

Acquia
EXPERIENCE DIGITAL FREEDOM

ULTIMATE GUIDE TO DXP:

**What You Need to Deliver
Great Digital Experiences**



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SECTION 01

**RETENTION,
ACQUISITION,
EXPERIENCE**

Engage new customers and
deepen relationships with
existing ones





DIGITAL EXPERIENCES ARE LACKING IN PERSONALIZATION

Confronted with economic uncertainty and unexpected changes to basic business practices (whoever thought that in-person meetings and in-store experiences would be off the table?), brands across the board have had to rethink two key activities: customer retention and customer acquisition.

To retain customers, brands need to provide a great customer experience, one that is both convenient and clearly tailored to the customer's specific needs. Customers expect brands to remember them and demonstrate that through meaningful and relevant personalization.

To gain new customers, brands need to be able to meet them where they are, engaging them on their preferred channels. That engagement must be constantly evolving, becoming more personalized and focused on creating a long-term relationship.

Customer retention and customer acquisition are hardly new. What is new is the context in which they have to happen today. The pandemic has radically accelerated the move to digital in customer behavior that has been unfolding across industries for years. Unfortunately, too many companies have just now discovered that their ability to deliver a consistent, personalized digital experience is lacking.

It doesn't have to be that way. In this e-book, we will describe how a digital experience platform (DXP) featuring the right capabilities makes it possible to create and sustain digital experiences that engage new customers and deepen relationships with existing ones. Along the way, we will share stories from our customers across industries – food companies, clothing retailers, hotels, nonprofits – who are leading the way, delivering great digital experiences that impact their bottom line.

SECTION 02

**DIGITAL
EXPERIENCE**

The two key elements





Before diving into the must-have capabilities of a digital experience platform, it makes sense to take a closer look at what we mean by digital experience.

Digital experience refers to any interaction that happens online. This includes the experience of visiting a website, running a search via Alexa, interacting with a chat bot, using a brand's app on a mobile device, following a brand on a social media platform and everything in between. Even though these experiences take place across countless digital touchpoints and require multiple technologies, they all have two key components at the core: **content and data**.

CONTENT

Content is the lifeblood of a digital experience — it is how we engage with our digital audience. It informs their experience. It answers customer questions and guides customer decisions. It explains, entertains and influences. Regardless of the channels

a customer uses, content is what they consume. As the entire buyer journey continues to move online, the demand for content that resonates and engages customers will only increase and the need for that content to be available wherever a buyer might engage the brand will be constant.

DATA

Ensuring that the content you create not only speaks to customer needs but is consistently relevant to particular customers requires data. Data — specifically customer data — is how we understand our digital audience. Without data, there is no customer insight, either on the personal level or in the aggregate. With data, we can identify key customer groups and segments. We can refine buyer personas and map out the customer journey. And as we get to know individual customers better, we can deliver the right content to the right user on the right channel to drive to the next desired action.

CHALLENGES WITH CONTENT AND DATA

While content and data are simple, easily defined terms, harnessing them to create digital experiences that engage customers and grow your business isn't easy at all. Indeed, the technological and organizational challenges involved are not only complex, they are continually evolving.

The challenges associated with creating, managing and deploying content and data are threefold:

Challenge #1: The Quicksand

Brands need a lot of content. The demand for it never stops and the pressure to create different types of content, including “composable” content that can be deployed in multiple variations and formats, quickly becomes overwhelming. It feels like you're drowning in quicksand.

