

CASE STUDY

Hershey Entertainment & Resorts Company entrusted Uniform to replace a decades-old legacy stack

QUICK STATS

- Tech stack modernized
- Faster page building
- Campaign updates in minutes
- Consolidated marketing capabilities

HERSHEY
ENTERTAINMENT & RESORTS®



INDUSTRY:
Hospitality



HEADQUARTERS:
Hershey, PA.



COMPANY SIZE:
3,000+

CHALLENGES

- Developer dependency for content changes
- Rigid PHP infrastructure
- Seasonal traffic demands without scalable infrastructure
- Complex path to adopt modern capabilities
- Technical skillset mismatch

BENEFITS

- Campaign velocity transformed
- 25–45% reduction in page-building time
- Reduced infrastructure maintenance burden
- Elastic scalability during critical periods
- Marketing autonomy without technical debt
- Consolidated toolset for future capabilities

Hershey Entertainment & Resorts Company (HE&R) operates beloved family attractions and resort properties, including Hersheypark, the largest amusement park in Pennsylvania, as well as numerous associated digital assets. For over 25 years, its web presence has run on a PHP stack, using HTML, CSS, and jQuery. A foundation that had served reliably but became a strategic constraint.

The company faced a marketing velocity opportunity due to its PHP framework. Content updates mostly required developer intervention. Publication was sometimes delayed 1–2 days, even for simple changes. The infrastructure was unable to scale elastically during peak seasons. The development team faced the challenge of complete retraining on modern JavaScript frameworks while maintaining business continuity.

Working with a digital agency partner, HE&R selected Uniform as the orchestration layer of a new composable architecture.

As a result, page-building time decreased by 25–45%, campaign updates that could take days now take minutes, marketing teams gained direct publishing capability, and HE&R established a foundation for personalization and A/B testing without vendor complexity.



