

A **White Paper** by Percussion Software, Inc.



LIVE IN FIVE:
Changing the definition of going live to
drive faster results

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LiveFirst Methodology and Technology

About 75% of the Marketing professionals we speak to are somewhat to extremely dissatisfied with their websites, but feel stuck due to the traditional high cost associated with implementing or migrating to a WCM. In the last two years, the most frustrating conversations we had were with people who loved the Percussion CMS and promise it held for giving marketing the ability to lower costs and drive revenue but who said “but I don’t have the budget for a migration project.” With LiveFirst, Percussion set out on the quest to remove this barrier.

The biggest challenge of moving to a new CMS is that you are forced to rebuild your site from scratch. Even if there are things you are happy with in your current website, such as your calls to action, or things that you’d prefer to leave alone, such as your old press releases, changing your CMS means needing to handle these as part of a new WCM implementation. With LiveFirst you don’t have to start over.

Percussion LiveFirst breaks this cycle.

Percussion focused on how to minimize the time and effort needed to migrate a site and go live. From this grew the LiveFirst technology and methodology which called for us to redefine what it means to “go live”. In the past going live meant months of effort starting from scratch by building out all your templates, designs, and governance practices, and moving all of your content before you could get to a point where a functioning site could be published. With LiveFirst, the new definition of go live is simply “get what you have today managed within a CMS and publish”. In other words, you can go live first, and from there you can use the CMS as the tool to help you redesign, fix what is broken with your website, and add new content as needed.

This approach is a revolution in how quickly you are able to get value out of your CMS. With LiveFirst you can start to improve your site immediately after import. The work to get value out of your CMS can either be deferred or removed entirely

The biggest challenge of migration is that a new CMS means starting over.

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Continuous, Proven, Agile

The first step to making this happen was bringing in an existing site without a loss of fidelity. Unlike scripting tools, this isn't just about migrating content. This included all aspects of the design including CSS, javascript files, background images, etc. Our objective was to pull your whole site in and be able to publish such that the transition would be absolutely seamless to a website visitor.

Live in Five

One of our early adopters went from kickoff to publishing their website live with their new website in just five days. They had just kicked off their project with a single training session on the Percussion CMS. They informed their old CMS and website host that they were going to be changing their CMS. Because their contract was up for renewal, that vendor responded by saying that the customer had to pay for another whole year of hosting or have their site shut down. They had seven days to pay or be shut down.

Using LiveFirst, they imported their existing site, made a few adjustments to their CSS, changed a few pages that had embedded web applications, and published -- going live in 5 days. Amazingly, the work was done by a single webmaster with basic HTML, CSS and Javascript skills. This scenario would have been absolutely impossible to achieve using any other technology or methodology.

What Comes Next

Once in our CMS, you can immediately start prioritizing what you want to do to improve your website. In the case of the customer above, they did the bare minimum to go live. They still have lots of work to create templates, change designs, modify navigation, etc., but now the work can be managed more effectively by using the CMS.

Below are some simple examples of things that LiveFirst allows you to do after go live that previously had to be done as part of site implementation:

Rebranding

Let's say your first objective is a rebranding effort. You want to change the look and feel of the site to use a new color palette, a new logo, new fonts, etc. Once your site is in Percussion, you can update the CSS to the new palette, change fonts, and upload and replace the logo. You can immediately see the new look and feel and QA for any unexpected negative impacts of the design.

Adding Dynamic Content

If your organization is frequently adding new PDFs and Docs to your site, and maintaining the index of those document has been a painful, manual effort, you can replace that page with a dynamic auto-list of files such that as soon as new files are uploaded the index displays them automatically.

Adding Calls-to-Action

You spend a lot of time and effort with SEO to drive people to your site, but you aren't capturing leads. You decide to add a "Demo Registration" form to each product page

to make sure that traffic is converting to leads. You can create a product page template using an existing page as a model, and add a form to capture leads to that template. You can then drag and drop the existing products page to that template and they'll be automatically updated with the new form.

Updating Information Architecture

You've built up lots of content over time and the site needs to be reorganized. Using Percussion, you can create your new information architecture and navigation and easily drag and drop pages to the new structure. All links are managed automatically so you don't have to worry about broken links. If you decide to remove pages, links to that content are removed as well.

New Design

You've decided to go in for the full project, hiring a design firm to upgrade the website design and IA. Lots of old content is going to get pitched and other content is going to need drastic modification to fit to the new design. The same tools that allow you to import your old website also allow you to import your design from your design firm and use it to model templates. To minimize the confusion in maintaining content in the current site and the new design, shared assets can be established so that content is updated once and replicated in both sites. Content can be merged from one design to another using some simple naming rules. Instead of being a barrier to redesign, Percussion helps facilitate the effort.

