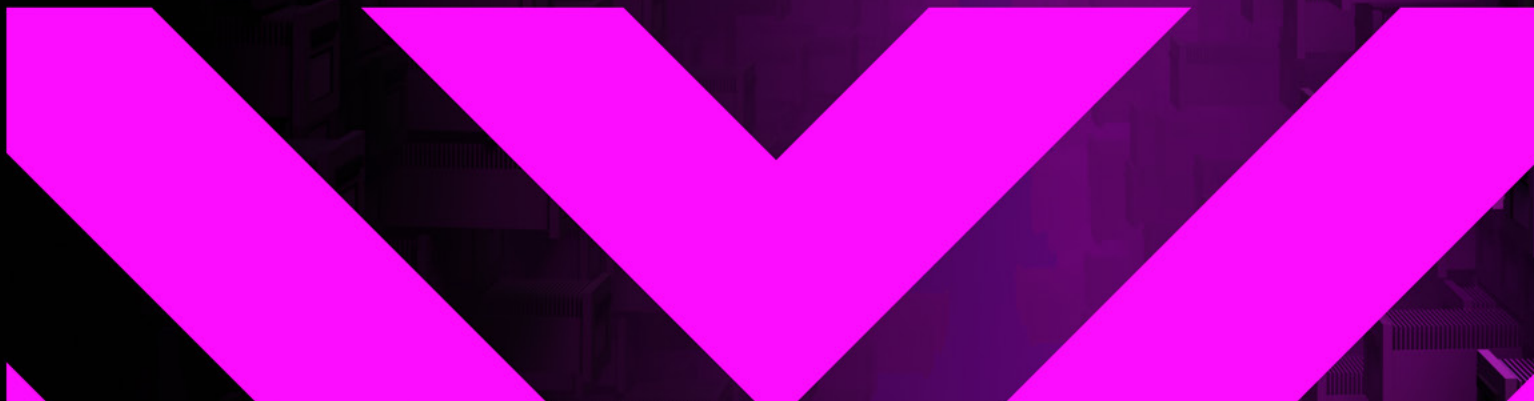




# CONTROLLING CONTENT CHAOS

A C-Suite guide to *enhancing customer value* through  
content effectiveness and management.



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# INTRODUCTION

It's hard to overstate the importance of content to modern digital brands. In a very real sense, when you exist in the digital ether, you live vicariously through the 'stuff' that populates your websites, your mobile apps, your social media pages, your marketplace listings. Content is your point of contact with the world on the other side of the screen. It's how you engage, influence, build relationships, establish a presence and an identity. It's how you sell. Content is your brand.

Yet, when you think of all the listings and posts, the page copy and blogs, the images and graphics, the videos and GIFs, all the dozens and dozens of forms that content can take, and then multiply it across all the places content can be online – it's immediately obvious that content production and management today is no simple task. And that's without even considering the growing expectation among consumers for personalized and contextualized experiences, and the pressure that creates to deliver almost endless variations in content at speed and scale.

In a world which demands that brands churn out more and more content just to maintain a placeholder in the digital multiverse, there's an undeniable sense of chaos in content management.

For this report, our starting point was to gauge how professionals involved in content production and management actually perceive it. We wanted to find out about the challenges they face with content management, their relationship with content solutions and technology, how they are using them and where they want to go looking forward. To that end, we carried out a survey of over 1,000 C-Suite executives in marketing and tech roles based in four countries – the UK, the U.S., Germany, and the Netherlands, and covering a range of industries, including CPG, FMCG, retail, automotive, fashion, luxury, health and pharma, technology, media and telecoms, and financial services.

In addition to sharing the findings of our survey, we have also drawn on the insights of our own content experts, both VML consultants and solution specialists from Contentful, the composable content management platform. In doing this, we are offering more than just a snapshot of content chaos – we're sharing practical, meaningful solutions from experienced professionals who live and breathe content.

As the vehicle for presenting your brand to the world and delivering winning customer experience, we firmly believe it is high time to reassess the value of content as a core business asset. From operational best practices to content strategy to the latest thinking about content tech, this paper outlines how to unlock that value.



**Mark Deal**

Technology Strategist  
VML



## METHODOLOGY

*The research was conducted by Censuswide with 1,008 respondents (CMOs/ CIOs/ CTOs and CDOs) across the UK, U.S., Germany, and the Netherlands between 10.05.24 to 17.05.24. Censuswide abide by and employ members of the Market Research Society which is based on the ESOMAR principles and are members of The British Polling Council.*

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

01

## Global Brand Consistency Requires Strategic Governance:

Maintaining a unified brand identity across diverse markets (a struggle for 81% of brands) requires a robust content governance strategy. Having this content governance strategy in place allows for controlled variation within defined guidelines, ensuring both global consistency and local relevance.

02

## Cohesive Content Supply Chains Drive Efficiency:

Fragmented content operations with siloed teams and processes hinder agility and impact. Designing a cohesive content supply chain that maps out workflows, ownership, and stages from planning to measurement, is crucial for streamlining content operations and maximizing efficiency.

03

## Elevate Content as a Strategic Business Asset:

Content should be treated as a valuable asset, intrinsically linked to business goals and customer experience. Aligning content strategy with these objectives ensures content contributes to measurable business outcomes and delivers impactful customer experiences.

04

## Collaboration is Key to Seamless Omnichannel Content:

Breaking down silos and fostering a culture of collaboration is essential for effective omnichannel content delivery. With 83% of leaders reporting communication breakdowns as a major obstacle, establishing clear roles, providing adequate training, and implementing effective communication channels are crucial.

05

## Data-Driven Personalization Demands Sophisticated Solutions:

While personalization is a powerful tool, many current CMS struggle to deliver truly tailored experiences, with 29% of leaders finding their systems limited. Integrating data platforms and analytics into the content ecosystem is essential for unlocking data-driven personalization at scale.

06

## Embrace MACH Architecture for Agile Content Delivery:

Legacy systems often lack the flexibility and scalability needed for modern content demands. Migrating to composable content stacks built on MACH principles (Microservices, API-first, Cloud-native, Headless) enables agility, seamless integration, and adaptability to emerging technologies.

07

## Demonstrating Content ROI Requires Robust Measurement:

Moving beyond vanity metrics and implementing robust content measurement frameworks is crucial for proving content's value. By tracking KPIs aligned with business objectives, brands can demonstrate ROI and secure buy-in, overcoming the challenges faced by 84% of leaders who struggle to quantify content's impact.

08

## Augment Human Ingenuity with Strategic AI Adoption:

While AI adoption is surging (88% currently utilize it), a strategic approach is crucial. Rather than relying solely on GenAI for speed, which can compromise quality, focus on leveraging AI to augment human capabilities in areas like governance, taxonomy, and workflow optimization.

09

## Centralized DAM Systems Optimize Asset Management:

Siloed digital asset management hinders efficiency and collaboration. Implementing a centralized DAM system with clear governance and metadata standards empowers teams to easily find, share, and reuse assets, maximizing their value and streamlining content operations.

10

## Integrate Design Systems for Brand Consistency & Efficiency:

Disconnected design systems create inconsistencies and slow down content production. Integrating them into the content workflow ensures brand consistency, streamlines production, and empowers content creators to work efficiently with pre-approved design elements.



# PART 1:



# THE CONTENT CONUNDRUM



# PART 1:

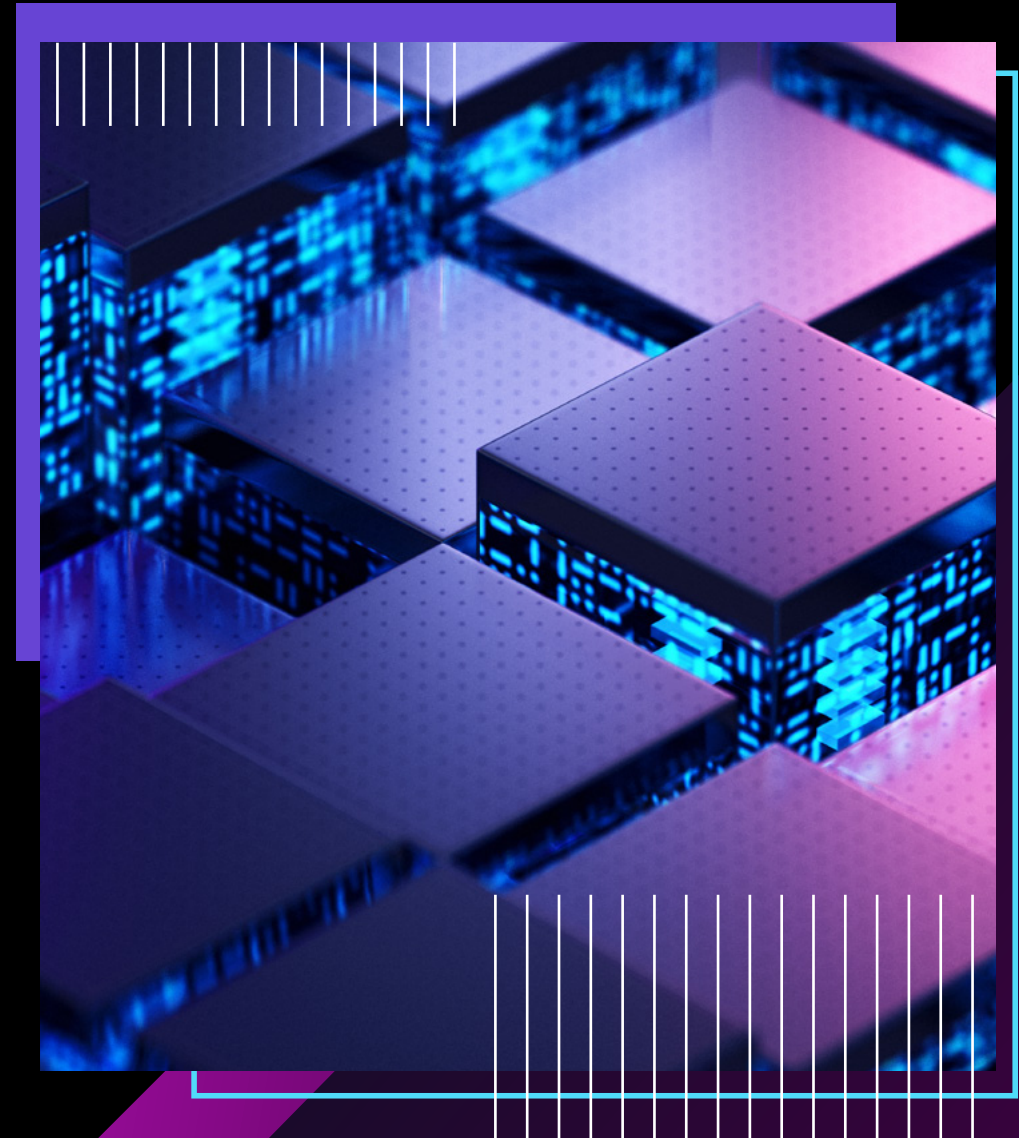
## 1: CONTENT CHALLENGES

Content management has grown in both importance and complexity in direct correlation to the expansion of digital channels and customer touchpoints.

