



Transforming Healthcare

A Guide to Choosing the Right Headless CMS
for Digital Success



Consumer preferences have undergone drastic shifts in recent years, and the repercussions are even being felt in the healthcare industry.

Patients are demanding more digitalization, and healthcare organizations are undergoing digital transformations to appease them. In fact, according to Deloitte, 92% of healthcare organizations are conducting digital transformations to improve the patient experience.

As part of this digital transformation, many healthcare organizations will find themselves on the lookout for a modern CMS to support their digital initiatives. After all, a CMS sits at the heart of the customer experience stack and allows organizations across several industries to orchestrate the digital experience.

In order to facilitate the experiences that customers demand and the capabilities healthcare providers need, a headless CMS represents the best option.

To help healthcare organizations better understand what to look for, we've provided a handy checklist of features to consider.

Why You Need to Upgrade Your Healthcare CMS to a Modern Solution

Before diving into the checklist, it's necessary to know why digital transformation is required at all.

1. Improve customer and patient experience

The number one reason for most healthcare organizations to undergo a digital transformation is to improve the customer and patient experience.

Today's customers have grown accustomed to on-demand digital experiences, and they expect the same everywhere they go, even when getting healthcare. This requires healthcare businesses to provide access to self-service tools and omnichannel digital experiences and ensure that customers can adjust the experience to suit their preferences.

2. Upgrade legacy systems

Another reason to upgrade to a modern healthcare CMS is to move away from outdated legacy systems. These platforms tend to require costly maintenance at regular intervals, are more susceptible to security breaches, and, in many cases, struggle to implement the engaging customer experiences patients demand.

3. Take advantage of new technologies

Like any other industry, healthcare is embracing modern technologies, tools, and gadgets such as smartphones, smart speakers, and digital signage. These technologies have opened the door to healthcare-focused applications, Telemedicine, and others, with more expected in coming years.

In order to take advantage of these technologies and keep up with growing trends, a modern CMS is a requirement and not just a nice to have.

The 37 Point Healthcare Headless CMS Checklist

- ✓ Initial Considerations
- ✓ Architecture
- ✓ Budget
- ✓ Speed and Scalability
- ✓ Security and Permissions
- ✓ Content Management
- ✓ APIs and Extensibility
- ✓ Additional Features and Support

Initial Considerations

1. How will you use your CMS?

This depends heavily on your organization. Start analyzing your current digital maturity levels and the types of digital experiences you might want to create now and in the future.

For healthcare organizations, this might include delivering content to clinics across multiple devices or to patients via the channels they use the most.

2. What are your business goals?

Can the headless CMS you choose help your business meet its short-term and long-term goals? Are those goals related to digital transformation in the medium-term or immediate efforts to improve the patient experience?

3. What are your performance and integration needs?

As an enterprise business, peak performance is fundamental. You need to ensure that your headless CMS provides consistent uptime and the types of integrations you will need to include, from your existing systems that will be part of the re-platforming to new tools you might integrate down the line.

4. What are your internal resource capabilities?

How extensive is your IT department, operations and marketing teams? The leaders of these departments will likely be part of your decision-making process and help you assess whether your internal teams can make the most of your headless CMS or if you need assistance with the implementation.

Architecture

5. Is the underlying architecture monolithic or microservices-based?

If your healthcare CMS has a monolithic architecture— which you get with an all-in-one suite—it can be more of a hindrance than a help. With a microservices-based architecture, your tech stack is leaner as it's composed of individual pieces of business functionality that combine to create one system.

6. Is the platform API-first?

APIs are the cornerstones of the modern web. Every application and business relies on them, so your healthcare CMS should be API-first to easily connect to other software tools.

7. Can you embrace composability?

Composability is critical for modern enterprises as it enables organizations to select the best tools for the job and build from the ground up. With this modular approach to building a software stack, businesses can swap out pieces as their needs change rather than suffer from vendor lock-in.