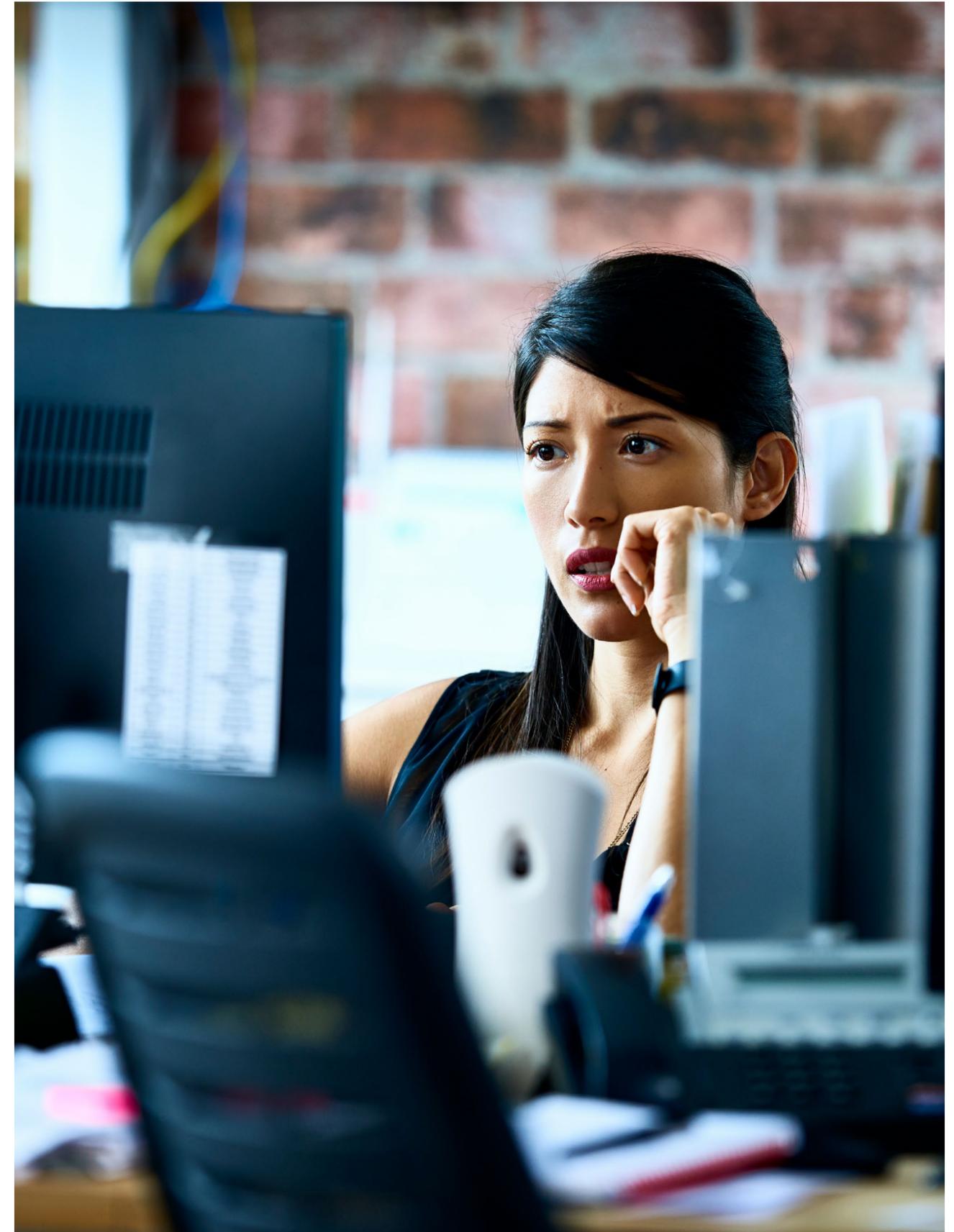
Challenge #2: The Labyrinth

Due to data silos (often a reflection of organizational silos), incomplete data, and the inability to analyze data effectively and efficiently, personalization efforts stall out. Competing or irrelevant messages end up confusing customers who feel like they are lost in a labyrinth.

Challenge #3: The Hydra

As if creating content and working with data weren't hard enough, the number of channels and digital properties brands rely on to engage with customers grows and grows. Trying to orchestrate and govern digital experiences across all these channels feels like taming a many-headed hydra!

We've written about these challenges here – [The Quicksand, The Labyrinth and the Hydra: Overcoming Your Top 3 Digital Transformation Challenges](#) – and encourage you to learn more about them. The good news: an open DXP provides the foundation you need to overcome them all.





