BRIDGING THE GAP.
Perfect content management in a non-perfect world.
Imagine a world of perfect content. One where everyone in your organisation is designing and delivering your brand experience with the same voice, and digital assets and operations that are centrally managed.

Imagine deciding on a new font and cover photo for an upcoming campaign, and all your designers know what it is and where to find it. Everyone knows which version of the photo is the most recent, so they create work that’s consistent across every piece of the campaign.

Imagine getting approvals within the same day of finishing a project. Because your marketing and creative teams work within the same software, it’s easy to communicate, make comments and fix quick adjustments. Everyone is able to communicate your brand’s message to the right person, at the right time, with the right experience.
If that sounds too good to be true, it is. At least for many businesses. Often, companies don’t have an organised system in place and instead rely on email and third-party systems to share and store files. For small organisations, it’s not a huge deal. But as businesses grow and work with multiple teams and outside freelancers, things get messy. Both digital assets and time gets wasted, simply because files are inaccessible or disorganised.

Not only that, today you have to create more content, and you have to create it quickly. There are more channels to reach than ever before. It’s not just print, television, and web that you have to worry about. Businesses must also market their brand on channels like Facebook, Snapchat, Twitter, YouTube, Instagram and LinkedIn, not to mention a brand’s own mobile app.

You can no longer pick and choose where your brand has a presence. Because the truth is, your customers are everywhere. In fact, consumers today use an average of 6 devices and 12 sources of content. They use every channel and device they can get a hand on. To keep up, businesses need to create, manage and deliver more content than ever.

What’s more, it’s not just the quantity that matters. It’s the quality. Customers won’t waste their time on content that’s not relevant and meaningful. In fact, 73 percent of consumers prefer to do business with brands that use personal information to make their shopping experiences more relevant. That means creating new content, specific to each customer segment, on every channel.

In essence, the marketplace is changing. Which means that the way marketers connect with their audiences must also change. The management process is a key component to this. It’s the middle man between creating content and delivering that content to your customers. In truth, when it comes down to it, the way you manage—or don’t manage—your content is what makes or breaks your time to market.

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Many companies are struggling to keep up with these high demands. Only 11 percent of large companies claim to be very advanced in their customer experience maturity, meaning they feel confident their strategy and technology helps them deliver successful customer experiences.

Whether or not you’re in that elite 11 percent, now is a good time to take a fresh look at strategy and technology to see if you have what it takes to keep up with this changing world. And regardless of where you’re at right now—if you work with an ideal process or far from it—you can decide to keep building your brand, driving demand and extending your reach.

A seamless customer experience starts with a seamless work experience for your own employees. When they’re organised and efficient, it shows in their work. Increase the communication within and between teams to make sure that your entire company is aware of what part they play in the customer experience.

A shocking 55 percent of large companies say that the organisational structure is a main barrier to improving customer experience. Getting and staying organised inside your own business helps you deliver a consistent brand experience for your customers, even across devices.

If you feel your company is organised or not, there are always ways to improve—whether it’s agreeing on a naming system for your files or putting in place a brand new management infrastructure. Because when all your teams and assets are organised, you can develop better experiences for your customers and ultimately build revenue. Here are a few signs that your brand might be due for a change.

There’s **HOPE**.
Perhaps the first question to ask yourself is if you have a system in place at all. This might come as a surprise, but many businesses don’t have an official process to keep content and assets in the right place or with the right people. In fact, only 37 percent of companies have the processes and collaborative workflows required to achieve a design advantage, meaning less than half of businesses can create customer experiences that differentiate them in the market place. It sounds shocking, but it makes sense. When companies begin, they don’t have a lot of content or a lot of people to work with. They can get away with simply storing assets on their computer’s hard drive and sharing them using email or Dropbox. Before they realise it, the company has grown into a much more complicated organisation. By that time, they may feel like it’s too late to introduce and train everyone on a brand new system. They simply don’t have the infrastructure in place to handle the growth.

Take Alex and Ani, for example. Since its founding in 2004, the retail jewellery brand has experienced tremendous growth. When it first started, its marketing teams relied on third-party data repositories to share files. As the company grew, so did the teams. The company’s internal e-commerce, digital marketing, content creation, customer engagement and business-to-business marketing groups all needed to communicate with each other, as well as with external partners and agencies, such as photographers and videographers. With too much data and too many licences to track under the current infrastructure, it was hard to manage files, control access to assets and track the rights and expirations dates.

