



THE COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE

of an Interactive Content Capability



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Why invest in a platform instead of a one-off interactive experience?

Because your audience doesn't have a one-off experience with you. It's highly likely that they'll interact with your brand six, ten, maybe fifteen times before they're warm enough to buy.

Your interactive brand is the sum of many parts and disciplines that can only be fully realized in a purpose-built platform.

Each buyer touchpoint is an opportunity. As an

integrated journey, those touchpoints can be a gold mine of insight and understanding. But only if they share an infrastructure that enables multi-touch profiling and progressive relevance through a digital dialogue.

This white paper will look at the capabilities and benefits of using a centralized interactive content platform as the foundation of an organization's interactive experience strategy.



Relevance Driving Revenue

A platform approach enables powerful data-driven opportunities—including high-fidelity buyer intelligence driving explicit personalization. Interactive content marketing is uniquely suited to deliver much more specific and descriptive buyer data at each step. As you learn more about each buyer, their journey can become more relevant to them. Relevance turns interest into action, and the faster you can do that, the faster you can generate revenue.

An interactive content marketing platform, like ion's, provides the capability to deliver a high-fidelity, progressively relevant, digital journey. And relevance drives revenue.



Sticky by Design

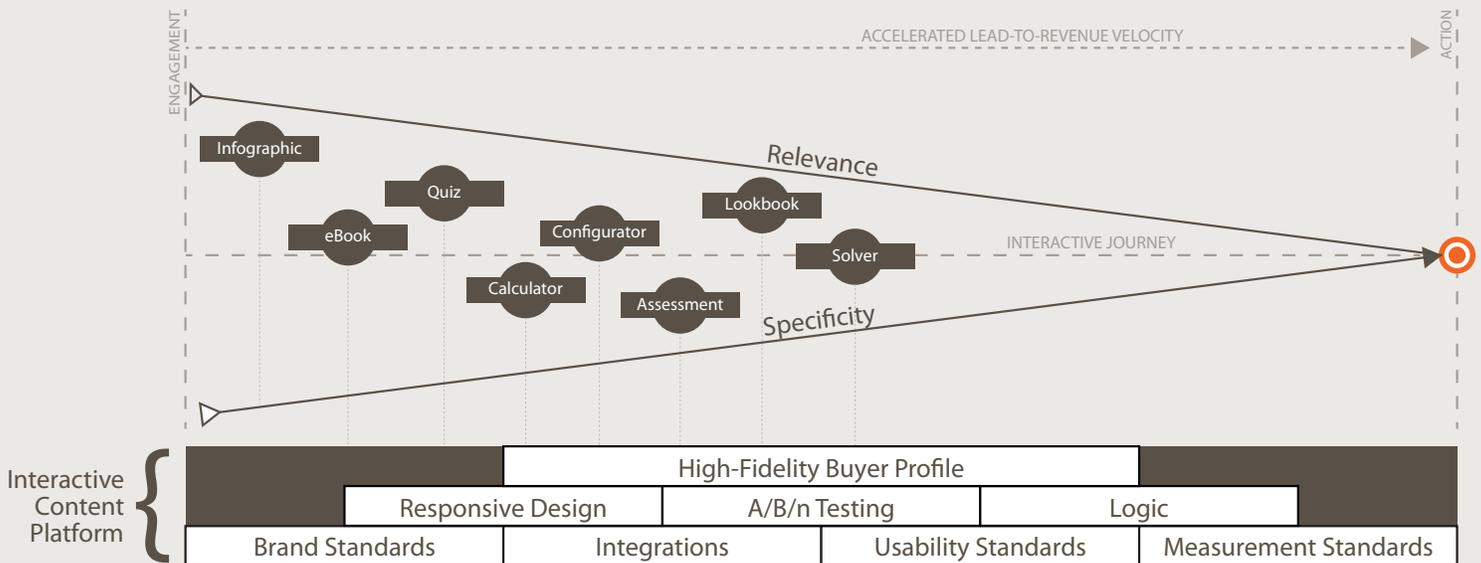
Today's multi-device users are app-spoiled. They're accustomed to a high level of utility and usability in the palm of their hand, on their tablet and on their computer. A benefit of an interactive content marketing platform is the standardization of responsive usability and utility. Everything works everywhere; looks and feels consistent; and has shared norms around functionality. The user experience is predictable, comfortable, and as a result, quite sticky.



