



EBOOK

The Big Book of DXP

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The journey to DXP

Let's start by taking a quick look back at the past. In 2005, iPhones didn't exist. Neither did Twitter or YouTube, never mind Snapchat, Instagram and Tik Tok. Gmail was in closed beta mode. Facebook has grown to 5 million users.

In the grand scheme of things, 17 years isn't that long. But in the digital world, it's an eternity—during which the technology landscape has changed beyond recognition. According to [chiefmartec](#), there are currently more than 8,000 marketing technologies out there.

The evolution to DXP

Recent times have taught us that digital is no longer a business strategy. It's the main (and sometimes the only) driver of successful business.

And as digital experiences have transformed over the years, so too has the role of content and content systems, which have evolved from CMS to WEM and now to DXP.

This evolution represents significant changes in channels (from single to multi-channel) and in content management (from content-centric to customer-centric).

And as online strategies focus on customer-centric content, DXPs offer a seamless and consistent way to bridge digital touchpoints. In other words, they provide the capability to reach customers on a one-on-one basis, we know increases both conversions and revenue.

This ebook will take you through DXPs, debunk the five myths that hold back digital transformation, show you how to get started, and take you through five essential tips for choosing your platform. We will also present a range of real-world stories from organizations that are reaping the rewards of DXP-powered digital experiences right now.

01

What is DXP?

A digital experience platform (DXP) enables companies to build, manage and optimize seamless journeys across all digital touchpoints.

The DXP according to... Gartner

A [digital experience platform \(DXP\)](#) is an integrated set of core technologies that support the composition, management, delivery and optimization of contextualized digital experiences.

The DXP according to... Forrester

A [DXP](#) provides the architectural foundation for flexible, agnostic core services to maximize scale, quality and insights across channels and systems.

This is all while delivering context-specific tooling for practitioners to build, manage and optimize digital journeys on “owned” channels (web, mobile, messaging) and orchestrate third-party experiences (e.g., social, retail marketplaces).

Leaving the theory behind, what does that mean in the real world?

Every new customer interaction with your company should offer a better experience than the last. A DXP provides all the tools you need to monitor those experiences, learn from them, and deliver ‘better’ across all your digital channels.

What is a digital experience?

A digital experience means far more than just browsing a site, viewing a product, or clicking a button. The best digital experiences knock down the walls between content, commerce and marketing to unify the entire customer journey. They are orchestrated and personalized at each touchpoint, driven by built-in processes, and supported by content, data and transaction services.

The digital experience in action

08:00: Moira looks through her social media and sees a sweater on sale from iHeartSweaters, a business she follows.

12:00: Moira takes another glance at the product on iHeartSweaters' website from her workstation.

17:00: She pulls the trigger and buys the sweater from the iHeartSweaters app on her smartphone.

