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contentful

Delivering next-generation
digital experiences

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Introduction

Delivering next-generation digital experiences

For brands to succeed in 2022, delighting and inspiring consumers throughout their entire lifecycle is key. Traditional content marketing and static sites are old news. To stay ahead of competitors and wow consumers, brands must offer premium experiences that are both timely and relevant.

Digital experiences help brands to generate greater revenue. Brands that satisfy customers can expect increased loyalty and demand for their product.

The growing demand is driven by several factors:

- 01 customer expectations are rising;
- 02 the number of digital channels and devices is expanding;
- 03 brand experiences must be meaningful across channels.

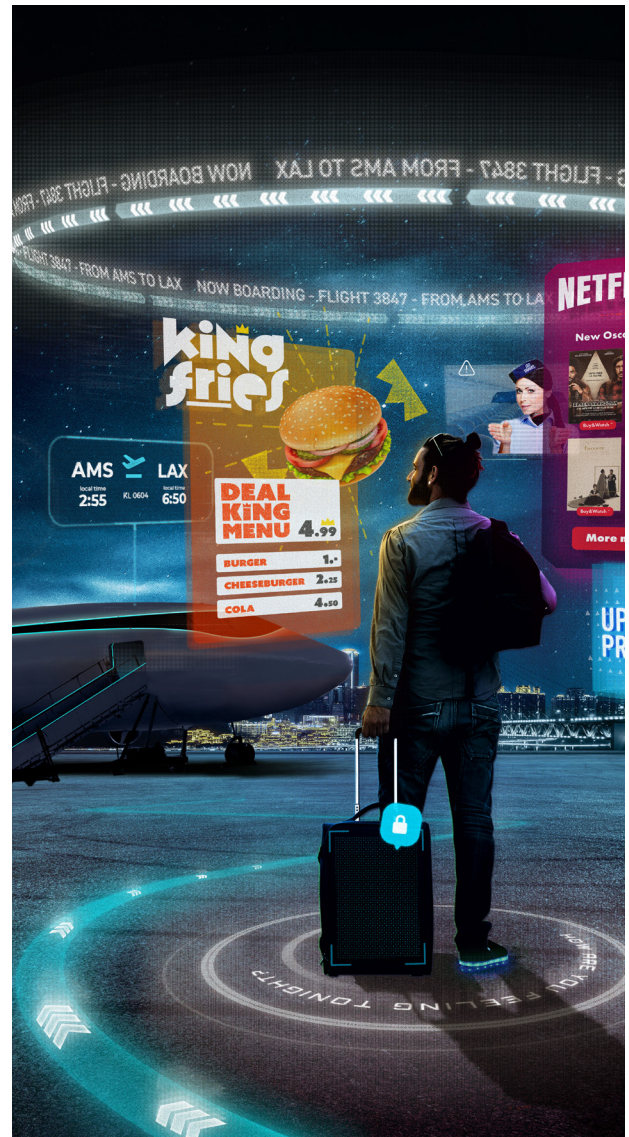
These factors coincide with broader trends in digital experiences:

- Mobile is a dominant;
- Brands are focusing on creating digital-first, direct-to-consumer experiences.

This trend has spread beyond digital native companies: large brands like Nike and Ralph Lauren are just two examples of brands investing in ecommerce experiences over traditional brick-and-mortar storefronts.

To stay relevant, enterprises need to be first movers and make delivering digital experiences a core competency.

This paper is your guide to understanding the latest digital experiences, from choosing the right cutting-edge tools and building the experiences to delivering them.

