Kentico

- ✓ Initial research
- ✓ Functional requirements
- ◉ Technical requirements
- ○ Other considerations

Centralized content Reduce costs

Security Future proofing

Enhanced scalability Better performance

Ebook

How to choose your next CMS.

The four checklists you need to see

kentico.com

Table of Contents.

Follow these four checklists for CMS selection success.

Choosing the right digital experience platform in 2026 can be overwhelming. Your platform forms the foundation of your digital presence, affecting everything from website performance and customer experience to scalability. And with growing options for AI and agentic marketing, organizations relying on legacy systems or overly complex composable stacks could be missing out on faster results without knowing it.

But it's important that you take careful consideration; the wrong platform can cause significant problems in your tech stack. Legacy platforms can introduce rigidity and technical debt, while piecing together multiple composable tools can lead to integration challenges, higher maintenance demands, and inefficient workflows. This can result in compatibility issues and poor customer experiences that frustrate instead of engage. The negative effects can impact your entire organization. The time and resources spent managing a subpar or overly complex digital experience platform can ultimately slow growth long-term and impact your digital maturity.

A modern digital experience platform empowers you to streamline content management processes, enhance website performance, and deliver exceptional user experiences. It helps you stay ahead of the competition with features designed for efficiency, like built-in AI and martech consolidation, without the limitations of legacy systems or the overhead of managing multiple disconnected solutions.

Whether you're upgrading or considering a migration, these four checklists include insights to help you make an informed choice that aligns with your goals. The checklists are designed to help your entire team, from marketers to developers, get a full picture of the requirements needed from your next digital platform.
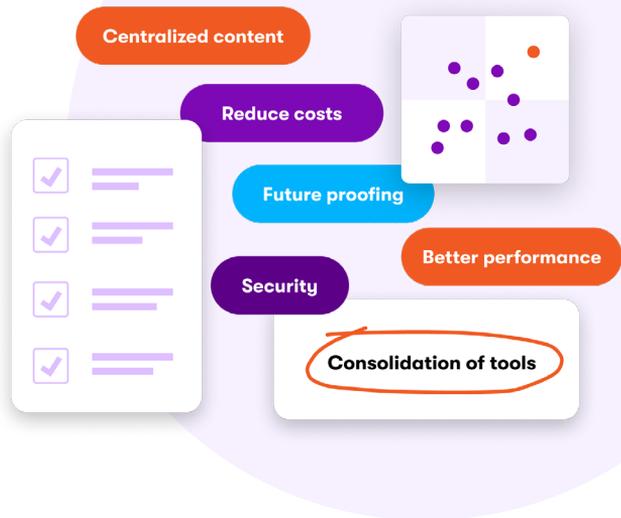
Initial Research.

Thorough research empowers you to navigate the complexities of the DXP and CMS landscape in 2026 with clarity and confidence, enabling you to make choices that align with your organization's goals, requirements, and aspirations.

From understanding your organization's objectives and stakeholder requirements to exploring the features and functionalities offered by different platforms, we'll take you step-by-step through the process of gathering and synthesizing the information necessary to make an informed decision.

This checklist is best suited for marketing decision makers who have a full overview of your team's digital maturity, budget, and timeline.

> ⓘ **By the end of this first checklist, you will be able to conduct comprehensive research to find a DXP that actually matches customer needs, your timeline, digital maturity, budget, and business goals.**

IIdentify the primary goals of your new digital platform.

Identifying the primary goals of your new digital platform is a crucial first step. Defining your strategic objectives and digital maturity ensures you choose an option that provides the necessary features and functionality to achieve those goals. Here are some common business goals of a new CMS.

Future proofing

Faster campaigns

Smarter processes

Lead generation

Technology upgrade

Regulatory compliance

Security

Easier content optimization

Greater efficiency

Multilingual features

Access to built-in AI

Centralized content

Better customer experience

Increased conversions

AI-powered efficiency

Easier content optimization

Better performance

Reduce costs

Consolidation of tools

Enhanced scalability

Understand user needs.

When choosing a new CMS or DXP, it's essential to gather input from all stakeholders to ensure that their diverse needs and requirements are considered in the decision-making process. Here are some key internal stakeholders you should talk to:

IT department	IT Managers, Developers, System Administrators
Marketing team	Managers, Content Creators, Digital Marketers
Design team	Graphic Designers, User Experience Designers
Sales team	Account Executive, Sales Manager, Sales Representative
Executive team	Chief Information Officer, Chief Marketing Officer
Customers/Users	Ideally, those who fit your ideal customer profile

Do your market research.

