Understanding The Challenges Of Building An Integrated Digital Experience Strategy

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Executive Summary

Commerce organizations are drowning in content. Their catalogs have grown, the sources of the product content propagated, and site versions divide and multiply across geography, microsites, and brands. Marketing and merchandising content has similarly amplified as this content supports cross-channel, search, email, and social marketing campaigns. Targeting, testing, and personalization all contribute to the explosion of content and content coordination challenges. Organizations are seeking solutions, yet are faced with a confusing landscape of technologies and approaches which often lead to a fragmented customer experience.

In October 2013, hybris software, an SAP company, commissioned Forrester Consulting to examine how firms should manage their repositories of structured and unstructured content to give customers the best possible digital experience. Forrester surveyed 159 US-, Canada-, and UK-based manufacturing, retail and wholesale, media, telecommunications, financial services, and insurance organizations responsible for the delivery of the brand experience online. The study revealed that today, manufacturers and retailers already operate a diverse set of touchpoints to serve their customers, but maintaining a consistent experience across these is a major headache. Marketers depend too much on IT for making day-to-day content and experience changes and the tools in place constrain their ability to push the envelope of delivering superior digital customer experiences. Marketers are seeking tools that will enable them to improve content quality and consistency not just between touchpoints (digital and physical), but also across the enterprise (brands, divisions, markets).

KEY FINDINGS

Forrester's study yielded five key findings for brands and manufacturers to take away:

› **Unification of digital experience is a key tactic for brand integrity.** With more than 50% of organizations already supporting 12 or more distinct consumer touchpoints, digital marketers and eCommerce leaders are prioritizing the reuse of content across their digital portfolio not just to drive down costs and the complexity of content creation processes, but also to drive a unification of the customer experience across all digital touchpoints. Today, unification of digital experiences is a brand issue that is forefront of mind not only for eCommerce professionals, but also for the CMO.

› **Many firms use their eCommerce platform to support web content management.** Few organizations can stomach the complexity of operating and integrating eCommerce and content management systems. Subsequently, 49% of organizations rely on homegrown systems or their eCommerce platform for web content management.

› **Content quality is a top concern.** More so than any other priority, digital brand leaders are focused on improving the quality of the content they expose to customers through digital channels. Of particular importance is structured product content where brands are discovering a clear correlation between the quality of their product content and revenue.

› **Traditional performance metrics still reign, but new metrics are emerging.** Traditional metrics such as revenue, registered users, repeat orders, and site traffic are used almost ubiquitously today to measure digital customer experience; however, 35% and 43% of organizations plan to introduce new customer lifetime value and NPS metrics, respectively. These new metrics reflect the need to measure and benchmark customer sentiment toward the brand experience in addition to metrics that are intrinsically linked to revenue.

› **Marketers depend too much on IT for content and experience changes.** Most organizations have a cross-functional team responsible for digital customer experience strategy; however, IT leaders are still deeply involved in execution. Dependency on IT ranks as the biggest challenge for organizations as they try to launch new touchpoints and create integrated content strategies. Marketers, brand owners, and eCommerce leaders all cite the ability to manage the end-to-end content creation process independently of IT as a critical priority.

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Digital Experience Excellence Is An Imperative

Sustained growth in online sales over the past decade means that C-level executives are already well versed in the upside that comes from delivering best-in-class digital experiences to their customers. Our study revealed that digital leaders from across the organization not only have executives that share their vision for a best-in-class digital experience strategy, but they also have budget commitment to invest in digital experience technologies and deliver on the vision. We found that these digital leaders:
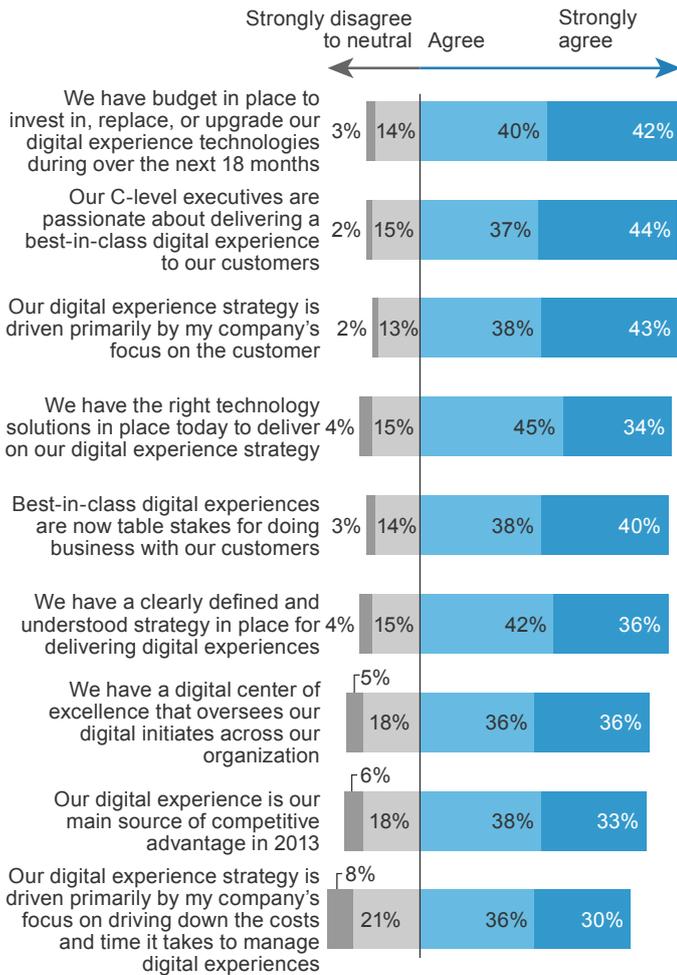
› **Have absolute backing from the C-suite when it comes to delivering best-in-class digital experiences.** Seventy-eight percent of the firms we surveyed believe that best-in-class digital experiences are now table stakes for doing business (see Figure 1). Luckily, this belief is also shared at the top — 81% of the leaders we surveyed agreed that their C-level executives are also passionate about serving the customer through the delivery of best-in-class digital experiences.

