



QUICK GUIDE

Own your commerce roadmap

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SWITCH

Digital transformation

Digital transformation. What was once a buzzword, popular amongst software sales reps, is now one of the most talked about topics in the world of commerce and a top agenda item for businesses - both big and small.

It is, quite simply, the adoption of digital technology to replace a physical process. But it also allows enterprises to prepare for the future, to shift to new business models, address new challenges, and focus strategies on new technologies. And it is more relevant now than ever before.

Constant evolution of the business landscape, changing customer expectations, and ongoing advances in technologies mean that digital transformation is a must. And it needs to be more than just adding a simple online shopping cart. Successful businesses are realizing the importance of shifting away from separate online and offline strategies, and towards "customer-first" strategies. Where customers can experience unified and connected buying journeys with personalized interactions.

To achieve this aim, marketing and IT leaders alike are beginning to take back control and truly own their commerce roadmap for today, and as their business grows and evolves into the future.

In this guide we'll explore the forces presently shaping buyer expectations, and why companies across manufacturing, distribution, and retail are all taking back control of how they go to market. We'll explore what a modern commerce roadmap is, and how composable commerce can help.



The market

As a result of recent events, growth of the ecommerce market has accelerated about five years into the future according to IBM's US Retail Index. And consumers' expectations have accelerated with it.

In a recent survey conducted by Forrester of US adults with confirmed or suspected cases of COVID-19 in their household, **75% said they were spending more time online than ever before***.

Ordering groceries, taking an exercise class, and going to the doctor are all things that we now do from the comfort of our own homes without a second thought. Online shopping is here to stay, and consumers expect frictionless buying experiences across online and offline channels.

Today's consumer is more digitally empowered than ever and expectations are high. They don't want to move through the entire checkout process just to be surprised by taxes and shipping costs right at the end. And they expect to be able to arrange a delivery that suits their lifestyle, not that suits your business. Convenience is critical. And consumers expect fast fulfilment and a variety of delivery options, with clear costs and timeframes.

75% of survey respondents say they are spending more time online than ever before*

FORRESTER

* Source: Lai, Anjali. Forrester Research, May 27, 2020, *Post-Pandemic US Consumer Recovery Will Vary by Personal Experiences during the Pandemic.*



The reality - you need to keep up

By now, most companies, regardless of digital maturity, have established an online presence. Simple web stores have been built and enterprises of all sizes are leaning more heavily into digital marketing and ecommerce. But that doesn't mean that digital transformation has been achieved, it is an ongoing and evolving process.

As the business landscape changes, and customer expectations evolve, organizations must focus their attention on acquiring new customers, retaining existing ones, and protecting market share. To achieve these goals, you need more from your technology.

The need to scale

Growth means more. More orders, more traffic, more bandwidth. If your business has growth plans, then you need scalability. You need software that can handle your growing needs, that allows you to keep up with momentum, and that enables you to delight all your new customers as well as existing customers.

Gartner Says 69% of Boards of Directors Accelerated Their Digital Business Initiatives Following COVID-19 Disruption*

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* Gartner® Press Release, "Gartner Says 69% of Boards of Directors Accelerated Their Digital Business Initiatives Following COVID-19 Disruption", 30 September 2020, (<https://www.gartner.com/en/newsroom/press-releases/2020-09-30-gartner-says-sixty-nine-percent-of-boards-of-directors-accelerated-their-digital-business-initiatives-folloing-covid-19-disruptions>) GARTNER is a registered trademark and service mark of Gartner, Inc. and/or its affiliates in the U.S. and internationally and is used herein with permission.

The need for flexibility

Flexibility is key for both your business and your customers. Headless ecommerce – a separate front and backend – allows you to enrich user experience without disrupting the underlying code. Plus, it allows you to roll out new features and capabilities that meet your customers' needs.

The need for customization

It goes without saying that customization is crucial. It allows you to add a personal touch to every interaction that your customers have with your brand, whenever and wherever. A personalized experience is a vital step in building brand likeability, trust, and loyalty.

The need for speed

The pandemic demonstrated just how quickly businesses could accelerate change. Launching multi-year digital initiatives in just a few weeks didn't seem possible. And yet for some, it was. Speed was imperative for survival, and it will continue to be crucial for you to keep ahead of the competition.

The need for agility

Digital transformation can no longer be siloed within the IT team, as marketers need to push dynamic campaigns to respond to and engage with fast-changing customer demands and market trends.

