

E-BOOK 3:

Composable.com
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After the Launch: Continued Innovation & Scaling

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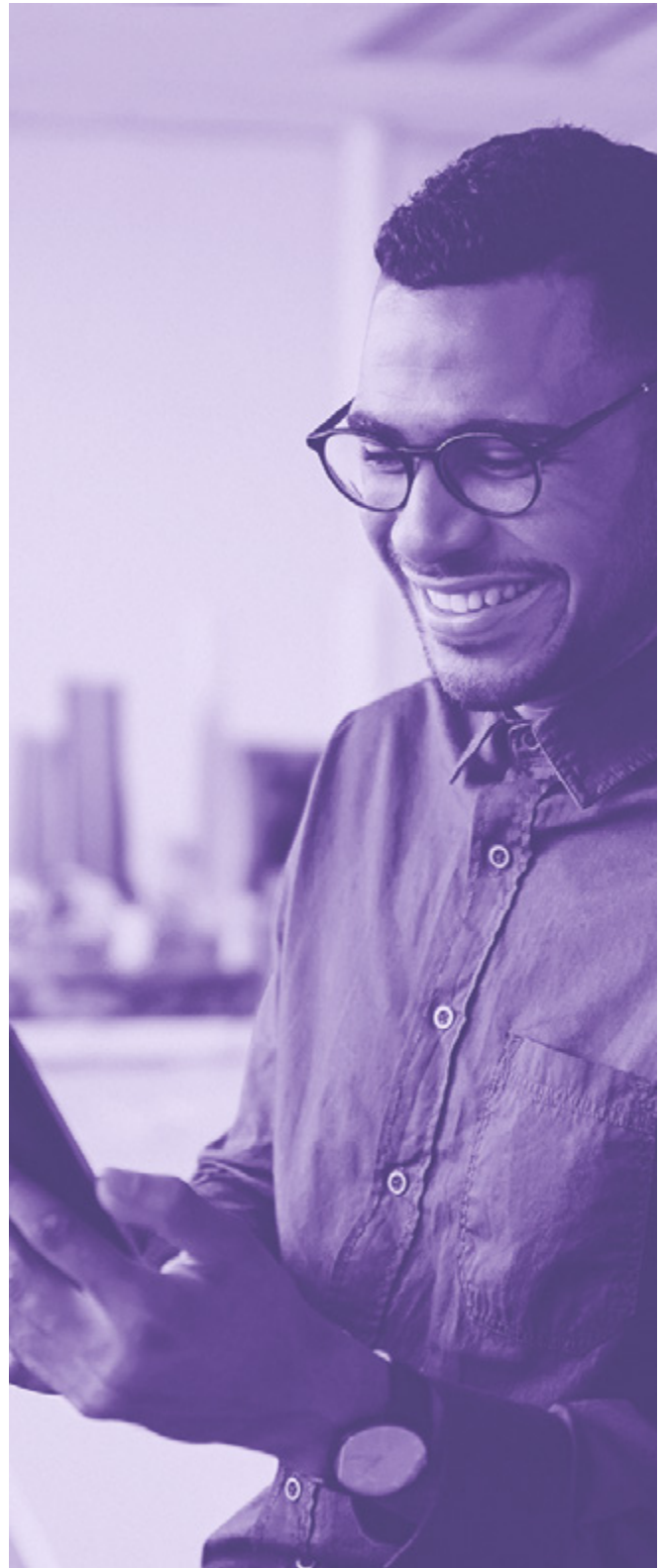
Introduction

The benefits of composable commerce are well established for brands facing complexity and the challenges that come with the new world of multi- (multi-channel, multi-interface, multi-brand, etc). Brands know the time to replatform from an aging monolith is now—take advantage of headless flexibility or be left behind by competitors—and what considerations should be made when outfitting a composable commerce tech stack.

But what happens next?

The commerce space, and e-commerce in particular, evolves at lightning speed. In less than a year novel technologies can become stagnant. Brands can't simply replatform, dust their hands off, and call it a day. To stay competitive, retailers must continually optimize and evolve their digital efforts online and in-store.

That's where this e-book comes in. It will share five foundations of post-launch scaling and innovation for composable commerce. These pair back to the five foundations of moving to composable commerce, shared in [e-book two](#) of *The Foundations Composable Commerce at Scale*.