8. Is the CMS cloud-based or on-premise?

Enterprise CMSs have been traditionally on-premises that you can manage yourself; this is especially true for CMS platforms in the healthcare industry.

But in the modern age, healthcare organizations can find better success by opting for a SaaS solution hosted in the cloud.

9. Does the CMS vendor offer a content delivery network (CDN)?

With a CDN, the network will hold copies of all images, videos, documents, and scripts loaded by a visitor's web browser.

Having your CDN built into the CMS can help you reduce load times and streamline your content creation. When it comes to patients and hospital staff accessing health records, speed could be a necessity.

10. How flexible is the data structure?

The capability to create data types and relate them to each other is vital for a CMS.

Still, it's more important to do these things well, which is why choosing between a CMS with JSON, XML, or Jamstack structure can help you delineate how your data will relate to your website. In addition, you need to consider how that data will be accessed.

11. Is the platform multi-tenant?

Multi-tenant architecture allows a software application to provide each tenant with a dedicated share of the instance's functionality, including configuration, data, and user management, which works wonders if several people collaborate on your website at the same time.

12. Does your CMS have its own internal site search?

Internal site search enables users to search for terms on your site, improving user experience and SEO.

You should find a CMS with the search functionality to make finding things easier.

This is especially important for healthcare organizations that need to connect various directories so that healthcare professionals and patients can access libraries, clinic information, doctor schedules and other relevant information.

Budget

13. Will it be too costly to scale in the future?

While an initial budget might not phase your business at the enterprise level, you might need to scale in the future. So you need to determine if your CMS can scale with you and the types of costs you might incur.

14. What are the projected maintenance/license fees for the CMS?

Aside from the technical requirements for your CMS platform, there are also some implementation and maintenance requirements that you should consider.

Speed and Scalability

15. How easy is the CMS to deploy?

Implementations can be time and resource-draining if you don't have the right platform. Ensure your team can easily deploy your new headless CMS without exceeding the budget or project scope.

16. What are your security requirements?

Each company has different regulatory compliance requirements. Some have stricter controls and more comprehensive measures than others, but you have to be sure that your CMS meets the minimum baseline controls.

For healthcare organizations that need to be HIPAA compliant regarding patient data, extra care needs to be taken when it comes to security. Many of these organizations also need PCI compliant when processing payments, which requires additional security considerations.

17. Can you start small and scale later?

As the amount of content grows, the problem becomes how to manage it from the creation process to the need to access it later. You need a CMS that can help you scale from the ground up.

Healthcare organizations often need to connect multiple clinic locations and services so that information can be shared effectively. These companies need to be able to start with one clinic or hospital and then add more to the network as time goes on.

18. What time-saving features does it include?

A headless CMS provides features that can help your enterprise business grow, including saving time. Consider how your CMS will help content managers, authors, and even your developers save time and have the freedom to experiment. You should consider how much you need features like customizable content workflows, global content search, and task management.

Security and Permissions

19. How granular are the permissions and roles?

In an enterprise business with hundreds of employees, you will need to create a variety of roles and permissions to ensure that only the right people have access.

The more granular your permissions are, the better for your company in terms of data protection and website security.

When compliance regulations such as HIPAA are factored in, permissions and roles need to be organized in a way to prevent unauthorized access to sensitive patient information.

20. Does it have formal security accreditation?

Other than an SSL certificate, there are other security accreditations that your CMS needs to have so you know you're dealing with a serious provider that puts your security at the front and center.

21. Is there a disaster recovery plan?

A disaster recovery plan is applied to the aspects of an organization that depend on a functioning IT infrastructure. This plan helps your company resolve data loss and recover system functionality to perform in the aftermath of an incident.

22. Does it support single sign-on?

Single sign-on provides secure authentication for multiple applications and websites but requires users to log in only once. Single sign-on lets you log in quickly and safely from a trusted device while a third party verifies who you are, a crucial component for enterprise business.

