

The Quest for Delivering Meaningful Digital Experiences

A Closer Look at the Roles of Collaboration,
Self-Service and Engagement

Executive Summary

Companies are pouring an increasing amount of resources into technologies and processes meant to improve the digital experiences of their customers. And while the battle for competitive differentiation will be won by those who provide those relevant, meaningful experiences, there's another side of the digital experience that's equally valuable – the one you provide to your employees, partners and others in your business ecosystem.

One key component of most successful digital businesses is the ability to get a strong handle on how to engage all stakeholders across a variety of channels in the most seamless manner. In an effort to better understand how businesses are driving social collaboration around content, delivering multi-channel digital experiences and using self-service to further engage with their customers, employees and other constituents, CMSWire conducted a survey of our audience. The results of that survey are reviewed in this white paper.

Key findings of the survey include:

- › When it comes to self-service and engagement, 46 percent of respondents indicated having multiple disparate systems, while 16 percent stated they currently have no solution. On the plus side, 30 percent reported having a platform that is integrated with their other systems.
- › Email is the overwhelming method of choice for communication and sharing – both internally (84 percent) and externally (83 percent). Organizations are also

using a combination of tools, including collaborative workspaces, public file sharing sites, FTP, instant messaging, social media and others to communicate with their stakeholders.

- › IT and marketing are the biggest players in building and maintaining company sites; however, other departments such as human resources, product development and customer experience are beginning to get involved.
- › The three biggest challenges facing organizations when creating and maintaining their websites aren't technical. They include: limited people resources (58 percent), having limited budgets (46 percent) and getting approval from decision makers (44 percent).
- › Fifty-three percent of survey participants noted that colleagues in their business unit would be willing to create websites or apps outside of IT if they just had the right training, while 17 percent are ready to try building sites on their own immediately. ■

SECTION I

Communication is Fragmented

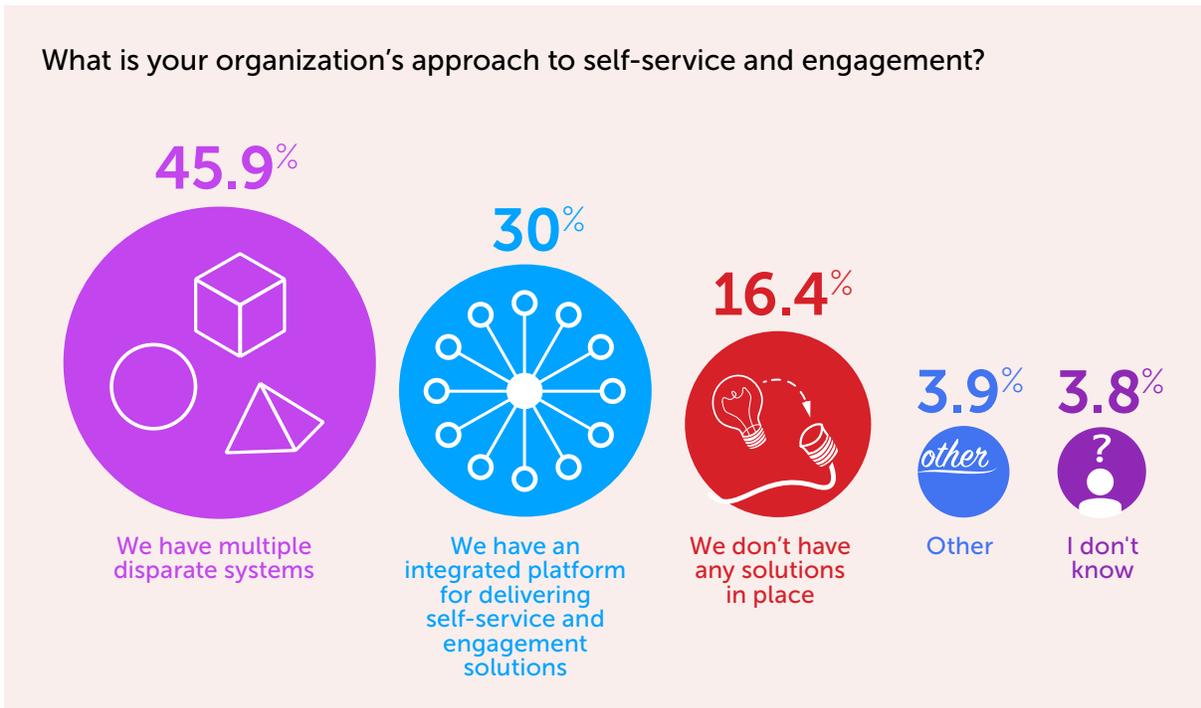
In today's digital workplace, the ability to engage customers, employees and other stakeholders depends on one essential element: effective communication. However, according to the CMSWire survey, a majority of organizations are still falling back on methods that produce fragmented interactions with their audiences.

