Adobe

Content for every moment.

Just the basics

An amazing meal doesn't require a whole lot of fancy ingredients. Sometimes, farm-fresh produce with just the right amount of seasoning can be more delicious than a complicated dish. You just need a few simple elements to create something unforgettable.

There is a similar "basics only" approach to becoming an experience business. In our multi-part Experience Essential series, we examine the basics of customer experience (CX)—the building blocks you'll want to have in place to sustain customer experience management (CXM) success.

In this installment of the Experience Essential series, we show you how you can start delivering the right content to the right people at the right time. You'll learn the fundamentals to put into place so you can connect with customers in the moments that matter and offer them great experiences.

The customer experience

Customer experience management (CXM) is the leading edge of marketing, sales, and branding today. It goes beyond CRM, which shows customers in the past. CXM shows what customers need right now and in the future, and delivers it in real time, at scale, and across every channel.

The challenge of being on time, every time

Jordan has spent all day researching custom couches for his very first home. While he's well-versed in interior design, he's at the very beginning of his customer journey. So Jordan skips over any generic content and goes straight for the details, learning about the construction, materials, and craftsmanship behind some of his favorite brands.

On the marketing side, Jordan's online research triggers a number of different events. Furniture brands start sending him retargeting ads. The home décor blogs he follows start showing him couches every time he visits their websites. And dozens of retailers add him to their direct mail list. Within a week, Jordan's inbox and mailbox are full of coupons, catalogues, and ads for couches. The abundance of information feels overwhelming, especially this early in Jordan's research and buying process. So he puts off his decision for another time.

The problem is that the bulk of these brands don't know very much about Jordan, including where he is in his customer journey. He knows he'll be buying his couch in a month or two, after he's had plenty of time for consideration. But the marketing teams trying to connect with him don't. Instead of meeting Jordan where he is at this specific moment, they are jumping the gun to make the sale. As a result, Jordan has no problem recycling his couch coupons and ignoring any discount offers he gets online.

Marketing budget and effort gets wasted in moments like this all the time. But it doesn't have to.

The positive customer experiences that marketers want to create are always dependent on timing. As Karthik Muralidharan, senior product marketing manager at Adobe, says, "Content should fit the context of whatever situation the customer is in." Although some marketers think of customer journeys as linear, most of the time they're just the opposite. Customers can bounce back and forth between the awareness and consideration phases, for instance, taking longer than anticipated to move into the purchase phase. And even if you could plan the perfect experience ahead of time, there's no guarantee a customer will follow the path you expect them to. Content needs to adapt to the ever-changing customer journey.

Digital foundation

To deliver high-quality customer experiences, businesses need a digital foundation of powerful core technologies. A digital foundation starts with a content management system (CMS), analytics engine, and AI to form the "single source of truth" for organizations.

Of course, this is easier said than done. Delivering the right experience at the right time requires marketers to press pause on strategizing and content creation and focus instead on building up a strong digital foundation.

An obstacle to establishing a good digital foundation, Muralidharan says, is when companies keep their content and data in siloes. If this sounds like you, you're not alone—Forrester estimates that 83 percent of digital professionals struggle with siloes.

With data and content spread out across an organization, it's no wonder companies have a hard time delivering the right customer experience at the right moment. Handoffs between marketing and IT can take days, if not weeks. And manual coordination between departments makes it impossible to respond to opportunities in real time. As Muralidharan says, "To really make content velocity possible, IT needs to give marketing a seat at the table."

But the timing of content, while vital, is only part of the equation. When marketing and IT are publishing content separately, but have no common place to store their most up-to-date assets, there's a big risk of inconsistency. Especially for longer customer journeys, like Jordan's, companies need to be sure they're communicating the same essential message at every touchpoint and in all the right moments. For example, if a furniture retailer's seasonal email promotion is ending, but Jordan is still seeing their digital ads for 30 percent off, his experience will be confusing. It could lead to a lost sale. Modern content management systems that include digital asset management (DAM) can help with this. Today, digital asset management is so much more than a content repository. With a modern DAM, companies can automatically store, locate, and customize their communications. This means that marketing and IT can deliver consistent messages—fast—to help customers like Jordan along their journey.

