

# BUILDING DIGITAL EXCELLENCE THROUGH TEAM EMPOWERMENT

By **Dave Moretti**, Senior Director of Digital Marketing & Technology, Columbia Business School

*Dave Moretti is the Senior Director of Digital Marketing & Technology at Columbia Business School, where he champions accessibility-first strategies and agile team leadership. With over three decades of experience in higher education technology, he specializes in aligning digital tools with user-centered outcomes and institutional goals.*

## My Career Path in Technology

I began my technology career in 1990 at Queensborough Community College. My journey included roles in academic computing, infrastructure management, and eventually digital marketing. A major turning point came in 2016 when my team faced an accessibility compliance deadline from the Department of Education.

That deadline forced me to find new tools, learn accessibility rules and become an advocate for it to my staff and the school.

In 2022, I joined Columbia Business School (CBS), where I implement my leadership philosophy of team growth and accessibility-first approaches to digital marketing.

## How I Select Technology Tools

I use clear criteria when selecting technology tools. My team employs DubBot for accessibility testing, BrightEdge for SEO connected to analytics, Looker Studio for analytics dashboards, and a few other tools. Each platform serves a specific purpose, yet they work together to enhance website performance.

I don't aim for minimum standards. We use these tools together to improve our site and user experience.

My tool selection process considers cost and fiscal responsibility, features and usability, team input and ownership, as well as university IT and security requirements. This balanced approach ensures technologies not only meet technical needs but also align with institutional constraints.

## Creating Quick Wins and Long-Term Success

My team uses an agile approach that delivers results. We gather insights through daily reports, weekly team meetings and biweekly meetings with university developers. This structured communication creates a framework for data-driven decision-making.

We celebrate quick wins based on feedback and data after implementing features. This builds team morale and helps us deliver major improvements.



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This method enabled my team to complete the remaining 75% of a website migration project in just eight months—a project that had only been completed 25% four years before my arrival. The focus on immediate achievements creates momentum for tackling larger initiatives.

## Our Approach to Accessibility

Content creators present the biggest challenge to maintaining accessibility compliance. My team addresses this through direct outreach to content editors, education about WCAG standards, making corrections first and then explaining why and demonstrating the impact on users with assistive technology.



Aside from assistive technology devices, personal communication is the best tool for effectively addressing the issues. Our guidance is delivered with understanding, as many content contributors aren't web professionals.

This human-centered approach to technical standards has proven more effective than automated solutions alone. We adjust our communication style based on the audience, working particularly thoughtfully with faculty.

## Transforming Search Functionality

A recent upgrade to Coveo Search transformed our CBS website experience. This change created a cleaner search results page, added AI-generated responses based on user queries, enabled strategic page promotion during key initiatives and provided data to improve academic and admissions content.

After implementing this search solution, we've seen double-digit performance improvements across the site.

The search improvements benefit different audiences in distinct ways. Prospective students find program information more easily, alumni connect with events and opportunities and visitors discover faculty research and thought leadership content without frustration.

## How AI Will Transform Business Education

I see AI as a transformative force in business school operations over the next 3-5 years. AI will improve our operations, from employee onboarding to student support services.

At CBS, we are exploring AI tools to help prospective students with admissions and program selection, support current students with quick answers to questions and assist staff in accessing website content efficiently. These initiatives balance innovation with ethical considerations.

From a digital marketing point of view, AI is changing how we create content, what search engines deliver and how we tell our story to candidates. My team already uses AI as a content collaborator across our digital platforms.



**Empowering teams, embracing accessibility, and harnessing the right tools—these are the cornerstones of digital success. When you trust your people and lead with purpose, they deliver lasting impact that transforms not only technology but the experience behind it**

## My Advice to New Digital Leaders

My top advice to new directors is simple: empower your team. Great leaders build great leaders.

This means training staff with clear expectations, building trust in their work, letting them take ownership of tasks and supporting them while allowing independence. I draw wisdom from personal mentors who shaped my approach.

My dad taught me this simple concept: respect is given, trust is earned. You are nothing without your people. Give them the tools and trust to succeed; they will make you look like a genius. [ED](#)