CHAPTER 1

Technology



Perhaps the most crucial aspect of supporting post-launch scaling and innovation for years to come is the regular maintenance and assessment of the technology powering and enhancing your commerce platform.

Infrastructure powerhouses of the early 2000s and 2010s are now, in many use cases, outdated and inefficient. Eventually, the technologies that comprise today's composable commerce platforms will be too. Let's be clear: a rip-and-replace or total replatforming is not going to be necessary every couple of years. But it is a caution to remain on top of your technology. Be vigilant about assessing its performance, ROI, and flexibility to meet your changing needs and update as necessary, taking advantage of the opportunity to assess performance and make incremental changes to your tech stack to enhance performance and add new functionality.

Much like investing in the stock market, a fruitful and continually optimized investment in composable commerce technology warrants an understanding of knowing when to hold, sell, or adjust how you are using your current assets.

Monitor your tech stack for performance degradation

You wouldn't let your site run without any commerce analytics to track performance and sales, or go by feelings and spot checks alone to determine how you're performing. It might sound obvious, but the same is true for all areas of your tech stack. Supporting continued post-launch

performance improvements requires ongoing maintenance and review.

One of the great benefits of a microservices-driven platform is that one short in the system will not take your whole site down as it does with a monolith. Finding the problem and fixing it should be comparatively straightforward.

That said, it can be difficult to find the point of failure. Just because sales are coming through and you aren't being bombarded with customer calls about being unable to check out doesn't mean there aren't issues. Similarly, just because you don't notice your systems are slowing down by observation doesn't mean it isn't happening.



Every piece of your tech stack should be scrutinized and monitored for performance changes. Not just in isolation, but in their connections as well. See where errors or dropped communications are most frequently occurring. See where speed is decreasing. Listen anecdotally or review support tickets to learn where your customers are finding friction. A modular architecture makes it easier to make incremental improvements and address stand-alone problems along the way, before they can snowball into larger concerns.

If you can address these issues, great! If not, that leads into an opportunity for re-evaluation of components.

How does your tech stack work together and serve your needs, now and in the future?

Best-of-breed does not always mean best for you, which might become apparent post-launch as you look to scale. Some systems may check the boxes for all your needs on paper and may have fully served your needs at the time of launch, but as complexity increases and the need and desire for experimentation grows, gaps may begin to show.

Maybe your product feed management tool can no longer handle updates at the frequency that your inventory and catalog details are changing, resulting in potential customers receiving ads with outdated information. Or maybe you're planning to start accepting new payment types that don't integrate well with your current checkout or payment gateway. Or you've found

that you have two vendors performing tasks that one of them is now able to take on seamlessly alone. Whatever the reason you're having second-thoughts about your tech stack, lean into them. Technology is ever evolving, as are your business needs.

A key benefit of composable commerce is being able to make these kinds of changes to continue to operate at scale, rather than being stuck with the stack you implemented because you have no option to change.

Autoscaling: Don't just throw more power at your problems

One of the biggest benefits of a composable commerce platform supported by cloud infrastructure is autoscaling. Your platform can beef up or pare down resourcing as needed to handle surges and declines in traffic and demand.

As you're scaling, keep an eye on your usage. Even though autoscaling can keep your problems out of sight and out of mind, an increase over time in computing power can be an indicator of trouble and a ticking time bomb for a brewing large-scale infrastructure problem—regardless of if you're feeling the cost now or not.

There will be expected scenarios when your systems need to tick a little harder to keep up (traffic surges are one example). But if your services are overticking at an alarmingly high rate, and requiring a degree of power you can't account for, it's worth looking into.

Something in the code of your calls or connections is making your back-end work harder than it needs to, and that should be addressed before it spreads and impacts other areas. Have your development team take a look at when and where they started to see these unaccounted for surges to triage a root cause—and protect your future platform.

Build vs buy considerations post-launch

To build or to buy? It's a question you probably asked yourself many times during your replatforming, but now you've had time to sit with your technology and assess the outcomes of previous build versus buy decisions. With the greater expertise you possess post-launch, you'll have a new view when it comes time to scale.

The advantage here is that now you have a pretty good idea of the types of custom work your team is good at, and what doesn't make sense to build from scratch yourselves. Likewise, you probably have a good feel for where an out-of-the-box implementation isn't a good

fit and you need more flexibility than current market offerings provide.