Alex and Ani recognised the need to take back control of its brand. It knew it needed defined and documented processes as well as a central repository for digital assets. Once it had this down, Alex and Ani’s creative and marketing teams were able to store and organise digital assets in an effective way.

Alex and Ani chose Adobe Experience Manager as their main platform because it grows with your company. As new teams develop and new people are hired, Experience Manager makes it easy to add, edit and delete user licences. That way, you can guarantee the right people have the right access to your digital assets.
If you do have a management system, is it able to keep up with new technology and integrate with other platforms in your organisation? Very often, an old, archaic management system can do more harm than good. If it doesn’t keep up with newer systems and integrations, employees often bypass the management system all together.

Take ASICS, for example. As a sports apparel and equipment store, ASICS manages as many as 40,000 digital assets for its retail partners. To manage all these assets, it used an old system that required manual tagging and categorisation. On top of that, when new employees or retailers came, they would need to request permission and wait until someone manually granted them access.

The outdated management system affected the business in a variety of ways. For starters, assets were often saved in multiple places because manual tagging was prone to error. But more importantly, because the system was so labour intensive, it slowed down employees’ productivity and retailers’ ability to find and upload ASICS assets to their websites.

ASICS updated its digital asset management platform to better categorise, manage and distribute its brand content to its hundreds of retailers and partners around the world. With the new process, it experienced more productivity, faster time to market and reduced costs. In fact, ASICS saved an estimated 200 employee hours on uploading assets and catching duplicates.6

ASICS understood that the world is changing. Companies are growing. New customer demands, employee needs and product capabilities are springing up every day. Make sure that your management system is capable of adapting with the times and not slowing you down.

Adobe Experience Manager helps companies like ASICS by managing assets across every channel and storing assets in a central location. It can also manage huge amounts of data that can be repurposed across different campaigns.

Out with the old, in with the NEW.
There are a ton of people involved in creating, managing and delivering content for your customers. It’s a mix of people both inside and outside of the company. On average, 58.4 percent of content is created by internal staff, 24.3 percent of content is internally crowd-sourced and 17.2 percent of content is created by outsourced staff.

Between all those who create the content, plus the stakeholders who review the content and marketers who help manage and deliver it all, it’s important to have a management system that allows your teams to stay organised and communicate with each other.

How do your teams collaborate? Is collaboration a main component of your asset organisation? Or is it merely an afterthought? When creative teams and marketing teams use different software, storage systems or filenames, assets are easily lost or misplaced. Having a streamlined collaboration system can keep employees on the same page. That way, they know which files are the most current and what tags to search under.

Not only should the creative and marketing teams be on the same page, but you can save a lot of time when your stakeholders and reviewers share the same software.

Getting your people and processes on the same page is not out of reach. In fact, when Vente-Privee streamlined their workflow, they saw great success. Because the store is an online retailer, they rely heavily on the images to inform customers about their products. To capture all the angles and detailed views needed to sell a product online, Vente-Privee shoots up to 20,000 photos a day. All these photos need to be edited, organised and shared.

Vente-Privee uses both Adobe Creative Cloud and Adobe Experience Manager to publish their product images. By combining their creative process with the capabilities in Experience Manager, Vente-Privee is able to streamline workflows and generate unlimited variations of any asset, easily changing the size, format, resolution, crop or effect using original imagery.

Adobe Experience Manager integrates with Adobe Creative Cloud. Marketers have the ability to create, edit, organise and review assets all within the same platform. They can make quick changes, comments and approvals, all without leaving the creative process.

According to Ilan Benhaïm, co-founder and executive partner in charge of innovation and technology at Vente-Privee, using "dynamic media capabilities [has] reduced by 60 percent the number of image versions used." When both the creative and marketing teams work within the same process, they save time and energy. It’s easier for them to communicate and search for assets. And when they save time in the creating and managing stages, they can get to market faster.

"With Adobe Marketing Cloud and Creative Cloud, we have the tools to deliver the right message to the right audience at the right time," says Benhaïm.
It’s **ALL** about the customer experience.

