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Most will upgrade. You could transform.

Navigate Umbraco 13 end-of-life strategically, then invest in digital innovation from a modern, AI-ready platform foundation.

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Umbraco 13 reaches end-of-life in December 2026. Most organisations will treat this as a compliance exercise. This guide helps you treat it as a transformation opportunity — and shows how MSQ DX gets you there efficiently.
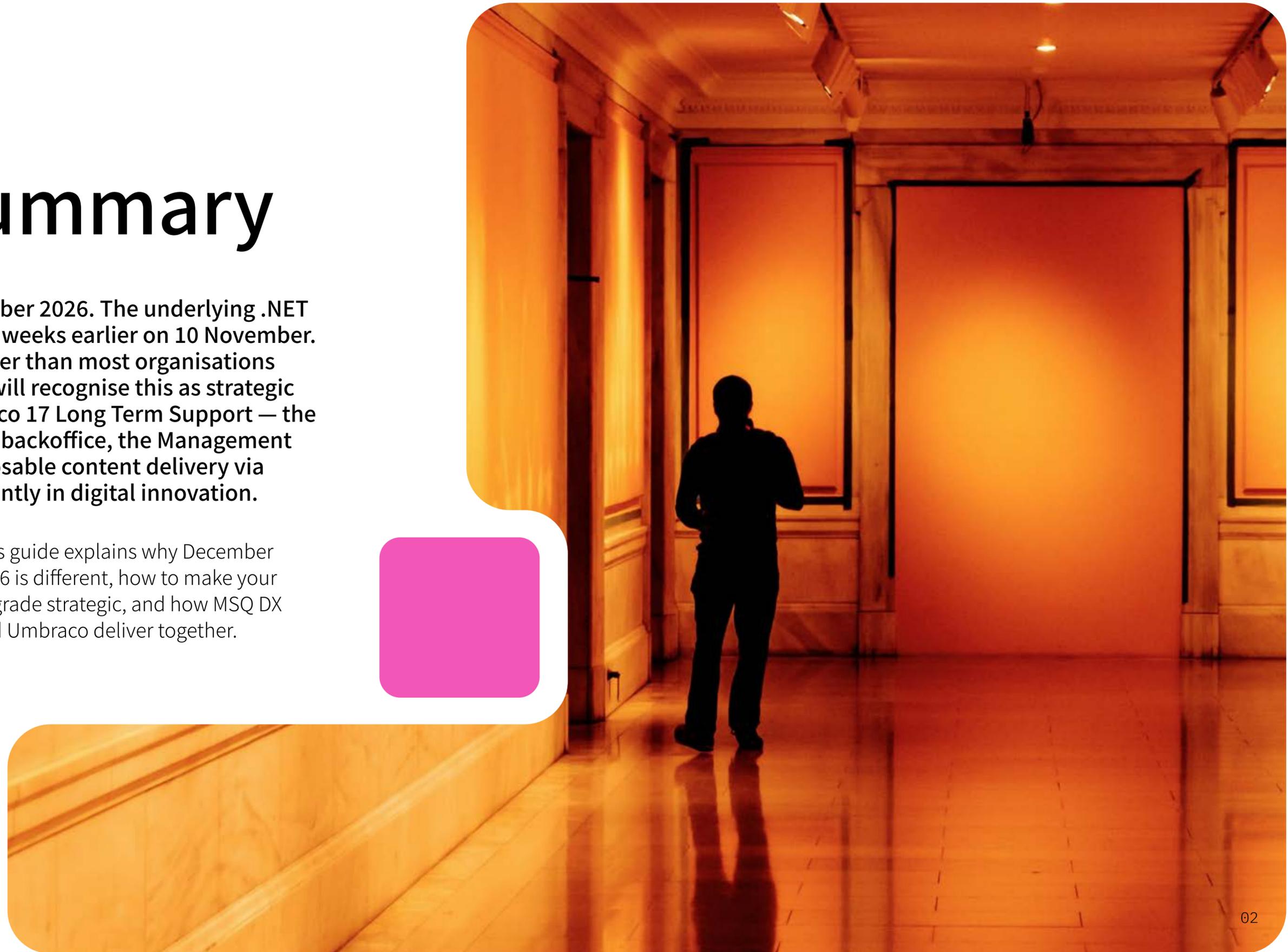
Executive summary

