

WINTER 2022

# The Advantages of Atomized Platforms for eCommerce Businesses

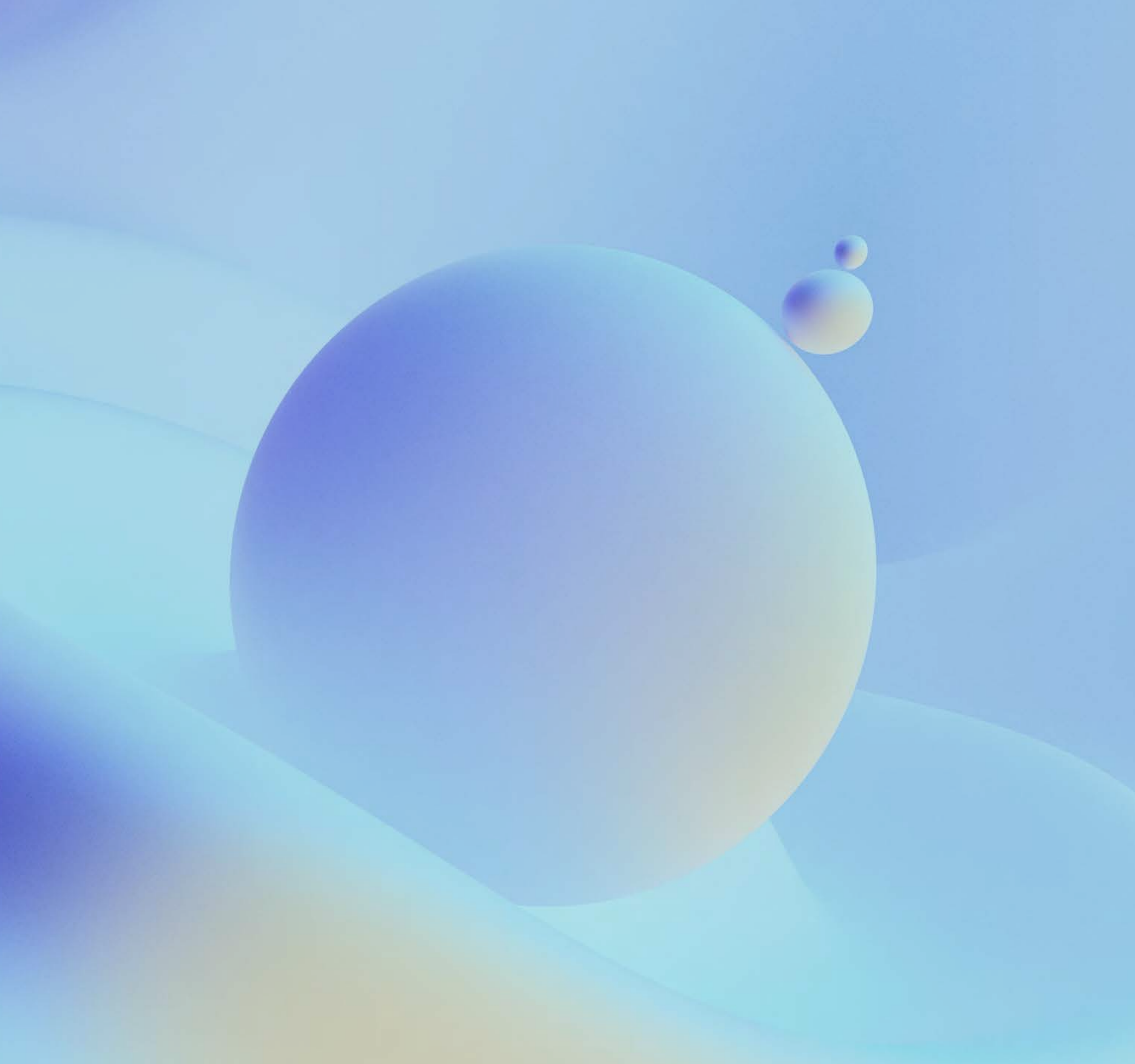
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# Contents

<b>Executive Summary</b>	<b>02</b>
<b>Digitalization in an ever-changing world</b>	<b>03</b>
<b>Taking the first step</b>	<b>06</b>
<b>Bringing in the tech support</b>	<b>08</b>
<b>Four ways Contentful helps your commerce business flourish</b>	<b>12</b>
Personalized content fit for consumers all in one spot	
Streamlining content creation with atomic design	
Complex matters made manageable with APIs	
Letting automation do the hard work for you	
<b>Final thoughts</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>About Apply Digital</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>About Contentful</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>Credits</b>	<b>25</b>

# Executive Summary

Embarking on a digital transformation journey for your eCommerce business will help you stand out from the crowd. And whether you're looking to expand your digital presence or improve omnichannel strategies, consumer experiences must be top of mind. From personalized and consistent content to simplifying complexities with APIs and automation, you'll reach your customers and ensure streamlined strategies for your organization.

At the heart of that process? Impactful technology platforms — and a trusted partner to help iteratively decouple your monolithic tech stack. With atomized platforms like Contentful that leverage composability and flexibility, you'll be better positioned to cater content for your customers, no matter who or where they are.

# Digitalization in an ever- changing world



## Digitalization in an ever-changing world

We've seen firsthand how the COVID-19 pandemic has shifted our lifestyles and our [buying habits](#). But even as we enter a post-pandemic world — or rather, one where COVID-19 is the norm in our day-to-day lives — many of those changed consumption habits seem to be here to stay.

