



Navigating Migration Challenges and Streamlining Content for Site Consolidation Projects

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JAKALA

It's great to see you!



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Agenda

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Challenges of Site Consolidation

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Lessons & Takeaways



Scattered, Incoherent, Ineffective

- ◆ Evolve in silos
- ◆ Compete in search rankings
- ◆ Inaccurate information
- ◆ Messaging inconsistent

Users lose interest with the brand, are frustrated and have trouble finding what they need.



The Trend of Consolidation

Organizations are increasingly consolidating multiple websites into a single unified site for several key reasons

Stronger Brand Identity

A single, well-structured site reinforces trust and credibility by presenting a cohesive brand presence rather than fragmented experiences.

SEO & Digital Performance

A single site concentrates all domain authority instead of spreading it across multiple sites, improving search rankings.

Cost Efficiency & Maintenance

A centralized strategy reduces the effort required to update and manage content across multiple sites.

When Does Site Consolidation Make Sense?

- ◆ When multiple sites serve overlapping audiences or content.
- ◆ When brand fragmentation is causing confusion or inefficiencies.
- ◆ When managing content and updates across multiple sites is becoming unsustainable.
- ◆ When SEO performance and domain authority need to be strengthened.
- ◆ When a brand expands services/acquires companies and needs to accelerate time-to-market, ensure brand consistency and avoid siloed experiences.



WELL, YOU MADE A CAMEL.

Stakeholder Alignment

In all projects, stakeholder alignment is important. In consolidation projects, it's paramount. A project purpose statement is a tool to define a north star vision.

Sample Framework

We want to _____ *the goal* so that _____ *the outcome*

because _____ *the challenge*.

We will know we have succeeded when _____

_____ *measurable impact*.

Example Project Purpose Statement

We want to migrate **[client project] content to co-exist with static marketing content** so that we can **better integrate content into a consistent customer journey**.

We want to become the **industry standard for knowledge** and give customers a **seamless experience** by fusing content into commerce and commerce into content.

We know we will have succeeded when the static and **[client project] content leverages a unified tech stack** and **enables the content strategy and architecture** to be streamlined, cohesive and engaging.

Challenges of Consolidation



Lack of Content-First Thinking

Many consolidations focus on technology first, leaving content as an afterthought. Without a clear content plan, issues emerge post-migration.



Technical Debt from Legacy Systems

Sites often carry years of technical debt—outdated CMS versions, custom code, and workarounds—that must be addressed before a successful migration.



Fragmented Content Strategies

Without a unified content approach, different sites develop their own structures, making consolidation difficult and requiring extensive content audits.



SEO & Redirect Challenges

Improper redirect planning can lead to broken links, lost rankings, and fragmented authority, negatively impacting search visibility and traffic.



Inconsistent Content Models

Different sites often have unique structures, taxonomies, and metadata, making it difficult to unify content without extensive mapping and restructuring.



