Contentful

The digital leader's guide to selecting a scalable, multisite content solution

How to plan for technology infrastructure growth across the seven dimensions of scale
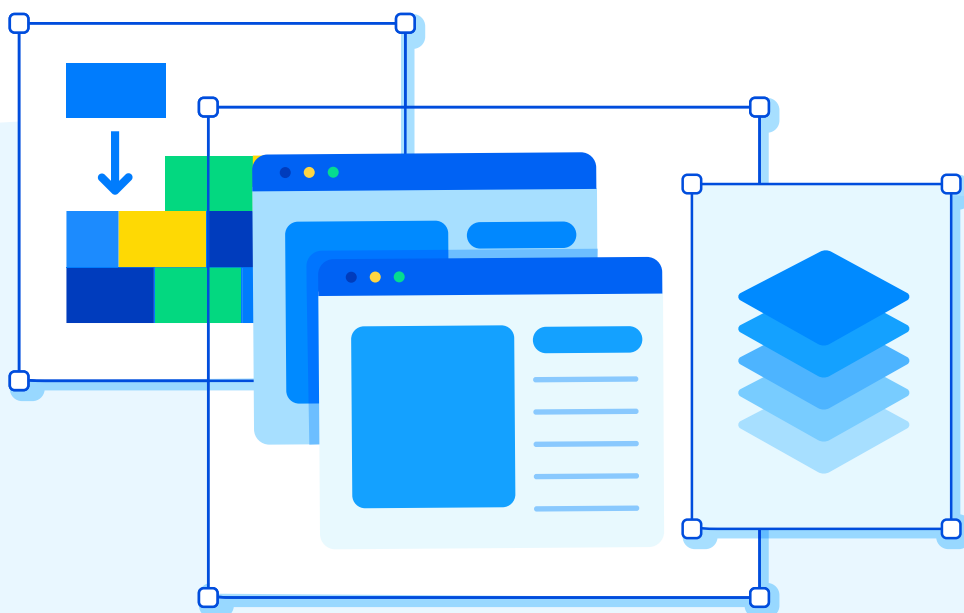
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Introduction

Scalability is an important consideration when purchasing or building business infrastructures. In our fast-paced digital world, companies can't waste time working around legacy systems or be bogged down by perpetual upgrades. Foundational systems that can't scale hamper results and halt momentum. You need technology that scales smoothly and preserves valuable resources for revenue-generating initiatives.
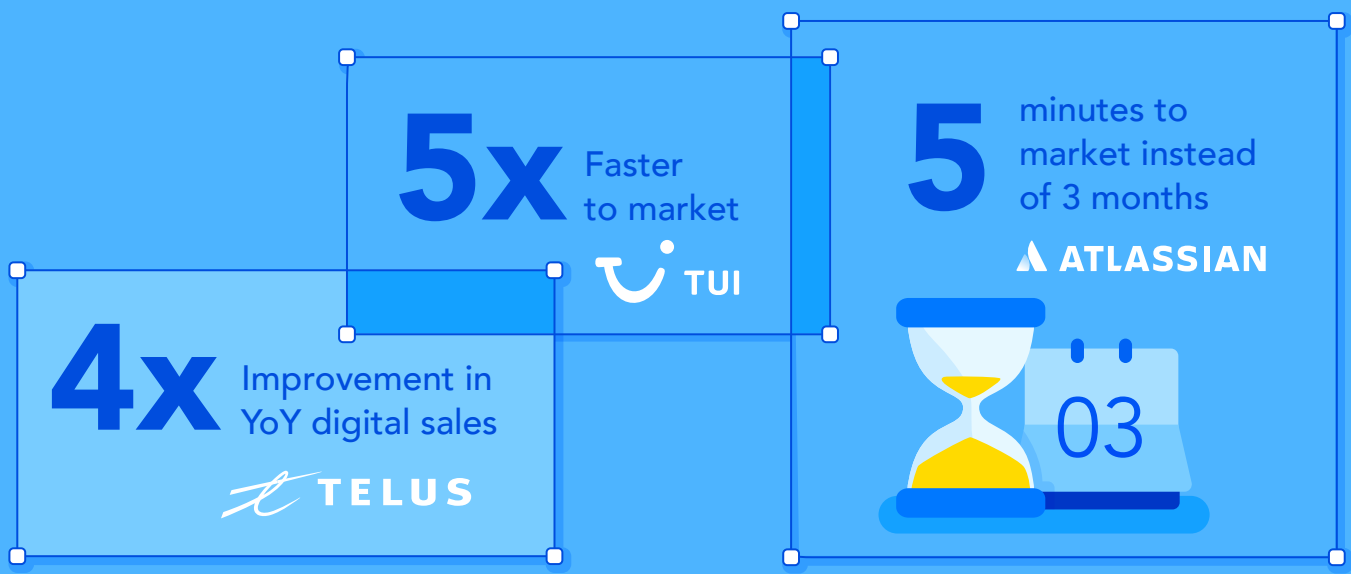
We all know what it means to scale in the general sense, but knowing whether a new platform or technology is scalable requires evaluation across multiple measures of scale.