Content velocity

Content velocity is the aspect of CXM that connects the right customers and content to the right moment in time. With content velocity, you can create, manage, and deliver content from a centralized and searchable digital foundation that empowers you to move from asset creation to monetization as quickly as possible and at scale.

Although Jordan had a longer-than-average customer journey, the company that ultimately wins his business has been in lockstep with him the whole way. A few months in, the winning company noticed indications that Jordan was getting ready to buy—he'd been reading up on recipes and games for the housewarming party he was planning. Because the furniture manufacturer had established a digital foundation, the sales email reached Jordan as soon as the right indicators were triggered. When Jordan opened his email, he saw an image of the custom couch he'd previously mocked up on the company's website, plus a discount code for 30 percent off. After guiding him patiently through each step, the company provided just the right experience at just the right time. And successfully made the sale.

With their strong digital foundation, the furniture shop can nurture and convert clients like Jordan all the time—and at scale.

As you can see, there are a lot of factors that come into play when trying to deliver the right content at the right moment. This guide will help break it down for you so you can make the most of every second.

Getting started

Content management

Making timely customer connections can feel like juggling, especially when it comes to content management. Tracking down the right assets across various people, teams, and departments isn't just inefficient—it's unnecessary. By establishing a digital foundation, you can avoid the juggling act. It's all about having a DAM and content management system (CMS) that work together seamlessly.
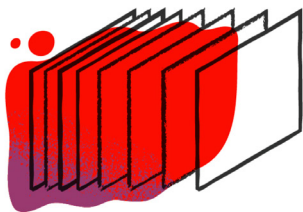
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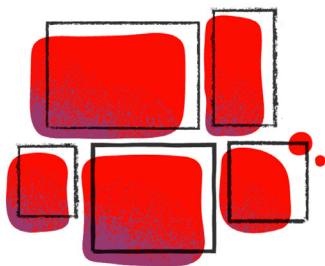
CMS PUBLIC GALLERY

This integration between your DAM and CMS is essential for content velocity. You can think of your DAM as an in-house asset storage system—like your company's own private art collection. Your CMS, on the other hand, is more like the gallery where you display your assets publicly. Smooth interplay between these two systems is essential. When you can easily search, locate, and modify assets in your DAM, you can publish them to your CMS without a hitch. For example, if you wanted to repurpose an image from your social media for your blog, a DAM would help you find, crop, and publish it all from one location in minutes.

Without a DAM, it could take hours or days to locate the asset in another department's database, send it through a designer for editing, and get IT to publish it to your CMS.

When it comes to well-timed content, every second you spend on content management adds up. The faster you can hit the publish button, the better—which means that every step before publication needs to be efficient, too. According to IDC, content management tools like DAMs can speed up the time it takes to find and download assets by 74 percent. And over a three-year period, these efficiencies can boost ROI by up to 366 percent. Shaving off extra hours and dollars is always a good thing—but if you're trying to grow your business, it's non-negotiable.

According to IDC

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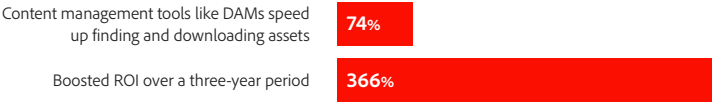
Content velocity

"Content velocity starts at creation," says Karthik Muralidharan, Senior Product Marketing Manager at Adobe.

Content velocity is a process, not a single moment in time. A lot goes into creating high-performing workflows that get the right content to your customers when they need it. Like a line of dominoes, every step forward in the content process affects the next one. And the total time to completion depends on the effectiveness of every preceding step.

This is why efficiency in the first aspect of content velocity—creation—is so important. Spending less time adapting assets to new use cases means the content velocity process can start off on the right foot. With a modern DAM, you can make content changes like cropping, recoloring, or copy

updates from one place, minimizing the number of steps in the content editing process. IDC has shown the companies that do this see up to 27 percent faster content delivery.