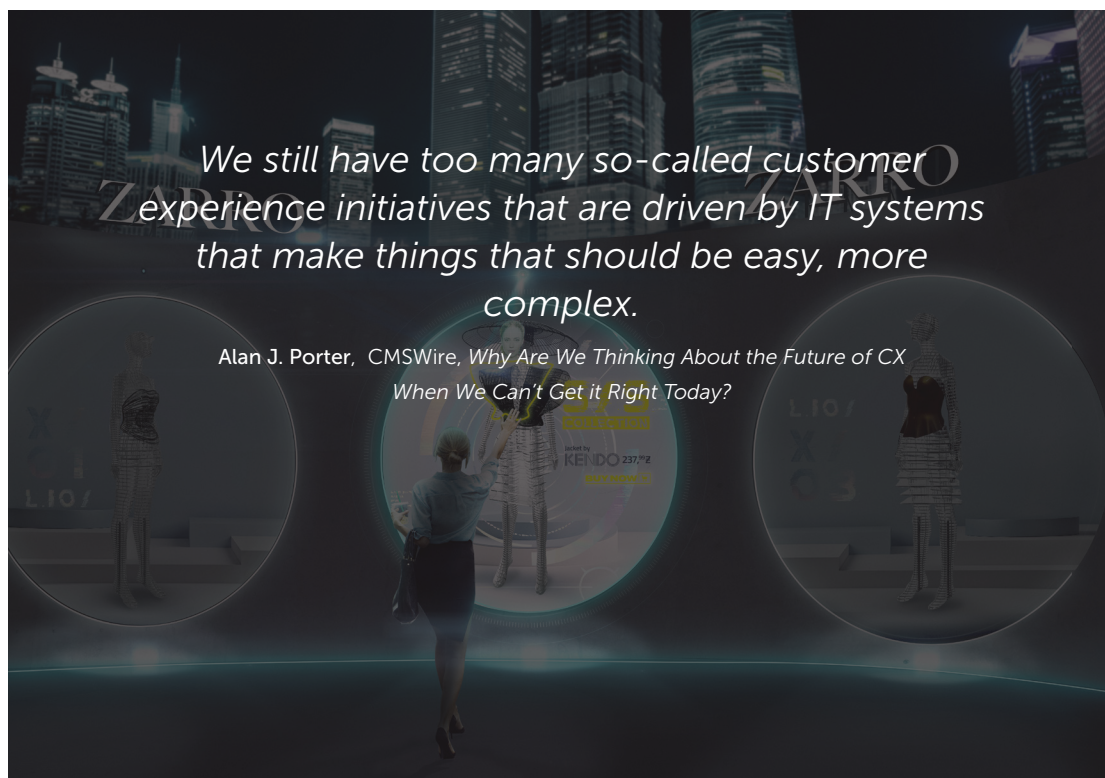


What is a digital experience?

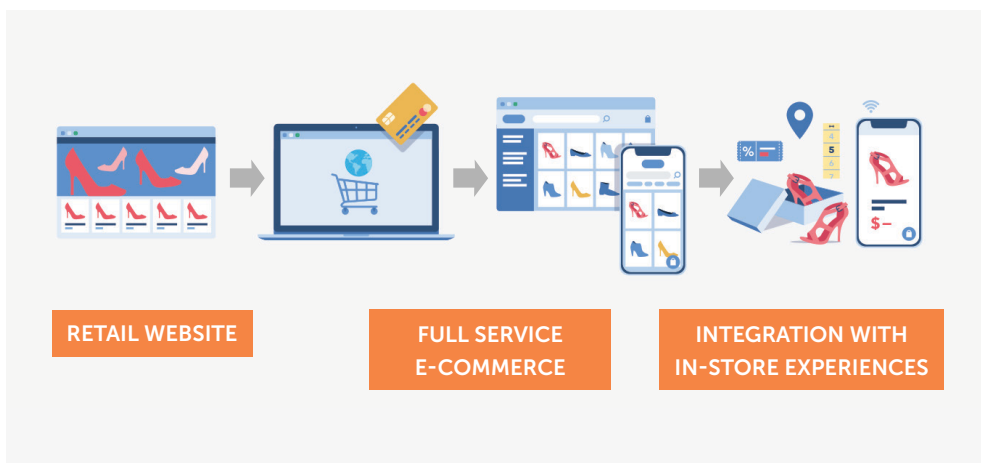
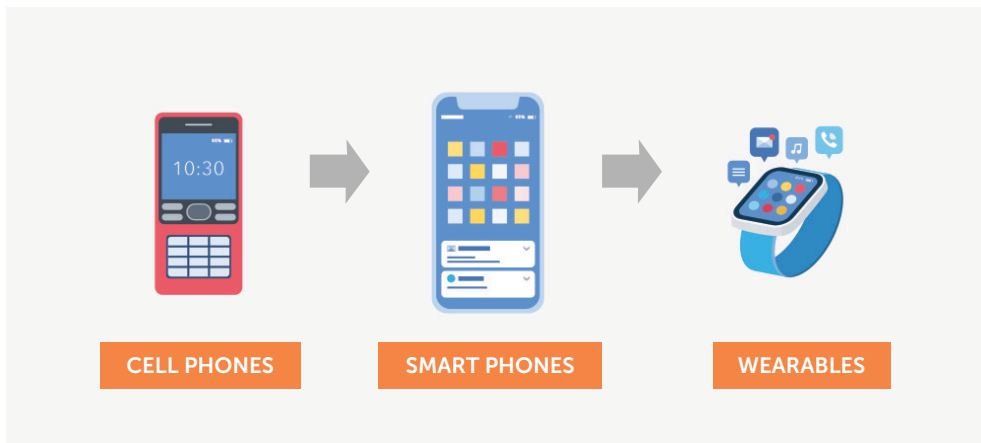
As technology becomes a normal part of daily life, we're seeing a shift in what defines a digital experience. Yes, it's still an interaction made possible by digital technologies, the focus, however, is now on augmenting, expanding and adding value to the human experience.