At the base level, scale can be administrative, functional or work-load related. From a technology standpoint, it takes form in systems or processes that flex to support more users, additional functionality and traffic spikes. But companies that aspire to be digital leaders need more than basic scalability.

Leading companies are expanding to new markets, diverse digital products and more sophisticated digital experiences across channels. They need scalability that supports globalization and accelerated speed to market, increased complexity and sophistication, multichannel distribution, integration with new technology and enterprise-level security and reliability.

In our opinion, scalability for growing digital brands boils down to seven things. Read on to learn about the seven dimensions of scale to consider when choosing a content platform or another technology infrastructure. With this information, your organization can select tools and technology that bring bigger, better digital experiences to life fast and support scaling.

5x Faster to market
TUI

5 minutes to market instead of 3 months
ATLASSIAN

4x Improvement in YoY digital sales
TELUS

SCALING FOR SPEED

Accelerate production and development while reducing time to market

It's not enough for a platform to work well at your current pace — it has to enable acceleration as your business grows. Companies that scale effectively ship more products faster. Systems that lead to this success support speed-oriented practices, including iterative development, agile workflows, continuous deployment and rapid experimentation with new technologies.

Monolithic solutions don't have the capabilities or features to deliver on this. By removing the restrictions of these aging technologies and favoring something more composable and modern, daily change becomes possible. You can roll out exciting new features and updates as quickly as your team builds them.

A composable approach to your platform enables builders within your company to choose technologies that fit into existing pipelines and create a custom technology stack. As you scale, these elements can be added or replaced to extend capabilities without breaking the stack or slowing processes down in the event of upgrades or replatforms.

