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# 10 Signs You Need To Re-Evaluate Your Digital Strategy

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You Don't Have One

Let's cut to the chase here – you need a digital strategy. Like building a house without blueprints, embracing the digital evolution without a strategy in place is sure to end with someone getting whacked over the head with a two-by-four.

A digital strategy can take many forms and have many different objectives. You might want to improve how you talk to your customers, or better capture and analyze the data you receive. Or it could be something as simple as needing to create a website that looks like it's from this decade.

Whatever the case may be, your digital strategy should be focused on transforming your business towards meeting these objectives. That means changing how you operate, how you assign resources, how you set priorities, and even how you organize your teams. A great digital strategy focuses on:

- Developing a unified vision for the organization's digital future
- Key opportunities and challenges in the market
- Goal-setting and long-term planning
- Setting initiatives and timelines
- Auditing current technical resources and legacy systems

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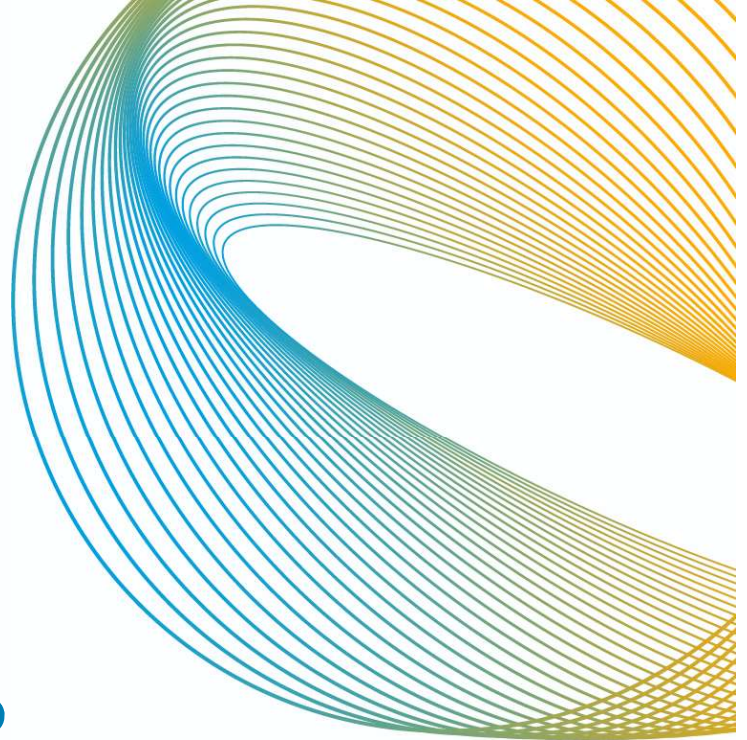
You Can't Adapt

This is actually not that uncommon of a problem for many organizations. They build a great digital strategy, focused around achieving the goal of transforming the way they do business online, and go to work executing on it.

Then, suddenly, it all falls apart.

Typically, the issue boils down to one key thing: **They didn't adapt**. The digital world changes on almost a daily basis. From smartphones and smart watches to worldwide pandemics, there's always something on the horizon that will throw a wrench into whatever digital strategy you may have developed. Being able to meet these challenges head-on, and alter your strategy to fit around them, is key.

This doesn't always need to be a major overhaul, either. Sometimes it's as simple as being creative with the technology you already have in place. With the recent COVID-19 outbreak, many restaurants and grocers have had to completely revamp how

they interact with their customers. The ones who were smart quickly pivoted towards contactless delivery and online ordering, reallocating resources towards the digital infrastructure they already had in place. Their digital strategy is still focused on the same goal – delivering excellent customer experiences – but the journey has completely changed. Luckily, because they adapted early and quickly, they are in a position to adapt again when and if they need to.

Oh, and those who were slow to adapt? They're either out of business or still playing catch-up at double speed, with the end result often being a poor imitation of their forebears.

Data Isn't At The Center

The goal of a successful digital strategy needs to be first and foremost centered around your customers - better understanding, stronger engagement, and seamless follow through with them. In order to do this, though, you need to tailor your digital technology to meet each of their specific needs. That requires a lot of **customer data**.

