

WHY IT'S TIME TO MIGRATE TO DRUPAL

***(AND 6 BEST PRACTICES FOR A
PAIN-FREE MIGRATION)***

A guide for marketers, developers and business owners looking to transfer online content and functionality to a more robust, scalable and flexible content management system



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In today's digital landscape, a content management system (CMS) is one of your most important tools. Customers want fast, seamless experiences that meet their needs, and prospects expect easy-to-find content. Yet all too often, an expensive, outdated or overly complex CMS hampers the ability to turn your vision for customer excellence into reality. And every wasted minute that customers and prospects spend wrestling with downtime or unclear interfaces impacts the bottom line.

Increasingly, marketing and IT leaders are turning to Drupal to give them the secure, reliable and intuitive solutions needed to build and manage customer experiences fast. As the world's leading open source CMS used by recognized brands across industries, Drupal supports growth, optimized customer experiences and digital application innovation.

If you're thinking about changing your CMS, or simply wrestling with the reality that your current CMS isn't delivering what you need,

***HERE'S A CLOSER LOOK AT
HOW DRUPAL CAN HELP.***

CUSTOMERS WANT FAST, SEAMLESS EXPERIENCES

THE BENEFITS OF DRUPAL:

WHY MIGRATE

Drupal is an open source content management system used by more than a million sites globally.¹ As a solution, Drupal solves some of today's most urgent business challenges.



CREATE UNFORGETTABLE CUSTOMER EXPERIENCES



Brands invest in Drupal because it is flexible, interoperable, scalable and provides an excellent total cost of ownership (TCO). Specific winning features include:

- Security:** Drupal is designed with rigorous security needs in mind, including a dedicated security team and features such as granular access controls and database encryption.
- Scalability:** Drupal scales fast by supporting rapid content growth, content caching and server scaling capabilities.
- Community:** Drupal has a rich community of over 1.4 million users in 230 countries² that continue to innovate, develop new tools and provide expert insights to brands using the product.

Accessibility: The Drupal experience management platform makes it easy to achieve your goals – with mobile-first capabilities, semantic code handling for screen readers, the ability to be FedRAMP and W3C compliant and much more.

User Experience: With additions such as Acquia Site Studio, Drupal offers a user experience with streamlined workflows that make it easy to tap into intuitive, feature-rich toolsets. Drupal becomes a digital experience platform that developers and marketers alike can leverage to create unforgettable customer experiences.

¹ <https://www.drupal.org/project/usage/drupal>

² <https://www.drupal.org/getting-involved>

6 BEST PRACTICES FOR PLANNING YOUR DRUPAL MIGRATION



If you're considering a move to Drupal, the following ideas can help you outline a migration strategy that shortens time to value, gets new applications and customer experiences into market and minimizes challenges along the way. Acquia works with brands to audit their needs, provides tools including Acquia Cloud Platform and Site Studio to get more out of Drupal and supports migrations. Here are some factors to consider based on hundreds of successful projects:



SECTION 01

OUTLINE YOUR LONG-TERM BUSINESS GOALS.

What problems are you trying to solve? That's a great starting point. Identify the pain points with your current CMS. Now imagine your ideal content management system, unconstrained by the limitations of your existing system. What features would you want? How would customers interact with your experience? What workflows would you simplify and streamline for content creators, marketers and developers? Some specific questions to help guide the conversation include:

- / What's currently working – and what's not working – with your current content program and platform?**
- / What business needs would you like your site to meet that it's not?**

- / Do you need multilingual capabilities, accessibility features, or additional tools?**
- / Consider your long-term content goals. Where do you want your content to be in 6 months, 1 year, or 18 months? What technology do you envision needing to support that?**
- / Who in the organization – and external vendors, such as agency partners – interact with the content solution?**

Once you've taken stock of where you're going and outlined key business goals, it's possible to determine what migration strategy is right for you.



SECTION 02

***SELECT THE
MIGRATION
MODEL THAT'S
THE RIGHT
STRATEGIC FIT.***





IMPLEMENT A BRAND REFRESH

There are multiple ways to approach your migration – and the right choice comes down to how satisfied you are with your current solution or how much you’re looking for a fresh take on your digital experiences.

If you’re mostly happy with your current content, but just want a better CMS experience, higher reliability and security, the “Lift and Shift” approach might be for you. This can be a good solution when:

- /// You want to keep most or all of your current branding.
- /// Your current content model and feature set is largely meeting business needs.
- /// You have a significant amount of unstructured content that could be difficult or costly to migrate automatically.

Is it time for a complete overhaul? A migration to Drupal is a great time to completely reimagine your content experience. Reinventing your site allows you to consider:

- /// Implementing a refresh of your brand, from visuals to experience-level changes.
- /// Adopting an entirely new content model to better meet customer needs and your changing vision for your organization.
- /// Granting you the ability to implement new functionality.