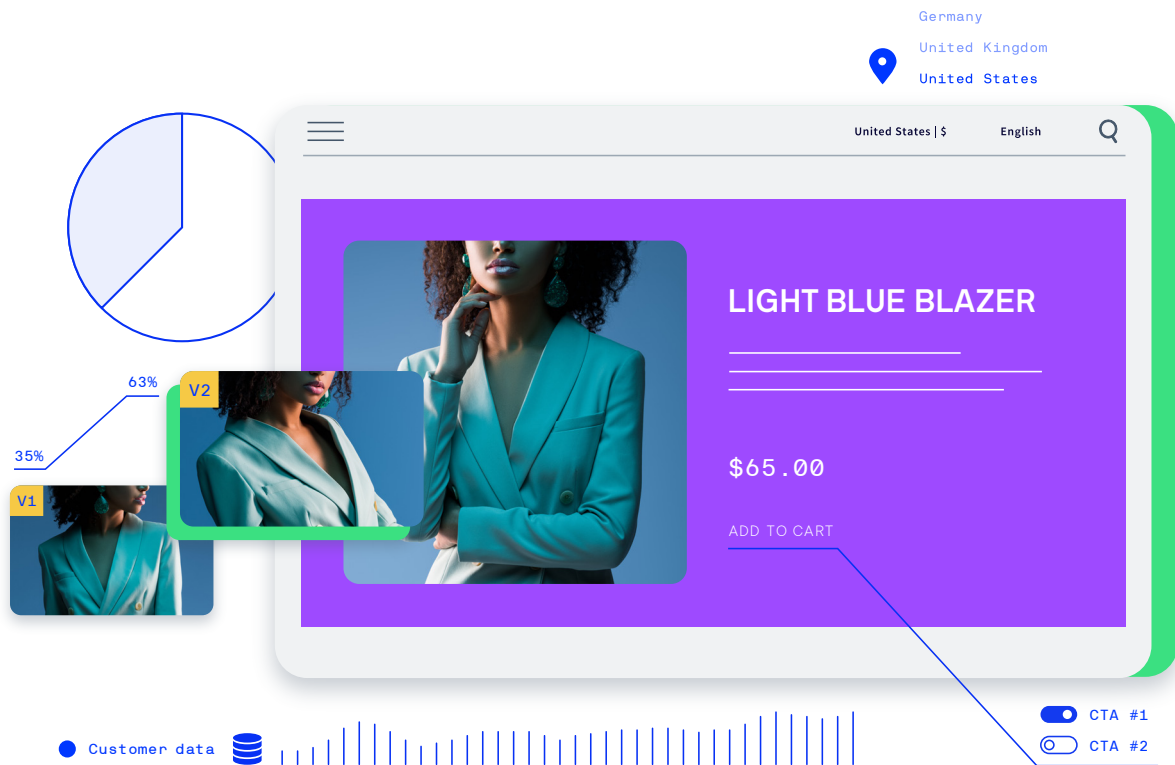
Each interaction Moira had with iHeartSweaters is called a digital experience, and the sum of the exchanges is called a digital customer experience.

Data: an overview

Customer data enables you to engage contextually by unifying behavioral, demographic and preference information about your customers. The most accurate customer data requires a unified, single view of the customer across all digital touchpoints, including data from outside the DXP that might be found in a CRM or ERP. Customer data is essential in creating a unified language between the understanding of the customer and the content.

Content data enables you to better understand, reuse and map your content easily. Note that many CMS providers don't provide an actual understanding of the content or the customers within their systems.

Transaction data serves as a path to conversion, enabling upsell, cross-sell and maximizing customer lifetime value.



DXP—the key ingredients

Content, data, and transactional workflows form the foundation of a DXP. From there you extract the experience management to unify experiences across content, data and transactions. In doing so, you create a consistent experience.

Experiences are delivered from **the cloud**, enabling you to scale up securely and easily.

Insights and analytics help you to shape your organizational strategy and processes.

Automation makes it easier to deliver a faster, better, more scalable digital experience.

An **API-first architecture** allows your DXP to smoothly integrate with all your crucial backend business systems like your PIM, ERP, and third-party tools, which also gives you the ability to further manage things like email, advertising and chat.

This **modular architecture** also future-proofs DXPs, allowing them to keep up with evolving technologies and customer needs.

02

Debunking 5 DXP myths holding back your digital transformation

Did you know that great digital experiences can increase conversions by as much as 60%? An effective DXP helps you to consistently deliver those kind of experiences—so don't let these five common myths stand in your way.

Myth #1: It's just a fad

Nope. DXP is here to stay, and it's only going to become more and more widely used. [Researchers](#) expect the DXP market to grow from USD \$7.9 billion in 2019 to a whopping USD \$13.9 billion by 2024. Here's why.

1. Winning and keeping customers

You want to acquire new customers, but you also need to keep your existing ones. DXPs help you do both by performing experiments and analyzing customer behavior to deliver personalized content that enhances the digital experience.

