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EXPERIENCE DIGITAL FREEDOM

MULTISITE MANAGEMENT

What CMOs and Business Leads Need to Know

CONTENTS

The Lay of the Land

"Sprawl." No matter the context, sprawl refers to unchecked growth that strains the underlying infrastructure. When it comes to marketing sites and digital experiences, sprawl is another name for the "multi/multi/multi" problem: The need to quickly create and manage sanctioned sites for multiple product brands, working with multiple agencies and covering multiple geographies.

No matter how you look at sprawl, it's not a pretty picture. Enterprises grappling with sprawl invariably conclude that there must be a better way. Fortunately, they're right. A centralized, **multisite management approach leveraging an open-source, cloud-based solution can give enterprises the flexibility, security, control and efficiency** they require to deliver digital experiences that keep pace with both market shifts and changes in customer demand.

If you're looking for a better centralized governance model, one that ensures IT can maintain a secure environment while giving brand teams peace of mind regarding adherence to brand standards, read on. This e-book explores the benefits of a multisite approach that enables technical and non-technical web content developers to manage hundreds or even thousands of web properties and publish new content quickly and easily… without the sprawl.

✓ From an **IT operations perspective,** when supporting multiple product brands, sprawl can look like a mismatched hodge-podge of digital properties, web development solutions, hosting platforms and management tools often held together by a disaggregated brain trust with high turnover.

✓ From a **marketer's or line of business (LoB) owner's perspective,** sprawl can look like a lot of red tape, with heavy involvement from IT and developers slowing down efforts to get new websites published (and sometimes tempting you to go rogue with some unsupported local solution).

✓ And from the **customer's perspective,** sprawl can look like poor performing websites with outdated content and inconsistent, jarring or dysfunctional UX, all leading to diminished brand loyalty.

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Multisite Management:
A Real Business Challenge

Back in 2015, Forrester reported that enterprises were managing an average of 268 customer-facing websites.[1] While that number may be different today, it certainly hasn't gone down. And that means enterprises today are either dealing with or actively trying to prevent site sprawl.

Such sprawl could manifest itself as a patchwork of Adobe, WordPress, SquareSpace (and/or other commercially available sites) and home-grown sites that IT operations — or more likely, pockets of independent "rogue" efforts — is trying to keep in motion.

There are several problems with a patched-together approach to site deployment and support:

- Management is highly inefficient, requiring too many resources to keep sites up and running while leaving too few resources to focus on innovating with new initiatives.

- Dependency on technical resources and bottlenecks caused by non-standard platforms slow efforts by non-technical web content developers to publish new sites and pages.

- Customers end up with inconsistent experiences across an enterprise's digital properties.

- Long term maintenance and support of these sites may be spotty or nonexistent.

- Security can get spotty, as well. (Who's making sure updated security patches are being applied across the patchwork of technology?)

[1] https://go.forrester.com/blogs/15-06-01-everyones_talking_about_your_digital_experience_dx_delivery_ability/

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If you're a marketer or LoB owner, you might not care how disparate systems get stitched together, so long as your digital presence continues to grow. However, you will definitely care about the following:

Customer experience

- Brand consistency
- User experience
- Website performance
- Website security

Business agility

- Responsiveness to changing customer demands
- Ease of publishing new web content
- Time to market for launching new websites or digital campaigns
- Achieving all of the above without having to open a new ticket or involve internal support teams

If these concerns are familiar to you, you should care about the tools, platforms and processes underlying your digital properties. This is not a marketing challenge or an IT challenge. It's a *business* challenge.

CASE STUDY: PHARMA, BIOTECH AND LIFE SCIENCES

astellas

Astellas Pharma Inc

Tokyo-based Astellas Pharma Inc. is a top 20 global pharmaceutical research company. Astellas is committed to turning innovative science into medical solutions that bring value and hope to patients and their families. Keeping a focus on addressing unmet medical needs and conducting business with ethics and integrity enables Astellas to improve the health of people throughout the Americas and around the world.

Situation:

Astellas needed a new network of global and regional sites to maintain corporate transparency and increase brand awareness.

Challenge:

A legacy content management system (CMS) and infrastructure made it impossible to unify more than 30 regional sites under one global brand.

Solution:

Astellas identified the multisite approach as the best fit to execute digital governance across security, time-to-market, standardization and user experience.

Results:

5 mos To launch Astella's global corporate site

3 mos Of replatforming efforts led to launching 12 additional regional sites

Through a multisite approach utilizing Acquia Site Factory, Astellas can enforce brand guidelines to minimize the gap between global and regional sites. For end-users, this means that every interaction with Astellas is accessible and intuitive. Today, the Astellas team is empowered to launch regional sites knowing that they are fully protected by our strict security standards.