Umbraco 13 reaches end-of-life in December 2026. The underlying .NET 8 framework loses Microsoft support five weeks earlier on 10 November. This means the effective deadline is sooner than most organisations realise. Forward-thinking organisations will recognise this as strategic opportunity. They will move onto Umbraco 17 Long Term Support — the fastest .NET version, a customisable new backoffice, the Management API for integrations, and access to composable content delivery via Umbraco Compose — then invest confidently in digital innovation.
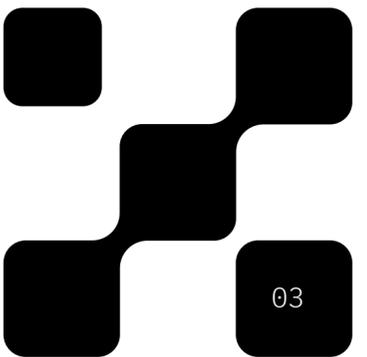
MSQ DX combines Umbraco Platinum Partner status with 15+ years of continuous specialisation and proprietary migration tools. This delivers complete upgrade solutions with transparent pricing and predictable outcomes. We get you to platform stability efficiently so you can invest confidently in what comes next.

This guide explains why December 2026 is different, how to make your upgrade strategic, and how MSQ DX and Umbraco deliver together.

Why this deadline is different

Most organisations will treat December 2026 as a compliance exercise.

Treat it as your digital transformation moment.

Here's what happens after the deadline. Security patches stop. Technical support ends. Integration compatibility declines. Your .NET 8 framework loses Microsoft support on 10 November — five weeks before Umbraco's own deadline. If you're in financial services, healthcare, or professional services, compliance exposure becomes a board-level problem. You can't stay on Umbraco 13 indefinitely. The risk compounds.
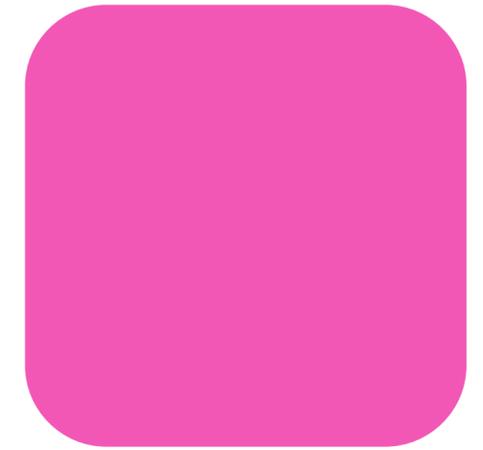
But...

here's what Umbraco 17 Long Term Support actually gives your team. Your editors get a completely rebuilt interface they can customise to match how they actually work — not a one-size-fits-all backoffice. Your developers get the Management API, connecting CRM data, product feeds, and business systems to the CMS. Your organisation gains access to Umbraco Compose for multi-channel content delivery — publish once, deliver everywhere, with external data accessible alongside your content. And Umbraco's intentional AI strategy means you adopt AI on your terms, with no lock-in to any specific provider.

The question isn't "how do we resolve this compliance challenge ahead of December 2026?" The question is "how quickly can we get onto stable ground so we can focus on improving customer experiences?"
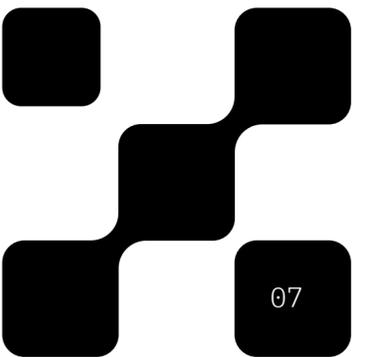
And a practical reassurance: you can upgrade directly from v13 to v17 with no intermediate versions required. Future LTS upgrades are expected to be incremental transitions, not the architectural rebuild you're facing now. You're moving onto a stable, predictable platform with a well-established upgrade pathway.

Fast migration isn't just about meeting deadlines. It's about reaching platform confidence so you can invest in what actually matters: better digital experiences and measurable business impact.

How to make migration strategic

Five strategic questions

Most organisations treat December 2026 as IT compliance. You can position it as digital transformation opportunity. These strategic questions help you frame your upgrade as business investment, not technical necessity.