Research competitors' websites to identify industry standards and best practices. Look out for:

Design and layout	user experience, user interactions
Navigation	ease, structure, user pathways
Content types	videos, blogs, newsletters, etc.
SEO	ranking, keywords, content structure
Agentic AI	Insights, content optimization, content creation, automations
Performance	load times, mobile responsiveness
Interactivity	forms, chatbots, infographics
Features	e-commerce, forms, shopping cart, etc.
Security	HTTPS, privacy policies, GDPR

How to choose your next CMS.

Explore the choice of CMS and DXP solutions on the market and whether they match your needs.

Here are some ways you can do that.

Vendor websites	Search for eBooks, videos, and other educational materials.
Review sites	G2 Crowd, Capterra, TrustRadius, etc.
Analyst reports	G2, Gartner, Forrester
Industry expert blogs	CMSWire, TechCrunch, HubSpot
Forums	Stack Overflow, Reddit, Digital Point
Case studies	Check vendor and digital agency websites
Webinars/Events	CMSExpo or industry-specific digital marketing conferences
Consultants/ Agencies	Digital agencies have experience with and expertise in certain platforms.
Demo	1-on-1 demos help you assess the CMS against your specific needs

> (i) **Good to know: Upgrading vs. Migrating**
> Upgrading allows you to modernize your platform while keeping your core content, media, and customer data in place; improving capabilities without starting from the beginning. A migration gives you an entirely new platform with new capabilities; requiring data migration.

Draw up a budget

Establish a comprehensive budget that covers both the initial setup and ongoing costs associated with your CMS. Consider the following to ensure you're calculating Total Cost of Ownership (TCO):
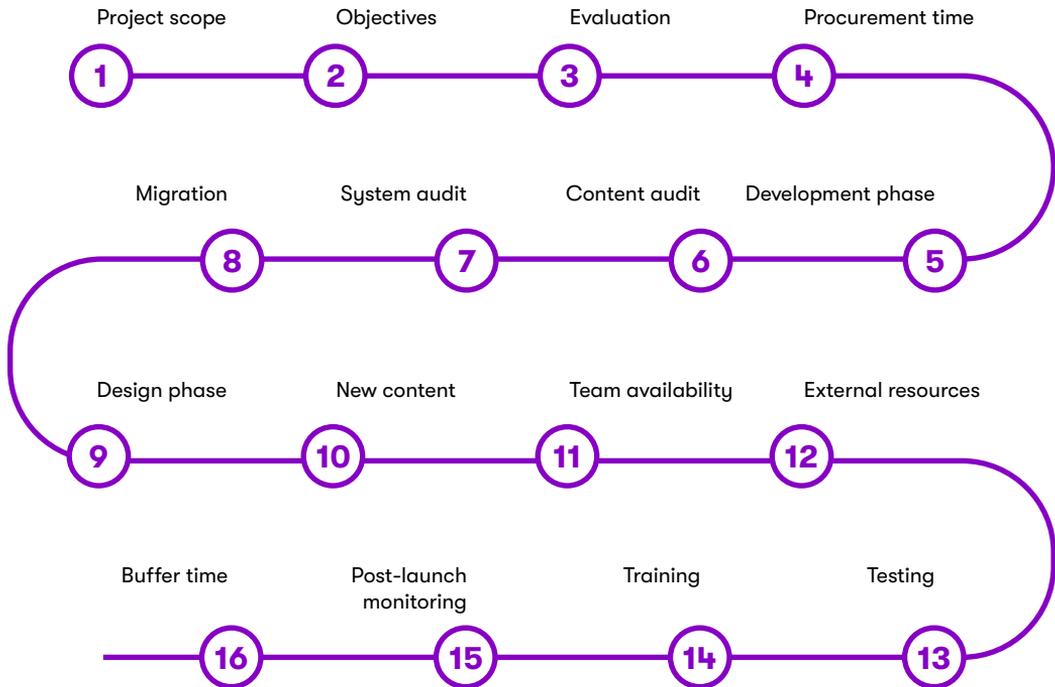
Software license/ Subscription fees	
Hosting (ongoing)	
Customization	
In-house development/ Agency fees	
UI/UX design	
Graphic design	
Data migration	
Content audit/clean	
Training	
Maintenance	
Support	
Security	
Third-party tools	
Hidden costs	
Contingency	

How to choose your next CMS.