2. Future-proof

Applications are becoming increasingly cloud centric. It's even possible to work on parts of some without interrupting the flow of others or the overall service, while microservices are now the current reality. Technology is constantly advancing, yet because DXP architecture is so flexible it can always adapt.

3. Centralized content management

There are thousands of digital channels out there: websites, mobile apps, social media, you name it. For maximum effectiveness, your backend information needs to be consistent across all these touchpoints, and DXPs make sure that happens.



Electrolux
case study

Myth #2: It's just another way to say CMS

We've just seen that DXPs do centralize content, but that's just one component of many. These platforms go way beyond content, unifying every aspect of the overall customer experience such as:

Ecommerce

DXP incorporates every facet of merchandising from displaying products to seamless, secure checkout.

Artificial intelligence

AI and machine learning take data collection to the next level, using the findings to anticipate customer needs and automatically tailor personalized experiences.

Personalization

Along with data analytics and AI, experimentation also plays a role in customized user experiences. DXPs integrate A/B testing, multivariate testing and more to create unique, relevant and ever-more effective content.

Myth #3: DXP is rigid and inflexible

So wrong. DXPs are anything but rigid. Their flexible, modular architecture is designed to keep up with evolving technologies and support a wide range of components. And it's so agile that developers can work on and deploy changes to, say front-end-as-a-service, without interrupting the rest of the solutions in the platform.

Myth #4: DXP doesn't improve productivity

DXPs are key to providing the standout, multi-channel digital experiences that can increase conversions by as much as 60%. In addition to that, a DXP can improve your workflow in at least three other ways.

Seamless communications

DXPs combine information from all departments, breaking down silos and promoting interdepartmental communication and collaboration, which even includes multilingual support.



The DXP is simply much broader [than CMS] because it's embracing the notion that there is a holistic customer lifecycle that demands support in a different way than web content management traditionally did."

Mark Grannan
Forrester Analyst

Common DXP components:

Content management

**Insights, analytics &
intelligence**

Digital commerce

Personalization & automation

API integrations

Cloud infrastructure

Omnichannel delivery



Informed customer support

A DXP puts comprehensive customer data at the fingertips of your technical and customer support teams, so they can provide knowledgeable assistance without asking the customer to repeat information.

Customized working

A DXP also allows your teams to customize their interfaces to how they work best: adjusting settings, adding features and removing unused functionality.

Myth #5: ROI just isn't worth it

We've already seen that DXP pays you back in several ways such as increased conversions and productivity. But let's not forget customer loyalty, too. The following graphic shows the correlation between positive experiences and customer retention. Whoever says the ROI isn't worth it just isn't looking at the [data](#)...

Customers are...

2.4x more likely to **stay** when companies **solve**
customer problems more quickly

2.7x more likely to **spend more** when companies
communicate clearly

10x more likely to **recommend** when employees in
physical locations **answer all customer questions**

DSG
DAKOTA SUPPLY GROUP



case study

03

The roadmap to your new DXP

Purchasing a digital experience platform can seem overwhelming for any company in the early stages of digital transformation. Before laying out a roadmap, let's first evaluate what we mean when we say DXP—and how your requirements will change over time.

Twenty years ago, setting up any digital platform, including those that feature ecommerce, would involve all kinds of disconnected pieces. You'd need to get different parts from different vendors using different buying processes, then somehow stitch the whole thing together. And that was just for a relatively basic operation.

The digital experience platform changes all that. Yes, it's a lot more sophisticated in terms of what it can do by delivering a consistent experience across ALL digital channels: not just websites and landing pages, but mobile devices, IoT devices like Alexa, and even digital kiosks in stores.

Yet when it comes to getting up and running, DXP is a fully integrated and fast-to-implement platform.

So, what does the roadmap look like from where you are now to harnessing the true value of a DXP?

Getting started

As a rule, the day-one requirements for any brand starting out on the digital experience journey include a homepage, search and search results, and landing pages for different categories of product or service.