In addition, many organizations have legacy systems with information located in multiple places, as the following results show. Such fragmentation comes at a high cost to many organizations, and is a symptom of a larger issue – the inability to efficiently share information.

First we need to define two terms used in this survey: Self-service refers to any website(s) – external or internal – provided to employees, partners, customers and the general public for finding information about your products and services, Engagement includes any efforts to get these audiences to visit or interact with your online content, or with each other.

When it comes to self-service and engagement, nearly 30 percent of respondents state they have an integrated platform for delivering these solutions, about 46 percent still indicate having multiple disparate systems. It's worth noting that 16 percent state they don't have any solutions in place whatsoever.

What is your organization's approach to self-service and engagement?



In an effort to resolve this challenge and coordinate information across channels and audiences, people often waste time and resources trying to find the right information and end up sharing and disseminating that information in inefficient, and often insecure ways.

And, as today's organizations are managing more and more content for the purposes of collaboration, the ability to integrate communications becomes even more difficult.

How extensive are your organization's content management needs with regards to content collaboration?



How Organizations Communicate

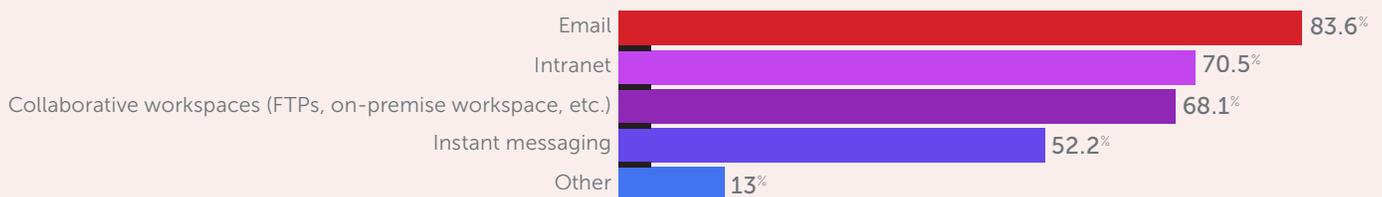
An overwhelming percentage of our respondents noted that email is their primary form of communication with both internal (84 percent) and external (83 percent) audiences, despite the availability of other tools that promise more efficient ways to share information.

Because digital experiences call for personal, relevant communication, email may not be the best choice in all situations. While email can provide a high ROI when communicating externally, this is only the case as long as those messages are meaningful. Internally, separate research shows that most emails are irrelevant to the person on the receiving end.¹

Internal Communication

Following email, respondents indicated intranets (71 percent) and collaborative workspaces such as FTP and on-premise workspaces (68 percent) as those most used in sharing information internally. And – a sign of today’s always-on culture – nearly 52 percent stated they use instant messaging.

How are you currently sharing content and information INTERNALLY? Choose all that apply.



¹Matthew Brodsky, "Cutting Employees Some Slack With Workplace Technology," CMSWire, February 22, 2016, <http://www.cmswire.com/social-business/cutting-employees-some-slack-with-workplace-technology/>.