Content Management

23. Is the content authoring interface marketer-friendly, easy to use, and SEO-friendly?

Your chosen headless CMS needs a clear interface that makes it easy for marketers to publish content, preview content across devices, create workflows, and manage pages, just like with a legacy CMS. This should include options to improve your SEO.

24. Is it easy to preview content?

Knowing how your content will look on a website or other channel before publishing is important for your marketing team. Having the ability to preview content with context is essential to avoid mistakes.

25. Is there a content architecture you can mould your content strategy around?

Some headless CMS vendors provide very little guidance when it comes to how your content should be structured, if at all. Look for a CMS with a content architecture that supports a scalable content strategy.

26. Does the CMS enable non-technical users to create more complex content?

WYSIWYG editors are the best way of producing error-free content quickly using a rich-text editor that helps marketers create content in a no-code environment.

If you plan to produce content at scale, a WYSIWYG editor is a must for your non-technical team members to easily embed videos, tables, widgets and make general content changes without needing developers.

27. Can you easily localize your content?

Translation and localization are two fundamental parts of content marketing.

Your headless CMS needs to be able to help you create localized campaigns that are specifically tailored to different regions and language speakers.

28. Does it offer support for multiple channels?

A headless CMS allows you to deliver content to multiple channels, but you also need flexibility for your developers.

This means flexibility in the frontend technologies developers can use to create different user experiences and personalization to support varied user preferences.

APIs and Extensibility

29. Is your CMS extensible with APIs and SDKs?

Extensibility means the capacity of your CMS to handle third-party extensions. The more you can extend the functionality of your CMS the better you can handle various scenarios and improve your CMS' capabilities.

An API-driven CMS provides the required backend services and data structure to manage your data. It also integrates with any existing systems by making simple API calls to the CMS.

30. Does it offer add-ons or plugins for customization?

Some CMS come with their own add-ons and plugins for you to install and hit the ground running quickly. When choosing a CMS, you need to ensure that these plugins are what you need or that the system enables you to integrate third-party software.

31. Does the CMS support open standards?

Open standards are freely accessible programming languages, and processes developers can adopt, implement, and extend royalty-free. Not all CMSs support this, so if being open source matters, you should identify the platforms built in this way.

32. Does the vendor provide certified partners you can choose from?

Many platforms have a list of partners and other vendors that work directly with them, guaranteeing better performance and seamless integration.

Check your vendor's partners and see if what they offer is also in sync with your company's goals.

33. Does it come with tools or methods for migrating thousands of pages of content?

Migration is always a challenge when re-platforming, more so if you run an enterprise business with thousands of pages.

Determine if your CMS can help you migrate your content or if you need third-party software to assist.

Additional Features & Support

34. Does it provide insights and monitoring into how customers interact with the content?

Analytics provides the content marketing and business teams with insights to optimize organic traffic and page and content performance. When choosing your headless CMS, pick one that has native integrations with Google Analytics or any other embeddable analytics framework.

Dashboards show your website's health and enable you to take action based on the KPIs you're monitoring.

35. Does the CMS offer internal search features?

Having an internal search feature in your website really eases navigation. It helps visitors find the content they're looking for faster, improves your website SEO, and increases your visitors' web session time.

36. Does the vendor offer 24/7 live support?

Constant support is a must if you're just starting with a new CMS. From onboarding right through to when you're a happy customer needing support for something that does work.

37. Is it backed up with appropriate technical documentation and user guides and training?

Your team needs proper support to get the maximum benefit from your CMS. User guides, documentation, and training provide these capabilities, and you should assess what your next CMS has to offer.

Medserena MRI Modernizes Operations



Healthcare organizations aren't just limited to hospitals and clinics. MRI scans provider Medserena needed to upgrade from a traditional CMS to match its cutting-edge product.

Visitors needed an intuitive way to book appointments and the scalability to manage a growing network of websites. With Agility CMS, they found the solution to handle their needs and integrate the other systems in their technology stack.

Read more about [Medserena and Agility CMS](#) in the case study.



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