B2B vs B2C

The least digitally mature organizations are probably those in B2B verticals like manufacturing. Let's say you have traditionally based your go-to-market around catalogs, field marketing, and personal relationships between sales reps and purchasers.

You can aspire to offer a B2C-style digital experience from day one. But is that a relevant goal? B2C experiences, like those offered by Amazon for example, are usually one-to-one. Amazon knows you, learns your behavior, and understands the experience you're looking for.

B2B can be a lot different (and a lot more complex) for several reasons. You may be selling to organizations rather than to individuals. Or you may have different SKUs and pricing for different customers. This kind of added complexity is just one of the reasons many B2B brands struggle to reach digital maturity. But we've now reached the point where it's absolutely essential to overcome the challenges.

After that, it depends on what type of organization you are

If you're B2C, you obviously need to make sure your customers can view, select, and pay for your products. To keep up with the competition, however, you'll also want to go beyond the basics and offer more tailored experiences such as personalized product recommendations, offers and discounts.

For beginners on the B2B side, if you're making the leap to taking orders online then you're most likely not thinking about sophisticated product recommendations—at least for the first six months. Even so, you should have an idea of where you want to go and how to get there.

For those organizations not focused on ecommerce, your site experience will generate very different goals. Are you trying to capture new marketing leads? Book online appointments? While purchase won't be a consideration, you will still want to focus on personalization, lead capturing through dynamic forms, a clean content experience, etc.

Which type of organization are you?

As Optimizely's Senior Director of Customer Strategy, Jeff Cheal is in constant contact with customers at every stage of their digital experience platform journey. When it comes to setting out on the road to a DXP, Jeff sees two kinds of customers: what he calls the aspirers and the optimizers.



The aspirers look at everybody else and want what they have, even if they don't yet have the infrastructure or mindset to support that. They're investing in technology to enable their dream about where they want to be.

On the other hand, optimizers already have a framework and need additional tools which fit it. Their needs are specific. Now, the way the aspirers can reach their dream is by optimizing the tools they already have, so that the path to enablement is shorter than if they implemented some big new suite of tools which requires a lot of retro-fitting and a lot of knowledge to run."

Jeff Cheal

Senior Director of Customer Strategy / Optimizely

The roadmap to your dream digital experience platform is a step-by-step journey. Start with the essential components you need right now. Then start adding more sophisticated elements like personalization and product and content recommendations as and when (or if) you need them.

Content is (still) king

In addition to the right kind of platform, you also need to plan the right kind of content. For example, there are plenty of organizations out there with more personas than they know what to do with. They can pinpoint someone 25-34 years old with a household income above \$100K. But they struggle to reach that customer in a unique way that stands out from their competitors.

Great content starts with understanding the needs of the browsers and buyers visiting your website. Why are they on your site? What sort of content are they looking for? How do you show them that you are a trusted advisor and a thought leader? Remember: you are the expert. Customers engage with you, and will keep coming back, if you prove that their visit to your site helped increase their confidence, knowledge or value. And how do you do that in a compelling way that stands out from the competition? Bear in mind that they don't want to be told what to do, but rather want to enjoy a unique and personalized experience. How can you use that thought leadership to invest that commitment back to you and your brand over-and-over?

Content can come in many shapes and sizes. Some examples are:

Images/Brand Visuals – do the visuals of your site create understanding and clear engagement? Do they evoke a comfort level and a sense of your brand and its message?

Business Information – typically product information, offering descriptions or directions. Is the right information for your users quick to find, and easy to consume?

Thought Leadership – Case studies, articles, FAQs. Are these searchable, sharable and linkable so that they can be quickly found again or distributed to their communities?

Driving the right content to the right users powers your personalization tactics. What are the goals of those personalized experiences? To promote a purchase? Sign up for your mailing list so they can consume more trusted content? Book appointments? Stay on the site longer? It shouldn't be just about brand presence, but rather a confirmation that consuming your site content was worth the effort and a commitment to more.