We wanted to understand from leaders in marketing and tech how they see the challenges posed by this growing complexity. Specifically, we asked about the difficulties they faced when scaling content across markets and multiple channels.

Our results show that the challenges faced are wide-ranging and significant. Here are the top six answers we got when we asked about issues with managing content at scale:

Lack of centralized oversight and control leading to inconsistent branding in regions	81%
Scaling content strategies to accommodate varying market sizes and maturities	81%
Training and equipping teams to deliver consistent customer experiences	80%
Cultural differences impacting marketing effectiveness	80%
Collaboration between central and local marketing teams	80%
Managing the production and consistency of content across markets	80%

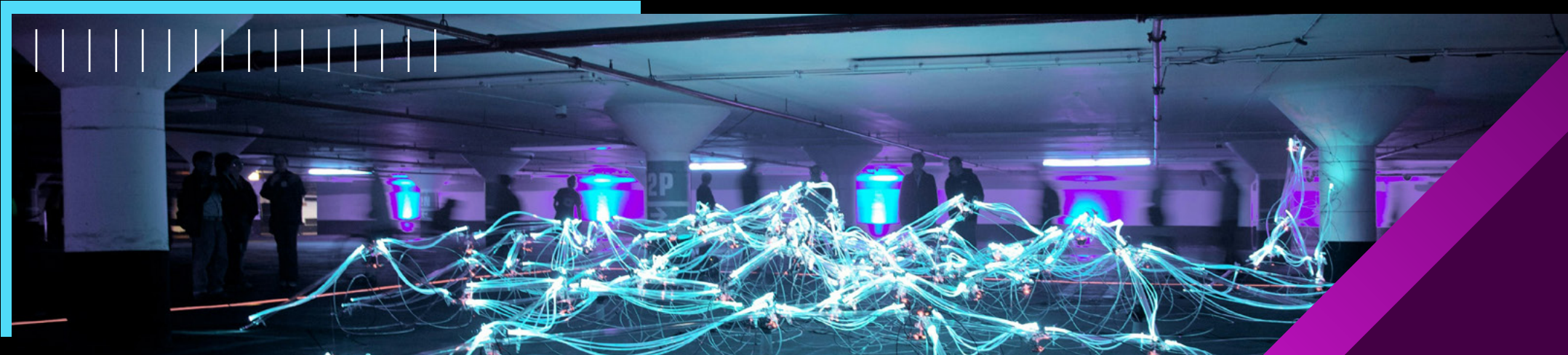


We got very similar numbers when we asked what the main challenges of content management in an omnichannel context are:



And there was more of the same when we asked what leaders saw as the top hindrances they face when it comes to omnichannel content management:

Inaccurate budgeting leading to cost escalation	84%
Resistance from senior management	83%
Slow decision-making	83%
Lack of alignment with customer requirements	83%
Inadequate employee training/education	83%
Insufficient internal communication/alignment	83%





Finding that so many leaders point to so many distinct challenges certainly paints a chaotic picture. But if we look closely at these different issues, five broader themes emerge:

1. Content leaders are struggling with how to achieve **consistency** across different markets and channels, including challenges posed by delivery and oversight, but also how to accommodate local differences in language, consumer habits, compliance, types of channels used, etc.
2. There are specific challenges around customer alignment, including **personalization**, with opinions split on how effective content management systems are at meeting brands' needs.
3. A significant chunk of the issues cited center around **organization** and **internal culture**, including issues with communication, collaboration, internal alignment and training, and skills.
4. Brands are not sure how to **measure** and **trace** the impact and effectiveness of content.
5. And they are also concerned about **speed of delivery** and **decision-making**.

Narrowing the list of challenges down to five 'themes' certainly seems more manageable and less chaotic than the long list of issues the raw survey data gave us. Now with a little order restored, what about solutions?

We turned to our content experts to shed some light on how they see the above issues playing out in their relationships with clients – and of course, offer some insights into how to overcome them.





## 2: CONTENT CONSISTENCY: IT'S A QUESTION OF BALANCE

81%

OF LEADERS SAY THEIR BIGGEST CHALLENGES IN CONTENT MANAGEMENT ARE INCONSISTENT BRANDING ACROSS REGIONS CAUSED BY A LACK OF CENTRALIZED OVERSIGHT AND CONTROL, AND HAVING TO SCALE CONTENT STRATEGIES TO SUIT DIFFERENT MARKETS.

The findings cited above reveal how international businesses struggle to balance global brand identity with local market nuances. There are several layers to this.

For example, as brands grow beyond a single country or regional market, they're confronted with having to deliver content not just in multiple languages and in compliance with multiple local rules and regulations, but also to fit the different customs, values, habits and cultural idiosyncrasies that shape consumer behavior.

And yet a mantra that we ourselves repeat over and over with clients is the importance of consistency in brand identity and content delivery. So, what gives?

Our content experts all talk about achieving an optimum 'push-pull balance' between the need for strategic consistency overall, but having the agility to differentiate to reflect local market conditions.

Part of the challenge for brands lies in letting go of the idea that content production is something fixed and linear. As we will explore, this has implications both for organization and for technology.

“““

### Expert opinion:

There's a continuum in content management between centralized control versus independent, market-specific production.

As you grow and your business becomes more complex, where you sit on this continuum becomes more of a pressing question. Do you go one way and delegate more flexibility and autonomy to those different teams and markets? Or the more complexity there is, do you try to exercise even more control centrally?

The former works well for those companies that have healthy process rules and governance in place to enable a degree of autonomy while maintaining an underlying level of consistency. Without that governance, you end up with inconsistencies in your branding, which our survey findings suggest is a common issue. On the other hand, content systems that are too rigid and overly centralized slow everything down, people can't do their jobs, and the company struggles to get the content they want out when they want it.

So, it's about finding a sweet spot between freedom and oversight. That's challenging, and you have to then look at the organization of your content teams and workflows, and also the technology you are using, and whether it will allow the agility you are looking for but still with powerful governance capabilities built into it.



**Allan White**  
Senior Enterprise Solutions Engineer

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### 3: PERSONALIZATION IS HIGHLY SOUGHT AFTER, BUT OPINIONS ON CAPABILITIES TO DELIVER IT ARE MIXED

Personalization poses another challenge to the edifice of brand consistency. In this day and age, consumers refuse to be treated as a generic herd. They look for brand experiences that speak directly to them or are specifically tailored to their own interests, preferences, and needs.

This has a huge impact on content management. Brands find themselves under enormous pressure to deliver the right content at the right time to the right person. It makes dynamic variation in content delivery, with all the operational complexity that entails, a key objective.

So how do businesses view their current ability to meet the demands of personalization?

When we asked how respondents saw the role of their current CMS in creating personalized customer experiences, there were certainly positives. 31% said it had a positive impact on facilitating multichannel content personalization, the joint top answer along with delivering API flexibility and AI-powered customization. 30% described their CMS as integral in deploying personalized marketing campaigns.

29%

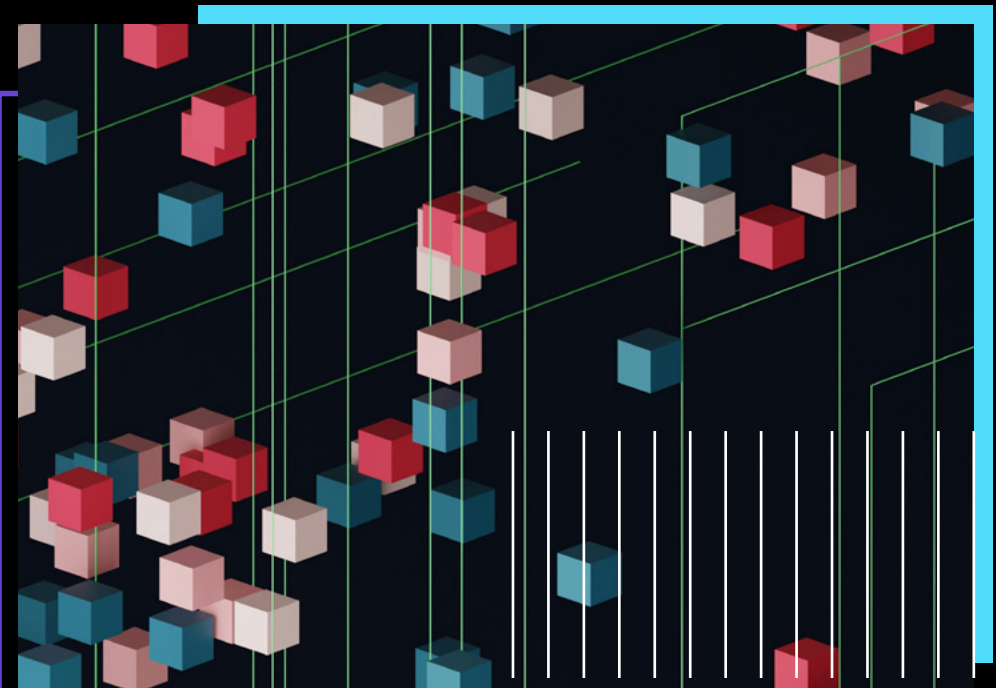
OF LEADERS FEEL THEIR CMS IS LIMITED IN ITS ABILITY TO HELP THEM PERSONALIZE CONTENT.

