

# ***WHY GO IT ALONE?***

**The Hidden Costs and Competitive  
Disadvantage of DIY Drupal Hosting**



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# INTRODUCTION

**Organizations that use Drupal understand its power and flexibility. Drupal is an open source technology, which means the software is free. But beyond being free, Drupal is also supported by one of the largest and most innovative open source communities in the world.**

This community continuously contributes new capabilities and integrations based on their own organization's needs as well as the evolving demands of customers everywhere. These contributions then become available for all Drupal users, which is why Drupal users are generally ahead of proprietary platform users when it comes to adopting new technologies.

Drupal's flexibility, adaptability and extensive contributor community make it easy to be innovative and keep up with the expectations of your customers. But when you have to create and maintain the

infrastructure necessary to ensure your Drupal application is always available, and that your developers have all the tools they need to build digital experiences, it can quickly get complicated and expensive. Worst of all, the flexibility Drupal promises is now diminished, because your team has to spend time maintaining, updating and securing your infrastructure — time they could spend innovating.

## **WHY DIY ISN'T WISE**

Before looking closely at the ins and outs of DIY Drupal Hosting, let's look at how DIY plays out in less complicated scenarios.

People who have tried DIY projects around the house know all too well that it can be much harder than it looks. What starts out as a short list of maintenance and set-up requirements quickly becomes overwhelming. The deeper you get into the project, the more expensive and time-consuming it becomes. In many cases, it takes significantly longer than you predicted and the work gets stalled — or it never gets completed at all.

DIY might make sense to fix a clog in your sink, but you wouldn't want to install a new radiator or septic system if you're not an experienced plumber. It's much the same with Drupal hosting.

Luckily, there is a way to leverage the power of Drupal while avoiding the challenges, headaches and expenses of doing it yourself. In this e-book, we will describe the challenges of DIY Drupal hosting in the enterprise — from the hidden costs to the security risks and the ongoing maintenance that such efforts demand.

**SECTION 1**

**THE HIDDEN COSTS OF DIY**

Your hosting platform can become a money pit



# THE HIDDEN COSTS OF DIY

One reason that organizations are tempted to do things themselves is that they fail to consider the full scope of everything they will end up doing. Sure, Drupal is free, and hosting **seems** cheap, but you still have to build and manage all the infrastructure that supports what you do with Drupal. This can be quite daunting.

“Organizations fail to consider the full scope of everything they will end up doing themselves.”

## SETTING UP SCALABLE AND SECURE INFRASTRUCTURE

Right off the bat, you have to **build a hosting infrastructure**. You have to choose from hosting on-premises or in a cloud of your choice, and then from there you have to configure storage, databases and file systems as well as set up web servers, caching, load balancers and your content delivery network (CDN).

After that, you will need to implement **monitoring and management tools** to ensure availability. But monitoring for availability isn't enough; you also need to build resilience into your platform and ensure all aspects of the infrastructure automatically scale to accommodate demand. So even if your Drupal application suddenly gets hit by thousands or even hundreds of thousands of customers — your infrastructure is ready.

But you're still not finished. Sometimes it isn't traffic that causes your site to go down; it's the infrastructure itself that fails. You need to ensure that this whole infrastructure is **highly available** and that you have a fail-safe business continuity plan in place in the off chance that something does happen to your primary infrastructure.

Once you are certain the infrastructure that supports your Drupal application is sufficiently performant, available and resilient, you will need to set up **development environments** and support those as well. Your dev environments must be compatible with the systems your developers are using, and your developers must have all the resources they need to work effectively.

On top of all this, your site needs to be **secure**. This means ensuring the security of all of the components of your infrastructure and securing your application. And that becomes more complex if you need to meet requirements for specific **compliance** standards, such as HIPAA, PCI or FedRAMP.



## **RESOURCE, TIME AND OPPORTUNITY COSTS**

Once everything is set up you might think you are done, but that's the trick: all of these facets of your infrastructure require **maintenance**. From ensuring you are using the latest EC2 nodes to implementing ever-evolving infrastructure security best practices, maintaining your hosting platform can consume multiple hours per week and require a lot of effort from your team.

And if you should decide to do the work internally, does your IT team have the required **expertise**? If not, how much training will they need? How long will that take?

Your in-house developers may be talented and capable. But do you really want them spending their **time** managing cloud servers, storage and databases when they could be iterating on the Drupal application itself? Is setting up an infrastructure the best use of their time? Wouldn't it be better for them to focus on revenue-generating innovations, such as optimizing an e-commerce site or creating engaging, cross-channel digital experiences for customers?