MARS WRIGLEY

THE DIGITAL HALLOWEEN EXPERIENCE

COVID-19 looked like it was going to make traditional Halloween activities all but impossible, reducing revenue for Mars, which relies heavily on this particular holiday for sales. The company needed to quickly come up with a digital alternative that would encourage people to celebrate via a virtual trick-or-treat app that was both content-rich and data-savvy.

Using Acquia's DXP and coordinating efforts with third parties for some specialized functionality, Mars was able to create and deploy a mobile app called "Treat Town" in time for the holiday. Pulling primarily from existing content on the company's site, Treat Town became the second most downloaded app in the food service sector for September and October! As Shubham Mehrish, VP Digital Demand at Mars, told [MarTech Today](#), the choice to use Acquia was easy.

"Acquia Drupal is our CMS for all of our web properties; we have been on a transformation journey to actually upgrade all of our web properties on the Acquia platform. It's the engine that serves up a lot of the content you see on the app — everything you see from the landing page, which allows you to click through to the iOS and Android stores, and also the content that gets served up when you are in the app experience."

Acquia's open platform made it possible for this initiative to happen as quickly as it did — from concept to final app in a matter of months, rather than the typical year-plus planning usually associated with a digital initiative like this.

SECTION 03

**EXPERIENCE
CREATION**

Content and digital properties
must meet certain requirements





An effective DXP needs to support the rapid creation of content and digital properties.

Content is at the heart of digital experience. And customers want content that is informative (or entertaining), timely and relevant. But customers always consume this content in a specific, digital context – which may be a site or app you have created, or could be one of the many digital channels they use.

Companies must be able to quickly create content-rich digital properties as well as content that can be delivered to any channel. There should be no technical limitations to such creation – no going through IT to spin up a microsite or long delays waiting for a new digital property to launch.

It's also important that content be created with an eye to reuse, and this requires two things. First, the content must be available to be deployed to any channel where customers engage. Second, some content should be

“composable” or “modular.” If you want to dynamically personalize a webpage or generate a customer-specific newsletter, you need to be able to create and manage content components that can be assembled as needed in real time.

There is a bit of a conundrum here. Sometimes companies feel like they need to choose between making content and digital properties easy to create, on the one hand, and investing in a platform that offers the control, oversight and security the business demands on the other. You shouldn't have to compromise. The platform you choose can and should offer ease of use to content creators along with enterprise-level controls.

Along those same lines, a DXP needs to be able to scale without degrading the digital experience for customers or opening up the business to a range of avoidable risks. Ideally, your DXP should be built to scale so that you can respond to sudden increases in demand for content or spin up digital properties for new products and new markets as needed.



KING ARTHUR BAKING

MEETING RISING DEMAND FOR CONTENT

When the pandemic started, people stuck at home suddenly wanted to do a lot of baking. That surge of interest caused website traffic for [King Arthur Baking](#) to increase 260%.

This venerable old brand (founded in 1790!) sought to provide customers content to match this surge of interest. While King Arthur's site already featured 2,000 baker-tested recipes, the now-remote marketing team was able to add recipe pages and videos, highlight key information and direct consumers to the appropriate products for their baking projects. They were even able to launch a weekly video program, "Isolation Baking Show," in only a few weeks.

The quick pivot to a more immersive digital experience was possible because the underlying platform of Acquia Drupal Cloud was designed to allow non-technical marketing people to add content as needed. The ability to quickly scale and build new experiences without struggling to overcome technical hurdles allowed King Arthur to provide a sustainable response to demand – one that saw sales in 2020 increase 200% compared to the same period in 2019.

SECTION 04

**DATA
MANAGEMENT**

Collect, centralize,
cleanse, analyze





An effective DXP needs to support and optimize data management at each stage from collection to analysis and personalization.

Data provides the customer insight necessary for the development of meaningful digital campaigns and the personalization of digital experiences.

Companies collect customer data from many sources, but that data often dwells disconnected in data silos. Without a centralized repository of data, it is impossible to fully understand a given customer or to create valuable and meaningful segments or customer clusters. It also makes it impossible to understand and act on the different ways these segments or clusters behave across channels.