But on the flipside of that, 29% also said their CMS was limited in its personalization capabilities, and 26% said it was not significant for personalization strategies. These figures were noticeably higher for smaller companies (under 1000 employees), with 39% saying CMS was NOT significant for personalization, and only 19% saying it effectively helped facilitate personalization across multiple channels.

The larger number of smaller businesses trusting CMS when it comes to personalization may be a reflection of the different platforms that different-sized businesses tend to use for reasons of cost and scale. But it's a missed opportunity, as there are plenty of highly agile, scalable solutions on the market that can be effective personalization tools for businesses of all sizes.

It's also perhaps a sign of the tendency for businesses to reach for tech first, prioritizing factors like cost, rather than digging down into what they need as a business first and then looking at what solutions are available in a strategic way.

Certainly, when it comes to personalization, this is a missed opportunity. Personalization is one of the key ways businesses can improve alignment between product offerings and what the customer is looking for, by delivering the right messages in the right way.



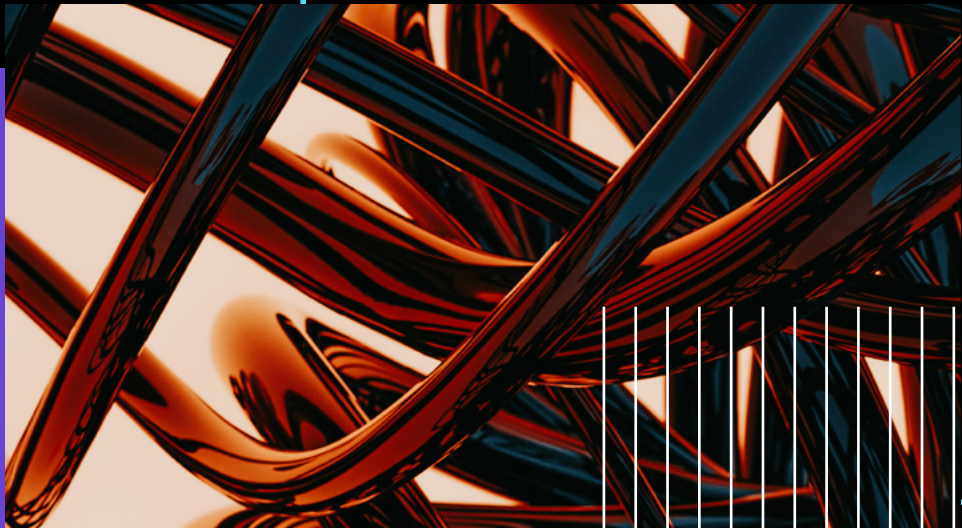
## 4: HOW YOU ORGANIZE INTERNALLY IS CRITICAL

The challenges businesses face in finding that ‘sweet spot’ between controlled brand consistency and dynamic, responsive variation across channels come across as more cultural and organizational than technical and operational. As we’ll explore more in Part 3 of this paper, content management technology has already evolved to prioritize flexibility and dynamic integration of workflows. It’s the way people and teams are organized that needs to catch up.

80%

OF BRAND LEADERS CITE COLLABORATION AND THE WAY INTERNAL TEAMS ARE TRAINED AND EQUIPPED AS KEY ISSUES IN DELIVERING CONTENT STRATEGIES AT SCALE.

From what we see day in, day out working with clients, there is all too often a disconnect between the planning of content workflows, and the systems and the consideration of the people who have to use them. A lack of adequate training for content teams is another sign that they are being under-resourced and stretched too thin.



### Expert opinion:

We’re used to talking about the importance of end users and audiences when it comes to content. And rightly so. But when it comes to producing and managing content and getting it out to our audiences in the right way, at the right time so it can drive the positive experiences brands are looking for, we have to consider the ‘internal customer’ too – the people and teams who deliver the content strategy.

I’ve seen so many times examples where businesses have content strategies that clearly define the customer journey and pack in content features along the way – but nothing to account for how content needs to be structured and labeled to allow teams to deliver. If you want content to be effective, efficient, scalable, consistent, and all the rest, you should design content management workflows and models that help teams work smarter, not harder. And to do that, you need the input of the people who exist within, own, and understand those workflows.



**Elena Sarmiento**  
Senior Content Strategy Consultant





83%

SAY THEY HAVE INSUFFICIENT INTERNAL COMMUNICATION AND ALIGNMENT BETWEEN TEAMS TO DELIVER OMNICHANNEL CONTENT STRATEGIES EFFECTIVELY.

We dug a little deeper into why internal alignment and communication seem to be problematic. We asked respondents about some of the biggest barriers they faced to achieving cross-business alignment.

Again, we got a spread of answers. The most frequently cited challenges included “balancing conflicting priorities and goals,” “ensuring clarity of roles and responsibilities,” “limited communications channels,” “resource constraints,” and “lack of leadership support.”

It’s interesting to see clarity of roles and responsibilities here. It makes sense that alignment is much more likely when everyone is clear about what they are trying to achieve, what their role is, and what the end goal is.

As well as communication, lack of clarity and alignment also hints at problems with organizational design. We’ve already seen that an overly centralized approach to brand consistency can stifle speed and efficiency in content delivery. And guess what? By far the most common organizational structure for digital marketing and content management amongst our survey respondents is centralized (50%), followed by hybrid models that incorporate some local flexibility (28%).

50%

OF ORGANIZATIONS HAVE A CENTRALIZED STRUCTURE FOR CONTENT MANAGEMENT.

Organizational approaches to content management haven’t caught up with the realities of how content works in modern enterprises and markets. As we said at the outset of this report, the days of having to worry about a single website or tight knit group of digital assets are over.

But not only have channels and markets fragmented and diversified, so has content itself. It no longer exists in one neatly ring-fenced repository at the center of the business. Content exists across every channel, every function, every touchpoint in the customer journey, every application plugged into the martech stack. Content delivery no longer fits the linear, A-to-B models of times past. Value and efficiency come from how you join up all the points, not forcing processes through a prefixed structure.

44

#### Expert opinion:

Perhaps the most overlooked reality of effective content capabilities is that there is no single right answer for what they should look like. Tech stacks and organizational structures alike are most effective when they are defined by the unique requirements and priorities of a given business or organization. And in all cases, effective internal communication and content operations play an instrumental role.



**Nicole France**  
Chief Evangelist

44



## 5: CONTENT REQUIRES NEW APPROACHES TO MEASUREMENT

Two of the top five barriers to effective omnichannel content delivery that leaders highlighted in our survey – inaccurate budgeting and lack of buy-in from senior management – are classic problems with measurability. Both stem from not having a firm grasp of ROI, so upfront costs don't align with expected returns, and it therefore becomes difficult to make a strong business case for further investment.

There's no ducking the issue – measuring the impact of content is tricky. The leaders we surveyed are well aware of this, as revealed in the top challenges they reported in measuring content effectiveness:

### THE TOP CHALLENGES WITH MEASURING CONTENT EFFECTIVENESS:

	ALL
The ability to distinguish between impact and performance of a campaign vs. the impact and performance of the content	84%
Ability to attribute performance and ROI to creative and content production costs	83%
The ability to monitor, analyze, and enhance live content to boost audience engagement and effectiveness	83%
Traceability of what content has been published where	83%

Businesses tend to build/acquire content systems first, and then think about measurability later. If you want to measure effectively, what you measure and how you measure it should be baked into your content strategy from the start.

Granted, the what and how of measuring content are not straightforward. And this potentially explains why businesses struggle to distinguish between campaign and content performance. Campaign performance is familiar and easily measured. It's ultimately all about how many conversions you get, a simple exercise in arithmetic.

84%

OF LEADERS STRUGGLE TO DISTINGUISH BETWEEN MEASURING THE IMPACT OF A CAMPAIGN VERSUS MEASURING THE IMPACT OF THE CONTENT.



Campaigns use content to achieve their goals. However, that doesn't mean campaign metrics capture the full value of content. You can measure how many likes and click-throughs a certain social media post generates, for example, and calculate the ratio of engagement to conversion. But how do you measure the more indirect, less action-based potential impacts that same piece of content could have? For example, how does it contribute to more nebulous concepts like brand reputation and visibility over time?

The truth is that there is no easy route to calculating content ROI. Metrics have to be built out of other metrics, with often complex models to explain and justify how they quantify impact. There are movements in the right direction, not just in the mechanics of how to measure content, but in understanding the value of content in the first place. For example, techniques like social listening and sentiment analysis can put numbers on the impact of content in terms of shaping attitudes and opinions. And even more importantly, they reveal a deeper value to content beyond direct reactions – it shapes what people think and feel.

It is important to be able to make the case that content has measurable and demonstrable intrinsic value. This again speaks to the challenge of getting buy-in from senior leaders to invest in content. A disconnect between content teams and leadership means a disconnect between operations and strategic decision-making, which makes resolving challenges even more difficult. Content teams need a vocabulary that is both content specific and speaks to the heart of strategic business thinking, so that they can define the challenges they face clearly and set out evidence-based solutions.



#### Expert opinion:

In general, we still tend to think too myopically of content in terms of specific assets or even the channels and activities they support. Tracking and measuring the reusability of content, use over time, and the power of content collections across channels and lifecycles introduces a whole new set of metrics that define content performance as distinct from campaign or promotion performance.