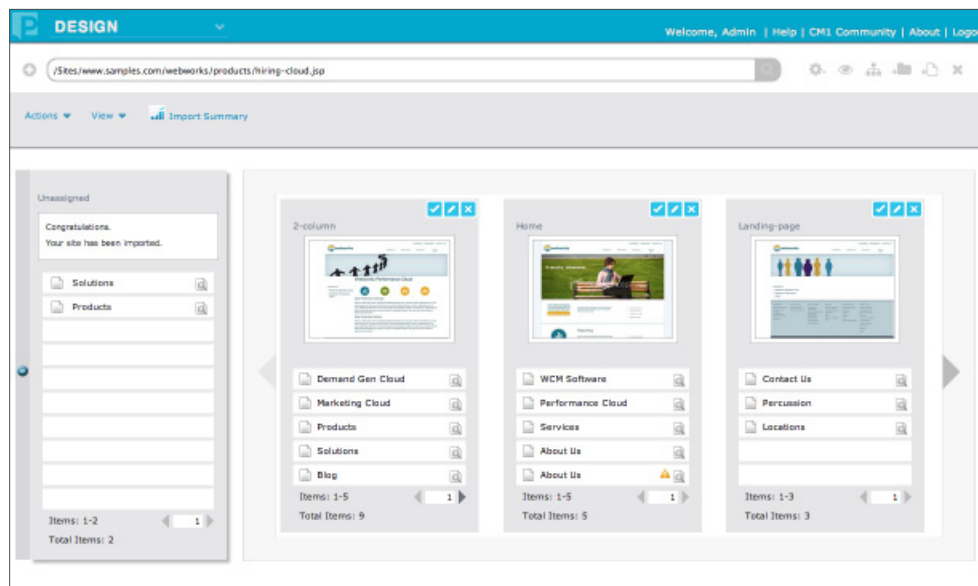
None of these projects call for you to do work that isn't critical to your marketing objectives. For example, if no one is ever going to edit old Press Releases, you can simply leave them alone and they will continue to work. You can add a new Press Releases template for any new content you want to add in the future, but don't have to worry about the busywork of modifying old pages.

How LiveFirst Works

As part of the import process a number of things happen to manage your site using the Percussion CMS. LiveFirst works by crawling your site and identifying the pages, CSS, javascript and other files that comprise your site. As pages are imported, they are saved using the same folder structure as they were found on your website. You can immediately preview any page to validate that it was imported correctly. Similarly for any CSS, javascript files, PDFs, DOCs, images, etc. relative folder structures are kept based on where the files were found in the original site. As these items are imported, the relationship structure becomes managed such that if you move pages or files, links to those items will be updated automatically.

Importing Metadata

The other critical activity that happens during import is the import of page metadata. Items such as the page title, Google Analytics code, inline scripts, and other items have been put in the appropriate place in Percussion. This ensures that on publish from CM1, your site will continue to function as it did before without any manual cut and paste effort.



Why not get ahead of the game? Make your site **work better** for your business now.

Creating Templates

Upon completion of the import process, your next step will be to create templates that serve as the foundation of your pages. LiveFirst provides the ability to model a template on your existing pages. You can preview pages within Percussion and identify pages that are representative of your site design, and then create them as templates. For example, many of our customers will have a sample landing page, a sample detail page, a two column layout, a three column layout, etc. You create a template by inspecting a page and breaking it down into components based on its HTML structure.

What is unique about this approach is that if you were building a site from scratch you would have to have the template broken down into the most elemental pieces -- the logo would be a region, the top navigation would be a region, the h1, the body, the sidebar, etc. But with this approach you can break down a template just to the point where it becomes useful for content contributors to be able to edit content. For example, if the first phase of your project does not include changing navigation, then there is no need to break down the header to isolate the navigation components. That work can be deferred until later.

Percussion's Design Inspector looks at the structure of the page and then guides you through the process of breaking it down into components. The system will show you when a section cannot be broken down further. Once you have broken down the page into regions, you can determine which parts of the page are going to be assigned to the template and which are unique to the page. For example, on a typical page, the header and footer would be part of the template, but the main body would be unique to each page. The system allows you to promote content from the page to the template.

As a last step, you can convert content from HTML to Rich Text. The rich text interface is a content editor similar to Microsoft Word to make the process of editing content easier for your typical content contributor. Once you have your site imported, you can immediately begin the process of enhancing it. You can drag and drop additional regions and widgets to add new content to your page.

Assign Pages to Templates

Once your templates in place, you can assign pages to templates. The system detects which content on the page should fit in the proper sections of the template based on matching Div ID or class names within the HTML. Once complete you can navigate to the page to confirm that the page was properly mapped. This same capability allows us to apply pages to a new design. You can create new templates from scratch or import a different design and assign pages to that. So long as you have named regions or classes the same across the two different designs, the system will merge the content into the appropriate places in the new design. The system also flags if content could not be matched.

Summary

LiveFirst technology allows you to think about your WCM implementation differently, giving you the option to prioritize your most critical tasks with the least amount of cost and effort. We measure the success of LiveFirst by "time to value" - how can you get value from your content management system solution more rapidly than ever before.

About Percussion Software

Percussion Software make it easy and affordable to create and maintain engaging and modern websites to increase traffic, drive revenue, promote thought leadership, and create compelling online customer experiences. Delivered as a highly usable and affordable product, leading companies, education institutions, and government agencies are using Percussion to be nimble and drive change quickly to the web, allowing them to increase leads and conversion rates at a very low cost. Leading customers include Sunoco, the U.S. Social Security Administration, Norfolk State University, Ceridian, Axceler, and Cornell University.

To learn more, visit percussion.com.

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