01
What could we consolidate whilst we're upgrading?

Migration creates opportunity to simplify template architecture, integrate scattered systems, and modernise workflows. Template consolidation reduces long-term maintenance. System integration brings analytics, personalisation, and content operations together within the CMS. The backoffice rebuild creates a natural moment to rethink how your team works. Consolidation during migration is strategic efficiency.

02
What new capabilities could we gain?

Your editorial team gets an interface they can shape to match their workflows. Your developers can connect CRM, ERP, and product data to the CMS via the Management API. Umbraco Compose becomes available for multi-channel publishing from a single content source. AI capabilities arrive without locking you into a specific provider. These aren't future promises — they're available on Umbraco 17 today.

03
How do we future-proof our platform investment?

Umbraco's release cadence aligns with Microsoft's .NET lifecycle, giving you a clear, predictable roadmap. Future LTS-to-LTS upgrades are expected to be incremental transitions — not the architectural rebuild you're facing now. Meanwhile, Umbraco's expanding ecosystem (Engage, Compose, Commerce, AI) adds capabilities without replatforming. You're investing in a platform with a well-established, low-disruption upgrade pathway.

04
What makes this investment strategic, not just necessary?

Platform stability enables confident digital innovation investment. Teams build sophisticated experiences knowing the foundation is solid and supported. The upgrade creates opportunity to embed personalisation, performance measurement, and API-first content delivery that version 13's architecture couldn't support. Strategic investment perspective transforms your upgrade from cost centre to capability enabler.

05
Who needs to see this as opportunity beyond IT?

Finance evaluates ROI including reduced hosting costs, lower maintenance burden, and operational efficiency. Marketing assesses new personalisation and analytics capabilities enabling competitive advantage. Executive sponsors consider digital foundation stability enabling long-term planning. Cross-functional engagement transforms technical project into business initiative with executive visibility.
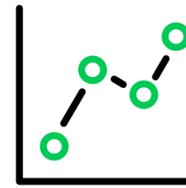
Planning for success

These practical planning areas help you prepare for productive partnership conversations and set your upgrade up for success.

Understanding your current complexity

Before engaging agencies, understand your upgrade scale. Document your page count, template count, custom backoffice extensions, and integration dependencies. This doesn't require exhaustive technical audit, just high-level clarity. Are you migrating 100 pages or 10,000? Do you have 15 templates or 150? What systems connect to Umbraco 13?

This clarity enables more accurate agency estimates. It helps you spot when proposals seem unrealistic. Many organisations discover consolidation opportunities during this review. You might find numerous templates serving limited use cases, revealing simplification potential. Understanding your complexity protects your budget and timeline.

Defining success beyond compliance

What does successful migration look like beyond "met the December deadline"? Marketing might want built-in personalisation or first-party analytics replacing third-party dependencies. IT might want simplified integrations or reduced technical debt. Finance wants clear ROI. Executive sponsors want strategic positioning.

Documenting stakeholder perspectives before agency conversations helps evaluate proposals objectively. Clear success criteria prevents mid-project conflicts when unstated expectations surface. Your agency partner can help refine these, but having documented thinking creates stronger partnership foundations.

Getting migration-ready

Practical readiness determines how quickly you can move from agency selection to implementation. These areas help you prepare.

Timeline & procurement planning

Work backwards from December 2026 to understand your realistic timeline. Factor in procurement, contract negotiations, implementation, QA, and buffer. The effective deadline is 10 November 2026 — when .NET 8 loses Microsoft support. If procurement typically takes weeks in your organisation, factor that in. Starting conversations in Q4 2026 creates unnecessary pressure. Q1-Q2 2026 provides comfortable margin.
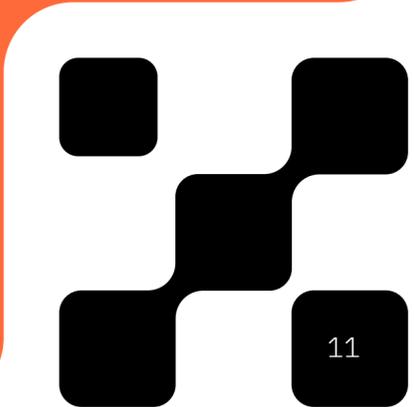
Evaluating agency partners

Look for Umbraco partnership credentials as baseline. Platinum Partner status provides direct product team access and certified expertise. Ask about proven Umbraco 17 experience with referenceable customers. Enquire about migration automation tools because manual approaches extend timelines significantly. Check version management track record — how many major upgrades has the agency delivered? Cultural fit matters. Create simple evaluation criteria for objective comparison.

