

Five Retail Challenges Overcome by Composable Commerce



Part One

Introduction

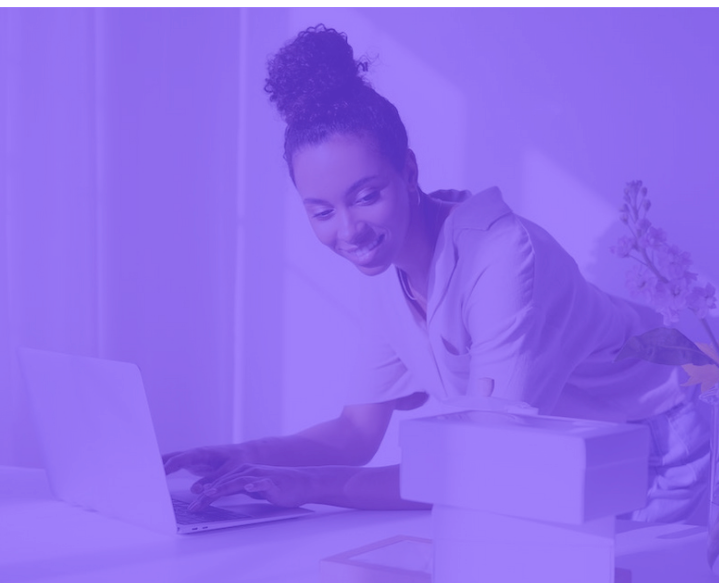
The Changing E-commerce Landscape

The retail e-commerce environment changes relentlessly, with a constant influx of competitors and ever-changing customer expectations and demands, challenging even the most sophisticated marketing technology (martech) stack to keep pace. What worked yesterday might hit the wall tomorrow. You can **survive** with monolithic or off-the-shelf systems. But to **thrive**, you need scalable, flexible systems built using the composable commerce architecture.

Why Retail and Rigidity Don't Mix

In the early days of the digital age, monolithic technology stacks represented the ultimate in sophistication and capability. However, **monolithic systems** are ill-suited to accommodate the rapid and frequent changes required to meet new market demands and competitive challenges that retailers face.

The primary reason for this inflexibility lies in the core architecture of monolithic systems. These systems are integrated from top to bottom. They are so tightly intertwined that a change in one area can, and often does, break something in another. Making changes requires an intensive, expensive and time-consuming development process. Developers need to document the user requirements, create a scope of work, receive approval to proceed, and turn the coders loose to write the required software changes, test and deploy. That laborious process slows down teams that need to react opportunistically and address ever-changing marketplace conditions to remain competitive.