> "By 2023, organizations that have adopted an intelligent composable approach will outpace competition by 80% in the speed of new feature implementation."
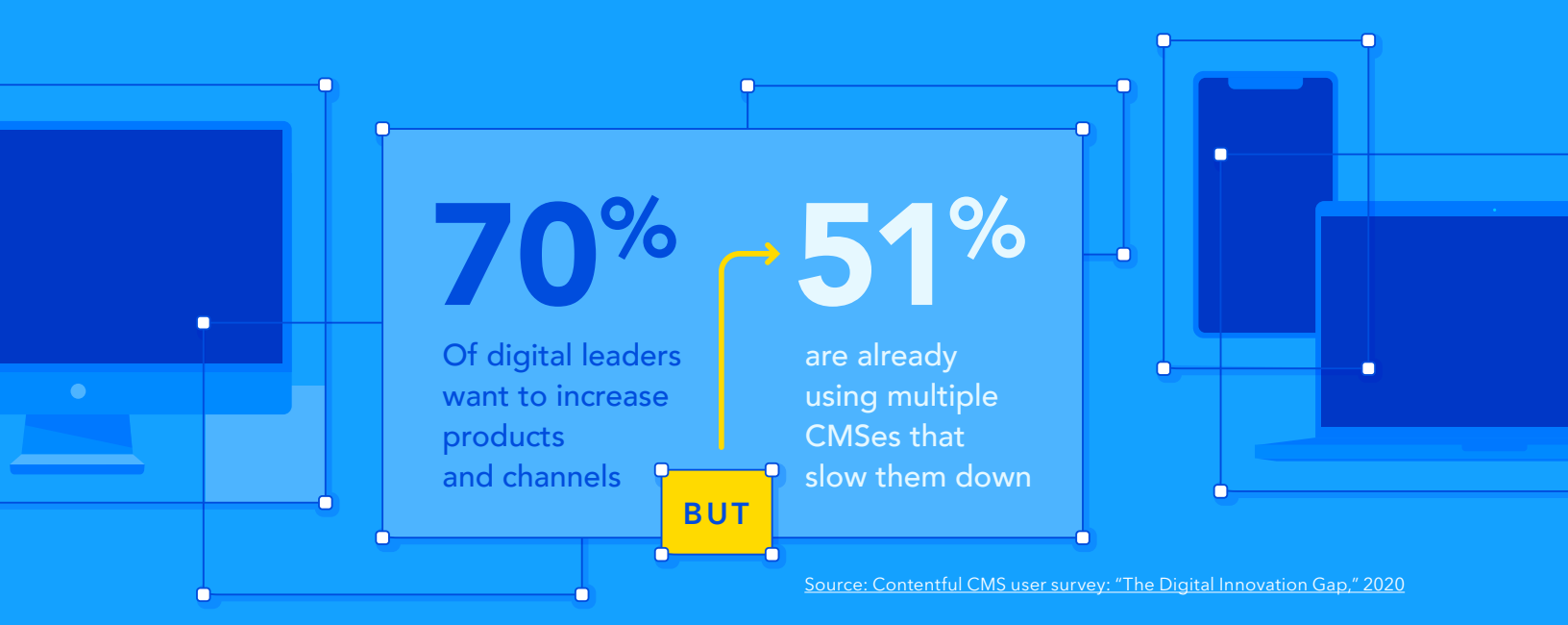>
> **Gartner Research**
> "Adopt a Composable DXP Strategy to Future-Proof Your Tech Stack"

How fast can you ship websites, microsites and apps to market?
With content at the center of a modern tech stack, it takes no time at all.

Learn more

Contentful

70%

Of digital leaders want to increase products and channels

BUT

51%

are already using multiple CMSes that slow them down

Source: Contentful CMS user survey: "The Digital Innovation Gap," 2020

SCALING HORIZONTALLY

Expand to new sites, channels and applications

A platform's ability to scale horizontally to support more sites, more channels, more digital products and more content is critical to success. "Many software platforms support a single use case across multiple business units, or multiple use cases in a single business unit. This is not [the] same thing as deploying a platform that can solve diverse business problems across the spectrum, around the world," writes Tony Byrne, founder of technology analyst firm, The Real Story Group.
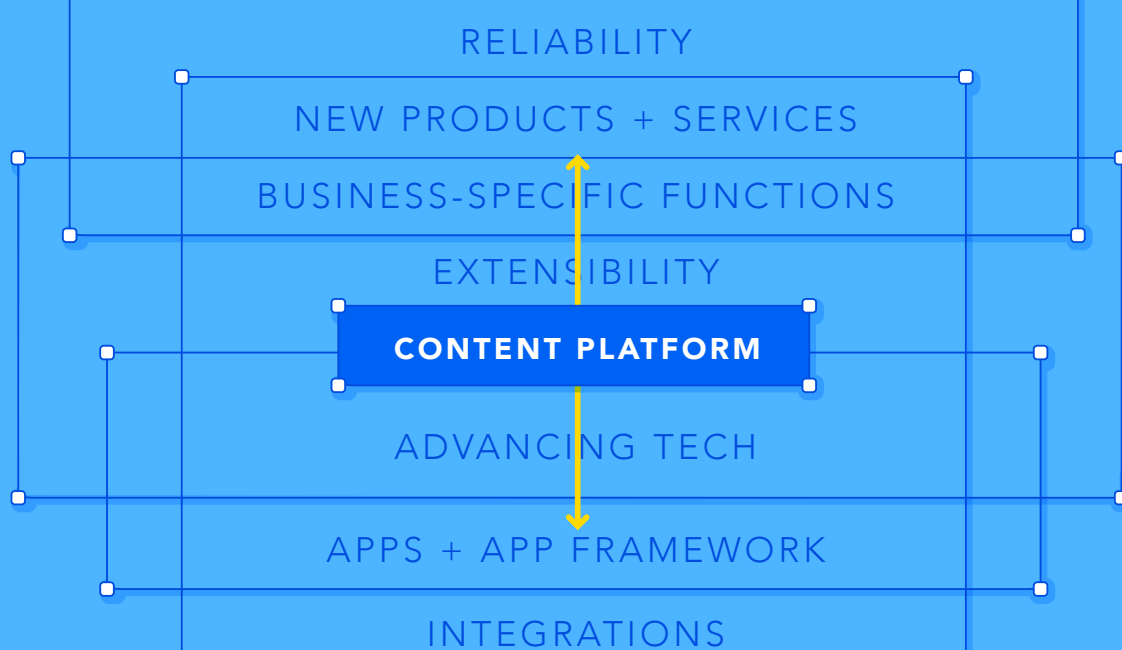
When platforms fail to scale across business units and use cases, you end up with silos and redundant work. These silos make it harder to maintain brand consistency as you expand to new sites, channels and applications. Editors get bogged down in copy-paste work across systems and become dependent on developers to publish changes across systems.