Once data has been aggregated from the different channels, tools, departments and functions where it resides, it needs to be cleansed, unified and enriched with other

relevant sources. Only then can a robust, comprehensive and actionable customer profile emerge.

Data analysis capable of leveraging machine learning and other analytical approaches makes these profiles actionable. One way it does so is by empowering companies to [cluster](#) customers into groups that are more refined and addressable than traditional segments.

Data analysis also drives personalization. Such personalization can take many forms, from localization of digital experiences, to increasingly relevant product and content recommendations, to guiding customer service representatives through data-informed interactions with specific individual customers.



LIDS

GATHERING CUSTOMER DATA TO BOOST SALES

Lids is a retailer that has sold sports team hats and fan gear both in malls and online for years. Although Lids has long had a loyalty program, its customer database was rife with duplicates. One consequence was that Lids' marketers didn't understand customer buying habits as well as they wanted to. As a result, they were limited when it came to effectively targeting customers with the right offers and promotions.

Using Acquia CDP, Lids created a unified database that gave marketers a better understanding of the brand's customers and pointed to new, more impactful marketing strategies. With that understanding, Lids was able to create effective email and paid digital campaigns that truly engaged customers and drove top-line growth.

SECTION 05

PERSONALIZATION

Customers expect to be known
and remembered



An effective DXP needs to support the personalization of digital experiences.

Of course, customer expectations for digital experience go beyond simply getting the content they want on the channels they prefer. As [our research has shown](#), customers expect to be known and remembered, with a consistent experience across channels. Customers also expect digital experiences to be convenient, which means, among other things, that brands make experiences easy by anticipating their needs.

In other words, brands need to combine data-based insights with their content creation efforts to personalize experiences across channels. A DXP must support the coordination and orchestration that this demand for personalization entails.



WATERAID

PUMPING UP DONATIONS WITH PERSONALIZED WEBSITE

WaterAid is an international non-governmental organization (NGO) based in the United Kingdom that aims to make access to water, toilets and hygiene available worldwide – fulfilling a basic human right not enjoyed by millions of people. To fund its activities, it relies on donations collected in part through its website. WaterAid sought to personalize the site for visitors through a better understanding of their interests and needs. With the aggressive spread of COVID-19, the NGO had an even more urgent need to raise funds for its expanded effort to stop the spread of the virus via safe water, sanitation and hygiene.

But WaterAid's site couldn't differentiate between visitors and lacked any method for following up with visitors. It recognized that it needed a new platform that would help them better understand their supporters and engage

them on a more personal level. The organization therefore had to move quickly to develop the capabilities required to increase donations with a personalized, integrated site experience.

Partnering with Acquia (using Acquia Cloud Platform, Acquia Cloud Edge and Acquia Personalization) and Access, a creative agency, WaterAid swiftly moved from proof of concept to full-blown personalization. The new site architecture allowed them to conduct A/B testing around abandoned donations, optimize the donation page, develop meaningful segments and targeted personalizations, as well as create custom events. As a result, the organization was able to complete campaign goals on both its UK and global websites.



SECTION 06

**GOVERNANCE
FRAMEWORK**

Security and compliance
without sacrificing flexibility





An effective DXP needs a governance framework that allows for flexibility within constraints.

Digital experience management has a lot of moving parts. The customer base grows and changes. Digital channels emerge and evolve. And companies continually create new products, services and campaigns.

As previously described, companies need to be flexible, responding quickly to the needs of both customers and the business. But this responsiveness can lead to chaos unless you have a governance framework that ensures security and compliance. Just as content and technical requirements must be able to scale, so must this framework. Without a scalable, practical governance framework in place, things will break, the company will be exposed to security and compliance risk, and the customer experience will suffer.

Controls need to be built into the platform to maintain enterprise-level security protecting both customers and the brand. These controls must also ensure that content and digital properties comply with both brand standards and relevant regulations, particularly around data privacy. On a purely technical level, such controls must also see to it that performance, a critical part of digital experience, won't degrade due to an influx of customers or an expansion of the digital footprint.

