Choosing Between Progress Sitefinity CMS and Xperience by Kentico

A practical CMS-fit guide for Kentico 13 customers deciding what should run their next digital estate

WHITEPAPER

Kentico 13 end of support creates the deadline but it should not define the answer. If your current Kentico 13 website is simple, clean and mostly marketing-led, Xperience by Kentico may be the lower-disruption path. If your web estate includes multiple sites, strict governance, authenticated content, complex integrations, regional variation, content reuse, customer data activation or AI search goals, Progress Sitefinity CMS should be evaluated as a strategic CMS choice.

Progress Sitefinity Point of View

Do not choose a CMS only by asking which path moves the most existing content fastest. Choose by asking which CMS better supports how your marketing, development, IT and governance stakeholders will work after launch.

Do Not Mistake the Successor Path for a Minor Version Upgrade

The word “upgrade” can make the Kentico Xperience 13 decision sound smaller than it is. Kentico provides migration guidance and tooling for moving from Kentico Xperience 13 to Xperience by Kentico and that tooling can be valuable. But Kentico’s own upgrade guidance covers planning strategy, transferring data, adapting code, migration of widgets, content retrieval changes and commerce-related considerations. Those are implementation workstreams, not routine patch activities.

That distinction matters for budgeting and risk. A migration tool can help move eligible data. It does not decide which content types should be retired, how a twenty-step approval workflow should be simplified, whether a custom widget should be rebuilt or how legacy integrations should behave in the target architecture. Those decisions belong to the migration team.

Experienced teams look past the vendor label and ask what will change. A Kentico-to-Kentico move can still require frontend work, component review, content model changes, integration adjustments, redirect planning, analytics re-tagging, accessibility review and regression testing. The same categories also apply when evaluating Sitefinity CMS. The difference is that a broader replatform lets the team reassess the operating model instead of preserving old design choices by default.

A Migration Should Expose Content Debt, Not Carry It Forward

Many Kentico Xperience 13 implementations have been in production long enough to accumulate exceptions. There may be page types created for one campaign, abandoned landing page templates, duplicated product content, redirects managed outside the CMS, regional variants that no longer match the current brand model or custom modules maintained by one developer who has since left. None of those issues disappear because the platform changes.

The migration planning phase should separate content and functionality into three groups: what must be preserved, what should be rebuilt differently and what should be retired. For example, a midsized bank may preserve rate tables and compliance disclosures, rebuild product pages as structured content with clearer ownership and retire old campaign landing pages that still draw organic traffic but no longer have business value. A manufacturer may preserve product category pages, rebuild dealer-resource content around permissions and metadata and retire duplicated regional pages that confuse search engines and customers.

Use This Guide to Decide CMS Fit

The question is not just around the migration path. The decision needs to also be based on “Which CMS better matches how this organization must publish, govern, integrate and improve digital experiences after go-live?”

That distinction matters because CMS selection mistakes usually surface after launch. Editors still wait for developers. Regions duplicate content. Compliance review moves into email. Product information drifts across pages. Portals keep stale resources. Search cannot distinguish approved content from old PDFs. AI projects stall because no one can identify trusted source material.

Use the Kentico 13 timeline as the trigger for the decision. Then evaluate Sitefinity CMS and Xperience by Kentico against the operating model you need for the next several years.

Two Credible Paths, Different CMS-Fit Profiles

When Xperience by Kentico Is a Reasonable Path

A useful CMS evaluation should identify when staying in the Kentico ecosystem is a practical decision. Xperience by Kentico can be a reasonable fit when continuity matters more than changing the operating model.

- The current Kentico 13 implementation is clean, documented and lightly customized.
- The web estate is mainly a public marketing site with limited portal logic, few integrations and a manageable content tree.
- The internal team or implementation partner has strong Kentico experience and a credible Xperience by Kentico plan.
- Marketing already works effectively in Kentico campaign, email, contact, journey and personalization workflows.
- Procurement timing, vendor-risk review or internal capacity makes a vendor change disproportionate to the value gained.

The caution: the same-vendor path should not be treated as automatically cheaper or safer. Kentico migration resources can support content and data movement, but custom code, integrations, widgets, templates, portal rules and workflow changes still require technical review. If those areas are already in scope, the organization is making a CMS-fit decision, not just a product-continuity decision.