Poor Authoring Experience

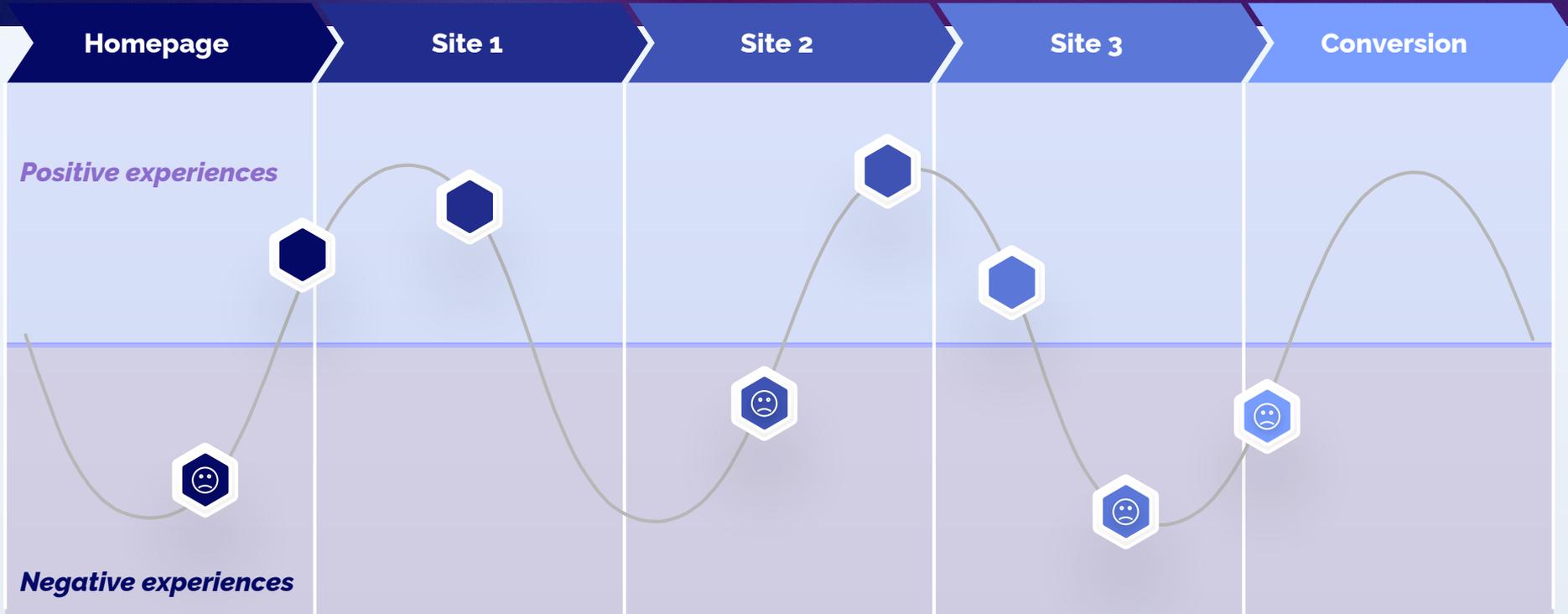
Content editors often struggle with new workflows, permissions, and interfaces, leading to inefficiencies and frustration.

Lessons in the real world

Successful site consolidation goes beyond merging domains—***it requires a strategic approach that prioritizes content structure, governance, and the user experience to craft a new experience.***

- ✦ Planning the UX
- ✦ Mapping Your Content Model
- ✦ Preserving SEO & Redirects
- ✦ Reducing Technical Debt

Learning 1: Planning the UX – Start with the End in Mind



Defining UX Goals

When consolidating websites with different goals, it's crucial to identify unifying factors that create a seamless user experience.

- ◆ **Content Strategy:** UX goals define what content should be prioritized or removed.
- ◆ **Information Architecture:** Navigation should align with user needs, not internal structures.
- ◆ **Taxonomy & Searchability:** Search and taxonomy strategies should make content easy to discover.
- ◆ **Editorial Experience:** Authors need intuitive tools and workflows to maintain a good user experience.

Prioritizing Findability

If users can't easily locate critical resources now, it will only get harder as the site expands. Organize based on how users search, not department silos.