## ***IT ALL ADDS UP***

Ultimately, while focused on maintenance and responding to urgent troubleshooting, your team loses time they could spend developing Drupal applications. This means your organization loses valuable progress that could have been made towards strategic company initiatives. Unless you have the proper tools to handle cloud management, including everything needed for monitoring and governance of your infrastructure, the cost and the risk you face will be significant.



**A considerable risk to hosting your Drupal site alone is a slower speed to market. Companies will need to invest considerable time in infrastructure configuration and DevOps, which impacts velocity and focus on other workstreams for websites. Organizations also run the risk of higher total cost of ownership over the long term.** ”

RICARDO OSUNA, SENIOR DIRECTOR OF STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS, FFW

**SECTION 02**

# ***YOUR HOSTING PLATFORM REQUIREMENTS***

Meeting customer expectations  
now and in the future



# YOUR HOSTING PLATFORM REQUIREMENTS

To avoid the complications that come with self-hosting your Drupal application, you can always choose a platform provider. While this might seem simple, customer expectations for both content availability and the security of their data are high. One security mishap and your brand's reputation is on the line. One problem with content delivery speed and your customer goes elsewhere.

Your hosting platform must be secure, compliant with industry-specific regulations, highly available and scalable, which means the hosting provider you choose must meet all of these requirements.

## **WORRY-FREE SECURITY AND COMPLIANCE**

Maintaining and updating site security is a never-ending process. How many parts of your IT infrastructure do you need to monitor for security threats? If the people in your organization responsible for IT security are not solely focused on your Drupal cloud, how much risk does that expose you to? Do you have sufficient resources and personnel to be sure your Drupal environment is always safe?

It is imperative that you ensure every layer of the stack is secure. You need to have security at both the application and infrastructure level. You also need the ability to deliver on compliance standards and meet those requirements, or you risk hefty fines.

Your hosting platform absolutely must possess the following:

- / A variety of industry-specific compliance audits and certifications performed by independent third parties**
- / Strong access and authentication controls built-in, as well as different firewall controls**
- / Semi-annual third-party penetration testing**
- / In-depth monitoring of systems security performed on a continuous basis**
- / Quarterly assessments of continuous monitoring activities**
- / Monthly server and web application vulnerability scanning**
- / Monthly operating system scans**
- / Monthly database scans**

## **ONGOING MONITORING AND SUPPORT**

The in-house team managing your Drupal hosting platform and the multiple applications running on it likely won't have the time, inclination or expertise to build the integrations you need to optimize it. Not only will team members have to fix things when they inevitably break, they'll also have to keep up with Drupal's latest developments and install new patches. It's critical that you have the following support resources and capabilities:

- / A team of Drupal experts available 24/7/365**
- / A support team that provides both infrastructure and application support**
- / A 99.95% uptime guarantee**
- / Documented contingency plan reviewed and tested annually**



## **HIGHLY AVAILABLE, SCALABLE INFRASTRUCTURE**

There are two key questions to ask when determining whether or not your web platform is sufficiently scalable:

- / Can your website's capacity scale up to handle rapid increases in traffic?**
- / Can your platform handle a proliferation of additional sites?**

You need to be sure your hosting platform will continue to perform under increased workloads. You must be certain your platform can automatically scale to handle sudden spikes in web traffic. These spikes could be from sales and promotions, holidays or sudden demand for certain products or services due to weather or current events. Otherwise, your customers will experience latency and delays, damaging your brand and your bottom line.

Also, enterprise organizations often have to manage vast, complex digital estates consisting of dozens, hundreds or even thousands of digital properties. Building, maintaining and optimizing all of these sites at scale is a significant challenge. Without the right infrastructure, it is impossible.



# AN IDEAL PARTNERSHIP

## **GEORGE WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY DITCHES DIY DRUPAL HOSTING**

George Washington University needed a digital experience platform that guaranteed both site reliability and operational efficiency to maintain the premium service its community expected. Their internal infrastructure and databases introduced unpredictable IT costs and prevented the web services team from focusing on platform innovation.

Although the team at GW had been using Drupal for some time, the university had previously supported its infrastructure and databases internally. This DIY approach created a variety of challenges, including having to navigate failovers between data centers. These facilities issues not only introduced unpredictable IT costs, but prevented the web services team from focusing on platform innovation and supporting each college and department.