With [64% of consumers claiming hybrid shopping](#) is still the way to go, it's crucial for commerce companies to continue bringing ongoing improvements to their omnichannel experiences.

That means companies still need to design journeys that exist in both online and real-life spaces, and continue their digitalization process to enhance every moment in the customer journey. And by taking advantage of modular, atomized platforms that enable you to build one piece at a time — and integrate the tech to help — this feat doesn't need to be so daunting.



A person wearing a blue suit jacket, white shirt, and tie is shown from the chest down. They are holding a black smartphone in their right hand and a silver credit card in their left hand. The background is a blurred, light-colored wall.

Not to be confused with digitization, digitalization is all about the use of digital technologies to change business processes and projects — and it impacts the entire organization. For eCommerce companies, how you go about your digitalization can put you a step above your competitors. If you needed another reason, in the United States alone, eCommerce sales in 2020 grew more than 30% compared to 2019, with online retail sales jumping 40% in 2021.

Digitalization is a movement with no signs of slowing down. The time to adopt new technologies that support your digital growth is now.





**Taking the  
first step**

## Taking the first step

Digitalization is a long journey, but you don't need to step out that door alone or unprepared. Your first step: choosing the right partner with experience not only in your industry but across sectors so you can benefit from diverse best practices.

That second step? Be open to change. Digital transformation requires an open mind about new technologies, a willingness to be flexible, and a desire to innovate. And it means rethinking your [technology, people, and processes](#) — something we've already explored at length.

And for many enterprises, that means restructuring monolithic legacy systems in place of flexible platforms. While that restructuring process is easier said than done, our teams have the expertise to help.

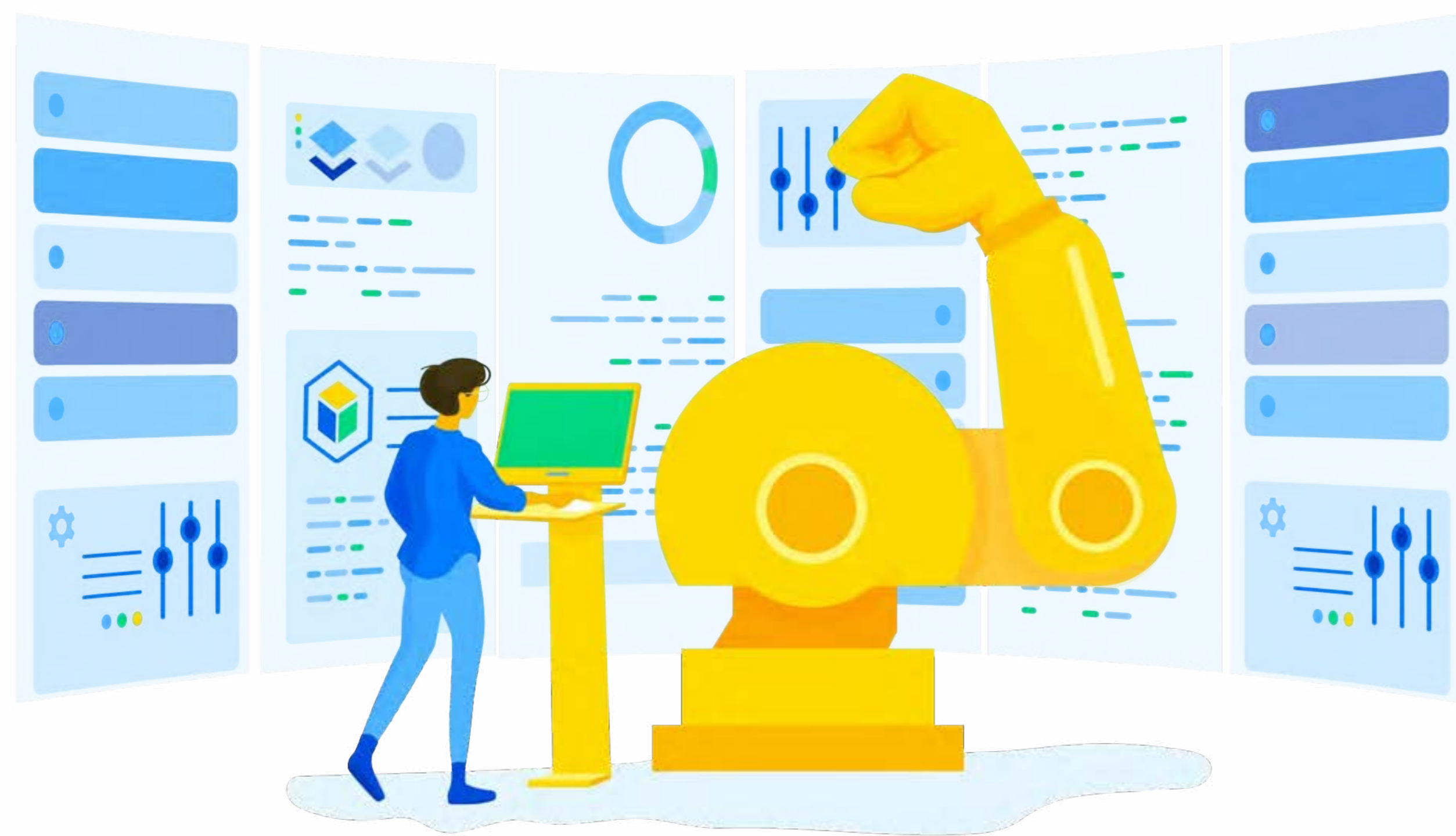
We start from the technologies you already have and transform progressively — a [headless](#) transition customized for each company. Gradually decoupling your monolithic system, we turn it into an atomized platform equipped with functions and services that enable experimentation and result in better experiences for you and your customers.





