Four smart-mover strategies for dominating digital moments

Explore four strategic areas to stand out and stay ahead of the competition

Foreword by special guest Ann Handley

Wall Street Journal best-selling author of the newly revised *Everybody Writes* and Chief Content Officer at MarketingProfs

SITECORE®

by Ann Handley, Chief Content Officer, MarketingProfs

SITECORE

The best way to understand the power of digital engagement is through a story.

So walk with me … no, actually run with me … because this story is about you and road racing.

Let's say you are a runner. And let's say you have a stretch goal of completing your first marathon next year.

Sure, you run a 12-minute mile. (A turtle could lap you!)

But you have time to work on your speed and endurance. You have time to build the mental fortitude. You set your sights on running the Boston Marathon next April.

You join a local running club. You venture out every weekend with a training group. You notice almost everyone wears a certain shoe brand. You make a mental note to look up the brand later. And you do! You visit the shoe brand's website from your iPhone while you're still cooling down in your car, post run. You navigate to the running products.

You notice the language: It's speaking directly to your aspirational marathoner's heart. Lots of the word you, empathetic tone, useful content. You start to scroll a blog post and – incredibly – you stop the scan-scroll and actually READ the training ideas on the site. Right there on your phone.

The truth is that you sometimes feel like a poser plodding along in your Spandex … covering miles at the pace of a geriatric turtle. But the way the shoe company speaks to you makes you feel a little less like a turtle and more like an aspirational hare.

Later you fire up your laptop and pop back to the shoe site. The brand recognizes you as a returning visitor, suggesting a downloadable, week-by-week training guide. Perfect, you think.

More signals (the brand pops up in your Instagram feed, on your TikTok For You page). You watch a video on post-workout stretching to avoid injuries. Somewhere in there you sign up for the shoe company's email newsletter geared especially to distance runners. Now in your inbox you get power training tips, nutrition ideas, and an invitation to join a next-level distance running group in a city near you. Even the name of the newsletter, "Sole Mates," makes you feel connected.

But do you buy the shoes …?

Well of course. At some point, the decision wasn't even a decision.

It was simply a no-brainer.

Did you notice what was happening there? The content. The experience. The tech. The data. All of it was aligned to engineer true customer engagement. Right away you felt seen.

But more than that: **You felt part of something.**

I put that in bold because it's important: That customer-first mindset is the foundation of all great marketing.

Digital engagement is the term we use in business to express what's really going on in our shoe story. And it's not just a nice-to-have … it's a must-have.

Shifting customer expectations means all of us — not just sneaker sellers — need to offer seamless and convenient experiences (whether you're sitting in your car on your phone or at your laptop).

It means we need to offer personalization and relevance (whether you have a 6-minute mile or a 12-minute one).

It means we meet customers where they are on their "journey" — whether an actual journey or metaphorical one. And we meet them on their terms. On their schedule. It means we need to deliver contextualized experiences that help them feel recognized, connected, and part of a greater whole.

Why?

Because that creates brand loyalty and lifetime value (and love!). Because it differentiates us from the competition. Because it's what drives revenue, growth, and success.

How do we truly embrace digital engagement? How do we make sure we truly serve customers in a way that makes them feel connected and part of something?

To me the key is slowing down and both developing and aligning four key strategic areas: content, experience, data, and technology. Doing so is what allows us to speed up, later on.

That's what this guide does. It explores those four strategic areas — content, experience, data, and technology — to set you on the path to wowing your customers. Through practical tips, real-life examples, and technology solutions, it helps us answer big, important questions like:

- How do we create content that resonates with our audience?
- How do we design experiences that meet every moment?
- How do we use technology to personalize and customize customer interactions?
- And how do we leverage data to optimize the results?

It's time to invest your brand's time, talent, and resources in the strategic areas that matter most. It's time to unlock the ability to adapt faster and gain a competitive edge. It's time to be the brand that meets every moment.

Ready?

Lace up your shoes. This is where the rubber meets the road.

Ann

Ready to meet every moment?

Rapid shifts in digital engagement continue to create uncertainty about what brands need to be competitive in a future that is far from predictable. While this challenges you to find solutions that will help you quickly adapt to changing market dynamics, it also presents an opportunity to consider your options, help future-proof your brand, and multiply the value of your efforts as you refine your digital journey. Not only will you unlock your ability to respond faster, but you'll gain a smart-mover advantage that drives digital disruption. The future favors the agile and getting there is less daunting than it seems.

This guide dives into four strategic areas that will help you plan your next steps in your digital journey, depending on your highest priority: technology strategy, content strategy, experience strategy, and data strategy. Each area offers practical tips on how to get started, examples from top brands, and introduces technology solutions that will help you be successful, no matter where you are starting from.

Meet every customer moment by knowing where to invest your brand's valuable time, talent, and resources, so you have the smart-mover advantage to stand out from the digital normal.

Approach new technology with a bold vision and an incremental growth plan

Rethink your approach, and choose a path that powers flexibility to grow and adapt to your unique needs in the moment.

Why it matters

Technology is the gateway to your customers, to scaling your efforts, and creating a brand experience that stands out from the rest. But tech-stack adaptability is crucial, so you can respond as customer demands and behavioral patterns evolve. Don't be hindered by failed proof of concepts, lengthy implementations, clunky integrations, or roadblocks caused by the limitations of monolithic solutions. When designing your growth path for new technology, take the smart-mover approach. Build flexibility into your tech stack to add new capabilities, test next-gen solutions, and achieve fast ROI.

Organizations that adopt a composable approach will outpace the competition by 80% in the speed of new feature implementation, reported Gartner.

Questions to consider

Does your software prevent you from moving digital marketing initiatives forward?

Helpful tip: If this sounds like you, identify where the gaps or challenges are in your brand experience and make bold decisions about how to address them, so you're simplifying your customers' journey. This may include rethinking your entire suite of digital experience solutions or identifying point solutions within your tech stack that can help improve customer experience or engagement to achieve higher ROI.
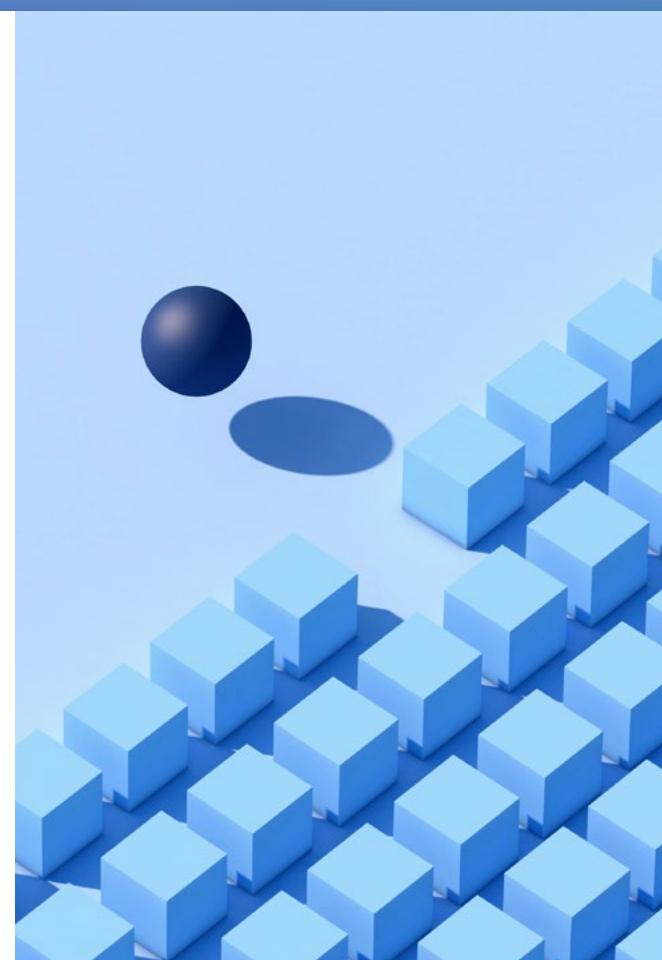
What is your brand's plan for immersive technologies and AI?

Helpful tip: Don't get caught up in trying to make predictions about what's going to be the next big trend in digital. Instead, focus on preparing your brand for the content, data, and delivery demands that will arise with new user experiences. You'll want to empower your marketing and developer teams to pivot quickly and leverage new technologies without ripping and replacing processes or starting from scratch.
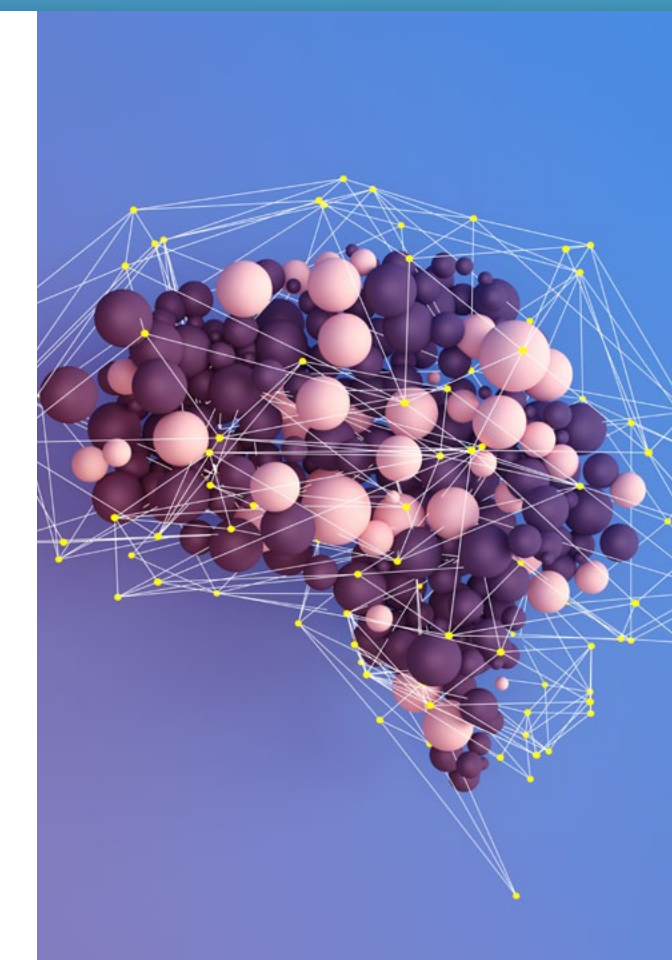
Can you easily integrate new applications?