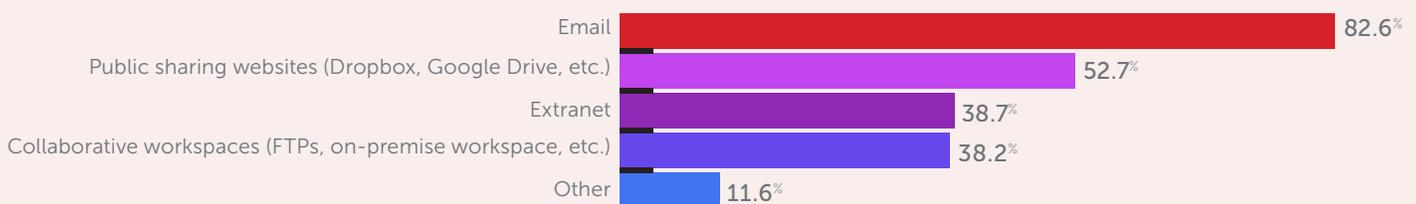
Write-in answers included enterprise tools like SharePoint and Oracle Social Network; social sharing tools including Slack, Skype and Yammer; and project tracking tools like Confluence and Jira.

Take note that these choices are not mutually exclusive. Many organizations use a combination of email, collaborative workspaces, instant messaging and other tools for internal communications, forcing their employees to jump from one application to another in order to be productive.

External Communication

Although not surprising, as employees bring their own devices to work and expect a seamless experience between personal and business interactions, consumer-grade websites such as DropBox and Google Drive are being used by 53 percent of organizations – a high number despite rising concerns around security.

How are you currently sharing content and information EXTERNALLY?
Choose all that apply.



Extranets (39 percent) and collaborative workspaces (38 percent) followed, with write-in answers including Twitter, LinkedIn, integrated CMS platform, OneDrive, private social communities, events and even paper.

As with internal communications, organizations are using a combination of these disparate systems to communicate with customers, partners and other external stakeholders, suggesting that the digital experience for those audiences is less than streamlined.

Further, although effective communication is essential in today's digital workplace in order to engage customers, employees and other constituents, the results show that many organizations are missing the opportunity to establish the brand consistency and operational efficiency that comes with using more rich, compelling and interactive ways to communicate. ■

SECTION II

Business Units are Getting Impatient

Respondents told us that their organizations are using their websites for a variety of purposes, including education on brands and products, marketing campaigns and communication and knowledge transfer within the company. Companies are also using their sites for customer service, customer communities and for internal document transfer and management.

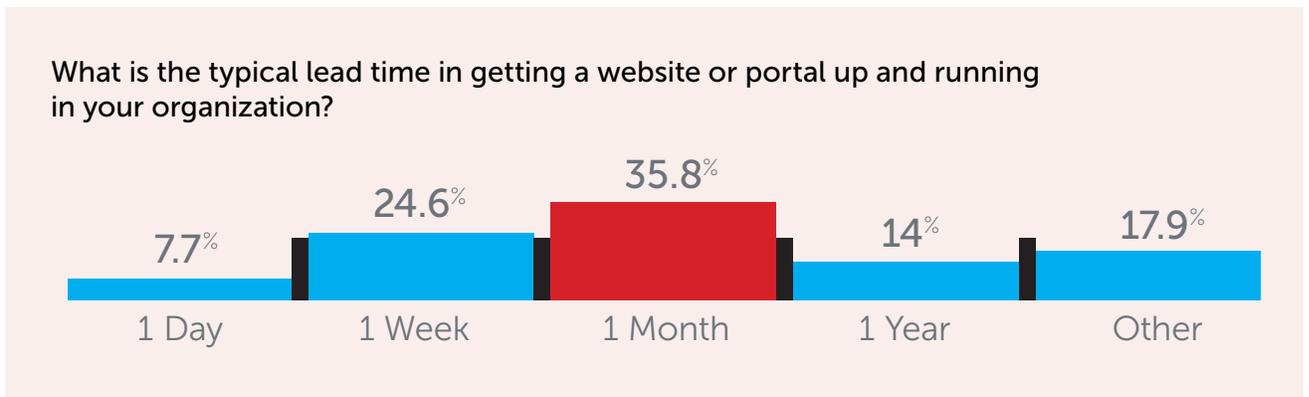
With so many functions being carried out, the results show that an increasing number of business units are getting involved with their company

