

## WHITE PAPER BRIEF

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# Marketing in the Age of Digital Content: The Business Case for an Enterprise Marketing Platform

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## IDC OPINION

In the age of digital content, marketing departments are increasingly tasked with creating digital experiences to promote their companies' brands. IDC believes that marketing departments can reap significant benefits from investment in an enterprise marketing platform to support these efforts. Such a platform includes:

- ☒ A digital asset repository, which manages all of the content that the marketing organization creates, including versions and renditions
- ☒ Collaboration capabilities, which support both ad hoc and more structured workflows
- ☒ Process management facilities, which enable the marketing department to automate and optimize its processes
- ☒ Publishing capabilities, such as Web content management, which enable the marketing department to manage its online channel to customers, partners, suppliers, investors, and other stakeholders

## SITUATION OVERVIEW

Marketing leaders face tremendous challenges today as their companies seek to inspire customer loyalty and grow revenue and market share. Tasked with building buzz and grabbing attention in an increasingly noisy and competitive environment, they focus relentlessly on building brand. After all, a company's brand is one of its most valuable assets and a statement about the value of its products and services. Increasingly, brand management is about managing the brand experience — presenting compelling creative assets in a way that truly engages customers and prospects.

With the rise of the Internet and the explosion of all types of digital media, marketing organizations need to manage the brand experience across a wide variety of venues and customer touch points — on the Web, in print, over the public airwaves, over the telephone, at live events, and through sales and distribution channels. It's no wonder, then, that the volume of digital assets (including rich media) that marketers need to manage is mushrooming. This poses new challenges for marketing organizations as they seek to ensure brand consistency and optimize their production costs.

IDC research into the expanding digital universe highlights the extraordinary growth of content of all kinds across the enterprise: IDC predicts that the amount of information that organizations must manage will grow tenfold over the next five years. Marketing organizations are certainly contributing their share to this content explosion as they invest in creative assets — including high-resolution graphics, digital photography, video, and other rich media in digital formats — to promote their brands and deliver their messages.

The need to manage this explosion of digital content — and put it to use in the context of customers, partners, investors, employees, and other stakeholders — is a key driver for the adoption of enterprise content management solutions. IDC research into customer needs and challenges illustrates the importance organizations are placing on content reuse and repurposing today. In a recent survey, more than three-quarters of respondents told IDC that their organization needs to be able to develop content once and reuse it in many different situations; and nearly two-thirds expressed the need to store content for print publications and electronic distribution in a single repository. At the same time, more than two-thirds of respondents reported that keeping content accurate and up to date is a significant challenge for their organization; and more than half of respondents indicated that managing image, audio, and multimedia content (including video) is a significant challenge for their company. Thus, there is a growing recognition of the need to manage all types of content in a systematic, end-to-end fashion.

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## **The Need for an Enterprise Marketing Platform**

Of course, marketing doesn't run on just good ideas and compelling content; it requires excellence of execution and optimized processes. Process-driven marketing entails the ability to:

- Plan campaigns
- Create and produce the assets for those campaigns
- Manage marketing projects
- Communicate marketing programs globally
- Implement programs locally, collaborate with key stakeholders
- Measure results

All of these activities, however, are content-intensive and require the ability to effectively manage digital assets and digital distribution channels. Process-driven marketing depends on access to shared marketing resources: Content technologies connect marketers with the electronic information and digital assets they need to support their marketing initiatives. These technologies seek to reduce the friction associated with fast-moving, often rapidly changing activities. Ad hoc information sharing helps to improve the day-to-day coordination of many marketing tasks, and electronic communications help to improve the flow of essential information and resources.

Of course, the marketing organization relies on a variety of different marketing applications, but these discrete applications need to draw upon a common set of marketing-related content resources. IDC believes that these shared marketing resources are best delivered by an enterprise marketing platform — a solutions framework for managing end-to-end marketing activities in a holistic and comprehensive manner.

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## **Enterprise Marketing Platform Solution Capabilities**

An enterprise marketing platform combines a digital asset repository with collaboration, process management, and publishing capabilities and provides the foundation for a comprehensive and extensible set of applications that support the marketing organization's many tasks.

The platform needs to support four key areas of marketing activity (see Figure 1):

- ☒ Brand management
- ☒ Interactive marketing
- ☒ Resource management
- ☒ Relationship marketing

Some suggestions on building out the definitions on the marketing applications are as follows:

- ☒ **Brand management.** The platform needs to let brand managers manage brand-related digital assets by providing a set of tools to store, search, access, modify, and repurpose rich media assets including photographs, design graphics, video, and Flash animations. A central repository — together with intelligent content handling and workflows — helps to ensure the right assets are used with the right campaign.
- ☒ **Interactive marketing.** The platform should enable marketers to deliver highly personalized and dynamic content via multichannel publishing and help them foster bidirectional communication with customers via Web 2.0 applications. Web content management, dynamic XML delivery, and publishing workflows all help to ensure the right message is delivered to the right audience.
- ☒ **Resource management.** Marketers need to define campaign plans, calendars, and budgets, and for those using marketing resource management applications such as Aprimo, SAS, or Unica, the platform must be easy to integrate with these applications. Reporting and dashboard functions help to ensure that campaigns are executed on time and within budget.
- ☒ **Relationship marketing.** Marketers need to leverage their existing relationship management systems — including contact management systems, customer segmentation applications, and lead tracking databases — to help execute segmented campaigns and turn leads into sales.