Creating outstanding experiences should be a core concern for every brand. The end goal should be to delight users (consumers, suppliers, partners) anywhere at any time during their journey with your brand.

Technology-driven experiences focus on a company's operational needs and are often measured by metrics around efficiency. To create digital experiences that bring value to users, it's vital to focus on understanding the experiences they want before choosing the best technology to deliver them.



How digital experiences have evolved



The digital experience landscape

Consumers interact with hundreds of brands every day. These experiences shape their expectations and so digital disruptors constantly raise the bar for everyone. Brands must keep an eye on digital leaders and disruptors – Amazon, Sephora, Glossier – to identify trends that are resonating.

Types of digital experiences:

Experiences that reduce friction

Attention spans are short meaning your brand, its product and presence must be convenient for consumers. This doesn't just mean making incremental UX changes, but fully reimagining the ideal experience and how to deliver it.

It's challenging to synchronise communications across channels. You need to identify preferred consumer channels and customise messaging based on previous interactions.

Companies with strong omnichannel strategies keep roughly 89% of their customers. Those with weaker offerings retain just 33%.

As companies conform to new digital formats and tailor content, users become less tolerant of companies that send generic messages. This is even more true since the wave of digitalisation driven by Covid-19.

French fashion brand **Mise au Green** accelerated its digital transformation for a post-Covid world, with convenient click & collect, e-reservation, ship from store, online personal shopper, etc.

As the majority of consumers become increasingly attached to their ever-present smartphones, many companies are reducing friction in how buyers find their brand by offering mobile shopping experiences and services.

Instead planning and paying for trips in person, travelers can book flights, select their seats, check trip statuses and make upgrades directly on their mobile device. **Uber** and **Lyft** disrupted the transportation industry with a mobile app. **Apple** went in a similar direction with their new credit card that integrates with iPhone apps, enabling users to pay, track and view the location of purchases with nothing but the phone in their pocket.

Novel experiences that delight

To stand out, brands must also consider localisation, personalisation, consistency and design. Consumers want something they can't get elsewhere. It's not enough to deliver the digital experiences we see today; it's vital to experiment with new technology that could be the standard tomorrow.

Luxury car brand **Maserati** wanted to give its user a consistent **360 experience, through various touchpoints and target different audiences** so, they diversified their investments in the following from direct marketing, search engine optimisation, social media, motion, print, media booking, lead management and data analysis.

Digital throughout the customer lifecycle

Digital experiences start with the first interaction and should support customers throughout the lifecycle as they research, learn, compare, buy, receive, set up, operate, troubleshoot, review, extend, repurchase and so on. Investing in better tools to up-sell, cross-sell and enable repeat purchases pays off.

Teams traditionally separated must now work together to make support seamless consumer interactions. This cross-company collaboration is crucial in keeping customers satisfied.

Breaking down data and content silos enables companies to gain insights, understand their customers more deeply and deliver their product at the right touchpoints, at the right time, in the right way.

Parrot, the drone technology expert, is offering their consumers high-flying experiences. Consumers are at the heart of their international digital transformation strategy and they benefit from an emotive brand experience.

