



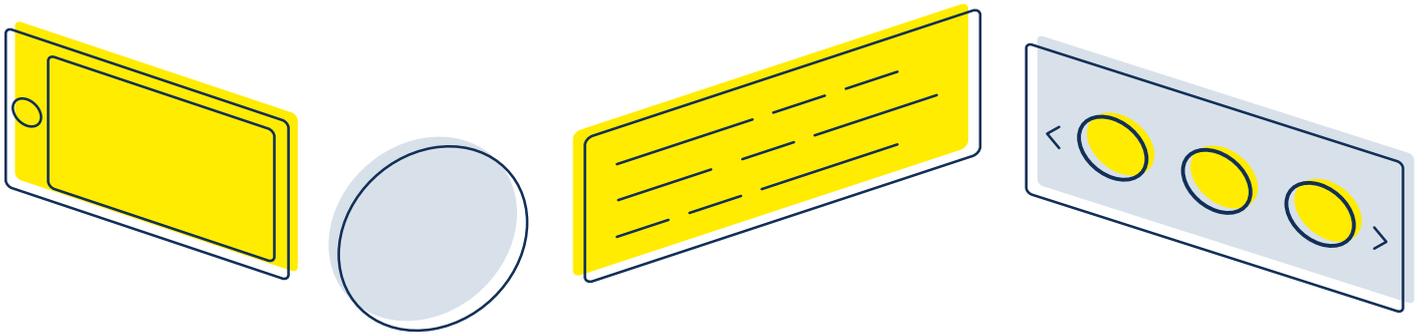
Future-proofing your Digital Offering

Future-proofing your Digital Offering



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What's Coming

Technology is developing at such a pace that change isn't just on the horizon - it's already here

We are in the “Fourth Industrial Revolution” - the current environment in which emerging and disruptive technologies and trends such as the Internet of Things (IoT), Virtual Reality (VR), Augmented Reality (AR) and Artificial Intelligence (AI) are changing the way we live and work. This is the move from the Information Age to the Augmented Age.

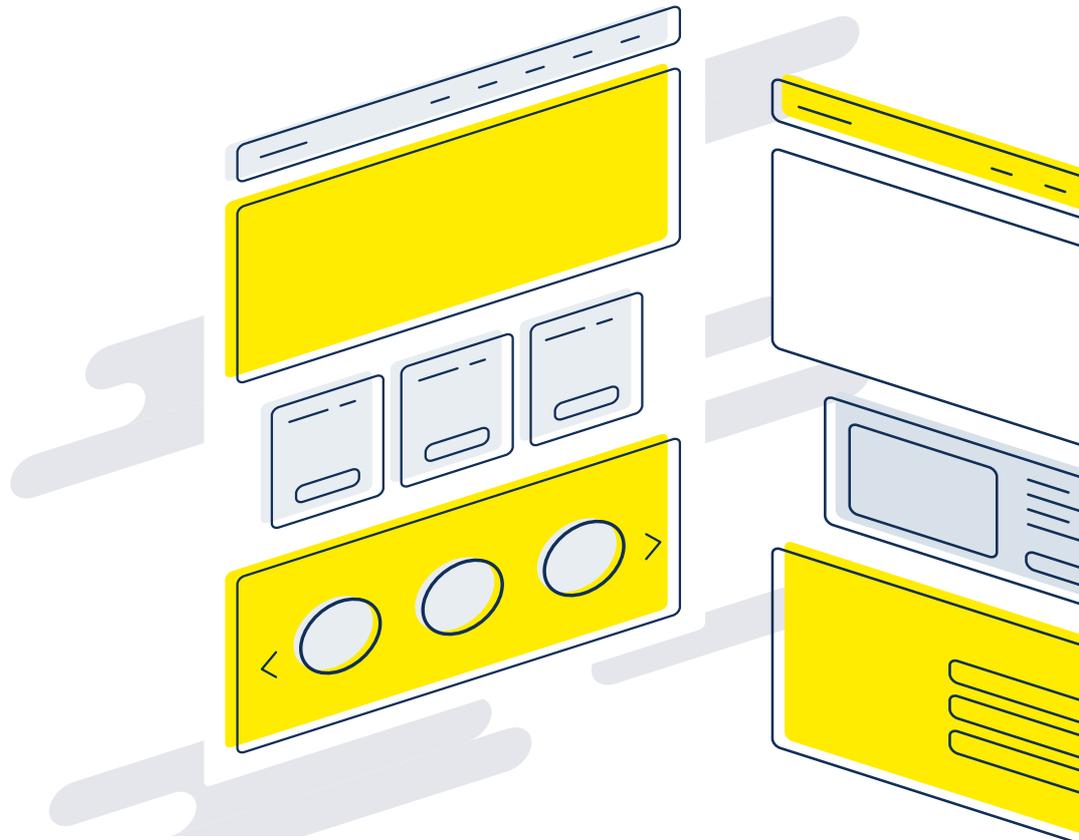
Multinational companies across sectors, from telecoms and gaming, to health and professional services are already investing in the use of A.I. and automation for efficiency to save time, increase speed of delivery of content to customers and reduce needless admin so staff can be freed up to do the jobs that only humans can do, such as problem solving, creating engaging and creative content and providing excellent customer care.

