BE A CMS HERO:

HOW TO USE A WEB CMS TO ACHIEVE ADORATION, FAME AND ROI

Introduction to the Characters

Octavius

@OctaviusCapstone
Founder and CEO of @CapstoneMedieval

📍 Everywhere

🔗 CapstoneMedieval.com

🕐 Joined February 1403

Augustus

@AugustusITCapstone
Your Favorite IT Guy @CapstoneMedieval

📍 At Work

🔗 CapstoneMedieval.com

🕐 Joined March 1399

Magdalena

@MagdalenaMarketingCapstone
Web content manager @CapstoneMedieval

📍 Deep within our website

🔗 CapstoneMedieval.com

🕐 Joined June 1399

A Chance Encounter

Once upon a time, in a nearby strip mall, stood a glorious two-story office building. The building served as the medieval headquarters for Capstone, a fictional company that forms the basis of this fairy tale. Capstone had a problem: website updates took forever to implement. As a result, their site content was outdated, inaccurate and just plain stagnant.

Meanwhile, their competitors had dynamic and fresh websites with recent news, the latest product information, and customer galleries. The result? Strong market share gains for the competition and dwindling sales for Capstone.

Octavius, King of Capstone, knew this could go on no further. You see, Capstone's products and services were better than the competition. It's just that very few people knew this, because Capstone's website was out of date.

Ocatvius was well aware of the fundamental challenge. Capstone was comprised of a number of fiefdoms. One fiefdom was called "Marketing," and another was "IT." The fiefdoms often stepped on each other's toes. IT said marketing was too demanding, and Marketing said IT ignored their requests. Not only did this cause painful feet, it also meant updating the website took eons.

Octavius had a plan to bring peace and unity to the fiefdoms. He hatched a plan to bring the leaders of the two fiefdoms together in a neutral setting, where they could work out their differences. He sent Magdalena from the Marketing fiefdom down to the Capstone cafeteria for lunch. Then he called Augustus from the IT fiefdom and also directed him right down to the cafeteria. Octavius hoped that Marketing and IT would find harmony, while enjoying the daily special (goulash).

Magdalena and Augustus arrived at the cafeteria line at the same time and nodded at one another. They both ordered goulash (Augustus had two helpings) and then went their own ways to find seats. Strangely, all seats were taken, except for a cozy, two-person table by the window. Magdalena and Augustus looked at one another across a sea of occupied tables, resigned to sharing the only table available. Little did they know, their chance encounter had been staged!
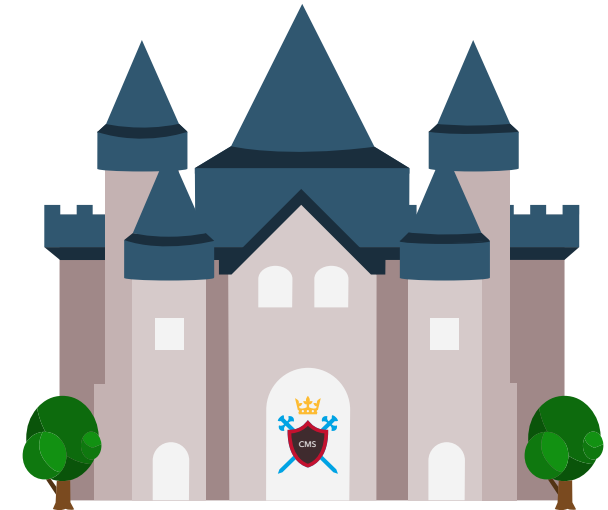
A Strategic Plan over Goulash

Capstone was so large that Magdalena and Augustus had never met! They discovered a shared love of goulash. Turns out Augustus handled the majority of Magdalena's website requests. Augustus had an overwhelming workload. Not only did he handle requests logged in Capstone's trouble ticketing system, he also forged and sharpened tools, raised and trained Octavius' hawks, and produced wooden joists and beams.

"If only we had computer software that could help us automate our website updates," said Magdalena in dismay. "Then we could really show customers how much better we are than the competition!" Suddenly, a light bulb went off in Augustus' head. He nearly tossed his cookies and his goulash. He remembered reading about Content Management System (CMS) software that could be used to manage and maintain websites.