When you're looking to add to or change any part of your tech stack in the post-launch stage, here are some assessments you should be considering:

Level of customization required

How much customization will this technology require, and would this level of customization be supported by an existing vendor? If the answers are "a lot" and "no", then you have your answer: build. But tread with caution. A specialized vendor that could support the high level of customization you need may be advantageous to go with, regardless of your in-house development capabilities. You can inadvertently build yourself into a tangled web of complexity that may end up costing more than an external solution in development time (and headaches) by tackling it in-house, so it's worth thinking about where it makes sense to offload effort to a vendor with a specialized focus.



Value vs cost

What is the value you intend to get out of a new system, and what would the cost be to custom build it vs buy it? Is there a difference in projected value that could be recognized from what could be built custom vs bought?

Market examples

Is this change unique to your business, or is this a common problem or use case that can be solved with technology?

Additional considerations (aka X-factors)

Are there other considerations outside of the technical best fit that might come into play when considering a custom build? Could this proof of concept bode favorably as an opportunity to flex your organization’s technical chops in the industry? For investors? For awards or qualifications? If so, this could add weight to the “build” column, but with the caveat that it needs to be a lot of weight to counter the potential risks of failure.



commercetools Spotlight

That “the only constant is change” is a timeless human truth that applies to every aspect of life – even more so in digital commerce. Market conditions and consumer expectations change daily, impacting how you reach out, sell and engage customers via your commerce experiences.

Until now, managing change in digital commerce hasn’t been a walk in the park. Most brands still rely on off-the-shelf commerce solutions that are rigid and difficult to adapt and update. Hence, they face massive challenges in customizing experiences and managing constant changes.

Composable commerce is a framework that flips this model on its head by following a simple philosophy: Maximum flexibility. In this model, you can choose the components that best suit your customer experiences, so you can contract, expand and replace every step of the buying journey without dependencies or vendor lock-in.

Pioneered by commercetools, a leader in digital commerce solutions, composable commerce is how brands can experiment,



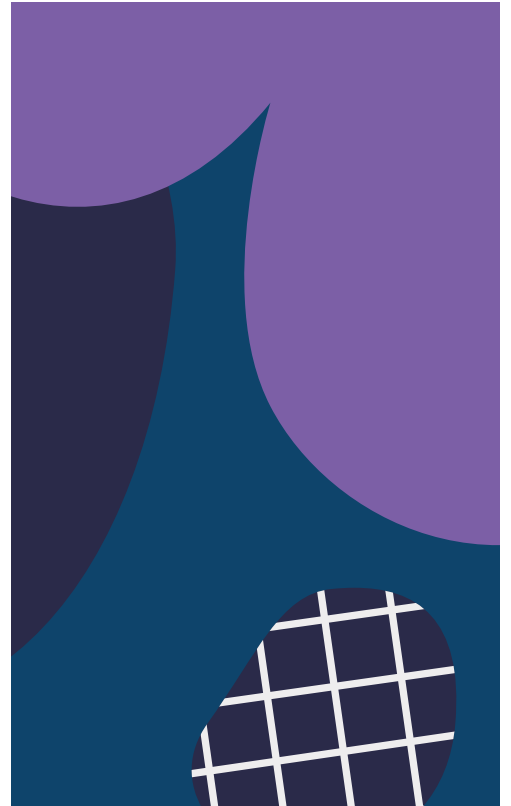
scale, change and adapt any functions at any time without disrupting their commerce engine or customer-facing storefronts. That way, you can unlock a mix of buy, build, extend and customize functions:

- Build what's unique to your business.
- Buy commodity functions like catalogs or shopping carts.
- Extend and customize those commodity features the way you need, injecting bespoke parameters that enable you to tailor your customer experiences further.

Ultimately, with [commercetools](#) composable commerce, you can shape customer experiences as often as you want, so you can thrive in the face of constant change.

CHAPTER 2

Operations



Replatforming and building your website is the easy part. No, really. While the technological aspect may be daunting, you're operating in an area of controlled variables. You have your systems, you have your plan, and your focus is relatively clear of outside interference and the volatile ups and downs of live commerce. You're just building.

And then you launch.

Suddenly you're not just building. You're monitoring, analyzing, maintaining, and handling the many curve balls thrown your way by live operations—all while probably continuing to build. Product issues, supply chain mishaps, sudden changes in your market share that need to be addressed: these all have to be handled on the fly.