Technology is developing at such a pace that change isn't just on the horizon - it's already here. Now is the time to start thinking about the changes that need to be made in order to make your business future-ready and to help you do this, the team at Mashbo has highlighted six key updates you need to consider now.



Six Tactics to Future Proof Your Digital Strategy

Headless Content Management Systems (CMS)



Headless Content Management Systems (CMS)

Dynamic editorial and advertising content surrounds consumers on a daily basis, from apps and smartphones to AR and VR applications. No longer just pushed out through traditional digital channels, but also omnichannel marketing and IoT systems, CMS need to evolve to manage a broader range of content, not just traditional website content.

Headless CMS, such as DNN, Kentico, Oracle, ContentStack and Built.io take an API (application programming interface) -first approach to content management. This means that the content source and destination communicate by API, so you're creating content for mobile devices that exist now and in the future.

Headless CMS essentially separates code from content to allow greater flexibility in terms of building and updating content, allowing changes that would require web developer input when using traditional CMS to be undertaken easily by any trained staff member.



Headless Content Management Systems (CMS)

Benefits

- Offers, news and other content can be updated immediately and react to competitor activity, rather than being hard-coded in advance
- Managing just one set of data - API-first CMS updates can be pushed through almost any format, including web, mobile app, SMS and digital billboards
- System will grow with the business as it scales and web presence grows (bring together subdomains, apps etc)
- Reduction in server costs and manpower required to build and launch new content
- Ensures your digital portfolio is future-ready and robust enough to manage content created through emerging technologies
- Marketing team don't have to rely on IT for minor changes, meaning significant savings in developer hours, which can be refocused on projects that will drive business scale and growth

CMS need to evolve to manage a broader range of content, not just traditional website content



Headless CMS in Action

Prominent Venture Capitalist, Sequoia, utilises Headless CMS platform Netlify. The company, which has invested in a raft of tech companies in the last 30 years, including Google, Apple, YouTube and LinkedIn, uses the platform to empower its workforce to update local site content at the click of a button, reducing the need for a developer to run content updates.

