High Code, Low Code, No Code

What Do You Really Need?

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High Code Is Necessary, But It's No Longer Enough

Introduction

Increasing demands for timely, personalized content are pushing marketers and developers to find a new, collaborative model for site building.

As digital transformation accelerates, enterprises must keep up with the pace of change without sacrificing time to market or the quality of the digital experiences they provide customers.

However, enterprises often have a large portfolio of digital websites and applications, consisting of many sites across many locations. An unprecedented volume of content has to be tailored to segmented audiences across these vast digital estates, while retaining brand consistency and remaining in compliance.

Traditionally, creating and managing content has been a collaborative process involving both developers and marketers. Updating, modifying, and optimizing content was the domain of developers who wrote code and deployed new content, websites, apps, and plug-ins. The development tasks were done at the request of marketers, who own the content creation process since they are the ones closest to the brand's messaging and customer needs. Marketers would determine what the brand needed in terms of new and updated content, put in official requests to IT, then wait on the developers to fulfill them.

This traditional approach, where developers manually write lines of code to create anything new or change any content or functionality, is known as "high code."

However, a high-code-only approach is no longer adequate to keep up with the pace of business today. Marketing campaigns need to be personalized and based on the most accurate, up-to-date data. Your customers expect content to be deployed in real time, on demand. It needs to be updated within hours or minutes of when relevant events take place. Otherwise, the customer experience is negatively affected.

In order to keep content optimized and up to date so that customer experiences are as personalized as possible, many businesses are incorporating low-code/no-code approaches to development and content management. In fact, Gartner predicts that the low-code application development market will reach $12.3 billion by 2024.

With low code/no code, the content workflow is decoupled from the code workflow, so marketers and other non-technical team members are empowered to make changes to both content and digital experiences using pre-built templates, apps, and plug-ins without relying on developers. Giving stakeholders across the

organization simple, intuitive tools to update and optimize content frees up developers to focus their time and energy on more valuable tasks.

This e-book explores how a low-code/no-code approach complements and works in harmony with existing high-code development, why it optimizes

processes and outcomes for both developers and marketers, what digital experiences are better addressed by a high-code or a low-code/no-code approach, and how to incorporate a low-code/no-code development practice into your organization.

High Code, Low Code, No Code: Who Owns the Experience?

When determining which site-building approach to use for a given situation, you need to ask: Who owns the experience?

High-code development is the traditional method, where skilled developers with in-depth knowledge of technologies and frameworks manually code and create the websites, apps, widgets, plug-ins, and whatever else the company needs for its digital properties.

High code is necessary for digital experiences that will be owned by the development team. For example, when logging into a cloud platform, the experience is completely tied to the code. The button you click has to match with the function that powers that button.

Cloud management tools must be integrated into the platform. Proprietary applications that add or enhance functionality to the site must be secure and compatible. Development at this level must be high-code; it requires specialized skills and expertise.

Low code/no code enables marketers to build and improve digital experiences without assistance from developers. It leverages component-based systems that allow the user to select pre-built elements to create and update websites, with no advanced coding required.

When the content workflow is decoupled from the code workflow, development is no longer a bottleneck for getting content out. Commands and actions can be performed with visual tools and drag-and-drop functions.

Pre-set templates and design components make reusing and recreating specific content types like landing pages, forms, and buttons much faster, so teams can publish more content across more properties without having to start from scratch every time they want to add a new component.

Many businesses today understand the advantages of a low-code/no-code approach and are increasingly investing in low-code and no-code tools. This is because significant changes in consumer behavior and preferences, spurred by rapid digitization and the COVID-19 pandemic, make the continuous optimization of customer experience more complicated than ever before.

Even when the economy is going well, businesses want their teams to be highly productive. But in an uncertain economic climate, CEOs want their staff to become even more adaptable, efficient, and resilient. Low-code/no-code tools enable more users to move forward on their individual workloads without the barriers that might have otherwise held them back.

Consumers' digital habits have also changed, such as the channels they use to engage with brands. This opens new avenues of communication and connections with customers, but brands need to be sure they're delivering the most personalized, memorable digital experiences possible; a generic or subpar digital experience can result in lost customers and lost revenue. The stakes are higher than ever.

Marketers understand how this fast-changing digital landscape impacts consumers. Since it is marketers who own the customer experience, it only makes sense that they should also own the digital experience.

The better an organization can leverage marketer expertise to stay ahead of these changing consumer dynamics, the more personalized and satisfying the customer experience will be and the more competitive the organization will become.

How a Hybrid Approach Optimizes Both Development and Marketing

Low code/no code opens the door to a new hybrid model of site building between developers and marketers, empowering both to optimize processes and drive more value for the business.

