

**The**

# **10**

A large, dark blue number '10' is centered on the page. The '1' is a simple vertical bar. The '0' is a rounded, pill-shaped form. Inside the '0', the letters 'CMS' are written in a bold, orange, sans-serif font, rotated 90 degrees counter-clockwise.

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## **Commandments of CMS Selection**

**Foreword**

In this paper, we highlight ten things that significantly contribute to the successful procurement and implementation of a Content Management System (CMS), based on our experience of working on a diverse range of content management projects, with clients that range from small local and regional organizations to global, multi-product consumer brands.

Digital marketers and communicators are facing increasingly complex issues when engaging with visitors; your consumers have limited time, the message needs to be split across multiple channels and communications need to be sharper, more targeted and relevant than ever before.

In our experience, great people, stakeholders and requirements – along with a flexible, easy to use technology platform – are common elements of success and we detail these elements in our Ten Commandments.



**Thou shalt be**  
**inclusive**

**Thou shalt be inclusive**

The key differentiating factor in a successful start to a CMS selection and ongoing implementation project is to have a high quality set of requirements that accurately communicate your business requirements internally, to your potential business partners and software vendors.

Yet, all too often we see a set of requirements written from the perspective of one business unit, in the hope that the resulting solution will fit, or can be imposed upon, the rest of the business.

A good set of requirements forms the framework around which these relationships and the implementation can be built around and early investment here pays dividends in ironing out some of the delay that projects incur as decisions are made during the process.

The key to a great set of requirements is to assemble a great set of stakeholders, a cross section, from all parts of the business that will be impacted by the project – the earlier the better.

Who better to describe a business pain or need than the actual folks that will be using the system or whose success will be dependent upon it? In addition, to have stakeholders own their requirements throughout the process, giving you a place to go when the requirements need clarification, when you are prioritizing or need a business justification for an investment decision is the only way to ensure the correct fit.

This stakeholder involvement also continues to reward the project – as the continued success of your CMS project will be dependent on not just launching a shiny new website, but of it continuing to hold the interest of your audience with fresh, relevant and engaging content for the entire life of the CMS.

This is when success is not just about the technical capabilities of the platform, but of the adoption by the business at large.

There are plenty of grand CMS implementations that wind up with the same two folks in marketing updating all of the content and the organization has not moved forward in engaging its audience.



**Thou shalt be prepared  
to engage**

### Thou shalt be prepared to engage

When looking at these requirements, the involvement of stakeholders will highlight a lot of the current business needs, but the digital communications is changing – do your requirements reflect the needs of your organization to move forward?

We are increasingly moving to the point where to engage with our audience digitally is not just about publishing a website; Josh Bernoff of Forrester refers to this as the ‘splinternet’:

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Now with iPhones, Androids, Kindles, Tablets, and TVs connecting to the Web [...] our site may not work right on these devices, especially if it includes flash or assumes mouse-based navigation. Apps that work on the iPhone don't work on the Android. Widgets for FiOS TV don't work anywhere else.

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Josh Bernoff, Senior VP of Idea Development at Forrester Research, Inc.<sup>1</sup>

Web engagement is of course not just about publishing the same ‘brochureware’ site on multiple devices; it’s also about a relevant and personal experience – across multiple channels and web destinations that include email, call centers and social media channels.

These business requirements, for highly dynamic, reusable, personalized content put special technical demands on your CMS platform that differentiate web publishing systems from true content management and channel agnostic delivery.

In addition, to be relevant, you need to understand something about your visitor – do your requirements include the ability to gain this insight?

<sup>1</sup> “The Splinternet means the end of the Web’s golden age.” Empowered blog (January 26, 2010 <http://forrester.typepad.com/groundswell/2010/01/the-splinternet-means-the-end-of-the-webs-golden-age.html>)



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Thou shalt be easy,  
**really,**  
**really**  
**easy**

### **Thou shalt be easy, really, really easy**

Ok – so who doesn't have "it must be easy to use" as a requirement for a CMS? But, the criticality of user adoption cannot be underestimated. How successful this CMS implementation is, both now and during its life will be wholly dependent on the people using it.

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“Almost every CMS investment that is being done as a replacement for a previous system is happening primarily because the users simply didn't like the old system – organizations do not replace systems that are popular with users.”

Ian Truscott, The Gilbane Group

This is the basic requirement for today, but entering into a relevant, personalized engagement with our visitor is going to require a lot more content – specific to that visitor segment and written by people that understand that detail.

Social media is also driving the expectations of your audience and the democratization of the publication and consumption of content – your visitor no longer just wants to hear from sales and marketing – but from the knowledgeable folks (like them) in your business.

We need to approach this in two ways, the first is to procure easy to use CMS tools that fit our business users, that they tested during the procurement process and the second is to ensure we can leverage the tools that our contributors already use – like SharePoint and Word.

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“I redesigned the presentation of the entire UK directory of 25,000 titles in four hours on a quiet Saturday afternoon, and rolled out the changes to the live site in minutes.”

Ian Hall, Group Internet Manager, Oxford University Press

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**Thou shalt not kill your**  
**business process**

**Thou shalt not kill your business process**

Do we fit the CMS, or does the CMS fit us? Implementing a CMS often requires some business changes to processes, roles and how you reach your audience.

Ideally of course – you want to use this as an opportunity to make improvements to your existing processes – making them more efficient or natural for your business.

But this isn't always the case, as organizations are forced to implement changes in order to accommodate the CMS.

This is often an area that is overlooked in CMS procurement; will how the content is stored and accessed change the way people work with the system? It has a workflow process, but do the notifications and alerts fit the way we communicate as a business?