# Bringing in the tech support





## Bringing in the tech support

[Contentful](#) is one of our allies in this digitalization process.

As an atomized and composable content platform, Contentful allows you to manage and deliver content smoothly across multiple digital channels. Because the platform works through APIs, which facilitates communication with other systems, you get the freedom to work with the programming languages and frameworks your teams prefer. This makes implementing a headless approach much simpler.

And because atomized platforms are all about building on top of key foundational pieces that form the final product, you'll be able to create the digital ecosystem you want with the technologies needed to do so.

But a picture is worth a thousand words, so let's paint you a visual of the benefits of atomized platforms.

It's Black Friday. Your main objective is to dramatically raise traffic and purchases across multiple channels, including your online store. You'll have to think about promotions, stock, and content — all of which must be uploaded to your platform before the big day.

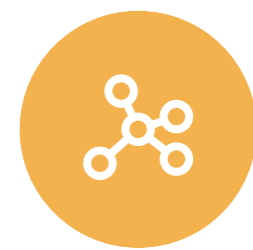
Thoroughness will have a direct impact on your success. Working in conjunction with a commerce engine like [commercetools](#), Contentful can streamline and support the planning process by:



Unifying content in the same space, easing distribution across several channels



Empowering the creation of personalized customer journeys through catered content



Distributing content through a [CDN](#) (content distribution network), enhancing its availability by being hosted in a network of nodes, and reducing latency by delivering content from the closest geographical point to the customer accessing it



Allowing the pre-loading of each product and promotion, synchronizing them with business operations and digital asset management systems to enhance product information through visuals



And these are only the highlights of the benefits atomized platforms offer that help commerce businesses cope with millions of products and content queries on a day like Black Friday.

But the advantages go beyond event-specific days. There are many more reasons atomic platforms like Contentful are right for you.



The background features a light blue gradient with several abstract elements: a large teal shape on the left, a blue sphere in the upper right, and three smaller yellow spheres scattered across the scene. A faint white arc is visible in the bottom right corner.

**Four ways Contentful  
helps your commerce  
business flourish**



# 1.

## Personalized content fit for consumers all in one spot

With [71% of consumers expecting personalized interactions](#) from companies, it's becoming clear that personalized — and localized — content really makes a difference.

In fact, relevant and personalized content should be a key strategy in your digital experience because it plays a significant role in people's trust in your brand, and how you foster long-term consumer relationships and engagement. This also puts less pressure and urgency on a company's shoulders to constantly attract new customers because the focus can shift toward retaining current ones.

But how do you go about doing that?

[91% of consumers](#) prefer companies that offer **personalized content** — you need to ensure the relevancy of what you're delivering and that it addresses your customers' preferences.

So, whether through live chat, websites, emails, or mobile apps, consider the [channels your customers regularly interact with](#) and how you can bring personalized journeys to life.

That could look like product recommendations, personalized rewards, or even unique mobile push notifications.



Fortunately, platforms like Contentful make content personalization and localization easy when working in conjunction with personalization platforms like [Ninetailed](#). Their platform [breaks content down into reusable components](#) that can be adjusted based on your customer, their device, and their location. Say goodbye to the arduous and time-consuming copying and pasting methodology.

Contentful also allows you to adopt a [microservices approach](#) which means building in technology partners specializing in platforms that give you a full-picture view of your consumers, like customer-data platforms (CDP) and data-management platforms (DMP).

Building strong relationships and loyalty are essential to achieving successful business results. And creating personalized and relevant content grows the likelihood of that crucial customer engagement.