**What functions do your organization's websites perform?
Please rank the responses below in order from Most Important (1) to Least Important (9).**



websites, and perhaps have become impatient with the lead times that IT provides for building and maintaining those sites.

Lead times for getting a site built range from 24 hours all the way to 18 months, according to the survey. Most respondents (36 percent) stated it takes one month to complete a site, while 25 percent answered one week, and 14 percent one year.



Because it can take hours, days or even weeks for site changes to be made, increasingly there is an expectation that functional units don't want to have to wait for IT to get websites up and running, so they prefer to own these sites themselves. These shadow projects create IT security, administration, maintenance overhead and other issues.

Here's a closer look at how today's organizations are managing their websites.

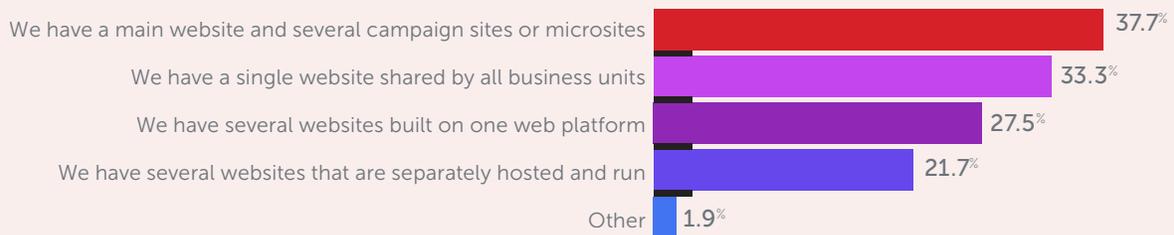
Current Practices

When asked about the number and types of internal and external websites their companies handle, the responses were all over the board.

For external stakeholders, 38 percent noted they have a main website and several campaign microsites, while internally, 33 percent indicated having a single website shared by all business units.

As far as how their sites are built, there's a fairly close split, where 22 percent have several sites built on one platform, and 28 percent have several websites that are separately hosted and run.

Which statement describes your organization's websites (internal and external) today? Choose all that apply.



In looking at the number of sites, 47 percent of respondents manage a total of two to five sites – both internal and external – while 23 percent maintain more than 10 sites. Only 17 percent maintain one site for all audiences, with slightly fewer (13 percent) managing six to 10 sites.

With so many properties to manage, organizations should be looking for ways to more effectively manage their websites, microsites and other communications under a single view. Companies that can successfully share content and information in a streamlined way will be able to accelerate time to market, increase brand awareness and boost end user adoption.

Website Creation and Management

When asked about who builds and manages their websites, we found that although IT still dwarfs other units in this area, there are other lines of business getting involved in the process.



Sixty-five percent of respondents stated an internal IT group builds and manages their sites, while 35 percent use an external IT group for this purpose.

Marketing came in at 42 percent, and 10 percent named other departments such as HR, product development and customer experience. Some also stated that each division of their company is responsible for building and managing their own website.

It's important to note that for most participants, creation and management of their company's websites is a collaborative effort between IT and marketing, or another department that is in charge of a particular site. ■

SECTION III

Self-Service is the Key

Organizations face a variety of both technical and cultural issues when it comes to managing their websites; however, as the results show, business units are willing to take these on if given the opportunity.

Those who took the survey stated that their top three challenges when creating or updating their sites include: limited people resources (58 percent), budget (46 percent) and getting approval from decision makers (44 percent).

What are the top three challenges your organization faces in creating new sites or updating existing sites? Please select three.