Once you have your content library established, content maintenance becomes the next step in content velocity. Marketers can only deliver content in a timely manner if the content is there for them when they need it. That's why it's so important to keep content organized, usable, and safe. Content is a hugely valuable company resource, being an estimated six times more effective at converting customers than other methods, according to the Content Marketing Institute. The maintenance aspect of content velocity also extends into searchability. How you store your content directly affects your ability to find what you need when you need it. When you establish a strong digital foundation, you can incorporate features like AI and smart tagging to make locating the right assets faster and easier. This means that teams can spend less time searching for content and more time repurposing it for new campaigns.

> *"The ideal way to achieve content velocity is with an end-to-end solution, all the way from creative to publishing."*
>
> **Karthik Muralidharan**
> Senior Product Marketing Manager at Adobe

The last domino of the content velocity process is delivery across channels and devices. As a manual process, content delivery is extremely labor-intensive. Every piece of content needs to be adapted and delivered separately—a task that even a big marketing team couldn't sustain for

long. But a digital foundation contains all the tools you need, like a DAM, to deliver multi-channel experiences in seconds. And when you can personalize these experiences at scale, you start to see real results—Econsultancy estimates a 5 to 15 percent increase in revenue.

Personalization and optimization

The wrong content at the right moment is still the wrong content. As much as marketing technology has evolved to pinpoint the ideal times to connect with customers, there's no substitute for personalization. According to Econsultancy, only 38 percent of the largest companies are taking advantage of personalization technology. The good news is that, when you're already set up with a digital foundation, you have a starting place for incorporating personalization tools. This foundation of data and content gives marketers a 360-degree view of customers that they can use to time the right digital experiences.

But data alone won't help you personalize your content at scale. It's a combination of creativity, AI-driven insights, automation, and real-time capabilities that take personalization up to the next level. While customer segments are a vital marketing tool, no team can create enough segments to properly tailor every

60%

of leading consumer brands are expected to use **emotion detection** to personalize experiences by 2025

experience for every individual customer. But still, the bar for hyper-personalized, in-the-moment content is always getting higher. IDC estimates that over 60 percent of leading consumer brands are expected to use emotion detection to personalize experiences by 2025. Only a modern, AI-enabled CMS with a constant influx of data can deliver this level of real-time personalization across every customer.

As an integrated feature of most modern digital foundations, optimization can help make personalized experiences even better. One of the major benefits of a digital foundation is that no piece of data goes unused—and this includes performance data. For every piece of content delivered, you can gather data and turn it into insights that help you deliver even more relevant, personal experiences the next time around. Without a strong foundation, this valuable information can easily get lost or siloed. But optimization helps you refine your content with every customer experience you deliver.

Scaling

As valuable as a stunning one-off moment can be, the real power of timely, personal customer experiences comes with scale. When every one of your customers is receiving hyper-personalized content on the right device at the right moment, you're operating at the full potential of today's customer experience technology. But scaling doesn't have to involve a lot of extra work for your teams. The tools in your digital foundation make reaching new customers—and even new markets—as simple as a few clicks.
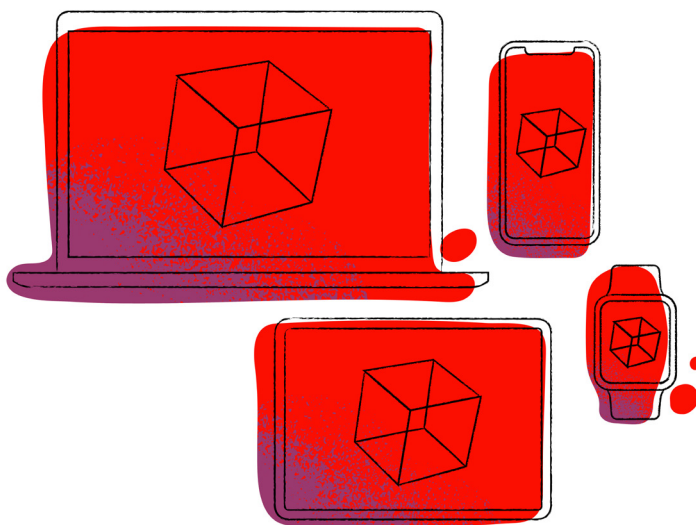
When it comes to personalization at scale, every type of organization can benefit from AI-powered automation. Language, location, culture, and other demographics just begin to scratch the surface of ways content needs to change with scale. There is no sustainable manual method to gain an extended reach with the level of personalization customers expect. As a result, IDC estimates 25 percent of global brands will be using AI and human translation to localize and personalize experiences based on a customer's context by 2024.