When Progress Sitefinity Is the Stronger CMS Fit

Progress Sitefinity CMS should be treated as a primary shortlist option when the CMS needs to reduce operating friction across departments, sites and systems. The strongest Sitefinity CMS case fits where larger digital teams need governed autonomy, reusable content, multi-property control, deployment choice, integrated customer insight and a cleaner foundation for search and AI.

- The web estate includes many sites, microsites, regions, languages, brands or business units that need shared governance without forcing every editor through one central queue.
- Regulated or high-risk content requires role separation, approval paths, version control, accessibility discipline and audit evidence.
- Product, rate, service, policy, branch, distributor or documentation content is duplicated today and should become reusable structured content.
- The CMS needs to work with enterprise systems such as CRM, ERP, PIM, DAM, commerce, appointment systems, forms, analytics, identity, consent and search.
- Customers, members, distributors, partners, students or residents need authenticated access to content based on role, region, product, agreement or status.
- IT needs deployment flexibility so CMS selection does not force a cloud or infrastructure decision before security and operations are ready.
- The AI/search roadmap depends on approved source content, metadata, permissions and review, not just AI-assisted copy drafting.

CMS-Fit Decision Matrix

Use this matrix before vendor demos. It keeps the discussion anchored in daily operating needs instead of page-editor preference.

Decision area	Sitefinity CMS is the stronger fit when…	Xperience by Kentico may fit when…
Multiple sites, brands or regions	One CMS needs to support shared templates, local permissions, language variation, microsites or business-unit autonomy.	The estate is one main site or a small set of closely controlled sites with limited local variation.
Governed marketing autonomy	Marketing needs to build pages and test content inside approved components, workflows and accessibility-safe patterns.	The current Kentico publishing model works well and campaign continuity is the overriding need.
Complex integrations	The CMS must connect with CRM, PIM, DAM, ERP, loan origination, commerce, identity, search, analytics, consent or support systems.	The website has few system dependencies and current Kentico integration patterns are still acceptable.
Authenticated content and portals	Gated resources need role-specific visibility for customers, members, distributors, dealers, partners, students or residents.	Portal logic is light or already well contained inside the Kentico operating model.
Deployment choice	IT wants the option to separate CMS modernization from hosting or cloud migration timing.	The proposed Xperience by Kentico deployment model already clears security, procurement and operations review.
Customer data and personalization	The organization wants segmentation, journey analysis, content performance and CRM-informed experiences with clear governance.	Existing Kentico marketing features are enough and the customer data model is simple.
AI-ready content and search	The organization's roadmap includes includes answer-based discovery across approved pages, documents, manuals, product data or service knowledge.	AI goals are mainly near-term content drafting or campaign productivity.

Buyer takeaway

A same-vendor move can reduce friction when the current estate is simple. It should not be the default when the organization needs multi-site governance, reusable content, stronger data activation, flexible deployment or AI-ready knowledge management.

How CMS Fit Changes by Industry Use Case

The right CMS choice changes when the content workload changes. A credit union, an industrial manufacturer and a public agency may all be leaving Kentico 13, but they do not need the CMS for the same work.

Industry	Typical digital workload	CMS-fit implication
Financial services: credit unions and midsized banks	Rate pages, disclosures, fraud alerts, branch pages, product campaigns, calculators, application handoffs, accessibility remediation and approval evidence.	Sitefinity CMS fit strengthens when marketing needs controlled autonomy while compliance needs visible workflows, reusable disclosures, version history and clear data boundaries for personalization. Xperience can fit when the site is mostly marketing-led and Kentico campaign workflows are central.
Manufacturing and B2B commerce	Product specifications, manuals, CAD files, distributor portals, regional product variants, quote forms, PIM/ERP/DAM integrations and technical search.	Sitefinity CMS fit strengthens when product content needs structured reuse, portals need role-based delivery and the roadmap includes answer-based discovery across approved technical content. Xperience can fit when product content and portal needs are light.
Government and public sector	Service pages, public notices, multilingual content, forms, records, accessibility, department publishing, resident portals, emergency updates and procurement controls.	Sitefinity CMS fit strengthens when many departments need shared governance, accessible component patterns, permissions, deployment flexibility and cautious data activation. Xperience can fit when the site is small, informational, lightly customized and procurement favors continuity.