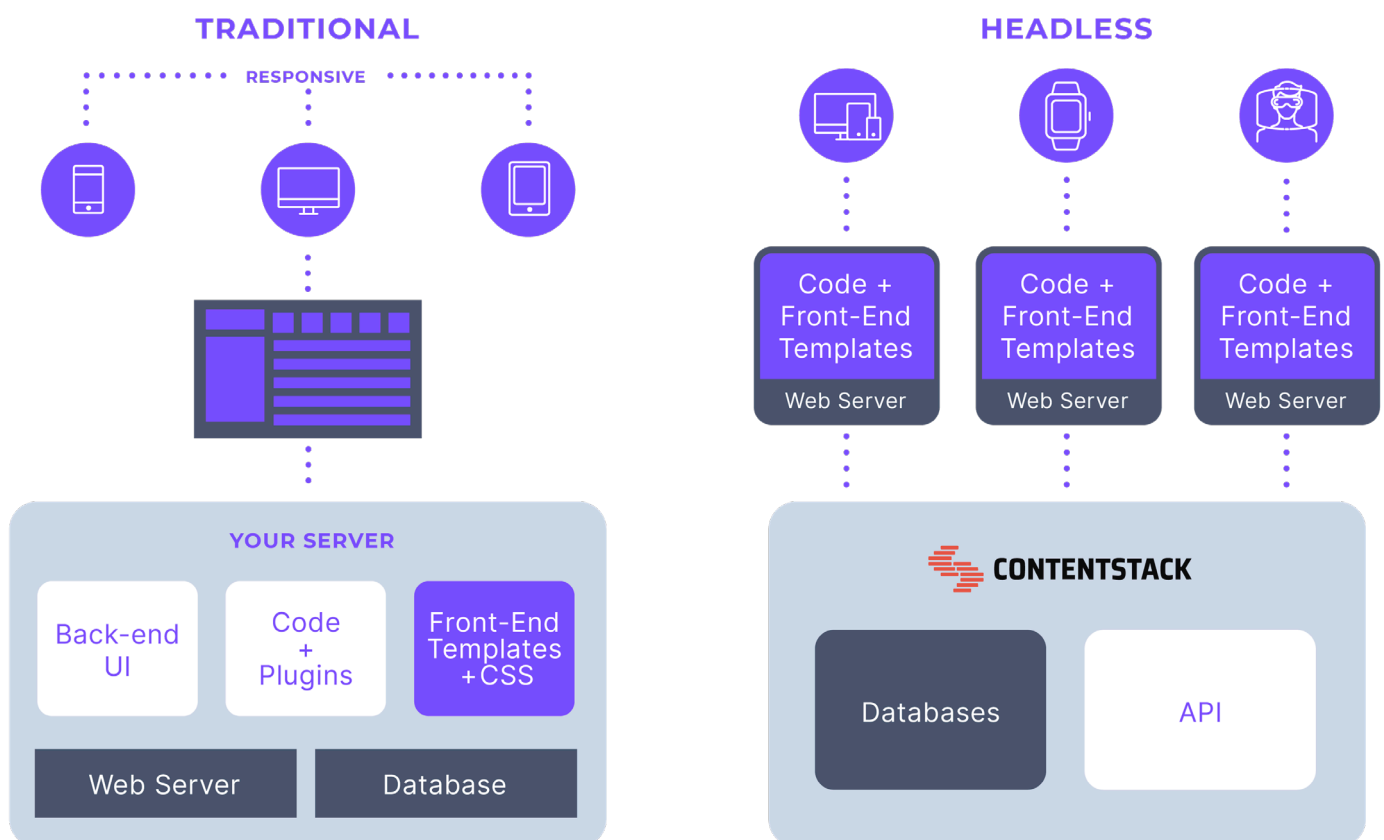
What is Composable Commerce?

Think of composable commerce as a development methodology where companies select best-in-breed commerce components for the specific functionality their business requires. After selecting these components, the company “composes” an e-commerce solution via APIs. These little bits of code are a big part of what makes composable commerce possible, or as Aristotle put it: “The whole is greater than the sum of its parts.”

Composable commerce systems are intentionally designed to allow rapid and continuous changes, enhancements and replacement of individual modules. And, unlike monolithic systems, changes to a component don't create unexpected issues in other parts of the technology stack.

The secret of these powerful systems? **MACH architecture** (**M**icroservices, **A**PI-first, **C**loud-native, and **H**eadless). The following diagrams illustrate how **composable commerce systems** are architected using the composable approach compared to more traditional system structures.

CMS Architectures



Five Crucial Retail Challenges that Composable Commerce Solves

Composable commerce is built to flex and change rapidly to meet new challenges and opportunities; and does it exceptionally well, as the following examples demonstrate. In each case, the company faced different issues stemming from the inflexibility of its existing systems. And in each case, switching to a composable architecture allowed the companies to not only overcome their immediate retail challenges but to thrive in an increasingly competitive marketplace.

1

Challenge One

Existing Platform was Unable to Scale with the Business

The inability to scale important business systems and change customer digital experience (DXP) interfaces easily and quickly represents a significant obstacle to capitalizing on growth, especially in retail e-commerce.

One online retailer started their business using Shopify, an e-commerce platform falling between a monolithic and MACH architecture. The solution initially satisfied the company's and its customers' needs, enabling it to meet and exceed its growth expectations. However, the company soon discovered the limits of its off-the-shelf e-commerce architecture.

Keeping pace with changing customer demands and managing increasing business volumes required the company to develop and deploy customizations to the e-commerce architecture, often hard-coded. As customizations piled on each other, the entire system became ever more complex and vulnerable to glitches and bugs.

It was also an expensive and time-consuming process that hindered the company's ability to meet changing market demands in a timely manner with confidence the systems would perform properly.