Create a timeline.

Outline a realistic timeline for implementation, including milestones and deadlines. Considerations should include:

Project scope	Objectives	Evaluation	Procurement time
1	**2**	**3**	**4**

Migration	System audit	Content audit	Development phase
8	**7**	**6**	**5**

Design phase	New content	Team availability	External resources
9	**10**	**11**	**12**

| Buffer time	Post-launch monitoring	Training	Testing
16	**15**	**14**	**13**

Assess your organization's current digital maturity.

Evaluate the technical skills available within your team to manage and maintain the CMS. You want to align your choice of CMS to current capabilities, but also ensure it can evolve alongside you as you evolve.

- AI readiness
- Digital literacy
- Change management
- Cultural readiness
- Existing workflows
- In-house skills
- Current objectives
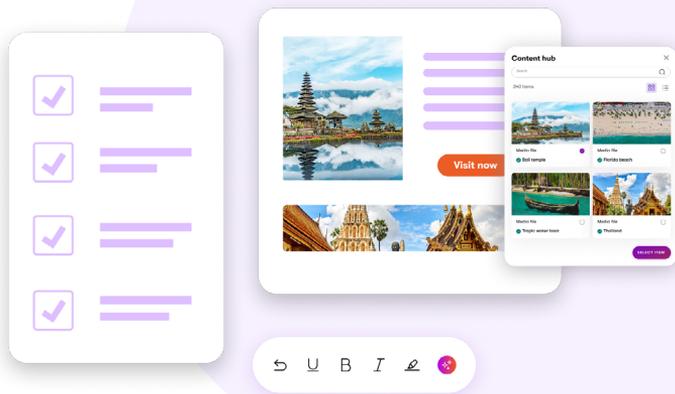
Functional Requirements.

Functional requirements outline the specific features and capabilities your digital experience platform must have to meet your organization's needs. For example, does it support tech consolidation with your digital marketing tools? Does it meet your need for enhanced AI capabilities? By clearly defining what your tech stack requires, you ensure that your chosen platform can actually deliver results.

Designed for content editors and marketers, this checklist will help you pinpoint the essential features and functionalities that will drive success for your organization.

Here are some of the most important capabilities you should look for in your new CMS or DXP:

Built-in AI	Does it include AI-powered tools for faster insights, content optimization, and multichannel marketing?	
Content types	Is the CMS suitable for non-technical users, featuring an intuitive user interface and low-code tools?	
Page building	Can you easily build custom pages using drag-and-drop interfaces without needing to code?	
Content hub	Does it provide centralized content and asset management?	
Reusable content	Does it maximize your resources by allowing you to reuse content anywhere?	
Multichannel	Will the CMS allow you to manage content for multiple channels from one place?	
Personalization	Can the CMS automatically show content tailored to individual user preferences and behaviors?	
Email marketing	Can it seamlessly integrate with your CRM and monitor open rates, click-through rates, etc.?	
Marketing automation	Can it automate workflows and automatically nurture leads through personalized email sequences?	
Built-in SEO tools	Does it help ensure your content is optimized to improve search engine visibility?specific permissions?	

	Ease of use	Is the CMS suitable for non-technical users (intuitive user interface, low-code tools)?
	Roles and permissions	Can you create and manage different user roles with specific permissions?
	Customer tracking	Does it bring insights into how users interact with your site (pages visited, time spent, actions taken)?
	Website analytics	Does it monitor page load times, bounce rates, and traffic sources?
	Multilingual support	Can you manage translations and content in multiple languages?
	Accessibility	Does it help you stay compliant with accessibility standards like WCAG?
	Privacy and data	How well does it keep you compliant with GDPR, PII, CCPA, etc.?
	Mobile responsiveness	Does the platform support responsive design and mobile-optimized content?
	Agentic AI Marketing	Does it include agentic AI that can take requests and generate structured outputs?