Now, customer data can take a lot of different forms. Behavioral, geographic, contextual – anything that can help give a clearer picture of your customers and their needs. Your digital strategy needs to account for this and bring in technology that can capture and extrapolate that data. Connecting that data into all of your other systems and being able to actualize activity with it is key. A system like a Customer Data Platform (CDP) can help ensure you have the capabilities you need, but don't forget to ensure that this same CDP can connect in with the rest of the technologies you use. Otherwise…

It's Hard To Personalize

We talked about customer data, but just collecting it and having it on-hand doesn't do anyone much good. You have to be able to put it in action – which means pairing it up with your content and using the insights that your new customer data provides to deliver individualized, one-to-one experiences for your customers. In other words, **personalization**.

Typically when companies have trouble personalizing, their digital strategy is lacking in one of two areas:

1. They can't connect customer data to content effectively
2. They aren't able to segment and build customer profiles

The first issue is purely a problem of technology – you need something that easily pairs with your CDP or whatever system houses your data. A Digital Experience Platform (DXP) is quickly becoming one of the most popular solutions for this, but it's not an end-all problem solver, as many CDPs are built as standalone platforms and it takes quite a bit of work to pair the two together. However, if you can find a DXP that either has a CDP natively built in (such as **Jahia**), this will usually save you a lot of time.

The second is more often an issue of how you use your technology than the technology itself. This is where we go back to your digital strategy. As part of your strategy, your teams need to be enabled on the software you purchase, know how they can use it effectively, and be able to put it into action across all of your systems and content. Segmentation and building profiles can often be done automatically in more robust DXP systems, but these processes need established rules and frameworks to build off of.

5 Your Content Still Underperforms

So you've built in data collection and personalization capabilities into your digital strategy but you're still not seeing the results you want on the content you're putting out there. There can be any number of reasons for this, but we'll focus on a couple potential situations here.

The first is the most likely one – you aren't **testing**. By testing, we mean studying, evaluating, and applying changes to content based on feedback, implicit or explicit, that you receive from the market. A/B tests are some of the most popular, allowing you to test two pieces of content against the same audience to see which one has the best results. This can be further expanded out into multivariate testing, which covers anything from a few pieces of content to an entire page, and allows you to see what is/isn't performing well across numerous different points of comparison.

If testing isn't the issue, then it can often be a problem with how you're **segmenting** your personalized content across audiences. You could either be segmenting too broadly or not broadly enough – extremes in either direction can be problematic. Best practice is to ensure your segments are practical (big enough to give real, actionable data), goal-oriented (focused around "WHY" they are doing something instead of "WHAT" they are doing), and free of bias (ie. don't pick and choose your data).

If neither testing nor segmentation is your issue, one other option is **analytics**. Or, rather, a lack of analytics.

6 There's Little To No Analytics

Analytics can best be seen as the lifeblood of personalization. It allows you to go beyond just data collection, aggregation, and application to actually empower you to enrich data with...well, more data.

Let's take a step back. When you bring in a customer's data from your CDP and segment it according to the various bases mentioned before (socio-demographic, behavioral, and contextual), you essentially create a profile for them. That profile is then driven across a map of personalization, all geared towards engaging them with the content you create.

As we talked about before, testing is an important piece to know whether the content will be effective for them. However, **analytics** goes far beyond simply testing – it looks at the profile as a whole, providing you a full-view of who they are, what they're responding to, and helps you get a bigger picture for how you can best alter your digital content to meet their needs. This includes such pieces as **goal and conversion management**, wherein you essentially create a scoring system based on engagement and track that throughout their whole interaction with your brand.

If your digital strategy didn't account for analytics, fortunately much of the technology we've talked about thus far – especially DXPs – tends to come with it out-of-the-box. However, to take full advantage of your analytics capabilities, it's important that your DXP is able to integrate into the other technologies you use as well...particularly anything that is also collecting customer data. The results won't be just a one-way street – you'll be able to use those analytics to both improve the efficiency of your DXP's personalization and that of your connected technologies at the same time!

You Aren't Multi-Channel

Multi-channel, very simply, refers to the various digital avenues in which your customer can engage with you. Think websites, mobile, email, smart devices, and so on. Each channel has its own requirements for how content can be delivered to it, and almost always requires a framework in which the content can sit.

Most digital-facing organizations tackle this in one or two ways. There's not necessarily a right or wrong approach (Jahia, for instance, is built to support both), but it's imperative that, as part of your digital strategy, you know what and why you've picked one of them over the other. Especially if you haven't yet considered multi-channel delivery up to this point.