**Nicole France**  
Chief Evangelist





## 6: SPEED IS A KEY CONTENT DIFFERENTIATOR

83%

OF LEADERS SEE SLOW DECISION-MAKING AS A BARRIER TO EFFECTIVE CONTENT MANAGEMENT, WHILE 82% SAY THEY STRUGGLE WITH MANAGING REAL-TIME UPDATES ACROSS PLATFORMS.

Finally, speed cropped up twice in our survey's top challenges lists, as per the findings cited above.

Speed is non-negotiable in modern digital environments. Consumers won't hang around for web pages to load no matter how keen they are to see your content. With so much choice available, they don't have to. The intense level of competition in digital markets also puts brands under enormous pressure to be as agile as possible, to publish nearly continuously, and to be able to pivot to new trends and opportunities at a moment's notice.

Yet, quite simply, most organizations weren't designed to work at the speed and scale that today's diverse digital channels require. In many cases, businesses find themselves in the position of trying to extend outmoded tools and workflows beyond their practical limits just to keep up.

The need for speed is a critical driver of change in content approaches, pushing organizations to think beyond those centralized structures and linear patterns to embrace a more agile, dynamic approach. But we also see delays in the decisions to implement change in content strategy, with brands treating it as a technology decision and holding on until they see value in upgrading their platform, rather than as an issue that requires a fundamental rethink and an iterative program of change on its own terms.

“““

### Expert opinion:

There are 3 Vs in content – volume, value, and velocity. The biggest problem most businesses face is velocity. They cannot get stuff out in front of people quick enough. And that's not just about putting content into a system and pressing publish. It's about the whole creation process, the approval process, all the multiple steps content has to go through from ideation through to delivery. Even when businesses have the ability to create high value content at high volumes, speed is often the main limiting factor they face.

The answer lies in finding where the bottlenecks are in your processes. But they're not always obvious. You have start by understanding where content sits in your organization, and then look at all the processes that link it all together, how content flows through your organization. When you map that out, you start to see where the hold-ups come – the duplication, the unnecessary repetition. And you can design workflows and build tech stacks that let content flow more efficiently and at greater speed.



**Charlie Bell**  
Senior Director of Solution Engineering EMEA

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## Part 1: Key Takeaways

### → Global Brand Consistency Requires Strategic Governance:

Maintaining a unified brand identity across diverse markets requires a robust content governance strategy with clear guidelines and approval processes. This allows for local adaptation while ensuring brand consistency across all channels.

### → Break Down Silos to Unleash Content Efficiency:

Collaboration and internal alignment are crucial for effective content operations. Foster open communication, establish clear roles and responsibilities, and provide adequate training to empower teams and eliminate bottlenecks caused by siloed workflows.

### → Unlock the Power of Personalization with Agile Technology:

Delivering tailored content experiences requires agile, scalable solutions that integrate customer data and enable dynamic personalization. Evaluate your current technology and explore options that empower you to meet evolving customer expectations.

### → Measure Content ROI to Prove its Value and Drive Improvement:

Develop a robust content measurement framework that goes beyond vanity metrics and tracks KPIs directly aligned with your business objectives. This allows you to demonstrate content's impact, secure buy-in for future investments, and make data-driven decisions for continuous improvement.

### → Embrace Agility and Speed to Thrive in the Digital Age:

In today's fast-paced digital landscape, speed and agility are non-negotiable. Embrace agile methodologies, streamline workflows, and explore technology solutions that enable faster content creation, approval, and delivery across all channels to keep pace with customer expectations and market demands.

# PART 2:



# CONTENT STRATEGY – THE SECRET SAUCE FOR SUCCESS



# PART 2:

## 1: CONTENT AS A VALUABLE BUSINESS ASSET

Speed, organization, collaboration, measurement, how you allow for tailored variations within the parameters of a well-defined and consistent brand experience – it's no wonder that content presents a conundrum to a lot of enterprises. But is there a single thread that connects these challenges, a dropped stitch somewhere deep in the fabric of content management approaches which, if unpicked and fixed, can help it all knit together that much more easily?

The simple answer is, yes. What all of the challenges outlined in Part 1 speak of is a deficit of strategic thinking when it comes to content.

Across our dealings with major multinational brands, we see the same patterns in approaches to content repeated over and over. Content is not always treated as a valuable business asset, and there is often a lack of alignment with business objectives in how content is managed and organized. There is often little or no clearly defined leadership and ownership of content strategy. There is often misunderstanding about what content strategy is, what it looks like, and why it matters.

In no shortage of cases, brands treat investing in technology as their content strategy. It's part of a wider mindset that's been programmed into all of us that tech equals solution. But dropping new pieces of tech straight into the middle of problems rarely solves them. A CMS isn't a content strategy – it's a tool for delivering the plans you've devised.

So, what does effective content strategy look like in practice? In this section, we explore four key ingredients – **alignment with business objectives, operational design, governance, and content categorization.**



### Expert opinion:

As businesses, no matter what our industry, we all face the challenge of retooling our organizations to operate quickly and seamlessly in rapidly changing digital environments. This means adopting new technology tools and architectures that are designed for the job. But equally, it requires us to adjust our management philosophies, organizational structures, and skills to enable our teams to work effectively and in coordination, but with a high degree of independence and autonomy. We need ways of operating that reinforce our collective goals and shared objectives, allow us to act quickly on good ideas, and facilitate experimentation. Our tools and systems should make it easy for everyone to do the right (and valuable!) things... and difficult to mess anything up or get in each other's way.

This may sound like a dream world, but for the most forward-thinking brands, it's an increasingly common reality. It starts with a clear vision that then needs the commitment to follow the vision through with the aid of technology.



**Nicole France**  
Chief Evangelist



## 2: ALIGN YOUR APPROACH TO CONTENT WITH BUSINESS GOALS

All good strategy starts with getting back to basics. What is it you want to achieve, what are the resources you have available, and what do you need to do to reach your goals?

With content strategy, this 'back-to-basics' mindset is even more important because content has traditionally not been included in core business strategy. Content has long been viewed as a means to bigger ends, a vehicle for marketing campaigns, for example. As we've mentioned, this has shaped the way its value has been measured and understood, largely in instrumental and operational terms. That in turn leads to looking for purely operational solutions when faced with content challenges.

VML's approach to content asks clients to take a step back and consider content through the lens of experiences. Every business understands the value of customer experience these days. When you consider how integral content is to the creation, curation, and delivery of brand experiences, your whole way of thinking about content changes.

From here, you can start to apply that basic strategic model to your whole content approach:

- What are the experiences you want to create that will drive value for your customers, and therefore your business?
- What content resources do you have, and where does it all sit in the business?
- What are you doing to utilize those resources to create the right experiences?



### Expert opinion:

Often the first thing we have to do with new clients is take them through a process of change – a change in culture and thinking about content, and a change to thinking more strategically about how they create, use, and measure content.

Content is not a touchpoint within a design workflow, and it doesn't work on its own. Content is part of the process of creating and bringing experiences to life. That process is a combination of tech, operations, and strategy – a magic trio. But they have to be set up to fit together, and none of them can do the job alone.

The starting point should always be asking both users and teams, what do you need? And then building systems with a goal in mind. But a lot of the time, it's done the other way round, and teams are handed a system, and they are expected to make it work.



**Elena Sarmiento**  
Senior Content Strategy Consultant



### 3: OPERATIONAL DESIGN: TAKE CONTROL OF YOUR CONTENT SUPPLY CHAIN

Of the three basic strategic questions we can ask about content outlined above, it's the third that poses the biggest challenges. How you harness and deliver available content to create the experiences you want starts by considering the operational mechanics. You're going to be much more successful in getting from content resources to desired experiences if you are working to a roadmap.

At VML, the roadmap we use is the content supply chain. In one sense, every business already has a content supply chain. It simply means the end-to-end processes enterprises have in place to plan, create, manage, deploy, and measure content.

However, with the proliferation of channels, devices, content formats, and use cases, not to mention the demands of market adaptation and personalization, those processes are put under increasing pressure. Without tight strategic controls in place, it's easy for everything to fragment into isolated silos that obstruct collaboration, impede speed and efficiency, and ultimately undermine investment in quality.

Taking control of how your content supply chain works in a planned, strategic way answers most of the challenges raised by decision-makers in our survey. It lays the groundwork for controlling variability within a consistent brand framework, achieving efficient production at speed and scale, ensuring effective collaboration across teams, and measuring impact in a way that takes full account of where and how content is used.

Shaping an effective content supply chain is also about building processes for your content. A lot of the time, content management processes and systems are built with only the end goal in mind, the point of publication or how content gets from A to B. The content itself – the material going through the pipes – gets overlooked. But content comes in all different types, sizes, shapes, and structures. Taking that into account as you plan the workflows in your supply chain helps ensure you choose the right solutions to optimize performance.



#### Expert opinion:

At VML, we have a tried and tested, well-understood leading practice content supply chain process that we follow when we work with clients. It helps us understand your content supply chain in the context of the wider business objectives, and gives us insights into the structure and organization of processes, so we can then prioritize and introduce changes with those business objectives in mind.

When we go into an organization, we want to understand where they are currently with content, how they manage it, how they're distributing it, what sort of systems are in place, and how teams are structured to support it. We want to know the regions we're dealing with and the stakeholders working with content within the business.

Then, diving into the workflows themselves, it's about looking at things like how content is commissioned, how it is produced, how it is stored and structured, staged and activated, and then tracked, measured, and optimized throughout. We also look at governance throughout the entire process.

Everything is broken down into stages, and across all the types of content and channels. There are a lot of variables, and that's why it's so important to set out everything clearly. We want to understand what your business objectives are, see what your current capabilities are, compare that to what you want to achieve and to where you are now, and then create a roadmap for closing the gap in a structured, strategic way.



**David Dekker**  
Technology Strategy Director





## 4: LET GOVERNANCE BE THE GUARDIAN OF YOUR BRAND

Content supply chains offer a valuable paradigm for imposing order and control on content chaos. But as we've emphasized already, there's no single answer for what one should look like, or how it should work. How content works is completely unique to each organization, and its content management structures should reflect that. Moreover, while you are looking for consistency and control on the one hand, you can't push too hard against the complexity and dynamism of content on the other. That's just in the nature of how content works in modern enterprises.