"Let's get a CMS for the website," replied Augustus, with mouth full. "I install it, you use it. The marketing fiefdom can take full control of maintaining the website content," continued Augustus. Hereupon known as "Plan Goulash," Magdalena scratched the following on the back of a napkin:

1. Deploy a Content Management System.

2. Empower the Marketing fiefdom to manage the website on their own.

3. Free the IT fiefdom to pursue more strategic projects.

4. Earn the admiration of Octavius.

5. Win more customers than the competition.

PLAN Goulash

Magdalena's Plan: Empower the Entire Organization

Magdalena walked back to her desk with a wide smile. Colleagues thought it was the handsome man from the cafeteria. Others thought it was the goulash. Only Magdalena knew it was something much bigger: CMS software would turn their website into a strategic, competitive weapon.

Magdalena's Metrics

Magdalena was metrics-driven. On the other side of the same napkin, she wrote down the top metrics to track before and after deploying a CMS:

1. Average turnaround time for a website update

2. Number of website updates per week

3. Number of page views per week

4. Number of unique visitors per week

5. Percentage of website visitors who convert into a lead

6. Revenue (bookings) sourced from the website

Supporting Multiple Authors

Next, Magdalena thought about all of the people who contribute content to the website:

1. Marketing

2. Sales

3. Product Management

4. Support

5. Engineering

6. Human Resources

7. Falconry

Today, these contributors email Magdalena requesting a page update. If the request is okay as is, Magdalena asks IT to make the change. If there is anything amiss, Magdalena asks requesters to make the necessary changes and re-submit their request.

Content Updates and Workflow

Magdalena decided that giving certain fiefdoms control over website sections would empower those fiefdoms, while taking some workload off Marketing. She decided that:

- Sales and Finance would manage the "Pricing" section

- Support and Client Services would manage the "Support" section

- Human Resources would manage the "Careers" section

- Product Management would manage the "Products" section

- Marketing would manage the home page, "About," "Resources" and "Blog." In addition, Marketing would be responsible for the overall experience: information architecture, branding elements, user journey and more.

(That's right! Blogs existed in medieval times.)

Magdalena recognized that she needed a system of checks and balances. For instance, Sales could manage the Pricing section of the site, but Magdalena didn't want an innocent error from a sales intern to cause a 50%

decrease in pricing. If that happened, Octavius would proclaim, "No goulash for you!"

Magdalena created role-based workflow approvals. Within each fiefdom, CMS users would be assigned "contributor" and "approver" roles. In Sales, interns and sales reps could contribute content, but all updates are approved by the Director or VP of Sales.

Similarly, in Human Resources, the HR Manager could update content, but the VP Human Resources needed to approve all content. For Marketing, both Magdalena and her boss were designated as approvers.

Support & Client Services

Human Resources

Marketing

$ Sales & Finance

Product Management

Page Templates to Make Website Management More Efficient

Magdalena believed in creating efficiencies. She knew that she could save time and effort by creating re-usable website templates. In order to do so, she insisted that Augustus review CMS vendors' ability to create and manage page templates.

Then, Magdalena created three page templates for the main sections of the website. The three templates would apply to the following sections of the site:

1. Careers, About

2. Pricing, Products, Support, Resources

3. Blog

Magdalena believed the templates would yield a 10x decrease in the time needed to create a new web page and that marketing could make new pages without help from IT! Right now, only Augustus could add pages in a four-step process:

