The core four essential marketing technologies
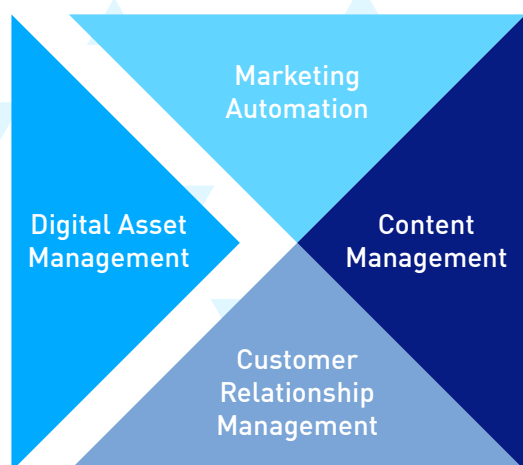
Three of them you know, and one you don't

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Digital asset management is moving to the center between upstream creative and downstream delivery.

Nick Barber, Forrester

There are now thousands of marketing technologies spread across dozens of categories to support all kinds of specific use cases. But there are just four applications that are absolutely essential for digital transformation. This small collection of capabilities allows teams to support the complete marketing content lifecycle.

Three of these you'll find consistently in marketing organizations of all shapes and sizes: marketing automation (MAP), content management (CMS) and customer relationship management (CRM). Surprisingly, one of them you'll find only about 35% of the time. This is the one **Forrester Research recently declared** has moved to the heart of enterprise marketing, Digital asset management (DAM).
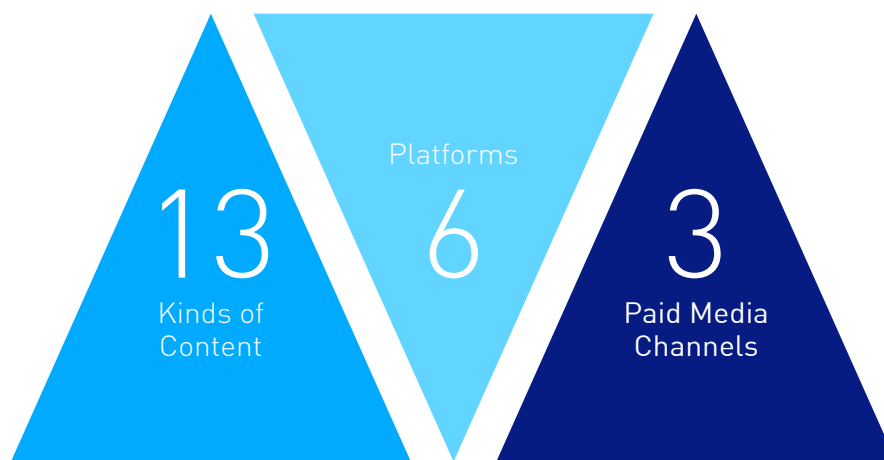

Marketing Cycle Technologies

As more organizations rely on rich content to drive marketing success and serve customers, the ability to effectively manage and connect creative content across platforms and touchpoints becomes imperative. Digital asset management systems, historically back-office systems used for storing finished marketing assets, are increasingly tied to other enterprise technologies like CMS, marketing automation, social platforms and CRM.

According to Nick Barber at Forrester Research, "This is the overriding, umbrella trend that we are seeing. Digital asset management is moving to the center between upstream creative and downstream delivery."

Connecting content is now key

Almost every brand, in every industry, creates content. According to the **Content Marketing Institute**, 88% of B2B companies report using content marketing and B2C isn't far behind at 76%.

Content has become the secret ingredient for brands with a story to tell. But delivery is splintered across channels and platforms. The average B2B marketing organization is producing 13 kinds of content, using six different social platforms and three paid media methods. Each of these variations require that content be adapted for format and context. So the volume and variety of content being produced is massive, and it's really hard to manage.

Average B2B Marketing Organization

Compounding the situation is the growing number of gaps in workflows between sources of content and systems where content is used or distributed. Most of these platforms are best-of-breed meaning they are not integrated with other systems. Manual effort has to be applied to move files between the places where they are created, stored and deployed.