Standardized Sexy

None of this matters if your content doesn't get attention. But, unfortunately, most content marketing looks like most other content marketing. Thankfully, interactive content marketing is different. It's inherently more engaging. Scroll effects, animations and reveals all create user interface sophistication that rivals apps, attracting and enthralling users. That level of sophistication can come with high development and debugging costs that can be avoided with ion's interactive content platform that includes those capabilities as code-free features.

Accelerate Relevance & Specificity





What is ion's 'interactive capability'?



Competitive Differentiator

ion is a strategic, differentiating digital foundation that provides a competitive advantage for marketing and sales. When you have ion's interactive capability, you can:

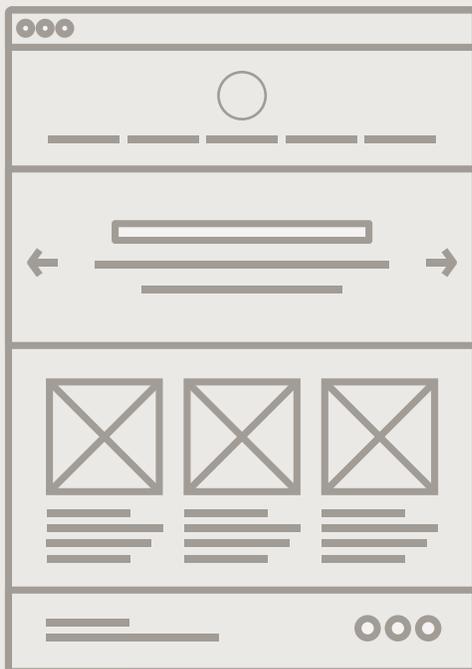
- **Attract the right leads.** Cut through digital content clutter with clearly differentiated interactive experiences that engage in a digital dialogue with the people who use them.
- **Retain the right prospects.** Use the ongoing digital dialogue to keep leads engaged in your content funnel using progressive relevance to make each experience more specific to their personal journey.
- **Accelerate lead-to-revenue velocity.** Use interactive digital content to learn buyer motives, pains, barriers and opportunities to move leads progressively closer to buying.



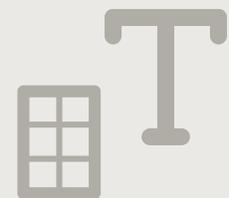
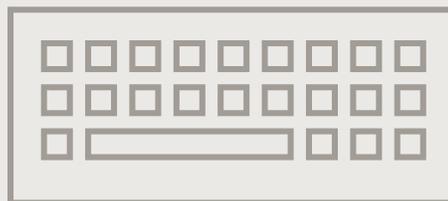
Agile Enabler

Marketing is moving faster than ever before. Real advantages are available to organizations that can deliver digital sophistication and performance within an agile framework. Interactive content is complex and multidisciplinary. Only when it's built upon a foundation of capabilities that simplify and speed development can it also have the agility required of modern marketing programs. In the end, ion's foundation-based approach brings more high-yield user experiences to market faster and with longer and more productive shelf lives.