The need for investment

Technology investments increased immediately in the pandemic and are expected to continue to increase. According to a survey conducted by Harvard Business Review* (HBR), 82% of business leaders have increased investment in digital initiatives as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic. Almost two-thirds (62%) said investing in technologies to accelerate the delivery of new business applications and/or products is a top technology spending priority for the near future.

* Source: Harvard Business Review - *The Transparency Imperative: How Visibility into Technology Spending Drives Business Value.*

Today's marketers need the ability to:

- Guide the organization in the direction the customer is steering them towards
- Combine, connect, and optimize data, content, and commerce to establish omni-channel consistency
- Control the brand and experience across new, emerging channels that aren't owned (such as Amazon)

Today's IT and technology need the ability to:

- Deliver agility and flexibility that other leaders across the business are demanding
- Say "Yes!" to feature requests and updates as customer expectations change, driving continuous innovation
- Integrate back-office systems to better manage data across the entire organization
- Demonstrate the value of new technology and how it will drive the business into the future



A new direction

Enterprise ecommerce experiences built on monolithic, slow-moving software platforms are now struggling to respond with the speed and agility needed to compete in today's competitive market.

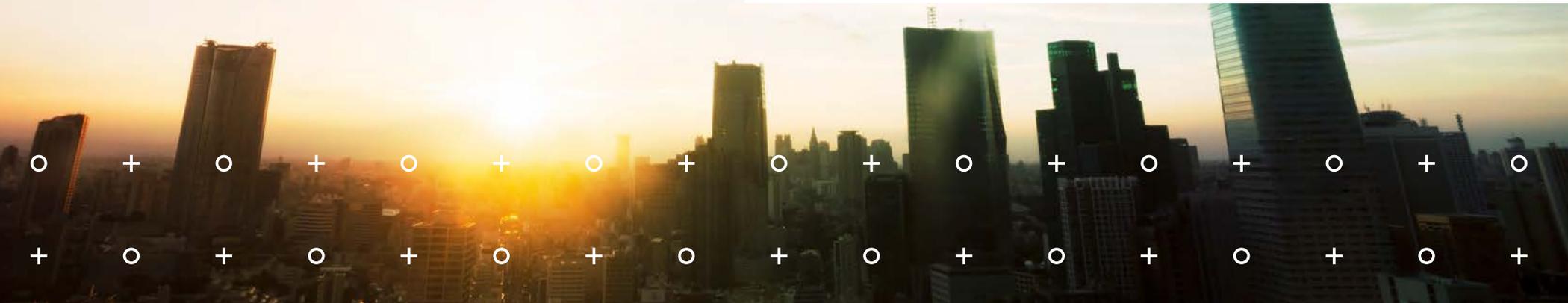
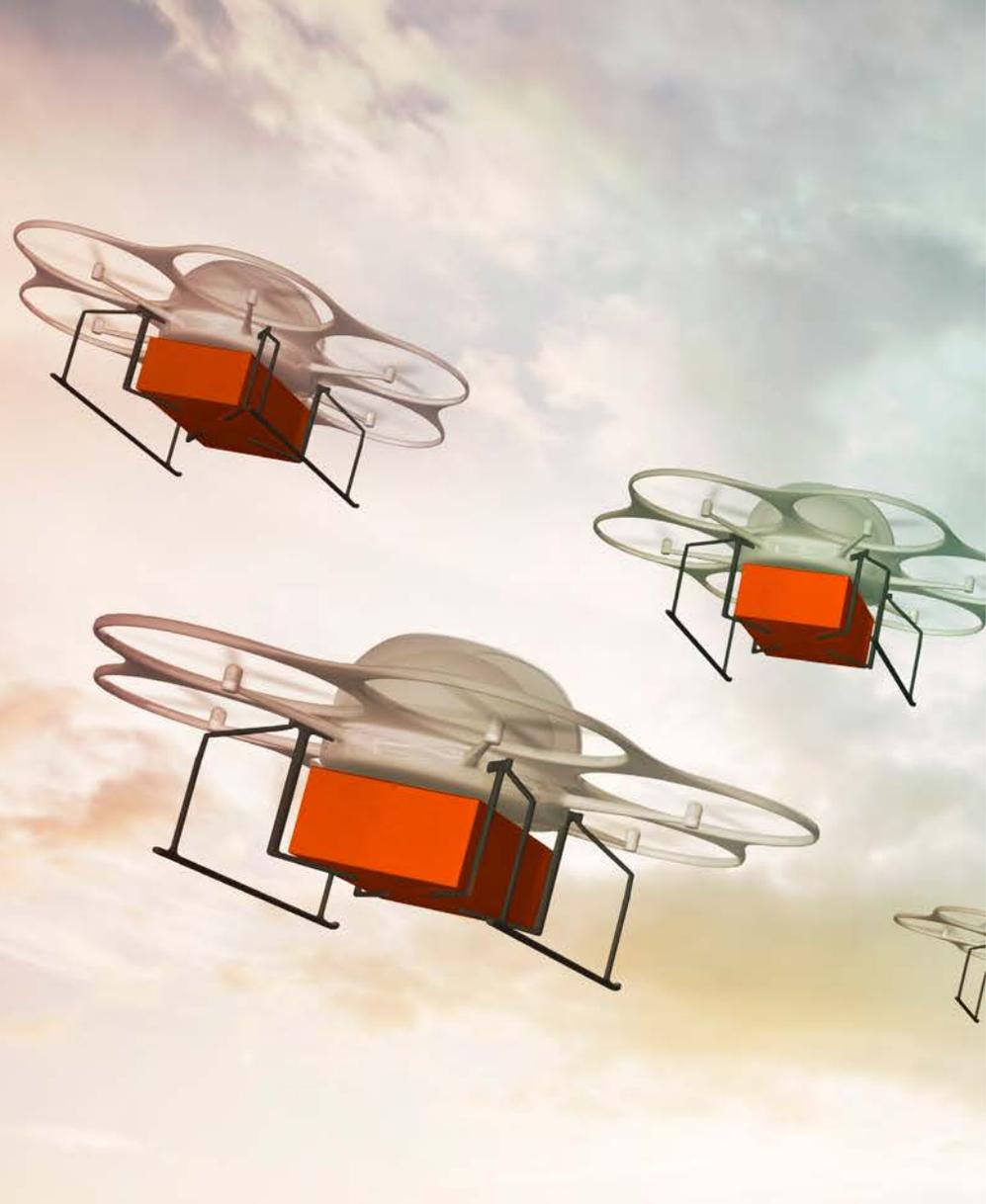
New feature requests are difficult and costly, or even impossible to complete.