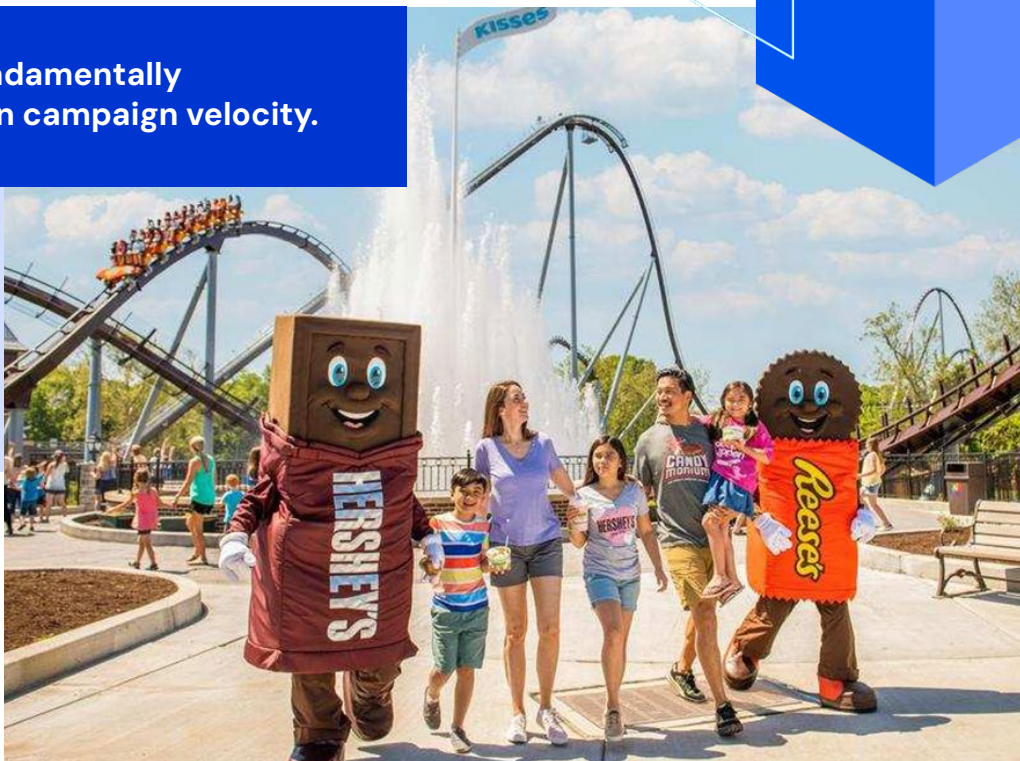
Challenge

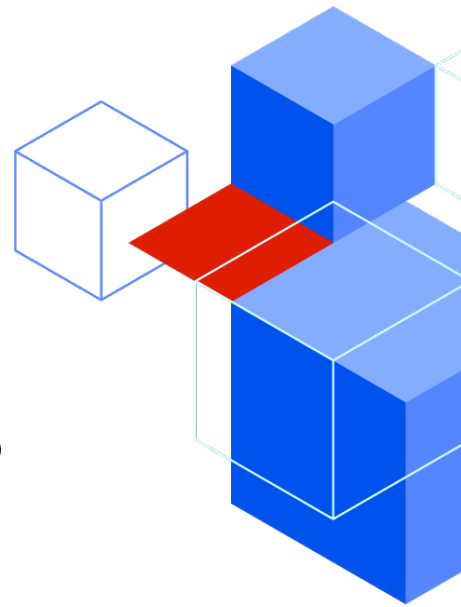
A legacy stack that could not keep pace with the agility needed to bring content to market

HE&R operated its properties on a PHP infrastructure. The technology stack (plain HTML, CSS, PHP, and jQuery) was stable; however, by the early 2020s, it had become a limitation.

- Content updates required development services, delaying routine marketing tasks up to two days pending developer availability.
- Marketers lacked direct access to publish content. Simple edits to copy or images needed a development ticket.
- Marketing teams managed content in documents and spreadsheets that required developers to transcribe into HTML manually.
- Content workflows could not keep pace with the marketing strategy, sometimes causing campaign launches to miss optimal timing.

Yesterday's technology was fundamentally incapable of supporting modern campaign velocity.





Technical constraints limited marketing execution

Deployments necessitated manually copying files as the system lacked CI/CD pipelines. This approach worked with infrequent updates; however, as digital media became central to the company's marketing strategy, the volume and velocity of important changes outgrew the infrastructure.

Infrastructure and integration considerations

HE&R's digital properties ran on Azure virtual machines, which required the team to manage every layer of the VM-based infrastructure because it could not scale elastically. OS updates, security patches, and PHP maintenance consumed development resources.

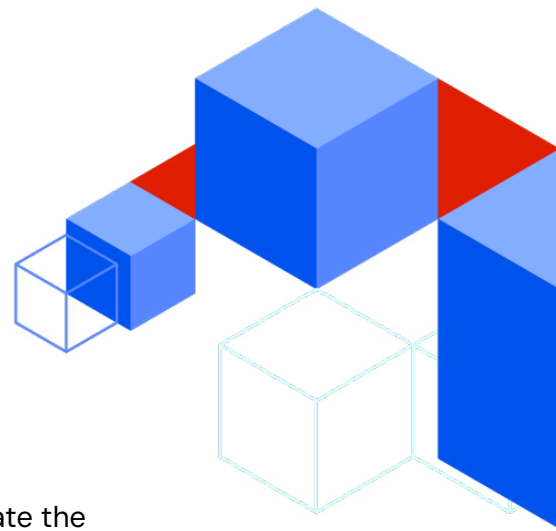
Compounding the challenge was the company's internal CMS, which manages operational content for attractions, dining, and entertainment. HE&R's CMS powers the website, mobile apps, and digital signage. Any new platform would need to integrate seamlessly with the internal CMS while enabling marketing teams to build pages independently.

Organizational and technical constraints

Doug Rahe, a 25-year HE&R team member, leads a veteran development team proficient in PHP. Retraining the team to adopt completely different technologies and composable principles would prove challenging, as most would be starting from scratch.

The marketing team sought personalization, A/B testing, campaign agility, and required autonomy to execute campaigns at market speed. In an industry where seasonal promotions and competitive pricing require rapid responses, time lost waiting on content changes equates to lost revenue opportunities and a weakened market position.