Helpful tip: Identify key friction points in your brand's digital experience. Find any roadblocks you may have that prevent your organization from easily integrating new applications with your existing digital experience solutions or commerce journeys. Develop a clear strategy to bridge the pathway to flexible technologies, such as headless APIs, cloud-based SaaS, and a composable solutions portfolio.
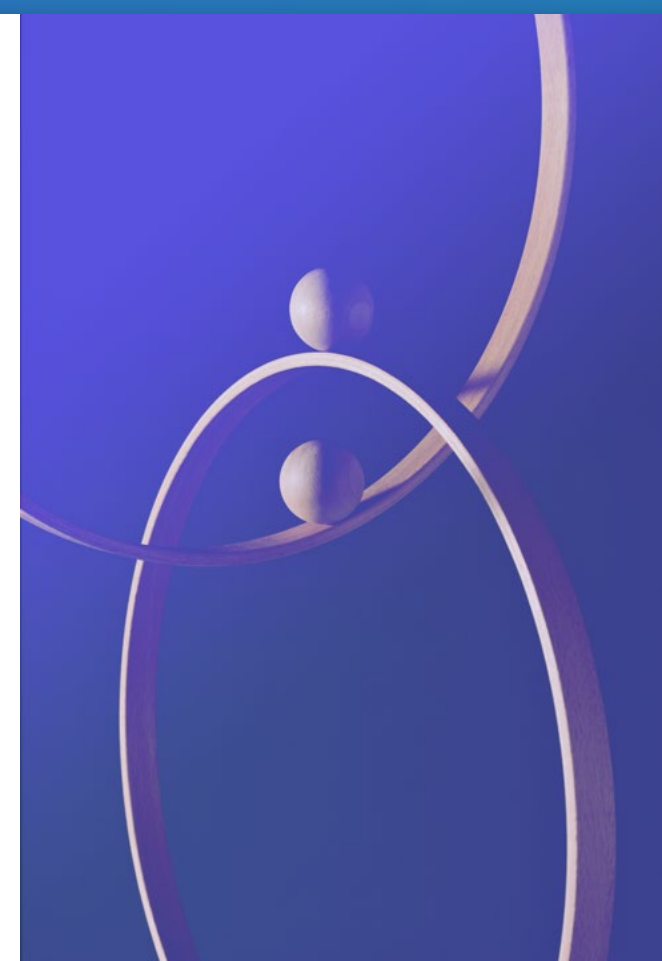
Does your marketing technology enable you to create customer experiences that are user-friendly and functional?

Helpful tip: When planning your path forward, make your internal users a top priority. Ensure that the solutions you adopt enable them to create impactful, personalized customer experiences and drive business results. Identify organizational silos and duplicated processes that are causing waste and disconnect internally or externally.
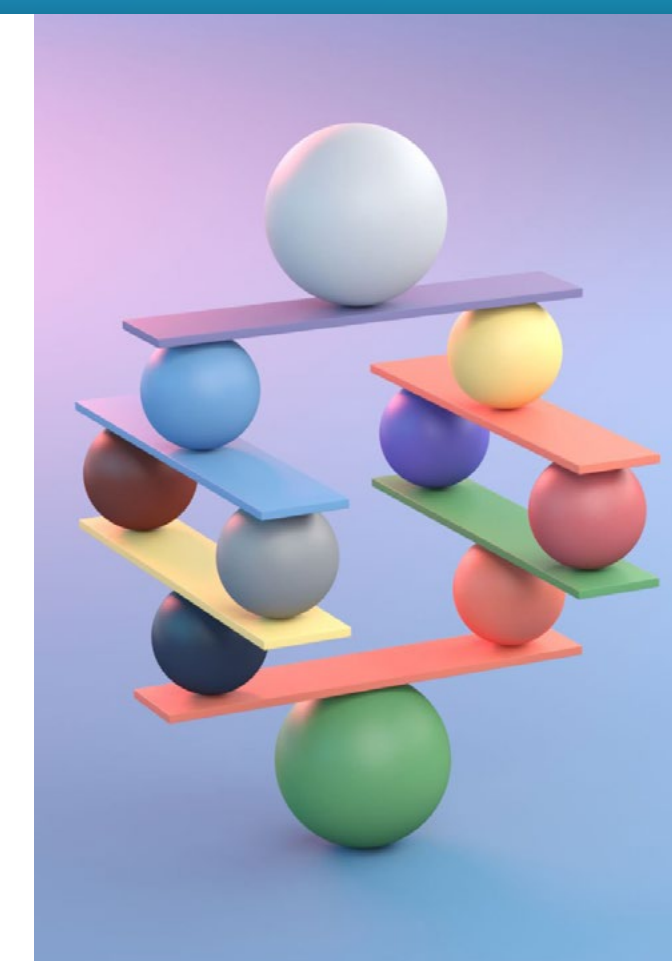
Recommended solutions

XM Cloud

The modern SaaS CMS

An entry point to composability, XM Cloud is an end-to-end SaaS-based solution that makes it possible to create content once and deliver it anywhere in multiple languages. XM Cloud supplies next-gen, enterprise-ready content management system (CMS) capabilities that enable your marketing and developer teams to easily power engaging experiences across every digital touchpoint — backed by real-time data and analytics.

Learn more

OrderCloud

The headless commerce platform for connecting customers with products

OrderCloud enables you to take advantage of its headless, API-first capabilities for supporting effortless integrations with your favorite e-commerce tools. OrderCloud pairs well with XM Cloud, or existing digital experience solutions, to equip your teams with real-time analytics and insights to power experience decisions that connect with your customers across digital shopping touchpoints.
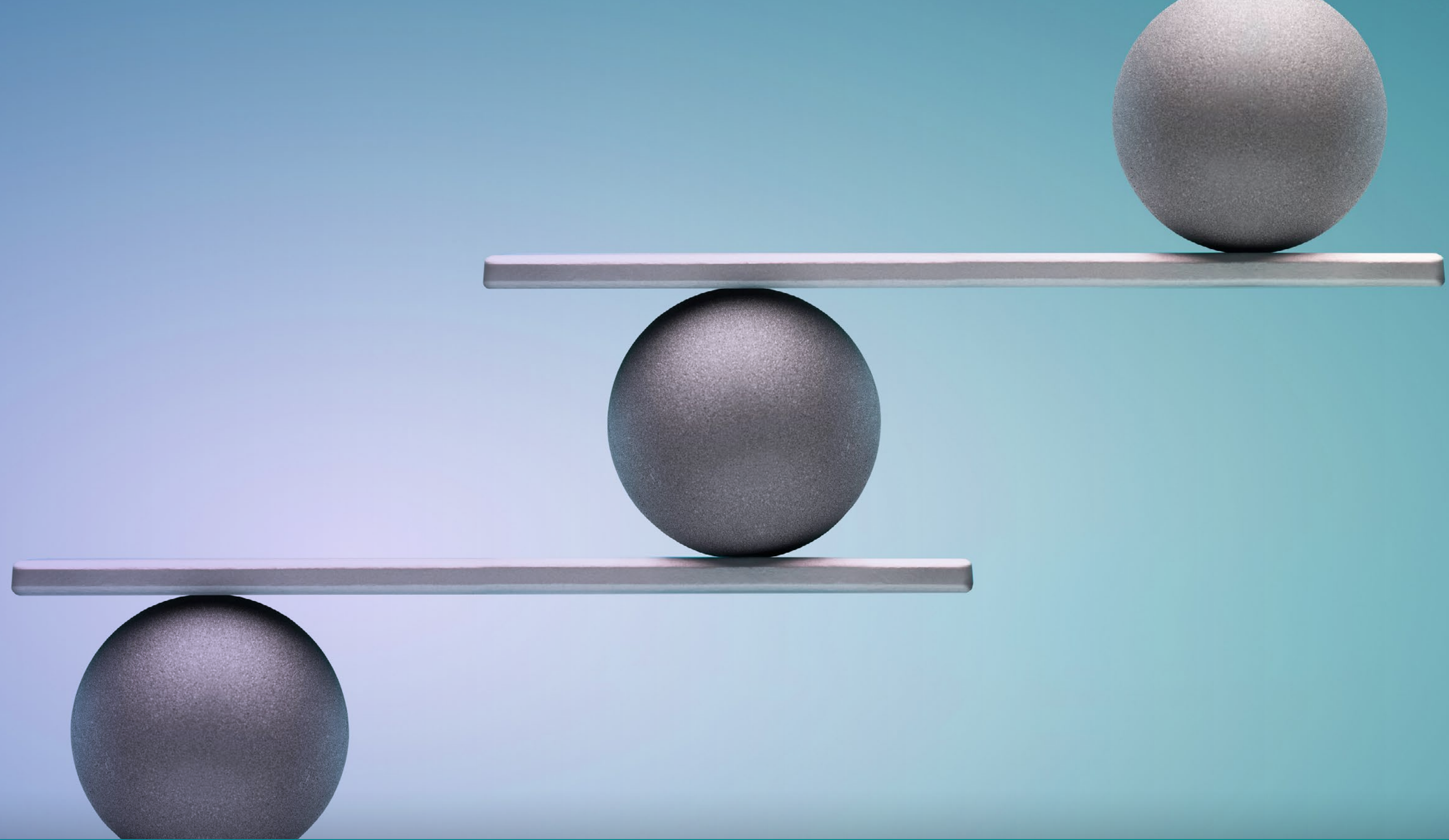
Learn more

Content Hub ONE

An agile omnichannel CMS to create, manage, and power content

Content Hub ONE is a lightweight CMS that easily connects with Sitecore Content Operations to create end-to-end lifecycle management and XM Cloud to deliver content across customer touchpoints.

