

MAARK

So You've Got AEM

Three Things to Focus on
in an AEM-Anchored
Digital Transformation



Adobe Experience Manager (AEM) can give enterprises the foundation they need to act nimbly and in real-time by integrating content marketing with analytics, audience segmentation, and personalization at scale. However, many of the rollouts for AEM don't meet their potential because those rollouts involve massive planning with massive partners and not enough focus on pragmatic approaches to deliver value quickly. It's the exact opposite of digital business.

AEM is an expensive investment, so as much value as possible needs to be pulled from it. But it goes further than missed potential. If implementation is not approached correctly, AEM, like any complex system, can be detrimental to the business. Think not being able to launch a new website or servers going down on a regular basis or only being able to launch that website or address those server issues at massive cost.

To use AEM successfully as a foundation for change and a platform for Pragmatic Digital Transformation and to avoid critical issues, your approach to AEM should focus on three important areas.



1. Taming Lions

The Art and Science of Managing AEM Server Infrastructures

Every AEM customer we talk to has difficulty managing their AEM server environment using modern DevOps tooling and automation. Whether you're working with Adobe Managed Services (AMS) directly or with one of Adobe's recommended partners, AEM requires that you find a partner with a deep well of expertise gained through years of experience to be even remotely successful. There are precious few of these resources available, and the support available for AEM infrastructures can be damagingly slow at times. This means the job will fall on you to find the right partner right up front to help you keep your environment online.

AEM gets deployed in an extremely complex environment—some customers have up to 15 servers for a single website—and few partners have the expertise required to set you up for success. That's why finding a partner with demonstrable success managing AEM in mission-critical environments is so important. The ability to configure, control, and manage complex AEM environments comes out of front-line experience from server-side teams that have created their own tools and hardened processes for automating operational tasks,

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which reduces deployment errors and downtime. AEM is not for garage tinkerers, it's for rocket scientists. You've got to treat it like rocket science.

2. Thinking Small

The Experience you Deliver is Only as Good as the Components you Build

Corporate-wide AEM component and template initiatives, while academically appealing to many consultants, lack the pragmatism that should be the first principle of any project that hopes to result in greater business agility. Fostering individual business unit and departmental creativity should be the goal, not the obstacle.

Smaller teams that are closer to customer needs create more nuanced and relevant digital experiences because they are thinking of the specific needs of those specific users, not the generic needs of potential users. This creativity and focus results in better components, which is the foundation for better experiences.

The strategy should then be to take the creativity and innovation that comes from those forward-thinking smaller teams and elevate it to the corporate level for other teams to use and build upon. Shared components should be pushed from the bottom up, not the top down. AEM can support those individual business units and departments looking to get to market more quickly with innovative ideas, but doing so requires lean development models and an approach to code and component sharing that doesn't rely on overwrought development.

3. Picking Teams

Bigger isn't Better, and Other Obvious Advice

Focused, nimble innovators are hard to find in monolithic vendor organizations. Many legacy vendors suffer from the same need to overhaul their cultures as the clients they attempt to serve. That's why smaller SWAT teams often represent the enterprise's best chance for change. You are trying to cross an ocean, not boil one, and to do that, you'll need the small, swift guide boats that can help you navigate AEM's extremely tricky waters.

Before even deciding to purchase AEM, you need to identify your SWAT team. Adobe won't give you one. To them, you will be one of many customers having trouble with their AEM implementation, relegated to filing support tickets into the ether and checking back every day to see if anyone has taken a look at your issue. Meanwhile, you'll be left hoping someone will get assigned to your account that can focus on your needs and restore some stability in your marketing operation.

Instead of rolling the dice with large corporate vendors, set up your SWAT team up front. If that's with one of the large corporate vendors, get it in writing. If it is with a smaller partner that will take a stake in your business, invest in a relationship with them. Make them a true partner in your business and in your success. More than anything else, your ability to build a SWAT team around AEM really is the difference between success and failure in your AEM journey.

Conclusion

AEM can change your business. Whether that's by helping launch it into the vanguard of digitally transformed companies or by draining its resources and immobilizing its teams, the outcome is determined by your approach. If you harden your server environment, focus on innovation at a business unit level, and partner with a focused, expert support team, you can realize the full potential of AEM as a platform for Pragmatic Digital Transformation.

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How a BlueChip Boston Asset Manager Went from Old Money to Digital Transformation

The asset management arm of one of the most powerful brands in the world, adopted Adobe Experience Manager (AEM) as a foundational piece of its digital transformation for sales and marketing. They sought a new technology partner and a new agency with the agility to quickly and expertly execute on its digital goals using AEM. It found both in Maark.

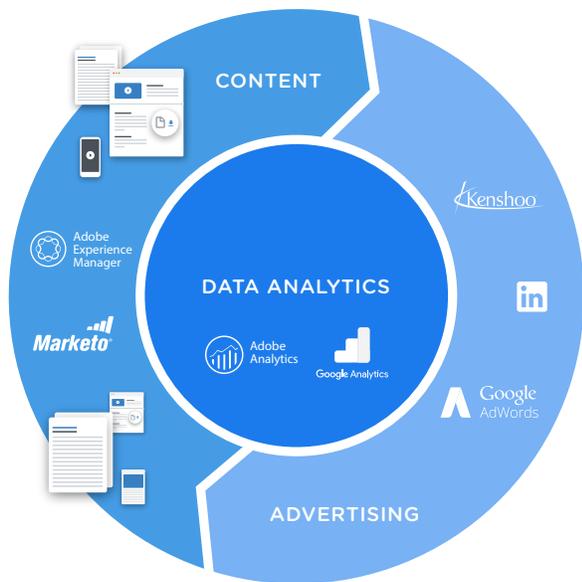
The asset management division had an impressive, prolific content engine. It daily, weekly, and quarterly disbursed cutting-edge financial thought leadership and core product and market data through many assets, both print and digital and needed a more unifying means of distributing content. Seeing thought leadership as a quick path to immediate value, the asset management

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division and Maark focused on consolidating this high value content from across the organization in AEM where they could then distribute it through new cutting edge mobile apps, responsive web apps, emails, blogs, and interactive whitepapers.

Within a couple of months, the asset manager had a new flow of digital assets, campaigns, and analytics that were all connected on a single technology stack, laying the groundwork for even more fundamental transformation down the road.

With Maark's nimble, execution-focused SWAT team approach and end-to-end skillset, we were able to help the client leverage its AEM platform to get to market faster, see immediate value, and leverage that progress into a broader transformation.



ABOUT MAARK

Maark is a digital innovation agency headquartered in Boston, Massachusetts. We focus on helping global clients transform their marketing strategies, brands, and operations to compete in a digital world that moves, communicates, and engages within fully connected environments. We define and communicate stories, design new digital experiences, and develop applications at the intersection of where what's possible meets what's relevant.

617-723-2122

info@maark.com maark.com

40 Cambridge St, Boston, MA 02129

MAARK