# 2.

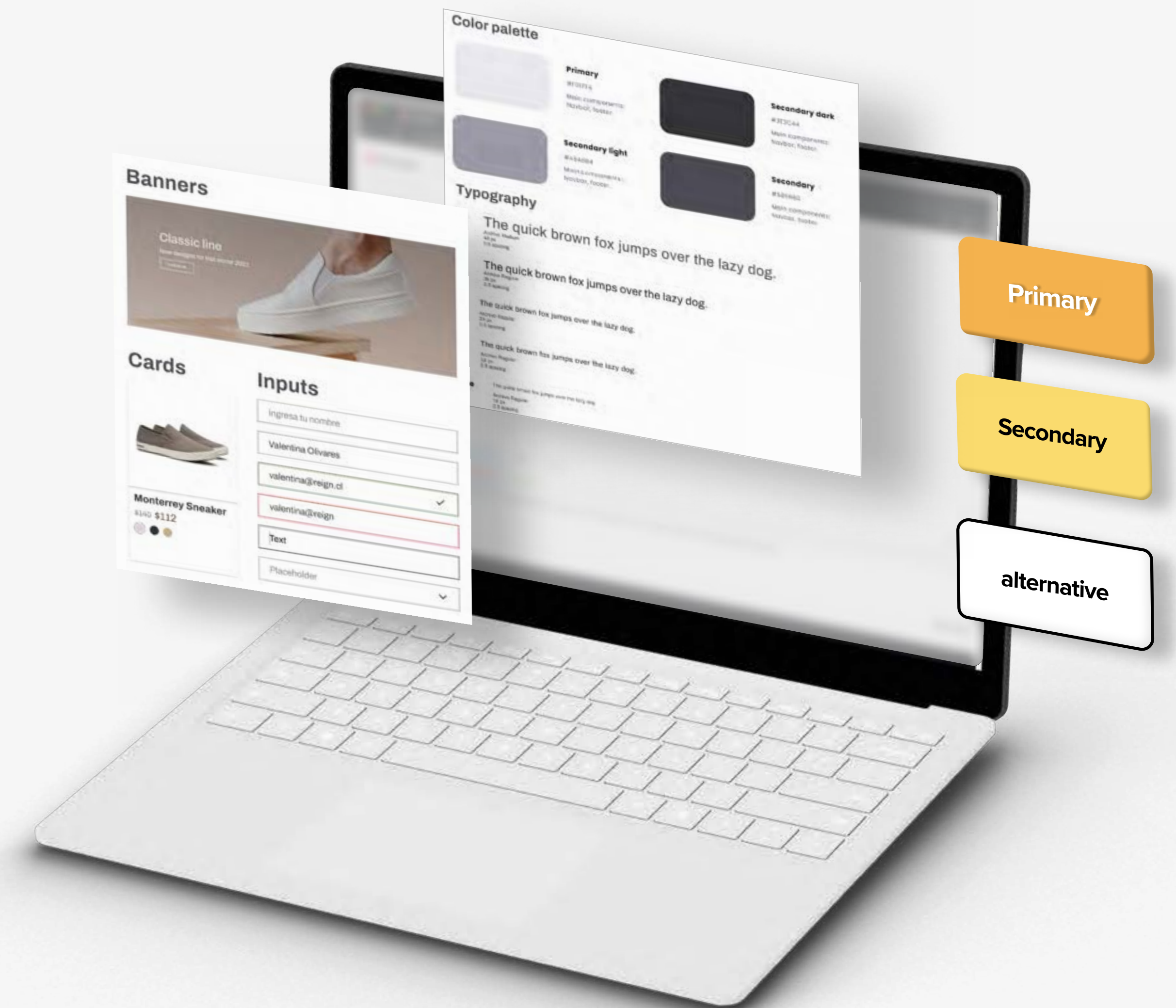
## Streamlining content creation with atomic design

The next question is: how do we ensure consistency in how content is delivered? While there are many ways to accomplish that, one approach we take is atomic design.

At Apply Digital, we leverage atomic design for our clients to help them create the uniform experiences they need, whether they're a multi-brand company or a global organization (or both). By managing content with an [API-first composable content platform](#) like Contentful, a consistent digital experience can be deployed using a single space.

But what is it?

Coined by [Brad Frost](#), atomic design is a methodology that draws inspiration from chemistry, starting with the atom. As the smallest unit, atoms are the foundational building blocks of our interfaces. They join together to make molecules that function together as an organism. These then form templates that will act as the base of our content structure. All these elements together make up the final stage of atomic design: the page. Pages are a complete instance of a design — or in other words, what users will see and interact with.







[Breaking Down Atomic Design](#)

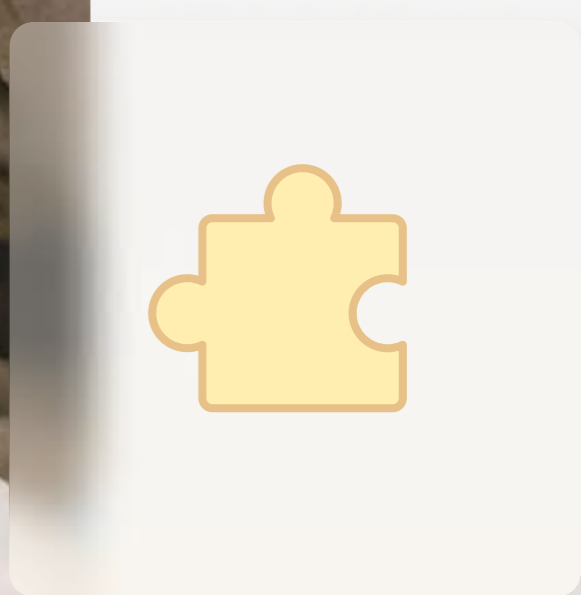
**The benefits of atomic design are plentiful, including:**

- Speeding up product and content creation by reusing components to reduce time-to-delivery
- Designing in a modular, consistent way across channels
- Reducing the likelihood of writing duplicate code
- Empowering content authors to make changes, edit, or create new landing pages independently from developers
- Acting as a source of truth for designers, developers, and content authors

Implementing atomic design can take time initially, but the benefits, in the long run, are worth it. Atomic design can reduce design cycles from [5-10 days to 1-3 days](#), improving efficiency across disciplines, making it quicker to prototype, and enabling faster content delivery. Plus, Contentful's APIs make it easy to deploy your atomic design system live.

This approach also facilitates trust between your business and customers because it enables consistent content that will keep them coming back for more. [75% of consumers expect uniform content](#) across their online journey — [consistency](#) and [governance](#) in your omnichannel experiences are a must.

And in today's broad diversity of digital channels, web browsers, mobile applications, IoT, and smart devices, users want to shop on all the channels available to them — with a journey adapted to each device.