The e-commerce website offers consumers an intuitive purchase experience with a look-and-feel. Their platform also features life stories and information on high-tech brand.

By providing a premium brand experience, **Parrot** gives users as much value and attention to detail as it gives its products.

This new cutting-edge e-commerce ecosystem was deployed in months and caters to 29 countries and five different languages.

The future of digital products and experiences

So where are we headed? The future is likely to be an entirely different landscape.

Brands will combine different technologies to understand customers at a molecular level and to deliver superior digital products and experiences. Less agile brands will be left behind if they don't have the in-house competency to ideate and build trending digital-first, direct-to-consumer experiences.

To stay competitive, brands will have to invest in exploration and accelerate their delivery of new digital products and experiences. By enabling teams to experiment with new technology, they can better understand how new tools can augment the experiences they want to deliver.



Technology at the service of digital experience

While existing technology and tools won't disappear overnight, they will become less relevant over time. Thinking broadly about how to best deliver the next generation of digital products and experiences, you should consider the following: mobile, AI, AR/VR and biometrics.

Mobile

Consumers want to access everything they need via their mobile devices. The next generation of digital products, like the **Apple credit card**, are integrated with smartphone features and commonly used apps to deliver blended digital experiences that aren't constrained to a single app. **Being mobile friendly can no longer be an afterthought or included in a phase two build.**

Forrester predicts that mobile will be a vital part of future digital experiences:



Tomorrow, mobile will be a digital experience choreographer, creating blended experiences from an ecosystem of developers and vendors building on shared data to address mobile moments.

The primary interaction may be on a mobile device, but it won't be constrained to it. Rather, these blended experiences will include anything that an individual can connect to — wearables, cars, homes, and gaming platforms.

Forrester, *The Future Of Digital Experiences*

To deliver blended digital experiences through mobile devices, businesses must break down content and data silos.

AI

With AI, brands are tasked with determining how it can meet consumers where they are and then expand from there.

For example, some businesses are using AI to predict user intent and trigger relevant content to assist them. Gartner identifies this type of AI-powered agent interface as one of the top digital experience trends for 2020.

Thinking about and experimenting with how AI can enhance consumer experience will help your business to move faster as the trend becomes more prolific.

Extended reality: AR/VR

While the nomenclature is still evolving, **extended reality** — including **augmented reality** and **virtual reality** — is rapidly becoming part of our digital landscape.

The luxury watchmaker [Jaeger- LeCoultre](#) built an out-of-this-world event experience for the prestigious luxury watchmaking exhibition SIHH. Visitors could explore the new **Astral collection** of the brand in complete immersion thanks to VR. They could look into a telescope and discover the watches among the constellations right inside the Salon's building.

AR/VR is expected to improve. With better sensors and controls, people use their bodies to interact with digital systems. In the future, brands could even receive and respond to input with AR devices.

Biometrics

Fingerprint and facial recognition, once novel technologies, are now widely available. **Facial recognition payments are on Gartner's latest list for top trends.**

[Philip Morris International](#) (PMI), the famous international tobacco company, created an extra condition to access its e-commerce app. While opening the app, users had to get their face scanned to make sure no underage teens could order — a new way to protect the younger people from smoking.