Learn more

Brands driving impressive results

Microsoft

30% faster at building digital experiences

L'ORÉAL

1 billion consumer visits across 600 websites, 2.2M assets & 35 brands

P&G

>120% increase in conversions

II. Experience strategy

Connect your teams, create connected digital experiences

Eliminate barriers to internal collaboration and empower your teams to deliver uninterrupted customer experiences.

Why it matters

Internal teams are at the heart of digital experience workflows. If your teams are struggling to create connected customer experiences, look at foundational systems and processes. The more that you can set up your teams for successful collaboration, the greater the payoff you'll see in smarter execution, cost savings driven by increased talent retention, and a better overall brand digital experience.
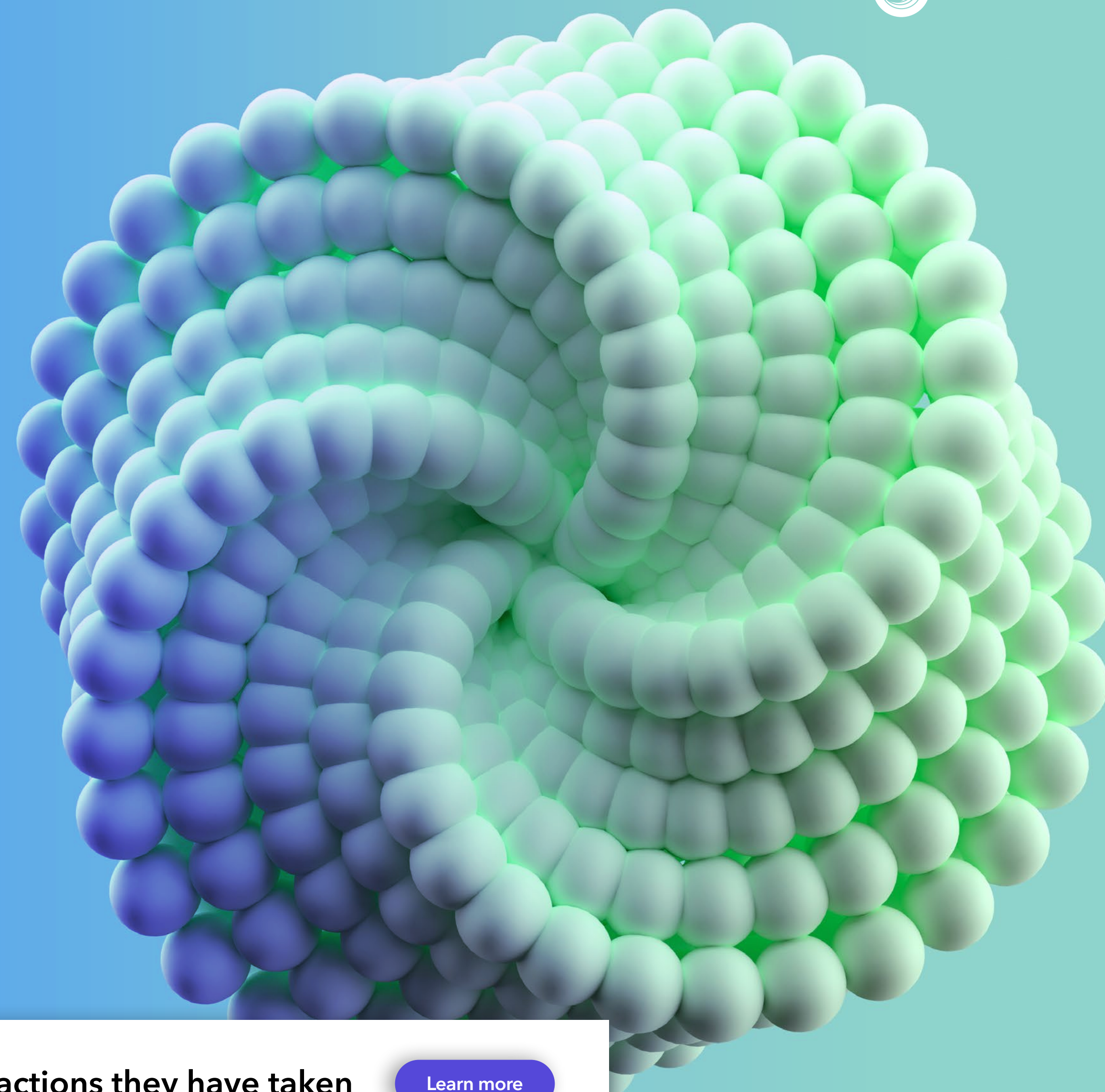
8 in 10 consumers say it's very powerful when brands remember the actions they have taken   [Learn more]

Questions to consider

Have you standardized workflows for content planning, creation, and management?

Helpful tip: Establishing a standardized content process within your organization will streamline and speed content creation. Identify whether your teams are operating within a central platform or encountering friction points in how they collaborate across multiple systems and share data to make informed content strategy decisions.
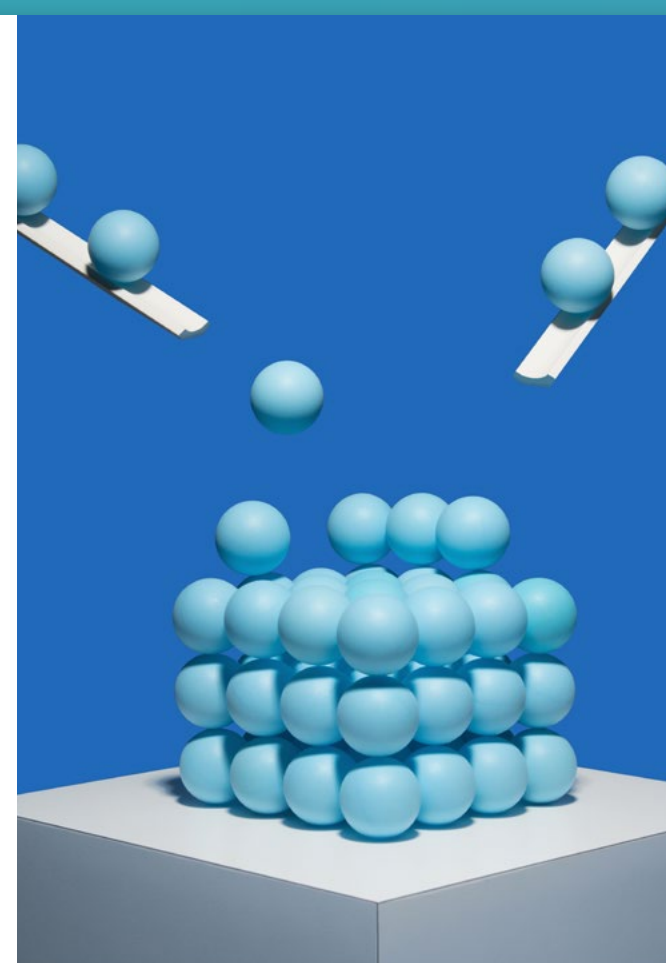
Can your teams manage the rollout of global campaigns to ensure localized consistency?

Helpful tip: Global brands also need to be able to deliver a consistent digital experience across the various regions with relevant content that aligns to the local languages and culture. Enabling your teams to power its content from a centralized point of operation helps ensure content consistently meets your brand guidelines and can easily be versioned for targeted audiences.

Does your customer data environment help your teams make informed decisions?

Helpful tip: Customers want to feel like your brand doesn't skip a beat as they navigate your holistic brand experience. Capturing and connecting first-party data enables teams across your organization to shape tailored experience strategies and offer informed one-on-one customer interactions.
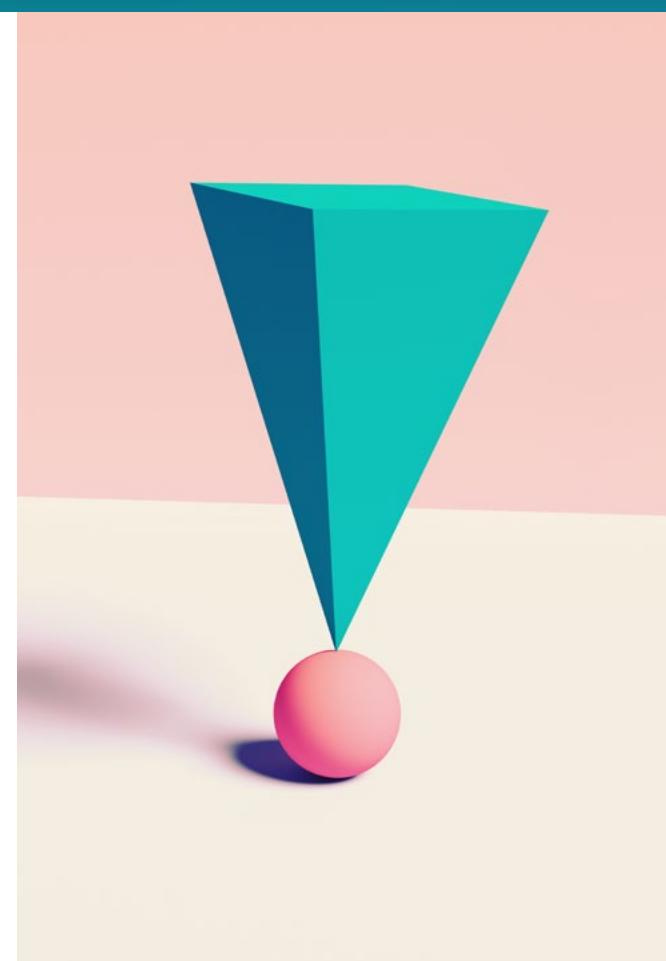
Do your commerce, content, and social media platforms encourage seamless content sharing?