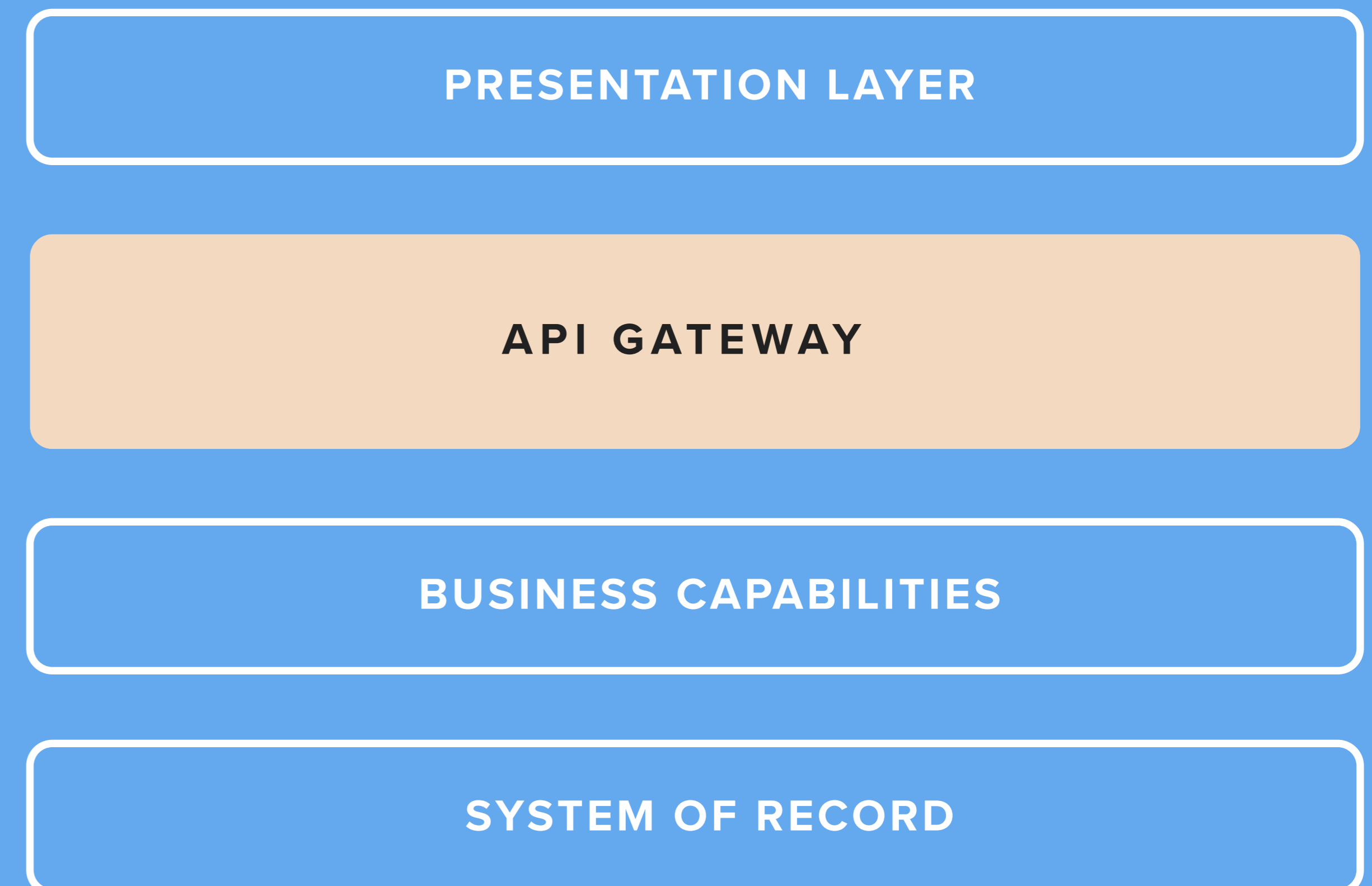


# 3.

## Complex matters made manageable with APIs

Managing multiple devices might sound complex, but with Contentful's atomized platform, all your content is managed from a single hub, delivered through [APIs](#), and seamlessly displayed on several devices. So no matter which channel your customers are using, your content is hosted and controlled in one convenient spot.

What's more, Contentful provides SDKs (software development kits) to make API calls regardless of the language used, making it easier for developers to [build software faster](#) and in a more standardized way. This relieves the pressure of starting from scratch and accelerates your digital transformation.





Contentful is also [UI-agnostic](#). It's the collaboration between developers and designers that dictates how content and data are presented to the consumer, utilizing the structure or tool of their choice.

Atomic design, for instance, is both a design system for UI and UX teams as well as a reference document for developers to use as they build.

These, in combination, put content in the same space, allowing teams to push it to the right channels without using multiple platforms. With [low-code/no-code](#) platforms, content management is more accessible for non-technical teams to publish from different sources without coding.

It also empowers content authors to personalize those omnichannel experiences — like regional retail promotions for multi-national companies or adjusting visuals for multi-brand organizations — all in the same CMS instead of doing it manually on multiple platforms.

# 4.

## Letting automation do the hard work for you

If there's one thing we can consider a universal experience, it's having that to-do list of manual, repetitive tasks that, while not difficult, distract us from more meaningful things. And in a business, that may include manually sending individual emails or messages instead of automating your processes.