As the GW team began to evaluate alternatives to DIY hosting, Acquia Site Factory emerged as the solution best suited to support the university's business needs.

Acquia's multisite approach meant that GW could rely on one fully managed cloud that unified platform updates, and maintained security and compliance across its entire network of sites. This provided the ability to seamlessly provision hundreds of sites for the university's various departments and colleges. Acquia Site Factory also takes care of all upgrades and security patches so that GW doesn't have to. The university can now focus on its own code base upgrades and delivering the optimal service its community needs.



**SECTION 03**

**DON'T GO  
IT ALONE**

Your future self will  
thank you





# DON'T GO IT ALONE

As we've illustrated, DIY will saddle you with ongoing costs in terms of time, money and resources. You will be stuck with support, maintenance and security issues that never end. Even worse, DIY imposes real opportunity costs by distracting developers from more important undertakings and slowing down speed to market.

It may be difficult to put a dollar amount on all the lost revenue and opportunities from DIY, but it is certainly more expensive in the long run than working with a partner, especially a partner who has a platform that ensures content availability and the security of your customer's data.

Acquia has been providing organizations of all sizes access to a premier Drupal hosting platform for over 10 years. Our goal is to ensure that your Drupal applications are available and secure so that you can focus on delivering great experiences to your customers.

**“It may be difficult to put a dollar amount on DIY, but it is certainly more expensive in the long run than working with a partner.”**

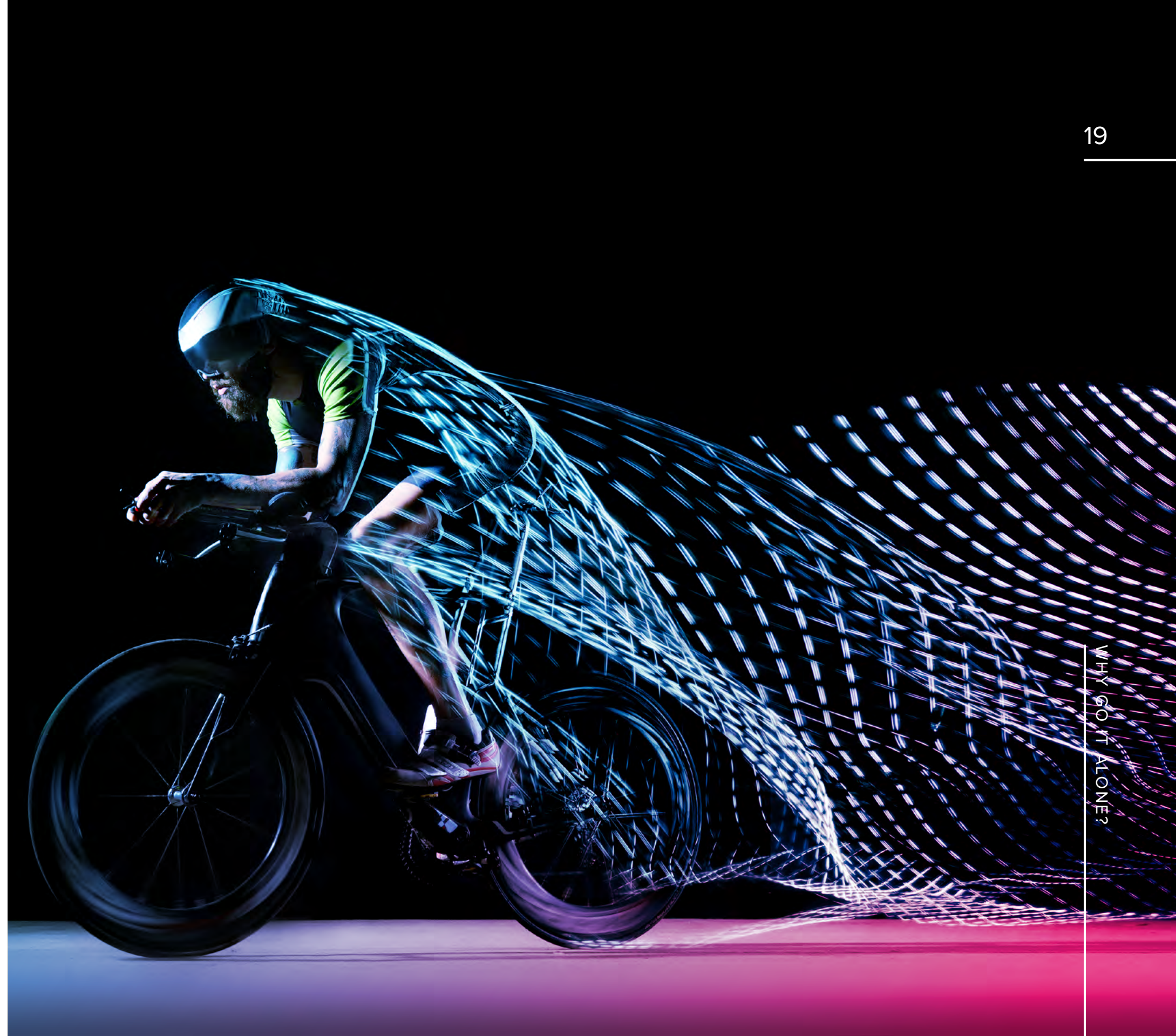
**We believe Acquia is a leading enterprise-grade platform for creating Drupal digital experiences and we would recommend their Drupal cloud based on proven results with joint customers. Acquia extends the value of AWS, enabling their customers to innovate and get to market faster without risking overspending.** ”