HE&R had strategic ambitions the legacy stack could not easily support, and sought a reinvention that would empower marketing teams to update content, modernize the foundation, and enable future capabilities.



Solution

Composable architecture: Marketing empowerment through technical modernization

Leadership recognized that investing in another monolith would recreate the same marketing constraints. In contrast, a composable approach would enable the selection of right-fit tools, allow for technology swapping as needs evolve, and preserve critical investments while modernizing gradually.

After evaluating alternatives, HE&R selected the Uniform Digital Experience Platform (DXP) for three critical reasons.

1. Visual CMS with governance built in:

The Uniform Visual Workspace enables marketing teams to build and modify pages using drag-and-drop functionality, eliminating the need for code. Unlike traditional “no-code” tools that generate technical debt, Uniform maintains architectural discipline. Developers would transition from coding individual pages to building a reusable component library. Each React component is built and tested once, then leveraged across multiple pages and sites. Business users could assemble pages from the pre-built components, granting autonomy without compromising quality or governance.

The marketing team would finally manage content internally with a component library that ensured brand consistency across all channels, shifting development tasks from building one-off pages to creating reusable assets.

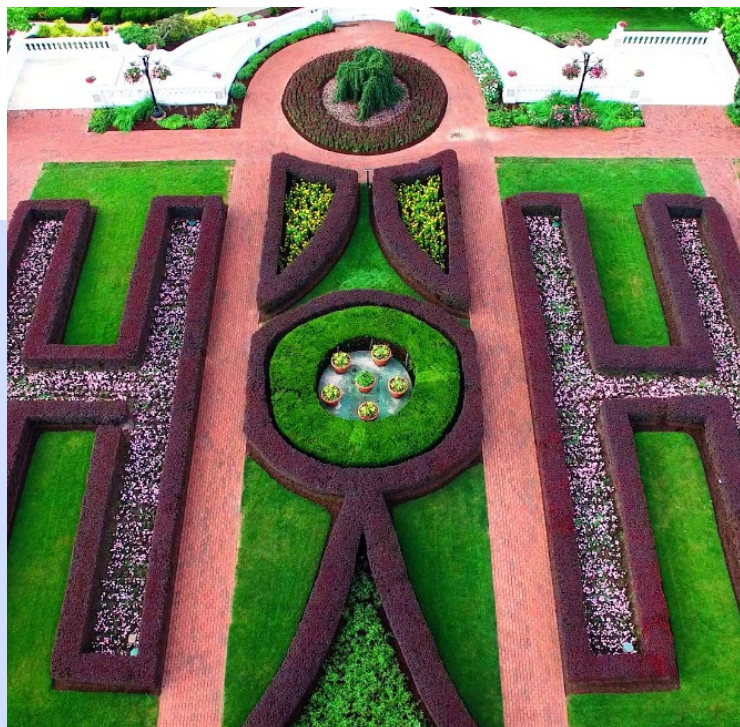
2. System-agnostic orchestration enabling incremental modernization:

Uniform CMS would manage marketing content, including hero images, promotional copy, and campaigns, while HE&R’s CMS would continue to manage operational content, including ride, dining, retail, and entertainment information. Under Uniform’s seamless orchestration, marketing teams can compose pages in the Visual Workspace with components that pull real-time internal CMS data via APIs combined with Uniform CMS content.

This incremental approach delivers immediate marketing velocity without disrupting websites, mobile apps, and park digital signage through their internal CMS. Hershey could then expand the use of Uniform CMS safely without impacting the connected backend systems.