> ⓘ **Understand AI in your new DXP**
>
> Not all AI is works the same. Generative AI creates content, while agentic AI takes action on defined goals. Choosing a DXP with agentic AI (or both) allows you to automate tasks like content optimization and consistency checks, not just generate text.
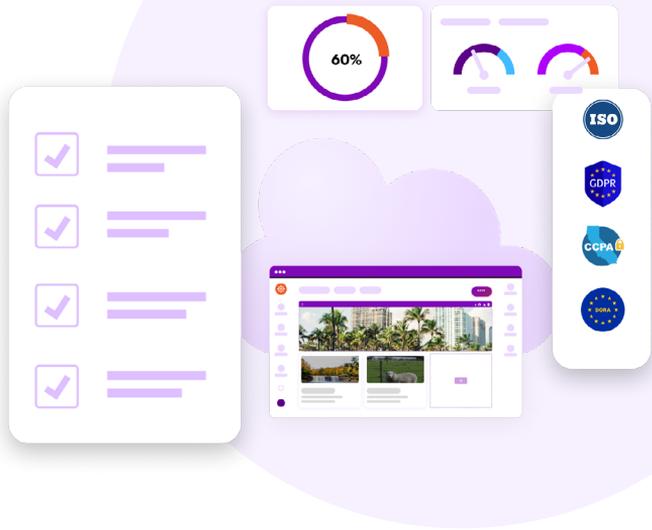
Technical Requirements.

Technical requirements encompass the underlying architecture, technologies, and specifications that power your digital experience platform. They ensure it operates efficiently, securely, and reliably within your tech stack.

By defining these requirements upfront, you lay the groundwork for a seamless transition to your new platform and set yourself up for long-term success. This checklist is best suited for review by technical teams, who know your existing IT environment inside and out.

Let's get into it.

	Scalability	Can the CMS scale with your business (growing features, users, functionality, traffic, content)?
	API and extensibility	Are there APIs for extending functionality? How well does the CMS integrate with your other tools (CRM, PIM, etc.)?
	Implementation	Does the vendor offer a choice of on-premises or SaaS implementation? What about single-tenant cloud deployment?
	Headless	Is the platform head-on, fully headless, or hybrid headless? Be careful you choose the right headless option for your needs.
	Customization	What are the options for customization? How easy is it to develop custom features?
	Security features	Are there security features with regular updates? Look for ISO 27001 and SOC 2 Type 2 certification.
	Performance	What's the platform's track record for uptime, reliability, and performance under high traffic conditions?
	Hosting requirements	Does the CMS/DXP have any hosting needs or specific server configurations or hosting environments?
	Migration	How simple will migration be? Does the vendor offer a migration toolkit from your current platform?

ⓘ **Understand AI in your new DXP**

Finally, here are some important considerations for choosing your next CMS that will contribute to its long-term success and value.
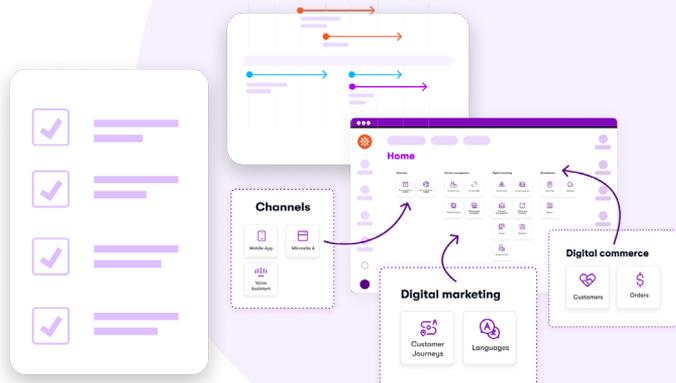
Other Considerations.

When selecting your next digital experience platform, it's crucial to consider some less obvious factors that significantly impact how effectively you can leverage the solution, how it enhances your digital maturity, and how well it meets your long-term needs.

This checklist is the most useful for marketing decision makers and those who set goals for your organization.

Let's explore.

Choosing the right vendor is almost as important as choosing the right CMS.

Vendor roadmap

Check the vendor's product vision aligns with where you want to go. What's their commitment to ongoing development and support?

Vendor reputation

Research the vendor's reputation, customer reviews, and support quality. Check G2's Grid® Reports for CMS and DXP for impartial user reviews.

Future-proofing

Ensure the platform extends via APIs so you can adjust your ecosystem with the tools you need as you and the market evolves.

Upgrades

Make sure the vendor releases regular updates that introduce fresh features and security enhancements without disruptions.

Training & documentation

Look for training programs, consultancy, onboarding resources and courses, well as extensive documentation.