Perhaps the most important question to ask yourself is why are you doing all this? Where should you focus? With all the changes happening—new channels forming, new customer preferences and new ways to interact with companies—it’s easy to lose sight of the end goal.

And the end goal is the customer experience.

The reason we’re all feeling pressure to create, manage and deliver more content is so that our customers have more—and better—opportunities to engage with our brands. Successful companies are strategic in their interactions with consumers. They know that nearly half their audience (49 percent) think personalisation is important.9

And more than that, 75 percent of consumers are willing to share at least one piece of information about themselves to improve the recommendations they see.10 Businesses that create tailored experiences gain the attention and time of their customers.

On the opposite end, if a brand doesn’t take the time to optimise content for specific devices, 30 percent of customers will stop reading or watching the content altogether.11 Customers don’t have time for half-baked experiences. They expect the very best and won’t settle for anything less.

According to a study by Google, on average, buyers engage with more than 11 pieces of content prior to making a purchase decision.12 And, according to a study by Forrester Research, that number doubled year-over-year in both 2012 and 2013.13 Each piece of content should flow into the next, creating a fully connected, consistent customer experience.

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The customer journey is a long one. It’s not just becoming aware of the product and purchasing it. You also have to create personalised content to help them learn more about your brand, the product they’re interested in and similar products. After they make a purchase, new content is required to keep them interested in your brand. And it all needs to be personalised based on their preferences and behaviours.

When a customer’s engagement across multiple channels is seamless and personal, amazing things happen. It’s what helps customers feel a deep connection with your brand. And when they feel connected, you earn their trust, loyalty and their purchases.
Imagine using your laptop to book a night at your favourite hotel. Later, you’re at the airport and your flight gets delayed. It’s busy and loud, so you don’t want to phone the hotel. Instead, you jump on their mobile app. There, your reservation is listed and you can quickly cancel, even though you don’t get a full refund. You tweet about how the hotel’s app made your life easier at the busy airport. To thank you for the good review, the hotel’s Twitter account replies and offers you a free future stay, making up for the refund.

Whether you’re at home, on the brand’s app, on social media, your experience is seamless and connected. You don’t find yourself repeating information or struggling to connect with the brand. Instead, it feels easy and convenient because you are at the heart of the experience.

When you change and adapt your business with the customer in mind, you make smarter decisions for your business. Don’t just create and manage more content for the sake of doing it. Make sure that the customer experience is at the heart of every piece of content and every business decision. In fact, this is something that your competition is likely already starting to focus on. Just 10 years ago, the phrase *customer experience manager* didn’t even register on Google trends. Yet Gartner predicts that by 2017, 50 percent of consumer product investments will be redirected to customer experience innovation.

Customer experience is what it’s all about. By putting it at the center of everything you do throughout the creative process, you build your brand by developing relationships and gaining loyalty.

Having a productive asset management system improves the customer experience. Your business is able to produce the kind of content that wins over customers. And you’re able to do it quickly and easily. While switching management systems—or even getting one for the first time—can be difficult, it’s worth the investment.

Like all changes in business, there’s a learning curve. Seek out help if you don’t fully understand every aspect of your new process. Otherwise, you end up bypassing even the very best management system simply because you didn’t take the time to learn how to use it. Adobe is here to help. With Adobe Experience Manager, we offer technical support to help you get your platforms up and running.
Adobe has been a partner to the world’s best brands for more than 30 years, providing industry-leading creative solutions that help you create amazing content. Today, Adobe offers everything you need to achieve an advantage through design, thanks to a variety of Adobe solutions, such as Adobe Creative Cloud for enterprise, Adobe Experience Manager and Adobe Experience Manager Mobile. These solutions bring together the necessary components for a modern digital workflow, including a full spectrum of creative desktop and mobile apps with integrated fonts and stock images, an asset management and delivery system that keeps your content connected and accessible, and direct publishing that lets you convert your designs into beautiful mobile apps that let you update continuously—without coding or IT support. Now you can easily deliver content at the velocity your company needs to give your customers engaging, personalised experiences. For more information, visit Adobe.com or contact a local Adobe Sales representative.