- **Reusable Tech Foundation:** The fundamental building blocks of ion's interactive capability can be reusable for agility, speed and reliability. Brand, usability and measurement standards; data model and data integrations; responsive design, A/B/n testing and logic; and most critically, high-fidelity buyer profiling are all made agile within ion's interactive platform capability. This foundation approach shortens per-experience idea-to-launch time and significantly reduces hard, soft and opportunity costs.
- **Fewer Resources:** One-off interactive content development, whether by in-house or external resources, requires many disciplines and roles. Multidisciplinary web development is expensive in time, in hard costs and in opportunity costs from the lack of flexibility and reduced shelf life of manually coded experiences. ion's platform-based interactive content development reduces the number of cooks in the kitchen, accelerating idea-to-launch speed, and reducing hard, soft and opportunity costs.
- **Reduced Complexity:** The overall impact of ion's foundation-based, developer-free approach is radically reduced design, production and launch complexity. This simplification of highly sophisticated capabilities enables marketing and sales to move faster to differentiate and distance themselves from their competitors.



“ion's foundation-based approach brings more high-yield user experiences to market faster and with longer and more productive shelf lives.”





Hi-Fi Lead Profiling

ion's multi-touch interactive content journeys can do something that no other digital marketing can. They can engage people in an ongoing and very fruitful, digital dialogue. This exchange is mutually beneficial—with both the buyer and brand getting what they want... to find out if they are a good fit for each other.

The result of ion's digital dialogue is a high-fidelity buyer profile that takes shape faster and more accurately than inference-based profiles that have come before. Explicit buyer answers to explicit marketer questions form extremely accurate and reliable pictures of who people are and how they fit. This drastically reduces the uncertainty and inaccuracy that typically plague lead scoring and qualification programs.

Relevance Drives Results

This dialogue can only take place across and between multiple interactive experiences building upon ion's foundational high-fidelity buyer profile. Only ion's interactive platform can increase content relevance using the buyer profile to dynamically target and personalize based on prior interactions. Each experience in the chain can dynamically become more and more relevant, accelerating the buyer's interest-to-action cycle.

Sales' Understanding of the Digital Journey

One of the greatest tests of the quality of a buyer's journey is how it transitions between the buyer-directed digital portion and the brand-directed personal selling portion. This is often the achilles heel of the journey, where many buyers experience redundancy, frustration and friction. The key to making this transition smooth and productive—where momentum is actually gained, not lost—is for the sales person to have full, complete, contextual understanding of what the buyer has experienced and expressed digitally. This is easier said than done, as most marketing learning is communicated to sales as disconnected data points.

Because ion's interactive content platform has unique understanding and perspective across the buyer's multi-touch journey, it has the potential to surface highly valuable context. The high-fidelity buyer profile can be viewed by sales as a chronological timeline. Instead of surfacing what the buyer expressed as data points, it's surfaced in the context of how they expressed it. Instead of relying on sales to interpret and apply what was expressed by the buyer, marketing can provide response-specific coaching and talking points to make conversations smarter, shorter and better.

The end result of improving the inflection point between digital marketing and personal selling is accelerated lead-to-revenue. Significant efficiencies are also gained across sales with increased call volumes, higher hit rates and reduced waste.



“This foundation approach shortens per-experience idea-to-launch time and significantly reduces hard, soft and opportunity costs.”



Simplified, Unified Data Flow

Data strategy, flow and integration are reusable, reliable and predictable when built into the foundation of ion’s interactive content platform. A reusable, proven and tested data model enables individual interactive experiences to flawlessly exchange information within a marketing technology stack. The one-time effort that is invested in establishing a bulletproof relationship between content, logic and the buyer’s profile is leveraged again and again as experience after experience sits atop the foundation.

Benefits of a Centralized Data Strategy

In addition to reducing the per-experience cost, time, quality assurance and resource load, ion’s centralized data strategy delivers strategic and measurement benefits:

- **Centralize Core Requirements:** Interactive experiences are destined to generate results—shares/engagement, lead generation, demand generation, and so on. Virtually all digital outcomes produce data that must be measured, stored and leveraged for ongoing benefit. By centralizing core data requirements, ion’s platform provides the stable, predictable and consistent data foundation to support results across the buyer’s interactive journey.