› **Intend to invest in, replace, or upgrade their digital experience technologies in the next 18 months.** Seventy-one percent of the firms we surveyed agreed or strongly agreed that their main source of competitive advantage in today's market is their digital experience strategy. It should come as no surprise then that 82% of eCommerce and marketing professionals report that they already have the budget in place to upgrade their digital experience technologies in the next 18 months.

› **Have the support of a digital center of excellence (DCoE).** As digital becomes more ubiquitous across these firms, the insight required to harness its potential is what creates competitive differentiation. Seventy-two percent of the firms we surveyed already have a digital center of excellence that provides standardized processes, ensures consistency, and provides insights that allows individual teams to forge ahead without the fear of operating in a vacuum.

› **Aim to expand their universe of digital touchpoints in the next 12 months.** Not all firms have a mature digital experience strategy in place. Perhaps surprisingly, 25% of the firms surveyed do not yet allow customers to research products, transact, or get customer support via their website, and only 50% of firms currently support online support communities or forums (see Figure 2). Despite these shortcomings, our study revealed significant plans for investment. Thirty-one percent of these same organizations plan to launch online communities in the next 12 months, 28% plan to launch online self-service tools, and 34% plan to launch mobile or tablet sites.

› **Are evolving the metrics used to measure digital business success.** Although 84% of firms use revenue as their primary KPI to measure the performance of the digital customer experience and other standard KPIs such as registered users, repeat orders and site traffic are also commonly used; these traditional metrics fail to inform the business of the impact of consumer engagement across multiple touchpoints (see Figure 3). Today, only 52% of firms currently measure the lifetime value of the customer. In order to better measure customer brand sentiment and loyalty, 43% of firms plans to introduce Net Promoter Score metrics and 35% plans to start measure aggregated lifetime customer spend.

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FIGURE 1

Firms Are Set To Invest, Replace, Or Upgrade Their Digital Experience Technologies

"To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about your company's digital customer experience?"

Strongly disagree to neutral · Agree · Strongly agree

Statement	Strongly disagree to neutral		Agree	Strongly agree
We have budget in place to invest in, replace, or upgrade our digital experience technologies during over the next 18 months	3%	14%	40%	42%
Our C-level executives are passionate about delivering a best-in-class digital experience to our customers	2%	15%	37%	44%
Our digital experience strategy is driven primarily by my company's focus on the customer	2%	13%	38%	43%
We have the right technology solutions in place today to deliver on our digital experience strategy	4%	15%	45%	34%
Best-in-class digital experiences are now table stakes for doing business with our customers	3%	14%	38%	40%
We have a clearly defined and understood strategy in place for delivering digital experiences	4%	15%	42%	36%
We have a digital center of excellence that oversees our digital initiates across our organization	5%	18%	36%	36%
Our digital experience is our main source of competitive advantage in 2013	6%	18%	38%	33%
Our digital experience strategy is driven primarily by my company's focus on driving down the costs and time it takes to manage digital experiences	8%	21%	36%	30%

Base: 159 online brand experience decision-makers from North America and the UK

Source: A commissioned study conducted by Forrester Consulting on behalf of hybris, October 2013

FIGURE 2

Website And Contact Centers Are Primary Customer Touchpoints But Distribution Channel Touchpoints Will Increase

"Which of the following touchpoints is your organization using to support your customers' ability to research products, transact, get customer support, exchange information, and/or collaborate with each other?"

No immediate plans to support · Already support · Planning to support in the next 12 months

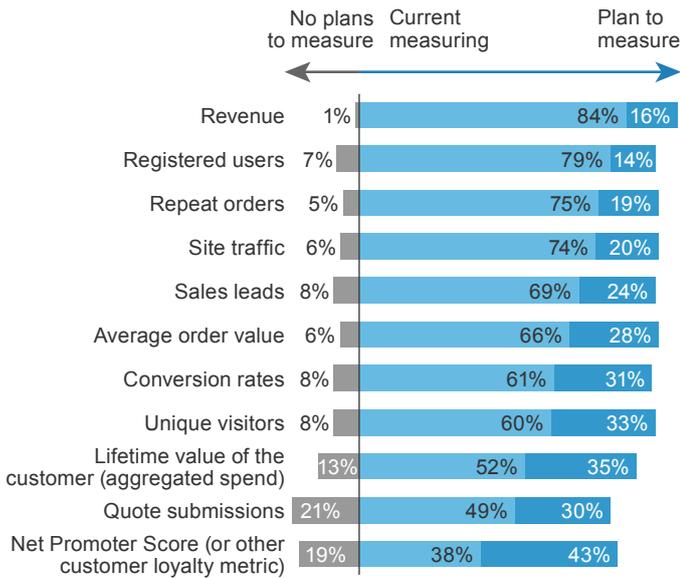| Touchpoint	No immediate plans to support	Already support	Planning to support in the next 12 months
Online, via our own website	4%	75%	21%
Through our contact center	8%	68%	24%
Online live help (i.e., click-to-chat, co-browsing)	9%	63%	28%
Online self-service (i.e., FAQs, virtual agent)	8%	63%	28%
Through a direct field or inside/corporate sales force	11%	61%	26%
Online, via our own mobile or tablet optimized sites or apps	8%	57%	34%
Sales force tools (e.g., B2B offline ordering tools)	9%	56%	32%
Through owned, affiliated, franchised, or wholesale trade distribution brick-and-mortar retail stores	21%	51%	26%
Through distribution channels (distributors, resellers, sales agents)	12%	51%	36%
Online support communities, forums	15%	50%	31%
Online, though reseller or aggregator sites	20%	48%	30%
Through our print catalog	26%	44%	26%

