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Lessons Learned

Consolidation at Scale: Transforming 40+ Website Across Business Units with Optimizely

Far East Organisation

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Overview

Far East Organization (FEO) is Singapore's largest private property developer, with a diverse portfolio spanning residential, retail, hospitality, healthcare, and commercial developments. As a multi-faceted enterprise operating across numerous business units, FEO manages a vast ecosystem of digital properties that serve varied audiences—from prospective homeowners and hotel guests to retail shoppers and investors.





and Context

About Far East Organisation Introduction

Q: What were the key reasons for migrating the site and what challenges did the team face in the current system?

Far East Organization (FEO), Singapore's largest private real estate developer, maintained a diverse portfolio of websites spanning residential, retail, hospitality, and corporate domains. These sites were hosted across different legacy platforms including Sitecore XM and bespoke CMS systems. Fragmentation across content platforms created inefficiencies, increased maintenance overheads, and made it difficult for marketing and IT teams to deliver a consistent digital experience.

Their key business problems included:

- Multiple CMS platforms with inconsistent backend experiences
- Inability to scale content operations across BUs
- High licensing costs and technical debt associated with legacy platforms
- Delayed content publishing due to technical bottlenecks
- Lack of unified performance tracking or analytics frameworks

Main objectives of the migration project:

- Consolidate 50+ websites under a centralised, future-proof CMS
- Empower content teams with modern authoring tools
- Enhance digital experience consistency across business units
- Reduce cost of ownership and streamline platform maintenance
- Improve time-to-market for marketing and campaign pages\

Q: Were other migration approaches or tools considered, and why was the final technology selected?

Vertis conducted a platform assessment comparing Optimizely, Sitefinity, and continued use of Sitecore XM. Optimizely CMS 12 was chosen for its:

- Editor-friendly interface with drag-and-drop and preview capabilities
- Advanced support for multi-site and multi-language management
- Flexibility in third-party integrations
- Lower total cost of ownership
- Enterprise-grade security features



Technology Overview

Q: What technology was used for the site migration and why was it deemed suitable?

Vertis implemented Optimizely CMS 12, a .NET-based digital experience platform known for its scalability, ease of use, and API-first architecture. The platform was selected to unify FEO's fragmented content ecosystem while enhancing the publishing experience.

Q: What features or capabilities of the technology were critical for a smooth migration?

- Component-based content model with reusable blocks
- Inline content editing with real-time preview
- Role-based access controls and editorial workflows
- Seamless support for form builders and campaign templates
- RESTful API support for integrations with CRM, booking engines, and analytics
- CDN and caching optimisation for global performance

Q: How did our expertise in Sitecore enable us to optimise the migration process?

Vertis' strong pedigree in Sitecore implementations and migrations enabled us to:

- Conduct accurate mapping of Sitecore content structures to Optimizely models
- Replicate complex workflows, multilingual setups, and custom modules
- Apply SEO and metadata preservation best practices

Translate legacy functionalities into Optimizely's modular ecosystem

Implementation Process

Q: How was the migration managed, and how did the team ensure minimal downtime during the process?

A structured rollout strategy was used, phasing the migration by business unit and platform complexity. Vertis created isolated staging environments for each cluster of websites, with contingency and rollback plans in place.

Key elements included:

- Site inventory mapping and classification
- Stakeholder engagement for every BU
- Parallel content population and migration sprints
- Multiple QA/UAT cycles before go-live
- Go-live runbooks and fail-safe procedures

Q: What milestones or key stages marked the progression of the migration?

- Website audit and content inventory creation
- Template and component library setup
- Integration of booking engines, CRMs, and third-party APIs
- Development of multilingual and mobile-responsive experiences
- UAT cycles per BU, followed by VAPT clearance
- Training and handover documentation

The Vertis Approach

Tech-Driven Creativity

- 1. A unified metadata tagging framework was introduced for structured analytics
- 2. A custom-built redirect engine handled thousands of legacy URLs
- 3. A headless component registry was built for future mobile and app integrations

Team Structure:

Team size: 1 Solution architect, 1 Project Manager, 6 Developers, 2 QA engineers

Risk Mitigation Strategies

- Optimizely CDN setup and dynamic caching for faster load times
- HTTPS, content security policies, and secure headers enforced
- All sites underwent Vulnerability Assessment and Penetration Testing (VAPT)
- Redirection strategies ensured no SEO or traffic loss

Use Case and

Functionality

Q: How did the migration technology address site structure, content, and design integration?

FEO's sites were standardised using a **shared design system** and **component templates**, ensuring visual and functional consistency while allowing each business unit to maintain their unique identity. This included:

- Flexible layouts for real estate listings, event calendars, room bookings, etc.
- Replication of custom functionalities from legacy platforms in modern frameworks
- Support for Chinese/English toggling and property search filters
- Custom editorial workflows tailored to content teams across retail, hospitality, and residential verticals

Q: How did the technology ensure a seamless transition while maintaining performance and security?