Even with the ability to personalize content at scale, you still need to be able to deliver your content to the right customer at the right time across every channel and device. The technology in your digital foundation should work seamlessly with testing and targeting tools to ensure there's a perfect match between content and customer. When combined with AI, the tools in your digital foundation can help determine when and how to present the right experience to every customer on your list. For customers, the result is a series of experiences that feel like they were handcrafted just for them, and that adapt to whatever context they are in. For businesses, this means making powerful connections with your full customer set that just keep getting better.

The players — who's who

Timing, as they say, is everything. That's why it's so important to have all the right people on board, up to date, and empowered to take action when you're looking to improve your customer experiences. To establish, use, and benefit from a digital foundation, you need to get the following four roles involved.

CMO/VP of Marketing

As the marketing leader within an organization, the CMO must balance the organizational and technological requirements of building a digital foundation. This starts by establishing a customer-centric culture where delivering top-notch experiences becomes a business priority. As the person responsible for the overall marketing strategy, the CMO needs to develop a broad vision for customer experiences, and then work with other teams to execute on these ideas. Included in this cross-functional approach is establishing a strong relationship between marketing and IT to ensure both departments work in lockstep, with a digital foundation that empowers each team to do their best.

Marketing Director

When it comes to delivering timely experiences at scale, the success of the marketing director depends on the digital foundation that marketing and IT leadership have created. As the hands-on practitioner, the marketing director looks for ways to combine technology and creativity to effectively reach customers. This means segmenting customers, developing innovative

campaigns, and structuring delivery to make the greatest possible impact. With the right digital foundation, marketing directors can achieve a lot without adding headcount to their team. Having a hands-on relationship with IT can help—marketing directors can work with IT to use the full potential of their software, including automation, integration, and data-driven optimization.

Sales

Personalization, when done right, really shines when it comes to sales. When salespeople are empowered with the right tools and technologies, they can make the most of each customer interaction. But today, CRMs don't provide enough information to give sales a real-time view of customers. This is where a digital foundation comes in. With one central repository for a company's full data set, sales can get an up-to-date view of their customers in real time. Because customer needs change moment to moment, real-time capabilities allow salespeople to respond so they can stay in lockstep with their prospects. This translates into more hyper-personalized offers at exactly the right time—and as a result, more sales overall.

CIO/CTO

While the CIO and CTO are the tech experts within any organization, they also have to become experts in cross-departmental operations in order to succeed at their job. In an ideal world, the CIO works alongside the full C-suite to establish a digital foundation that meets the needs of every department. To deliver the right content for every moment along the customer journey, the CIO must work especially closely with marketing to understand the customer experience strategy and configure company technology to support it. As more companies rely on data-driven insights to make decisions in marketing and beyond, it's also the CIO's responsibility to break down siloes and unify data into one central location. This puts the CIO at the center of company-wide insights, many of which can be used to craft better customer experiences.

Meet the experience makers

Every company delivers experiences whether they intend to or not, from friendly customer service to integrated digital marketing campaigns. But tomorrow's market leaders are intentionally creating experiences that engage, delight, and convert customers, wherever they are. The following experience makers are great examples to help you get inspired to create experiences of your own.

