

A cheat sheet for getting composable right



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Whether you're ready to [go composable](#) or just thinking about it, be sure to first consider a number of factors. In particular, closely examine how your current technologies, workflow, and tech strategies will affect—and be influenced by—the switch.

At a recent CMSWire webinar, [Digital experiences without drama: Empower marketers and streamline development](#), I discussed a cheat sheet that contains guidelines for getting composable right. Below is a recap.

At the outset, take these five steps:

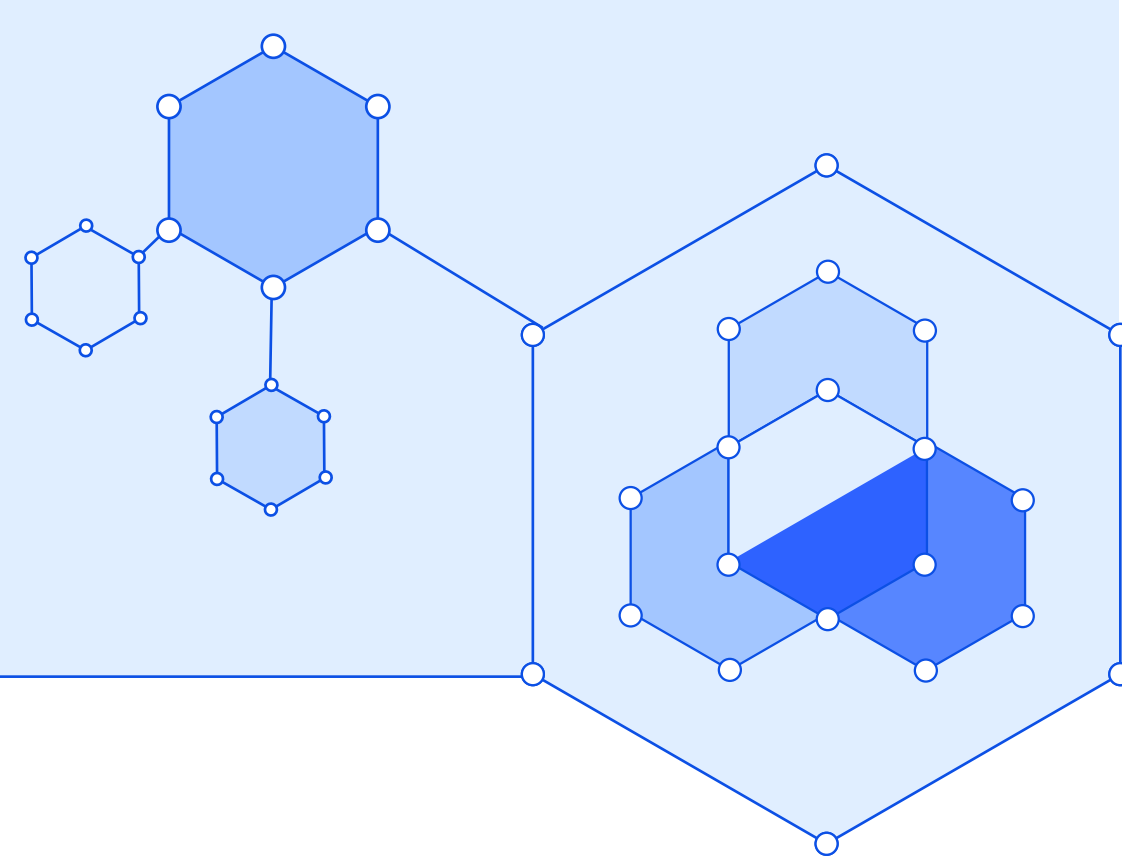
1 Write up a manifest for your future composable stack.

When building a composable-based tech stack, keep in mind that it must **be composable, not composed**. Composable means easily assembled, modified, and reassembled as requirements change. A composed solution needs glue code to connect the composable API-orchestration and front-end layers. The more tools you use, the more glue code you need. That can make things ... well ... sticky. Plus, the tools stay agile only for a while—pretty much until that glue dies.

In preparation, write a manifest that describes what you want your stack to be—and not to be—with an emphasis on the following:

How fast the features in each tool can be replaced or swapped given that best-of-need solutions must accommodate evolving needs. For example, a tactical feature in composable product X might be replaced with a dedicated product with more advanced features. If Phase O uses a CMS's media capability and then, later in Phase N, you want a dedicated DAM for media, no CMS switch occurs, just a swap of the media features offered by the DAM.