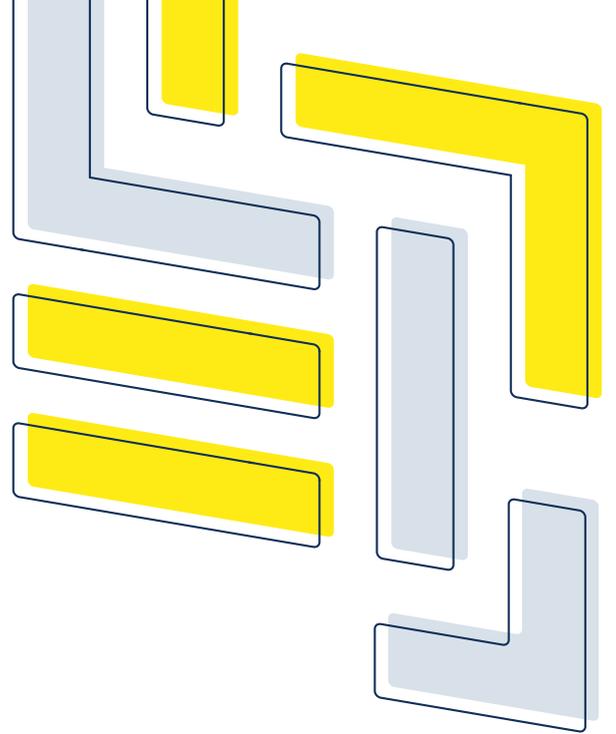
Other users of Netlify:

Facebook, Mozilla, NBC and Vice

Companies like The Container Store have selected Headless CMS Prismic.io to help create inspirational editorial content and seasonal promotional pages that can be integrated to directly feature their products, as well as allowing for the preparation of bulk changes in advance, for special events like sales or holiday periods.

Other users of Prismic.io:

Google, Made.com, Ebay and Deliveroo



The JAMstack - Modern Web Development Architecture



The JAMstack - Modern Web Development Architecture

JAMstack - an acronym for JavaScript, APIs and Markup - is a new way of building websites and apps that delivers better performance, higher security and lower cost of scaling.

Unlike sites built with a server-side CMS such as Joomla!, in projects built with the JAMstack, the dynamic programming during the request/response cycle is handled by JavaScript, running entirely on the client. All server-side processes or database actions are abstracted into reusable APIs, accessed over HTTP with JavaScript, which can either be custom-built or utilise third-party services. Finally, templated markup are prebuilt at deploy time, usually using a site generator for content sites, or a build tool for web apps.

***Better performance,
higher security and
lower cost of scaling***



The JAMstack - Modern Web Development Architecture

Benefits

- Better performance - as the server is only sending static content (any non static elements are handled by JavaScript and API) there is no need to run any complex programs or systems, so the time for server to send data is reduced. It can also mean you need less servers too as server load is minimal
- Cheaper and easier scaling, using files that can be served anywhere
- Server-side processes are abstracted into microservice APIs, so the risk of attack is reduced, making your site more secure
- Loose coupling and separation of controls allow more targeted development and debugging, while also removing the requirement of a separate stack for content and marketing
- Possibility of offering offline access. Users can access the site when offline, as the JavaScript allows them to visit sites and pages that they have been on before, which is particularly good when serving areas with poor signal

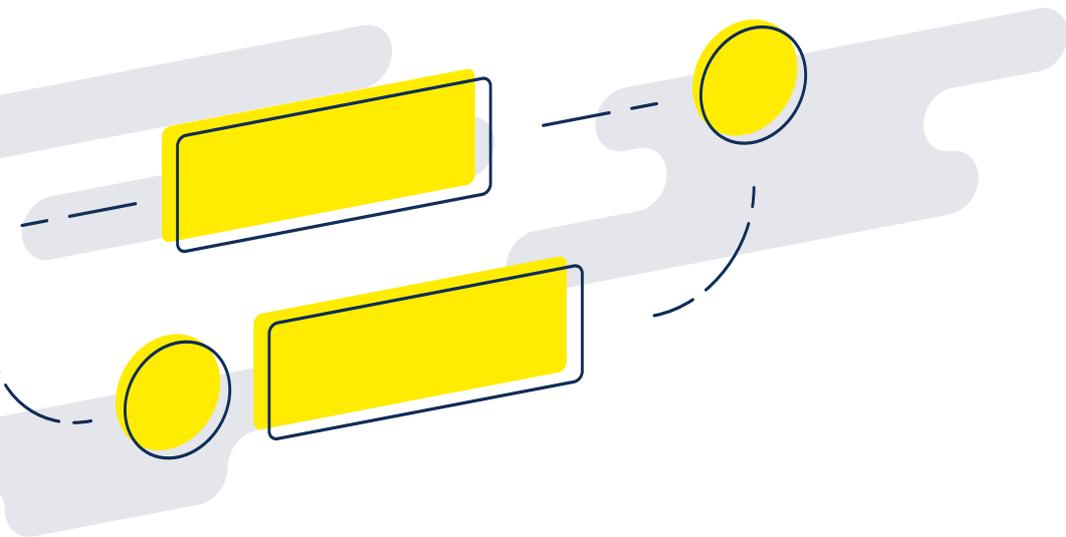
By its very nature, companies using Headless CMS will be adopting the JAMstack