1. Copy an existing page

2. Apply the change (via coding of HTML)

3. Make styling changes (HTML and CSS)

4. Test the new page on a staging server

With a CMS, Augustus would not need to do any of that and would have 10x more time to work on higher impact projects: you know, the sorts of things that will get Octavius to sit up and take notice!
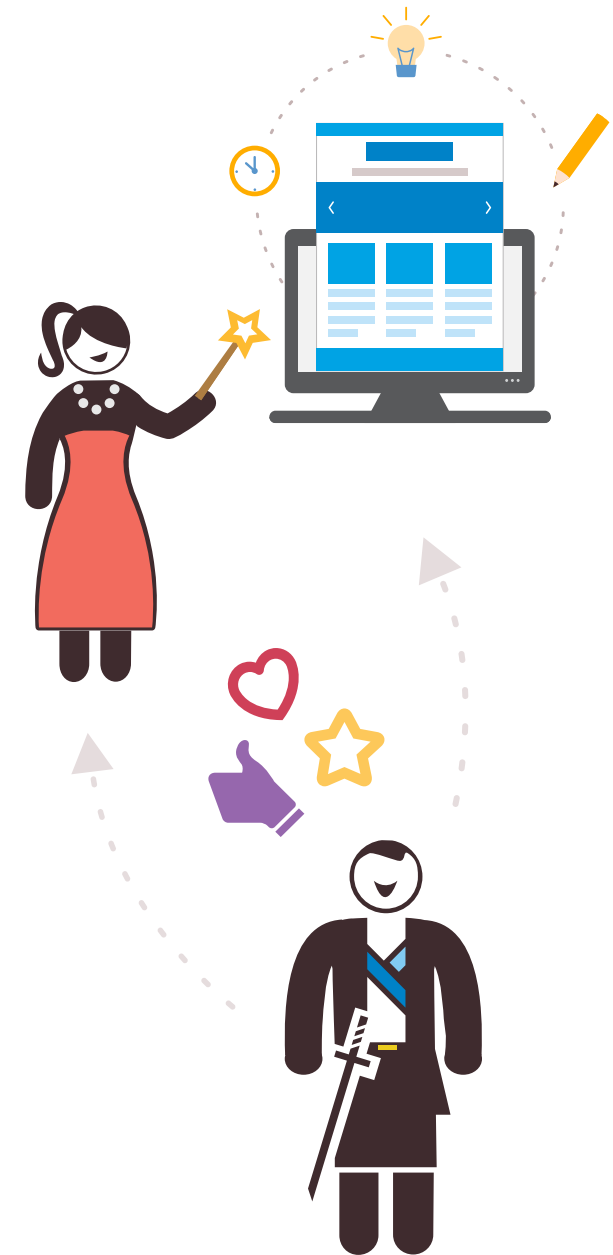
Augustus' Plan:
Select & Deploy the Right Solution

While Magdalena walked back from lunch with a wide smile, Augustus' expression was more of a grin. While a CMS could make life easier, Augustus knew that he'd need to find a **flexible** solution that he could mold to fit Magdalena's needs and the larger needs of Capstone.

If the CMS was rigid and non-intuitive, Augustus would be no better off. And what's worse, he'd have to face the wrath of Octavius, after having wasted the King's hard-earned money on useless software. Here is how Augustus approached the CMS evaluation process:

Try Before You Buy

Augustus saw his role as providing technical validation behind the vendors' claims. For example, a vendor may claim to meet all of Magdalena's requirements. To validate those claims, Augustus could start a free trial of the vendor's CMS solution. He'd then report back to Magdalena who might, in turn, bring him a bowl of goulash.

Software Delivery Options

Augustus would determine how to deploy the

CMS within Capstone. Because he already had enough infrastructure to worry about (servers, firewalls, joists, beams and falcons), Augustus needed the CMS to be delivered "on-demand." In other words, he wanted a fully managed service, which required **zero** infrastructure from Capstone. Augustus would eliminate vendors who could not provide their solution on-demand.

