



DXP guide for CMOs



In this whitepaper

After reading this guide, you will have an answer to these three things:

- #1 Marketing in the digital age: acquisition, retention, and experience** **3**
- #2 How the drastic shift to digital makes DXPs indispensable** **6**
- #3 Our guide to choosing the right DXP for your organization** **11**

About Dropsolid

Dropsolid Experience Cloud is the most open Digital Experience Platform (DXP) for enterprises with a low barrier to entry. The platform enables developers and marketers to co-create relevant and consistent digital experiences for a wide range of stakeholders on all digital channels.

It combines advanced Content Management (Drupal), Marketing Automation (Mautic) and Customer Data Platform (Apache Unomi) capabilities as an integrated toolset. It integrates seamlessly with Google Analytics & Data Studio and runs on Google Cloud Platform.





#1

**Marketing in
the digital age:
acquisition,
retention, and
experience**



Marketing in the digital age: acquisition, retention, and experience

All digital experiences used to start and end on your website. These days are over. Marketers today deliver multichannel experiences across multiple channels to meet rapidly increasing customer expectations. Those digital channels serve both to attract new customers and to engage existing customers in long-term relationships and increase CLV (Customer Lifetime Value).

Below, you can read some of the challenges that marketers face every day today in the digital age:

- Creating a strong and consistent branding combined with controlling an ever-growing number of communication channels and technologies.
- The high bar for the best digital experiences is being set by the pioneers such as Google, Amazon, and Netflix.
- A digital experience can be a differentiator in highly competitive industries. For example, services such as HR, real-estate, and retail.
- The customer journey spans multiple departments. A battle the CMO can no longer win on his own.
- Technology alone does not solve this. The right combination of tools, strategy, and people helps companies reach their full potential in the digital age.
- Bad data: too much data is still unusable, sitting in silos, or not consolidated to extract valuable insights.

?

What is a DXP?

A Digital Experience Platform or DXP is an integrated technology aimed at serving relevant and personalized digital experiences to different audiences through a wide range of digital touch points. This is made possible by centralizing content management for multiple channels and combining this with customer data management.

More information can be found [in this blog](#).



#2

**How the drastic
shift to digital
makes DXPs
indispensable**



How the drastic shift to digital makes DXPs indispensable

A CMS is no longer enough for the best digital experiences. Why?

Before we dive into the details, let's take a deeper look at what we mean by 'digital experiences'. A digital experience refers to any online interaction: website visits, searches through Alexa, interactions with chatbots, use of mobile apps, interaction on social media... While these experiences take place at numerous digital touchpoints and require multiple technologies, they all have two key components at their core: content and data.

Content

Content is the heart of the digital experience. It is how we connect with our digital audience. Content answers customers' questions and guides their decisions. It explains, entertains, and influences. Regardless of the channel, content is the medium. The further along the client's customer journey, the more demand for relevant content at that time and through that specific channel.

Data

Data ensures that the content you create not only meets the needs of one specific customer but is also relevant to other customers. Customer data allows us to understand

your digital audience better. Because without data, no insights: not on a personal level and not on a global level. Through relevant data, we identify key customer groups and segments, refine buyer personas and map the customer journey. The more individually we get to know our customers, the more relevant content we can deliver to that specific user at the right channel with the goal of driving the next desired action.

No content and data without a challenge

Content

- You need a lot of content for your different stakeholders in the different stages of their customer journeys.
- You need to spread your content across different channels, and it needs to look good on every screen.

Data

- From data to insights is a big job: you have a lot of data but analyzing it into insights is not that easy. Combining and comparing different data sources involves extra work. Not to forget: your data quality needs to be right, you need to extract the right insights...
- Extracting insights from your data is not enough. You need actionable data.

Content + data

- The real challenge begins when you link your obtained data and insights to your content. This way, you learn from your data which content is relevant to specific personas, at what point in their journey they need certain pieces of content, and via which route they prefer to digest that content. Personalization is key here.

How a DXP helps to make your digital experience more relevant across all channels

Managing content across multiple channels and the fact that your visitors interact through multiple channels makes the challenge all the greater.

Examples of how a DXP can help efficiently manage content across multiple channels:

- A central content library linked to all your websites (public site, customer portal, shop, extranet, ...) makes managing central content more efficient. For example, you only need to manage and update your privacy policy in one place.
- A Customer Data Platform (CDP) allows you to make 360 customer profiles transparent. From this platform, you can also manage content personalization across multiple channels.
- Personalization from a central system across all channels.

How a DXP helps to expand your reach?

Some concrete examples:

- [A technically well-designed central content management ensures better findability \(SEO\).](#)
- You get in-depth insights into the performance of your ad campaigns that go far beyond website conversions. You can even feed your CRM system per lead with which campaign provided the first visit and conversion. This way, you can see which campaigns really bring in valuable leads.

How a DXP helps increase your Customer Lifetime Value?