Base: 159 online brand experience decision-makers from North America and the UK

Source: A commissioned study conducted by Forrester Consulting on behalf of hybris, October 2013

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FIGURE 3
Only Half Of Firms Currently Measure The Lifetime Value Of The Customer

"What KPIs and metrics does your firm use today to measure the performance of your digital customer experience?"

	No plans to measure	Current measuring	Plan to measure
Revenue	1%	84%	16%
Registered users	7%	79%	14%
Repeat orders	5%	75%	19%
Site traffic	6%	74%	20%
Sales leads	8%	69%	24%
Average order value	6%	66%	28%
Conversion rates	8%	61%	31%
Unique visitors	8%	60%	33%
Lifetime value of the customer (aggregated spend)	13%	52%	35%
Quote submissions	21%	49%	30%
Net Promoter Score (or other customer loyalty metric)	19%	38%	43%

Base: 159 online brand experience decision-makers from North America and the UK

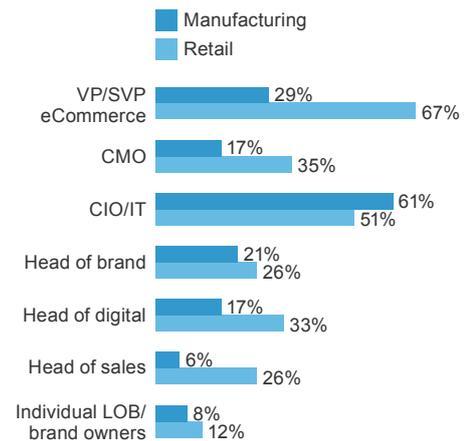Source: A commissioned study conducted by Forrester Consulting on behalf of hybris, October 2013

OWNERSHIP OF DIGITAL EXPERIENCE STRATEGY IS CROSS-FUNCTIONAL

Rarely does a single organizational role have exclusive ownership of its firms digital experience strategy and execution, nor should it. At many firms, the responsibility of delivering customer-facing digital experiences is split across a diverse set of cross-functional leaders (see Figure 4). Subsequently, many organizations lose focus on the purpose of their digital experience delivery platform — to serve the customer. Instead, stakeholders from across these cross-functional areas come to the table with conflicting requirements and opinions of the role that their digital delivery channels should be serving. Commonly at conflict are the differing objectives of the marketing and eCommerce roles. Historically, commerce and corporate marketing teams have a limited history of collaboration — eCommerce is focused on driving online conversions and

revenue and thus is closely tied to product catalog and merchandizing tools for cross-sells and upsells, etc. Digital marketing teams are focused on targeted, personalized, and interactive brand experiences that drive brand and product awareness across all channels. At two-thirds of retail organizations, it is the head of eCommerce who is ultimately responsible for digital customer experience; however, only one-third of eCommerce leaders own digital customer experience at B2B firms. Commonly at these manufacturing-orientated organizations it is the CIO who owns the delivery of digital customer experience. To further complicate the landscape of content ownership, digital content created to serve online channels is increasingly repurposed by corporate marketing groups in print catalogs, billboards, print ads, and in-store communication materials. Content consistency and reuse across channels was cited as the second highest priority for content owners in our survey, and encouragingly 73% of firms cited that their integration of content between online and offline channels is already performing well or very well.

FIGURE 4
The CIO Has Responsibility For Digital Customer Experience Strategy At 50% Of Firms

"Within your company, who is ultimately responsible for the strategy and execution of your firm's digital customer experience (website, tablet, mobile, social)?"
(Select all that apply)

Manufacturing
Retail

	Manufacturing	Retail
VP/SVP eCommerce	29%	67%
CMO	17%	35%
CIO/IT	61%	51%
Head of brand	21%	26%
Head of digital	17%	33%
Head of sales	6%	26%
Individual LOB/ brand owners	8%	12%

Base: 159 online brand experience decision-makers from North America and the UK

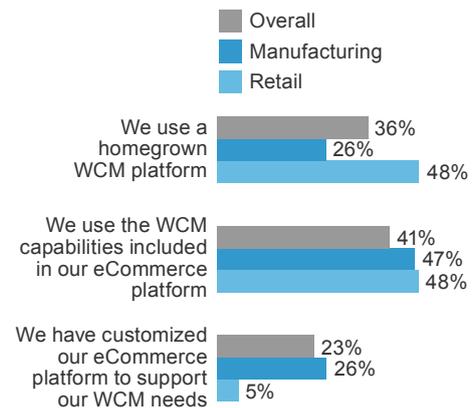Source: A commissioned study conducted by Forrester Consulting on behalf of hybris, October 2013

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Digital Experience Technologies Are Still Fragmented, But Change Is Upon Us

The organizational walls between corporate marketing and eCommerce teams have also kept technology solutions largely fragmented. The marketing teams are relying on web content management systems (WCM) to deliver their non-transactional interactive brand experiences while eCommerce teams are using commerce platforms to deliver on their transactional and merchandizing focus. The result is often a "two site" experience where marketing holds the reins to romance the customer with a deeply personalized ".com" experience and commerce drives the business home with extensive merchandizing tools in the ".store' or "/store" experience. It's an obvious and often jarring disruption in the customer life cycle.