Sure, many of these are ultimately outside of the world of your commerce platform itself. But they still have to be dealt with. And just because they

exist outside the platform, doesn't mean they can't be solved—or at least improved—by technology.

Expand your TAM and continue to scale with a marketplace

Technology isn't just able to solve operational problems, it can also identify and enable operational opportunity. In a business context, these opportunities will really start to present themselves after you've been live for some time.

Take the example of a marketplace. A marketplace is a great, relatively low-risk way to test new products and enter new markets. It allows you to access and send third-party vendor products directly to customers on-demand, without purchasing and holding the inventory yourself or even involving your own warehouses. Modern technology to integrate a digital marketplace on your website can handle most of the heavy lifting for you, providing



immediate access to thousands of products that can be ready for purchase on your website following what is generally a fairly hands-off, one-time configuration to connect the marketplace to your ERP/OMS/PIM.

Marketplaces are especially smart to consider in the post-launch optimization stage, rather than in the initial replatforming, because their value will need to be tested in real-time. You can't do pre-launch testing on whether a new product mix you're bringing in will resonate with your customers. You'll need to observe this in real-time as customers purchase on-site. This is why a marketplace within a commerce stack is usually considered for more mature retailers with a solid composable commerce platform. It's important to have been live long enough to know where the areas of opportunity are, to be able to integrate a marketplace with relative confidence and ease. Once you're aware of these opportunities, a Marketplace will let you test out your hypotheses relatively risk free.

As technology solutions go, marketplaces offer a lot of upside, but nothing is perfect. Despite their myriad benefits, marketplaces will not be the right post-launch decision for everyone. They generally operate at a loss for the first while, which means incurring not only the initial upfront costs to launch, but also a period of time involving operational trial and error to find the right vendors and the right product mix to sell on your site before you start to see any ROI.

Even once you're past that stage, there are risks. With your own products in your own warehouses, you have full control. You can define and abide

by fulfillment agreements with your customers, but that's not the case when third-party vendors are fulfilling the orders, which means there's greater risk involved. Your business must be able to support and plan to operate at a loss in those early stages, with the expectation that the investment of time, strategy, and money will eventually pay off for you with a huge, long-term ROI.

Any trial will inevitably come with risk, but better to take that risk online in an on-demand ordering system, instead of being stuck with a warehouse full of unwanted products.

Inventory backup: Sourcing product through marketplaces

Supply chain issues have been rocking the world for the last few years, since the onset of COVID-19. We won't always be facing a once-in-a-generation pandemic and its effects, but supply chain disruptions are always a possibility in any commerce environment.

In fact, even if your supply chain can keep up, sometimes your planning can't. What happens when there's an unexpected surge in demand for a product? How can you make your customers happy and get them what they're after?

A marketplace can solve for that, too. Outside of any in-house custom products you sell, most likely your products are coming from a vendor,

and most likely they are not the only vendor selling that product. So long as your business agreements don't have you tied to one particular vendor, you can look into using your Marketplace to connect with other vendors selling the same product that's out of stock in your warehouses, and have them fulfill the order to the customer directly.

You can implement an online call to run and see if an item can be fulfilled through a marketplace as an automatic backup when a product is out of stock. And, this can be used as a tool in-store if you enable your sales associates with devices linked to your marketplace system.

Inventory backup: Stores as micro-fulfillment centers

If the marketplace route won't work for you, either due to the business model or due to the uniqueness of your product or vendor agreements, there are other ways that technology can improve operations and get your product to customers despite inventory issues.

One is to use your stores as micro-fulfillment centers. Generally, your online inventory levels will be connected to your warehouse inventory. The website will scan your warehouse database for the matching product a customer is browsing online and validate that enough are in stock for them to purchase. Then, when the customer completes their purchase, the fulfillment cycle begins, and the order is flagged for selection in the warehouse.

The warehouses serve online sales, and they serve orders for your physical stores, if you have them. Naturally, the inventory in stores will run leaner than your warehouses, and generally your stores will be placing orders for just the amount of inventory they plan to sell with some buffer, so they aren't sitting on huge amounts of unsold inventory.

However, in the depths of supply chain issues, more and more retail businesses have been turning to their stores as micro-fulfillment centers. For the overall success of the business, it has become imperative that all stores and warehouses talk to each other, and help each other fulfill orders.