Scope and Assess Integration Needs

In reviewing vendors' solutions, Magdalena and Augustus determined that they'd take advantage of the standard set of features, without the need to customize. Customization sapped far too much resource from Capstone's IT department. There was one mandate from Octavius, however: the website must be integrated to the Capstone's proprietary order management system. That way, Capstone visitors could purchase products and services directly on the website.
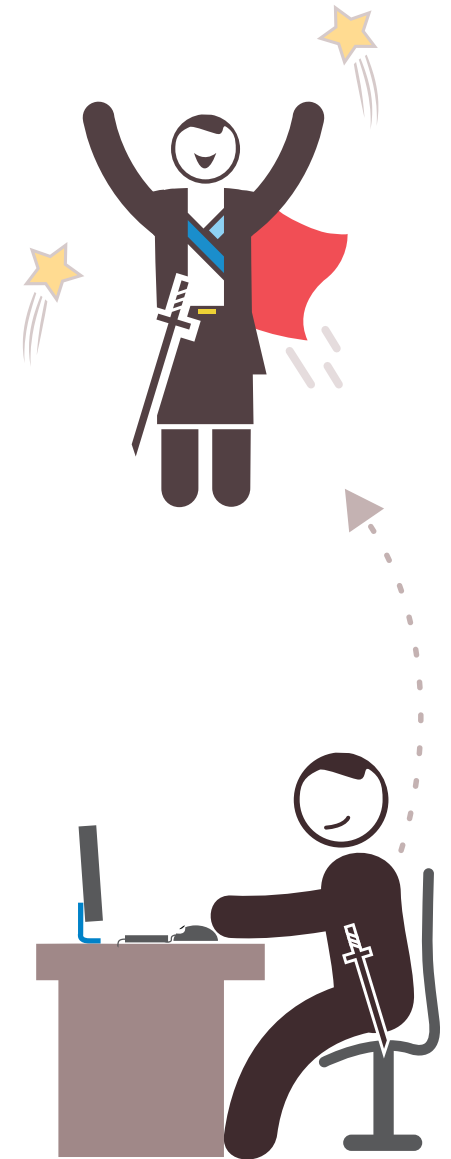
Given this requirement, Augustus spent extra time with each prospective vendor, to determine how to integrate with his order management system. He concluded that the best solution was having the vendor provide an API (Application Programming Interface). Using the API, Augustus could build a tool that passed data from the website to the order management system (and back).

The Launch!

Over the next few months, Magdalena and Augustus met for lunch once a week, sitting at the same table by the window. Mostly, they compared notes on the CMS vendor evaluation and implementation. At times, the conversation would briefly stray to their personal lives and common interest in the history of jousting lances. Yes, Magdalena and Augustus were falling for each other.

Internal Project Launch

Here's the timeline they worked against:

1. Final selection of CMS vendor (1 week)

2. Deployment and configuration of the on-demand CMS solution (2-3 weeks)

3. Creation of website templates (1-2 weeks)

4. Training of the content contributors (2 weeks, to happen in parallel with step 3)

5. Migration of existing web pages into the new templates (1 week)

6. New website review with Octavius (1 week – that's right, the review took an entire week)

7. "Reveal" of the new website at the company's All Hands Meeting (1 day)

Rave Reviews

"The new page templates give our site a modern look and feel. It's as if we've matured beyond the Stone Age."

-- Mathilda from Finance

"We implemented a 15% price increase today and our website already reflected this. That never used to happen before. No more explaining to Octavius why I undercharged!"

-- Maximilian from Sales

"We're set to launch Capstone Builder v2.1 next week. I have our product page updates ready to go. When we deploy the new release, the website will be updated at the same time. Can you believe it?"
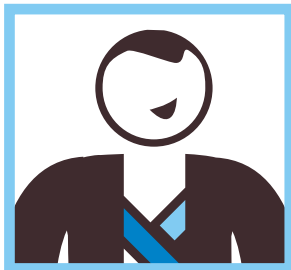
-- William from Product Management
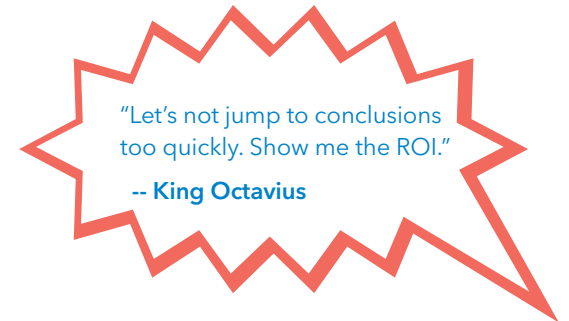
"Let's not jump to conclusions too quickly. Show me the ROI."

-- King Octavius

"Tastes great. Less filling!"

-- Augustus from IT

External Launch!

One week after the All Hands meeting, Magdalena and Augustus launched the new website to the public. They changed the DNS (Domain Name System) settings on their website, to point web traffic to the fully managed service from their CMS vendor. Magdalena coordinated an email blast to Capstone's customer list, announcing the new website and inviting all customers to visit.