Helpful tip: Successful omnichannel delivery is the ability to serve up highly tailored experiences across digital touchpoints. However, increasing the number of touchpoints does not require you to create more content; omnichannel content delivery simply means being smarter about how you enable your teams to reuse content, so you can eliminate the need to create channel-specific content and save on time and costs.
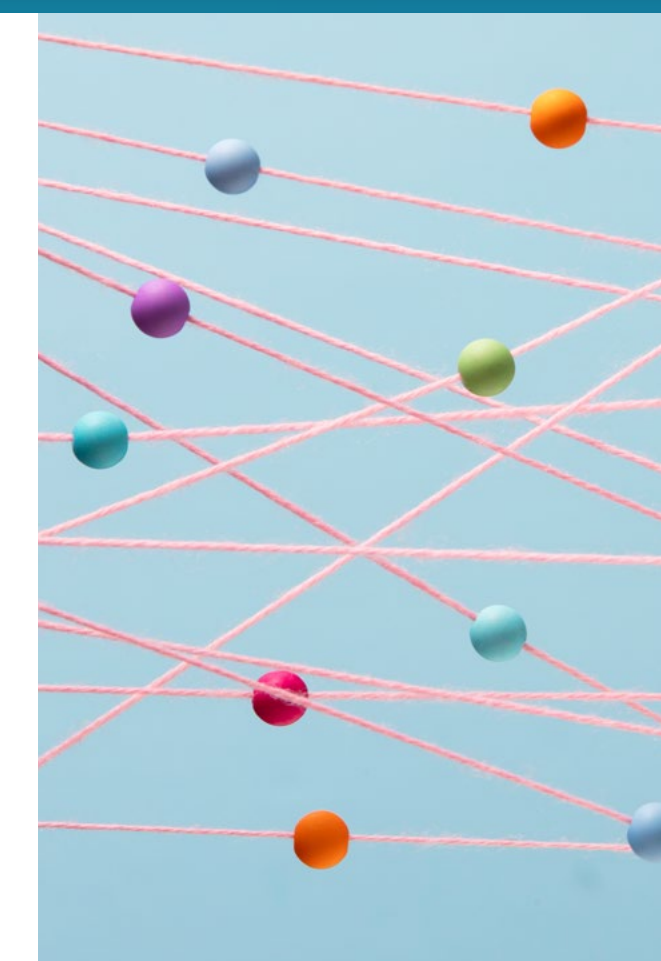
Recommended solutions

Content Hub Operations
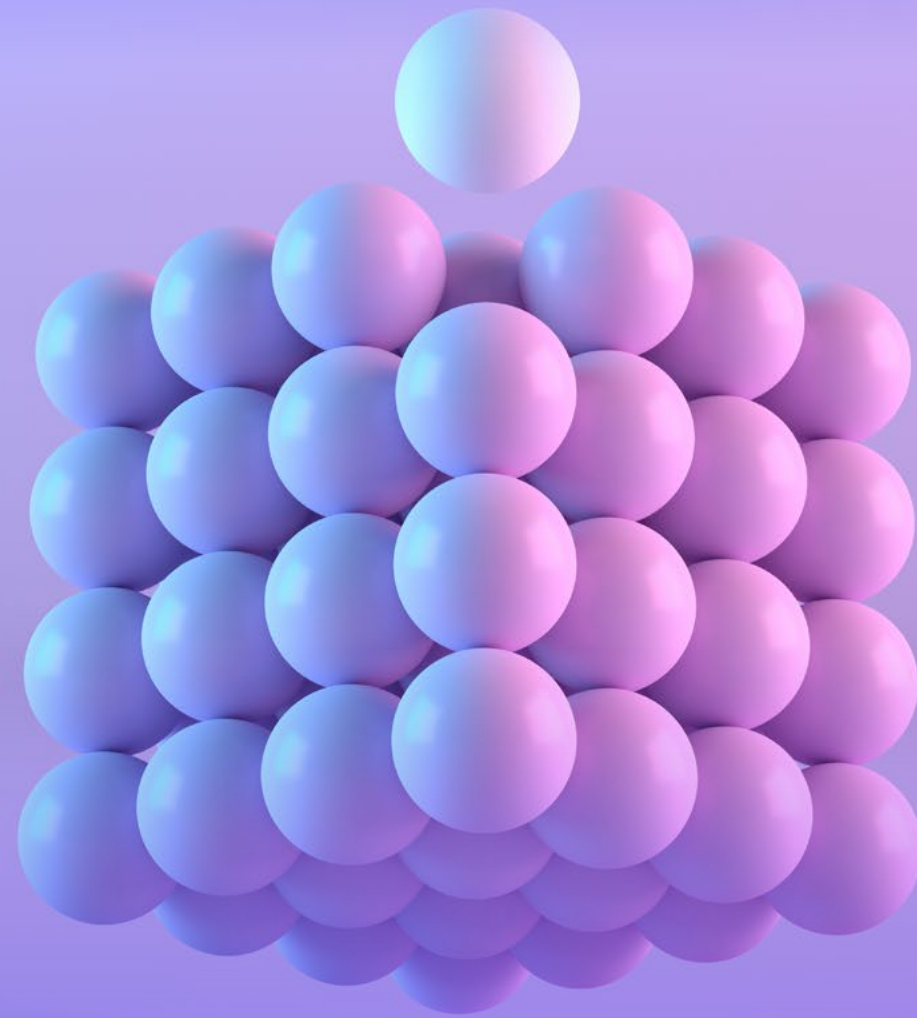
An end-to-end content operations solution

The Sitecore Content Hub Operations system enables your organization to create a streamlined content machine for your teams to centrally plan, manage, and create content. With transparency across the content lifecycle, you can identify opportunities to save time and money, break down silos, and build better workflows. Drive omnichannel content delivery by connecting Content Hub Operations with your CMS and any front-end application, site, or other experience that talks to Graphic QL API.

Learn more

CDP
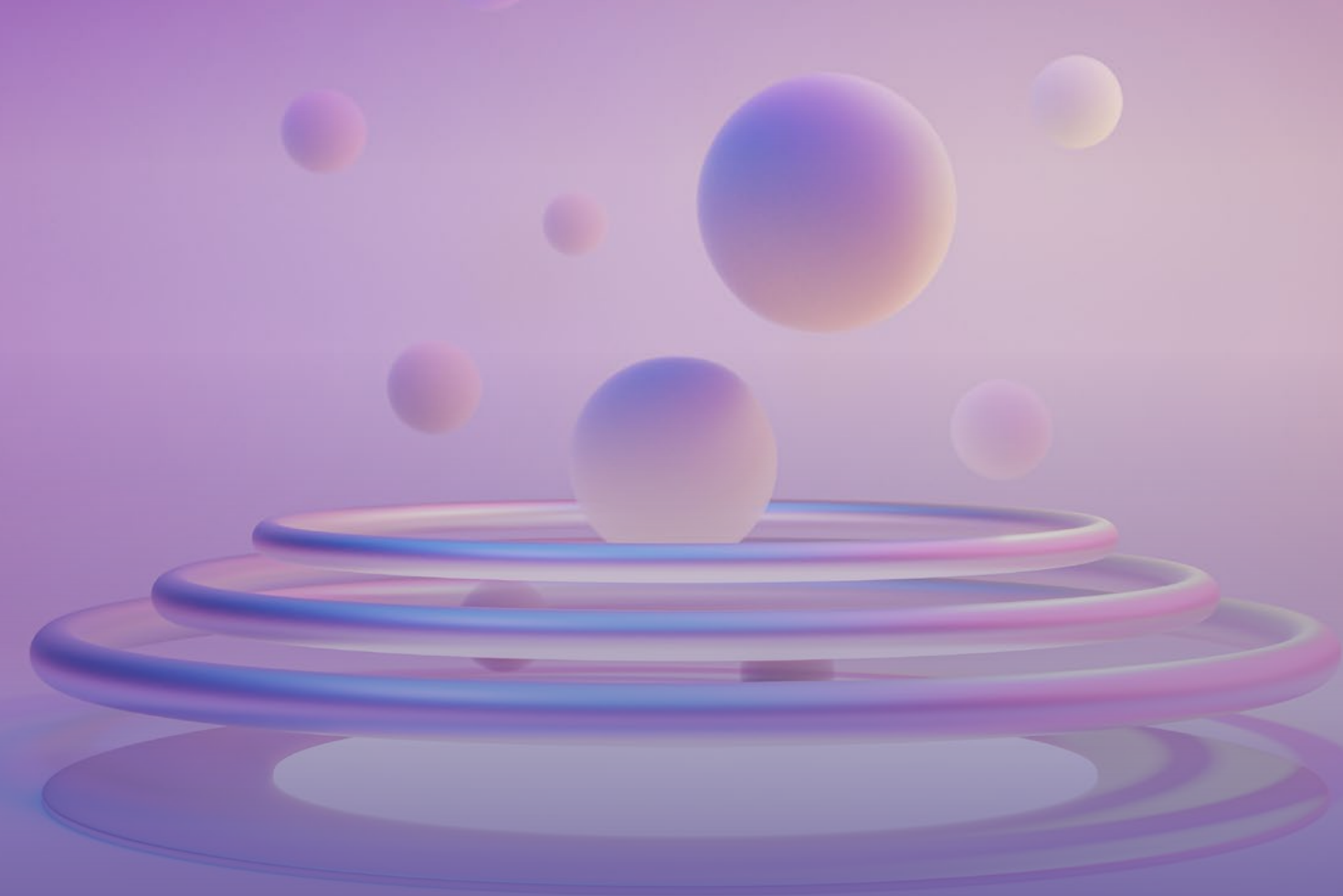
An intelligent customer data platform that activates data across an ecosystem

Sitecore CDP enables your organization to capture, connect, and activate first-party data to turbocharge conversions and revenue without compromising privacy. With the ability to capture data from every channel, Sitecore CDP can help provide your team with actionable insights in real time.