Integrating with other back-office systems to better optimize the order processing experience takes too much time and resources, leaving systems siloed and underutilized.

And whenever a new go-to-market strategy or opportunity comes into play, teams are sent back to the drawing board and the vendor selection process.

To rise up and meet these challenges, ahead of your competitors, you need to rethink your commerce strategy. You need technology that is designed with flexibility and scalability so that you can make updates, extend to new markets, and maintain control of the customer experience over time.

You need the ability to own your commerce roadmap.



Establishing a modern commerce roadmap - What would that look like?

A future-ready foundation you can build upon is where your journey should begin. Flexibility to grow with you, as your business evolves, will carry you into the future.

01

Start with a digital storefront

There is no question that the future is digital. To stay competitive, the foundation of your roadmap should be an ecommerce platform that allows you to deliver highly customized B2C and B2B commerce experiences and workflows that mirror the way your business runs.

There is no need to transform the way your business runs just to fit into the confines of your software. The right platform will support each unique workflow experience that you need to deliver.

02

Establish omnichannel consistency

Once you've established a strong digital footprint, you'll need to focus on establishing a single source of truth for all orders, wherever they come from.

Disconnected online and offline experiences with order data siloed across various systems creates an operational nightmare. It increases expenses and halts growth and innovation.

Your customers want the same level of service wherever, and whenever, they buy from you.

An ecommerce platform with APIs at its core will allow you to take your roadmap to the next milestone: establishing omnichannel consistency. This will help you to build brand loyalty, create more sales touchpoints, and deliver a personalized experience to your customers.

03

Personalize the experience for every user type

An omnichannel approach to ecommerce allows you to share data across channels. With this data, you'll have the ability to deliver personalized buying experiences across every touchpoint. This allows you to add value to a customer by making it better, easier, or faster to make a purchase.

You can take their experience to the next level by actively monitoring and updating the experience through content, features, and functionalities as their needs change.

It's all in the detail

Your customers are all individuals with their own stories. They have different likes, dislikes, and habits.

When, as a business, you recognise these differences and demonstrate understanding and empathy, customers will feel that you have their best interests at heart. And this is the secret to building lasting and loyal relationships with customers, who will ultimately turn into advocates for your brand.