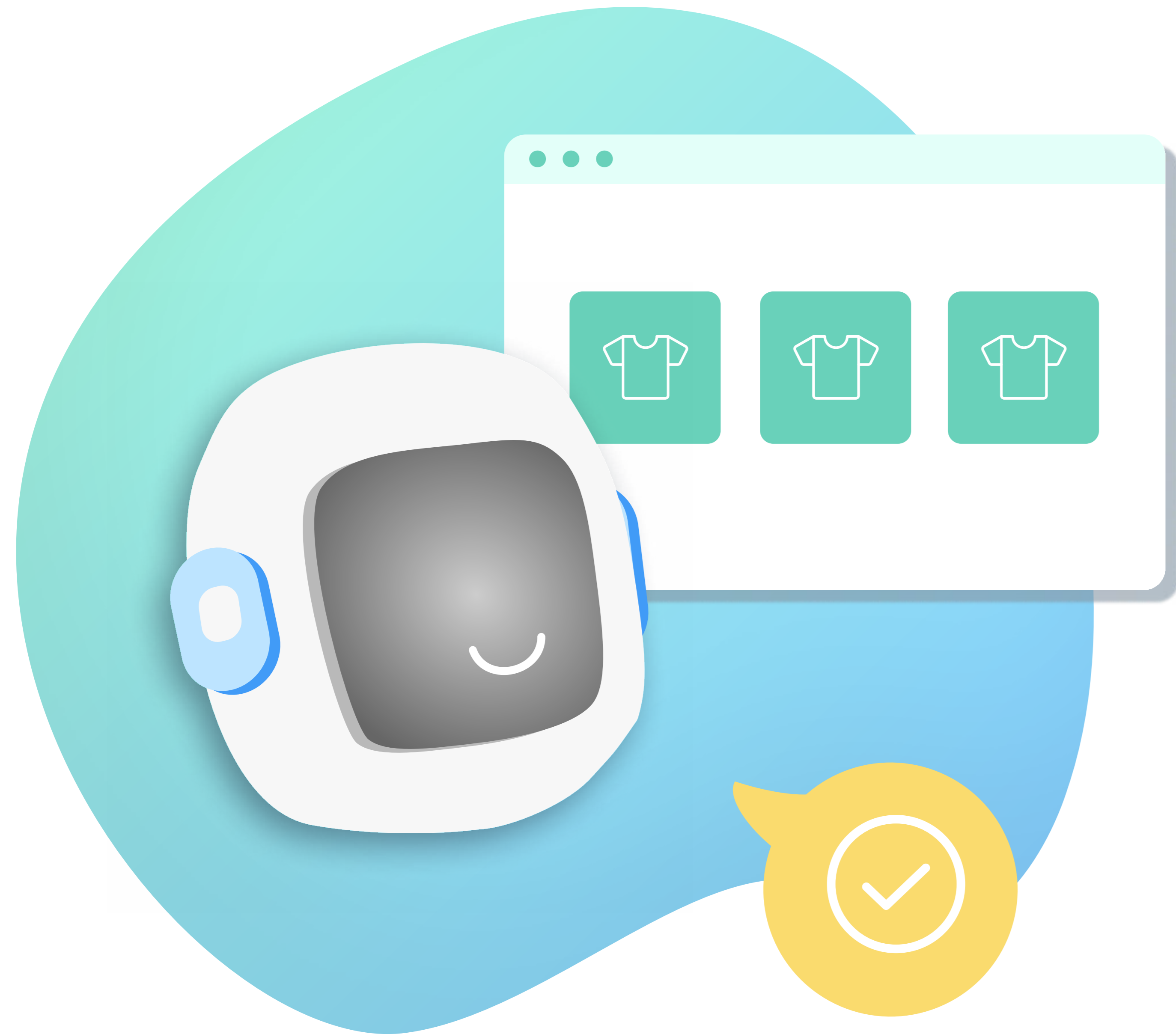
Just imagine — or maybe you don't have to — the arduous process of sending personalized content to your consumers based on their unique shopping needs and behaviors, one by one.

Wouldn't having a CMS handle the hard work for you make life so much simpler?

Contentful can automate and improve your business flows, relieving much of the workload arising from iterative processes stemming from creating and publishing content. This allows your company to operate more efficiently without investing in more resources, with IT professionals claiming automation can [save departments up to 50% on the costs](#) that come with manual processing.



AUTOMATION



Implementing automation allows you to better coordinate customer communication, resulting in improved customer service. Perfectly orchestrated and synchronized communications allow your organization to reach people through strategic touchpoints while providing a memorable experience.

If you need further proof, one study showed that more than [75% of people would most likely buy again](#) from a brand that remembers their name, shopping history, and offers personalized experiences. Automation gives you the opportunity to retain and build customer loyalty. After all, isn't this what businesses are looking for?

# Final thoughts

Although we'd like to say that incorporating new technologies is as fun as writing about them, the truth is that it comes with its challenges. Resistance to change, lack of an experimental environment, or inefficient use of technologies are common factors that hold back business growth.

Many companies still use old technology, legacy systems, and traditional monolithic solutions that don't offer the flexibility needed to bolster your brand's evolution. And in a world that's constantly changing, companies need to change too.

With atomized platforms like Contentful, you'll achieve the flexibility to scale, centralize, and distribute content across multiple channels so you can optimize your digital experience. And with the ease that comes with managing content in a headless platform, you'll gain more time to innovate in other ways across your organization.

Because digital transformation is more than just adopting new technologies, it requires a culture of digitalization and innovation — a mindset that empowers companies to evolve constantly. At Apply Digital, we can work with you to develop future-proofed commerce platforms as we help nourish that growth mindset.