As the "focus on the customer" decrees have come from on high, the pressure is on for marketing and eCommerce teams to develop a seamless experience transition between the "exploration" and "buy" phases of the customer life cycle. More functionality has started to overlap within the WCM and eCommerce technologies, specifically those around customer engagement like personalization, globalization/localization, navigation, and site search. These overlaps will eventually drive a greater need in the market for a melding of eCommerce and WCM solutions. Today, in most cases, companies are putting their investment dollars in a best-in-class version of one or the other depending on their business needs and relying on the expanding features set within to optimize the digital customer experience. In our study, for example, those firms which had not invested in WCM platforms did so because they were relying on homegrown WCM systems or leveraging the WCM capabilities included in their eCommerce platforms (see Figure 5). In the retail vertical in particular, the reliance on the eCommerce platform remains even among the companies that have or are planning to implement both an eCommerce platform and a WCM; over half of the respondents said that their eCommerce platform is fully responsible for the delivery of the website experience (integrating with the WCM in the back end) (see Figure 6).

FIGURE 5

WCM Capabilities Are Often Homegrown Or Integrated Into eCommerce Platform

"Why is your firm not currently using an enterprise WCM platform?"

Legend: Overall, Manufacturing, Retail

We use a homegrown WCM platform
- Overall: 36%
- Manufacturing: 26%
- Retail: 48%

We use the WCM capabilities included in our eCommerce platform
- Overall: 41%
- Manufacturing: 47%
- Retail: 48%

We have customized our eCommerce platform to support our WCM needs
- Overall: 23%
- Manufacturing: 26%
- Retail: 5%

Base: 78 online brand experience decision-makers from North America and the UK

Source: A commissioned study conducted by Forrester Consulting on behalf of hybris, October 2013

FIGURE 6

Over Half Of Retailers Surveyed Use The eCommerce Platform For Delivering The Website Experience

"Which of the following best describes the architectural integration of your eCommerce and WCM platforms?"

Legend: Overall, Manufacturing, Retail

The WCM platform is fully responsible for the delivery of the website experience (presentation layer) and integrates with the eCommerce platform on the back end
- Overall: 23%
- Manufacturing: 25%
- Retail: 23%

The eCommerce platform is fully responsible for the delivery of the website experience (presentation layer) and integrates with the WCM platform on the back end
- Overall: 42%
- Manufacturing: 40%
- Retail: 55%

Both platforms play a side-by-side role in delivering the website experience (presentation layer)
- Overall: 33%
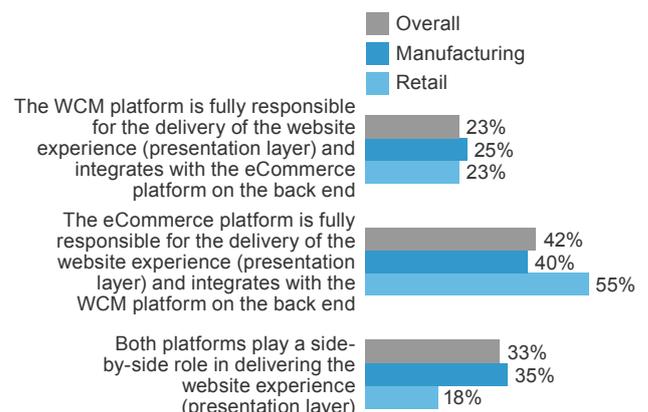- Manufacturing: 35%
- Retail: 18%

Base: 133 online brand experience decision-makers from North America and the UK

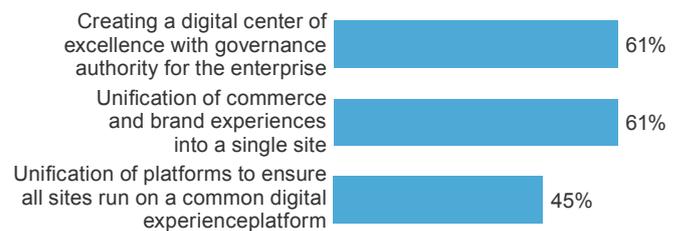Source: A commissioned study conducted by Forrester Consulting on behalf of hybris, October 2013

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Unification Is A Key Tactic For Brand Integrity Across The Enterprise

As online commerce grows in size, geographic scope, product assortment, and complexity, marketing and merchandizing content has exploded. Suddenly, brand managers must coordinate content from more sources across more channels and more site versions taking into account targeting, testing, and personalization efforts. The key tactics online brand experience managers are exploring to build consistency across the enterprise include:

› **Creating a digital center of excellence (DCoE) for governance authority.** Many organizations have fragmented ownership of digital experiences across brands, divisions and lines of business. As a result, many ".com" experiences end up being a poorly organized assortment of different sites with little visual or navigational consistency. Worse still, customers commonly have to create and maintain multiple accounts and "jump" back and forth between these sites to achieve their goals. To combat this chaos, 61% of the firms we surveyed reported that they are planning to implement a digital center of excellence (see Figure 7). The role of the DCoE is to devise standards and to evangelize and, in some cases, enforce them.

› **Unifying brand experience on a single site.** Sixty-one percent of the survey respondents reported efforts to unify their fragmented brand marketing and commerce sites. For many brands and manufacturers, this is no easy feat as segregation between the eCommerce team and the digital marketing teams often means they have historically used different tools. Further complicating the unification of brand experience onto a single site is that many firms operate different digital experience tools across brands, divisions, and international markets.