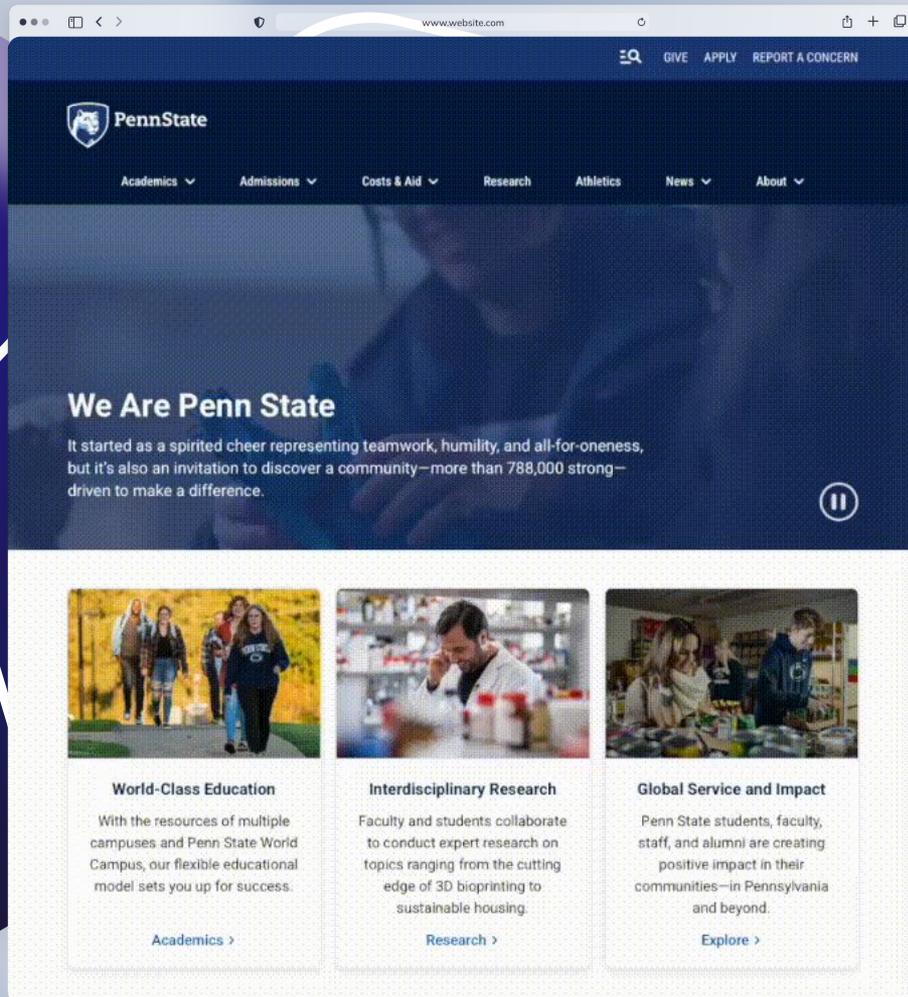


- ◆ **Use a Flexible, Modular Structure:** Design an IA that accommodates new content and sections without disrupting the existing framework.
- ◆ **Keep Navigation Clean & Predictable:** Avoid overloading the menu with too many layers or categories; simplify choices so users can scan and decide quickly.
- ◆ **Standardize Naming Conventions:** Consistent, user-friendly labels improve clarity and prevent confusion as more sites and content are added.
- ◆ **Leverage Taxonomy & Search Effectively:** A well-defined tagging system and robust search functionality ensure that users can locate content even as the site scales.

Unifying Enrollment

Encapsulate key touchpoints and experiences across channels that a prospective student encounters when researching the Institution. By consolidating websites we were able to create a dynamic user experience that guides users through the process and personalizes their experience along the way.

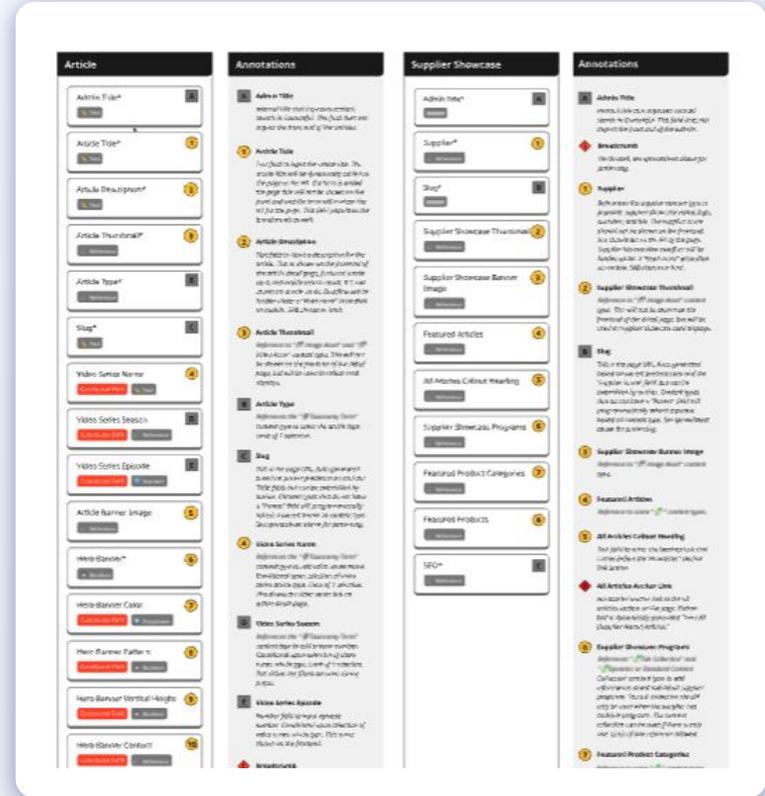
- Content architected around key user journeys.
- Focused on providing powerful search & filter to individualize the user experience.
- Consistent navigation & design system
- Enhances marketing campaigns through consistent experiences & personalization tactics