DARREN HAUS, PRINCIPAL ADVISORY CONSULTANT, SHARED DELIVERY TEAMS,  
AMAZON WEB SERVICES

## ***THE FASTEST TIME TO MARKET***

When it comes to developing Drupal applications, Acquia is dedicated to ensuring nothing gets in the way. Delays and uncertainties are eliminated with Acquia's built-in developer tools, workflows and fully managed platform. Acquia gives your organization a complete set of solutions to deliver better digital experiences. With Acquia, you have all the tools needed to build Drupal applications, including the most user-friendly, low-code solutions on the market, a built-in CDN, application performance management (APM) and more.

Acquia empowers stakeholders across your organization to build beautiful, powerful, scalable, on-brand websites in less than half the time needed using traditional CMS tools. With Site Factory and Site Studio, you have the most intuitive toolset on the market for building and rapidly spinning up brand-compliant sites at scale. In addition, Acquia provides a viable framework for upgrading to Drupal 9, making the transition smooth and seamless.



## ***THE SAFEST AND MOST COMPLIANT PLATFORM POSSIBLE***

Acquia is also deeply committed to security. We provide security and infrastructure monitoring services and support 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Acquia's security is also audited both internally and by independent third parties. As a result, our platform is compliant with all major regulatory frameworks and policies, including SOC 1, SOC 2, PCI, HIPAA, FERPA and ISO 27001. In fact, Acquia complies with more security standards than any of our competitors. For example, Acquia is the only Drupal PaaS that meets Federal Risk and Authorization Management Program (FedRAMP) requirements — the highest security standard in the market today.

By leveraging Acquia's highly secure platform, you can reclaim the time and resources spent maintaining security and direct these resources toward more profitable initiatives.



## **PROACTIVE, ROUND-THE-CLOCK EXPERT SUPPORT**

Acquia's expert support team provides all-inclusive support for your websites 24/7/365, along with a 99.95% platform uptime guarantee. Acquia ensures that your applications are always available and that your team is fully supported around the clock. In addition to this guarantee, Acquia's support team is also available for application-level support, so no matter what the issue is, our team of Drupal experts has you covered.

## **THE DEEPEST DRUPAL EXPERIENCE POSSIBLE**

There simply is no organization with a higher level of Drupal expertise than Acquia. Acquia is by far the largest contributor to the Drupal Project and has the deepest experience in Drupal possible. In fact, Acquia's founder, Dries Buytaert, created Drupal. It doesn't get deeper than that.

If you're on Drupal, the best thing you can do is invite Acquia to help you avoid the ongoing headache of DIY Drupal hosting. Your colleagues, your customers and your future self will thank you.



WHY GO IT ALONE?

# ***TAKE A DEEPER DIVE***

Get a complete comparison between  
Acquia's Drupal Cloud Hosting and DIY

[\*\*LEARN MORE ▶\*\*](#)

# Acquia

ACQUIA.COM

## **ABOUT ACQUIA**

Acquia is the open digital experience platform that enables organizations to build, host, analyze and communicate with their customers at scale through websites and digital applications. As the trusted open source leader, we use adaptive intelligence to produce better business outcomes for CX leaders.