Preparing your organisation

Migration affects teams beyond IT. The v13-to-v17 upgrade introduces a rebuilt editorial interface — content creators learn new workflows and navigation. Administrators configure governance differently. Early stakeholder communication prevents resistance. You don't need detailed change plans before agency selection. You need awareness this involves people change alongside technical change. Your partner guides transition planning, but acknowledging the human element early sets realistic expectations.

How MSQ DX and Umbraco deliver

Platform excellence and implementation expertise

Platform partnership and implementation expertise working together to deliver your upgrade efficiently.

About MSQ DX

MSQ DX is a 600-person digital experience agency operating across the DACH region, UK, and US. We're the world's first digital impact company. If we can't measure the impact, we don't build it. We hold Platinum Partner status with Umbraco — one of our longest platform partnerships at 15+ years — alongside expertise across Contentful, Contentstack, Kentico, Optimizely, Sitecore, and Storyblok. Our Umbraco team includes certified Umbraco Masters and Experts, and we're the only agency with Head of Sustainability on Umbraco's Community Sustainability Team, creating industry-leading tools for low-carbon implementation.

About Umbraco

Umbraco gives editorial teams independence and developers flexibility — trusted by 700,000+ websites worldwide. Version 17 LTS delivers a customisable backoffice, the Management API for system integration, and a growing ecosystem including Engage, Compose, and Commerce. ISO 27001 certified since January 2026, ranked #1 for enterprise usability on G2, and built on a predictable upgrade pathway aligned with Microsoft's .NET release cadence.

This is a partnership combining platform excellence with implementation expertise and proprietary tools. We don't just upgrade. We help you transform onto a stable, modern foundation that enables confident digital innovation.

Certified. Accelerated. Guaranteed.

No Umbraco partner other than MSQ DX combines Platinum Partner status, proprietary migration automation, and proven long-term managed services. This is how we deliver what others promise.

Platinum Partner & 15+ years

Umbraco Platinum Partner status provides direct product team collaboration, early roadmap visibility, and certified expertise. Our 15+ years of specialisation means we've managed every major version transition. For upgrade projects, this translates to proven migration frameworks, content model optimisation patterns, and methodology that de-risks complex transitions. You benefit from deep knowledge earned across financial services, professional services, manufacturing, and hospitality.

Nimbus: AI-powered migration

Our proprietary Nimbus platform streamlines the entire migration effort. It automates content capture, architecture mapping, and template consolidation — reducing cost, risk, and time to value. What typically takes months of manual effort is compressed into weeks with validated accuracy. Your team isn't waiting for content to be copied page by page. Nimbus handles the heavy lifting so the project focuses on the work that actually improves your digital experience.

Beyond go-live: managed services

Migration is the beginning, not the end. Our managed services model ensures your platform delivers sustained value — 24/7 support with tiered resolution, proactive version management, performance monitoring, and quarterly strategic reviews. We don't hand over and walk away. We help you continuously improve editorial efficiency, conversion performance, and platform capability as Umbraco's ecosystem evolves.

Pick your starting point

Interested in finding out more? We'd love to help. Simply reach out and let us know which of the 3 approaches seems the best starting point.

OPTION 01

Initial fit discussion

We'll have a 30-minute conversation to discuss your Umbraco 13 situation and upgrade options. It's informal and there's no pressure. We're just exploring whether our approach matches your timeline and requirements.

OPTION 02

Upgrade complexity assessment

We'll spend an hour examining your Umbraco 13 setup — architecture, content volume, custom extensions, integrations, and customisations. We'll advise on likely timeline and investment based on your specific complexity. An honest assessment before you make any commitment.

OPTION 03

Stakeholder opportunity assessment

We'll demonstrate Umbraco 17's rebuilt backoffice, Compose content orchestration, AI capabilities, and how the Management API connects your existing systems. Perfect for taking stakeholders on the transformation journey.

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Get started, we are looking forward to hearing from you!

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