The composable commerce solution

The company implemented a **composable commerce solution** to replace its current semi-monolithic and inflexible system. By adopting the MACH approach of "composing" a solution from discrete components, or microservices, connected with APIs, the company created a system architecture capable of scaling without limitation and deploying updates and added capabilities without incurring the broader risks of "breaking" something elsewhere in the system.

Today, the company creates and implements special promotions, conducts A/B testing, previews different front-end combinations to determine which has the greatest customer appeal and easily implements dynamic pricing strategies to close more sales, all without involving a developer.



2

Challenge **Two**

Just Going Headless Wasn't Enough to Meet Emerging Business Requirements

When monolithic enterprise IT systems provide essential internal services to functional areas outside sales and marketing, a wholesale migration to the composable commerce architecture may be infeasible. In these situations, moving off the legacy system requires a hybrid approach.

One sizable online clothing retailer facing this situation went headless for certain martech and customer-facing functionality, retaining its monolithic system to continue serving other internal users' needs. However, it quickly discovered that the hybrid approach couldn't support the changes and improvements required to meet all its business objectives. It simply lacked the flexibility to do so.

The composable commerce solution

The company found the solution in the MACH architecture, where all the APIs managing the interaction of the microservices are language, channel and vendor agnostic. Also, the flexibility of the API-first architecture enabled the company to implement its front-end applications in a manner that best suited its business objectives, unfettered by other system limitations.

The composable architecture they deployed provides all the speed and flexibility necessary to captivate consumers and convert site visits into sales, presenting a personalized experience based on customer characteristics and not system limitations. And APIs also feed the monolithic system the data it needs to deliver critical services to internal users.

3

Challenge **Three**

Needed to Fill Critical Gaps in a Legacy Platform

A large Latin America (LATAM) supermarket chain used the Oracle Commerce platform to provide essential internal services. This monolithic, purpose-built system worked well for certain services but could have been more effective at delivering others. For example, it was incapable of providing support for complex promotional campaigns tailored to meet specific market needs in different countries. These functionality gaps created severe issues for the company.

The company's workaround was often expensive and always complex and slow. For example, meeting the unique market needs of two countries required creating separate instances of the monolithic system: a costly solution. This workaround required substantial hard-coded customization, exposing the company to the attendant issues that go with it. It also involved long lead times and increased the fragility of the overall system.