If your organization falls somewhere in between, an incremental migration can allow you to migrate more straightforward aspects of your digital experience first. More complex sections of the site that require more work, such as e-commerce pages or custom functionality, can be migrated in phases. As your business objectives become clear, it’s easy to identify the roadmap that best fits your organization.



SECTION 03

**CAPTURE
YOUR CONTENT
MODELS –
CURRENT AND
FUTURE.**

The next step of the process involves mapping your current content model, ideating your future content model and assessing the overlaps and gaps.

Mapping your existing content model means looking at factors like:

- / How structured is your site content?**
- / How do you extract data from the site, such as via API or exporting .csv files?**
- / Does your current system use any taxonomy, such as tags?**
- / Do you currently attribute authorship of your content?**
- / Do you maintain revision histories, audit trails or content in different publication states, from draft to published?**
- / Is there multilingual content, and if so, does it exist as separate stand-alone content or is it a “translation” of existing content?**

MAPPING CURRENT MODELS

The screenshot shows the GitHub repository page for 'acquia/drupal-spec-tool'. The repository has 16 watchers, 80 stars, and 18 forks. It contains 99 commits, 4 branches, 0 packages, 4 releases, and 6 contributors. The latest commit is by TravisCarden, dated 26 days ago. The repository includes a README, a LICENSE.txt, and a composer.json file. The file list shows the following items:

File/Directory	Description	Time Ago
docs	Updated changelog.	4 months ago
features	Updated image styles and effects for recent Lightning changes.	3 months ago
src/Context	Resolves #10: Multiple bundles with the same label break ERD generation.	4 months ago
tests	Added default feature files. (#37)	4 months ago
var	Added acquia/coding-standards.	10 months ago
.gitignore	Added acquia/coding-standards.	10 months ago
.travis.yml	Updated ORCA integration. Added D9 readiness job.	26 days ago
LICENSE.txt	Added license text.	2 years ago
composer.json	Updated composer.json to allow Drupal 9.	27 days ago

From there, it's time to ask key questions about your future desired content. Start by determining what features are must-haves. Include any features you don't currently have but want, and consider eliminating features you have but don't use.

INSIGHT:

Acquia has developed a tool that's available on GitHub, to help you quickly transfer your content model into a Drupal-friendly set of specs. Access it [here](#).



SECTION 04

MAP YOUR CONTENT.



YOU'LL MAP EXISTING CONTENT TO WHERE IT WILL GO

With the content models defined, now you'll map existing content to where it will go in Drupal. How will you port existing data over? There are numerous ways to do so. These might involve leveraging your existing content management system's API, creating a Drupal-friendly MySQL dump of your existing database or using SQL

queries to export data into .csv files. Determining these points helps clarify your timeline and the specific support you'll need.

You'll also explore dependencies – such as content complexities, user access mapping and more. With these defined, you'll create a

one-to-one mapping of your existing CMS source to the Drupal destination. If you access the Spec Tool, it contains tabs to simplify the mapping process and support the migration more seamlessly.

SECTION 05

***OUTLINE
YOUR PLAN
FOR EXTERNAL
SERVICES.***



THE QUALITY OF THE DIGITAL EXPERIENCE YOU PROVIDE RELIES ON A HOST OF OTHER SERVICES.

Do you connect to external APIs? Are there integrations that you've wanted but haven't been able to achieve in the past? Drupal supports more than 45,000 external services modules – including Google Analytics and Salesforce integrations – that can help you expand your experience and website capabilities.

[Search the full database here.](#)

The screenshot shows the Drupal.org website interface. At the top is a navigation bar with links for 'Why Drupal?', 'Build', 'Solutions', 'Services', 'Community', 'Resources', 'Give', 'Events', and a highlighted 'Try Drupal' button. Below the navigation is the Drupal logo and the heading 'Download & Extend'. There are tabs for 'Drupal Core', 'Distributions', 'Modules', and 'Themes', with 'Modules' selected. The main content area displays '45,143 modules match your search' and a list of filter options: Maintenance status, Development status, Module categories, Works with, Status, Stability, and Security advisory coverage. A search input field and a 'Search' button are also present. On the right side, there are two sections: 'New Modules' listing items like 'BEE Hotel' and 'Coronavirus Live Tracker', and 'Most installed' listing items like 'Chaos Tool Suite (ctools)' and 'Token'.