Learn more

Brands driving impressive results

PAPA JOHN'S PIZZA

5,000 added locations worldwide

MICHELIN GUIDE

96% reduction in publishing times for digital images

UNITED

70,000 global employees connected

Centralize truth to get the most out of your digital content

Stop wasting time and money creating net new content and unify your digital assets to power more advanced experiences, more cost effectively.

Why it matters

Your ability to deliver consistent, real-time customer experiences depends on content availability and accessibility to power them. Organizing your content in a single platform allows your teams to work from a centralized source of truth and ensure every experience aligns with your brand identity. The payoff not only comes in the form of smarter, more efficient content creation, faster content delivery, and greater ease of collaboration, but also better overall execution that builds trust with your audience and improves the bottom line. The content journey is like a financial investment with compound interest – the more you commit to it, the better your results.
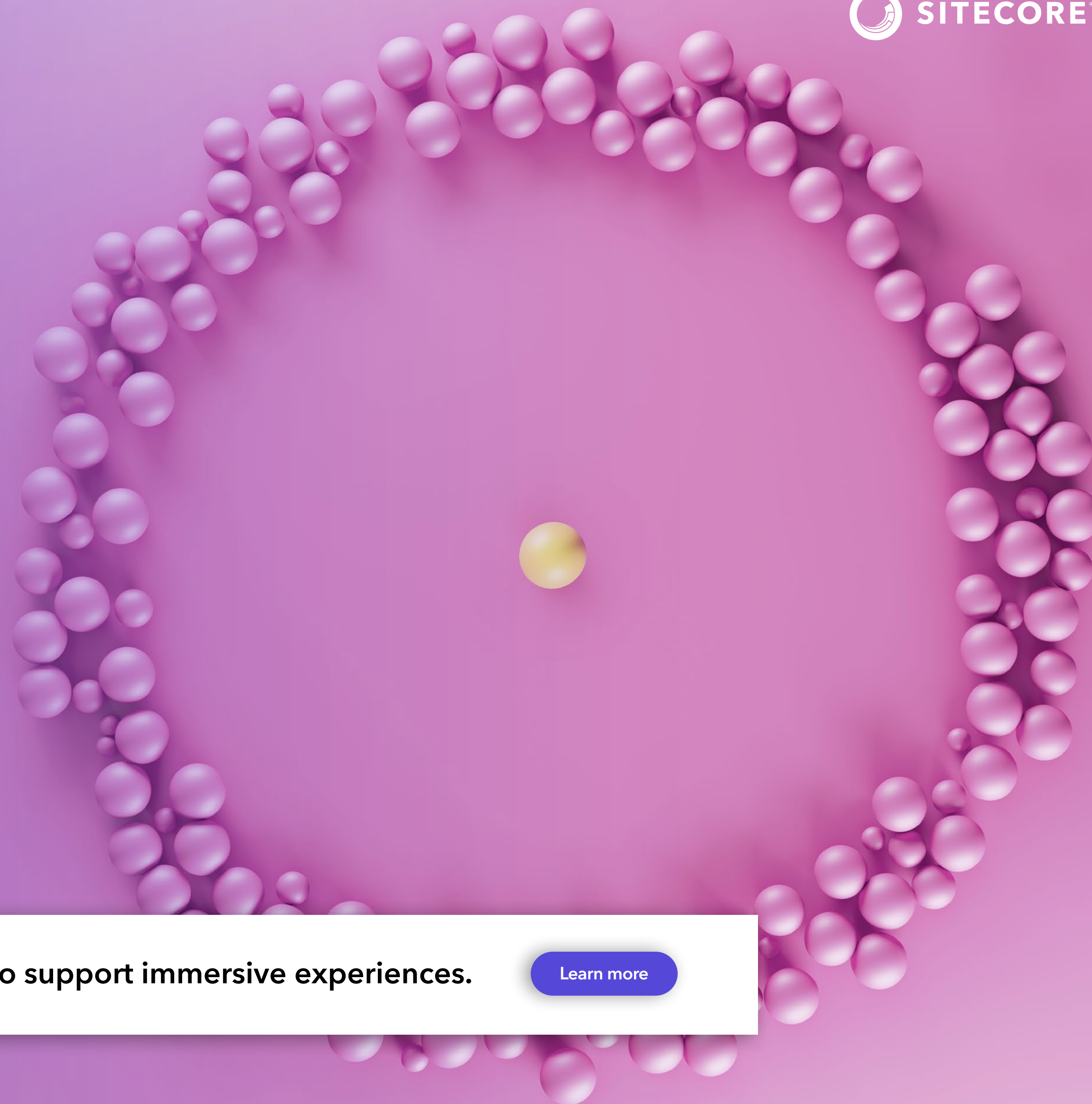
68% of marketers are already concerned about building content to support immersive experiences.

Learn more

# Questions to consider

Does your organization store all of your digital assets in a digital system?

Helpful tip: Creating a single source of truth for your organization's digital assets makes your content easy to find and use. When assets are easy to find, teams can reduce the number of net new projects, quickly and easily repurpose content for global or regional campaigns, and spend less time tracking down content. To get started on this journey, take inventory of existing content silos, and evaluate the cost/benefit of consolidating everything in one location.
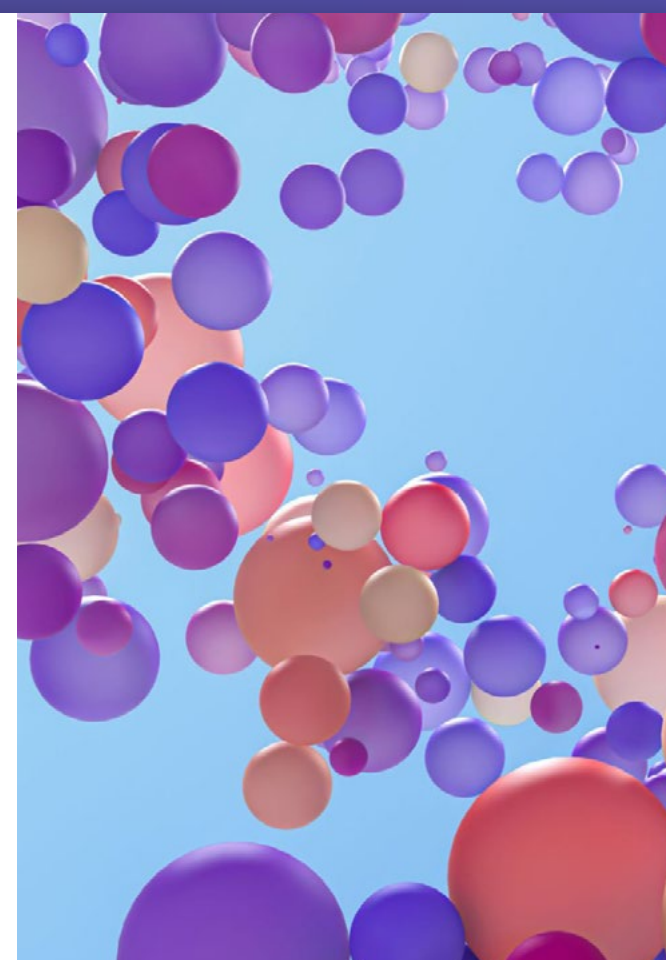
Do you have consistent taxonomies across platforms and business functions?

Helpful tip: Implementing a centralized system can help you align your content naming and tagging methodologies across systems. With taxonomy alignment, your organization can unlock a level of asset management that can power AI-driven search, advanced personalization, omnichannel delivery, and more.
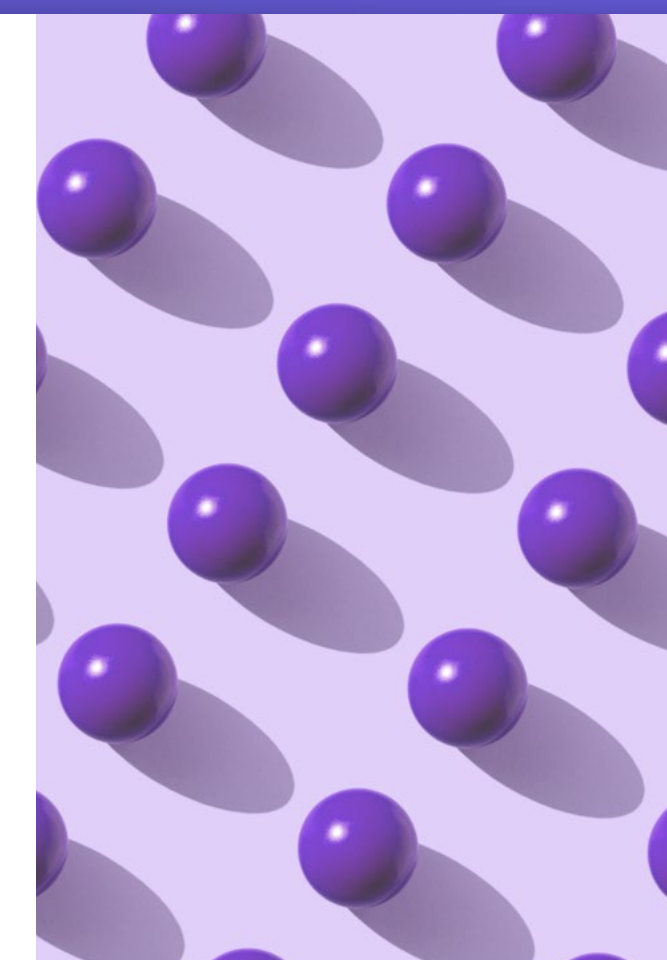
Do you have common personas/audiences across the business?

