

A checklist for creating digital agility

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The digital landscape is constantly evolving, presenting new opportunities for organisations to better serve their customers and audiences. Marketers need to respond quickly to exploit digital trends and maximise the return from online customer behaviours and sentiment. They depend on the agility of underlying technology platforms to accommodate their needs, rather than limit their online ambitions.

How often does a great business idea run into technical difficulties, or end up being delivered late, incomplete or over budget? What gives some organisations the ability to implement changes quickly, such as interacting with the latest social networking phenomenon?

The rate of evolution and adoption of new digital channels is staggering. The pace of change in customer behaviour and expectations has typically far outstripped the ability of technologists to innovate. It is this legacy of coding, architecture and technical investment that has held back organisations from exploring truly agile marketing tactics online. Thankfully, this picture is changing with the new wave of responsive, change-driven systems from technology innovators.

There are two objectives for such a responsive system:

- **To be agile** in delivering personalised / targeted services to customers based on disruptive forces in either technology or media consumption patterns. To deliver this requires '**Commercial Granularity**'
- **To reduce the time and cost** of technical innovation so the overall service offered to customers can continue to evolve without being constrained by the strategy or vision of the originating vendor. To deliver this requires '**Technical Granularity**'

What follows is an eight point check list for choosing technology that provides the most agile foundation to build a responsive system. The checklist ensures that you can meet the above two objectives and exploit new online models of audience engagement, with minimal cost and risk.

'Change Readiness Checklist'

This checklist is based on Digirati's many years of work in both the Corporate Enterprise Application sector and Open Source arena. It is, in our opinion, the most effective method to frame the debate and assess the options for the selection of a responsive platform-based digital solution. No single solution will likely meet all of these criteria, and the choice will depend on the importance your organisation assigns to specific needs.

- ✓ Has it got APIs that allow content, user profiles, personalisation rules and analytic data to flow freely to external applications?
- ✓ Has it got a modular, pluggable approach to functionality which would enable you to get a custom module made for your purposes without any reliance upon the platform vendors themselves beyond documentation and access to an API?
- ✓ Has it got a commercial model that scales based on use and the value you gain from it? This could be because it is a cloud based solution and/or that it has the option of being provided as a service (SaaS).
- ✓ If it's a cloud based service, is it hosted by the vendor or by a third party and are there options for you to 'own' an image of the service to host where you wish?
- ✓ Is there an ecosystem of innovation outside the confines of the originating vendor (if it's a proprietary solution and not open source)?
- ✓ If it's open source, is there a community (no matter how small) who are regularly adding functionality to the project (not just fixing bugs)?
- ✓ If it's a proprietary system from a vendor, do you trust the organisation and feel they have a clear vision for their own product innovation? Can you see yourself building a long term relationship with them and getting involved in their user groups and developer community activities?
- ✓ Is the technology based on accepted protocols and readily available technical expertise from the global and/or local developer community?

If you would like to learn more about how to implement a technology framework which will enable you to exploit digital opportunities, better serve your customers and truly understand the commercial and technical agility needed for digital business, Digirati and Alterian are running a joint seminar in London on 20 September. Visit <http://www.digirati.co.uk/agility-briefing> for more info.

About Digirati

Digirati provides digital business, technology integration and user experience consultancy services. Whether creating a bespoke client solution or integrating best of breed technology we provide consultation and implementation expertise spanning: content management, digital publishing, mobile content delivery, social business, e-commerce and paywalls. Our approach is highly disciplined, agile and innovative to harness the latest trends and technologies for multichannel business for the real benefit of our clients.

About Alterian

Alterian (LSE: ALN) enables organisations to create relevant, effective and engaging experiences with their customers and prospects through social, digital and traditional marketing channels. Alterian's Customer Engagement solutions are focused in four main areas: Web Content Management, Campaign Management & Analytics, Email, and Social Media. For more information about Alterian visit www.alterian.com or the Alterian blog at www.engagingtimes.com