Sprint

For the telecom giant Sprint, connecting with customers in the moment was a huge differentiator from the other players in the industry. They offered plenty of 24/7 self-service options for customers looking to complete various actions online, from purchasing new devices to updating their service plans. But Sprint had started to notice a pattern of "irritants"—places where customers got stuck along their trajectories. To address these challenges, Sprint developed a 360-degree view of their customers. With a full picture of who customers were, where they'd been, and what they were trying to accomplish, Sprint could deliver personalized content at the moment when customers needed it the most. Overall, Sprint's updated digital experience helped them decrease their bounce rate by 12 percent and increase conversion rates by 22 percent.

maxim integrated™

A full-service semiconductor-based solutions firm, Maxim Integrated sells thousands of products on their website, with up to 15 SKUs per product. In order to make managing and selling their many products less complicated, they decided to move away from their home-grown platform and establish a digital foundation. This helped Maxim Integrated better organize their products online and provide a more personal experience for every customer. With support from other key integrations, Maxim Integrated's digital platform led to faster time-to-market, improved operational efficiencies, and a 300 percent increase in revenue due to the now-seamless site experience.

Dentsu isobar

With a wide array of offerings in the digital marketing industry, Dentsu Isobar is always looking for ways to shave off inefficiencies—for themselves and their clients. As a creative agency, visually showcasing their work was a high priority. The organization found that by using the right software to accurately mock up deliverables, their clients could make decisions faster. The result was a 20 percent reduction in resources for double the amount of creative production. This meant that Dentsu Isobar had dramatically accelerated their delivery times for important customer content. On the web side of things, establishing a digital foundation helped Dentsu Isobar better manage a large volume of assets, both for themselves and for their clients. With organized content, Dentsu Isobar could locate, adapt, and deliver content faster.

telenor

To stay competitive in a market flooded with streaming services, Norwegian TV and broadband provider Telenor upped the ante on personalization. They started by centralizing their data into a single place so they could gain powerful customer insights. With the results from their analytics, Telenor built out customer segments that helped them deliver more targeted experiences across their ads and website. For their advertising, Telenor used geotargeting to connect directly with customers in areas where their broadband service was strong. And on their website, they served strategic content to current customers to cross-sell or upsell services. With their new commitment to personalization, Telenor made notable gains in ROI.

Get the most from each moment

Sometimes, you need to slow down a little before you can speed up. It's easy to get excited about all the cutting-edge technology that can get your content to customers when they need it the most. But remember—a strong digital foundation is the first step to creating the timely, personal, and contextually relevant experiences you want to deliver. When you start strong with the right digital foundation, you'll have a long-term solution that will help you turn every moment into an unforgettable customer experience.

Find out how you can start building a digital foundation of your own.

Learn more

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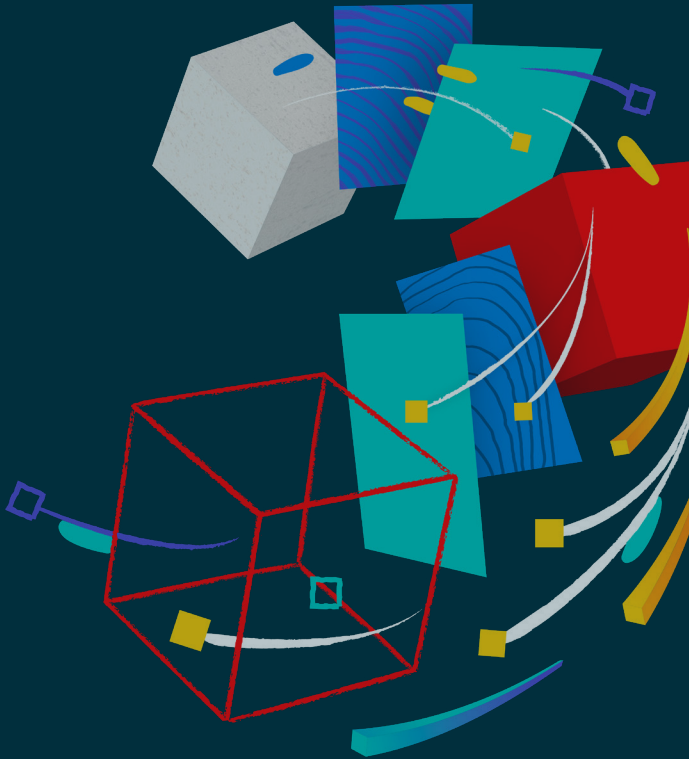
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