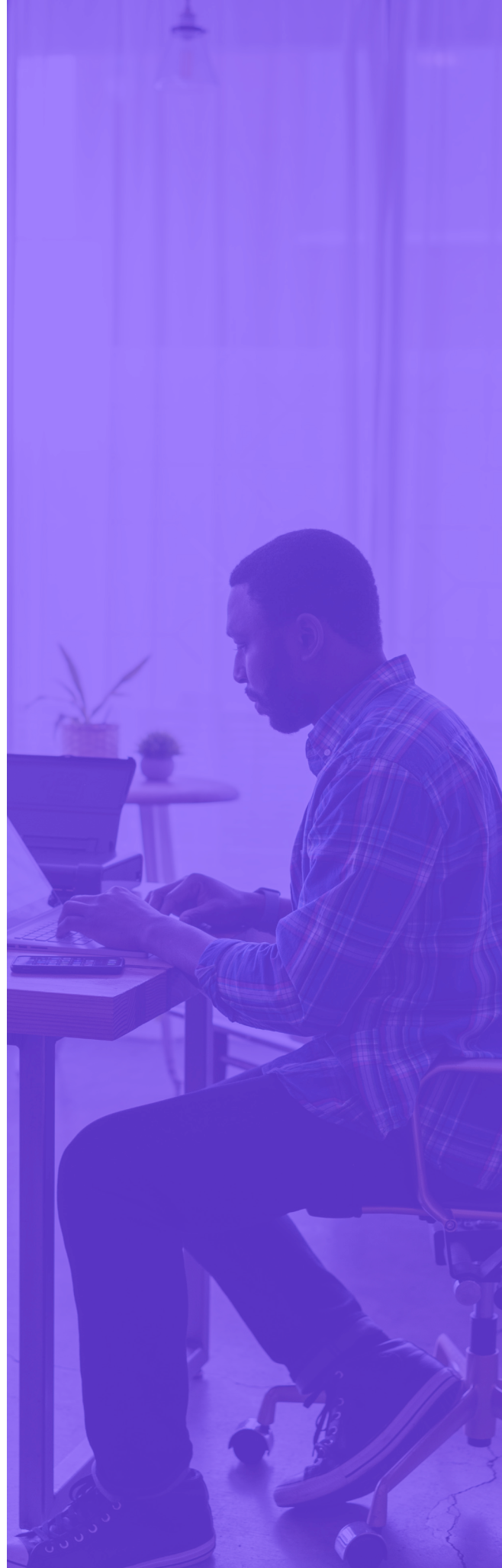
The composable commerce solution

The company turned to MACH architecture for a solution. Using the innate flexibility of the architecture, they built a common backend-as-a-service (BaaS), creating a single API that any front end system or other internal operation needing to interface with the monolithic system could use to interact with the existing system.

Internal services connected to the BaaS include the "promise engine," a real-time inventory tool required to make their "buy online and pick up in store" (BOPIS) service functional and dependable. Back-office functions such as PIM, OMS, and ERP also used the API.

A composable commerce solution now serves each country, providing a unique customer experience tailored to that country's preferences and market requirements. Today, the company manages complex promotions, responds rapidly to market changes, and adapts rapidly when global events like COVID-19 severely impact traditional in-store traffic.

And for the first time, the composable commerce solution enables the company to create a unique composable customer experience for each traditional supermarket's website.



4

Challenge **Four**

All-in-One Platform Couldn't Keep Up with Business's Growing Complexity

E-commerce may be the largest enabler of establishing an international presence regardless of where your operations reside. In the rush to take advantage of this new "channel," many early adopters implemented off-the-shelf, all-in-one solutions, invested in monolithic enterprise systems or customized their existing legacy systems to capitalize on this emerging global opportunity.

One mid-market business-to-business (B2B) company took the all-in-one, off-the-shelf approach and enjoyed initial success. However, it quickly became apparent that this approach couldn't handle the complexity of its business model and elaborate product catalog.

The company invested heavily in creating customizations for its e-commerce solution but still was unable to meet vital needs or adapt in a timely manner to market changes. On top of the cost and glacial pace of change, the customizations reduced system reliability, creating conflicts and producing unexpected issues in seemingly unrelated parts of the system.

At the same time, the company was moving its digital operations to Amazon Web Services (AWS) to take advantage of the commodity pricing offered by AWS.

The composable commerce solution

A composable commerce system met every need of the company. This approach enabled it to reduce the total cost of ownership (TCO) of its e-commerce solution with a software as a service (SaaS) model, maximize system availability, house all its applications in the cloud, scale rapidly to meet growth objectives and market opportunities and only pay for the services it needed. And its new solution was designed to be easily maintainable using cloud best practices and infrastructure as code (IaC).



5

Challenge **Five**

Quickly Growing Business Needed to Re-Platform, but Wanted to Avoid Disruptions

A large B2B company was actively pursuing a strategy to migrate off its home-grown, in-house legacy commerce system that had reached the end of its adaptability. While the company had already kicked off a headless project internally, they wanted to add the experience and power of a technology vendor and systems integrator (SI) to complete the migration to a full MACH composable commerce solution.

Of vital concern, the migration had to be completed with the legacy system still running to ensure there were **no interruptions to business operations**. Working with their technology vendor and SI, the company mapped out an incremental, phased approach that completed the migration with no business disruptions.

The composable commerce solution

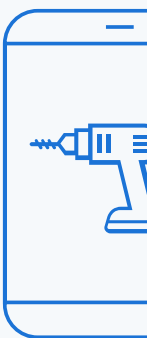
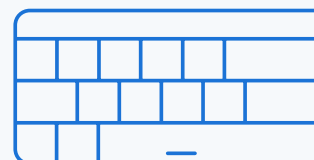
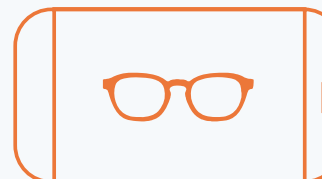
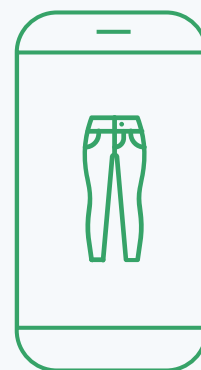
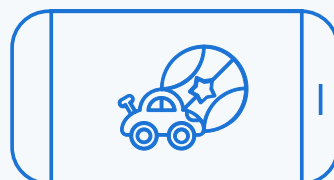
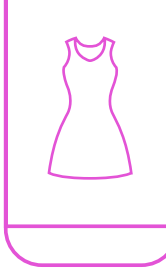
Composable commerce solutions are ideal for companies and organizations that require a **phased, incremental development and implementation approach**. The use of APIs and MACH architecture enables companies to determine the order in which components of the new solution are implemented and specify the timetable for making the new functionality available to customers. All of this takes place without disruptions to normal, day-to-day operations.