Putting a channel-agnostic content platform at the center of your technology stack removes silos and provides a consistent, seamless user experience as your digital portfolio grows. With an extensible content solution, internal users can focus on creating and building digital experiences instead of navigating a sprawling system.

How do you go from content silos to scalable solutions?
Learn more in our modern website strategy guide.

Read it now

RELIABILITY

NEW PRODUCTS + SERVICES

BUSINESS-SPECIFIC FUNCTIONS

EXTENSIBILITY

CONTENT PLATFORM

ADVANCING TECH

APPS + APP FRAMEWORK

INTEGRATIONS

SCALING VERTICALLY

Integrate sophisticated products and services

Businesses are constantly expanding and improving their products based on customer insights, market trends and advancing technology. The goal is to wow customers with something new — something that delights them and solves their problems. To do this, businesses need a composable solution that scales vertically to enable rapid additions of products and services.

The key here is to choose a platform that welcomes new technology through seamless integrations. This extends the value of existing technology investments. The ability to add or build business-specific functionality on top of your stack provides the vertical scalability necessary to deliver the increasingly sophisticated digital experiences customers want across multiple sites and channels.

Monolithic suites and platforms, which only work with preferred vendors, are slow to adopt new technologies, limiting your ability to extend your digital capabilities with new tools. API-first technologies typically offer the most extensibility and flexibility.

Is your content solution able to grow with your business needs?
Learn how a content platform helps you manage content, orchestrate experiences and deliver on any digital touchpoint — faster.

Request a demo

alpro

**AN AMBITIOUS
GLOBAL REBRAND**

In 32
markets

With mulitple
languages

In less than
9 months

Cater to new, diverse markets

Businesses of all sizes can access global markets through digital channels, but successfully scaling involves more than adding sites and translating content. Platforms that promise geographic scalability must address numerous challenges, including distributed teams and localization considerations like language and currency, legal and regulatory requirements, download speed and finally, reliability.

Speaking your customer's language goes beyond translation — it requires localization that considers colloquial expressions, local events and cultural lingo. Giving teams the flexibility they need to localize digital experiences while protecting brand consistency requires more sophisticated processes and governance features.

Legal and regulatory requirements are also a critical consideration for global businesses. An API-first solution makes it easy to swap out components to meet changing requirements without disrupting or breaking other parts of your sites, services and apps — no law breaking or tech-stack breaking here.

Do you have to trade brand consistency for localized content?
See how brands achieve both with Contentful.