Be ready for a new ad model

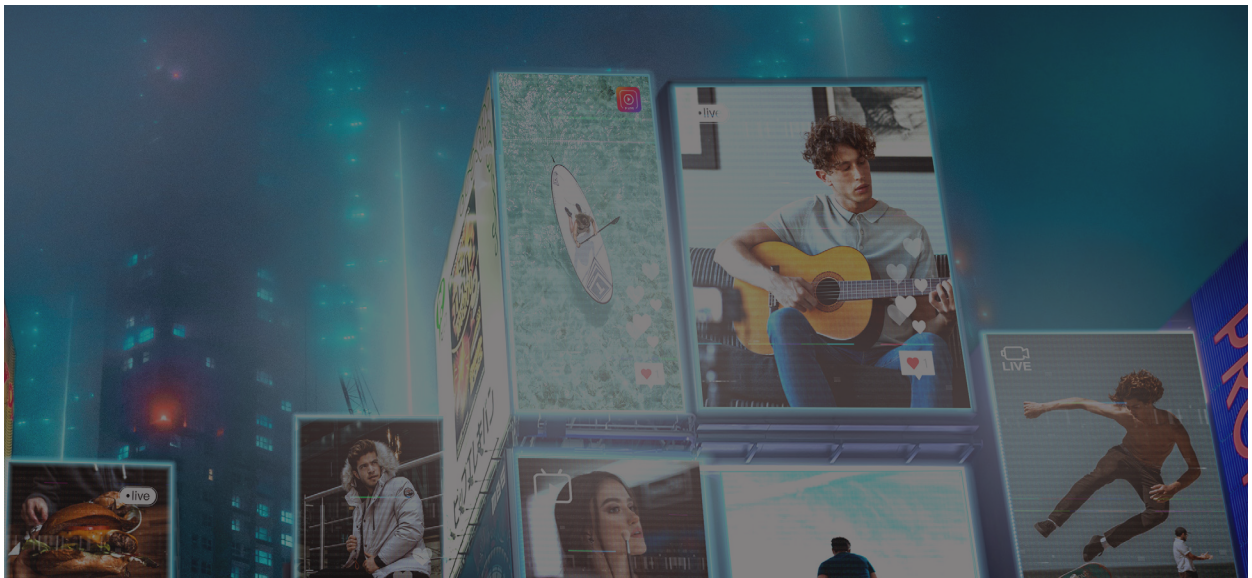
Traditional advertising models that disrupt or interrupt users, aggressively pushing content, are way out of sync with the digital experiences that people have an appetite for today.

Even with sophisticated targeting, ads are rarely relevant and timely for the user at that precise moment. As companies focus on the end-to-end customer experience, they need to reimagine how their approach fits into today's culture and environment.

Reimagining the way we advertise might seem radical, but the old model has been failing for years. Tom Standage, the deputy editor responsible for digital strategy at *The Economist*, predicted that display advertising would disappear by 2026.¹

Advertising is evolving with technology, breaking the codes and turning the old ad models upside down. [Dina Försäkringar](#), an innovative Swedish insurer, wanted to promote cybersecurity by doing exactly what they were trying to warn people about. The company hijacked the identity of a famous Swedish singer creating the first ever deep-faked ad — a disruptive and positive way to raise awareness.

We don't know what future ad models will look like but, **advertisers need to invest in flexible content storage and delivery** so they're prepared for how advertising evolves.



¹ PressGazette, *Economist Digital Strategy Chief: We Expect Display Advertising To Have Disappeared By 2025*

Adapting to increasingly demanding consumers

When one brand delights customers with a new digital experience, user expectations elevate. As other brands begin to follow, it's impossible for a novel digital experience to differentiate a brand for long. That's why being the first mover is critical.

Keeping pace with technological change is a challenge, especially for businesses that rely on outdated systems and siloed operations. More than half of CMOs and senior marketers surveyed by the Digital Marketing Institute voiced concerns about how their department and business will keep up.²

So how can brands keep up? By **rethinking back-end operations and the tools that support them.**

Companies need to reinvent their customer experiences, but this reinvention must be tied to back-end operations.



The other imperative for companies is to explicitly tie the reinvented customer experience to their operations.

If they focus only on the front-end experience and don't change the back-end operations that support it, the new experience is unlikely to be sustainable.³

Sun & Sand Sports, the sports clothing retailer, needed to improve a system that wasn't flexible enough to adapt to increasing customer expectations. **By using MACH APIs such as an order management system and product information management tool**, the brand manage to change the face of its old system and **create a seamless omnichannel environment** for its consumers, enhancing their experience. Thanks to these decoupled, MACH solutions — icroservices, API-led infrastructures, Cloud hosting and Headless — businesses are enhancing their capabilities to accelerate the time to market for digital experiences.

² Digital Marketing Institute, *20/20 Vistion: A Marketing Leader's View of Digital's Future*

³ McKinsey Digital, *Putting customer experience at the heart of next-generation operating models*

Three changes you can make to streamline operations

01

Unify siloes

Achieving a level of collaboration where marketing, customer service, product design, sales, advertising agencies and retail partners work together to create a single touchpoint is still a challenge.