**FIGURE 1**

Enterprise Marketing Platform



Source: EMC, 2008

The enterprise marketing platform provides a trusted source for all of the content used by the marketing organization. In addition to all of the business documents that the marketing organization needs to maintain to manage its programs, the digital asset repository manages the many types of rich media assets used in brand management and interactive marketing and makes searching for assets by keywords or categories an easy task. It manages versions of assets (helping to ensure that content is always accurate and up to date, which is critical for brand consistency) and supports renditions (making it much easier to create versions of content for different form factors or types of displays). The repository provides security and can enforce additional levels of control over intellectual property via information rights management.

The enterprise marketing platform should provide an interactive environment for sharing, communicating, and collaborating globally. It should support both ad hoc unstructured collaboration and more formal, semistructured processes. Unstructured or semistructured collaboration workspaces connect distributed teams and help to eliminate functional, geographic, and organizational barriers. The platform also needs to provide a flexible project management environment — one that empowers business users to manage collaborative interactions and lets end users balance their need for creative freedom with the need for process efficiency.

In addition to automating routine marketing tasks such as approvals, notifications, and so forth, strong process management capabilities can help the marketing organization to capture and leverage its best practices across multiple projects. Reusable templates reduce the time it takes to implement new processes and speed time to productivity. Well-thought-out processes and good process management can improve team effectiveness without imposing undue overhead.

Finally, an enterprise marketing platform supports publishing to the Web and other channels. The platform improves control over Web content by centralizing the management of multiple sites. By automating key business processes, multichannel publishing also accelerates time to Web — empowering both knowledge workers and IT groups to reach multiple distribution channels in a cost-effective way.

An enterprise marketing platform thus provides the tools to orchestrate marketing's business processes, including integration with marketing planning and execution environments. The platform also provides the tools for ongoing measurement and reporting. As a result, the platform is able to track, trace, and help to account for a wide variety of marketing activities. This ensures a lower total cost of ownership as well as seamless access to and greater reuse of content.

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## **Getting Started with an Enterprise Marketing Platform**

Where should marketers begin in regard to making the transition to a comprehensive enterprise marketing platform? IDC believes that marketing organizations should focus first on gaining control of their digital assets and mapping their processes (both formal and informal). In today's digital world, the brand experience is increasingly a rich media experience. Managing digital assets effectively, however, entails more than just assembling a collection of assets; it also requires managing the metadata about those assets. They must be tagged and catalogued to make them easy to search and find. These tags, in turn, are often defined by one or more taxonomies.

Once the organization has its digital assets under control, it can add support for ad hoc collaboration and begin to automate and optimize its more structured processes. Marketing entails a series of steps for developing new and engaging content, creating compelling events, and engaging with customers and prospects. By mapping its current processes, the marketing organization can assess how automation can help to expedite those processes and make them more effective.

## **CHALLENGES/OPPORTUNITIES**

Content technologies can help marketing organizations automate many of the tasks related to brand management, interactive marketing, resource management, and relationship management. Investment in an enterprise marketing platform should expedite the execution of marketing initiatives while also reducing costs and enhancing profitability. Marketing organizations will need to build the return on investment (ROI) business case to justify this investment.

Excellence of execution depends on best practices and the consistent application of those best practices. Effective marketing in the digital age depends not only on the quality of the content but also on the quality of the business processes that put it to use. An enterprise marketing platform provides the foundation that marketing organizations need to effectively manage their content and business processes, but the technology itself is only a part of the solution. Marketing organizations must be prepared to train users and provide handholding as necessary to ensure adoption — especially when new processes create change for end users.

## **CONCLUSION**

Digital marketing is here to stay. Marketing's day-to-day activities — communicating with customers, planning and executing campaigns, distributing consistent information about products and services, and building the brand and keeping it fresh — have become more complex and require more attention than in the bygone days of the analog era. Marketers must engage customers through multiple channels, with new types of media, using new and emerging technologies. To unleash their creativity and capture promising opportunities, marketers must evaluate the impact that the shift from analog to digital will have on their organization and invest accordingly. Marketers should focus on implementing flexible solutions — solutions that combine innovative ways to manage their business processes with proven information technologies.

IDC believes that marketing organizations will benefit substantially from implementing an enterprise marketing platform. Such a platform is the foundation for organizing, accessing, and distributing all of the digital content (including rich media assets) that is required to successfully manage marketing initiatives in the digital age. The platform can help the marketing organization define and implement its more formal business processes and also facilitate ad hoc collaboration. The result is a holistic, solutions-oriented approach to managing the wide range of marketing activities required to compete effectively in today's digital marketplace.

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