JAMstack in Use

By its very nature, companies using Headless CMS will be adopting the JAMstack. A great example of this is Smashing Magazine, which used JAMstack to create a unified platform that delivered a faster page load speed (from 800 milliseconds to 80 milliseconds), gave them greater freedom to create a design they loved away from the limitations of Wordpress and improved site performance overall.



Bespoke E-commerce Platform Development



Bespoke E-commerce Platform Development

For global organisations demonstrating growth, off-the-shelf open source e-commerce platforms are a false economy



As your brand develops, its e-commerce function will be expected to as well. Delivering a variety of product and payment options and new innovative services to growing customer numbers, means many organisations are reaching a tipping point where they are beginning to outgrow the capabilities of its current set up.

Investment in a fully bespoke e-commerce platform is strongly recommended to deliver a more integrated system with better pay gateways, which also make online payments, access to account history and other services more seamless for customers.

For global organisations demonstrating growth, off-the-shelf open source e-commerce platforms are a false economy. They are built to meet the needs of most - not your specific needs. This means that as your business scales it will almost certainly reach the limits of an off-the-shelf solution's capability, as well as facing increased subscription costs to utilise the nearest-fit solution available to plug in.

Although a more significant financial outlay in the short term, a bespoke solution delivered by best-in-the-industry developers will be more cost-effective in the medium-to-long term and will give you greater control over your customer's payment journey.

We recommend a bespoke solution created using Sylius. Sylius is an open source e-commerce solution for PHP, based on the Symfony framework. Working closely with your team, our Symfony specialists can analyse how payments are currently managed online, how they can be improved and forecast for future changes, before building a bespoke solution.



Bespoke E-commerce Platform Development

Benefits

- There are no compromises - the solution fits your business exactly, rather than vice versa
- Access to extensive e-commerce features through Sylius (products catalog, shipping engine, promotions system etc)
- Sylius is constructed from fully decoupled components, which means that every feature can be used in any other application
- There are no limitations the platform can be developed and adapted to meet changing business needs
- Better basket flow will increase online conversions, taking pressure off bricks and mortar stores