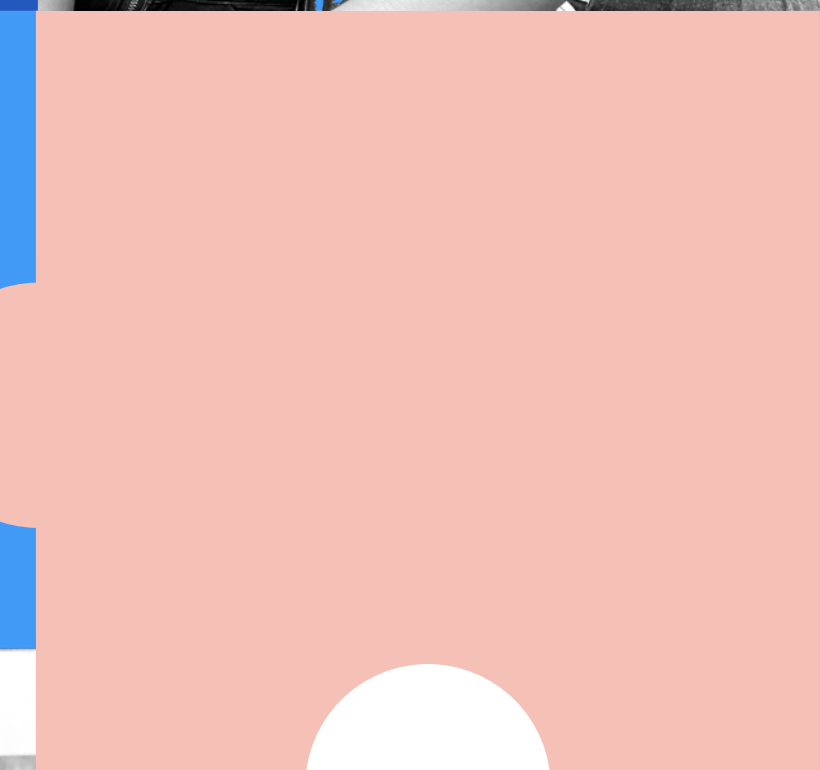
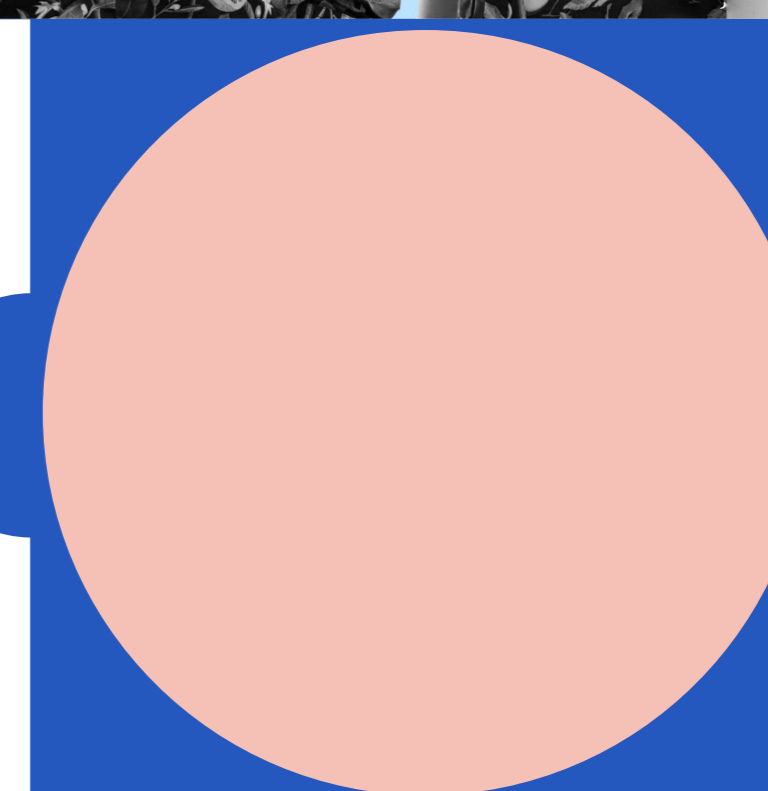
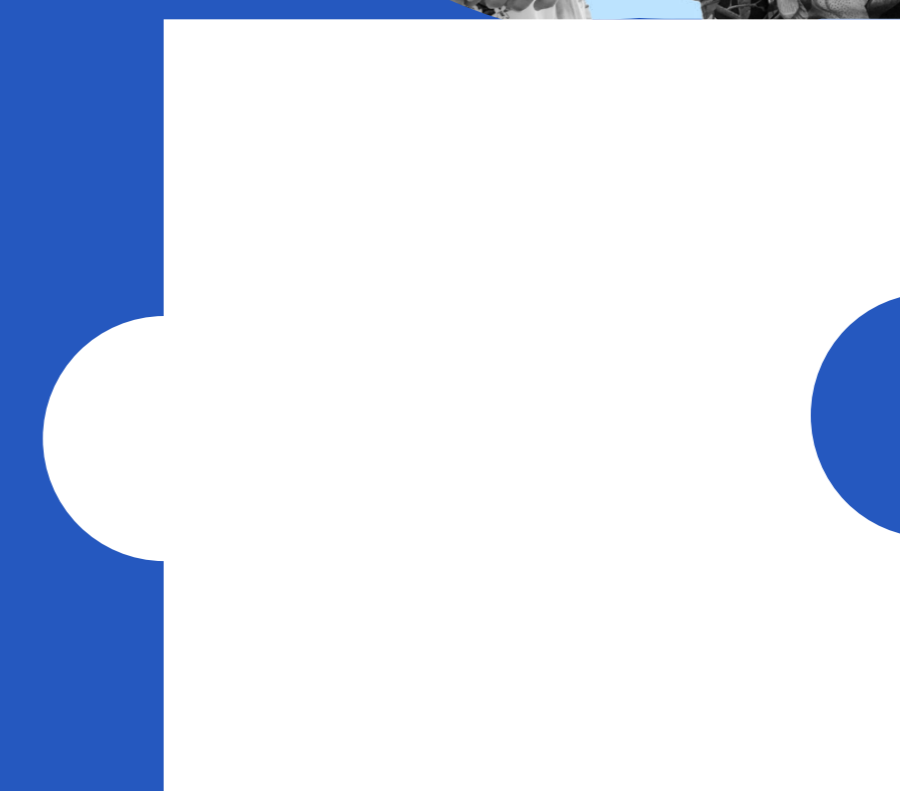
# About Apply Digital

Apply Digital is a digital innovation company focused on products, platforms, and commerce.