In a hybrid site-building model, developers use high code to create new modules. Then, marketers can then simply locate the module in a component library and "snap" the pieces of a new web experience together.

Developers

Traditionally, developers have been reluctant to embrace low code/no code due to concerns about control, consistency, functionality, and security.

However, when done the right way, low-code/no-code platforms can significantly benefit developers by taking many simple, mundane, yet time-consuming tasks off their plate.

Low code means developers can add new "features" or "components" to the business and remain a vital part of the digital team without being tied up with everyday tasks and back-and-forths with marketers.

When developers can devote themselves fully to high code and shift from an "app building" mindset to a "platform building" mindset, a substantial amount of time is freed up for innovation that brings the organization more value and revenue.

This includes building new modules and new functionality in existing modules that the marketers can, in turn, leverage in a low-code environment to create even richer digital experiences for customers.

Marketers

Marketers, meanwhile, can use low-code/no-code tools to perform tasks that previously would have required manual coding.

For example, let's say a marketer wants to add a lead generation form to a page where customers download an informational brochure; or assign campaign tags to a page with Google Tag Manager; or add dynamic content to a page that changes depending on specific customer data, such as age, gender, location, or purchase history.

Previously, the marketer would have to put in a request to IT and wait for developers to write the code or create the app. With low code/no code, marketers can perform many of these site-building tasks themselves.

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There are many other ways low code/no code empowers marketers and benefits the organization. With a low-code/no-code approach, marketers can:

- **Innovate without waiting for developers:** Marketers gain more control over their tasks and workflows, resulting in higher quality outputs, as no subject matter expertise is lost or misunderstood in back-and-forth communication with developers.

- **Expedite time to market:** With marketers and developers working in parallel on their respective projects, timelines and deliverables are expedited. A shorter time to market is valuable not only in meeting ever-evolving customer demands, but it also allows marketers to understand the impact of what they're developing as soon as possible.

- **Create and optimize experiences based on the customer perspective:** Marketers are more directly involved with customer engagement than developers and have a more holistic view of the customer experience, including customer pain points. They can directly apply that customer perspective when creating digital content, designing an application, or adjusting and fine-tuning experiences as customers' needs change.

With simple, intuitive interfaces and drag-and-drop functionality, marketers can preview exactly what their audience will be seeing before the project goes live, putting themselves in the customer's shoes and ironing out any wrinkles in the customer experience.

This in-depth level of customer insight could easily get lost or changed along the way when being relayed to developers through IT tickets or project briefs. With low-code tools, the creator and the author are one and the same.

Drupal and Acquia: The Ideal Foundation for a Low-Code/No-Code Strategy

The combination of Drupal and Acquia Site Studio provides the ideal composable foundation for a robust, future-proof low-code/no-code development strategy.

The low-code movement is helping organizations remove the friction between marketers and customers by having marketers involved in shaping every step in the customer experience. It also empowers developers performing high code by removing many simple, routine tasks from their schedules, giving them the time they need to innovate and be creative.

Drupal is the leading open source CMS that is API-first, as opposed to API-only, and capable of equally serving high-code applications and low-code applications. This gives organizations the best of all worlds because Drupal can be used to support high code and low code/no code individually or both at the same time.

Acquia Site Studio, the low-code site builder in Acquia's open and composable DXP, is the original low-code toolset. With Acquia Site Studio, developers and marketers can build brand-consistent sites in days, reducing time to market. Few other tools on the market can do this, and none do it quite as well.

The composable framework of Drupal paired with Acquia Site Studio gives developers and marketers the very best tools and capabilities for a best-of-all-worlds development paradigm:

- **Reusable components:** Developers can create components and store them in a searchable component library. These components only have to be built once. Anyone can preview a component and use it without taking up any of IT's time or resources.

- **Guaranteed brand compliance across all sites and channels:** Pre-approved branding and design elements provide creative freedom within the proper guardrails. Every component on every page can be customized while always staying on-brand.

- **Simple, non-technical site building and management:** A visual, drag-and-drop interface allows non-technical users to quickly assemble or update a page. They can search for components and drag them onto a layout canvas, making it easy to build a page within minutes. Real-time preview capabilities allow you to see changes immediately.

- **Pre-built modules at your disposal:** Over 46,000 pre-selected modules from the Drupal community are ready to use from day one.

- **Easy collaboration between departments:** Customizable workflows allow diverse teams to build, manage, and share content with a common set of tools.