› **Maintaining brand integrity on single platform.** The ability to manage all brands/divisions and content from a single digital experience platform is a top priority for marketers, as well as a key tactic for maintaining brand integrity (see Figure 8). The key to enablement is not the platform itself, but providing access and control to all stakeholders while maintaining governance over roles, permissions, and activity ownership.

FIGURE 7

Digital CoE And Unification Of Brand Experience Into Single Site Are Key Tactics For Maintaining Brand Integrity

"What are some of the key tactics your company is exploring to maintain brand integrity through content and information across different channels and brands?"
(Select all that apply)

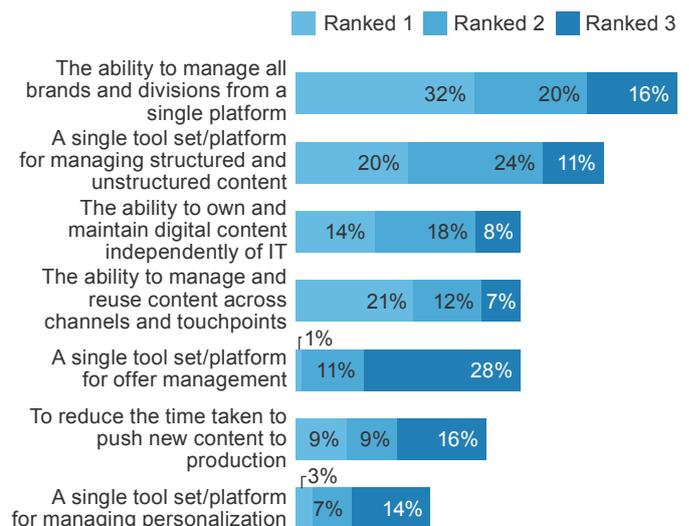|	
Creating a digital center of excellence with governance authority for the enterprise	61%
Unification of commerce and brand experiences into a single site	61%
Unification of platforms to ensure all sites run on a common digital experienceplatform	45%

Base: 159 online brand experience decision-makers from North America and the UK

Source: A commissioned study conducted by Forrester Consulting on behalf of hybris, October 2013

FIGURE 8

Top Priority For Marketers: Manage All Brands And Divisions From A Single Platform

"As a marketer, what are your most important priorities for a future state digital experience platform?"

Ranked 1 Ranked 2 Ranked 3

	Ranked 1	Ranked 2	Ranked 3
The ability to manage all brands and divisions from a single platform	32%	20%	16%
A single tool set/platform for managing structured and unstructured content	20%	24%	11%
The ability to own and maintain digital content independently of IT	14%	18%	8%
The ability to manage and reuse content across channels and touchpoints	21%	12%	7%
A single tool set/platform for offer management	1%	11%	28%
To reduce the time taken to push new content to production	9%	9%	16%
A single tool set/platform for managing personalization	3%	7%	14%

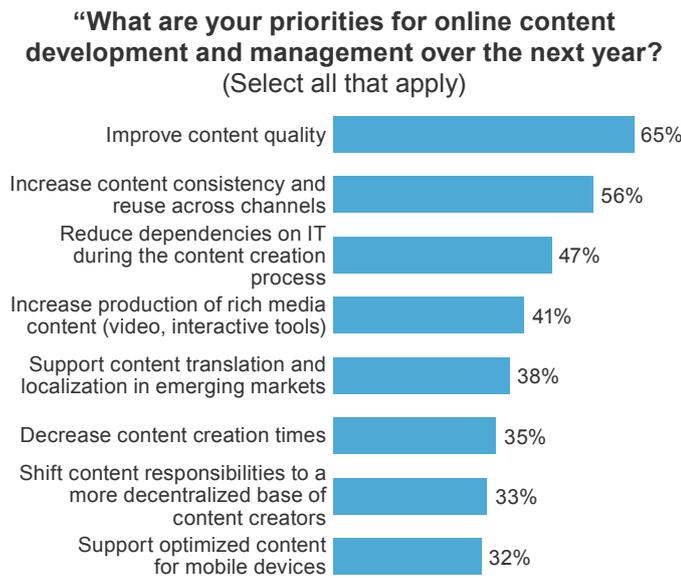Base: 76 marketing decision-makers from North America and the UK

Source: A commissioned study conducted by Forrester Consulting on behalf of hybris, October 2013

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TOP PRIORITIES: CONTENT QUALITY AND REUSE, REDUCING DEPENDENCY ON IT

As firms focus on unifying internally to manage the volume and variety of content, they are also intent on optimizing the use and quality of the content (see Figure 9). A whopping 65% of online brand experience managers list improving online content quality as a top priority for online content development and management this year. This is easier said than done in the siloed environments most corporate marketing and eCommerce teams live in.

Disjointed technologies and messy integrations have led to a heavy reliance on IT to make even the simplest day-to-day changes in the digital content — so much so that reducing dependencies on IT is a top three content management priority this year.