- **Centralize Tags and Measurement:** Consistent, platform-enabled tagging means consistent measurement and relative and comparable performance metrics between experiences and campaigns. In some cases, this means focusing on consumption of content; consumption of specific hot-button content; tags associated with strong geo or industry indicators; and so on. Tags can be applied to virtually any action, counted and measured for insightful comparisons.
- **Centralize Performance Benchmarks:** Performance is rarely relevant in a vacuum. Meaning is typically drawn from comparison between experiences, campaigns and time periods. ion's interactive experience platform measures performance consistently—enabling meaningful relative comparisons, effective A/B/n testing and highly confident decision making.
- **Centralize Integrations:** The movement of data between systems in a marketing technology stack often means the difference between success and failure. ion's platform centralizes those critical connections and builds them into its stable and reusable foundational infrastructure. The fundamentals—including which data is exchanged and how it's exchanged—are used over and over again by many interactive experiences.
- **Marketing Automation:** ion's platform integrates with all major marketing automation platforms—providing a stable, better together, bi-directional data flow to enable high-fidelity, real-time buyer profiling, segmentation, targeting and personalization. By building marketing automation integration into the foundation of the ion platform, all experiences built in the platform can leverage these powerful data relationships.
- **CRM:** ion's platform provides all major CRMs with the ion Sell-Side Timeline—giving sales lead-specific, contextual understanding of the lead's interactive journey—quizzes answered, self-assessments taken, solutions configured, budgets calculated—are all surfaced to the CRM and to sales to facilitate and accelerate the journey.
- **Data Append:** ion's platform can dynamically impact the buyer's interactive experience using over 1,200 code-free combinations of logic. This personalization can be driven by ion's internal buyer profiling, optionally augmented with external data append services that can instantaneously provide gender, industry, role and other data that can dynamically personalize the buyer's experience in real time.



Highest Quality User Experiences

ion's platform makes bespoke design and usability agile through centralization and standardization of the fundamentals. Brand, usability and true responsive design standards are part of the platform's foundation, enabling every experience built on top of them to be stunning to see and use.

- **Brand Standards:** The key to maintaining brand consistency is the centralization of the range of options available. ion's platform centralizes brand standards in themes at the foundational level. Experience-specific theme options are then limited to the range of choices defined in the centralized standards. Agile, decentralized experience creation is governed by these controls.
- **Usability Standards:** The key to making the user's experience consistently excellent and predictable is centralization of usability norms. ion's platform centralizes state-of-the-art user interface components that behave consistently across experiences. Exemplary usability norms are designed into every component. Each time one of those components is utilized in an experience, its feel, behavior and usability are governed by the centralized standards.
- **Responsive Design Standards:** It's not enough to simply have pages that render on all devices. Software-only, automatic responsive design lacks the human controls required of world-class interactive experiences. ion's platform centralizes and standardizes code-free, true responsive design controls—making bespoke, screen-specific content display feasible in every experience.

“Each experience in the chain can dynamically become more and more relevant, accelerating the buyer's interest-to-action cycle.”





Decentralized Content

To this point, we've been discussing the benefits of the centralization of foundational data, design and usability standards. Ironically enough, the biggest benefit of centralization is safe, reliable decentralization of the creation of individual interactive content experiences. Entire organizations can be empowered to produce engaging content atop the centralized foundation of standards—making them more agile, more competitive and more consistent.

Here are two examples—one marketing and one sales—of content decentralization driving organizational agility:

- A headquarter's marketing team creates an interactive infographic ideal for social sharing and engagement. Field marketing teams around the world then use that interactive experience as a template that they localize and deploy in their local regions. Headquarters is confident in the decentralized localization because of the platform's underlying data, brand and usability governance. As a result, the interactive infographic can be rapidly localized and deployed in hundreds of markets with great agility and confidence.
- A centralized marketing team creates a sales enablement crawl/walk/run buyer assessment to be used by sales reps. The assessment includes account-based selling personalization options that are designed for use by the individual rep. Sales reps around the world are provided with this assessment that they can then create, personalize and deploy in minutes for their personal selling.