Helpful tip: To be successful, content must serve a purpose to your audience. Brand digital experiences must also take into consideration that every customer is on a journey. When content across your digital touchpoints aligns with a cohesive persona/audience strategy, your brand can deliver consistent experiences and advance your personalization efforts. A centralized content system prepares your organization for greater success in both areas.
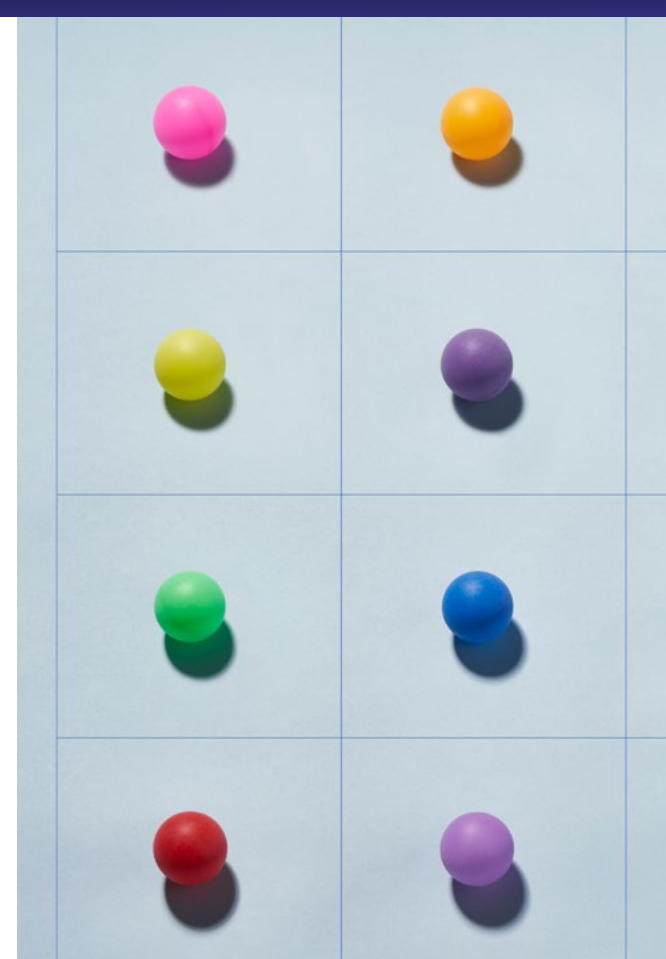
Have you established strong collaboration that supports information-sharing?

Helpful tip: Often, marketing isn't the only team within an organization that creates or leverages content to connect with customers. Providing a central content system for an organization can bridge collaboration and communication gaps among teams that traditionally operate in silos. As you assess the cost/benefit of implementing a central content repository, factor in the added benefit of organizational transparency available for brand-approved content, usage data, and creative files.
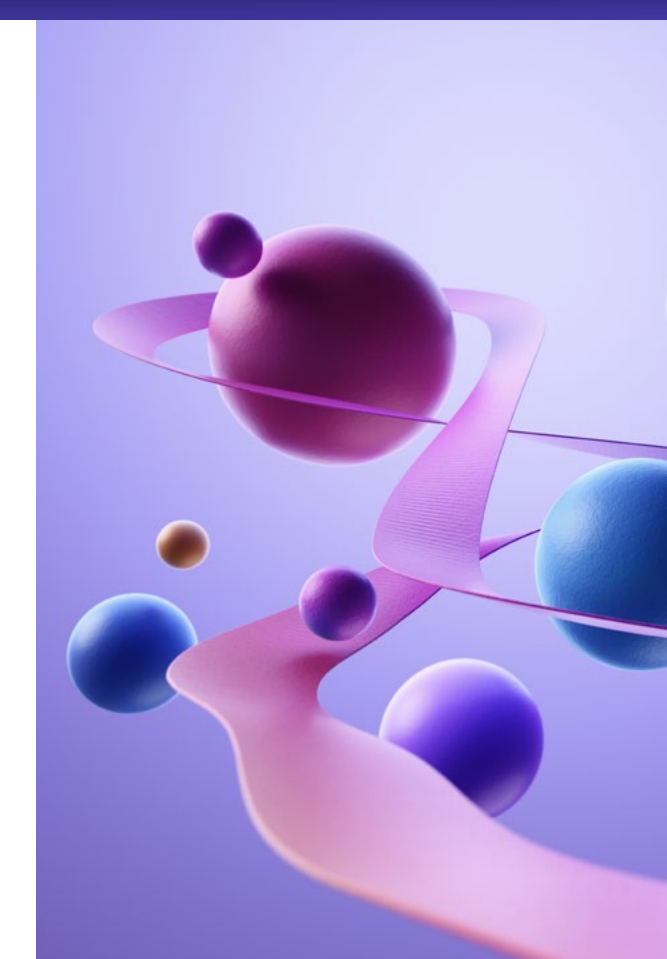
Recommended solution

Content Hub DAM
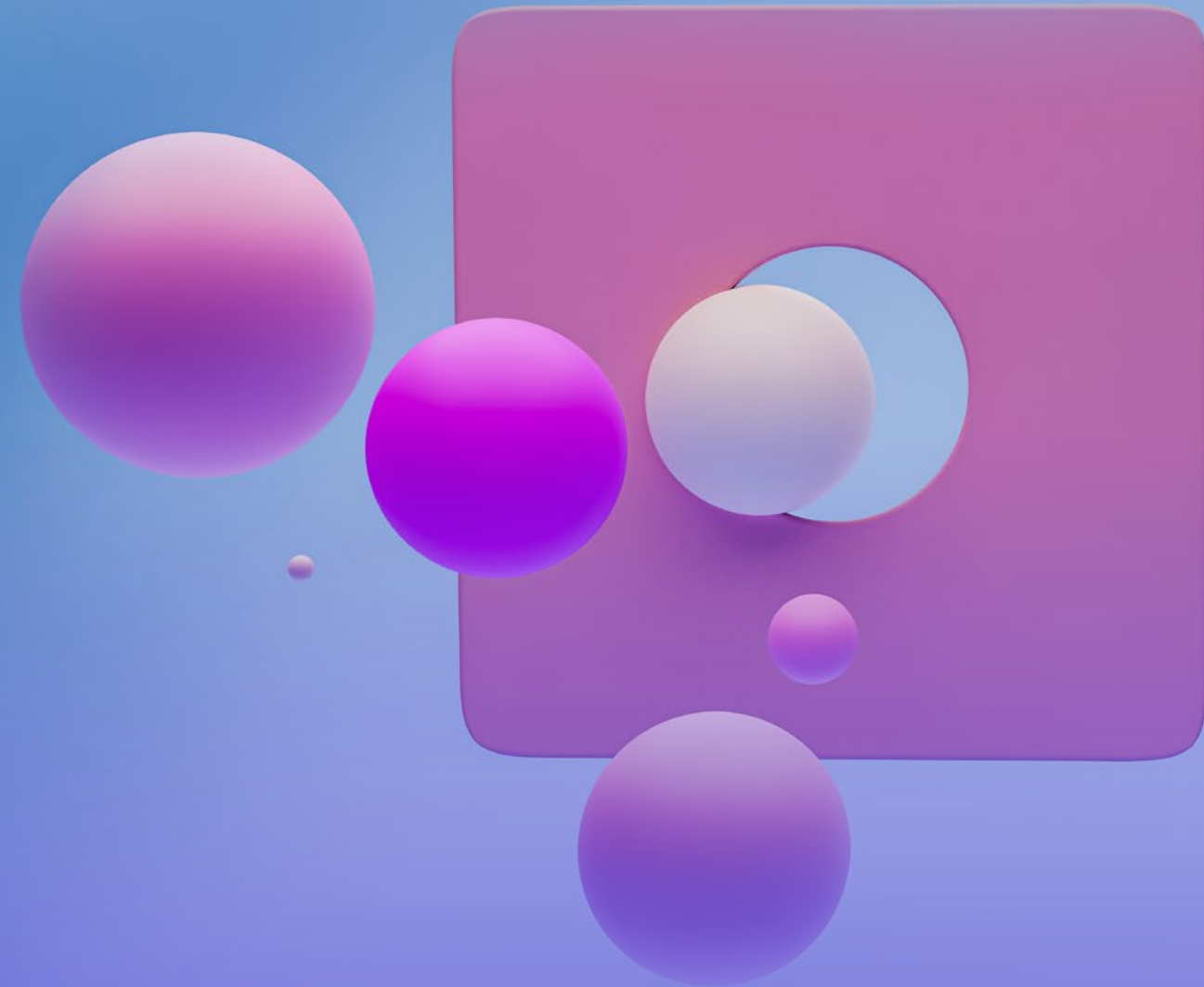
An automated digital asset management solution

Sitecore Content Hub DAM provides a single repository for all your digital assets, making content easy to find and use to power your digital experience. Connect to any content source to store, manage, and enrich digital assets for various content destinations. Content Hub DAM's app connector lets your teams work from their favorite apps, such as Adobe Creative Cloud.
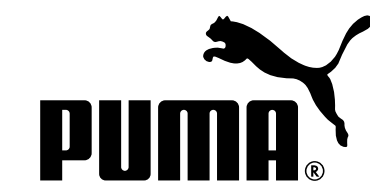
Learn more

Brands driving impressive results

ASTON MARTIN

64% rise in strategic market engagement

Cracker Barrel
OLD COUNTRY STORE

116.8% improvement in online revenue

PUMA®

84% increase in SEO results

Mute the noise for your customers

End generic marketing efforts that lack data and offer every customer what they want.