3. Consolidated capabilities:

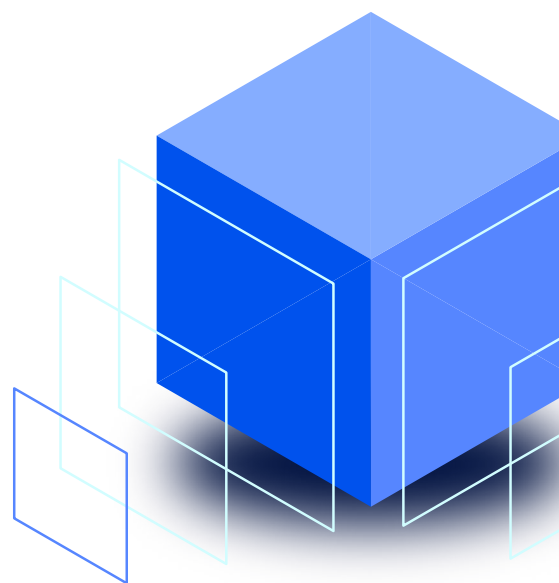
The company sought personalization and A/B testing experimentation, which Uniform provides natively inside its platform. Marketing teams could build pages, personalize content, and run experiments in the same interface used for content management, with no additional code or vendor lock-in.



The proposed technology stack

HE&R would build a new digital ecosystem on composable principles, with Uniform serving as the orchestration layer:

- **Uniform** for visual composition, content management, personalization, and dynamic page generation
- **React with Next.js on Azure Web Apps** for modern component-based development
- **Internal CMS** for operational content management, integrated via API to Uniform
- **Azure Web Apps (PaaS)** provides elastic scalability and automated infrastructure management
- **Azure DevOps** pipelines for CI/CD



Results

Marketing autonomy increased velocity

The most impactful change for HE&R was the fundamental improvement in its daily operations.

Before Uniform, every content update followed a pattern: marketing would submit a ticket, communicate continuously to explain requirements, review drafts, and request revisions, then development would eventually publish. This cycle consumed time, making rapid iteration difficult.

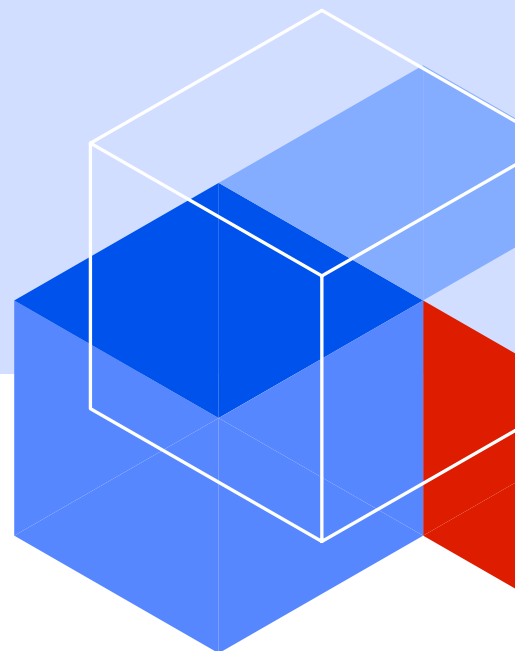
In its new architecture, marketers select pre-built components inside the Visual Workspace, compose pages quickly and visually, apply content directly to the draft, preview changes, and then publish it themselves—all in less than ten minutes. Campaign updates can now be pushed live in real-time.

- Copywriters who previously managed content through separate documents now write directly inside Uniform.
- Real-time previews eliminated the blind editing process of estimating how text would wrap or display on mobile devices.
- Creators can add images and adjust layouts without submitting tickets.

Uniform's CMS provides drag-and-drop page building, content scheduling, and real-time preview without requiring technical skills or developer intervention.

The quantified impact:

- Page-building time decreased 25–45%.
- Campaign updates dropped from 1–2 day cycles to 5–10 minutes.
- Marketing teams publish updates independently.