Lesson 2: Holistic Content Modeling

As you consolidate multiple sites into one experience, it can be tempting to create a model that fits all of the legacy types of content and the editor's existing process. This will create content debt and a redundant model that is cumbersome rather than scalable. Don't do that. Instead, ***evaluate the entire body of content from all of the merging sites and create a holistic structure that is aligned with what the user needs from your content.*** From there, streamline the editing and governance approach. By doing this, you'll be able to:

- Reduce Cognitive Load
- Enable Content Reusability
- Support Scalability & Future Growth
- Streamline Editorial Workflows
- Enable design iteration and visual evolution of content presentation



Structuring Your Content

So how do you actually do that? You have to raise your perspective to the 30,000 foot view and work back down to the weeds.



- ◆ **Start with inventory of all relevant content** so you understand what exists and how you've been communicating across all of the sites to the user.
- ◆ **Audit the entire body of content** against user needs to identify how and where it fits, along with identifying any gaps in the information users are looking for.
- ◆ **Scrutinize the *structure* of the content needs.** You may have news articles, blogs and article across all of the sites. Is there room in the consolidated model for all three?
- ◆ **Consider the nuance:** Once you understand the body of content and how it aligns with the user needs, now you move back into the weeds to ensure each type of content has the appropriate fields, configuration and related workflows and governance.

Preserving SEO & Redirects



Define URL Strategy

Mapping old URLs to new ones is critical to maintain SEO equity.

Avoid conflicts where multiple sites have the same URLs merging into one.

Consistency in URL structure helps with usability and findability.



Redirect Strategy

Ensure users and search engines are properly redirected.

Prevent broken links and negative SEO impacts.



User Considerations

Many users start their journey from Google or organic search, determine where users should land and if they are able to get to other relevant pages in their journey.

Lesson 3: Preserving SEO & Redirects



One of the biggest risks of site consolidation is losing search traffic due to poor SEO and URL planning. Without a solid strategy, sites can experience ranking drops, broken links, reduced traffic and a negative impact on user experience.



www.sitename.com/about
www.sitename.com/about2
www.sitename.com/about3



www.sitename.com/about/company
www.sitename.com/about/department
www.sitename.com/about/program

Creating SEO-Friendly URLs & Redirects



Keep URLs Short & Descriptive

Avoid long, complex URLs; use concise, keyword-rich paths that clearly indicate page content.

Minimize URL Depth

Keep URLs user-friendly, avoiding excessive subdirectories that create complexity.

Use a Logical Hierarchy

Structure URLs to reflect the site's information architecture, making navigation intuitive for users and search engines.

Avoid Unnecessary Parameters & Numbers

Dynamic URL parameters can create indexing issues; where possible, use static, readable URLs.

Standardize Naming Conventions

Avoid inconsistent paths by using a structured approach to categories, subpages, and resources.

Test & Validate URL Structures

Use tools like Google Search Console and Screaming Frog to check for duplicate, broken, or overly complex URLs before launch.

SEO & URL Mapping

A major university consolidated its flagship website and standalone news platform to enhance content discoverability, SEO, and user experience. The fragmented structure was causing duplication in stories across websites. By integrating news content into the main domain with a structured architecture, the project streamlined workflows, improved search rankings, and strengthened digital authority.

Critical Success Factors:

- Redirects for important URLs only to save the crawl budget
- Created SEO-friendly URL structure that could be easily applied and scaled over time
- Evaluated content and removed unnecessary or duplicative content
- Redesigned tagging system enabled dynamic content surfacing across key landing pages