Support

Ensure 24/7 support with an in-house team that has first-hand knowledge of the product.

Implementation partners

Digital agencies only select platforms that help them succeed. Look for a healthy list and choose the right partner for your project.
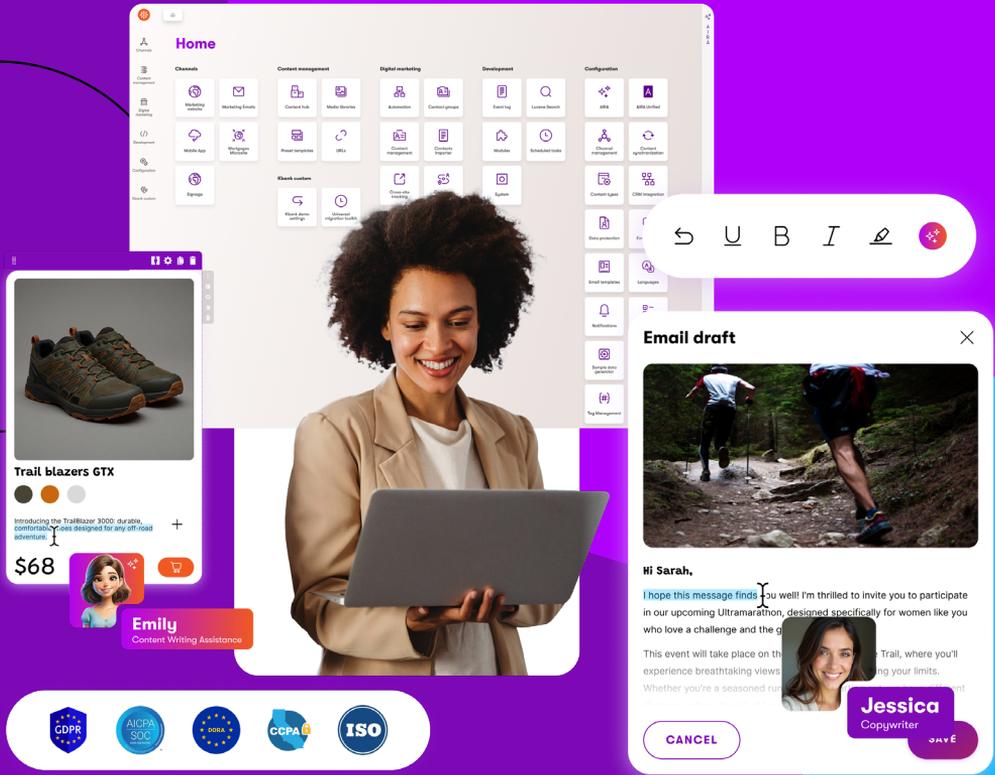
Looking for a CMS that checks every box?...

Explore a solution that that ticks all the boxes is just a pie in the sky, think again.

How to choose your next CMS.

Meet Xperience by Kentico.

Xperience by Kentico is a content management and commerce platform with built-in digital marketing that helps your organization deliver multichannel, multilingual digital experiences; all managed from one place. CMOs gain the visibility to drive growth, marketers get the tools to execute faster, and IT has a flexible foundation to support it all. The easy-to-use platform boosts efficiency with the Content Hub, marketing automation, AI-powered optimization and insights, the AIRA Agentic Marketing Suite, commerce capabilities, customer journey mapping, reusable content, and more.

Flexibility runs through the platform, from implementation and customization to scalability. Powered with features like the AIRA Agentic Marketing Suite, Xperience by Kentico is designed to make marketing easier for your team, helping you engage with your target audience and boost your results, now and into the future.

And speaking of the future, Xperience by Kentico's evergreen platform includes frequent refreshes that keep you up-to-date without waiting on time-consuming, costly, manual updates.

Features that check every box.