What you want to avoid. For example, too many different spin-ups by different teams would result in redundant tools that are not part of the stack. Also, explain how to build a sustainable stack that can serve as many facets of your business as possible.



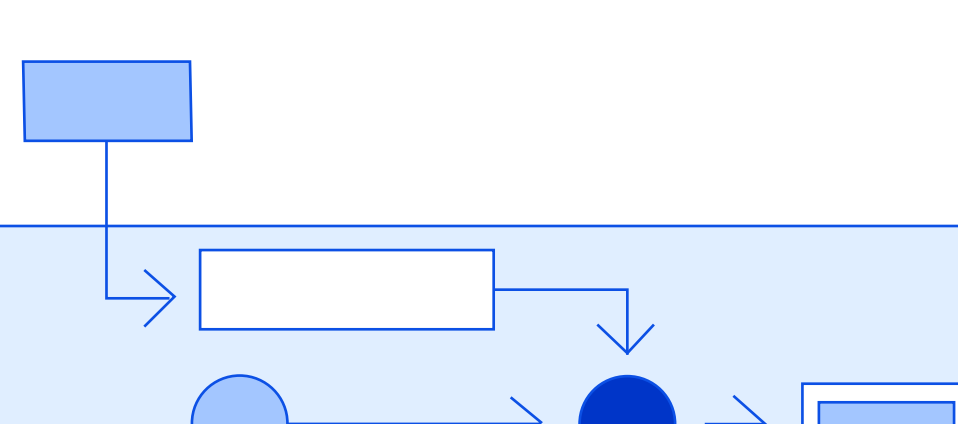
2 Evaluate your current technologies

Take a close look at your existing technologies, which likely stemmed from large investments in the past. You might not want to scrap your entire suite of solutions just because they do not connect with modern developer tools. Instead, consider incorporating them as part of a composable stack so that you can continue to leverage their content, features, and assets.

3 Update the workflow.

Answer these questions:

1. What is the current workflow between design, development, marketing, and business teams?
2. How can you optimize the various elements to eliminate bottlenecks and long wait times within the workflow?
3. Can you streamline the workflow to start the process of creating content, design, coding, or even optimization first with resources as they become available so as to launch digital experiences faster?



When putting together the proof-of-concept for a composable stack, start with your design system because that content library is unique to your business. Next, try out different tools based on that system for an indicator of how well they will serve your needs based on what you want to build.

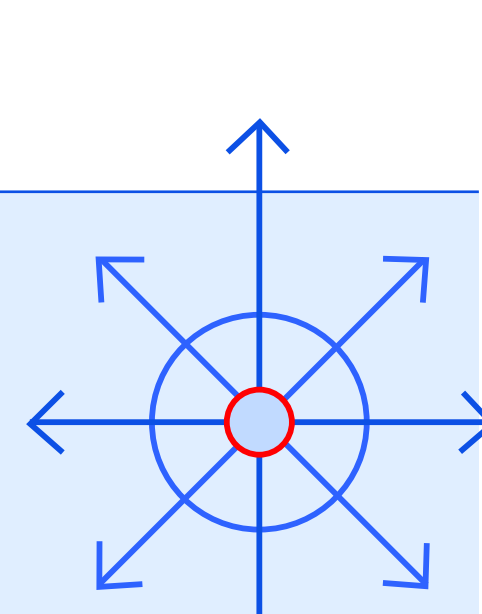
4 Find the right vendors and ask the right questions.

A key question to ask when selecting vendors is how much glue code will be necessary to implement your new tech stack with those vendors' tools. For instance, an accelerator that's tied to a specific agency would require a lot of glue code and render the stack virtually impossible for other agencies or developers to work with in the future.

5 Adopt a value-first approach

A value-first approach focuses on the final outcome, which is vastly different from the platform-first philosophy companies have adopted over the past 20 years. By being platform-first, brands are locked into a certain platform and end up having to look for agencies that specialize in it for upgrades and maintenance.

Being value-first means you are in the driver's seat, free to focus on making the systems in the new stack compatible with your business goals.



The above five steps are a prerequisite for your decision and selection process for building a composable stack. For more information, watch the webinar.

Digital experiences without the drama

Watch now