The Practical CMS-Fit Scorecard

Score each factor from 1 to 5. A score of 1 means low complexity; a score of 5 means the factor is a strong signal to evaluate Sitefinity as the strategic CMS choice.

CMS-fit factor	How to score it	Score
Number of sites, brands or regions	1 = one site; 5 = many properties with shared governance and local autonomy	/5
Content reuse requirement	1 = mostly page-level editing; 5 = structured content reused across pages, sites, portals and search	/5
Government and public sector	1 = simple author/publisher model; 5 = role separation, audit needs, accessibility review or regulated workflows	/5
Integration complexity	1 = few external systems; 5 = CRM, ERP, PIM, DAM, identity, commerce, consent, search or portals	/5
Portal or gated-content need	1 = none; 5 = role-based resources for customers, members, dealers, distributors or residents	/5
Deployment constraints	1 = hosting choice is straightforward; 5 = flexible deployment path needed before infrastructure decisions are final	/5
Customer data activation	1 = basic analytics only; 5 = CRM or behavioral data, journeys, personalization and governance boundaries	/5
AI/search readiness	1 = no near-term change; 5 = answer-based discovery over approved structured and unstructured content	/5

Interpretation: 8–17 means Xperience by Kentico may be sufficient if current Kentico patterns are working. 18–28 means compare both CMS products against real use cases. 29–40 means Sitefinity CMS should be treated as a leading candidate because the decision is about operating model, not migration convenience.

Proof-of-Fit Questions to Ask Vendors

Ask each vendor or partner to prove fit against the work that determines adoption, maintenance cost and governance after launch.

Evaluation area	Proof-of-fit request
Marketing and content operations	Show how a non-technical editor creates a campaign page from approved components, reuses governed content, routes it for review, tests variants and publishes without breaking accessibility or analytics rules.
Multi-site governance	Show how the same content can be shared, localized, restricted or varied across multiple sites, brands or regions without copying and pasting pages.
Developer model	Show the component model, APIs, renderer options, source control, CI/CD approach, environment promotion, rollback and how developers extend the CMS without creating one-off editor workarounds.
Integrations	Identify which systems own product data, customer/member data, pricing/rates, documents, forms, authentication and analytics. Show how the CMS consumes or activates that data without becoming a fragile custom hub.
IT, security and compliance	Show permissions, SSO/MFA options, logs, audit trails, deployment responsibilities, patching model, backup/recovery, data residency options and third-party service dependencies.
AI and search readiness	Show how approved sources are indexed, how permissions are respected, how answers cite source material, how stale content is excluded and how human review is handled.

Common Mistakes This Guide Helps Prevent

Mistake 1: Treating the Kentico 13 deadline as a Kentico-only decision.
The deadline creates urgency but the CMS choice should still be based on the target operating model. A same-vendor path is rational only when the current model is worth preserving.

Mistake 2: Comparing page editors instead of publishing systems.
A page builder demo does not prove governance, content reuse, accessibility control, data activation, integration fit or developer maintainability.

Mistake 3: Rebuilding legacy content structures because they already exist.
A CMS change should remove duplicated content, old widgets, stale PDFs, abandoned microsites and hidden integration workarounds. Recreating them in a newer product preserves the same burden.

Mistake 4: Buying personalization before defining data rules.
Financial services, public sector and complex B2B scenarios need consent, data-source ownership, segment logic and review boundaries before activating customer, member or resident data.

Mistake 5: Treating AI as a copywriting feature.
For regulated or technical content, AI readiness starts with structured, approved and retrievable content. The CMS should support governed sources and clear review, not just faster draft generation.

Recommended next step

Get a CMS Fit Assessment for your Kentico 13 estate. Compare Sitefinity CMS and Xperience by Kentico against your actual sites, roles, workflows, integrations, deployment requirements, content reuse needs, personalization goals and AI/search readiness.

Next Step: Get a CMS Fit Assessment

At this stage, a generic demo is rarely the right next step. Your team already knows a CMS decision is coming. What you need is a structured comparison of Sitefinity CMS and Xperience by Kentico against your actual operating model.

Progress Sitefinity resources to support you in your evaluation:

Download the CMS Vendor Selection Guide
Download the CMS RFP Template
Book a Customized Demo

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