Read more at:
www.acquia.com/resources/case-study/astellas-pharma-inc

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The Goal: Flexibility and Operational Efficiency

When an enterprise acknowledges that its patchwork, improvised website management processes are no longer sustainable, they come around to the idea of replatforming with a **multisite approach**. That's a good idea, because replatforming allows you to regain control and operational efficiency by migrating your web content and properties away from that sprawling hodge podge of antiquated or otherwise inadequate systems.

The decision to replatform can be triggered by any of a number of factors:

Mergers and acquisitions

Redundancies and/or incompatibilities resulting from the mashing together of two or more previously independent organizations, each with its own operational philosophy, can often be impossible to simplify and standardize without replatforming.

The sunsetting of a legacy content management system

Sometimes organizations realize that their legacy CMS, built for a different time when all digital development had to run through the IT team, gets in the way of the organization's ability to respond to or anticipate shifts in customer demand. With that realization comes the need for replatforming.

A more profound digital transformation initiative

Every day more enterprises are making an organization-wide investment in common platforms to break down internal silos. This means giving up on continuously modifying what you have and simply implementing something new.

Replatforming to a robust multisite solution gives enterprises a new foundation on which to modernize their development and management practices. Replatforming offers the following advantages:

More efficient management:

Creating a central repository for all content and centralizing operations allows enterprises to create once and publish anywhere, requiring fewer resources for content oversight and technical support.

Tighter governance:

To ensure consistency and compliance across your sites and the site development process, you need standards and, where feasible, rules-based controls. Replatforming can provide you with a single dashboard to manage the creation and deployment of websites, including setting code standards, and support overall code management.

Technical control with creative flexibility:

The right solution will give you control over website management and new content development. At the same time, it can empower contributors across brands to quickly and easily develop digital properties that are aligned with the needs and expectations of their target markets.

CASE STUDY: CONSUMER PACKAGED GOODS

SABMiller

As part of the Anheuser-Busch InBev brewing company, SABMiller brings more than 200 local and internationally renowned beers (such as Peroni Nastro Azzurro, Pilsner Urquell and Grolsch) to millions of people.

Situation:

SABMiller needed to provide consistent brand experiences across an enormous portfolio of websites while simultaneously minimizing risk and reducing costs.

Challenge:

With more than 200 brands in 80 countries, built up through a series of mergers and acquisitions, it was difficult to guarantee brand consistency at a reasonable price.

Solution:

By redeploying existing code on Acquia Site Factory, SABMiller not only improved speed to market, but significantly reduced site complexity and duplication. SABMiller significantly reduced risk, too. The company was able to ensure every site was compliant with regulatory obligations by implementing mandatory components of code in the DNA of every website.

Results:

90% Of SABMiller's brand websites are on Acquia Site Factory

100+ Sites built on or migrated onto Acquia Site Factory across six regions in less than 20 months

50% Decreased web production costs

Read more at:
acquia.com/resources/case-study/sabmiller

Is the Multisite Approach Right for Your Enterprise?

A multisite approach can be the right one for your organization if either of the following applies:

1. **A number of your sites could rely on a standardized code base and utilize a core site architecture and capabilities**

A platform that can support a significant number of web properties, leaving the rest to be built as stand-alone sites or "snowflakes," offers the greatest operational and cost efficiencies. Examples include developing numerous landing pages or product description pages, or even sub-sites, that can all follow the same format, or developing localized versions of the same page that are translated into different languages.

2. **You want to empower non-technical team members to create new digital properties without involving your technical teams**

The right multisite platform will give non-technical "site builders" (for example, someone in a remote marketing role with limited visibility into the intricacies that go into standing up a site) the ability to duplicate sites, add domains, manage permissions and so on, without needing assistance from a developer or other IT resource. This sort of self-service capability, commonplace in the consumer world, is becoming standard, and even expected, in the business world.

The bottom line is, with the right multisite approach, your teams can create and manage the great digital experiences your brand needs and your customers want. And with the governance capabilities afforded by the right multisite solution, IT can rest assured that digital properties are being built and maintained according to rigorous standards, allowing them to focus on innovation, rather than maintenance and monitoring for compliance.

CASE STUDY: HIGHER EDUCATION

THE GEORGE
WASHINGTON
UNIVERSITY
WASHINGTON, DC

George Washington University

Established in 1821, George Washington University (GW) has been educating the next generation of leaders in government, international affairs, journalism and more for nearly 200 years.

Situation:

GW needed a digital experience platform that guaranteed both site reliability and operational efficiency to maintain the premium service its community expects.

Challenge:

Internal infrastructure and databases introduced unpredictable IT costs and prevented the web services team from focusing on platform innovation.