Magdalena selected a web analytics solution that integrated with the CMS, giving her metrics and insights she never before had. Not only could she track views and visits, she could also measure things like time on site, pages per session and conversions.

Customers, partners and prospects noticed the newly designed and modern-looking site. Prospects could quickly find the information they needed. Octavius received a number of phone calls from customers, who congratulated him on the new site.

Going forward, content on the site would always be fresh and current.

Six Months Later...

It's amazing what can happen in six short months. Website traffic surged and leads increased. More importantly, sales exceeded targets and Capstone saw rapid gains in market share.

Within Capstone, the perception of both Marketing and IT were elevated. Now, Marketing and IT were invited to join Octavius' weekly staff meetings. And guess who represented their fiefdoms? Our CMS heroes, Magdalena and Augustus. Using six months of metrics, they presented the following results at Octavius' staff meeting:

1. Average turnaround time for a website update: down from 4.5 days to 2 hours

2. Number of website updates per week: up from 4.7 to 21.2

3. Number of page views per week: up from 69,000 to 551,000

4. Number of unique visitors per week: up from 19,500 to 101,100

5. Percentage of website visitors who convert into a lead: up from 1.5% to 5.7%

6. Revenue (bookings) sourced from the website: up from $15,500/month to $101,400/month
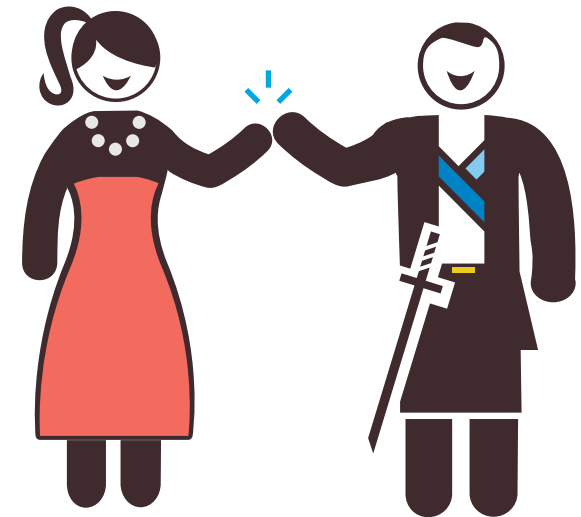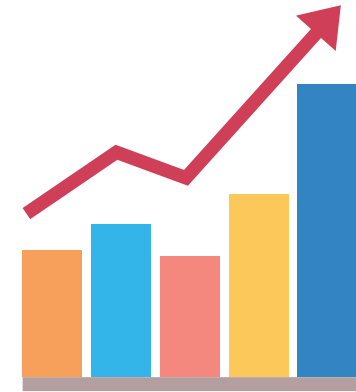
In addition to the website metrics, Augustus shared the following:

1. IT time spent on website updates: down from 20 hours/week to ZERO

2. Number of strategic projects IT is engaged in: up from 1 per quarter to 5 per quarter

3. IT approval rating, via internal surveys: up from 45% to 80%

At the next All Hands meeting, Ocatvius announced the creation of The Ocatvius Award, awarded annually to the employees who made the largest impact on Capstone. The inaugural Octavius Award (of course!) went to Magdalena and Augustus. And it included a lifetime's supply of goulash.

The Moral of the Story

What's the moral of this story? It's simple, really:

1. Your website is a strategic asset and competitive weapon. Treat it like one.

2. When Marketing and IT collaborate, they both win.

3. Use a CMS to empower your entire organization to contribute to your website.

4. Leverage the features provided by a CMS (e.g. workflow, templates, etc.) to create

efficiencies in website management.

5. Working together, Marketing and IT can become CMS heroes. Scratch that: they can become **SUPERHEROES**.

About DNN

DNN provides a suite of solutions for creating rich, rewarding online experiences for customers, partners and employees. DNN products and technology are the foundation for 750,000+ websites worldwide. In addition to our commercial CMS and social community solutions, DNN is the steward of the DNN Platform Open Source Project.

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