This comes back to the first conundrum raised by decision-makers in our survey, the issue of balancing brand consistency with the variability demanded by different markets, channels, and individuals. So, how do you square this circle at a strategic level?

The answer is governance.

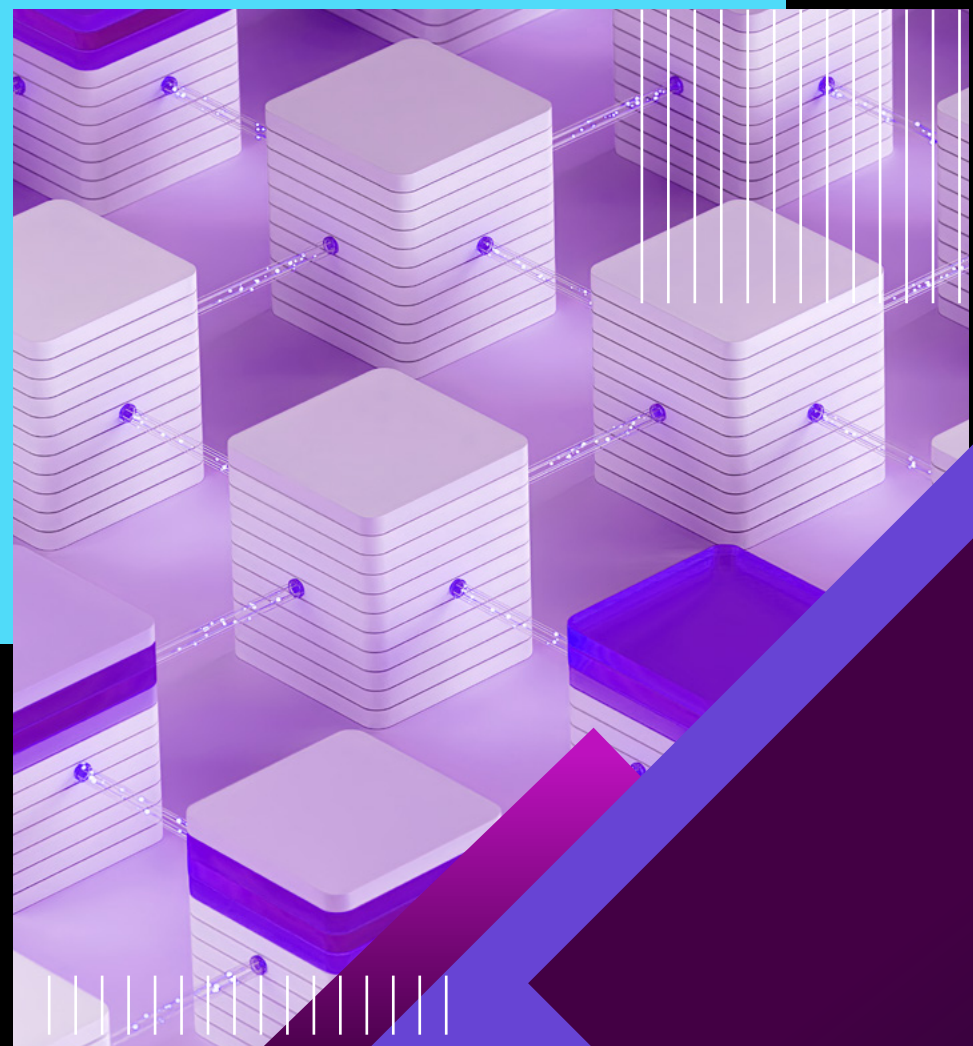
Rigid command structures stifle creativity and lead to bottlenecks that hamper your ability to deliver content effectively at scale across channels and markets. At the same time, completely devolving responsibility to local teams or to creators specializing in one type of content or another will only lead to more chaos and the erosion of your brand. Governance is the middle path.

When content supply chains stretch across multiple teams, domains, markets and, as is increasingly the case, third-party external partners, effective governance is critical. It allows for necessary devolving of responsibilities within the parameters of defined rules.

It also allows for content variation at scale without losing sight of the need for brand consistency. Or, just as importantly, compliance. One of the big challenges of working across multiple markets is the fact that local rules and regulations make variations in content absolutely necessary. And you cannot afford to slip up. These variations can be technically complicated, too. It's a major pain point for food and drink brands, for example, in how they advertise and list nutritional credentials across different markets.

Having good governance procedures in place is about building relevant content rules into the operational structures of the supply chain. It's about communicating them effectively, so all stakeholders are aware of the rules and are empowered to use them. And it's about being meticulous in your monitoring, so digressions are spotted early to avoid repetition and wasted efforts.

It's a big task, but one that technology can certainly help with (once you have your strategy clear), as we will explore further when we look at the role of Artificial Intelligence.



## 5: CONTENT CATEGORIZATION: GET CONTENT TEAMS SPEAKING THE SAME LANGUAGE

Technology can certainly help with implementing robust, yet agile, governance in content management. But you can also flip that around – good governance is also necessary to allow tech to do its job with content.

Across complex content supply chains that deliver content in omnichannel, multi-market environments, there might be dozens of individual tech platforms and applications involved. It's not just solutions on the production and delivery side, the CMS, the DAM, the PIM, etc. (and as we shall discuss later, the way these can be broken out into many different individual tools in composable architectures). It's also all the different web platforms and mobile apps and devices you are delivering into.

Machines and software don't 'read' content the way people do. Whether it's text, imagery, video, or audio, computers need help identifying what the content is, what's it's about, where it should go, what needs to be done with it, etc. The way they get this help is through metadata.

Metadata is the descriptive classification and categorization of data. In content management, it plays an essential role in making human-focused content intelligible to computer programs, by describing it in terms computers can understand – neat, structured taxonomies of information.

Every content management environment requires metadata to be added to content so that it can be shared, stored, found, reused, and repurposed effectively. Without metadata, absolute chaos would reign. But it's also vitally important that metadata is used consistently right across an organization. Something as simple as images being tagged with dates in different formats opens the door to confusion and errors. Someone running a search for images by date using one date format would not see half the images available.

This is where governance comes in. To work efficiently and effectively at reducing rather than adding to the chaos, metadata must follow clear, consistently applied rules, formats, and structures. Deciding what those rules are needs to be set out from the beginning as part of your content strategy.



### Expert opinion:

For me, technical governance is all predicated on metadata for the content itself. Categorization, taxonomy, it's all about making sure there's some kind of order and structure to the metadata. Think of it as having a metadata dictionary so people aren't just making up tags on the spot, they are working within agreed and shared confines.

Getting this right at a strategic level brings all sorts of benefits. From a customer experience perspective, there are a lot of businesses that suffer from having sub-optimal search on their websites. Good taxonomies and structures behind the metadata make all the difference in how accurate and relevant the results of search queries are.

Similarly, for your own marketing people working in a DAM, the ability to find content assets with the right characteristics quickly and efficiently is a huge factor in streamlining work processes. And, as well as helping people understand how to find assets, you can also layer in performance data, so content is categorized by efficacy as well as type and topic. You can build taxonomies that help content teams select assets based on how successful they have been, how often they've been deployed, how often they've been clicked on, and what their conversion rates are – all kinds of information that help pick out the best possible content in every situation at speed and at scale.



**Adam Wolf**  
Chief Technology Officer, North America





## Part 2:

# Key Takeaways

### → Recognize Content as a Strategic Asset:

Shift away from viewing content as merely operational. Instead, consider it a vital asset for shaping customer experiences and driving business goals. This mindset shift is the foundation for a successful content strategy.

### → Align Content with Business Objectives:

Don't just create content for content's sake. Define clear business objectives and align your content strategy accordingly. Ask yourself: What experiences do you want to create for your audience, and how will those experiences contribute to your overall goals?

### → Design a Cohesive Content Supply Chain:

Take control of your content operations by mapping out a clear and structured content supply chain. This roadmap should encompass all stages, from planning and creation to management, deployment, and measurement, ensuring a streamlined and efficient process.

### → Establish Strong Content Governance:

Balance brand consistency with the need for flexibility and local relevance. Implement clear content governance guidelines and processes that empower teams to adapt content while maintaining brand integrity across markets and channels.

### → Speak a Common Language Through Content Categorization:

Ensure consistent and effective content organization by establishing clear metadata standards and taxonomies. This shared language will streamline content discovery, improve searchability, and maximize the value of your content assets.



# PART 3:



# HARNESSING TECHNOLOGY TO DELIVER YOUR CONTENT STRATEGY

# PART 3:

## 1: THE ROLE OF TECHNOLOGY

As we spelled out in the previous section, technology is no substitute for sound content strategy. Technology isn't a panacea; you don't magic away challenges with a simple upgrade. Our message is clear – strategy first, then choose and deploy tech in the service of clear, robust planning.

That said, there's no doubt that modern content management at enterprise scale simply couldn't happen without technology. With asset volumes reaching into the millions and production cycles measured in days if not hours, you would have to employ an army of workers to keep on top of the demands manually.

Technology is critical for delivering efficiency, speed, consistency, oversight, and more in content management. So, we wanted to understand from enterprise content leaders where they are with content technology and gather the views of our specialists.

## 2: CONTENT MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS (CMS)

As far as technology for content management goes, CMS is the default everyone knows about and uses. It has been around for a long time, it's familiar and well-trusted – to the point where that can cause issues. We've talked about brands falling into the trap of thinking they've got content sewn up simply because they have a CMS in place, and the extent to which thinking around content processes and possibilities is often shaped and limited by legacy CMS systems.

Nonetheless, when we asked our survey respondents what CMS meant to their organization, we expected to get a clear vision about what the most important elements of a CMS solution were. What we got was slightly different. As you can see from the table below, a high percentage of the C-Suite identified almost every factor as being important!