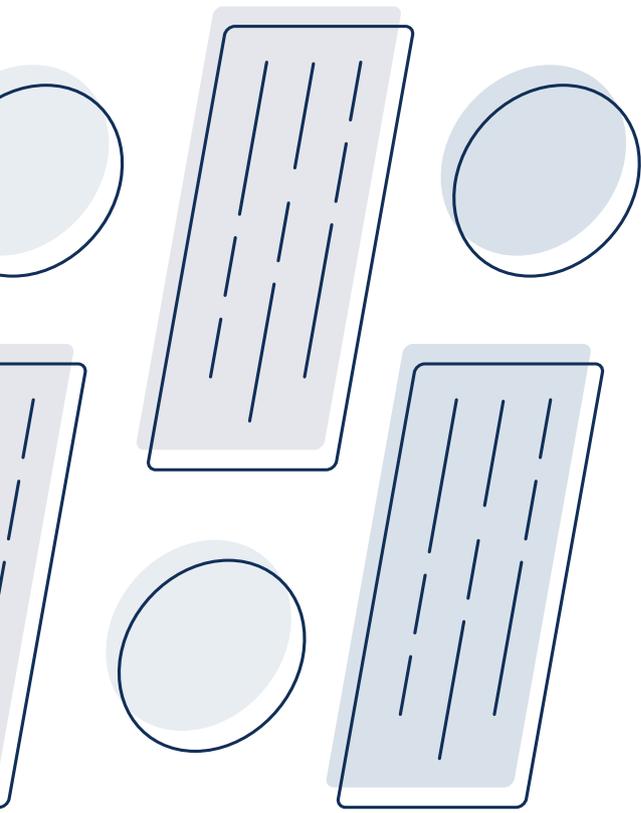


Examples of Bespoke E-commerce sites

Any large online retailer, such as Very.com or ASOS, will be running a bespoke system or highly bespoke components on top of a framework to deliver their business specific e-commerce needs.

Although not a traditional e-commerce site, Mashbo has delivered a highly bespoke e-commerce solution for the property industry by creating **PropertyCloud** - student letting management software which manages rent payments through a bespoke e-commerce system developed to meet the exact needs of landlords, tenants and property management agencies, through close liaison with the client and end users, to fully understand the payment journey.





Customer Service & Sales Chat Bots



Customer Service & Sales Chat Bots

Constantly improving customer service and growing and retaining its customer base should be a key objective for any business. As A.I. increases in prominence the next logical and best-practice step to future proof your brand is to integrate chat bots into its customer service and also its sales function.

Using messaging system, Intercom, which provides inbox, instant messaging and articles, you can help you communicate faster with customers. Automating processes can facilitate self-service support, meaning faster answers for customers and less questions for support teams. When the answer can't be found that way, instant messaging can ensure faster response times and quicker resolutions - meaning happier customers.

Instant messaging can also target new customers with onboarding messages, or even qualify inbound sales leads to help convert them quicker.



As A.I. increases in prominence the next logical and best-practice step to future proof your brand is to integrate chat bots

Customer Service & Sales Chat Bots

Benefits

- Facilitates more effective use of human customer service assistants
- Reduction in customer support response time and increase in engagement
- Increase online sales leads and reduce sales cycle
- Increased conversions
- Insights provide greater understanding of customer needs so customer experience can be improved
- Increased morale due to improved workload and better working hours for human customer service assistants

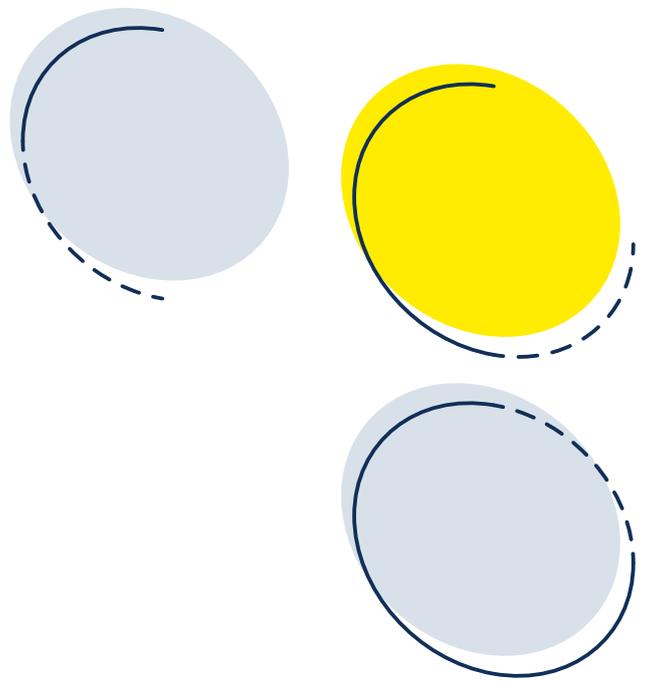
There are countless examples of businesses in all industries using chatbots to improve their customer service and sales functions

Who's Using Chatbots?

