Navigating the benefits of Sitecore content management system in Healthcare

Top things to be considered for successful Sitecore migration

Sunil Rana

Sr. Solution Architect, Design Experience, CitiusTech

Introduction

Content Management System (CMS) serves as one of the best solutions in addressing Healthcare application needs. Providing patients with high-quality, informative content demonstrates a commitment to patient education and transparency, fostering trust and loyalty. A robust and modern CMS, like Sitecore, allows healthcare professionals to share relevant health information with patients promptly and effectively.

These cutting-edge CMS further leverage AI to personalize and create engaging content to improve patient understanding and engagement, leading to better results during treatment. For instance, Sitecore's Experience Editor enables personalization features that allow content creators to customize content for specific audience segments. This level of personalization enhances user engagement and helps drive conversions by delivering targeted content to different user groups.

PERSPECTIVE PAPER

Most importantly, CMS brings a holistic approach to healthcare content management by connecting health information exchange (HIE), pharmacy management systems, health and wellness apps, and telehealth platforms.

The booming state of Healthcare CMS

The global Healthcare content management system (CMS) market is poised for a surge, with a projected growth rate of 12.9% between 2024 and 2032[1] Several key trends catalyze this steady growth:

- As medical records go digital, healthcare providers need robust, interoperable systems to manage them securely. Hence, there's an immediate need to shift from legacy and outdated systems to modernized CMS platforms.

- Stringent regulations like HIPAA demand secure and controlled access to patient data. CMS platforms, such as Sitecore, offer industry-specific solutions to meet these requirements with compatibility between HL7 (health level 7) and FHIR (fast health interoperability resources).

- Healthcare is putting patients at the center. CMS empowers patients with ready access to their medical information through secure portals — for ease of use. For example, patients can easily access and manage prescriptions, keep track of refill details, and even request refills — all from a secure online platform managed by CMS.

Why care providers should favor Sitecore

Among all the available CMS, Sitecore has taken center stage as one of the most preferred solutions for larger healthcare organizations. Many smaller healthcare providers are also managing their entire content on Sitecore.

The primary reason behind the popularity of Sitecore is its user-friendly Experience Editor, which provides a user-friendly interface for content editors and marketers to make direct changes to the website. This drag-and-drop interface simplifies content management tasks and enables quick and easy updates. It also offers real-time previews of how the content will appear on the website — enabling swift feedback on design changes and content updates. This feature enhances the user experience (UX) by empowering you to visualize the changes before publishing.

Additionally, the modular design and robust security features ensure Sitecore is built for scalability with healthcare-specific safety regulations such as HIPAA in mind, making it suitable for organizations of any size.

However, Sitecore implementation requires deeper expertise and strategic planning to reap long-term benefits and meet both organizational and customer needs. Whether you are an existing user trying to upgrade to Sitecore's latest version or have a new facility and trying to set up your Sitecore architecture, several risks should be considered to ensure a smooth and successful upgrade process.

Top considerations during migration to Sitecore latest version

When upgrading Sitecore in the healthcare domain, you must remember certain things. Here are some areas that you need to focus on and plan for before a Sitecore upgrade:

Compliance and Security:

- **Data security compliance:** Healthcare organizations deal with sensitive patient data that must comply with strict regulations like HIPAA. During the upgrade, ensure data security measures are in place to prevent potential breaches or non-compliance issues.

- **Regulatory compliance:** Healthcare regulations are constantly evolving. Ensure the upgraded Sitecore platform complies with all current healthcare regulations and standards to avoid legal issues.

Infrastructure Integration:

- **Third-party integrations:** Healthcare systems often rely on third-party integrations like HL7, HIEs, EMRs, or CRMs. Check the compatibility of these integrations with the upgraded Sitecore version to avoid service disruptions.

- **Disaster recovery and backup:** Data loss or system failures during the upgrade can severely affect the healthcare sector. Implement robust disaster recovery plans and regular backups to mitigate risks.

- **System downtime:** Any downtime during the upgrade can impact patient care and business operations. Plan for a phased upgrade approach and backup systems and perform thorough testing to mitigate downtime risks.