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**Thou shalt not be a slave  
to technology**

**Thou shalt not be a slave to technology**

The technical delivery behind a compelling web experience is no longer solely about the database of your choice, a web scripting language and a few templates – it's about a deeper integration into your back office systems, leveraging content and services from outside the server room in the cloud and feeding visitor information into our customer and marketing systems.

These integrations are often neglected in the rush to launch the visible return on the CMS investment – the website – but these deeper, often phase two requirements, can be a significant burden and obstacle to providing a better visitor experience, if the underlying CMS technology is restrictive.

Ensure that the technical requirements of integrating both the legacy systems and any proposed new systems feature in the requirements. Also, ensure that you choose a CMS with a broad technical footprint and a proven integration track record.



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**Thou shalt not worship  
false gods**

**Thou shalt not worship false gods**

We've already discussed the importance of forming a stakeholder community and developing requirements. It will also be incredibly important to the continued success of your project and commitment of all involved that you stick to them and not be swayed into a compromise.

An example is where a lot of organizations are pushed into using products like SharePoint, its ubiquity within IT departments and the buzz around a new release can appear very compelling.

But, your process will have armed you with mandatory business requirements around accessibility, branding, multi-channel/multi-site publishing, social media and email integration that may not be met by SharePoint.



**Thou shalt treat your visitors,  
including Google,  
equally**

### **Thou shalt treat your visitors, including Google, equally**

We have a legal obligation to make our websites accessible – yet above that it's simply the right thing to do – access to information for the disabled community is empowering and the internet is an unprecedented opportunity for equality.

This is aside from the commercial benefits in accessing these consumers and the fact that people make investment decisions based on how ethical a company is or appears to be.

The structure of a web page, its adherence to web standards and how it's described by metadata are also best practices for Search Engine Optimization (SEO) – a search engine spider is viewing your website through a limited 'text only' view.

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“Why should you take the time to make your site more accessible? In addition to the service you'll be doing for the visually-impaired community, accessible sites are more easily crawled, which is a first step in your site's ability to appear in search results.”

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T.V. Raman, Google Research Scientist, Official Google Webmaster Central Blog

Therefore your requirements must also cover how the website will publish accessible content – which technical and legal standards will it support?



**Thou shalt seek and meet**  
**your visitor**

### **Thou shalt seek and meet your visitor**

As we have already discussed, a single website is no longer sufficient to satisfy our digital marketing and communication objectives. Our digital marketing and communications activities are now driven to create an Engagement Hub – fed by our content, publishing relevant content to multiple channels.

It's not just devices – digital marketers are now being driven to be where their consumer is on the web and it's been widely reported that major brands, like Coca-Cola, are moving more of their campaign site to social media platforms – like YouTube.

But moving to these new web destinations doesn't mean throwing away the good governance of a CMS (or our websites) – it's an additional channel to publish to.

An additional channel that should include email – often neglected in CMS selections, but where better to craft an HTML email than in your CMS? The advantages to this hub approach are that you provide your audience with a consistent message and view of your brand across these channels, leverage the efficiencies of content re-use and co-ordinate communication campaigns.

In addition this hub can serve as a single conduit for visitor insight, where you collate and process feedback from email campaigns, social media, web analytics, comments and visitor behavior.

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Using Alterian software has allowed us to replace 10 disparate websites. We now have a set of websites with a uniform, corporate feel – they look like part of the same family and can talk to one another.

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Ian Jones, Head of Communications, The Regional Co-ordination Unit

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**Thou shalt seek**  
**early reward**

### Thou shalt seek early reward

We've discussed that digital engagement is now broader than creating websites – but today our CMS implementation is no doubt focused on that first website.

The maturity of the CMS industry would suggest that we'd moved on from starting from scratch with each implementation – but that's not always the case.

It's important to understand what a vendor has in terms of getting your website up and running quickly, including out of the box example websites, deep third party integrations with commonly used products and code examples – plus of course case studies, testimonials and real-life references where they have got a website live in your timescales.

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Using Alterian software has meant our extensive website was completed in just 10 weeks, making it not only one of the most accessible sites in the UK but also one of the fastest deployed.

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Andrew Kirkham, Operational Head of Stockport Council's E-services

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**Thou shalt seek**  
**like-minded**  
**partners**

**Thou shalt seek like-minded partners**

Let's be honest, there are bumps in the road in any implementation of enterprise software – the impact of these are greatly determined by the people you have chosen to work with.

It's imperative to get to know the people involved in providing the proposal: the implementation team, be it the vendor or a third party and the vendor support team.

It's obviously difficult to do this in a sales process, so select someone to work on a proof of concept, a pilot or an extended demonstration of your scenario.

By following these Commandments you can help ensure that your implementation is based on a sound footing, decreasing the possibility of project failure and increasing the likelihood of a successful, "fit for purpose" CMS which will evolve as your organization does.

**Corporate and  
European Headquarters**

The Spectrum Building  
Bond Street  
Bristol  
BS1 3LG  
UK

T +44 (0)117 970 3200  
F +44 (0)117 970 3201

**Asia-Pacific  
Headquarters**

Building 34  
Suakin Drive  
Mosman  
NSW 2088  
Australia

T +61 (2)9968 2449  
F +61 (2)9968 1163

**North American  
Headquarters**

35 East Wacker Drive  
Suite 200  
Chicago  
IL 60601  
USA

T +1 312 704 1700  
F +1 312 704 1701

**Continental Europe  
Headquarters**

Naarderweg 16  
1217 GL Hilversum  
The Netherlands

Tel : +31 (0)35 625 7890  
Fax: +31 (0)35 625 7899