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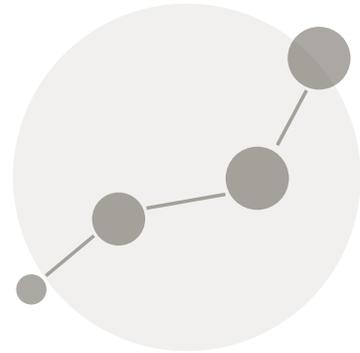




Interactive Journey Visualization

Understanding a prospect's interactive journey can be challenging. What they've done—clicks, downloads, views—has some value. But the real value is in how they've personally done it—budgets calculated, self assessment results, solutions configured, ROI estimates. Surfacing this much more explicit data exchange is a significant marketing-to-sales opportunity. Centralization of this sales-specific capability means that every interactive touchpoint is automatically included in a contextual and friendly graphical timeline.

Sales can use their instant access to a prospect's interactive journey to pick up a personal conversation right where the digital one left off. They can dive as deep as they want to into each buyer's explicit profile—with 100% fidelity with what they did and how they did it. And, rather than wading through a sea of unimportant data to get to the salient points, a prospect's timeline is contextual—showing the salesperson the prospect's data the way the prospect provided it. The result? Smarter conversations that produce revenue faster.



Centralized Performance Optimization

With centralized measurement standards comes the ability to compare and contrast results. A significant platform advantage is the capability to test interactive experiences against one another without additional tools and without development or code. Instead of guessing which experience is more effective, test it and know the answer. ion's platform provides the following A/B/n testing features:

- Unlimited point-and-click A/B/n testing of experiences
- Automatic (or manual) optimization of tests.
 - Configurable confidence interval 80-99%
- Testing-specific reporting gauges and metrics for monitoring and understanding results



Longer Lifetime Value

What is the lifetime of a web experience? In today's fast-moving, modern marketing environment, a state-of-the-art experience can feel pedestrian in months. Updating manually developed experiences is time consuming,

slow and expensive. Iterating within ion's platform is agile, fast and free. Enabling a culture of fluid, low-defect iteration extends the shelf life of the original investment from months to years.



Makeover Rather than Start Over

Versioning is a powerful but unrealistic concept in the hand-coded development world. The idea of running six or twenty versions of a hand-coded experience is fairly preposterous. Why? Because the ongoing cost and complexity of developing and maintaining those versions is extremely high. Neither of the two options is palatable: The first is to develop an experience and watch it quickly lose its value —forcing ROI justification in a very short window. The second option is to put good money after bad, constantly scrambling to keep pace in the face of market expectations outpacing development.

In ion's platform-driven world, evolution is an everyday capability. Copying and modifying experiences to keep pace with the state of the art can take minutes or hours rather than weeks or months. This means one interactive experience can easily evolve into many more micro experiences. It also means you can expect your ion experiences to live longer and more productive lives than their hand-coded predecessors. And that means higher ROI.



Fewer Defects, Faster Deployment

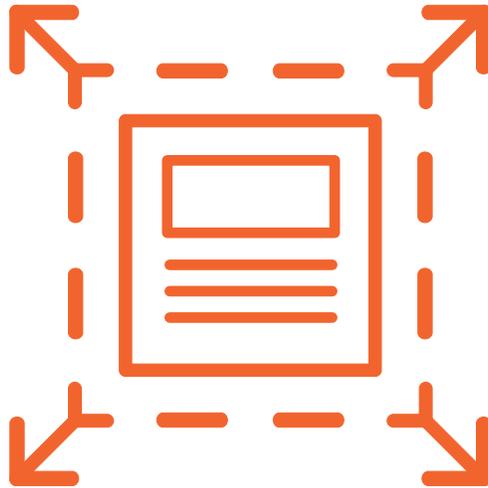
Modern marketers create software. Yes, that's a bold statement, but it's also true. Digital marketing is essentially one huge user experience with your brand. And unless you're back in the digital dark ages, that experience is driven by logic and data at every step. With logic and data come bugs, and bugs diminish the predictability of performance.

ion's platform centralizes and standardizes data and logic, resulting in fewer bugs. As importantly, the quality assurance and debugging processes with slow hand-coded development are far more agile in this standardized context. Over 1,200 combinations of powerful logic are available code-free. So instead of developers hand typing thousands of lines of script, complex, app-like logic is invoked through a code-free interface. Yes, code can be injected for those rare cases beyond the capabilities of the code-free logic. But, 90% of the time, even the most sophisticated use-case will be accommodated without code, bugs or headaches.