Unifying content and data fosters collaboration by making assets accessible across products and channels within a single hub. Instead of managing fragmented data, teams are empowered to build new digital experiences with existing assets. Leaders can streamline processes by implementing automated governance.

02

Structure teams, content and tech for speed

When businesses unify siloed content and data, it's imperative that they think about how to structure those assets for usability. For content this means creating reusable, modular components that teams can use to quickly spin up new experiences.

Once your content and data are structured, you can set up actions, triggers and webhooks to reduce the amount of intervention needed when routine updates are made.

03

Choose extensible technology that empowers people

To deliver better digital experiences faster, brands need to empower the people who care the most about their company with the right technology. For example, content creators want power over their own content and autonomy to change it without developer intervention.

Developers want to build without the grunt work of maintaining aging systems or content. And everyone wants platforms that integrates with their preferred tools and workflows.

To meet these needs, companies are replacing restrictive legacy systems with extensible, API-first tools that complement custom technology stacks.

New digital experiences for new generations

To appeal to new generations, digital experiences must be delightful and inspiring. Curiosity must be piqued by something novel, and this has to be backed up by intuitiveness and convenience.

Gartner's latest top digital trends include changes in how companies build digital experiences.

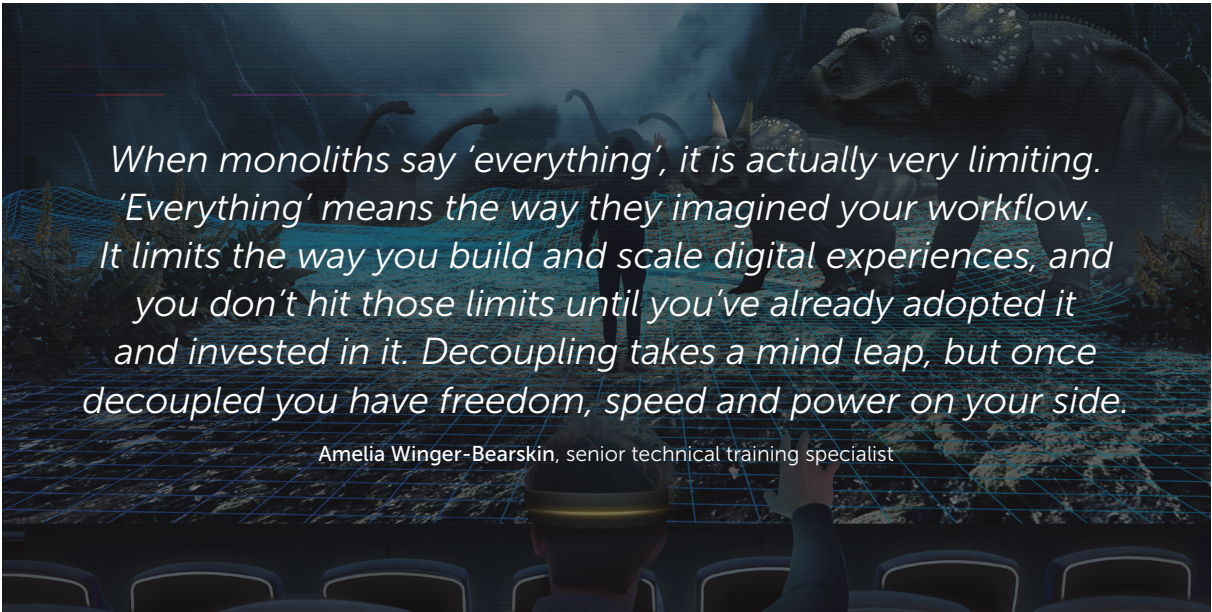


The way in which engaging digital experiences are crafted is becoming increasingly formalised, which means that delivering a digital experience that ensures a measurable outcome will require both creative excellence and consistent process execution.

Gartner, *Gartner Identifies Top Digital Experience Trends for 2020*

Custom stacks deliver what legacy solutions can't

Monolithic platforms and mega-suites are a prior generation of tools that provide all-in-one solutions at the expense of flexibility and speed. Relying on these puts companies at a disadvantage when accelerating workflows and integrating new technology. Digital leaders must look to embrace more agile custom technology stacks.