The first is what is commonly known as the **Traditional** approach. Here, you design content to be delivered to one specific channel. That means one framework, one language, and one layout. This has a number of benefits – for instance, if you're only looking at one or two channels that the bulk of your customers use, it makes sense to put in the effort to create a framework for each one on a UI that your team is familiar with and can easily work with. Plus, since there's less complication here, everything is much easier to set up and use, which can save time if you need to get your CMS set up to go to market quickly. However, the downsides are numerous – going multi-channel is complicated, painful, and can take a lot of time, and this approach isn't exactly built to scale as your organization does.

The second approach is commonly referred to as **Headless**. In this, you create content once and then share it across however many digital channels as you need. Rather than building frameworks for each one, your system is designed to let you borrow frameworks and use them as needed to deliver the best-looking content as possible on each channel. Of course, as with Traditional, there are downsides to this approach as well as upsides. Since it's more technologically advanced, it ends up taking more time to set up and use a Headless system over a Traditional. Headless is also not as user-friendly – you require a development team to set it up, and the UI can often have a higher learning curve compared to Traditional.

Whichever you choose – staying strictly in one or two channels with Traditional or going multi-channel with Headless – you should ensure that it aligns with your digital strategy over the next few years. Otherwise, you will end up having to re-evaluate it again sooner rather than later…and the costs can be significant.

There's Not Much Room To Scale

Let's envision a scenario. You've successfully set up your digital apparatus. You're collecting customer data, applying personalization, delivering out to multiple channels, and overall doing exactly what you envisioned when you set your digital strategy. However, you're doing so well that you're outgrowing what your technology has afforded you, and you have no idea how to continue to grow.

This is a quintessential **scaling** problem, and something that many companies run into at one point or another. It's not anyone's fault; it's hard to predict when your organization will start growing at a rapid pace, and sometimes it happens so quickly that by the time you realize it's happening, it's already too late.

So what's the solution? Planning ahead always helps – buying technology that has scaling built into the platform. This has the benefit of you being able to map out your growth plan for years down the line, and being able to bring

in extra capacity (with a cloud solution) as needed. However, that's not always feasible especially given that some of the technologies you may want to scale to weren't available at the start of your journey.

In those cases, you want to take a step back and look at what technology you want to bring in next – is it unlimited data capacity via cloud, or maybe functionality flexibility via IoT or AI? More often than not, if you have a stack of technologies that are flexible enough to adapt to changes in the market, you will be able to integrate with and grow your platform using outside technology that enables you to scale the way your organization requires.

In other words, planning ahead is the preferred approach...but not all hope is lost if you can't. Just make sure you have flexibility to allow for scaling when it's needed.

No Built-In Consent Management

Another consideration for digital strategies is the recent proliferation of data protection and privacy laws. The most visible of these has been the General Data Protection Regulation, or GDPR, which went into effect in the EU back in 2018. The basic gist of these kinds of regulations is to put the power back in the consumer's hand – not just in being able to give consent for handing over their data, but also giving them control over how it's taken, where it's taken, and the limits on the data once it's taken.

Now, regulations like GDPR won't make-or-break your digital strategy, but they could set you back quite a bit if you don't plan ahead for complying with them. If you already have your digital strategy humming but data protection compliance isn't a part of it, you need to start working on that ASAP. Every technology handles GDPR a bit

differently. The main ones you need to focus on are the ones that touch your customer data directly, aka your CRM, Marketing Automation, and of course, your CDP. Many CDP's have consent management built-in...but not all. It's important that you take a step back and examine whether your CDP does cover consent management, and if it's to a level that you're comfortable with. If it isn't, then it's time to start shifting your customer data over to a CDP that is better equipped to meet these compliance guidelines. With California and many other states soon to follow in GDPR's footsteps, there's no real wiggle room here.
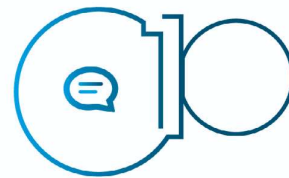
Lower Than Expected ROI

Finally, we come to the big one. You've completed all the steps above, and yet you are still not meeting the ROI goals you set out for when establishing your digital strategy, buying technology, implementing it into your company, and then training your employees on it.