- CDN and dynamic caching configurations reduced site load times and optimised global delivery
- All sites passed enterprise-level VAPT testing to meet FEO's cybersecurity standards
- Strict content governance controls reduced the risk of publishing errors or brand inconsistencies
- HTTPS enforcement, secure headers, and data privacy compliance ensured long-term risk mitigation

Q: Were there any unique or innovative methods used to enhance the migration?

- Shared component libraries enabled rapid scaling of new microsites and seasonal campaigns
- Embedded analytics through tagging framework and Google Analytics integration provided deeper content performance insights
- Mobile-first responsive design improved usability across property-focused sites targeting mobile-first audiences
- Cross-site search and taxonomy were structured to support content discovery across related sites in the ecosystem
- Modular architecture was built to allow future expansion, including virtual showrooms and Al-driven personalisation tools

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Projected Impact and Results

The migration delivered strong outcomes across Far East Organization's digital ecosystem:

Q: How did the technology improve development time or productivity for the team?

- Template reuse across microsites reduced build effort per site
- Editors now use an intuitive WYSIWYG interface, removing IT bottlenecks
- Integrated forms and components eliminated reliance on developers for campaign rollouts
- Unified all websites under Optimizely for better management

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Stakeholder Feedback

Internal Stakeholder Feedback: Stakeholders across Far East Malls, Hospitality, and Corporate teams praised the project's implementation. The phased approach ensured minimal disruption to business-as-usual. Concerns around content freeze timelines were mitigated through proactive scheduling and communication.

End-user Feedback: Improved usability, especially for mobile visitors and international audiences, was highlighted. Property seekers and hotel guests found forms easier to complete, and page load speeds were noticeably faster across regions.

Training Provided:

- Tailored training guides per BU
- Live CMS walkthroughs and UAT playbacks
- Reference documents for SEO handling and campaign creation
- Post-launch CMS helpdesk for 3 months

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Comparative Analysis

Q: How did the technology used for migration compare to previous solutions in terms of efficiency and cost-effectiveness?

- Lower software licensing costs
- Editorial empowerment led to long-term operational savings
- Reuse of components and shared templates created consistency and scale

Q: What advantages or trade-offs were experienced with the chosen migration technology?

Advantages:

- Better editor usability
- Easier integration and deployment
- More modular design

Trades-offs:

- Multilingual support required custom implementation
- Some legacy features had to be reimagined rather than ported

Q: Did the migration solution provide long-term value over alternatives?

Yes. The platform is now more future-ready and scalable for future digital touchpoints (e.g., apps, kiosks), with simplified management and extensibility baked in.

Challenges and Limitations

- Q. What were the major limitations faced during the migration, and how were they overcome? And how was it resolved?
- 1. Coordinating stakeholders across 40+ sites was a significant logistical challenge

Resolution: Vertis assigned dedicated project managers to each business unit stream and implemented a phased rollout strategy.

2. Some legacy platforms lacked export tools, requiring custom migration scripts

Resolution: Vertis developed bespoke content extraction and transformation scripts tailored to each legacy CMS.

3. Changes in third-party APIs during development necessitated rework

Resolution: A flexible integration framework was established using Optimizely's API capabilities.

4. Editorial inconsistencies required manual clean-up and standardisation

Resolution: A centralised content audit was conducted, followed by templated editorial guidelines and a shared component library.

- Q. Did the migration process reveal any gaps in functionality or performance that needed to be addressed?
- 1. Lack of native multilingual toggles prompted Vertis to build custom logic
- 2. Role-based permissions needed finetuning for certain business units
- 3. Some components had to be rebuilt entirely to match Optimizely standards

9 Lessons Learned

Q. What key insights were gained from the site migration process?

- 1 Early planning of components and connected APIs and its relevant requirements helped to improve the speed of delivery
- 2 Deep platform familiarity across Sitecore and Optimizely improved the migration progress
- 3 Editorial involvement in UAT ensures higher adoption and fewer reworks

Q. What are the best practices for managing large-scale migrations?

- Start with a thorough site audit and inventory
- Align technical, editorial, and legal stakeholders early
- Establish a comprehensive governance model (RACI, change control, scheduling)

Q. What would be done differently if the migration were to be repeated?

- Conduct proper analysis of technical and business requirements
- Establish proper governance structure across business units from the start

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About Vertis

Vertis is a digital agency on a mission to constantly innovate and create exceptional digital solutions, elevating clients' brands and the experiences they deliver through the power of technology-driven creativity.

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