HOW WELL DO THE FOLLOWING FACTORS DESCRIBE WHAT A CONTENT MANAGEMENT SYSTEM MEANS TO YOUR ORGANIZATION?

		DESCRIBES IT WELL
1	A tool for managing and sharing content for internal purposes	88%
2	A tool to enable content workflow and approval process	87%
3	A tool for collaborating with in-house teams	87%
4	Creation and publication of content for websites only	87%
5	A tool for collaborating with external agencies	86%
6	Creation and publication of content for websites as well as other channels such as email, social media, etc.	85%
7	A single source of content	85%
8	A tool for orchestrating omnichannel marketing strategies	85%
9	Brand and regulatory governance	84%

These findings certainly suggest leaders expect a great deal from their CMS solutions.

Another interpretation is that it reflects how the role of content management is evolving and expanding. We've talked about the need for enterprises to shift thinking about the role of content and reframe its value in terms of delivering experiences. Treating content as an increasingly important business asset that sits at the heart of business and marketing strategy places new demands on content management systems.

We can see recognition of some of these emerging demands in the high numbers of leaders who are looking for CMS to provide a single source of truth, enable creation and publication of content across channels, and orchestrate omnichannel marketing strategies, all at the same time.

So how well do leaders feel CMS platforms meet all these expectations? When we asked what their CMS does well, the responses we got reveal a high level of trust and satisfaction in CMS performance across a wide range of areas:



## HOW WELL DOES YOUR CMS PLATFORM SUPPORT YOU IN THE FOLLOWING AREAS?

	AGREE
Supports my business needs in terms of content customization and adaptation across different markets	80%
My CMS inspires creativity and automates repetitive tasks through AI	80%
Gathers and utilizes local market analytics to inform content strategy	80%
Gives me speed and agility in content updates and publication across regions	79%
Integrates with local digital platforms and third-party services	78%
Supports omnichannel publishing from a single interface	78%
Manages multiple language versions and translations efficiently	78%
My CMS helps to streamline content development through AI	78%

However, we should add a note of caution about these results.

There's a lot about publishing and production, not so much about workflow and collaboration. And that suggests leaders are still stuck in the 'old school' way of thinking about CMS as a production tool, rather than as vehicle within the broader tech ecosystem for unlocking content's value across an organization via agile, scalable, and efficient integration.



### 3: THE ROLE OF MACH

If ideas and expectations around CMS are changing and expanding, it's important to ask, how is the technology that underpins content management platforms evolving to keep pace?

We've talked about the need to identify the problem and goal in formulating a content strategy first, then create a solution accordingly. But if legacy CMS platforms are built as linear production tools and nothing more, does that not become a limiting factor on brands' ambitions?

The simple answer is that modern CMS platforms have evolved. Many are now built using MACH architectures – Microservices, API-first, Cloud-native and Headless. This approach to platform design promotes agility, scalability, extensibility, the ability to integrate diverse and disparate systems, or have functions operate independently of one another but still with a necessary degree of orchestration. Just what you need when you are trying to balance brand consistency with variations in content across dozens of different touchpoints or replace linear content workflows with something that more closely resembles a supply chain or network.

We call this a 'composable' approach to content management, or joining the nodes that you need to deliver the functions and outcomes you want. For example, a composable content stack could have a digital asset management (DAM) system at the center storing and collating all the brand's content resources. But the delivery engine, CMS, is attached as a headless autonomous function.

This means content resources can be managed centrally for consistency and governance purposes. However, a headless CMS decentralizes delivery. Rather than forcing delivery to multiple platforms and apps through a single funnel, you 'break out' content customization, publication, etc., to each destination separately. You remove bottlenecks and avoid duplication, and get the benefits of speed, scalability, flexibility, and efficiency.

So, what do decision-makers make of it all?



Our survey results suggest a high level of awareness of MACH as a concept, with 90% of respondents saying they are either familiar or very familiar with it. But it seems there is still room for improvement when it comes to a full understanding. When we asked leaders to define headless, only 58% could pick out the right answer. It's difficult to be sure that the benefits of headless/MACH are well understood if there's uncertainty around the concept itself.

58%

OF CONTENT LEADERS CORRECTLY PICKED OUT THE RIGHT DEFINITION OF 'HEADLESS / COMPOSABLE.'

In addition, we wanted to find out how confident decision-makers were that their own tech stacks could support their ambitions. The blunt answer is, not very! The table below shows that more respondents rate their tech stack as ineffective rather than effective across all areas.

## HOW EFFECTIVE IS YOUR TECH STACK?

	EFFECTIVE	NEUTRAL	INEFFECTIVE
Adapts to emerging technologies and trends	34%	22%	43%
Facilitates flexibility and scaling	35%	18%	46%
In terms of facilitating collaboration between teams and technologies, breaking down silos, and enabling seamless communication across the organization	34%	19%	46%
It adequately supports the integration of omnichannel strategies for a consistent customer experience across all markets	36%	19%	45%
It adequately supports the integration of personalization strategies for a tailored customer experience across all markets	36%	18%	45%
It delivers a consistent customer experience across channels	35%	17%	47%

The temptation with results like these – especially in areas such as flexibility and scaling, breaking down silos and supporting omnichannel integration – is to interpret them as further evidence that what brands need is to step up MACH migration.

But you have to be cautious about jumping to conclusions with technology. MACH can have a transformative impact on the effectiveness of content management, provided its strengths align with the strategy and business case.

For example, we've highlighted how the agility of MACH provides a good fit for the challenges of omnichannel content management. But there is a question here of scale. Our survey results showed that larger businesses are much more likely to find managing content across channels challenging, presumably a consequence of having more channels to think about across more markets. MACH, therefore, makes more sense the bigger you are and the more markets and channels you feed into.

Does that necessarily apply if you're a smaller organization with a much smaller number of channels to think about? Switching from legacy content platforms to a MACH environment can be counterproductive if you don't actually need the benefits MACH brings. Composable approaches come with their own challenges, such as engineering difficulties associated with integrating different systems and ensuring full interoperability, as well as the traceability and governance issues that arise when you decentralize content and add more and more platforms where it exists.



## 4: DAM, DATA, AND DESIGN SYSTEMS: OTHER COMPONENTS IN THE CONTENT TECH STACK

Let's return to the idea of a composable content tech stack. We've outlined how, with a composable approach, CMS is no longer treated as 'the content tool' where all content management happens, but rather as one part of a much larger whole. To use the analogy of an orchestra, CMS is one section, the horns or the strings. It plays independently but needs other players to create real content harmony.

So, who/what are those other players?

### Digital Asset Management (DAM)

Let's start with digital asset management, or DAM. DAM platforms are designed to organize, store, and distribute digital content assets like images, logos, video, and audio clips, and any number of text resources. They are built to make assets easily traceable, retrievable, and reusable, helping to maximize the value brands get from content, and from streamlining delivery through a CMS by taking the organizing and sorting workload away from it.

In short, having a DAM in your tech stack should make your content workflows more efficient. And this is a message that the leaders we spoke to understand loud and clear – 88% told us that improved productivity for their marketing and content teams was the number one benefit they were looking to gain from a DAM platform.

88%

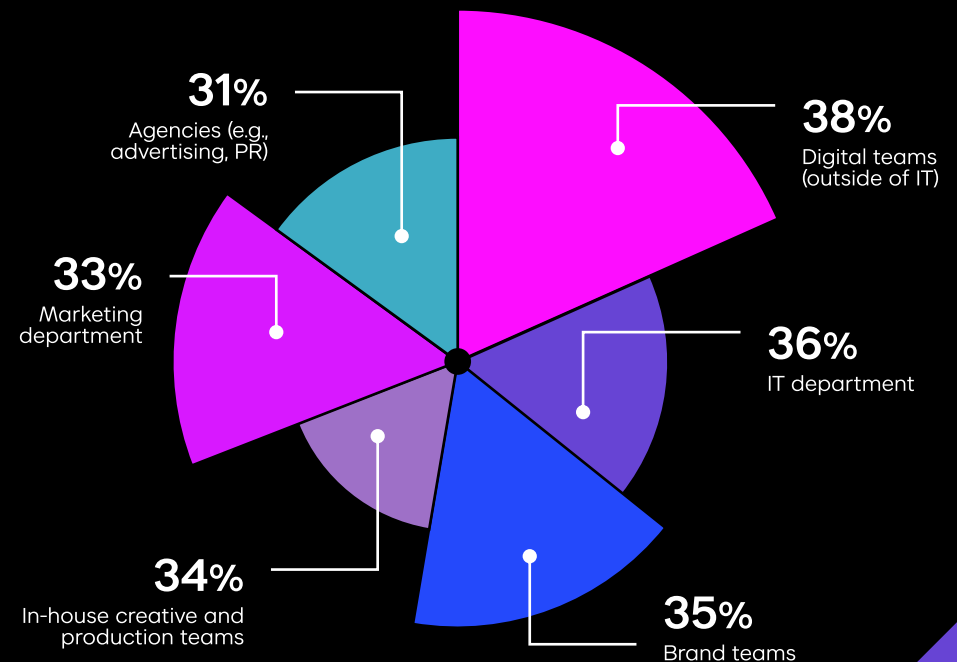
IMPROVED PRODUCTIVITY OF THE MARKETING  
AND CONTENT TEAMS IS THE NUMBER ONE MOST  
IMPORTANT FACTOR WHEN SELECTING A DAM  
SOLUTION

There's a certain gravitas to the term 'digital asset management.' And indeed, if you consider digital content an important asset for your business (which you should), there's a corresponding level of importance to who takes responsibility for it in an organization.

Where does this responsibility lie in most businesses?

As per the table below, our survey data suggests there is a trend toward collaborative decision-making for DAM systems, involving both technical and creative departments, with an even spread across different functions.