If you're entirely new to the digital experience, there's no need to over-complicate matters. Start with what's easy and fast to implement: a homepage, product pages, and forms or checkout—whatever is relevant. The ultimate aim is to provide a digital experience that sets you apart from the competition. That means personalization, and personalization means tailored content.

And it shouldn't be created just because your marketing team thinks it's needed. The job of content is to serve your visitors and guide them toward the desired outcome.

The timeline for reaching your dream will be dictated by your digital maturity and sophistication. But there's no better time to start than today.



04

Do you need DXP?

The short answer is yes. Because to put it simply, when you focus on digital experience, you win. And that's especially true in uncertain times, such as the 2007-2009 recession, for example. Research from McKinsey & Company and Forrester showed that companies investing in digital experiences outperformed the laggards by up to 300% in that time.

Wait until you're ready for a DXP? Or take the chance to grow into one?

As consumer expectations grow, businesses are striving to create ever more personalized and more compelling customer experiences. That's why you need to start investing in a DXP platform—whether you're ready for one right now or not.

We've worked with companies of all shapes and sizes at the right level of digital maturity to implement a full-blown DXP, complete with specialist components for content, intelligence, digital marketing and ecommerce.

At the same time, we've also supported companies that hadn't yet reached that point, but were ready to start growing into a DXP.

A few examples

✓ We've helped fast-growing financial services firms to scale new products and quickly inform employees how to support those products.

✓ We've supported industrial suppliers with an urgent need to equip customers with the ability to evaluate COVID-19 safety products.

✓ We've enabled recently merged information services organizations to create an engaging experience that features their newly integrated product offering.

The big question is:
Does my company need to reach a certain level of maturity before investing in a DXP partner?

In each of these cases, our customers were able to cherry pick relevant parts of our DXP and customize them over time as their strategy and requirements changed. That's the beauty of our composable, flexible platform. You don't have to have all the answers now, because the platform is equipped to grow and change with your business.

As you evaluate the needs of your business, ask yourself these three key questions. If the answer is yes to any of them, it might be time to adopt a DXP (or at least start laying the foundations for one).

1. Does your experience reach across multiple digital touchpoints?

Experiencing much of the world through the screens of our devices has become an everyday reality. In response, businesses need to expand the number of digital channels they use to reach the right people in the right places. As the saying goes: **"You've got to meet people where they are."**

In this increasingly virtualized world, companies also need to create integrated customer journeys across these channels through personalization, AI and relevant content. Upping your game in any one of these areas could be the foundation for a powerful DXP strategy.

Some headless CMS vendors will claim to support multi-channel delivery, just like a DXP. But headless content management systems have no understanding of the customer, which means they lack the capability to offer a contextually-relevant experience the way a DXP can.

Key takeaway

If your team is managing multiple assets across multiple platforms, a DXP architecture is essential for seamlessly driving dynamic content that's personalized, AI-driven and continuously optimized. In a world that changes by the minute, you may face the need to build microsites in days or even hours—and a DXP provides a simple, sophisticated way of eliminating the common pain points that can affect your IT team, or that come from working with an outdated IT vendor.

2. Is your buyer journey as personalized as your products?

You might provide a product or service perfectly matched to your customer needs. But it won't matter if you're selling it through a clunky, one-size-fits-all digital experience. As a digital marketer, especially at a company that is constantly creating better and more customized products, you must make sure your experiences keep pace. It's never too late to start learning about your customer ecommerce journeys, from how they search for your products to how they make a transaction. Every new piece of customer data you generate is a step towards your ideal DXP.

Key takeaway

Digital behaviors are constantly changing. Old, clunky components such as an outdated Content Management System (CMS) often lead to sub-par customer experiences—and, in turn, lost customers. A DXP is the only effective way to stay ahead of the game. Instead of re-inventing the wheel every few years, build your digital transformation on an infrastructure that can grow with you.