FIGURE 9
Improving Content Quality, Consistency, And Reuse Are Top Development Priorities

"What are your priorities for online content development and management over the next year?"
(Select all that apply)

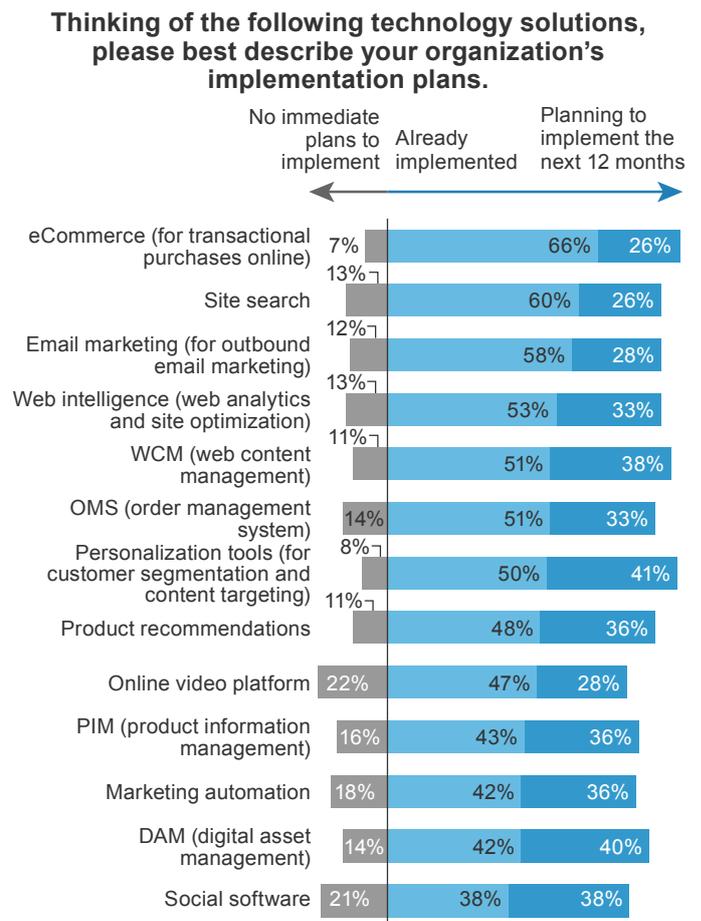|	
Improve content quality	65%
Increase content consistency and reuse across channels	56%
Reduce dependencies on IT during the content creation process	47%
Increase production of rich media content (video, interactive tools)	41%
Support content translation and localization in emerging markets	38%
Decrease content creation times	35%
Shift content responsibilities to a more decentralized base of content creators	33%
Support optimized content for mobile devices	32%

Base: 159 online brand experience decision-makers from North America and the UK

Source: A commissioned study conducted by Forrester Consulting on behalf of hybris, October 2013

As manufacturers and retailers try to create efficiencies and unify marketing and eCommerce efforts internally, they also want to integrate non-transactional personalization and rich media product-based marketing content into the online transaction experience. This adds more technology priorities

into the mix to manage complex product catalogs or digital media content like videos and images. As such, third-party personalization engines and digital asset management (DAM) solutions are top items on online brand managers' investments plans for the next year (see Figure 10).

FIGURE 10
Firms Plan To Implement DAM And Personalization Tools In The Next 12 Months

Thinking of the following technology solutions, please best describe your organization's implementation plans.

No immediate plans to implement ← | Already implemented | → Planning to implement the next 12 months

	No immediate plans to implement	Already implemented	Planning to implement the next 12 months
eCommerce (for transactional purchases online)	7%	66%	26%
Site search	13%	60%	26%
Email marketing (for outbound email marketing)	12%	58%	28%
Web intelligence (web analytics and site optimization)	13%	53%	33%
WCM (web content management)	11%	51%	38%
OMS (order management system)	14%	51%	33%
Personalization tools (for customer segmentation and content targeting)	8%	50%	41%
Product recommendations	11%	48%	36%
Online video platform	22%	47%	28%
PIM (product information management)	16%	43%	36%
Marketing automation	18%	42%	36%
DAM (digital asset management)	14%	42%	40%
Social software	21%	38%	38%

Base: 159 online brand experience decision-makers from North America and the UK

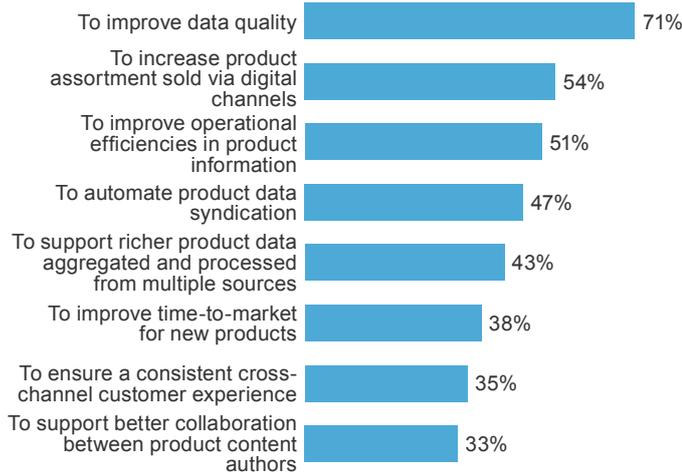Source: A commissioned study conducted by Forrester Consulting on behalf of hybris, October 2013

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Product Information Management Solutions Improve Data Quality

As companies begin to shine more of the spotlight on digital customer experience, having high-quality data to feed these technologies becomes vital. Consumers are spending more time researching products online than ever before so high-quality product content has taken center stage. With online product assortments becoming evermore complex, and globalization means more and more localized content, managing the creation and governance of product content is increasingly difficult to do through incumbent homegrown or eCommerce catalog tools. Many organizations are turning to product information management (PIM) platforms to drive eCommerce sales and enrich the digital customer experience. Beyond the obvious desire to improve product data quality, our study also revealed that firms that have invested in PIM solutions have also been able to more efficiently (see Figure 11):

› **Grow product assortment.** Many retailers are increasing by a factor of 5 to 10 times the number of SKUs they sell online. The industry calls this the "endless aisle" and for retailers it is a necessity to stay relevant in an era where online pure plays sell almost every conceivable consumer merchandise category. Brands too are increasing the number of SKUs they offer with new sub-brands, private label products, and general diversification of product lines. All of this means that existing homegrown product management systems and manual processes are breaking at the seams. PIM provides a scalable solution that enables firms to rapidly increase the SKUs and products they sell without having to worry about system scalability.

