participants had to work for an organization of at least 500 employees and answer yes to this question: “Does the majority of your day-to-day work directly support the digital experiences of your customers (such as shaping the customer experiences on web, mobile, or social media)? This could include user experience, development, design, and marketing activities.”



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