Fewer bugs in development mean fewer bugs for users. That translates to higher integrity user experiences that provide predictable performance for you.

“Enabling a culture of fluid, low-defect iteration extends the shelf life of the original investment from months to years.”





Flexible Types of Interactive Content

The buyer's interactive journey includes multiple touchpoints that require different types of interactions. Competitive differentiation depends on the modern marketer's ability to get and hold attention across the journey using engaging experiences. When each interaction builds on the last, the journey becomes stickier and less leaky—keeping buyers enthralled in your brand

experience instead of searching for another.

Unlike point solutions, ion's platform creates all types of interactive content. This capitalizes on the platform's brand, usability, data and feature infrastructure to deliver a more consistent, stickier and less leaky buyer's journey.



Interactive Infographics



Interactive White Papers



Calculators



eBooks



Lookbooks



Quizzes



Games & Contests



Assessments



Configurators



Different Interactions for Different Purposes

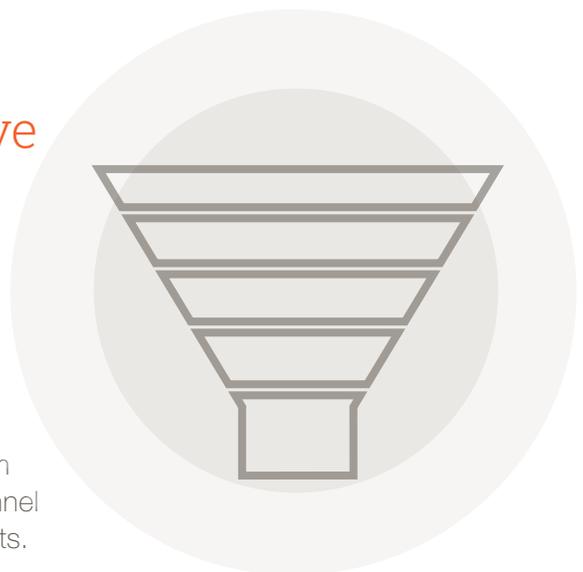
A captivated audience sticks around for more. Modern marketers tell their stories across engaging interactive infographics for social sharing; interactive eBooks for lead generation; self assessments for qualification and profiling; and solution configurators for demand generation. Pulling these disparate interactions into a captivating story told across many touchpoints starts with having all types of interactive content at your disposal.

ion's platform enables agile creation of all types of interactive content. Each is a tool in the journey and has its purpose—all come together to form a compelling story:

Type of Content	Primary	Secondary	Stage
Interactive Infographic	Social Sharing	Lead Generation	Early/Middle
Interactive White Paper	Education	Lead Generation	Middle/Late
Calculator	Lead Qualification	Demand Generation	Middle/Late
eBook	Education	Lead Generation	Early/Middle
Lookbook	Education	Social Sharing	Early
Quiz	Social Sharing	Education	Early/Middle
Game	Social Sharing	Lead Generation	Early
Assessment	Lead Qualification	Demand Generation	Middle/Late
Configurator	Lead Qualification	Demand Generation	Middle/Late

“Sales can use their instant access to a prospect’s interactive journey to pick up a personal conversation right where the digital one left off.”

The capability for marketers to deliver a cohesive digital journey that tells a compelling story, begins with a platform approach. Marketers must be empowered to focus on funnel performance rather than production or resource constraints.