3. Are you trying to solve too many solutions or experiences at the same time?

Brands tend to be everything to everyone, especially when thinking about a relaunch or replatform. We take the opportunity of a “fresh start,” and we aim for the stars. This can become unobtainable, especially as you are trying to build the right content, experiences and customer flows for your different use cases and personas.

This typically ignores that a new site rebuild is also laying a new foundation for your asset management, your personalization management, your content management... your basic building blocks for future scale and growth. Growth should be thought of as a digital maturity, solving your fundamental use cases first and establishing best practices as you branch out.

Key takeaway

Conventional wisdom assumes that smaller, emerging brands don't need DXPs because their operation isn't sophisticated enough to warrant it. But the organizations that adopt systems better equipped to handle greater complexity in the future will be the ones that can scale the fastest.



Grant Thornton
case study

05

5 tips for choosing a DXP

1. Map your requirements to your goals

Your business has a unique set of requirements. While it's easy to get distracted by the current trends, the latest buzzwords, and the flashiest technology, stay focused on the features and the functionality that are right for you. Set realistic goals and understand how certain technology requirements will help you achieve them.

It's also helpful to separate your requirements out in phases. What capabilities do you need right now? What will you need down the line?

2. Validate with the experts

When you're doing your research, you can benefit from the expertise of organizations known for their authoritative analysis of leading technology vendors. Analysts such as Gartner and Forrester regularly release rankings that include the top performers in digital experience, commerce, CMS and all the other areas you should be considering.

3. Ask for plenty of references

It goes without saying that you'll want to see examples of success from a potential vendor. But not any old success will do. Be sure to ask for case studies that reflect your requirements and your industry and are based on similar use cases and customer types.

4. Evaluate vendor ecosystems

It is also essential to consider any potential vendor's partner ecosystems and integration capabilities. The whole point is that one software needs to be able to speak to another rather than operate in silo. Make sure you understand the community, documentation and integration partners that come with a particular software. Optimizely, for example, incorporates a thriving app marketplace, offering seamless integrations, applications and pre-built connectors.



GOODWOOD
case study

5. Don't compromise

You should never have to make a compromise in areas of speed, quality, cost or support. In other words, you don't have to choose between, say, speed and quality. Go with a vendor that provides you with the best of both worlds.

In conclusion

It's clear that focusing on customer experience is a winning strategy, never more so than in times of uncertainty. **Today, it's not about if you invest in digital but how and where you invest.**

Not every company necessarily needs a DXP. For some, a simple ecommerce store or catalog site is enough. But what about later down the line? Is a digital experience platform something you could grow into?

And remember, you don't have to invest in everything right away. If you're entirely new to the digital experience space, you can get up and running with what's fastest and easiest to implement, like a homepage, product pages, search, maybe even a checkout experience. Then simply add new features and scale up as and when you need.

But if you want a way to connect the entire digital journey, create personalized customer experiences, and ultimately leverage digital as the main arm of your business, you may be ready for a DXP. We'll be happy to talk through your next steps.

Optimizely DXP: a measurable impact

Between March and May 2020, customers using our cloud infrastructure for more than one year showed a 70% increase in average engagement and a 43% increase in average conversions compared to the same timeframe in 2019.

At Optimizely, we're on a mission to help people unlock their digital potential. Our leading digital experience platform (DXP), equips teams with the tools and insights to create and optimize in new and exciting ways. Now, companies can operate with data-driven confidence to create hyper-personalized experiences. Building sophisticated solutions has never been simpler. Optimizely's 900+ partners and 1100+ employees in offices globally are proud to help over 9,000 brands, including Electrolux, Uber, Visa, WSJ, Santander, The Red Cross and Mazda enrich their customer lifetime value, increase revenue and grow their brands. Learn more at **[Optimizely.com](https://www.optimizely.com)**