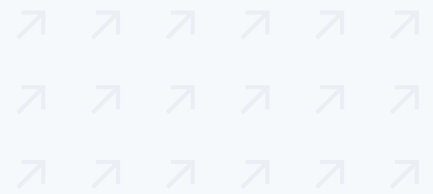
Benefits of Adopting a Composable Commerce Approach

As you can see from these five challenges, composable commerce's innate characteristics and capabilities make it a powerful approach for retailers, whether you're web-only, hybrid (bricks & mortar and web) or bricks & mortar-only. Here are some of the key benefits adopting composable commerce can provide:

- **Publish content faster** via a fully integrated, automated, MACH-compliant front end.
- Acquire the ability to **innovate quickly** and publish engaging, personalized content in a fraction of the time.
- **Use flexible content modeling** to organize and scale content without having to write code. Content is organized in blocks to help you deliver the best experience at the right time.
- Seamlessly **automate manual tasks**, build triggers across your marketing systems in just a few clicks, and see the full feedback loop and campaign audit trail.
- Leverage the **responsive live content preview** to ensure website content looks precisely as intended before publishing across marketing channels.
- Marketing teams can **build their dream tech stack** to do more with less, all while improving the relationship with their developer teams and reducing developer intervention in content publishing.
- **Get more out of your existing marketing investments**, nurture collaboration and consolidate operations into a single platform to streamline and scale content production.
- Implement an effective, efficient and adaptable **omnichannel capability** to broaden your reach and drive more conversions by creating highly personalized customer experiences.
- **Limitless scalability** from cloud-native, cloud-based systems allows you to take full advantage of your growth opportunities.
- **Increased reliability and system availability** by being cloud-based.
- **Pay only for the services you need** and eliminate the expenses of housing system hardware in-house.



Part Two



A Powerful Composable Commerce Partnership



Going Composable Doesn't Have to be Hard or Slow

Changing your martech stack may seem daunting, especially when your current tools are of the monolithic or off-the-shelf variety. MACH architecture simplifies moving to composable commerce, and with the partnership between Contentstack and BigCommerce, creating an industry-best e-commerce system for your company is easy and fast.

Doing What We Do Best, Together

There are any number of analogies we could make about how the two companies complement each other, but this says it perfectly;

“In the Contentstack/BigCommerce partnership, each company **contributes what they do best**; Contentstack brings the content, and BigCommerce brings the commerce, or more precisely, the e-commerce.”

These two leaders in their respective fields deliver an agile, global content and e-commerce platform with the speed and flexibility companies like yours need to thrive.

Choosing our combined solution puts the power to build, innovate and grow in your hands, enabling you to quickly test, learn and adjust your content strategies and DXP to keep your brand and offering ahead of the competition.

From the get-go, our combined solutions provide everything you need to drive a robust omnichannel communications and marketing strategy within the context of a remarkably feature-rich e-commerce site. And, because of the inherent capabilities of the MACH architecture, you'll never find yourself in a technological cul-de-sac or unable to scale to meet growth.

The Contentstack and BigCommerce Stories



Contentstack – the leading Composable Digital Experience Platform (DXP) provider – empowers marketers and developers to deliver digital experiences at the speed of their imagination. Companies such as ASICS, Chase, Express, Holiday Inn, Icelandair, Mattel, McDonald's, Mitsubishi, Riot Games and Shell trust Contentstack's industry-leading headless CMS platform to power their most critical content experiences with uncompromising scale and dependability. Famous for its Care without Compromise™, Contentstack has achieved the industry's highest customer satisfaction rating. Contentstack is also a founding member of the MACH Alliance, setting the industry agenda for open and composable technology that is Microservices-based, API-first, Cloud-native SaaS and Headless.