To be able to call inventory from stores, and to be able to identify which store it's coming from, will mean additional complexity in your back-end platform. There will likely be more logic added on to that complexity in order to assess which store to pull from first based on a number of criteria like proximity to delivery address and relative store inventory levels. But when done correctly, the benefit here is a smart, self-sustaining operation that will allow you to fully optimize the inventory you already own, and keep your customers happy.

Inventory backup: Alternative options

Despite your best efforts to get your customers out-of-stock product, sometimes it's just not possible.

Though many people believe nothing can beat the original, there are alternative 'next best'

options that can make it work for your customer in a crunch. Who knows? The next best might even end up being better— that's the beauty of discoverability.

There are plenty of tools out there for collecting data points on your products and on your customers' previous purchasing and browsing behaviors that will enable you to make smart recommendations on similar products they might like. There are even some that can scan using visual AI recognition to find the closest match on your website to what the customer has been browsing. Your in-house data scientists and developers may be able to build out this sort of machine learning algorithm themselves.

This technology can be hit and miss, certainly, but the goal here is to continue to save and win sales for you at relatively small—or perhaps no—incremental cost to maintain post-integration. In this case, any ROI is a good ROI!



Fluent Commerce Spotlight

Enable your business and give customers the experience they deserve with a flexible, cloud-native Order Management System (OMS). With the right OMS in place, you can quickly respond to a changing market or business need without a heavy operational lift.

A flexible, agile platform allows you to adapt quickly—whether that’s adding a new channel or region, or to enable a device-specific experience. As an integral piece of your tech stack, an OMS shines before and after the buy button.

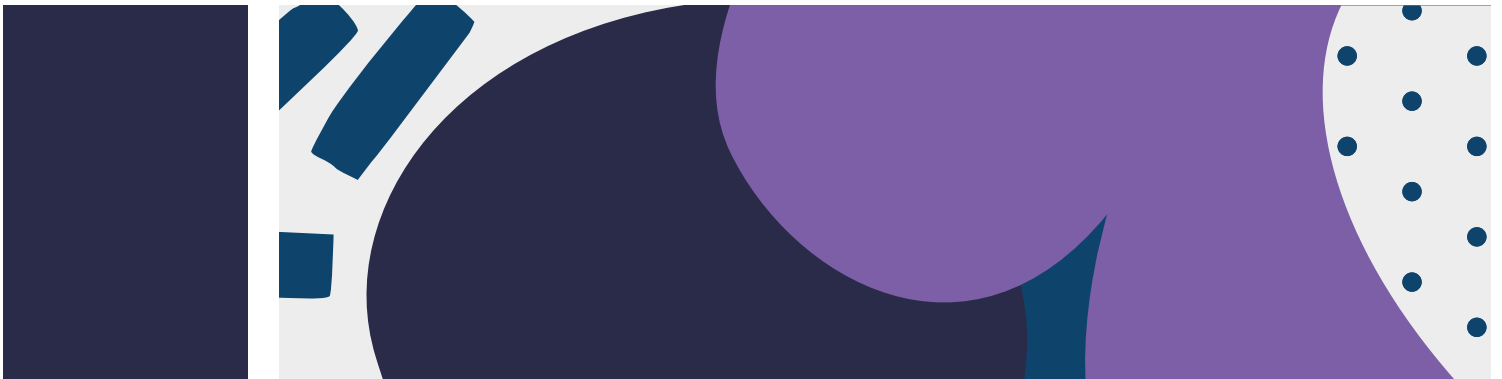
Looking to drastically reduce overselling and canceled orders? Eliminate underselling so you can stop losing sales? You can accomplish this—and more—with a distributed order management system like Fluent Order Management.

Fluent Order Management has helped a Tier 1 global retailer reduce their canceled order rate by 52%, and a Tier 1 global luxury brand increase their online sales by 155% thanks to accurate inventory visibility.

Be ready with a scalable, flexible platform. Learn more about [Fluent Commerce](#) and read their [JD Sports Case Study](#) to understand how a cloud-native OMS could impact your org.

CHAPTER 3

Team Management



They say teamwork makes the dream work, but a team that's not structured optimally to serve their product or goals can ultimately become the downfall of an entire operation.

You can safely assume there will be a learning curve and some inevitable friction with how your teams operate and are structured when transitioning to a composable commerce platform, and the change management needed to match the new technology workflows are significant. Though they will diminish greatly as your team grows accustomed to your new platform, you should still expect some of those challenges when continuing to run at scale, innovate, and grow, too.