Development and Customization:

- **Custom code and modules:** Healthcare websites may have custom code or modules that the upgrade could impact. Conduct a full assessment of all customizations and ensure they are compatible with the new Sitecore version.
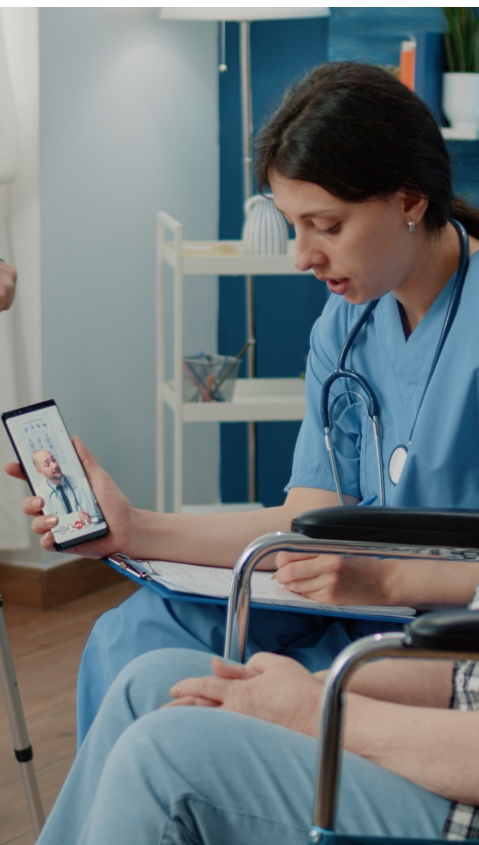
- **Performance optimization:** Poorly optimized upgrades can lead to performance issues, slow loading times, and user frustration. Prioritize performance testing and optimization to deliver a seamless user experience post-upgrade.

- **Testing and QA:** Thorough testing is crucial to tracking and mitigating bugs or issues before the upgraded platform goes live. Invest time in quality assurance processes to minimize risks post-upgrade.

User Engagement and Support:

- **User training and adoption:** Healthcare staff may need the training to adapt to changes in the upgraded Sitecore platform. Plan for adequate user training to ensure a smooth transition and prevent workflow disruptions.

- **Post-launch support:** Ongoing support and maintenance are crucial to resolve potential issues after the upgrade. Have a support plan in place to quickly resolve any post-upgrade complications.

CitiusTech recommendations for the latest version of Sitecore implementation

While you prepare for the latest Sitecore upgrade, here are some best practices based on our experts' insights. [3][4]

Focus area	Risks	CitiusTech recommended best practices
Incompatibility issues	**Third-party modules** or **custom code** might not be compatible with the new version.	• Ensure all **custom code** and **modules** are compatible with the latest Sitecore version by checking for **updates** or contacting the respective vendors • Conduct thorough testing to identify any compatibility issues early in the process.
Data loss	Data loss is a common occurrence during an upgrade, affecting **content, configurations, and user data.**	• Before initiating the upgrade, perform a **full backup** of the Sitecore databases, content, and configurations. • Implement a **robust rollback strategy** in case of unexpected issues during the upgrade.

Performance degradation	Upgrading without considering the performance implications can lead to degraded system performance.	▪ Conduct performance testing before and after the upgrade to identify any performance degradation. ▪ Optimize configurations and settings post-upgrade to ensure optimal performance.
Licensing and compatibility	Ensure that the existing licenses are compatible with the new version of Sitecore.	▪ Verify the licensing requirements for the latest Sitecore version and ensure that your current license is valid for the upgrade. ▪ Obtain any necessary licenses or upgrades before starting the upgrade process.
Customizations and integrations	Customizations and integrations with external systems may need to be re-implemented or adjusted.	▪ Document all customizations and integrations to understand the impact of the upgrade. ▪ Work closely with developers to assess and update any customizations for compatibility with the latest version of Sitecore.
Lack of testing	Inadequate testing can result in post-upgrade issues that impact the usability and functionality of the site.	▪ Develop a comprehensive testing plan covering all aspects of the Sitecore instance. ▪ Conduct thorough testing of the upgraded environment before going live to identify and resolve any issues.

By proactively managing these risks and enforcing appropriate mitigation strategies, healthcare organizations can reap multiple benefits from this Sitecore upgrade — such as ensuring patient and staff data security, compliance, and uninterrupted services. Let us explore this with a success story.

In a recent engagement, we assisted a leading healthcare provider in migrating from Sitecore 9.3 to the latest version 10.3. During this process, they encountered significant challenges related to the activation of analytics.