Some concrete examples:

- You can approach existing customers more personally when they visit your

website, even if they are not logged in. This way, every visit is maximally valuable.

- You recognize visitors across multiple touchpoints, even if they are not yet customers.
- You gain insight into 360 customer profiles, and you can use that insight to make your website experience more personal, as well as your email target groups more targeted and your email content more relevant.
- You can also make your 360 customer profiles available in your CRM, so your sales and service staff can communicate in a more targeted way. And vice versa: a customer who files a complaint through the service center will automatically get a red flag in your email automation system so that he temporarily no longer receives commercial emails.

How a DXP helps get to market faster with new digital experiences?

- Centralized and reusable content and code repositories make it possible to go live faster with a new website, new language, or new region.
- An Open DXP gives both developers and marketers the right tools to do their jobs efficiently and collaborate better.
- Headless technology allows developers to work with different front-end technologies without having to (re)build the backend or middleware each time.

Organizations that consciously choose and properly implement a DXP will reap the benefits of faster time-to-market, improved marketing workflows and lasting customer relationships.

“Managing content across multiple channels and the fact that your visitors interact through multiple channels makes the challenge all the greater.”



#3

**Our guide to
choosing the right
DXP for your
organization**



Our guide to choosing the right DXP for your organization

How to choose the right DXP for your organization?

There are a whole bunch of DXPs on the market. Making the right choice depends on your business case, your digital maturity, your ambitions, and your current ecosystem. Use the crawl, walk, run approach: determine your needs to crawl and your ambitions to walk. In other words, start small and dream big.

5 questions to help you prepare properly

#1 Who are your key stakeholders?

#2 What are your business goals?

#3 What fundamental functionalities do you need?

#4 What does your current ecosystem look like?

#5 What is unique about your digital experiences?

1. Who are your key stakeholders?

Identify a small group of key stakeholders to determine your digital customer experience. As CMO, you probably won't make such a decision alone. The CTO, Enterprise Architect, Customer Service or Senior Management are usually involved and each have their own selection criteria.

2. What are your business goals?

Digital experience technology should not lead the agenda, but rather support your strategy and business goals.

3. What fundamental functionalities do you need?

Would you like to support multiple channels, multiple markets, automated journeys, advanced metrics, personalized experiences...? Make a list of what you need and what you already have today. Rank this list from must-haves (what you really can't live without) to nice-to-haves (your biggest dreams).

Below is a list of what we consider fundamental functionalities in a DXP:

1

EASY CONTENT CREATION AND DISTRIBUTION IN LINE WITH CORPORATE BRANDING

Marketing teams must be independent of developers to create and deploy content across all digital channels. This in graphically beautiful looking pages fitting into corporate branding.

2

SIMPLE METHODS FOR DEVELOPMENT

Developers must be able to deliver new sites and features quickly.

3

INTEGRATED APPROACH TO CONTENT & DATA

Data makes your content relevant to visitors and determines how and where it should be deployed. A DXP should bring together customer data and content in an integrated way.

4

INSIGHTS INTO CUSTOMER DATA AND CAMPAIGN PERFORMANCE

Need deep insight into visitors to identify valuable audience segments. Inject this data also into analytics or BI solutions for better insights into campaign performance.

5

ACTIONABLE AUDIENCE SEGMENTS ACROSS ALL DIGITAL CHANNELS

Use of valuable audience segments for personalization of both inbound channels (website) and outbound campaigns (email or mobile push).

6

EASY JOURNEY ORCHESTRATION

Independence of marketers from developers to create and deploy multi-step personalized journeys across all digital channels.

7

OPEN STRUCTURE

Every organization has a specific ecosystem that evolves over time. Therefore, a DXP needs an open structure that allows easy adoption and integration of new channels and tools.

8

SCALABLE GOVERNANCE

As your organization evolves, add more channels, markets and features to your digital platforms. A DXP needs a built-in governance framework that enables IT and security teams to fulfill their mission to protect both customers and the brand.

This is a list of optional features that not every organization needs. But which, depending on your business, might as well be essential:

Advanced permissions for decentralized marketing teams

When your local marketing teams are responsible for their areas, a sophisticated permission system is crucial. A central team of marketers defines templates and styling, local teams manage their own websites and send campaigns to their limited audiences.

Flows & journeys without worry

The easy setup of campaigns and nurturing flow with integrated forms.

Personalization for a more relevant journey

Make your emails, website or journeys even more relevant? You can do that with

personalization. Think carefully beforehand where the most value lies: do you go for marketing automation first or do you consciously choose the first steps in personalization?

Multichannel is key

How crucial is the multi-story for you today. And tomorrow? How many sites are you currently managing and what are the growth expectations? Based on the characteristics of your ecosystem, multilanguage, multimarket or headless architectures become critical capabilities.