Finally – and this is the tricky part – these controls can't get in the way of how marketers use the platform. Marketers need freedom to create content, update sites and build campaigns without a dependency on IT. The governance framework built into the DXP has to thread that needle.

CENTARA HOTELS & RESORTS

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BOOKING REVENUE IN THE FACE OF COVID-19

Centara Hotels & Resorts has 81 deluxe properties across Thailand as well as another 34 in Southeast Asia and the Middle East. As COVID-19 shut down international travel, the chain needed a way of continuing bookings wherever possible. Centara wanted to showcase the safety precautions it took with its properties to a wider audience so that they would be top of mind once travel resumed.

But Centara's previous CMS, custom-made by a local Thai agency, required the IT department to create and manage content. The chain needed to not only allow marketers to add content without IT help, but also decentralize the platform so individual hotels could provide their own content. Of course, all the content created had to meet Centara's brand guidelines and other governance-related issues.

Centara decided to replatform on Drupal and implemented Acquia Site Factory to manage the multisite content production and publication process. The templates Centara built in Site Factory allowed customization while still adhering to brand standards. Using Acquia Cloud Edge, Acquia Site Factory and Acquia Personalization, Centara launched multiple campaigns, embraced social media and published multiple content streams showcasing the chain's efforts to combat the spread of COVID-19. The chain also adjusted booking and cancellation conditions to give customers more flexibility in their travel plans and matched price points with market demands. As a result, Centara's conversion rates and bookings both jumped 100% year-over-year in Q3 2020.



SECTION 07

A DXP CHECKLIST

What's needed to create valuable, sustainable digital experiences



Adding up all the factors that we've looked at here, we get a clear picture of what it takes to create consistent digital experiences that customers appreciate. To bring that picture to life, a DXP must feature:

/ An integrated approach to data and content

While content may be the heart of digital experience, data is what makes that content relevant to particular customers and determines how and where it should be deployed. For this reason, a DXP must bring together data capabilities and content capabilities in an integrated way.

/ An easy-to-use method for creating content

Forcing marketers to go through the IT department will not work in an era that requires quick introduction of new content to digital outlets. Low-code solutions and methods that allow the use of composable content help lower these technical hurdles.

/ Easier methods for development

Developers also need to be able to move quickly in standing up sites and apps.

/ Governance that scales

As its digital footprint grows and diversifies into different channels, an organization needs a governance framework that keeps pace. A DXP should come with a built-in governance framework, one that enables IT and security teams to fulfill their mission of protecting customers and the brand, without undercutting the need for speed in digital experience creation.

/ An open structure

Because customer behaviors change and the digital toolkit evolves, a DXP needs an open structure, one that allows for the easy adoption and integration of new channels and tools.

/ The latest technology

While no one can say exactly what new channels or solutions will matter most, there are certain capabilities that serve as the foundation for digital experience management. A DXP should feature the latest when it comes to the following:

- **A customer data platform** that unifies customer data, cleanses it and uses machine learning to derive actionable insights

- **A personalization tool** that allows marketers to run multichannel campaigns, customize digital experiences to different audiences and orchestrate self-directed customer journeys
- **A governance feature** that allows CMOs to manage and govern global marketing efforts while empowering local teams to collaborate and contribute to digital campaigns

Acquia offers a DXP meeting all of these requirements in the form of Drupal Cloud and Marketing Cloud. Together, they give companies the power needed to quickly and effectively gain deep knowledge of customers and create engaging, content-rich experiences across multiple channels, while supporting the governance capabilities enterprises need for scalability, security and compliance.

WANT TO LEARN MORE?

The world's only open DXP can empower you to deliver the best possible digital experiences.

LEARN MORE ▶

Acquia

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ABOUT ACQUIA

Acquia is the open digital experience platform that enables organizations to build, host, analyze and communicate with their customers at scale through websites and digital applications. As the trusted open source leader, we use adaptive intelligence to produce better business outcomes for CX leaders.