The good news is there are some strategies to set you for success—between, across, and within all areas of your business—so that your teams are all working at their peak towards a shared set of goals for commerce success.

Have experts across platform technologies, but beware of knowledge silos

It's not possible for any one person to be an expert in every aspect of your business and platform, but deep expertise is crucial for the success of a technology solution. Instead of having the whole team striving to master the entire end-to-end requirements, assign each person an area (or areas) of expertise. By giving your technologists space for dedicated focus on one or two areas, they'll quickly begin to master their responsible microservice, leading to ease of maintenance and optimization.

That doesn't mean they only look at their slice of the pie. Each team member still needs to have a strong understanding of how to work with the system as a whole, and should be documenting more specific or nuanced knowledge that can't be gleaned easily. It's still very important to build resiliency here, for a number of reasons.

Firstly, no one wants to do the exact same types of tasks every single day. Sure, being an expert is great, but if you have one of your engineers focused only on your loyalty engine day in and day out, you are not going to keep them engaged and energized, which puts you at risk for losing an expert in your business.

If you have a sole expert who is the only one who knows how to do X, Y, and Z, you're setting yourself up for disaster when there are shoes that cannot be filled. The risk becomes greater the further along you are in your post-replatforming journey, as more and more custom work and integrations are done within and between your systems.

Outside of attrition, as a general best practice across any line of work, siloed and non-contextual knowledge is not conducive to a high-performing program. Your commerce platform output is the connected workings of all of your integrated teams and systems together, not a container of many separate and unrelated systems.

All of your teams should have at least a cursory understanding of the work your other teams perform. When it comes to system knowledge, all of your developers should have more than a cursory knowledge of most, if not all, of your

integrated tech stack. Even if they're not working in each of the systems daily, this general understanding of the overall platform architecture, what they're integrating to, and what the downstream impact of changes will be, is necessary for making informed architectural decisions.

This is particularly crucial in a post-launch context as you are supporting a live website. Any changes you make could have immediate impact across a number of other components, which can then impact the performance of your website. Cross-platform understanding within all teams is essential to ensure you are not making any breaking changes that will halt live sales.



Train strategic leads who understand the broader business context and plan for the future

On a related note, your technology and business units cannot operate in isolation. Anyone who works in software delivery knows there can be many different interpretations of the same acceptance criteria, and many different ways to get there. So while the outcome might be the same, there are numerous implications, limitations, or opportunities granted based on technical decisions made to arrive at that outcome.

That's why scalability and future growth plans should be top of mind for everyone and integrated across all teams, not just those on the business side.

Knowing your company's strategic initiatives as well as the short- and long-term goals will ensure that your solutions architects are informing their plans with this knowledge. This will ensure their plans serve the broader business imperatives instead of operating to only serve micro-level goals and tasks at hand. You will prevent the creation of a disjointed platform of features or systems updates and will instead encourage a scalable, unified experience for your employees and customers alike.

Teams in a scaled commerce business should be preparing for the future, not just operating with the present solution in mind.

For example, immediate needs might dictate support for one currency, but if global expansion

is in the five year plan, future needs might dictate support for multiple currencies. It's important not to engineer yourself into a corner where you'll need to completely rework all the functionality you've built.

It's important to take due care in how you organize and educate your teams to ensure their focus doesn't stay within their microservice alone.

Promote a shared and clear understanding of ownership between teams

As organizations grow, it can become harder to know who owns what. This goes for external vendors as well (in some cases, especially for vendors). Throw in the added layers of confusion and ambiguity that inevitably come the longer you've been live and the many different work groups touching many different components of the platform, and the hot potato of responsibility can start to get tossed around pretty quickly.

But the good news is that implementing and logging clear RACIs for your teams indicating ownership and responsibilities across departments and vendors will allow you to continue to scale with confidence and clarity, and

always know who to come to about any area of the platform needing reassessment—and who ultimately owns the outcome of that experience.

Organizing teams by responsibility and experience, rather than technology, helps promote the understanding needed for continual success. And with an integrated composable commerce platform made up of many different teams, vendors, and technologies, that's essential because you're all a part of the same outcome. There is no "us vs them".

As a bonus, this ties into similar strategies that should be followed for product management.