- ✅ Easy to use
- ✅ All content types
- ✅ Low-code page building
- ✅ Content hub
- ✅ Reusable content
- ✅ Multichannel
- ✅ Personalizatio
- ✅ Email marketing
- ✅ Marketing automation
- ✅ Built-in SEO tools
- ✅ AI email assist
- ✅ Roles and permissions

- ✅ Customer tracking
- ✅ Website analytics
- ✅ Multilingual support
- ✅ Accessibility
- ✅ Privacy and data
- ✅ Mobile responsive
- ✅ Scalability
- ✅ APIs and extensibility
- ✅ SaaS or on-premises
- ✅ Hybrid headless
- ✅ Customization
- ✅ Robust security

- ✅ High performance
- ✅ Migration toolkit
- ✅ Future-proof
- ✅ 24/7 in-house support
- ✅ In-depth documentation
- ✅ Large partner network
- ✅ Frequent updates
- ✅ Transparent roadmap
- ✅ Stellar reputation

- ✅ Agentic AI marketing
- ✅ AI content optimization
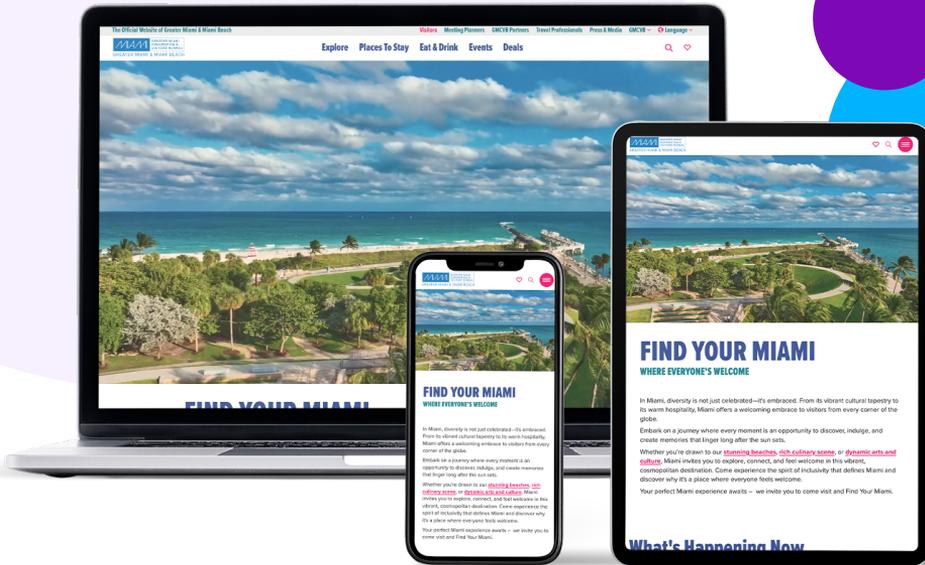
Greater Miami and Miami Beach modernized its 3,500-page website with Xperience by Kentico to be able to delight customers with personalization and marketing automation. The new website is super-fast, easy to maintain, and keeps pace as the organization's success grows. The marketing team can add new themes to the website without the help of developers and data import has increased by 300%.
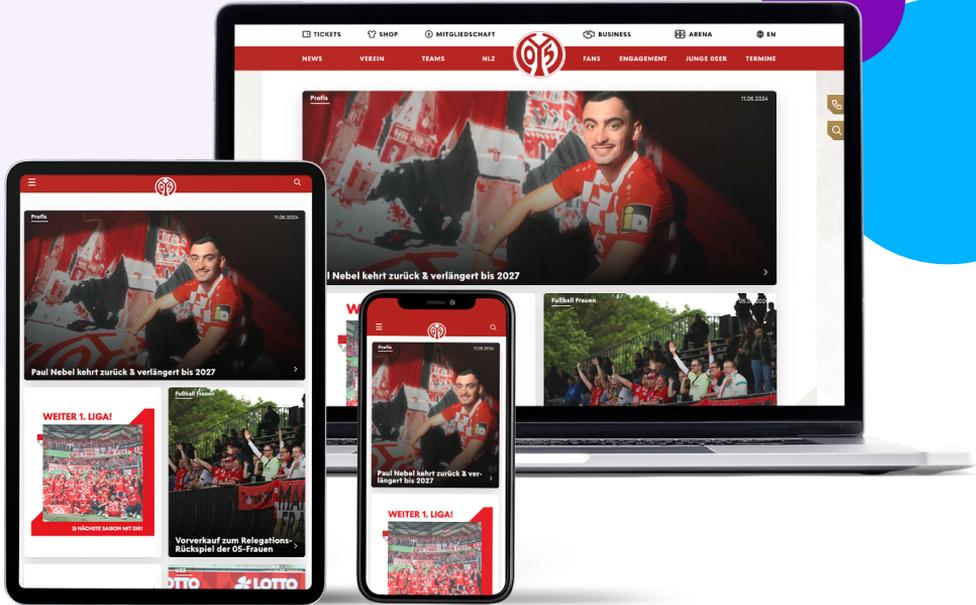
300%
increase in data import

READ THE FULL STORY

How to choose your next CMS.