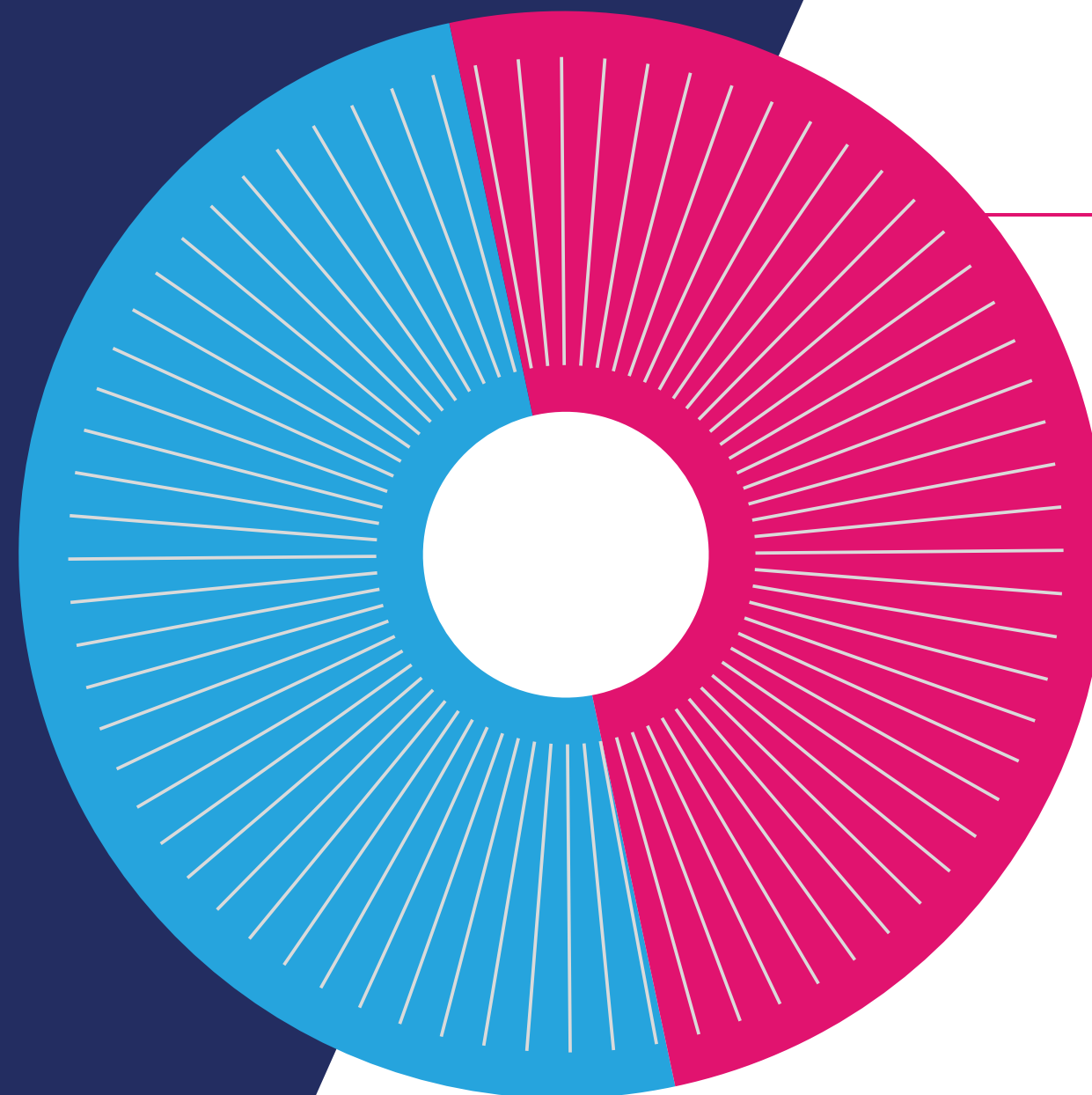
Extend and customize Drupal functionality with contributed modules. If a module doesn't quite do what you want it to do, if you find a bug or have a suggestion, then [join forces](#) and help the module maintainer. Or, share your own by [starting a new module](#).



SECTION 06

**USE THEMING
TO CONSIDER
UX AND
BRANDING
DESIGN.**

During the theming stage of your plan, you can leverage Drupal's themes as a starting point for design. Start with wireframes and design before doing anything else, so you'll have a clear working visual that can be updated and act as a "source of truth" across your design and development teams. Does your organization have multiple sites to design and manage? Solutions like Acquia Site Studio are add-ons that allow you to build new experiences in a low-code environment while you keep your sites compliant and on-brand – and speed up the development process by up to 50%.



50%

FASTER DEVELOPMENT

Once these steps are complete, it's time to execute the migration strategy you selected:

**LIFT AND SHIFT,
REIMAGINING
YOUR SITE OR
INCREMENTAL
MIGRATIONS.**

OPTIMIZING YOUR LAUNCH FOR MAXIMUM IMPACT



You've defined your business goals, mapped your content and navigated the technological journey of migrating your content management system to a new platform.