Learn more at <http://www.contentstack.com>

Contentstack Capabilities Overview

A Contentstack system delivers the following capabilities to companies pursuing an aggressive omnichannel strategy:

- Onboard new system users in less than 30 minutes through easy-to-master interfaces and system structure.
- Roll out localized campaigns 250% faster than with traditional martech stacks.
- Increase your company's IT resource availability by 40% annually with MACH-architected systems.
- Increase your publishing velocity tenfold (10X) over traditional alternatives.
- Dramatically improve content management, availability and usability using one central content hub with a unified user experience across the entire martech stack.
- Streamline the content creation, review, approval and publication process, getting your content to your customer faster than ever.
- Unified content management ensures your content governance meets regulatory standards, where applicable.



BigCommerce is the leading software-as-a-service (SaaS) e-commerce platform that empowers merchants of all sizes to build, innovate and grow their businesses online. As a leading open SaaS solution, BigCommerce provides merchants with sophisticated enterprise-grade functionality, customization and performance with simplicity and ease of use. Tens of thousands of B2B and B2C companies across 120 countries and numerous industries use BigCommerce to create beautiful, engaging online stores, including Ben & Jerry's, Skullcandy, Sony and Woolrich. Headquartered in Austin, TX, BigCommerce has offices in San Francisco, Sydney and London.

BigCommerce Capabilities Overview

The capabilities and power of a BigCommerce storefront are unrivaled in the industry. Just a few of the features and capabilities include:

- Enable your teams to create and manage multiple, unique storefronts across all channels from a unified dashboard.
- Implement and manage cross-channel e-commerce, selling through marketplaces like Amazon, eBay and Google Shopping.
- Add social commerce and brick & mortar capabilities and support to your mix.
- No-code, drag-and-drop storefront design and management.
- Optimize each storefront for any device: PC, tablet and smartphone.
- Build out a conversion maximizing customer experience with coupons, discounts, digital wallets, dynamic pricing and robust search.



Five Ways to Maximize the Combined Power of Contentstack and BigCommerce

One: Differentiate Your Site with Creative Content

Content is still king, and an unrivaled way to differentiate your e-commerce site is to infuse it with creative, captivating, relevant and valuable content. While the nature of your product or service will dictate what type of content your customers value, consider the following and use the power of Contentstack to create, publish and manage it across all channels:

- Engaging videos
- Dynamic how-to guides
- Inspirational visuals
- Creative language
- Context-relevant content

Two: Go Omnichannel Now!

Your existing and potential customers are omnichannel buyers, so you better have a matching omnichannel sales strategy. And your content, branding and messaging must be identical regardless of the channel to deliver the optimal digital customer experience. You want your customers to recognize your brand, style and messaging wherever they encounter you.

Three: Embrace and Take Advantage of Marketplaces

Don't overlook the value of digital marketplaces like Amazon, eBay, Google Shopping and others. While you might prefer to serve your customers from your home storefront, online sellers have increased retail sales by as much as 1,250% by integrating marketplaces into their strategy. And increasingly, savvy e-commerce operations are integrating social selling, allowing customers to purchase directly from their favorite social platform.

Four: Empower Your Experts

Let the people within your company who know the customer best lead the effort to build the customer's digital experience. Don't settle for a serial development process where the technology folks build the platform; the product groups write the descriptions and catalog entries while marketing creates the supporting content. Get all three working together, something impractical, if not impossible, with monolithic and off-the-shelf martech systems.

Five: Experiment with New Trends and Technologies

Where are your customers going regarding how they want to try and buy your products and services? Do they want to use cryptocurrencies as payment? "Test drive" your offerings using augmented reality? Buy from your digital ads on streaming channels? Set aside 5-10% of your marketing budget to enable experimentation with new customer interaction initiatives and technologies. With your combined Contentstack and BigCommerce composable commerce system, you can test, experiment and act while the opportunity is fresh.

ROI and Business Impact

Now, on to the economic side of the equation; what will a composable commerce solution do for my company regarding ROI% and total economic impact (TEI)? In short, will this investment pay for itself and benefit my company's bottom line?