Some examples:

- [Soudal: explicit need for multi-mult-multi](#)
- [UZA: different platforms for different audiences](#)
- [ERA: a corporate site and hundreds of subsites with local real-estate complexity](#)
- [Visit Flanders: a multi-brand solution with ever-growing number of subsites](#)

“Make a list of what you need and what you already have today. Rank this list from must-haves (what you really can’t live without) to nice-to-haves (your biggest dreams).”

Why is Drupal a good basis for an Open DXP?

Drupal is an open source CMS. More than 12% of the top 10k sites on the Internet are built with Drupal. Drupal lends itself especially well to enterprises that need more than just a very simple website: integrations with backend systems, multilingualism, advanced search engines or very specific components. Drupal is open, mature and composable. [It has evolved over the years with multiple changes in web development.](#)

So: Drupal lends itself very well as a basis for an Open DXP, but by definition it is not itself a DXP. Why not?

- It includes only the Content component and not the Data component (see higher challenges content & data). It does allow you to link multiple channels to your central content engine (e.g. a website, an intranet, a portal and a shop).
- It does not allow you to easily profile your users, analyze individual behavior and do content personalization.
- It also lacks a strong base for your outbound channels (e.g. email, mobile push, SMS) for following up online transactions or doing marketing campaigns.

So why is it a good foundation?

It is open source and, in terms of capabilities, geared to meet complex enterprise needs. So, by definition, a good foundation to build on. Content remains the foundation of a digital experience.

Dropsolid built an Open DXP on top of Drupal. We integrated an **Open Source Customer Data Platform (CDP)** and an **Open Source Marketing Automation solution** with Drupal. This is how we bring content and data together and enable consistent personalization across all channels.

In addition, we brought together a range of Devops functionalities in a Drupal Cloud platform that enables Drupal Developers to manage their Drupal environments more efficiently. By offering those same capabilities for the Open Source Marketing Automation and Customer Data Platform, we speak of a full DXP-ops platform. This allows organizations or agencies to customize, manage and evolve the full digital experience based on very strong open source foundations of Drupal.

4. What does your current ecosystem look like?

Start by answering the following questions:

- What enterprise architecture do you currently have?
- What would you like to keep, and what would you like to change in the future?
- What data do you already have? Where and how do you store it?
- How is your current tech stack connected? (CRM, PIM, marketing automation, SSO, portals, websites...)
- What about your data security and compliance? What hosting do you need?

From answers to such questions flow fundamental criteria and showstoppers that immediately rule out some possible solutions.

Also, be sure to consider the openness of new platforms in integrating your data to and from external sources, in the freedom of data modeling for marketers to build targeting and personalization, and in reporting data across all those systems.

?

Monolith vs. microservices vs. composable solution? Make a sustainable choice.

A DXP choice is one for the long term. When making your choice, ensure that you are making a sustainable decision. Can the system grow with your organization for more than 5 years? Can you replace a particular component when it is no longer adequate? Or will your entire system immediately fall apart like a domino? Here, certain architecture choices are essential.

Without zooming in too much on the technical details, you make a choice somewhere between a monolithic approach (everything from one vendor), microservices (highly fragmented and flexible, but potentially very high maintenance) or a composable solution in between. [Our CTO makes such choice very tangible in this video.](#)

5. What is unique about your digital experiences?

Make sure you fully understand the nuances of your own digital landscape, the dynamics of your teams, and your marketing campaigns. This will ensure that the solution you choose is perfectly aligned with it.

Map existing pain points and make them tangible. That's how you'll make sure they get resolved.

Need help determining your next step or struggling to select the right platform for your organization? Then Dropsolid Digital Agency would be happy to help you make a sustainable choice.

“Consider the openness of new platforms in integrating your data to and from external sources, in the freedom of data modeling for marketers to build targeting and personalization, and in reporting data across all those systems.”

Successful DXP implementation

Once you've chosen a DXP solution, the real work begins. As with any new technology, excellent communication, training, and implementation are critical factors for success and end-user acceptance. Keep in mind the objectives you defined in the selection phase. Always think from the business objectives and user value.

Start small and dream big. Learn and improve along the way.

And don't forget: enjoy the ride!

About the author

Leen Penders, CMO Dropsolid

"As a Digital Marketing professional, I'm passionate about building products and services humans love to use. I strongly believe that both good and bad user experiences have a big impact throughout the buying process and entire customer lifecycle.

For over 15 years, I've worked with enterprise B2B and B2C brands across many industries, helping them to articulate business challenges into manageable solutions. The Digital Marketing space is rapidly evolving and marketers are facing so many challenges.

I've bundled some of my insights in this whitepaper, hoping it can help many more marketers to make confident decisions while moving forward in ever improving their brands digital experiences.

I hope you enjoy the read and look forward to hear your story!"



Let's get in touch

Need help picking the right DXP for your organization? Don't hesitate to contact Leen via e-mail leen.penders@dropsolid.com or reach out via our contactform.

[Contact us](#)