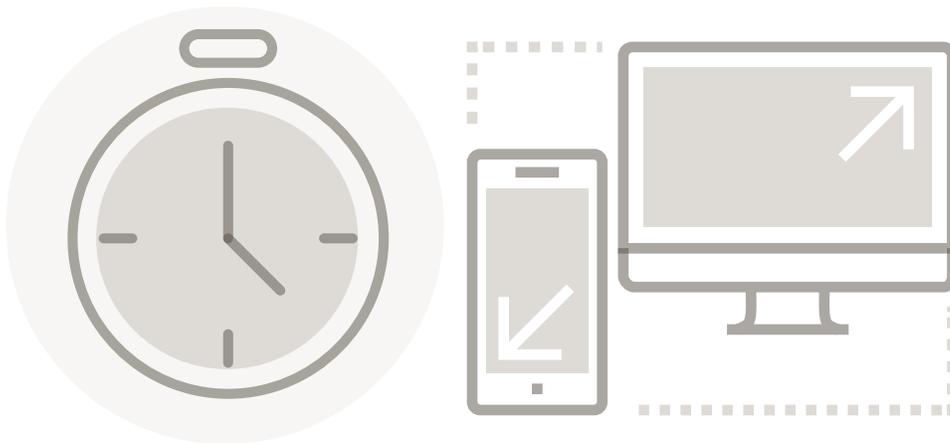
Prefabrication to Shorten Launch Times

The technical obstacles to agile production of interactive content are overcome with the platform's foundation. But, without a head start, creative and strategic obstacles can keep marketers from achieving their goals.

ion's platform includes prefabricated interactive content experiences that can be fully customized and launched in a fraction of the time it would take to create them from scratch. Most critical for marketers, these prefabricated experiences are state-of-the-art—with new ones being released into the ion platform on a weekly basis, ensuring ongoing market innovation and competitive leadership.

Using ion's Quick Start templates, marketers need only know what they want to accomplish—social sharing, lead generation, lead qualification, sales enablement, demand generation, etc. From there, they choose a Quick Start, customize it as much or as little as they like, add their content and launch—fast.

The productization of design, usability and utility puts interactive content marketing in easy reach of all digital marketers—not just those with wide and deep creative development teams.



Flexible Distribution

Much of this white paper has focused on the creation and testing of interactive content experiences. Ultimately, distribution of these experiences has a great deal to do with their success or failure. They need traffic in order to perform.

Many interactive experiences are limited to either embedded or standalone use cases—meaning, you either need to run them inside an existing web page (your website) or as a microsite. ion's platform supports flexible usage as embedded and standalone using the same *truly responsive* experience. This means maximum exposure for your most desirable and effective content.



Summary

A platform approach provides an organization with the capability to be interactive in all of its digital marketing. It lays a reliable data, brand, usability and technical foundation on which an unlimited number of highly engaging experiences can be launched, tested and measured with great agility.

Unlike hand-coded development, platform-based interactive experiences require no code and none of the quality assurance and resource-intensive headaches that go along with it. And because all experiences share a common, consistent foundation, they all relate to one another—enabling progressive relevance that drives velocity and results.

Another significant barrier to interactive content success is a lack of creative and strategic resources. Prefabrication of state-of-the-art experiences is built into the platform—empowering all levels of digital marketers to tap the power of highly sophisticated and differenti-

ated interactivity. Prefabrication significantly reduces the resources and calendar time required to bring interactive experiences to market.

Without a shared platform, one-off interactive content development is arduous, inconsistent, disconnected, slow and expensive. Maintenance and iteration are harder and more costly, making shelf lives shorter and ROI lower.

Data, integrations, brand, usability and utility are fundamentally designed into the underlying foundation of ion's platform. Every experience produced using that shared foundation benefits with elegant design, consistent usability, reliable and predictable data flow, speed to market and progressive relevance. The time and resources required to succeed with a platform-based interactive journey are far lower than one-offs—making ROI and performance significantly higher. That is the competitive advantage that an interactive capability provides.



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