Why it matters

Customers remember you when you remember them. But delivering memorable experiences requires data and the ability to execute based on customer behavior in the moment. Marketing campaigns that are missing these two factors will not stand out. Customers won't stick around if they don't see content that interests them. Smart data capturing and intelligent, real-time experience delivery are both required to effectively contextualize your customers' patterns and tailor your content for every moment.

75% of efforts to create automated, personalized engagement won't meet ROI goals because of inadequate buyer insights.

Learn more

Questions to consider

Can your brand market to customers in the context of their current and past interactions?

Helpful tip: Content is more successful when backed by contextual data. To get started, make understanding your customers your first goal. Create content that will drive engagement, build trust, and help you capture first-party data so you can start creating user profiles. During this process, be transparent with your customers about how they can benefit by providing their information — receiving promotional communications or exclusive deals, for example.
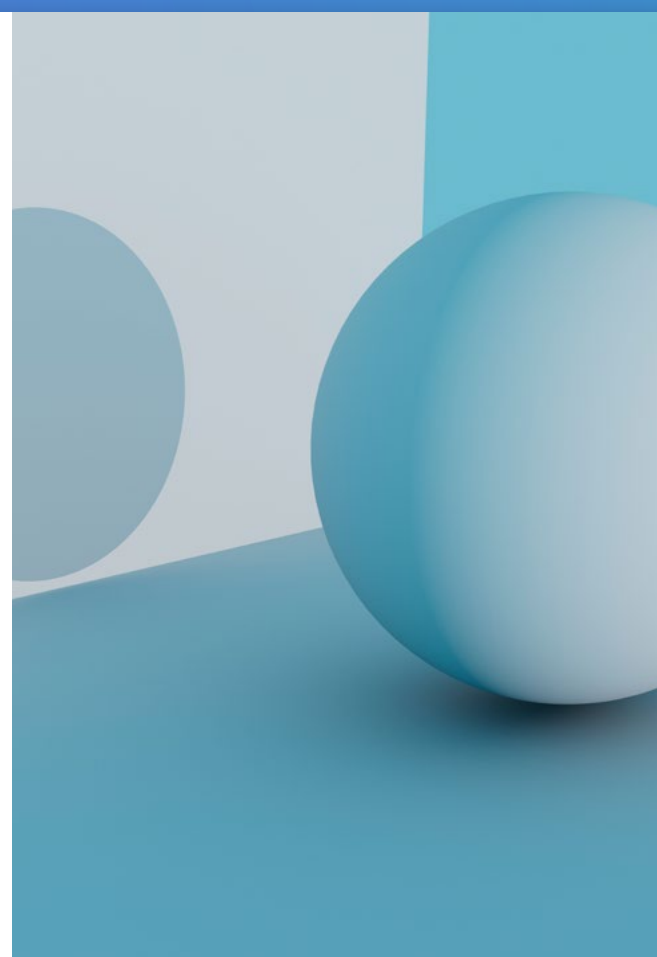
Are you driving personalized content with rich data you're capturing across all digital channels?

Helpful tip: Maturing your data capture across digital channels helps create a 360-degree view of your customers. Creating detailed customer profiles will drive actionable insights that will unlock your ability to leverage advanced digital experience strategies, such as AI-powered personalization and automation.
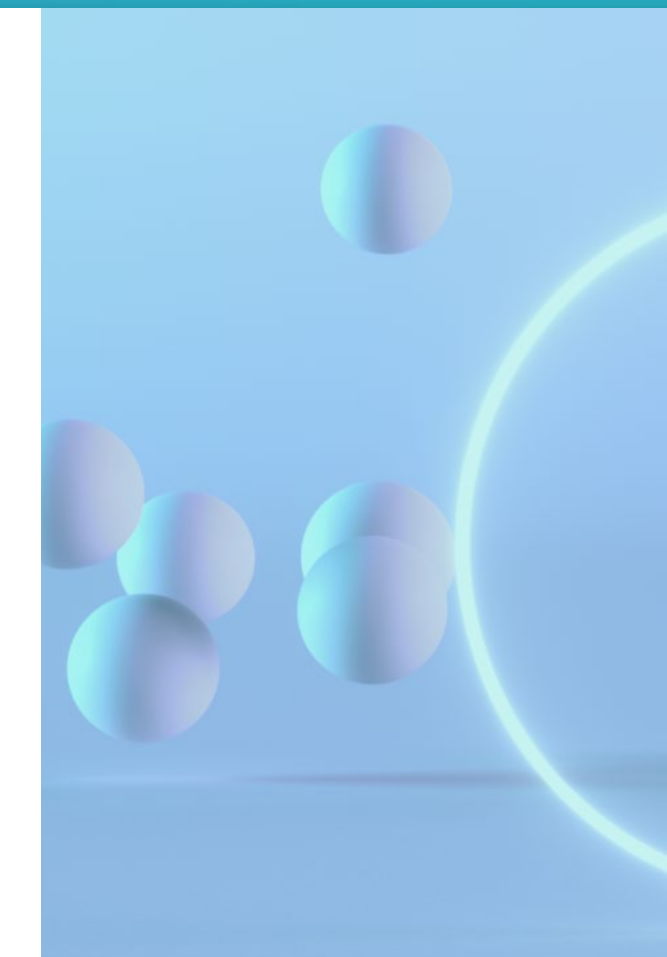
Are you using AI and automation to respond to customer behavior changes?

Helpful tip: Advanced, real-time personalization and automated processes require a significant amount of data and the ability to understand the context of each interaction. Unifying data can empower your organization with the right insights and tools to optimize customer events and segmentation.
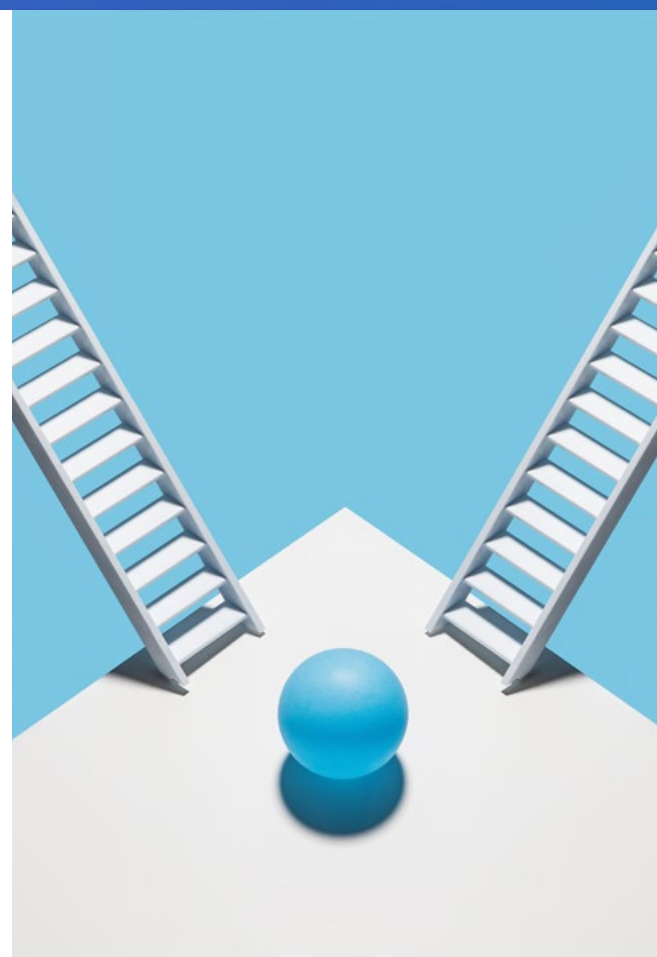
Does your brand pay attention to privacy rules and use customer data respectfully?