### WHO IS INVOLVED IN DECISION-MAKING RELATED TO DAM?





This is no bad thing. At the outset of this report, we highlighted how collaboration was a common content pain point for businesses. If DAM in a composable stack is encouraging a collaborative approach to digital content ownership, that's a positive.

The important thing is to make sure ownership is being taken effectively, and not falling down the cracks between teams. An essential precondition for this is to have clear, agreed-upon rules and vocabulary for tagging and logging assets that everyone abides by. If the metadata isn't consistent, retrieval and use of assets cannot be consistent, and chaos ensues.

## Customer Data Management

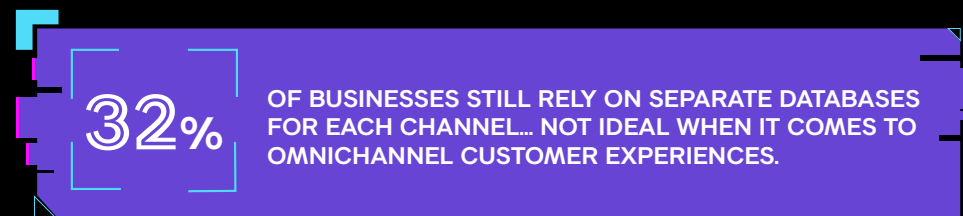
One of the mantras we repeat over and over at VML is that content management serves a higher purpose. And that purpose is creating winning experiences for would-be customers: driving engagement, locking in loyalty, etc.

In other words, content is nothing unless it makes an impact on people. It's no surprise that the most successful content strategies are tightly aligned with customer data. If you know who your audience is, what their motivations and interests are, how they want to receive their messages, etc., you have a head start in creating content that hits home. If you have customer data embedded in your content ecosystem, then you can start to do very powerful and clever things such as personalize content at scale.

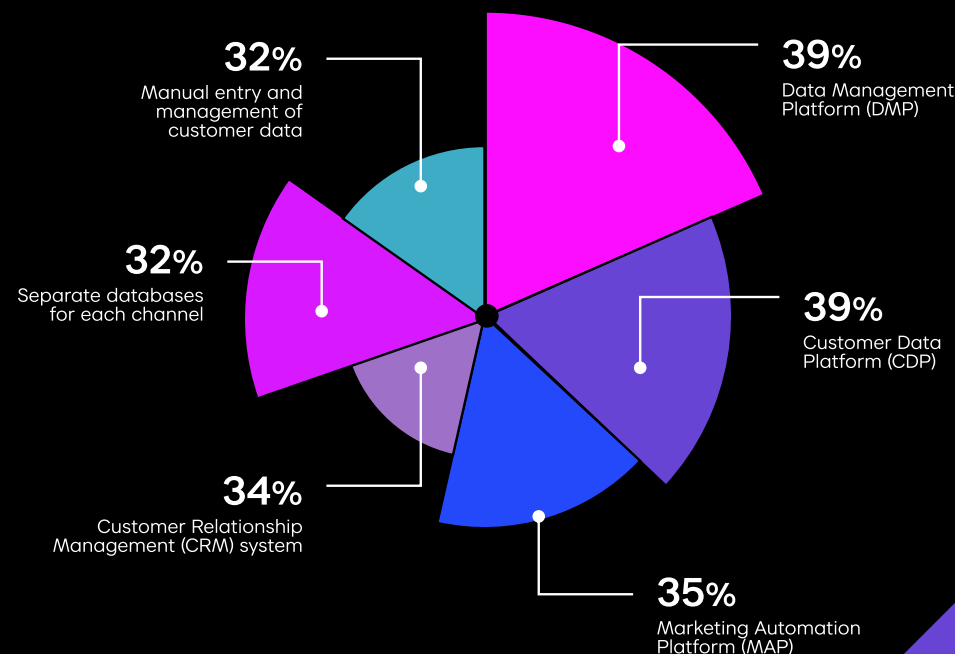
This all makes platforms for managing data highly valuable components in any composable content stack. Yet, this is an area that a lot of businesses seem to be struggling to get to grips with.

When we asked how data is managed within organizations, the responses revealed a fragmented landscape where organizations employ a mix of modern and traditional methods for managing customer data. As shown in the table below, Data Management Platforms (DMPs), Customer Data Platforms (CDPs), Marketing Automation Platforms (MAPs), and CRM systems are all popular modern solutions. There's no real surprise that all are popular, as they all offer different functionality, and all do different things, playing key roles in customer data management. But it does show the complexity of the data ecosystem that businesses must contend with.

A more worrying sign is that a significant portion of organizations (32%) still rely on separate databases for each channel. Manual data entry and management are also prevalent (32%), indicating room for improvement in automation.



### HOW IS CUSTOMER DATA MANAGED?



What is more, it's clear that there are still issues in managing customer data and achieving a single view. Our respondents identified three core challenges.

Data silos plague organizations: 79% of respondents acknowledged that data silos between departments and isolated data sources are major obstacles. Inconsistency in data quality and accuracy – identified by 79% of respondents. Real-time insights remain elusive: 79% identified difficulties accessing real-time customer insights hindering data-driven decision-making.

These issues pose bigger challenges to the ability to drive value from the alignment of customer data and content than fragmentation does, per se. Fragmentation of data (and, for that matter, content) has forever been and always will be the reality. The answer lies in acknowledging this and working out how to work with it effectively.

Issues like data silos and inconsistencies arise when you try to skip this part. Again, it comes back to treating tech like a Band-Aid. Markets have been awash with data management and analytics solutions for the past however many years. We see that in the list of solutions referenced in our survey results. However, a new data product doesn't mean a data problem automatically goes away. As with CMS, systems and processes must be designed to address the issues at hand, and with clear goals in mind. And in a composable stack, that includes how data solutions add to the whole.

## Design Systems

A design system is a set of reusable templates, elements, and other pre-configured components, backed up by standards and guidelines for us, which can be deployed to speed up and facilitate design at scale. In brand design and content production, design systems have the added benefits of helping to ensure consistency and replicability, as well as providing a visual interface so content teams can 'see' the output as it will be delivered.



### Expert opinion:

When you build a web page using a headless CMS, you have your front end completely disconnected from the back end, and it's disconnected from the content too. That's fine, except it often means people behind the scenes will be filling in forms that don't look anything like the finished product. So, relating content to what's on the page ends up being the age-old problem of trying to force your content to fit the design rather than writing your content for the way it is presented on your site.

Creating content and design separately doesn't make sense. You end up getting into difficulties when a piece of content has been approved, but then you realize it doesn't fit the design. You have the choice of routing it back through the approvals process, which delays publication, or having to change the design. Neither is a particularly good option.

Design systems help to keep content production and design in sync. You have all your elements and components for how content is presented visually on different channels, all your brand guidelines and your voice and tone and your principles, everything in one place. It streamlines production because content is created for the design and with a view to how it will present on the page. And it aligns with your content strategy too, because it helps to protect brand consistency while providing room for variation within defined boundaries.



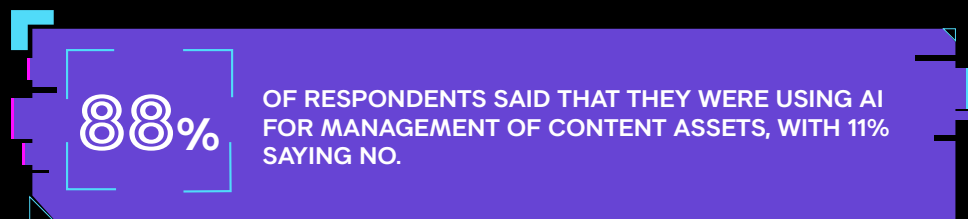
**Simon Ward**  
Senior Design & Experience Consultant



## 5: ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

We've already seen how decision-makers have one eye on the future in their thinking about content. One of the top reasons given for why leaders see their current tech stack as ineffective is a lack of agility when adapting to emerging technologies and trends. On the other hand, one of the things our survey respondents love about their CMS is its ability to inspire creativity, automate repetitive tasks, and streamline content delivery using AI.

AI is very much part of current and future thinking for business leaders, with potential applications across operations. With regard to content, there's little doubt that the emergence of Generative AI has turbocharged interest in and exploration with AI tools. A massive 88% of our survey participants told us they are now using AI in content management, up from 56% in 2021\*, the year before ChatGPT launched the GenAI revolution.



We'll be honest, this high figure caught us by surprise. AI is far from being a mature technology, and yet that's a mature adoption figure. The first question that leaps out is, what is AI being used for to return such a high number?

We posed the question, and got a broad spread of answers:

### WHAT IS AI CURRENTLY BEING USED FOR?

Accessibility assurance	24%
Personalized marketing	24%
Drive greater impact and effectiveness of content	24%
Asset renditions for channels	24%
Translations	24%
Brand governance	23%
Asset tagging	23%
Regulatory compliance	22%
Drive cost efficiency across the content supply chain	22%
To boost creativity	22%
Content suggestions or recommendations	21%

\*Building Better Experiences, Wunderman Thompson/VML



When you see all the use cases listed like this, the 88% adoption rate for AI is less surprising. AI is being applied broadly across content processes. That raises a second, and even more important question – which of these use cases is really driving value in content management, and which are just ‘doing AI’ because it’s there?

## Augmented Intelligence

There’s a ‘smart’ way of using AI to positively impact content strategies and there are certainly uses of and approaches to AI that have less impact.

The less-smart approaches are those that fall into the the trap of quick-fix Band-Aid thinking – they treat AI as a ready-made tech solution to a defined problem. In content management, this manifests itself most often in AI, and GenAI in particular, being plastered over the problem of velocity. Want to speed up how you create and publish at scale? Get GenAI to do it for you.