Customer experience drives more than two-thirds of customer loyalty, outperforming brand and price combined – but over 70% of CX leaders struggle to design projects that increase customer loyalty and achieve results*.

* Gartner, "How to Excel at Strategy and Execution: A Marketing Perspective", 2020 (<https://www.gartner.com/en/insights/top-insights/marketing-2020>).



04

Navigate new markets

It's more important than ever for businesses to diversify their approach to reaching new customers by integrating into new channels - be it B2B, direct-to-consumer (D2C), existing 3rd Party marketplaces, or social media.

"Out of convenience, buyers are increasingly researching products on consumer sites like online consumer marketplaces (33%), search engines (26%), and business marketplaces (17%)" (Accenture)¹.

New markets might include:

- **Consumer Marketplaces²:** Channels such as Amazon see close to 2.5 billion visitors a month and over 50% of searches for products start on Amazon versus Google.
- **Social Networks³:** Over 130 million Instagram users tap on shopping posts every month, with two thirds of all Instagram users saying the network helps foster interactions with brands.
- **B2B Marketplaces⁴:** Established B2B distributors are expanding their product portfolio to capitalize on a share of \$3.6 trillion in sales by 2024.

¹Accenture - Master Omni-Channel B2B Customer Engagement. ²Digital Commerce 360 - 2021 Top 1000 Report Analyzing North America's leading 1,000 online retailers. ³Instagram. ⁴Digital Commerce 360 - The 2020 B2B Marketplace Report Series.

05

Execute omni-market control

As you enter new channels, you need to ensure that new growth opportunities don't negatively impact your core business contracts and commitments.

The right commerce platform will enable you to maintain control of your commerce roadmap. You'll be able to control:

- **Product Access:** Control which markets and channels get which products based on supplier agreements and distribution access.
- **Pricing Strategies:** Support specialized pricing for high-profile buyer contracts while providing list pricing into open marketplaces.
- **Order Validation:** Configure order validation logic by channel, including the integration of 3rd party services to automate fulfillment.

These steps provide a solid basis for building your strategy but choosing the right technology will be key to delivering a successful commerce roadmap. Investing in a flexible solution that integrates with existing systems within your organization will ensure that objectives are achieved faster and with minimal disruption.





How Composable Commerce can help

When looking for the right technology to power your modern commerce roadmap, there are four, crucial capabilities to look for:

1. Scalability to match your future needs, so you can operate at high performance, no matter your pace of growth.
2. Customizability and control to meet each of your unique buyers' expectations.
3. Extensibility for both connecting systems and extending your commerce experience to new channels.
4. Agility and speed you need to respond to changing customer expectations.

A composable commerce platform with APIs at its core will allow you to take back control and own your commerce roadmap.

Are you ready to take back control of your commerce roadmap?

Get in touch to see how we can help you today.

The flexibility of composable commerce allows businesses to use and develop only the features and functionality necessary to run their business. These applications are often leaner, faster, and more flexible. To work even faster and deliver an experience that's far superior, this development approach lets you seamlessly combine different best-of-breed components, from content management to payment processing, further speeding up your time-to-market.

With customer demands continuously evolving and the need for digital transformation more important and necessary than ever, composable commerce gives businesses greater control over how their ecommerce application is delivered. The decoupled approach makes it easy to manage ecommerce experiences across channels while setting yourself up for success with a future-proof application.

Sitecore® OrderCloud® is an API-first, headless ecommerce platform which supports your needs for scalability, flexibility, customizability, and speed to market.

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ABOUT SITECORE

Sitecore delivers a digital experience platform that empowers the world's smartest brands to build lifelong relationships with their customers. A highly decorated industry leader, Sitecore is the only company bringing together content, commerce, and data into one connected platform that delivers millions of digital experiences every day. Leading companies including American Express, ASOS, Kimberly-Clark, L'Oréal and Volvo Cars rely on Sitecore to provide more engaging, personalized experiences for their customers.

Learn more at [Sitecore.com](https://www.sitecore.com)

ABOUT SWITCH

Switch is a multi-award-winning digital agency with proven success in delivering the complete vision for customer experience management and measurement. We create composable solutions for businesses to connect with their customers through intelligent design, strong implementation, structured support, defined metrics and future optimisation strategies.

Learn more at [switchit.com](https://www.switchit.com)