Helpful tip: Customers are more likely to provide data if your organization can use it to help them find what they need, quickly. Be transparent about why you are capturing first-party data and how you will use it. Consistently deliver on your promises and ensure that you implement a system that remains compliant with current data regulations.
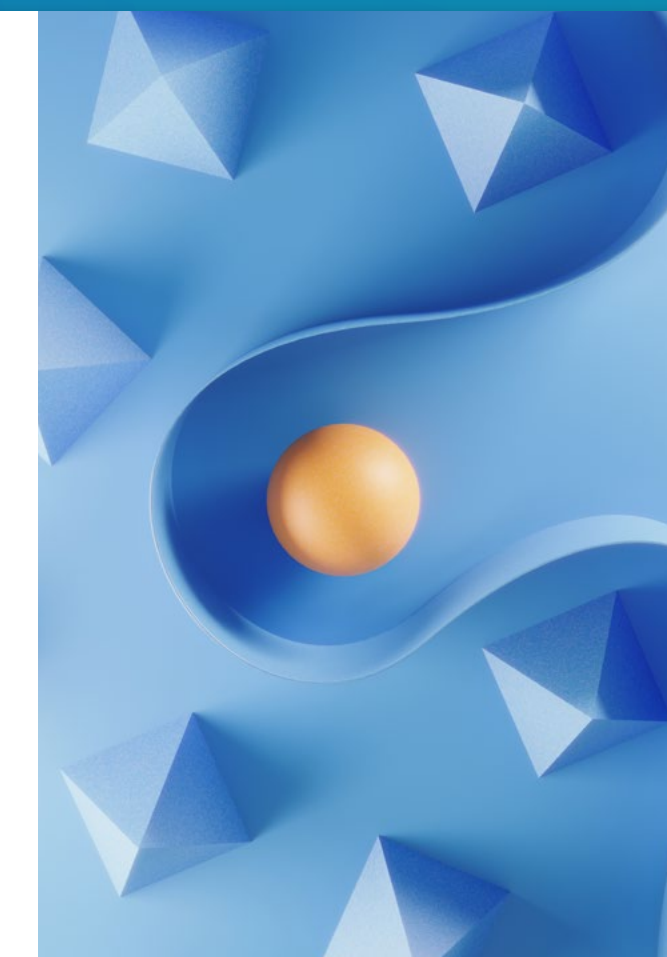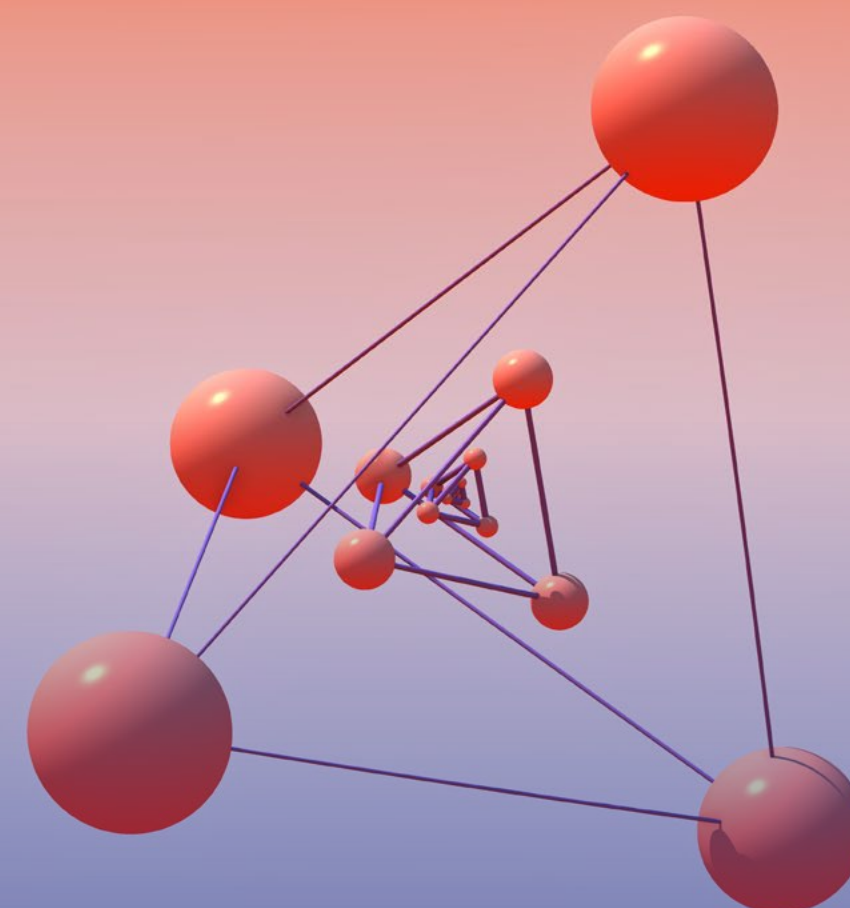
Recommended solutions
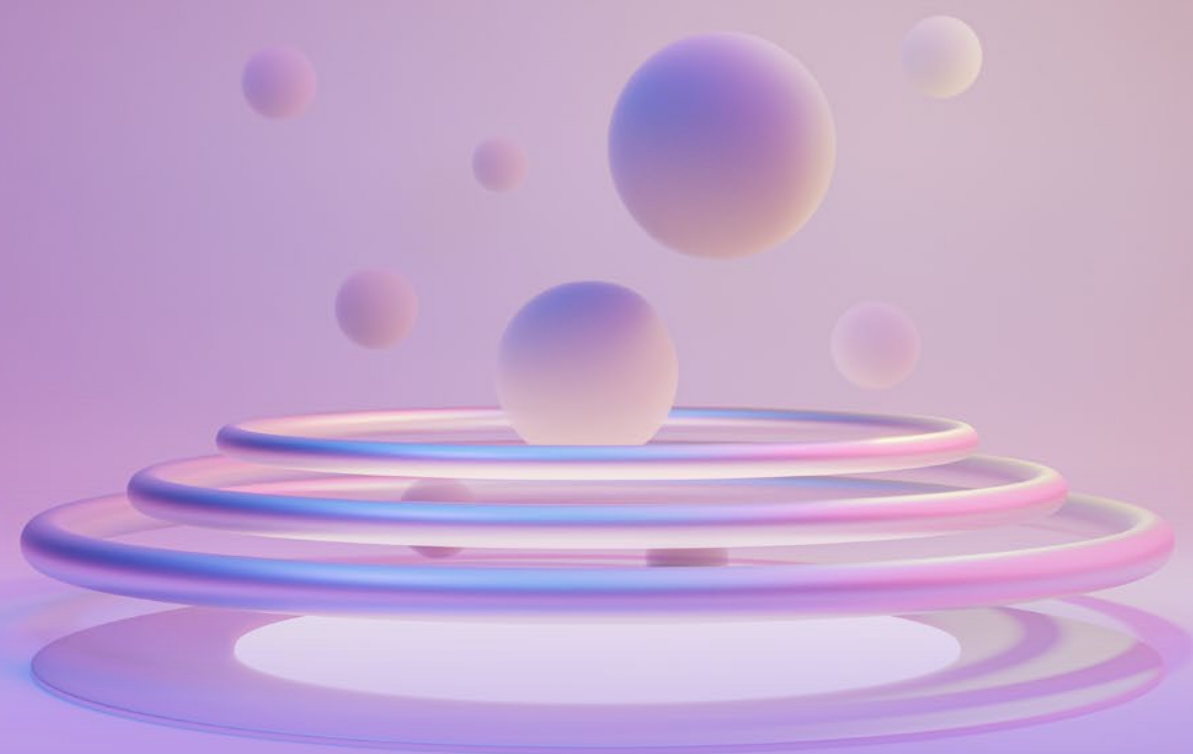
CDP

**An intelligent customer data platform
that activates data across an ecosystem**

Sitecore CDP enables you to build for now while remaining secure for the future. As privacy rules change, your organization can remain confident with the data capture across your ecosystem that powers real-time, omnichannel experiences.

Learn more

Personalize

**Leading experimentation
and personalization platform**

Paired with a customer data platform (CDP), Sitecore Personalize enables you to optimize every customer experience across every channel. You'll have the agility for in-the-moment marketing by using live data to respond with the right content. You'll also be able to build conversion and engagement experimentations on any channel with both client-side and server-side integrations.

Learn more

Search

**An AI-powered solution for building blazing-fast,
searchable experiences**

When customers are in the research phase, Sitecore Search will help connect them to content that is highly relevant to their needs. You can build fast, predictive search experiences from scratch without needing complex code. Create a searchable experience across any number of digital assets, organized and optimized for your audience, while incorporating multiple languages at once.

Learn more

Brands driving impressive results
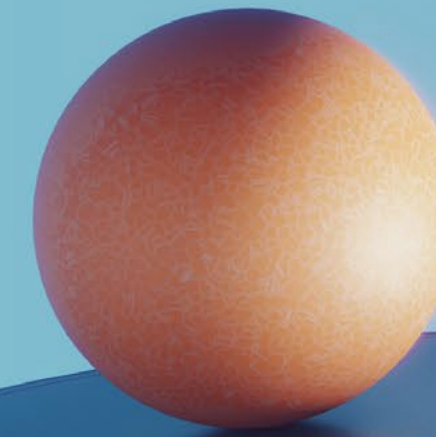
CIRQUE DU SOLEIL®

Increased engagement and conversions through personalization
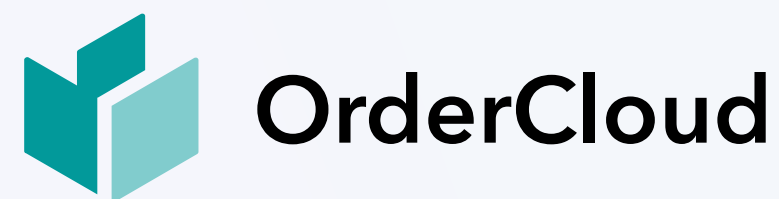
JD Group

1M+ customers served personalized content

SUBWAY®

71% increase in rewards program usage

Four smart-mover strategies and solutions to help dominate digital moments

SITECORE®

I. TECHNOLOGY

Power flexibility to grow and adapt to your unique needs in the moment

XM Cloud
The modern SaaS CMS

OrderCloud
The headless commerce platform for connecting customers with products

Content Hub ONE
An agile omnichannel CMS to create, manage, and power content

II. EXPERIENCE

Empower your teams to deliver uninterrupted customer experiences

Content Operations
An end-to-end content operations solution

CDP
An intelligent customer data platform that activates data across an ecosystem

III. CONTENT

Unify your digital assets to power more advanced experiences

Content Hub DAM
An automated digital asset management solution

IV. DATA

Offer every customer what they want

CDP
An intelligent customer data platform that activates data across an ecosystem

Personalize
Leading experimentation and personalization platform

Search
An AI-powered solution for building blazing-fast, searchable experiences

About Sitecore's composable DX

Sitecore's end-to-end, SaaS-enabled, cloud-based digital experience platform unifies the entire customer journey from search to purchase to post-sale marketing with solutions for Content, Engagement, and Commerce.

Start your journey.

Customer data platform

Marketing automation

Personalization and testing

Product discovery

Connnect

Enterprise CMS

B2X commerce

Intelligent content search

Agile CMS

Digital asset management

Content operations