7 signs you've outgrown your CMS

Recognize and address CMS issues before productivity suffers

How do you know when it's time to rethink your legacy content management system?

Sometimes it's obvious that a business has outgrown its CMS, such as when a legacy CMS can't support a new product or functionality. Other times the signs are hidden by workarounds that make it hard to see where the CMS is holding teams—and your company—back.

CMS frustrations are so pervasive that many product managers and digital leaders write them off as sunk costs.

However, businesses that eliminate these hurdles achieve dramatically improved results: they build apps 2-3 times faster, deploy content updates in minutes, develop prototypes in days and scale complex digital products with ease.

Across a diverse mix of industries, there are some common signs that a company has outgrown its CMS and could drastically increase its speed and efficiency by moving to content infrastructure.

1. MAINTAINING MULTIPLE CMSES OR CONTENT REPOSITORIES

A CMS is meant to centralize content management. The benefits of a content hub are lost when an organization needs more than one CMS. Multiple CMSes create content silos that require extra work to maintain, make it challenging to intelligently repurpose content and collaborate efficiently across teams.

"We originally managed our content via a Wordpress CMS—or should I say 'CMSes'?" said one Freeletics digital product manager. "Each language had a separate website, plus its own support center, knowledge base,and blog. That's a lot of Wordpress sites…. Now, we have a simple stack with Contentful on the backend. It's super easy to maintain."

> **"Workflows are often so intertwined with the CMS that it's hard to distinguish the technology problems from the human problems."**
>
> *—Society for News Design,*
> *"We know content management systems suck; we're trying to fix them"*

2. RELYING ON A FEW PEOPLE TO PUSH NEW CONTENT LIVE

As a company's digital portfolio grows, monolithic CMSes tend to become less stable as hacks and workarounds get added to support new products. Changes to one part of the CMS can easily trigger problems in other areas, and, in the end, developers are needed to publish even the smallest changes.

This overload of complexity runs the constant risk of breaking things, creates content bottlenecks, and is also a huge business risk if the few developers who understand the CMS-specific workarounds leave the company.

3. CMS CAPABILITIES CAN LIMIT THE FEASIBILITY OF INNOVATIVE PROJECTS

Working around an outdated CMS is time consuming, forcing marketing and product development teams to be selective in how they deploy resources.

As developers become focused on keeping the lights on, fewer resources are available to explore new functionalities, implement creative designs and develop proofs of concept.

4. UNWIELDY CMSES SLOW DOWN PRODUCTION

This manifests as extra time needed to migrate or recreate existing content, time spent researching workarounds or plugins instead of writing clean code, and time wasted while troubleshooting bugs caused by adding new code to a monolithic CMS. Any one of these can add days or weeks to production.

"Contentful is a great fit with our speed-oriented architecture," said Lukas Edenfelt of TUI Nordic. See how TUI Nordic boosted developer and editorial productivity.

BOTTLENECK FIXED

BeautyBay grew into Europe's largest independent online beauty product retailer, their aging systems couldn't support their content needs. Using Contentful as part of a new microservices approach, they've cut site update time down from a day to 10 minutes and can launch new pages in less than 40 minutes.

5. PROJECTS ARE HELD UP BY CONTENT BOTTLENECKS

According to the Content Marketing Institute, 28% of technology content marketers say content bottlenecks hold up some or most of their projects.

Content bottlenecks are a frustrating sign that your CMS has gone from enabling to inhibiting good content management.

Read the case study on how Trunk Club broke through its content bottleneck.

6. CONTENT AND DEVELOPMENT WORKFLOWS ARE INTERDEPENDENT

When legacy CMSes struggle to accommodate growing digital portfolios, content and development workflows become entangled. Instead of working in parallel, content and development teams have to take turns working in the CMS.

Editors need developers to push content changes live, update hard-coded content and create new layouts. Developers can't easily pull content for new products, waste time on minor but persistent content publishing requests, and get bogged down in managing and troubleshooting the CMS.

7. INABILITY TO SCALE DIGITAL PRODUCTS EFFICIENTLY

Taking a day or more to make updates in a cumbersome CMS might work with one product in one market, but is a completely inefficient workflow when companies need to add multiple products with content that is customized to different devices and localities.

Failure to scale can also occur when the CMS limits developers' ability to choose the best languages and tools for their projects. Many developers say major CMS platforms are coded in a way that hinders their ability to build applications that scale, according to software engineer Dan Webb, in his blog post on B2Interactive "Framework or CMS better for web development."

WHAT TO DO WHEN YOUR CMS IS HOLDING YOU BACK

Is your organization is suffering from one (or many) of these common signs of CMS frustration?

Here's the good news: there's a solution to your headache that has the potential to transform your workflows and drastically reduce your time to market.

Contentful can help you with everything from best practices for deploying a quick proof of concept, to building the case for a content infrastructure that can scale. Our intuitive web app and support for popular languages and tools makes it easy to get started for both editors and developers alike.

Contentful is an API-first solution that provides flexible, modular content infrastructure that easily plugs into the modern technology stack and powers content across a company's entire digital portfolio from one central hub.

Editors and developers enjoy interfaces that fit their individual work styles, and no longer have to waste time on workflow inefficiencies, freeing them to spend more time focusing on their best work and on ideating the next big thing.

Talk to one of our experts today. Or, learn from other brands that outgrew their CMSes and found a better solution. This ebook offers 14 examples of how companies and agencies are leveraging Contentful to rapidly ship digital products and beat their competitors to market.

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