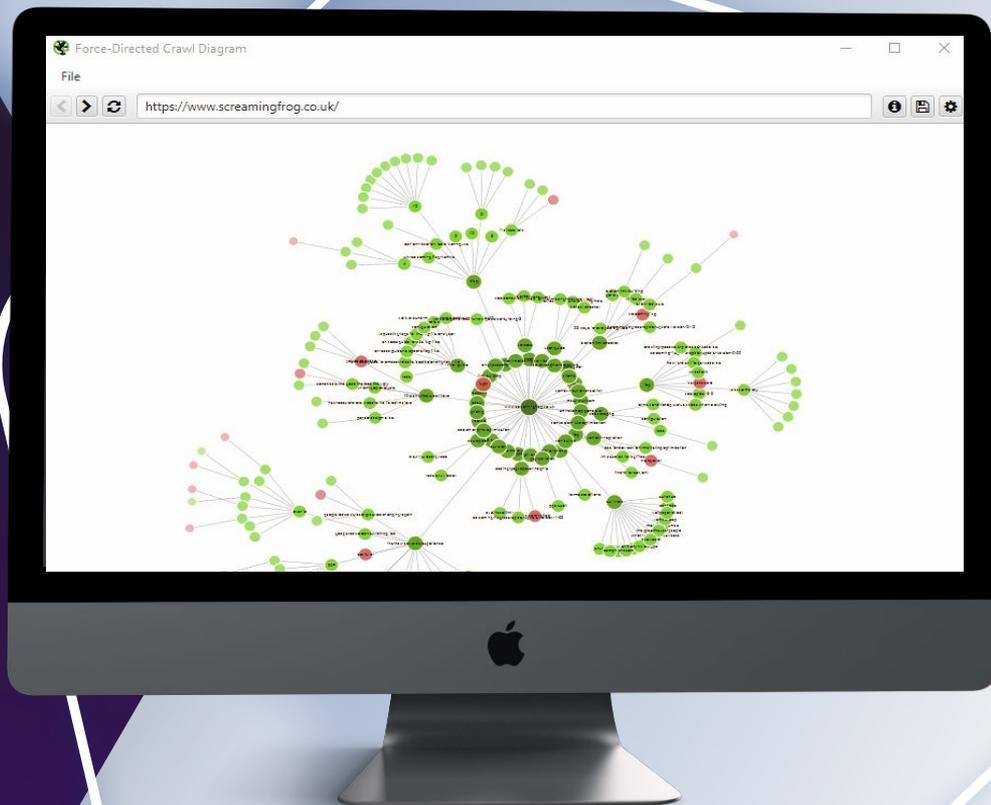


Image by screamingfrog.co.uk

Reduce Technical & Editorial Debt

Consolidation offers a fresh start to streamline technical infrastructure, release technical debt and improve feature solutions.



Stakeholder Alignment: Engage stakeholders early to set expectations on how the features align with the purpose of the project and related objectives

Documentation: Document all technical features with an understanding of how critical the functionality is to the project goals.

Validation: Identify features that only apply to a single site or use case and determine if it should be developed in the new website and if so, if it should retain the same solution.

Address Complexity & High Value: Address the most complex use cases early to identify challenges upfront. This will allow you to properly solution edge cases before migration begins and reduces the need to carry over technical debt.

Prioritize: Prioritize the use cases and recommended solutions, taking the opportunity to deprecate unnecessary functionality when possible.

Incremental or Phased Roll Out



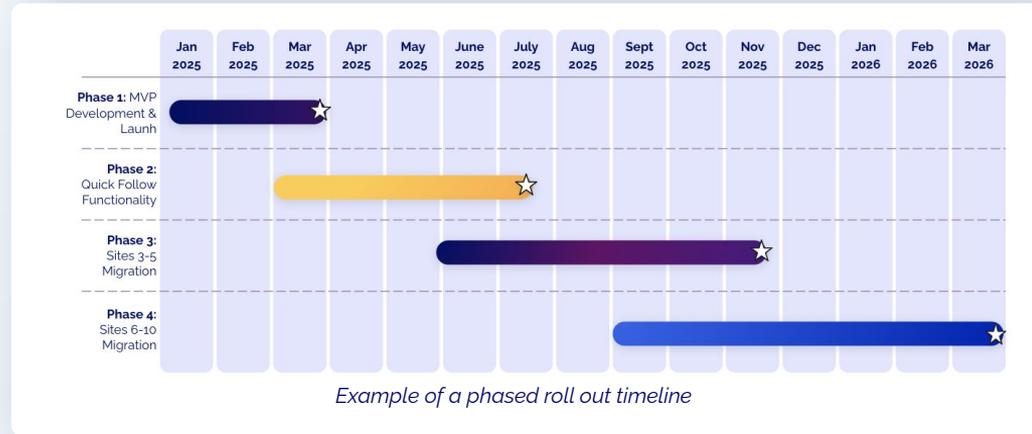
A phased rollout allows for controlled testing and refinement. Early adopters help uncover additional use cases before a full launch of the consolidated experience.