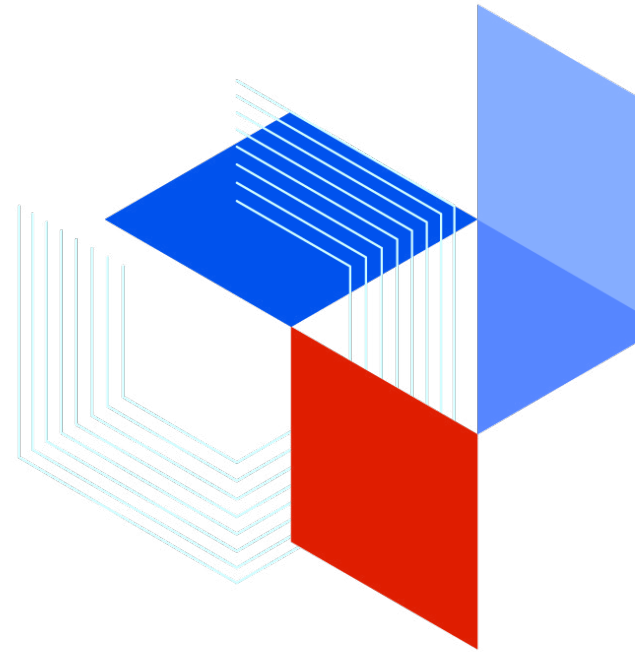


Unlocking higher-value development work

The operational transformation freed developers to focus on building new components and enabling new capabilities rather than executing routine content updates that marketing could handle—fundamental improvements that change how the team creates value.

A better technical foundation

HE&R's migration from Azure virtual machines to Azure Web Apps delivered immediate benefits. The new infrastructure scales elastically, and the organization is no longer responsible for OS updates or security patches. The update included over 100 redirects to preserve SEO equity, dynamic page generation, and integration between Uniform and the HE&R's CMS.



Strategic flexibility

HE&R's transformation laid the foundation for capabilities that were difficult in the legacy environment. The organization created a clear path for swapping backend systems as needed and adopting tools like personalization and A/B testing, all without vendor complexity.

The Uniform release scheduling feature has proven particularly valuable. Marketing teams can now schedule complex seasonal takeover pages to go live automatically at midnight, eliminating the need for developers to deploy changes manually. This “set it and forget it” capability removed the coordination burden and weekend on-call requirements that challenged both IT and marketing teams during critical campaign windows.

Team evolution

The development team's technology retraining was remarkable. After 25 years of working with PHP, the team became proficient in React and Next.js, facilitating the migration of the production system. They are more enthusiastic than ever about the new stack and its expanded capabilities.

Support from Uniform remained steadfast as HE&R's team took the reins to begin building components in the new composable architecture.

In Summary:

HE&R's journey from a PHP monolith to a modern composable architecture required technical vision, organizational commitment, and the right platform to orchestrate the transformation.

By placing the Uniform DXP at the center of a composable architecture, Hershey successfully:

- Reduced page-building time 25–45% and transformed campaign updates from 1–2 day cycles to 5–10 minute tasks
- Reduced the infrastructure maintenance burden by migrating to platform-managed Azure Web Apps
- Preserved integrations with HE&R's CMS while gaining modern content management, visual composition, and orchestration
- Successfully retrained a veteran PHP development team to own React and Next.js practices
- Built a foundation for personalization and A/B testing without vendor fragmentation
- Managed over 100 redirects to ensure SEO continuity



What began as technical modernization became organizational reinvention, as Uniform evolved HE&R's web infrastructure from a strategic constraint into the foundation of an agile digital strategy.

For organizations trapped by legacy infrastructure or developer-dependent workflows, especially hospitality and entertainment brands, HE&R's story demonstrates how a composable architecture built on Uniform delivers operational improvements and a technical foundation for continuous strategic flexibility.





ABOUT UNIFORM

Uniform is the next evolution of composable digital experience platforms, uniting native AI, personalization and localization, content management, and A/B testing inside an intuitive, marketer-first platform that transforms how digital teams deliver experiences that drive revenue.

Your creators will design targeted omnichannel experiences visually, blending reusable components with editable external content and data to deliver scalable, personalized experiences. Uniform's no-code approach gives marketers publication and optimization autonomy, freeing your development resources to focus on innovation.

Uniform is multi-source, technology-agnostic, and MACH-aligned, enabling your architects to pursue only best-fit solutions and seamlessly replace systems without rewriting frontend code or disrupting the customer experience. Future-proof technology investments for years to come.

Truly composable and competitively priced, Uniform unleashes your brand's potential by offering the freedom and simplicity to streamline digital production reclaim productivity, and own the competitive edge in every market.

Experience what you can deliver with Uniform today!

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