Don't worry - not all hope is lost! Often when organizations see a lower ROI than they expected from implementing a new digital strategy, it's because they are either looking at too short a timeline or too high of a target. Most digital strategies are ramps rather than rocket launches – you need to give it time to show that your toils are bearing fruit.

If it's still difficult to pair this off with expectations, consider taking a wider breadth of what your technology has enabled in your organization. Although Marketing and Sales are the main beneficiaries of digital transformation, it's very much a "rising tide lifts all sails" situation. Look at how much more efficient your developers and IT departments are now that you have effective, autonomous technology
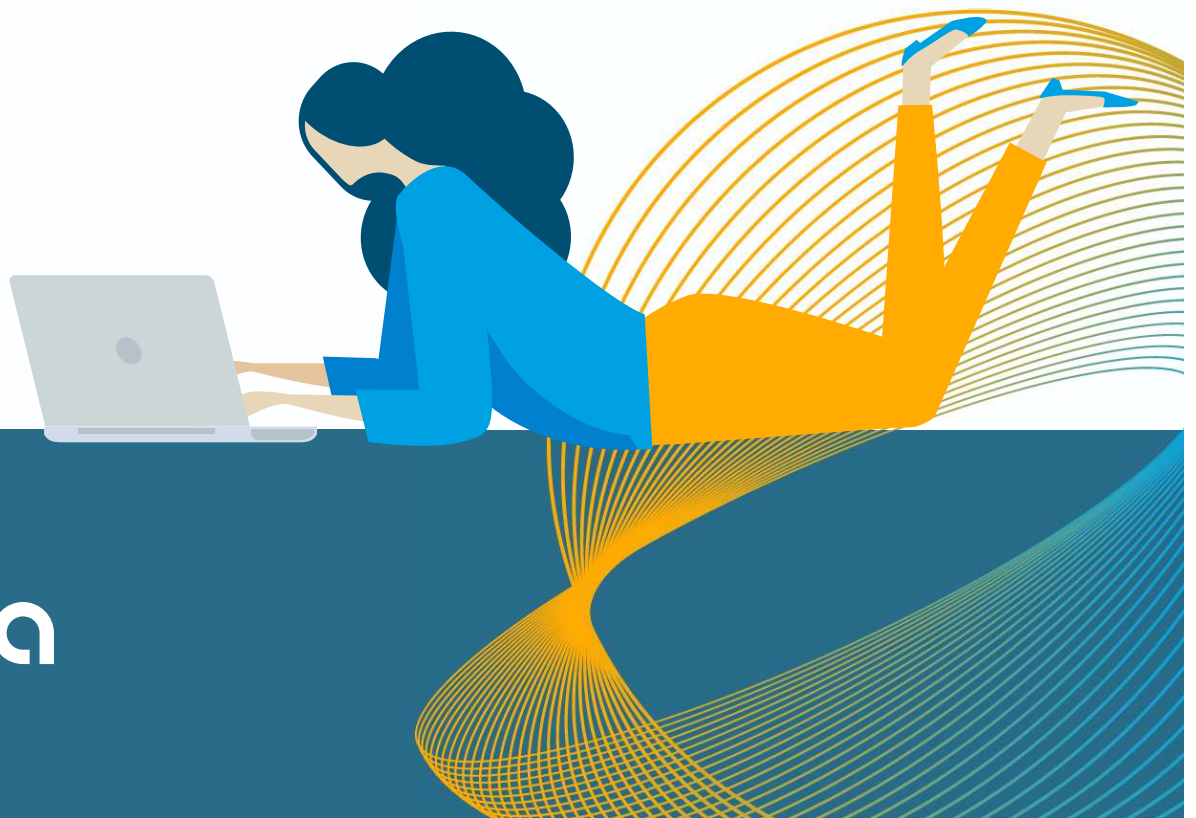
in place that no longer requires constant upkeep. Internal enablement technology, such as employee portals, are great test cases for analysis like this. Examine usage over a span of time from before and after you brought the new solution live.

There are numerous ways to show that your digital strategy is working for you, even if it isn't quite at the level you expected it to be. Always keep your eyes looking forward. If you build the foundation for your digital strategy right, it'll pay back your investment tenfold, carrying you to bigger and brighter heights than you may have ever thought possible!

That's the "Top 10," but there's so much more!

Jahia's mission is to help organizations just like yours leverage content and data to fully engage with their customers.

Want to learn more? Join us at www.jahia.com

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