58% Limited people resources



45.7% Limited money resources



43.5% Getting approval from decision makers

As the results demonstrate, businesses are finding it increasingly difficult to come up with the resources needed to get their websites up and running, so they need to come up with more creative ways to manage their communication, including giving other departments, such as lines of business (LOB), the freedom to develop their own sites.

By doing so, organizations can save hundreds of hours of labor through more efficient, streamlined operations, as well as thousands of dollars in agency and IT costs. In addition, they can more easily meet industry regulations, ensuring all marketing channels display uniform and consistent messages, potentially saving millions in government fines.

In addition to IT inefficiencies, other challenges such as lack of alignment, et al contribute to companies wanting to drive self-service. These factors help explain why reliance on IT came in at a surprising 27 percent behind limited technical expertise (30 percent) and lack of alignment on features (31 percent).

What Businesses Want

Respondents have a need to extend their website functionalities in several areas. The top three needs include: drive campaign management and sales enablement (20 percent), enable better sales performance and process insights (18 percent) and empower partners and suppliers through self-service (16 percent).

A slightly smaller percentage (14.5 percent) stated they want to enhance their sites in order to empower lines of business to drive agility and faster

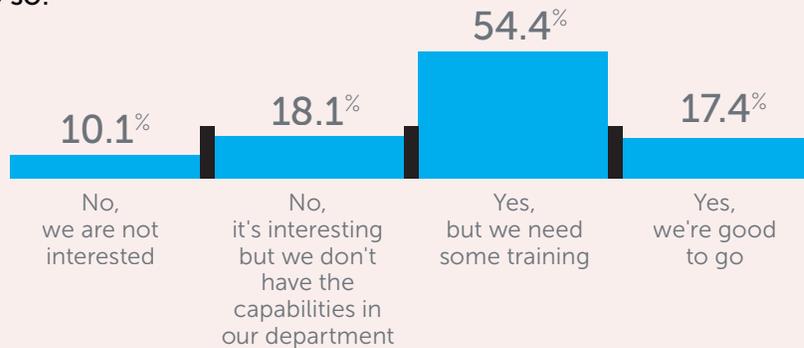
Do your organization’s websites need to extend applications to do any of the following?



innovation, while 14 percent want to extend functionality in order to empower, train and engage employees.

When it comes to managing those sites, 54 percent of respondents stated that colleagues in their business unit would be willing to create plug-and-play websites, apps or other web experiences without IT, but would need

If your organization could create plug-and-play websites, web apps or other web experiences without relying on IT, would colleagues in your business unit be willing to do so?



further training to do so, while 17 percent are ready to try building sites on their own immediately.

For those not willing to go outside of IT for their websites, 18 percent say it's because they don't have the capability in their departments, and 10 percent simply aren't interested.

Looking Forward

While some organizations are making progress in the way they communicate with both internal and external audiences, many are still struggling to make sense of disjointed tools and systems, and are challenged with limited human and financial resources.

As these organizations continue to search for better ways to collaborate and share information with all of their stakeholders, business leaders must keep in mind that empowerment and flexibility are important components in this equation.

By considering the following key questions, organizations can better support the digital workforce in the areas of collaboration, communication and process automation:

- › How you can empower your workforce to do business anytime, anywhere, on any device securely without having to continually change applications?
- › How can you streamline and automate business processes to reduce employee workload and dissatisfaction?

- › How can you mobilize existing business content and context without creating new information and governance silos?

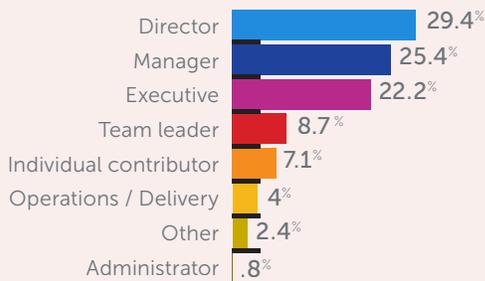
Organizations that are able to break down internal silos and create opportunities for self-service will not only be able to drive agility and innovation, but will also be better equipped to provide customers with personal, relevant experiences that fuel loyalty and long-term growth. ■

SECTION IV

About Our Respondents

The majority of our respondents (77 percent) were manager-level and above, and a quarter of our respondents were at enterprise-level companies of 5000-plus employees.