Solution:

As the GW team began to evaluate alternatives to DIY hosting, a multisite approach via Acquia Site Factory emerged as the solution best suited to support the university's business needs. The multisite approach allowed GW to rely on one fully managed cloud that unifies platform updates and maintains security and compliance across its entire network of sites.

Results:

Today, GW is able to create department sites faster and more efficiently than ever before. By offering every stakeholder a standard Drupal build, the web services team can provision sites for any school, department or university branch in a number of minutes.

300+ Sites migrated to Acquia Site Factory in seven weeks

90% Decrease in time required to provision a new site

100% Recorded site uptime

Read more at:
acquia.com/resources/case-study/george-washington-university

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11

Is the Multisite Approach Right for Your Enterprise? (continued)

A Word on Drupal and Multisite

Drupal is a free and open source content management framework for building digital experiences. Drupal's multisite capability allows you to set up **multiple websites with the same code base and the same core, themes and modules**. It's a good basic solution for managing a few sites but when it gets into the dozens or hundreds of sites, a more robust solution such as Acquia Site Factory should be considered.

To learn more about Drupal and multisite:
drupal.org/docs/8/multisite

A Better Way Forward

If you're interested in exploring a multisite approach for your brand, consider Acquia Site Factory. Site Factory is a multisite platform-as-a-service that enables your IT and digital organizations to efficiently deliver and govern multiple sites at scale.

Acquia Site Factory standardizes the technology and processes needed for building, provisioning and maintaining hundreds or thousands of digital properties. With its centralized cloud management console, **Acquia Site Factory gives your digital platform team and developers the tools, visibility and control needed to manage multiple sites quickly and efficiently, all the while ensuring brand and code consistency.**

With Acquia Site Factory, non-technical users can create sites with the click of a button, and by enabling IT operations to deploy, manage and govern sites centrally, Acquia Site Factory helps transform this team into a trusted service provider within the organization, rather than a bottleneck.

CASE STUDY: CONSUMER PACKAGED GOODS

CONAGRA
FOODSERVICE

Conagra Brands

Conagra Brands, Inc. is an American packaged foods company that makes and sells products under various brand names available in supermarkets, restaurants and food service establishments. Conagra Brands brings to market a rich heritage of great food and a new, sharpened focus on innovation. Several of Conagra's iconic food brands include Hunt's, Reddi-wip and Healthy Choice.

Situation:

With 40 percent of consumers learning about food and recipes through websites and mobile applications, Conagra Brands recognized the need to reinvigorate its online presence by establishing one platform that would make site governance easy and bring its digital brand to life.

Solution:

Utilizing a multisite approach, Conagra Brands created a base template that contained all core functionality required by a brand site. When Conagra needed to spin up a new site for Swiss Miss or Orville Redenbacher's, for example, they simply duplicated the site template. Because every site shares a single code base, platform maintenance and governance is effortless. With Acquia Site Factory, Conagra can support its broad portfolio of brands, in addition to corporate, careers, food service, nutrition and recipe sites.

Challenge:

The company's brands were operating on separate digital platforms, causing each brand to spend considerable time maintaining and updating websites.

Results:

Conagra Brands assembled a digital platform that makes multisite governance and delivery fast and removes the complexity from maintaining a network of brand sites. Conagra's multisite approach, including integration with their preferred DMP and CRM systems, has yielded enviable metrics:

15% Decrease in bounce rate

27% Increase in site visitor time consuming content

114% Increase of recipe conversion rate

Read more at:
acquia.com/resources/case-study/conagra-brands

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Recap

Customer experience is a fierce battleground for brands today. We know that a consistent, compelling customer experience builds brand loyalty. And that means consistency across your web presence — in look, feel and user experience — is paramount when it comes to creating and maintaining a cadre of vocal brand advocates.

Marketers and IT resources alike must be properly equipped and empowered to build and maintain a great customer experience. Marketing teams need to move fast and be responsive to customer demands. IT teams need to be business enablers while guaranteeing compliance and security. The right multisite management platform gives these teams what they need.

When you adopt a multisite approach, you'll have a secure, flexible, and agile foundation on which to build brand consistency and ensure optimal site performance. Beyond that, you'll find yourself overseeing a coherent and manageable ecosystem of web properties, not a disparate, siloed and impossible-to-manage sprawl.

With the ability to launch hundreds or thousands of sites from a single code base and manage them from a centralized console, multisite management with Acquia Site Factory gives you the cloud-based agility, elasticity and scalability to deliver digital experiences that win customers, and keep them coming back.

To learn more about Acquia's multisite approach, visit:

acquia.com/products/drupal-cloud/site-factory

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ABOUT ACQUIA

Acquia is the open source digital experience company. We provide the world's most ambitious brands with technology that allows them to embrace innovation and create customer moments that matter. At Acquia, we believe in the power of community — giving our customers the freedom to build tomorrow on their terms.

acquia.com

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