Because creative assets play a central role in so many marketing processes, digital asset management is one of the capabilities frequently bundled into other marketing solutions. These lightweight asset-storage features can complicate marketing processes because they separate creative assets from other systems.

Building a strong foundation that connects core marketing technologies is the key to speeding up and smoothing out essential workflows, and more importantly, ensuring your audiences have consistent experiences no matter where you connect with them.

Core marketing technology

The core of your marketing technology stack needs to support the complete marketing cycle: attract, engage, convert, manage and understand. Marketers must first create awareness and attract interest. Interest is then elevated to engagement and conversion. After conversion, customers are managed to increase value and build loyalty. Finally, the whole process must be measured and understood for continuous improvement.

Core technologies have emerged to support each step in the process:

- **Marketing automation (MAP)** to manage outreach and attract interest

- **Content management (CMS)** to oversee web experiences and conversion

- **Customer relationship management (CRM)** to support customer interaction

The missing component in many organizations is a platform for developing and managing the creative content used throughout the marketing cycle. Creative content is often developed and managed from multiple locations creating discontinuity and interrupting marketing processes.
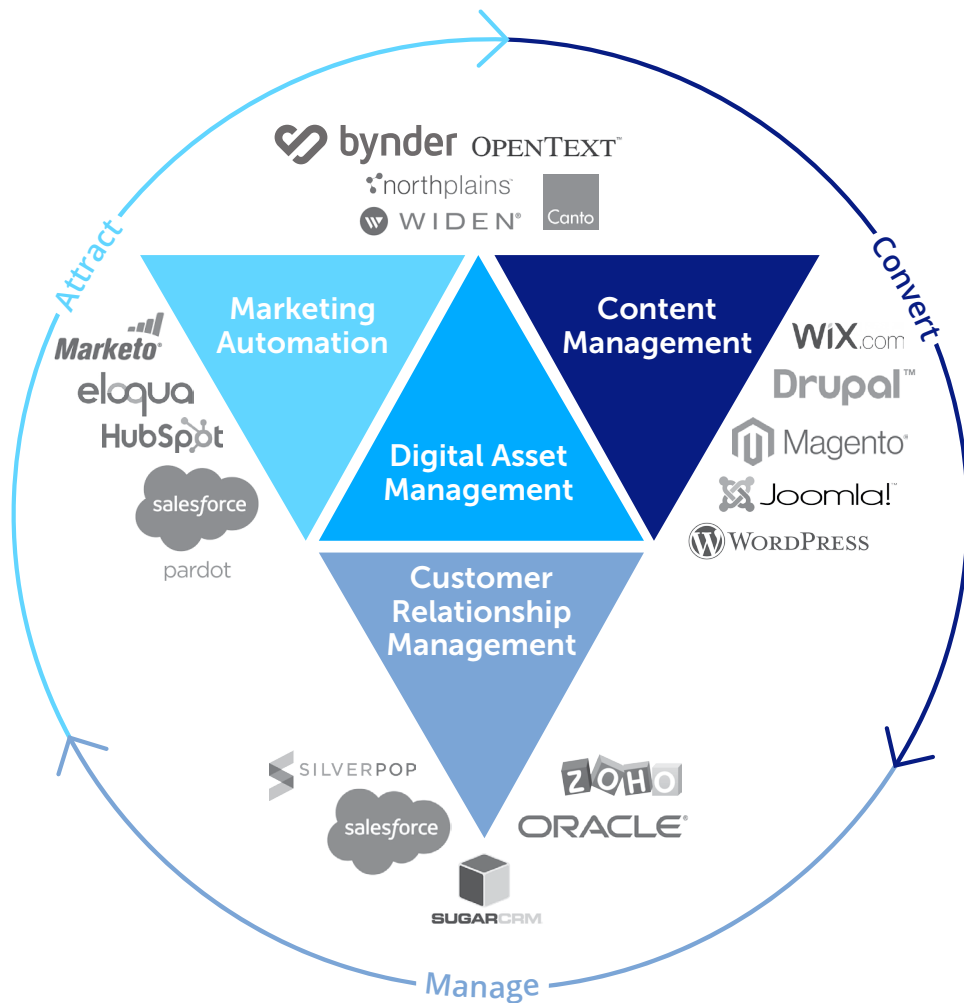
As we described earlier, DAM is now moving to the middle of these core technologies to deliver the rich content that attracts attention and drives engagement. As more enterprises rely on rich content in their marketing programs, DAM must integrate into the systems that contribute to digital experiences.

