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Survey identifies digital innovation gap between leaders and laggards; findings reveal increased drive toward “digital first, digital fast”

In the largest survey in the CMS industry, two-thirds of digital leaders admit they may be falling behind competitors

SAN FRANCISCO & BERLIN, SEPTEMBER 23, 2020 — Contentful today released results of the industry’s largest-ever survey of digital leaders and content creators. While 90% of respondents believe delivering digital experiences is important to business success, the survey found major differences in the digital capabilities of leaders and laggards.

The survey of more than 750 business and digital leaders, developers, and content creators reveals that brands struggle to deliver the digital experiences customers demand: slow time to market, high unit cost associated with creating new experiences and difficulty iterating plague the majority of business and digital leaders. For content creators and editors, the chief problems are controlling content across a host of channels and managing its consistency.

“The disconnect between the experiences customers want and what brands can deliver is caused by a gap in companies’ digital capabilities,” said Steve Sloan, CEO of Contentful. “One of the clear impediments is last-generation legacy content management systems (CMSes). They hamper rapid creation and iteration of compelling digital experiences. The time to deliver these, especially in this rapidly changing market, has a real impact on revenue. The companies that prioritize speed and flexibility are outpacing their competitors and will be the leaders in the digital-first era.”

The survey also found a significant disconnect between the perceptions of digital leaders and content creators. For example, 72% of digital leaders believe their CMS is capable of managing omnichannel content, but only 34% of content creators agree.

Contentful, the global leader in omnichannel content platforms, powers digital experiences for 28% of the Fortune 500 and thousands of global brands. It's leading the industry with a content platform that enables builders — developers, designers and content creators — to create and deliver digital experiences for any channel or device.

“This survey confirms what we hear from customers every day — that what got you here won't lead to success in the future,” Sloan added. “Digital native companies such as direct-to-consumer (DTC) brands are upending traditional business models. By the same token, companies that adopt digital-first competency, fast, are disrupting companies moving slowly toward digital transformation. To accelerate, digital leaders need to empower the builders in their organizations — developers, content creators, and teams across every business unit — with the tools and processes they need to quickly create compelling digital conversations at scale.”

The report, *The Digital Innovation Gap*, provides additional insight into the widening gap between brands with digital-first capabilities and those trying to keep up. It reveals dissatisfaction with traditional CMSes, and points to the need for next-generation tools that enable teams to work faster and deliver value sooner. With these tools, teams can close the gap by accelerating speed to build, speed to market and time to value.

Key survey findings:

Having a digital strategy and presence is no longer a differentiator; it's an expectation: 90% of survey respondents say building digital experiences is important to business success, with 82% of business leaders tying digital capabilities directly to revenue. **More channels, more digital challenges:** 70% of business leaders plan to increase the number of digital products or channels they deliver, but they need API-first integrated tools and systems to deliver those experiences faster. **Fragmented and fractured conversations::** 80% of business leaders plan to invest more in personalization, localization/translation, segmentation and other adaptations to content, but half say they're already spending too much time maintaining their existing content, and not enough developing new content. **Editing is too hard:** 93% must manage content across multiple digital products. But 66% can't control their content without developer assistance, 41% are updating content individually in each CMS, and 35% can't reuse content across multiple digital channels.

“The survey mirrors what our customers tell us: that traditional web CMSes hamper digital efforts, because they don’t support agile, omnichannel delivery,” said Bridget Perry, CMO of Contentful. “We’re seeing companies reach the limit of what their legacy CMSes can deliver. Digital leaders are adopting next-generation content platforms that can connect with older systems and pull existing content into new digital experiences. This lets companies move faster in digital and prove out the value of a content platform, while leaving some of the entrenched, legacy systems intact ... for now.”

Contentful funded the survey, which included users of all types of CMSes and across all industries, with independent research analysis by Grail Insights.

About Contentful

Contentful, the global leader in omnichannel content platforms, powers digital experiences for 28% of the Fortune 500 and thousands of leading global brands. It enables enterprises to deliver omnichannel digital experiences with greater speed and scale than with a traditional CMS. Contentful unifies content in a single hub, structures it for use in any digital channel, and integrates seamlessly with hundreds of other tools through open APIs. Companies such as Telus, Atlassian, Alpro, Clover, Intercom, Chanel and many others rely on Contentful’s content platform. For more information, visit <https://www.contentful.com/>.

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