Watch demo

The average cost of downtime

$84,650 per hour

X

Average downtime for an outage

1.3 hours

SCALING FOR PERFORMANCE

Address customer growth, usage spikes and storage limits

One of the most common concerns with digital products is performance or load scalability. How well does the platform perform with increased demands? Scaling for volume means choosing platforms that can handle more customers, traffic, API calls, images, content and payments — especially when they're unexpected. Businesses must ensure that the resources they invest in to acquire customers and increase usage aren't undermined by sites or apps that crash.
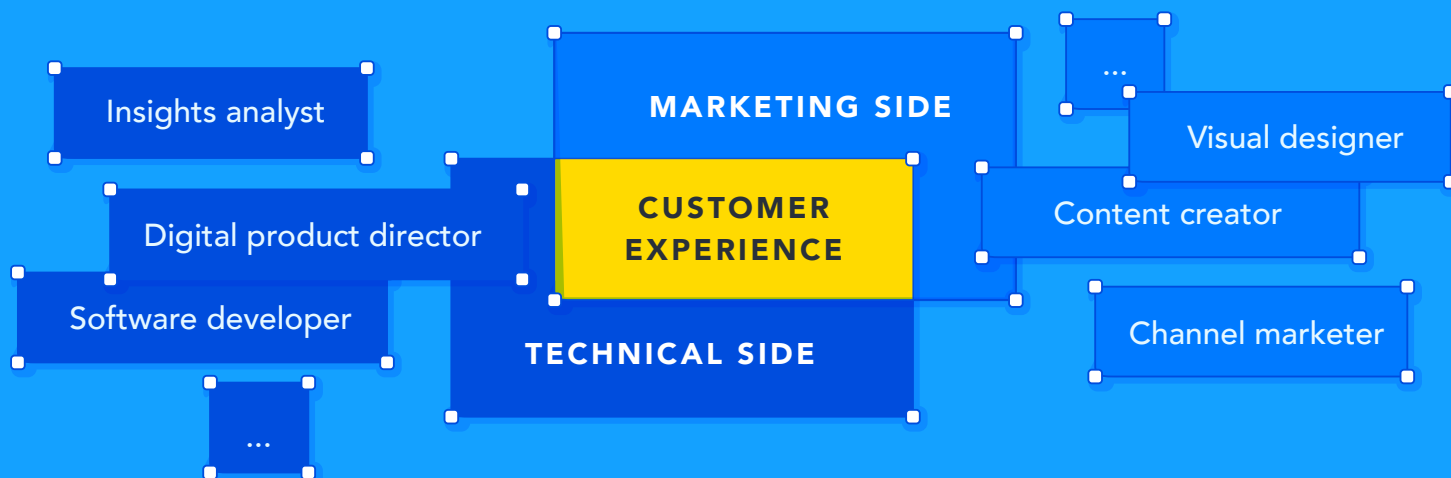
Usage spikes are a concern for retailers during the holiday rush, but they affect other industries as well. Peak commute times, holiday traffic and construction affect rideshare apps and customer support portals in the transportation industry. Sports and entertainment apps feel the pressure when serving record numbers of fans during big events like the Super Bowl. Performance issues in any of these cases can hurt customer loyalty and damage a business's reputation.

Load scalability also impacts the efficiency of day-to-day operations. Small issues, such as reports that time out, processes that slow the system down and manual workarounds, can become big problems as a business scales.

Reliable performance is a key indicator of digital maturity.
Learn how to assess your platform and architecture in our white paper on KPIs.

Check it out

MARKETING SIDE

Insights analyst

Digital product director

Software developer

...

CUSTOMER
EXPERIENCE

TECHNICAL SIDE

...

Visual designer

Content creator

Channel marketer

SCALING ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURES

Orchestrate cross-functional teams

Administrative scale — how well a system enables you to orchestrate more users and teams — is a function of growth sometimes overlooked. But it can cause huge headaches when platforms lack features to help organize, operationalize and govern users. As an organization grows, team structures, processes and workflows evolve and become more complex.

It's not simply a matter of adding users to a platform, businesses must be able to orchestrate user interactions, streamline workflows and adjust permissions as roles change. This requires flexible, granular governance features that are easy to configure and reconfigure as your organization evolves.

In his article on scale, Byrne pinpoints access control and entitlements as common challenges of scale. "Scalability means being able to connect to multiple different identity stores (the inevitable result of mergers and acquisitions, if nothing else), as well as support complex group and role structures for authorization in every facet of the software."