When you start to work on a composable commerce platform with many vendors in the mix—and in some cases many vendors touching different shared parts of the purchasing journey—it can be easy to point blame and shirk responsibility even inadvertently, which becomes a blocker to efficient operations on a large scale.

For example, if three different microservices work together to power inventory and a discrepancy in the output is observed, who is responsible for owning this investigation? It becomes very easy to assume someone else will take care of this.



If you're the owner of one of the three microservices and don't immediately see an issue on your end, knowing there are other vendors involved may lead you to stop your own system investigation preemptively, assuming the problem falls elsewhere and letting them do their due diligence first.

The best way to mitigate this is by ensuring a centralized understanding of ownership, as outlined above. It's important to promote an experience-driven focus with your teams, and that at the end of the day you're all supporting positive outcomes of your area of responsibility together. That said, it's very important to have a single owner of all decisions to be made for each experience, because if everyone is accountable, no one is.

Vertical product management: Think about experiences, not technologies

Organizing functional product teams for a composable commerce platform should be driven by experience first, and supported by technology second. Your customer cares about their start-to-finish experience acquiring, viewing, and redeeming loyalty points— they don't care about the engines that make it happen.

In other words, if experience is the vertical bars of the product management team setup, all those crucial, supporting horizontal rungs on the ladder are the different technologies making it all happen.

The goal should be to eliminate technical bias that can come from a product management

function owning a singular system. What happens when it comes time to replace an element of the system you've built, as should be the case in a flexible composable commerce architecture? Undoubtedly there would be friction and vested interest from a product team to keep 'their' system and show its worth— even if they logically know it isn't in the best interest of the business. The best way to combat this is by encouraging a holistic view of the business-driven outcomes.

When you are in the replatforming stage, most of your work is necessarily technology focused as you work to implement necessary components of your platform like your ERP, PIM, OMS, and other supporting technology.

But post-launch once the basics are stood up, it's important to think holistically about the output of these technologies together, not in isolation. What aspects of the customer experience are they serving together, and what are the team's goals for that experience, not for individual systems.

Much as you should be continually evaluating the efficacy and relevancy of your tech stack, as outlined in the Technology chapter, you should be doing the same with your team organization and the structure and scope of your product management verticals.

As technology, the retail space, and your customers' behaviors and expectations continually change, so too should your product management teams, and the scope of the experiences that they serve.



Orium Spotlight

Orium is North America's leading composable commerce consultancy and systems integrator. We work with best-in-class technology partners to set strong composable commerce foundations today that can support how brands serve their customers across channels in the future. Setting strong foundations is about more than just selecting the right technologies and implementing them thoughtfully. We believe that your team plays an essential role in the continued innovation and scaling of your business.

We help retailers set up their teams for success and navigate the complexities of omnichannel retail. With over a decade of experience building headless and composable commerce solutions, we're retail technology experts. But we also know that technology alone, without enabled teams behind it, will not make brands successful. We work with you every step of the way: from selecting the right vendors through implementation, launch, iteration and optimization.

Our [award-winning composable commerce transformation work](#) is a direct result of getting to know your business, inside and out, and working shoulder-to-shoulder with your team to ensure the systems and processes are in place for ongoing success.

[Learn more](#) about how Orium can help your brand and teams grow, scale, and transform in the changing retail and commerce landscape.

CHAPTER 4

Content



The back-end of your commerce platform and your available products to sell can be relatively easy to scale once you get going. With a well-engineered platform and infrastructure to support growth, you can go from 1,000 to 10,000 to 100,000 products online in a snap. Especially if you've brought a marketplace into the mix for virtually immediate scale.

But what about the content? The copy? The images? Promotional content not only for the web but for social channels and newsletters and in-store features and digital billboards? By nature, that is not so scalable. There's an inherently (and necessarily) individuated aspect to all creative content that you can't exactly dropship in.

As always, technology and strategy can't solve all our problems, but they can certainly help, especially in the context of post-launch continuous scaled content generation.

Design system: Maintain it (and get one if you don't have one!)