Contentstack has plenty of data about TEI for customers of our software. We also realize that vendor-supplied data can be viewed with a jaded eye. After all, isn't it the objective to make a sale? Even though that tactic has never been part of our DNA, we commissioned the well-respected firm Forrester Consulting to develop an objective assessment of the financial impact of investing in composable commerce solutions from us.

The study came back with remarkable numbers, exceeding our expectations. It's a lengthy document, so we'll provide a few key results. If you'd like a copy of the full report, you can [request a download here](#) in exchange for some contact information. But hey, doesn't that mean a salesperson will contact you? True, we are trying to identify potential future users of our products. But we are also trying to prevent bots from downloading the study. We are confident the information will provide value, and you can easily opt out of future communications.

Here are the key performance statistics for a composite organization using Contentstack:

- 295% Return on investment (ROI)
- \$4.1M Net present value (NPV)
- 90% Reduction in time to publish

Three-year economic benefits for the same composite organization:

- \$3.0M increase in profit
- \$507.3K Productivity savings due to reduced development time
- \$2.0M Savings due to the reduced time to publish

We'd love to help your company achieve these results, too.



295%
Return on investment (ROI)



\$4.1M
Net present value (NPV)



90%
Reduction in time to publish

Customer Care: a true differentiator

Content and digital experience teams seeking dependable, personalized and comprehensive post-sales support are often disappointed when the reality of the engagement settles in.

We believe in relationships. That's why Contentstack Customer Care enables teams to navigate their journey with Contentstack smoothly and efficiently, maximizing the value they get from our platform--every step of the way.



96.8%
Contentstack customer retention rate

Turning customers into heroes with continuous, personalized support, a Tangible Demonstration of Customer Success

Contentstack recognizes that the customer support model most companies follow today often leaves the end user hanging whenever an issue involves software provided by another company. The wealth of API-first components available for MACH-architected systems represents a crucial element behind the success of composable commerce systems. With so many options and the ease of API integration, system users can select exactly what they need regardless of which company provides it for the first time in software history.

One of the challenges of managing a multi-vendor software stack is that companies must deal with several unrelated vendors to address an issue with no clear path to resolution. Let's take an example. Say your company wants a specific search functionality and find it from their preferred vendor. They incorporate it into their composable commerce stack using its API. Everything seems to be working, but then an issue pops up, creating undesirable results with the search component.

Old-School Software Customer Support Model

In many situations, software vendors absolve themselves from any responsibility for issues caused by another company's software. This model usually results in a round of finger-pointing, with each company blaming the other and leaving you with an unresolved problem. Your options here are limited, taking valuable time and potentially forcing your IT staff to fix it themselves. Meanwhile, your martech stack limps along with the issue.

Care Without Compromise Customer Support Model

By contrast, Contentstack's Care Without Compromise program ensures that joint customers are supported with a robust post-purchase experience that brings ease and agility to the implementation and ongoing success of the entire technology stack. The program represents "worry transfer" for the customer.

So, in the situation with the search issue, participants in the Contentstack customer support program will take ownership of the problem, placing the onus of finding the path to resolution on the collaborating vendors, not you, the customer.

Meet customers where they are — now.

The rewards for a successful e-commerce strategy are immense as hundreds of companies are already discovering because of their composable commerce systems. These companies are shredding their goals, growing their market share, delivering significant profits and outpacing their competitors with first-to-market system functionality customers demand.

Composable commerce systems built around the MACH architecture eliminate the bottlenecks, headaches and inability to meet customer expectations and market opportunities imposed by monolithic and off-the-shelf alternatives. Rather than struggling to eke out an e-commerce presence with older technology, companies can now create an infinitely scalable, highly adaptable e-commerce system that will allow them to accomplish strategic goals year after year.

Get started

Are you ready to eliminate the headaches and restrictions of your current martech stack that stand in the way of crushing your e-commerce goals? Then you are ready for a composable commerce solution. Stop losing ground and customers to your more agile competitors and start your journey towards e-commerce success.

What's the perfect next step? **Contact us for an in-depth demonstration** of how our best-in-breed composable content creation and e-commerce solutions can put you on the path to achieving and exceeding your e-commerce objectives.

[Learn how](#)