Editorial & Content Benefits

- Opportunity to establish governance and enforce editorial best practices.
- Ability to say no to unnecessary content types and workflows that create inefficiencies.
- Validate editorial assumptions and refine content strategies based on real-world application.

Technical & UX Gains

- Simplifies system architecture by consolidating disparate functionalities.
- Reduces technical debt by deprecating outdated or complex features.
- Improves site performance and long-term maintainability.



Stakeholder Review & Governance Framework

Strategic governance of the platform should be seen as an ongoing investment. While the commitment may decrease in needed effort, it should always be a priority. Without governance and continued strategic alignment, inconsistencies will creep back in post-launch.

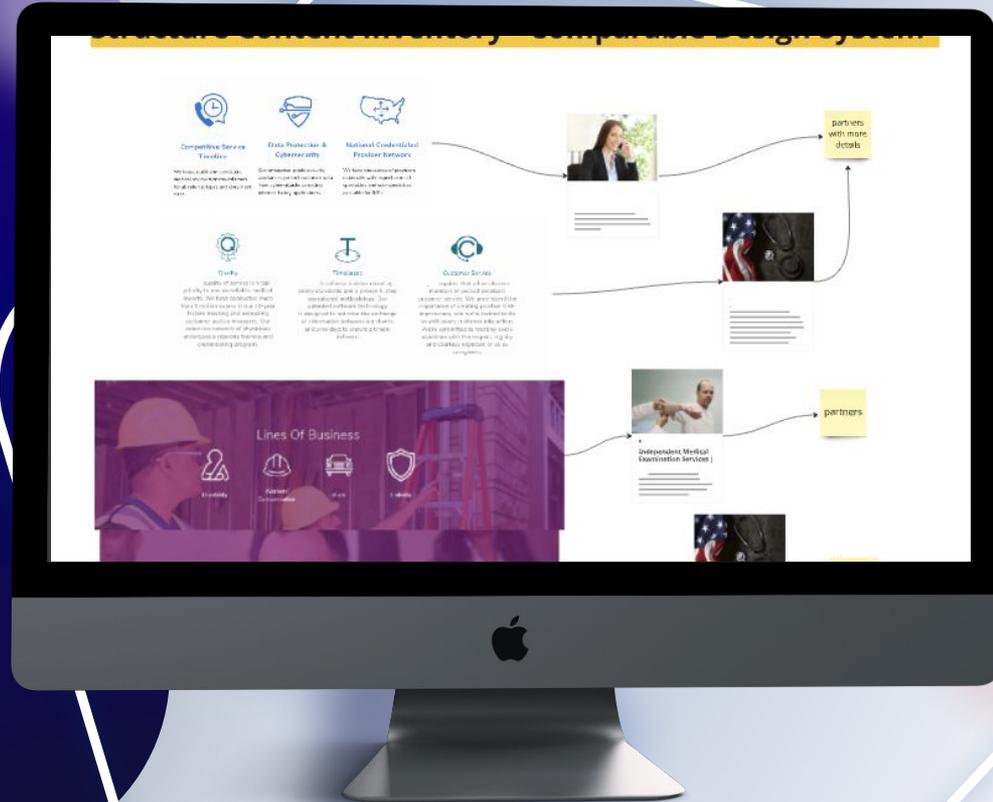
- ◆ Pair your project purpose statement with a routinized governance process with the core stakeholders to address the grey areas of the project.
- ◆ Leveraging a governance council or advisory group has proven to be beneficial in many organizations.
- ◆ Craft guardrails for when and how future features, functionality and content structure updates should be made (both introduction and deprecation).

Consolidating Acquisitions

The acquisition strategy of a large technology company requires a concerted effort to bring acquired organizations and digital platforms into the primary tech stack. **Each platform is evaluated against the existing features and functionality, content structure and design system.** The output of this activity is the categorization of user stories:

1. Content and functionality will be updated to fit the primary site.
2. The primary site will be minimally adapted to accommodate high priority content and functionality.
3. The primary site will be extended to support new types of content and/or functionality.

This repeatable process allows a timeline and strategic consolidation of sites.



What Will Your Consolidation Success Look Like?

1

What's the biggest challenge holding your organization back from a seamless consolidation?

2

Who are the **key stakeholders** who should be involved now and throughout the project?

3

How can you align your teams now to prevent **future fragmentation**?



Download the Slides

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TOGETHER **TO GET THERE**

Thank you.