Digital to our core, we are purpose-built to transform possibilities for people. We solve complex problems with well-executed solutions tailor-made for continuous growth — we're ambitious and our clients are too. We work with well-funded start-ups, global brands, and Fortune 1000 companies spanning industries and audiences, including EA, Moderna, League Health, and Realtor.com.

For more insights on how we can help you succeed,

email us at  [hello@applydigital.com](mailto:hello@applydigital.com) or visit our website  [www.applydigital.com](http://www.applydigital.com)

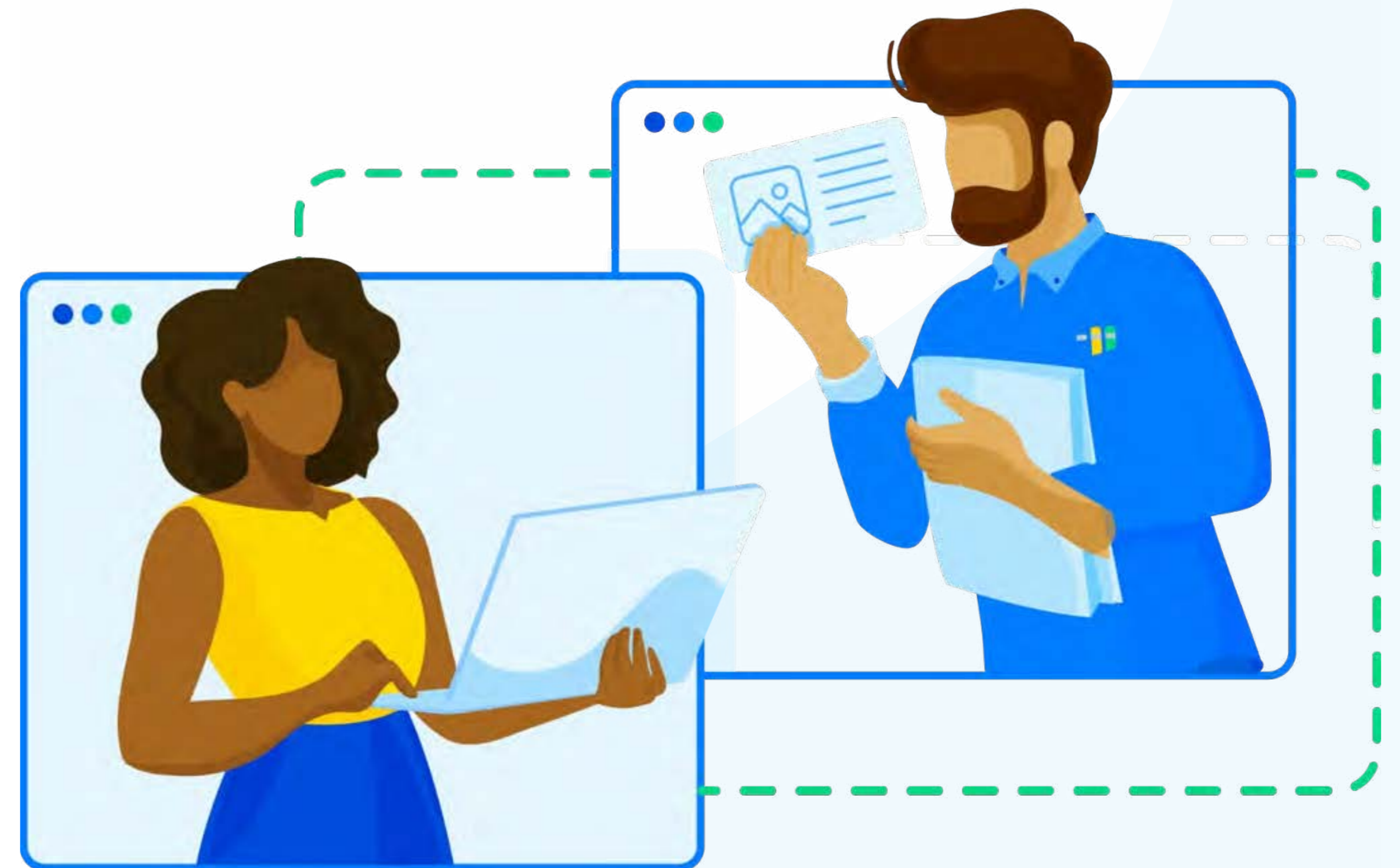




# About Contentful

The Contentful® Composable Content Platform brings the building blocks of content together to create once and reuse for any digital experience. The API-first platform integrates easily with data sources and new functionality as digital experiences and technology evolve. With built-in orchestration, a robust app ecosystem, and app framework to easily extend the platform, Contentful frees teams across the business to work together to connect, create, and extend content more efficiently. Contentful helps companies unlock the power of digital content so they can build faster and deliver at scale, making their content a strategic business asset. Nearly 30% of the Fortune 500 and thousands of companies around the world rely on Contentful to help them bring their best ideas to life.

For more information, visit [www.contentful.com](https://www.contentful.com)



# Credits

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