All these core technologies must be open and extensible. They have to allow you to add more specialized functionality around them as necessary to support the unique demands of your marketing strategies. These are things like social marketing, ecommerce, user-generated content, advertising, etc.

The power of the DAM is integrating with delivery channels so that you can have large volumes of content, in effect a scalable library, that you can deliver to email, or WCM (Web Content Management), or PIM (Product Information Management), or CXM (Customer Experience Management), or even videos to social channels.

Nick Barber, Forrester

Digital asset management (DAM) systems give the enterprise a place to develop, organize, distribute and track creative content. A centralized digital library provides employees, clients, contractors and any key stakeholders controlled access to digital assets — including images, photos, creative files, video, audio, presentations, documents and more. Historically a repository for finished creative content, many DAM systems now include creative workflow capabilities to support the development of new content as well.

The ability to manage content from a single location makes it possible to deliver a consistent content strategy across all your programs and customer touch points. It means you don't have to manage multiple versions of content or have different teams producing similar content for their own purposes. Popular options: Bynder, Northplains, Canto, Widen and OpenText.

Marketing automation platforms (MAP) allows teams to more easily market using multiple digital channels like email, social media, websites, etc. It helps to streamline and even automate marketing functions like customer segmentation and campaign management. Popular options: Marketo, Eloqua, Pardot and HubSpot.

Content management systems (CMS) support the creation and modification of digital content by multiple users working collaboratively. CMS applications were originally used to manage website content, but they have evolved to provide a much broader set of capabilities across more digital channels. Many CMS now leverage visitor information to shape experiences that are more personalized. Popular options: Wordpress, Drupal, Magento, Joomla! and Wix.

Customer relationship management (CRM) helps companies maintain a centralized record of business contacts, whether they are end users, prospects, customers, or partners. A well-integrated CRM system compiles data from the spectrum of communication channels, including a company's website, telephone, email, chat and social media. Through CRM, businesses learn more about their audiences and how to cater to their needs. Popular options: Salesforce, Zoho, Oracle, SugarCRM and Silverpop.

Overall considerations for choosing the right technology

These are the essential technologies that every marketing organization needs to manage the marketing cycle. However, they aren't the only technologies you're likely to need. Others must be layered on to support key strategies. But if managed well, this core infrastructure will allow you to add other capabilities without disrupting essential workflows. **APIs** can be particularly valuable in knitting the pieces together.

Your core marketing technologies need to share relevant data and content. Marketing teams are discovering the value of specialized technology, but as marketing applications diversify to handle particular tasks, they create a new problem by opening gaps in previously integrated workflows.

Here are some requirements to consider as you evaluate options. Each component ought to:

- Provide best-in-class functionality for its primary purpose.

- Integrate easily at the data and content level.

- Adapt smoothly to rapidly-changing requirements.

- Support personalization and micro-targeting.

Content has become critical for marketers of all kinds, B2B and B2C alike. Core technology has emerged to support the use of content to create engaging customer experiences across a broad range of customer touch points. But the development, management and distribution of content remains splintered. It's often stored haphazardly on local drives, network servers and cloud storage which limits its value and impact. Workflow gaps have to be overcome with lots of manual processes.

Digital asset management is moving to the heart of marketing infrastructure to solve these challenges, making content accessible to marketing and creative teams, and connecting it to critical systems where it's put to use.

Learn More

To learn more about DAM and compare DAM vendors, read the DAM Comparison Guide.

Download now

Bynder is the fastest growing DAM service, offering a simplified solution for marketing professionals to manage their digital content in the cloud.

For more information please visit our website **www.bynder.com**.

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