There are countless examples of businesses in all industries using chatbots to improve their customer service and sales functions, such as UK app-only bank, Monzo, which is revolutionising the banking sector by building the company through close interaction with its community.

SEO software company, Moz, has also significantly improved its sales and customer service by consolidating activity previously carried out by five platforms into one. Moz understands the importance of chatting with customers at various touch points, such as acquiring new users, onboarding new customers, dealing with customer service enquiries and messaging clients in its app. By using Intercom it was able to streamline its communications and ensure they were more relevant and efficient, resulting in a 70% reduction in median response time and more conversations with users than ever before.

Collaborative prototyping tool for designers, InVision, also uses chatbots to communicate with its network of users, after its previous ticket-based helpdesk system began to struggle with the more conversational and detailed nature of customer feedback and enquiries. They now use chatbots to manage a full 365-day cycle of communications with users to build relationships and can respond to feature requests by using automated update emails when the requested feature is added.



Simple, Functional Design and Review of Customer Journey



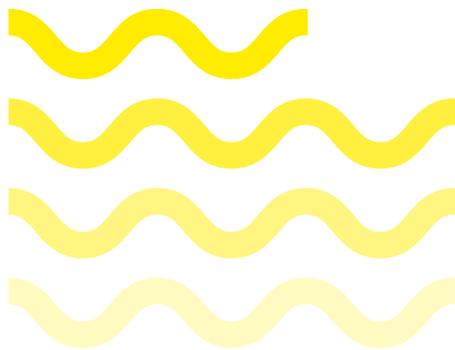
Simple, Functional Design and Review of Customer Journey



Current website design trends focus on creating simple, fast and clear websites that are fully optimised for mobile and champion exceptional user experience. They need to be able to integrate new types of formats and technologies as these develop at a rapid pace.

Investing in gaining greater understanding of your customer journey is also essential, using information gleaned from analytics to streamline content and restructure the information architecture, improve basket flow and remove any barriers to purchase (for example, removing overwhelming blocking content and placing it before final sale when it is required, rather than up front).

We recommend a full review of the content and design of the your current website, along with running focus groups to ascertain areas of the website that need refreshing in order to improve the user's experience of the site.



***Investing in gaining
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Simple, Functional Design and Review of Customer Journey

Using a headless CMS allows the designer and developer to have full control over the display of a page without restriction imposed by a standard CMS like Joomla! or Wordpress. Quite simply it allows design to be applied to the page where standard CMS does not.

When considering banners on many websites we noted the difficulty of working with third parties, providing designs that were not of the right spec and standard for the site. We looked at the potential to create a banner builder that would allow the quick and easy creation of highly responsive banners or - as another option - creating a range of banners to switch in as a screen size decreases, depending on the device the site is being viewed on. Progression of such a solution would require working closely with a client's team to deliver the best design solution from desktop to mobile and everything between, taking into account processes for working with third parties, to ensure customers always enjoy the optimum experience.