Here's a checklist to help you ensure that you have a successful launch and plan for ongoing management:

- / Set a date to go live. Prior to the date, implement a content freeze – no new content or content changes – until the Drupal site is live and tested.**
- / Perform a final export (if needed) to ensure that Drupal reflects all content up-to-the-minute on your previous CMS.**
- / Conduct final user acceptance testing (UAT) on the site.**
- / Generate a sitemap prior to launch.**

On an ongoing basis, your checklist should also include:

- / Search engine optimization: Ensure that your content reflects your SEO strategy for maximum visibility and discoverability.**
- / Sitemap: Verify that your sitemap is updated and reflects the latest content.**
- / Redirects: Install the 404 module to keep your redirects pointing to the right place.**

PLANNING FOR A SUCCESSFUL LAUNCH



CASE STUDY

Adtalem Global Education’s mission is to empower students to achieve goals, find success and have a global impact. Adtalem required robust content management capabilities, to add new content as well as adjust their sophisticated e-commerce platform. The Adtalem team was using another content management system for experience management and Elastic Path for e-commerce. The combined environment was highly unstable, non-performant and created errors throughout the process, which negatively impacted customer experience and customer conversions. Additionally, Adtalem’s previous site was difficult and inflexible for content authors, limiting the company’s ability to deploy revised content in response to market conditions.

The company saw an opportunity to implement the world’s first instance of Acquia Cloud Platform and Salesforce B2B Commerce. The team worked with our partner agency Avionos on their migration. After selecting a partner to balance the functionality with stability and operational performance, the team used a hybrid agile approach to develop a site that simplified customer transactions and helped employees reach their goals.



SPECIFIC OUTCOMES INCLUDE:

100%

The site has performed perfectly, with 100% uptime, since the formal launch of the new brand.

10+

The site is performing double digits higher for same-day sales, year over year.

35%

The site is 35% faster overall, with homepage and top 10 pages load times of <1 second – down from ~5 seconds previously.

10-25%

The backend integration throughput is now more stable and 10-25% times faster within the overall solution.

THE ROLE OF ACQUIA AND DRUPAL

One decision that makes migration to Drupal easier is leveraging a cloud provider. A cloud provider reduces the time spent managing the infrastructure and allows your team to shift focus to your Drupal application.

Acquia Cloud Platform lets enterprises and brands access the solutions they need for building, hosting and managing Drupal sites. Acquia's platform – with tools such as Acquia Site Studio – helps you build and manage digital experiences of all sizes, through optimized workflows and best-in-class features.

Acquia's platform allows you make the most of Drupal's capabilities by offering:

- / Security by design: Increase the security of your digital experiences with additional offerings, including built-in layers of protection such as CDN and Isolation.**
- / Optimized developer experience: Build, test and optimize new sites with our developer tools, including APIs, monitoring and integration.**
- / Drupal-specialized hosting and infrastructure: Acquia Cloud Platform's hosting solutions are custom built with the needs of Drupal 8/9 sites and applications in mind.**

- / Expert Drupal support: Acquia's expert teams can support brands on every aspect of their Drupal journey, including application development and data migration.**
- / Low-code design and management: Acquia's Site Studio offers a low-code solution to quickly and efficiently build digital experiences, empowering marketers and other non-developers and simplifying ongoing content management.**

BRINGING IT ALL TOGETHER



Your content management system is the cornerstone of the digital experience you're able to provide for site visitors and customers. Don't let a restrictive CMS or overly complex interface slow down your development, hamper employee productivity or lead to bad customer experiences. Tap into the power of Drupal and Acquia Cloud Platform to create secure, scalable and cutting-edge digital experiences that raise brand awareness, convert prospects into customers and keep customers coming back for more.

TAKEAWAYS:

- // Assess if your current CMS is supporting all of your business needs. If not, consider leveraging Drupal's open source CMS, which is reliable, secure, highly customizable and leveraged by some of the world's most demanding brands.
- // Determine which migration strategy is the best fit for your needs: Incremental Migration, Reimagining Your Site or Lift and Shift.
- // Follow six simple best practices to map out the information you need for a seamless migration.
- // Pair Drupal with Acquia Cloud Platform and Acquia Site Studio for the latest in security features, developer experience, customized hosting offers and easy-to-use building tools.
- // Deliver consistent, exceptional digital experiences across channels by leveraging the Acquia Open Digital Experience Platform, the only DXP optimized for Drupal.

ARE YOU READY TO EXPLORE HOW DRUPAL'S CONTENT MANAGEMENT SYSTEM CAN TAKE YOUR DIGITAL EXPERIENCE TO THE NEXT LEVEL?

Learn more about Drupal and
Acquia Cloud Platform today.

[LEARN MORE ►](#)



Acquia

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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.