Which of the following best describes your job function?

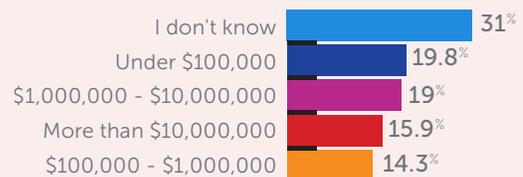


About 50 percent of respondents were in the marketing and IT departments. Other departments participating included sales, product management, customer experience and information management.

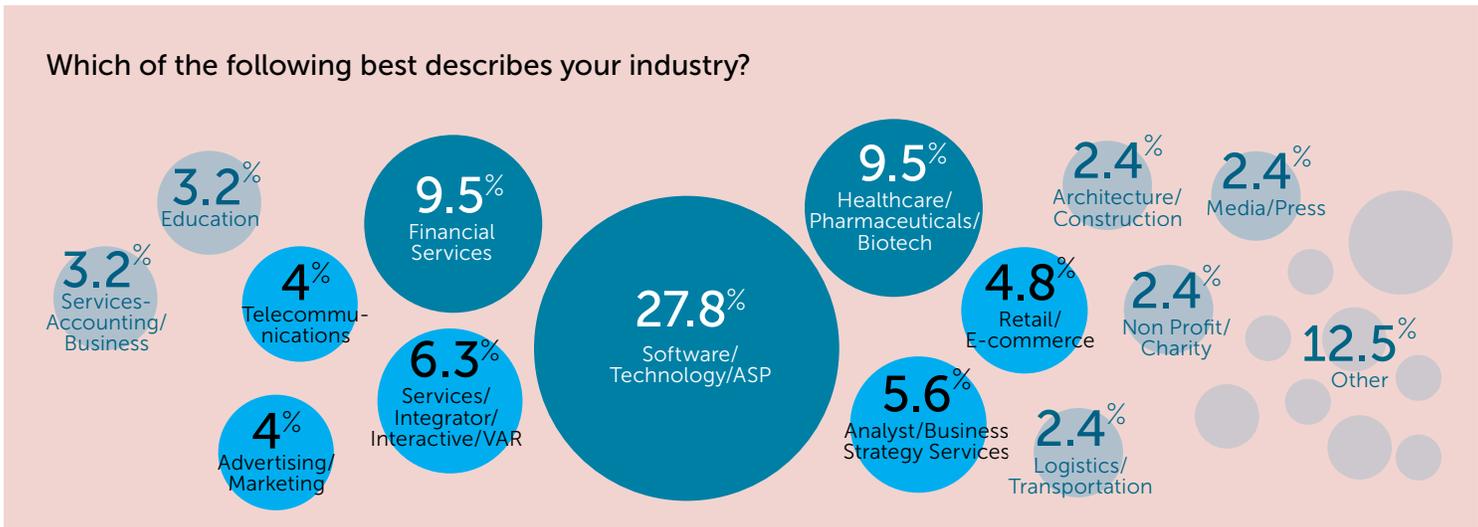
How many employees does your organization have?



What is the size of your organization's annual IT budget?



When we look at their industries, the majority were comprised of software and technology companies (28 percent), with a large portion of financial services (9.5 percent) and healthcare companies (9.5 percent). ■



SECTION V

Methodology

CMSWire conducted this survey between January 14 and February 9, 2016. Surveys were sent via email and website pop-ups to 20,000 readers who scored highly for interest in customer experience (CX). Partial survey responses were received from 69 participants, with 138 completing all the questions in the survey. That response rate translates to a 95 percent confidence level, with a nine percent margin of error that these survey results accurately reflect the opinions of our audience as a whole. ■

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