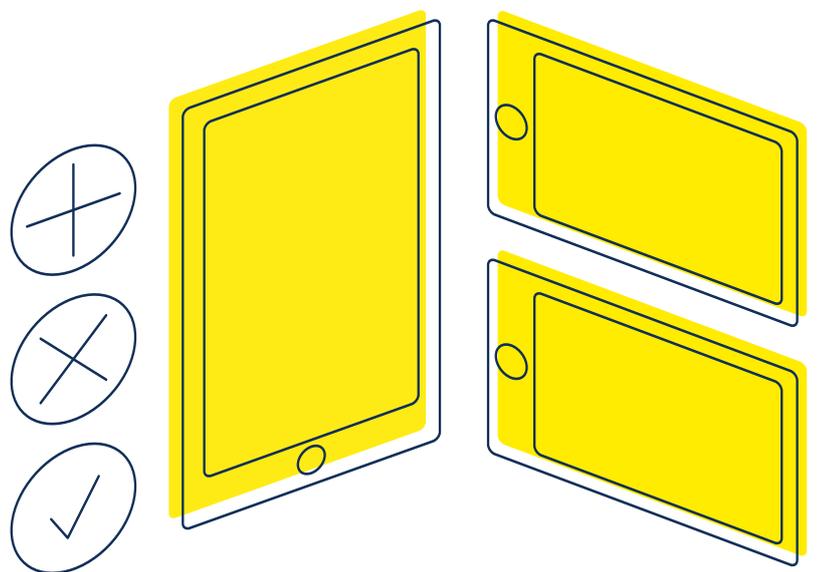
We also recommend that organisations review their other websites and digital channels in tandem to ensure brand consistency across all sites.

Using a headless CMS allows the designer and developer to have full control over the display of a page

Benefits

- Strengthen existing brand
- Easier customer acquisition
- Refresh is more cost effective than a full redesign
- A simpler, more intuitive user interface will encourage more time spent on website and increase conversions

App Development for Account Management and Rewarding Loyalty



App Development for Account Management and Rewarding Loyalty



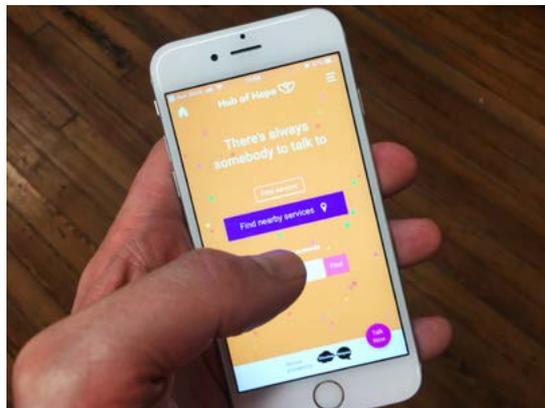
You can further improve customer experience and drive loyalty through more work on its app offering. Apps can deliver greater convenience to customers by allowing management of accounts through an app and integrating customer service chatbots, as well as delivering targeted offers to customers and effectively communicating new and existing loyalty rewards to them.

As the prevalence of AR technology increases there will be opportunity to deliver user-specific offers via the app, based on an individual customer's on and offline choices and actions as well as their interests and geo-location.

Targeted loyalty-driven rewards can increase customer retention and engagement, having a wider positive impact on a company, as customers feel they receive added value from their relationship with the brand.

Using headless CMS to centralise all content means that the content for the app can be driven from the same place as the website, ensuring efficiency and cost effectiveness.

As the prevalence of AR technology increases there will be opportunity to deliver user-specific offers via the app



App Development for Account Management and Rewarding Loyalty

Benefits

- Increased customer loyalty and engagement
- Positive brand awareness
- Increased customer retention
- Additional ways to communicate with customers and respond effectively to customer service queries

Customer Apps - Who's Doing it Well?

When it comes to providing a genuinely useful app that plays a part in customer retention by rewarding loyalty, O2's priority scheme is sector-leading example. Providing targeted rewards from a wide range of partners - from food and music brands to travel and beauty brands - via a web portal or location-based web app, it engages and delights customers away from its core service offering.

It's important to note as well that apps can also drive loyalty and customer retention in other ways, by providing a more direct point of contact for customers (integrating chatbot services) and delivering convenience, for example by allowing users to top up other phones from family accounts via the mobile app, as provided by EE.

Apps can also drive loyalty and customer retention in other ways, by providing a more direct point of contact for customers

About Mashbo

Mashbo is a design-based digital consultancy and development agency with one clear objective - to build things that people use.