CitiusTech successfully addressed these issues, which involved:

- Ensuring the Experience Profile recognized all existing data in Shards.

- Resolving the impediments in the XDb index rebuild process to ensure seamless operation.

- Identifying and correcting the underlying issues in the analytics setup, as indicated by the log errors.

This meticulous approach rectified the migration process, ensuring its successful completion. The healthcare provider now profits from the advanced capabilities of Sitecore 10.3, with enhanced data recognition, streamlined indexing, and robust analytics — ultimately supporting their mission of delivering superior patient care and operational excellence.

References

1. A Healthcare Content Management System Market Size, Trends (marketresearch.com)
2. Use of content management systems to address nursing workflow (nih.gov)
3. CMS Migration Guide (sitecore.com)
4. Sitecore 10.4 Developer Documentation (sitecore.com)
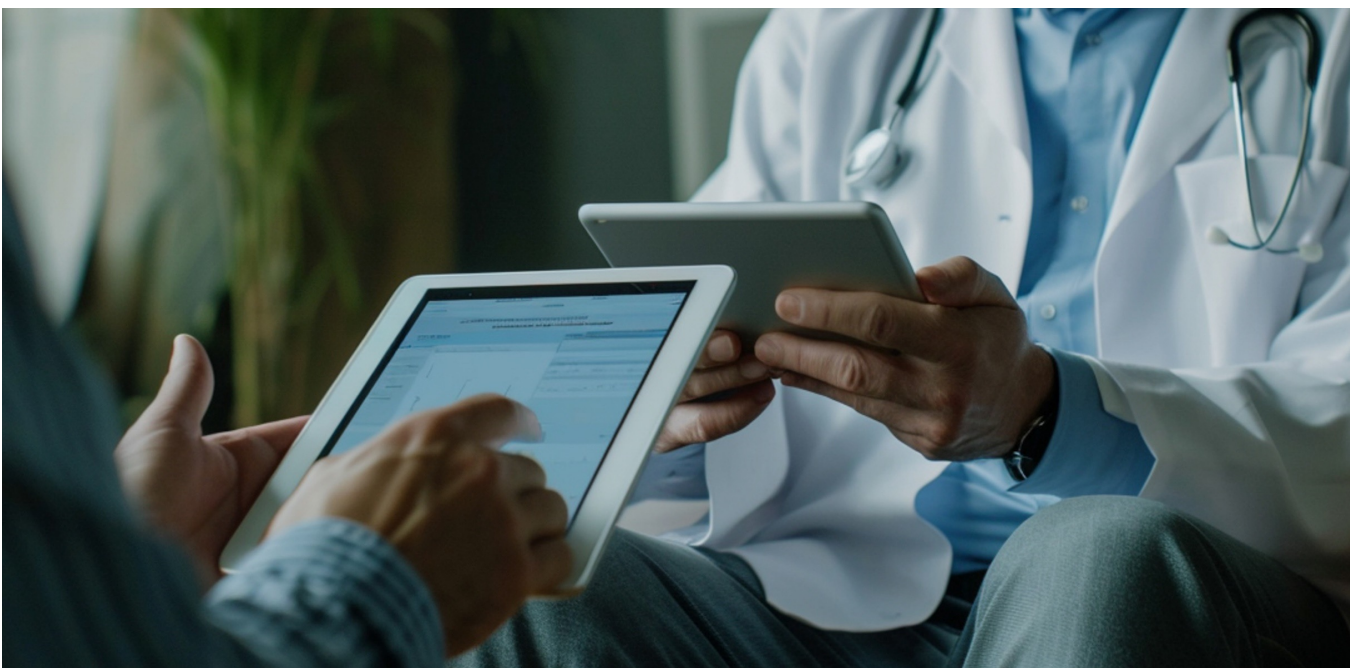
CitiusTech

Shaping Healthcare Possibilities

CitiusTech is a global IT services, consulting, and business solutions enterprise 100% focused on the healthcare and life sciences industry. We enable 140+ enterprises to build a human-first ecosystem that is efficient, effective, and equitable with deep domain expertise and next-gen technology.

With over 8,500 healthcare technology professionals worldwide, CitiusTech powers healthcare digital innovation, business transformation and industry-wide convergence through next-generation technologies, solutions, and products.

www.citiustech.com

Shaping Healthcare Possibilities