> **"** We are so happy that our website miamiandbeaches. com is powered by Xperience by Kentico. The fast, intuitive user interface lets us manage our content with ease and connect with our community better.**"**

Josie Llado.

AVP, Digital Marketing at GMVCB

[Mainz 05](#), the esteemed German football club, launched its new website on Xperience by Kentico, taking a monumental step in streamlining its digital ecosystem, enhancing fan experiences, and optimizing internal processes. The new seamless website now sets the stage for future enhancements in digital marketing features and centralized channel management.

33,000

fans engaged

READ THE FULL STORY

How to choose your next CMS.

"

The decision to relaunch our website on Xperience by Kentico marks a milestone on our digital transformation journey. Xperience by Kentico will sustainably improve the digital fan journey and optimize our internal processes."

Tobias Sparwasser.

Director of Communications & Media at 1. FSV Mainz 05
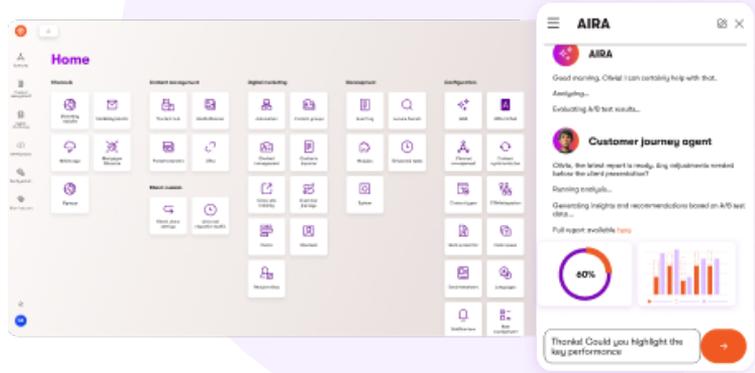
It's time to start exploring!

Now that you know exactly what to look for, you're ready to narrow down your options and start asking questions. Review your checklists, take a look at potential platform options, and get your questions ready about functional and technical requirements to dive deeper. Once you're ready to go, contact your favorite platform options to learn more.

Why not start with Xperience by Kentico?

Kentico is a content management system and commerce platform, with built-in digital marketing, native commerce and AI agentic capabilities that help deliver personalized customer experiences through websites, emails, and other digital channels. It consolidates marketing tools to improve efficiency, drive stronger customer engagement, and reach business goals faster.

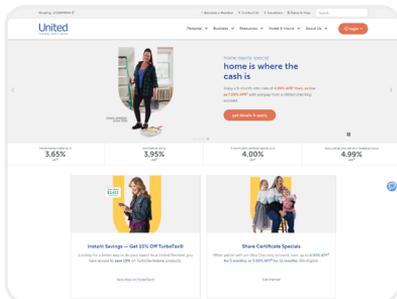**Ready to see what's possible? Contact us to schedule a demo and discuss your upgrade options.**

CONTACT US

Meet the Brands Thriving with Kentico.

United
FEDERAL CREDIT UNION

90%
faster workflows
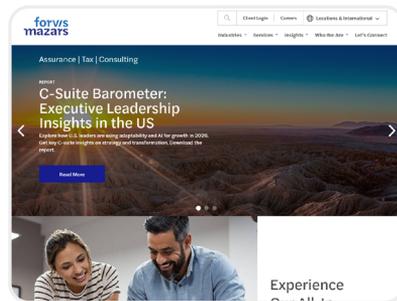
forvis mazars

61%
increase in users

UFCU partnered with SilverTech to migrate from Sitecore to Xperience by Kentico. This move addressed several pain points: slow page load times for content editors, a lack of reusable components, and limited flexibility within the CMS. By adopting Xperience by Kentico, UFCU gained new content management and digital marketing tools that helped acclerate workflows by 90%.

Forvis Mazars needed a future-ready website that reflects their leadership in the financial services industry. They partnered with SilverTech to migrate from Drupal to Xperience by Kentico to improve personalization and to simplify workflows; using their new platform's blend of out-of-the-box tools and extensibility to meet their technical and strategic goals; leading to a 61% increase in users.

GET THE STORY

GET THE STORY

kentico.com