When monoliths say 'everything', it is actually very limiting. 'Everything' means the way they imagined your workflow. It limits the way you build and scale digital experiences, and you don't hit those limits until you've already adopted it and invested in it. Decoupling takes a mind leap, but once decoupled you have freedom, speed and power on your side.

Amelia Winger-Bearskin, senior technical training specialist

Digital experience stacks decouple functions that are typically tied together in monolithic systems. **Tried and true tools for each function** — content, data, payments, inventory, etc. — **form a customised stack**. Brands focus on selecting extensible tools with high-quality, well-documented APIs. Developers use these APIs to **create a digital-first ecosystem of tools** that can deliver an array of experiences.

All the layers work well together but can also be swapped out to fit the needs of each project. This provides **flexibility** and **limitless possibilities** at the project level, while offering consistency and unity across the enterprise.

Getting started: Contentful and the App Framework

Delivering digital experiences that are fresh and synchronised requires building a digital experience stack, that helps content flow consistently.

Contentful's App Framework offers a new, agile way to assemble that stack. With it, teams can easily integrate market-leading third-party services **Contentful apps** or build custom integrations suited to specific business needs.

Integrating services with **Contentful** means that you can create a stack that's seamlessly connected, bringing all relevant tools into the context of your editorial UI.

Whether it's for optimisation, deployment and delivery, analytics or collaboration, you can mix and match knowing they all reference your content repository within **Contentful**. More than a dozen independent software vendors, including **Optimizely**, **Netlify** and **Commercetools**, offer apps on **Contentful**.

The **App Framework** lets businesses scale services programmatically, instead of one-off integrations that are hard to maintain and upgrade. This gives **Contentful** customers and its partner ecosystem more agility, while strengthening governance for customers' global content operations.

Do you need help?

At Emakina, we understand how important digital experiences are and our goal is to delight our clients users everywhere. Want to upgrade your digital experiences? Our teams are ready to help you level up.

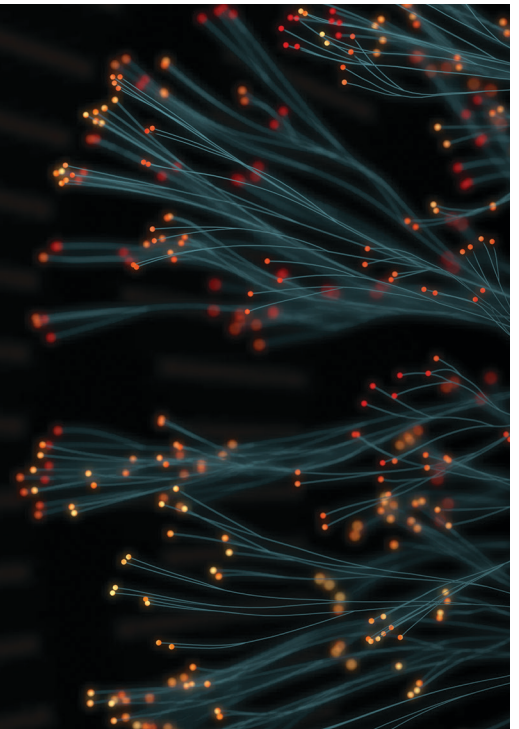
Our Digital eXperience Design (DXD) team will help you ensure that the User Experience of your brand feels personal, and remains consistent across all touchpoints for every user. Whether you're taking your first steps in digital experiences or already familiar, our teams would love to support you.

[Learn more about DXD](#)

Who is Emakina?

Emakina is a digital agency with global reach. It is part of Emakina Group, an agency network uniting more than 1,100 talents in 18 countries. Marketing and technology experts work in concert with their clients to grow their business and brand value. Together, they gain the necessary user insights to develop highly effective strategies and creations. These include cutting-edge applications, websites, e-commerce projects, impactful content and campaigns.

As ambassadors for users, Emakina places user expectations and requirements at the heart of any project. This approach ensures our clients delight their leaders: the consumers of the digital age.





EMAKINA

The User Agency

The ultimate digital brand experience for your users

Team up with our digital eXperience Design experts to start designing the brand experience your users dream of.

Start your journey with us.



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