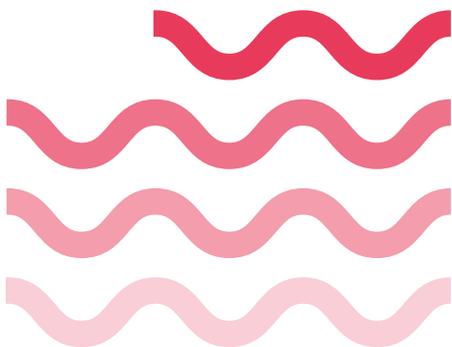
We are a team of digital problem solvers designing and developing websites, apps and digital products that are revolutionising whole industry sectors. We combine unsurpassed technical expertise, design excellence and critical yet creative vision, as well as having a keen nose for commercial opportunity for our clients and investment business partners, helping them to create new revenue streams.

As well as being designers and developers, we are strategists, researchers and harbingers of the future of technology.

Using new and emerging technologies we create and deliver cutting-edge solutions that drive audience engagement and streamline and automate processes - ultimately future proofing thousands of businesses across multiple sectors including property, brands, sport, leisure, professional services and the third sector.

***We combine
unsurpassed
technical expertise,
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and critical yet
creative vision***

Awards



Profile North Best Small Digital Agency 2016



Big Chip Leadership Award 2017



Creativepool Top 100 Digital Influencers 2017

Meet Our Founders

Gavin Sherratt

Managing Director

Gavin is the pioneering and entrepreneurial heart of Mashbo. With 21 years' experience working at the forefront of technology in senior level creative and technical roles he is no stranger to working with global brands and big multinational clients. He drives our team to push the boundaries of new and emerging technologies and build innovative, transformational products and solutions with the power to revolutionise whole industries. The proud recipient of the Big Chip Leadership Award in 2017 and a name check in Forbes magazine in 2015, Gavin works closely with clients and investment business partners to develop their business strategy, identify challenges and commercial opportunities and advise how they can invest in digital to future proof their enterprises and organisations. He is also committed to the development our industry locally and nationally, founding **Creative Kitchen** to encourage knowledge sharing between agencies, businesses and freelancers in the creative and digital sector, as well as sitting on the board for the Liverpool BID Company.



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Meet Our Founders

Liam Potter

Creative Director

A technically minded creative who has 18 years' experience working with cutting edge web technology, Liam combines his passion and excellence in design with technical skill in front-end development. He leads our design team in its mission to create tech that provides solutions, looks great and that people will actually use. An expert in UX and UI, Liam also has a remarkable ability to put himself in the position of the target audience, challenge briefs and work with clients to ask questions that get right to the heart of their business need. Through tenacious research and unsurpassed understanding of cutting-edge technologies, he is able to create and implement industry-leading solutions that resolve clients' most pressing business issues in innovative ways that have not been seen before. Demonstrating both his aptitude for creating revolutionary solutions and his commitment to using tech for good is Liam's pro bono project the [Hub of Hope](#). The web-based app, which is endorsed by the Samaritans and 25 other national mental health support networks.

 [@evo1](#)

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Meet Our Founders

Steve Todd

Technical Director

An experienced project manager and natural digital problem solver, Steve is an expert in an extensive range of computer languages, frameworks and tools. He uses this expertise to push the boundaries of our technical ability, leading projects for global companies, SMEs and social enterprises, future proofing their businesses through automation and AI, as well as delivering business-transforming solutions for whole industries. A great communicator, Steve is also responsible for building client relationships, ensuring our projects deliver the best solutions on time and in budget. Committed to the future of the industry, Steve mentors students in the Computer Science Department at Liverpool University. He was also recently shortlisted in the Insider Young IT Professional Award 2018.

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Next Steps

Want to discuss future proofing
your digital portfolio?

● Contact Mashbo on
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