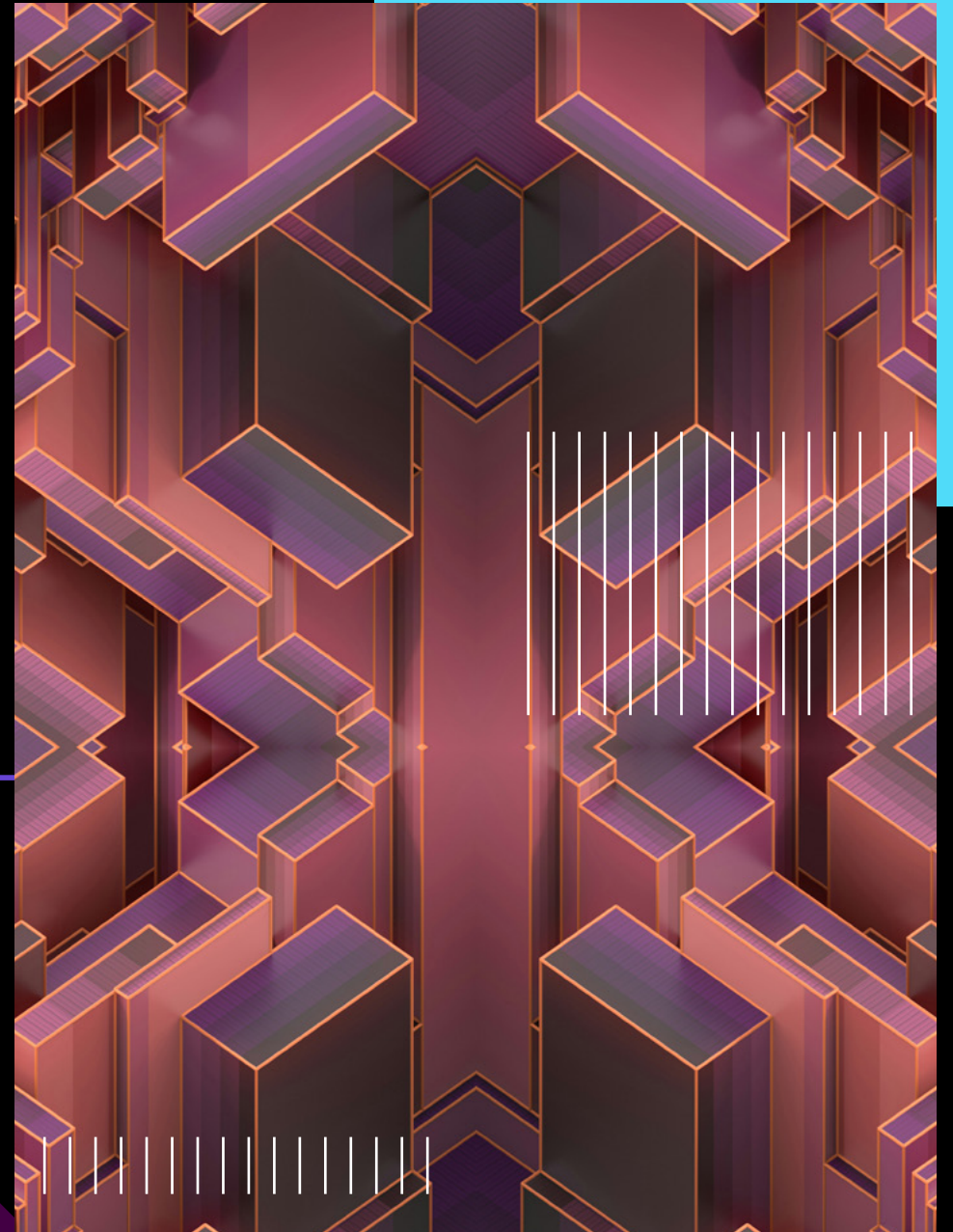
There are big risks in leaning too heavily on GenAI as an automated production engine. For all the hype around it, there’s a growing realization that GenAI output is limited in both quality and trustworthiness. It’s very generic. It knows nothing about your brand. And until Large Language Models (LLMs) are trained to unpick the minutiae of local laws and regulations in different territories, GenAI is of limited use in heavily regulated sectors like healthcare, pharmaceuticals, and financial services, where compliance is a primary concern in content management.



The ‘smart’ approach to AI is not to view it as something that can take over your content creation for you, but something that can instead augment the processes you have in place. So, not just artificial intelligence, but augmented intelligence, with all that implies about supporting and assisting the essential work your teams do. The good news is that this can apply to pretty much any content-focused application of AI – it’s all about the intent and how it fits into and adds to your workflows.

For example, a well-known app like Grammarly might not strike anyone as the most radical and game-changing application of AI. However, if it helps content teams minimize mistakes and improve the overall quality of content, that has a valuable impact on experience. GenAI might not (yet) be equipped to navigate the intricacies of local regulations and individual brand identities, but machine learning algorithms can learn patterns and spot anomalies at a much smaller, more focused scale. These are being successfully used in brand governance and compliance tools to take some of the burden of checks, improving speed and accuracy.

AI is also an ideal fit for the tagging, logging, and metadata work we discussed in relation to DAM. And looking forward, this is where we can perhaps expect AI to drive the greatest value, certainly in terms of unlocking operational efficiencies, supporting collaboration, and allowing workflows to be ever more agile and responsive. AI is a powerful tool for identifying, comparing, and classifying at scale. By treating content like data, it can potentially create taxonomies within content ecosystems that will serve as 'content warehouses,' comprising not just digital assets themselves but all the documentation and guidelines and design components that support them. Logged, tagged, and classified correctly, they will be available on demand as and where required, and they can be built into feedback loops to make checks for consistency, quality, relevance, etc., automatic and context-focused.





## Part 3:

# Key Takeaways

### → Evolve Your Content Management System (CMS) Mindset:

While a CMS is essential, don't let legacy systems limit your thinking. View your CMS as a key component within a broader technology ecosystem, enabling agile content delivery and unlocking the full value of your content across the organization.

### → Embrace the Flexibility of MACH Architecture:

Consider adopting a composable approach to content management, leveraging MACH architecture (Microservices, API-first, Cloud-native, Headless) to build a flexible and scalable technology stack. This allows you to integrate best-in-breed solutions and adapt to evolving needs.

### → Optimize Digital Asset Management (DAM) for Efficiency:

Implement a centralized DAM system with clear governance and metadata standards to streamline asset organization, discovery, and reuse. This empowers teams to collaborate effectively and maximizes the value of your content assets.

### → Unify Data for Personalized Experiences:

Break down data silos and establish a unified view of your customer data. This enables you to deliver personalized content experiences that resonate with individual needs and preferences, driving deeper engagement and loyalty.

### → Augment Human Capabilities with Strategic AI Adoption:

Embrace AI strategically to enhance, not replace, human creativity and expertise. Focus on solutions that streamline workflows, automate repetitive tasks, and provide intelligent insights to empower your content teams.



# CONCLUSION

# CONCLUSION

## FROM CHAOS TO COMPOSURE: POSITIONING CONTENT AS A DRIVER OF VALUE FOR YOUR CUSTOMERS AND YOUR BUSINESS

The digital landscape is overflowing with content, creating both immense opportunities and significant challenges for businesses. As this report reveals, many organizations struggle with content chaos, facing obstacles in consistency, personalization, measurement, and speed. However, the path from chaos to control lies in recognizing content as a strategic business asset and embracing a holistic approach to its management.

To achieve this, businesses must:

- Shift to a strategic content mindset and recognize content as a valuable business asset, intrinsically linked to customer experience and business goals. This will shift their view of content beyond purely operational and enable them to embrace a strategic approach to content planning, creation, and management.
- Design a cohesive content ecosystem by mapping out a clear and structured content supply chain and establishing a robust governance framework that balances brand consistency with local adaptation.
- Embrace technology as an enabler by leveraging technology solutions that support your content strategy. They should do this by exploring agile, scalable platforms like composable CMS and DAM systems to streamline workflows, enhance collaboration, and enable personalized content delivery.
- Augment human ingenuity with AI allowing them to enhance content operations, focusing on solutions that automate repetitive tasks, provide intelligent insights, and empower content teams to work more efficiently and effectively.

Ultimately, conquering content chaos is not about the capability to produce more content, but is about creating content that truly matters – content that resonates with audiences, strengthens brand identity, drives meaningful business results, and managing and distributing it in the right way to achieve your business goals.





## About VML

VML is a leading creative company that combines brand experience, customer experience, and commerce, creating connected brands to drive growth.

Underpinning all of this is VML Enterprise Solutions, a single operating unit that brings together all of our consulting, technology, data, and innovation capabilities. Over 7,000 employees across VML's key offices and local markets contribute to the Enterprise Solutions offering to deliver on the increasing market demand for applications of AI, technology-driven transformation, and operational efficiencies, brought to life via robust technology solutions.

We are celebrated for our innovative and award-winning work for blue chip client partners including AstraZeneca, Colgate-Palmolive, Dell, Ford, Intel, Microsoft, Nestlé, The Coca-Cola Company, and Wendy's.

The agency is recognized by the Forrester Wave™ Reports, which name WPP as a "Leader" in Commerce Services, Global Digital Experience Services, Global Marketing Services, and Marketing Measurement & Optimization. VML's global network is powered by 30,000 talented people across 60-plus markets, with principal offices in Kansas City, New York, Detroit, London, São Paulo, Shanghai, Singapore, and Sydney.

VML is a WPP agency (NYSE: WPP). For more information, please visit [www.vml.com](http://www.vml.com), and follow along on [Instagram](#), [LinkedIn](#), and [X](#). #WeAreVML

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## About Contentful

Contentful is the intelligent composable content platform that unlocks all of an organization's digital content to deliver impactful customer experiences, making content a strategic business asset. The Contentful Platform, Contentful Studio, and the Contentful Ecosystem combine the flexibility of composable content with the intelligence of AI, empowering digital teams to drive business momentum through collaboration, speed, and scale. Contentful powers innovative content experiences across brands, regions, and channels for organizations around the world, including nearly 30% of the Fortune 500. For more information, visit [www.contentful.com](http://www.contentful.com)

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**W:** [contentful.com/partners/get-started/](https://contentful.com/partners/get-started/)

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