



Content Operations SaaS · SaaS / Digital Marketing · Berlin, Germany · Ongoing

Content Operations SaaS: Seven-year SaaS partnership rebuilt for the age of AI. Architecture stabilised, AI assistant launched, product strategy refocused.

CLIENT CONTEXT

The client is a Berlin-based SaaS content operations platform serving marketing teams at publishers, agencies, and enterprises across the DACH region. Founded in 2011, the platform covers the full content lifecycle, including strategy, editorial workflow, production, distribution, and performance analytics, for approximately 500 paying customers.

Backed by major German venture capital, the company has built an established niche in German-speaking content marketing software, differentiating on editorial workflow depth rather than breadth. With around 26 employees and \$2.8M ARR, the enterprise operates as a lean, product-focused team.

THE CHALLENGE

By 2022, the client had been adding features for years. Every new capability solved a real problem at the time it was built, but the accumulation had created a product that felt cluttered to users and difficult to maintain internally. The platform was functional, but no longer crisp. Marketing teams were still opening it every day to plan, write, and publish, but the experience had drifted from the focused tool it once was.

Three problems were compounding simultaneously. First, a lead developer departed during a critical phase, disrupting delivery rhythm and placing pressure on the remaining team's capacity. Second, a newly built key performance analysis module had consumed significant engineering investment but did not match how clients actually worked, and usage data confirmed the mismatch. Third, a migration from TinyMCE to CKEditor, which appeared to be a contained editor swap, turned out to touch more of the system than anticipated, requiring coordinated QA effort that the team could not absorb alone.

Beneath these immediate problems sat a strategic question, which was which features genuinely served users, and which were accumulating technical debt without driving retention or growth? Without honest answers to that question, any rebuild would replicate the same pattern.

THE APPROACH

Gradion had been working with the client since the early years of the platform, so the 2022 engagement was not a new relationship but a deepening of one. That history mattered, as Gradion already understood the codebase, the team dynamics, and the product's real usage patterns.

The first move was team stability. Gradion brought in a senior developer to restore delivery confidence, take technical pressure off

the internal team, and reestablish a predictable release cadence. This was not a temporary fix, it was the foundation for everything that followed.

On product strategy, Gradion worked with the company's leadership to audit the feature set against actual usage data. The key performance analysis module was a clear case, where the investment was real, but so was the evidence that clients had not adopted it. The joint decision to sunset the module and reallocate those engineering resources to higher-impact work was a hard call made cleanly.

The CKEditor migration was unblocked by adding QA capacity and tightening delivery coordination. The new editor shipped without disruption to existing users.

The longer-term change was architectural. The rebuilt system reduced the bug rate and support burden, making the platform easier to maintain and scale. Feature development shifted to a usage-driven model, ensuring each release was grounded in client behaviour data and not internal assumptions.

With that foundation in place, the long-awaited AI assistant, which was designed to help writers with SEO guidance, readability, and workflow prompts, was finally shipped to production.

RESULTS

The partnership with the client has been active for seven years and continues. What began as an outsourcing arrangement has evolved into a model closer to shared product ownership.

AI assistant launched: Shipped to users after years as a roadmap item, it integrates SEO, readability, and workflow guidance directly into the writing interface.

Architecture stabilised: The rebuilt codebase reduced bugs and support requests, which lowered maintenance overhead.

Team delivery restored: A senior developer placement stabilised velocity within a lean engineering team.

Key performance module sunset: This was a hard decision made cleanly, allowing engineering capacity to be reinvested in features with measurable adoption.

CKEditor migration completed: A complex editor swap was shipped without user-facing disruption.

Feature development now usage-driven: Each release is tied to actual client behaviour data.

The engagement demonstrates a consistent pattern, where a long-term partner with deep codebase knowledge is able to make and execute difficult product decisions faster than a new team starting from context zero.

SERVICES DELIVERED

- System rebuild
- Maintenance & upgrades
- AI & editor integration
- Product development support
- Engineering team stabilisation
- Feature rationalisation and product strategy

TECHNOLOGY STACK

- CKEditor (editor migration from TinyMCE)
- AI assistant integration (SEO, readability, workflow)
- SaaS content operations platform

Ready to discuss a similar challenge?

Gradion works with software companies, fintechs, and industrial operators across DACH, Southeast Asia, and Africa. ISO 27001 certified. 23 years of delivery in regulated and high-growth environments.

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