- **Worry-free security:** The Acquia platform has been architected to the latest security standards, providing an array of robust access and authentication controls as well as firewall controls. Acquia also provides security and infrastructure monitoring services and support 24/7. Third-party audits and certifications validate the security of the Acquia platform and compliance with regulatory frameworks such as PCI-DSS, HIPAA, GDPR, FedRAMP, FERPA, SOC, and ISO 27001.

Unleash Your Creativity Now

Give your marketers and developers what they need to provide best-in-class customer experiences quickly.

Try Site Studio now
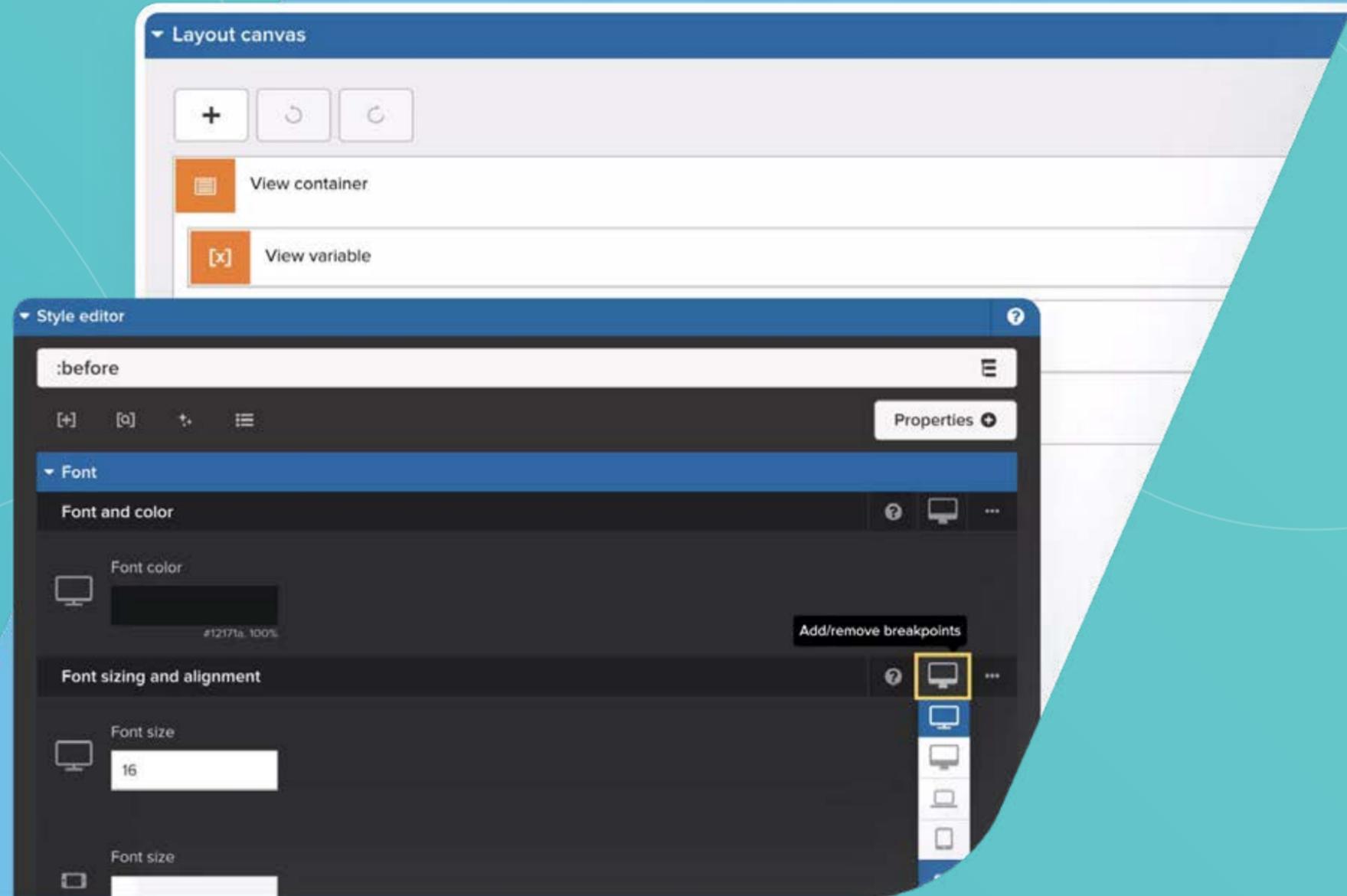
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About Acquia

Acquia empowers the world's most ambitious brands to create digital customer experiences that matter. With open source Drupal at its core, the Acquia Digital Experience Platform (DXP) enables marketers, developers, and IT operations teams at thousands of global organizations to rapidly compose and deploy digital products and services that engage customers, enhance conversions, and help businesses stand out.