Look for vendors with a proven track record for supporting organizations as they scale from proof-of-concept to enterprise-level accounts.

How do you customize workflows for any team structure?
Contentful's customizable content approval workflows make it a snap.

Learn more
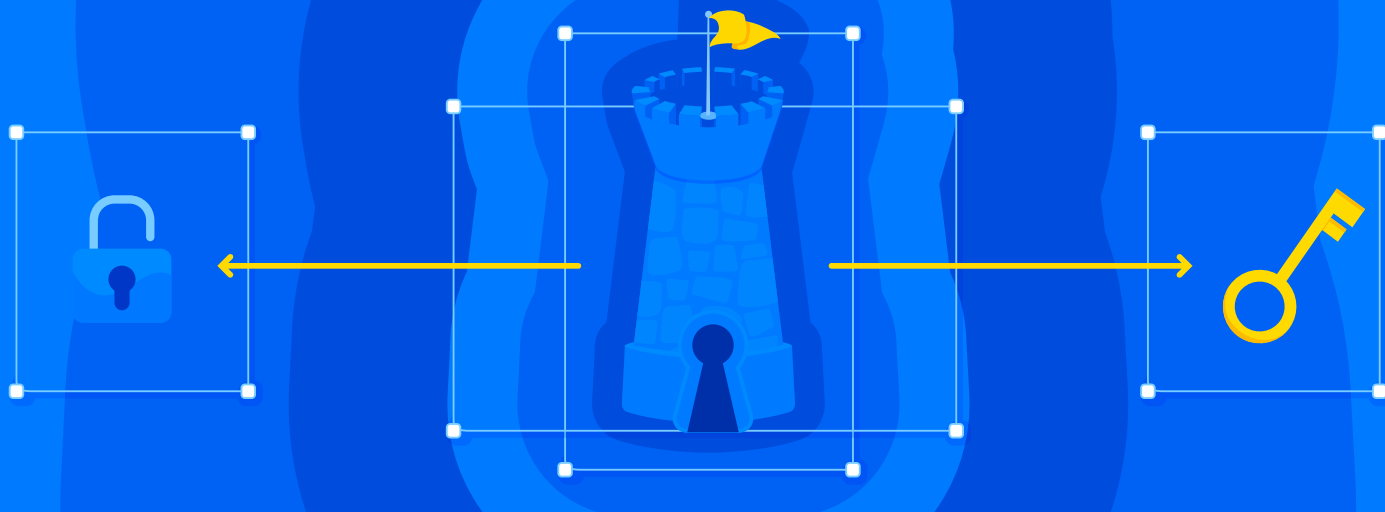
Protect scaling businesses

Nothing kills the excitement of a fast-growing product like a security breach or major outage. Sure, there may be buzz around quick iterations and failing forward, but stable companies need to balance agility with reliability, especially when it comes to security concerns that could damage their reputation. This is particularly true of high-profile companies.

"Large enterprises want to be agile like everyone else, but their stakes in the game typically have them seeking something more reliable than 'public beta.' And of course, a higher profile also means more likelihood of lawsuits, especially in litigation-happy North America," explains Byrne.

Choosing platforms that have enterprise-level security and business continuity measures in place helps minimize risks as you scale. Platform providers should be transparent about their approach to security and up-front about how their security measures keep pace with new threats. Keep in mind that plug-ins and third-party tools carry their own security risks, which should also be considered.

Could more reliable, secure tools help you build faster?
Read our blog post on software security to find out.

[Check it out]

Future-proof your business

While it's impossible to predict the future, choosing a platform that considers these seven dimensions of scale can future-proof your business, making it agile and positioned to scale. Platforms that are extensible, adapt to different workflows and evolve to offer new features are the best option now and later.

Content is the heart of every digital experience and the core of the modern technology stack. An extensible content platform can unify technology with a shared content hub at the center of the stack. With a powerful, extensible content platform in place, you can quickly spin up pre-made stacks for new sites, channels and other projects. Teams can work together or in parallel to improve efficiency, while the single source of content ensures brand consistency.

Let us show you how a content platform lays a solid foundation that supports scaling

Demo Contentful