› **Syndicate product data to trading partners.** From video and high-resolution imagery through to detailed product specs and even supply chain data, savvy online retailers are becoming increasingly demanding. The rules of the game are changing. Manufacturers, brands, and CPGs that want to distribute via online channel partners must play by their rules and demands. PIM provides the governance and process orchestration tools needed to manage unique product content needs for individual channel partners, as well as the tools to syndicate out product content in the required format and specifications defined in their downstream channel partner trading agreements.

› **Aggregate rich product content from multiple sources.** Manufacturers source product content from a variety of systems of record (see Figure 12). Orchestrating, automating, and governing the collection of data from these back-end systems is commonly an IT headache that requires complex batch extraction jobs to develop, maintain, and monitor using data extract and transformation tools. PIM solutions simplify these processes by applying a common set of processes that makes the job of the data steward much easier and prevents bad quality data from making its way upstream.

› **Get new products to market.** Thirty percent of the firms we surveyed ranked the ability to reduce the time-to-market for new product launches as a top three priority for their future digital experience platform. Product life cycles are getting shorter. Brands and retailers alike have a need to get new products quickly into the hands of the customer. And this means streamlining the processes for creating, approving, publishing, and syndicating consumer-ready product content. Today, manual processes hinder this goal, but with PIM, many stages of the product content creation life cycle can be automated.

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FIGURE 11

Product Information Management Solutions Improve Data Quality

"What value does your organization drive from using a product information management (PIM) solution?"
(Select all that apply)

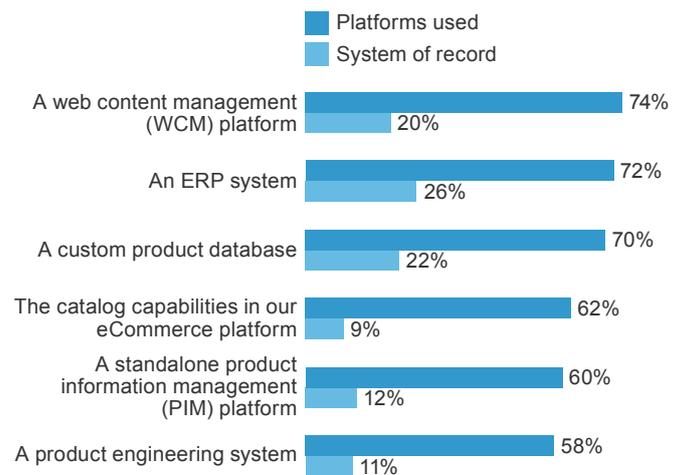|	
To improve data quality	71%
To increase product assortment sold via digital channels	54%
To improve operational efficiencies in product information	51%
To automate product data syndication	47%
To support richer product data aggregated and processed from multiple sources	43%
To improve time-to-market for new products	38%
To ensure a consistent cross-channel customer experience	35%
To support better collaboration between product content authors	33%

Base: 95 online brand experience decision-makers from North America and the UK

Source: A commissioned study conducted by Forrester Consulting on behalf of hybris, October 2013

FIGURE 12

The Product Content Supply Chain Is Complex

"Thinking about structured product content (product or parts) that is displayed on your website, what platform do you use for authoring and maintaining this content?
(Select all that apply)

■ Platforms used
■ System of record

	Platforms used	System of record
A web content management (WCM) platform	74%	20%
An ERP system	72%	26%
A custom product database	70%	22%
The catalog capabilities in our eCommerce platform	62%	9%
A standalone product information management (PIM) platform	60%	12%
A product engineering system	58%	11%

Base: 95 online brand experience decision-makers from North America and the UK

Source: A commissioned study conducted by Forrester Consulting on behalf of hybris, October 2013

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Key Recommendations

As brands double down on their digital strategy, the need for an integrated tool set that empowers cross-functional teams to effectively collaborate on content creation, management, and publishing is becoming a major priority. The landscape of potential solutions is diverse, and many firms struggle to build a comprehensive set of requirements that clearly outline their needs and priorities before diving into technology selection. This study yielded several important observations that represent key success factors for brands embarking on the development of an integrated digital experience strategy:

> **Identify steps in the content creation and publishing process where IT barriers exist.** Before embarking on the design of a next-generation digital experience platform, it is important to first identify existing barriers in the end-to-end content creating and publishing process that are caused by dependencies on IT people, process, or systems. Each of these barriers must be ranked by current severity (typically the delay they pose on content publishing timelines) and ease of removal (do tools exist in the market that would enable the business to manage the process independently). Only once these IT barriers are fully understood and documented can the architecture of a new DX platform begin as success will be measured directly against a reduction on IT dependency for common tasks such as the launch of a new marketing microsite.

> **Resist the temptation to over-engineer your digital experience platform.** It is common for brands to operate a mishmash of experience management technologies that include WCM, eCommerce, PIM, DAM, and ERP systems. Furthermore, across brands, divisions, and product lines within the enterprise there is commonly duplication of instances and multiple vendor solutions in play. Developing a reference digital experience architecture for the enterprise to standardize upon can yield operational efficiencies and, more importantly, standardize the experience for customers who engage across brands, divisions, and product lines. However, the end users (the digital marketers, eCommerce team, and brand owners) of these systems seek foremost a unified tool set. When developing the future state architecture for your DX platform, beware of over-engineering the platform. Where possible a single tool set is preferable to facilitate collaboration among dispersed end users.

> **Recognize that complex product catalogs require structured content governance.** High-quality product content is a fundamental precondition for any brand or manufacturers digital strategy. Modeling large, complex product data catalogs in unstructured data tools such as WCM platform or in a homegrown product database will unlikely scale as you inevitably grow the product assortment offered online. Not only must enterprise organizations with a complex product catalog include PIM in the scope of their DX platform, they must architect how to expose the product taxonomy such that it seamlessly integrates with the experience delivery tools that markers and merchandisers will use to distribute product content across the selling channels.

> **Establish a digital center of excellence to create alignment of objectives.** Without the governance of a digital center of excellence — the differing objectives and goals of each organizational role, brand, and market involved in the delivery of digital experiences will neither be understood nor designed for consistency. Part of the role of the DCoE is to facilitate a common understanding that should be centered on an obsession for consistent customer experiences. Only with a "customer first" mindset can enterprise organizations build out a successful digital content strategy.

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Appendix A: Methodology

In this study, Forrester interviewed or conducted an online survey of 159 organizations across North America and the UK to evaluate how firms manage eCommerce content to give customers the best possible digital experience. Survey participants included decision-makers in marketing, eCommerce, and IT. Questions provided to the participants asked about the organizations digital marketing strategy, how they manage both structured and unstructured data on their websites, and upcoming priorities for digital content development and management. The study began in August 2013 and was completed in October 2013.

Appendix B: Supplemental Material

RELATED FORRESTER RESEARCH

"The Forrester Wave™: Product Information Management (PIM), Q2 2014," Forrester Research, Inc., May 21, 2014

"The Forrester Wave™: B2B Commerce Suites, Q4 2013," Forrester Research Inc., October 7, 2013

"Commerce And Content: The Perfect Couple Or A Tumultuous Affair? Forrester Research, Inc., November 19, 2013
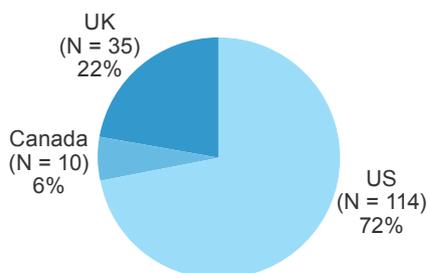
"Commerce Technology Investment And Platform Trends — 2013," Forrester Research, Inc., July 25, 2013
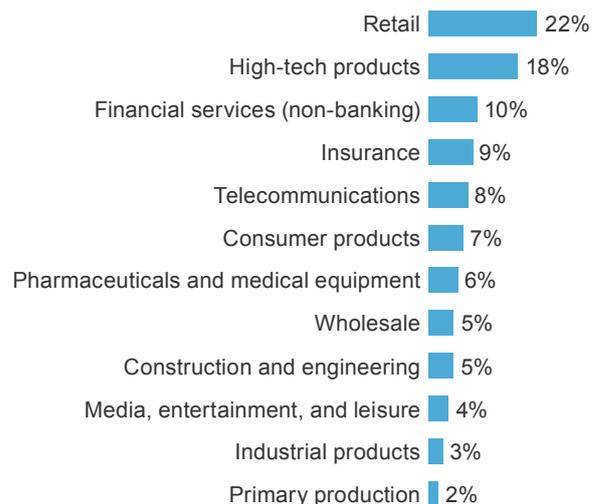
Appendix C: Demographics

FIGURE 13
Demographic: Location And Industry

"Where are the headquarters of your company located?"

UK (N = 35) 22%
Canada (N = 10) 6%
US (N = 114) 72%

"Which of the following best describes the industry to which your company belongs?"

Industry	%
Retail	22%
High-tech products	18%
Financial services (non-banking)	10%
Insurance	9%
Telecommunications	8%
Consumer products	7%
Pharmaceuticals and medical equipment	6%
Wholesale	5%
Construction and engineering	5%
Media, entertainment, and leisure	4%
Industrial products	3%
Primary production	2%

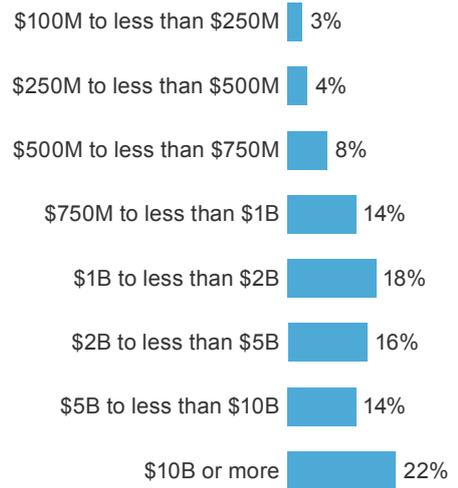Base: 159 online brand experience decision-makers from North America and the UK

Source: A commissioned study conducted by Forrester Consulting on behalf of hybris, October 2013

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FIGURE 14

Demographic: Respondent Department And Company Revenue

"Which of the following most closely describes the department you work in?"

Information technology	48%
eBusiness/eCommerce	33%
Marketing	15%
Customer experience	2%
Product branding	2%
Merchandising	1%

"Using your best estimate, what are the total worldwide annual revenues of your company/ corporation across all brands and divisions?"

$100M to less than $250M	3%
$250M to less than $500M	4%
$500M to less than $750M	8%
$750M to less than $1B	14%
$1B to less than $2B	18%
$2B to less than $5B	16%
$5B to less than $10B	14%
$10B or more	22%

Base: 159 online brand experience decision-makers from North America and the UK

Source: A commissioned study conducted by Forrester Consulting on behalf of hybris, October 2013

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