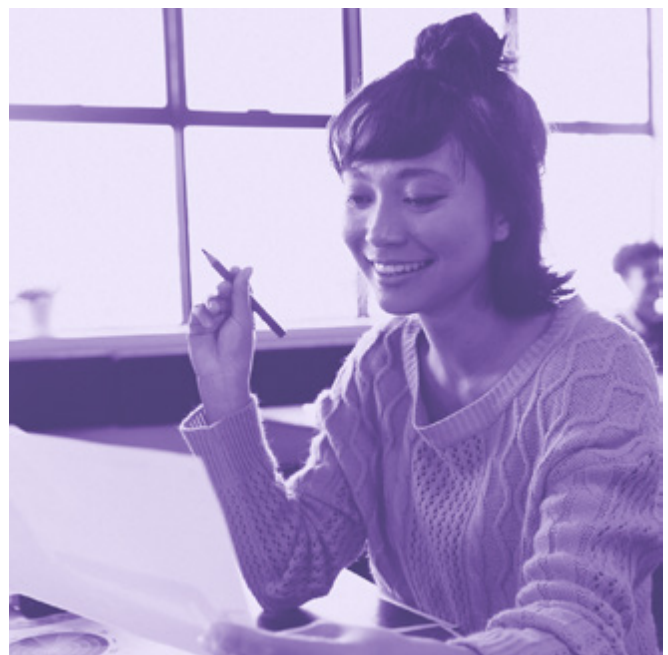
A design system is a need-to-have for any mature digital business with a growing content and design team. Hopefully, you built one or refined your existing design system during your replatforming, but if it was deprioritized until the dust settled, the time to act is now.

A design system is a coded, live repository of branded components for repeatable use across multiple mediums. This means your design and content teams won't need to create from scratch

every single time they need to update a new component or piece of content, and ensures consistency across all of your content updates. This will allow you to grow your content teams to produce infinitely higher amounts of content without sacrificing quality or worrying about inconsistencies between content creators. Even without growing your team, you can significantly scale the output from your existing team by enabling them to create many more pieces of content at minimal incremental effort.

Scalable content generation: Use your CMS to its fullest potential

With your design system allowing your content teams to easily grab and adjust from existing design guidelines, your CMS will round out the perfect team to unlock seamless scaled delivery of content across live destinations.



Think of your design system and the components within as the building blocks, with your CMS as the house of all those components, brought together to form full page content.

Your design system should be able to integrate directly with your CMS as one unit, so that the content types within your CMS are your design system components, ready to copy, edit, and publish in a matter of minutes. Your CMS will allow you to create one version of a piece of content that it will then optimize for formats that can be published to multiple different front-end displays or locations, like desktop, mobile, social feeds, and more. Scaled content generation at its finest!

Where you may continue to find efficiencies of scale down the road is if you end up building out multiple digital products— for example, a number of partner websites, or multiple international subdomains, for content and products tailored to your customers' specific locations.

You can share content type structures within your CMS across all of these instances, adjusting in-line with differing design systems and brand guidelines where applicable. This means that both your developers and your content creators can take advantage of component setups that were already completed in your replatforming across a growing number of distinct products.

Don't be afraid to look for the possibility within your CMS. Most headless CMSs are extremely flexible, and they're able to work with you and your developers to go far outside of the box in terms of the capabilities they support.

Experimentation and creativity to support scaled content generation through your CMS should really just be starting, not stopping, after you launch.

However, remember that technology alone will not drive efficient operations. It is important that content workflows and processes are clearly defined across your teams. There are many agencies who can support you through content modeling workshops to define the content workflows and governance that will work best for you.

Content for new markets

On the topic of international subdomains, expanding into new global markets is another area where scalable content is crucial.

You need to ensure that your branding is consistent across all of your international domains, but that the language, messaging, and presentation is appropriate for each culture. Where other aspects of the website can be straightforward direct translations (product names, pricing and currency display, etc.), often the custom content piece requires a little more care.

It goes without saying, if you can get away with the same content across domains with the only change made being a translation (and lots of services can automate that for you) then go ahead and do it. The easiest way to scale your content to serve new markets is to copy as much of it as you can.

However, before making this sweeping decision, consider cultural expectations and differences.



Some cultures favor text heavy, informational messaging, where for others the snappier the better.

Certain images or advertisements may not be socially or legally acceptable in some countries. Certain compliance or regulatory information may be required to be on easily accessible display for some countries and not others. It's not always as straightforward as a 1:1 translation.

It's important to be aware of these cultural and legal differences for content generation on an international scale. The easiest way to make sure these are accounted for while operating as efficiently as possible is to do that legwork once, and make checklists for your international markets.

It might be easiest to group together all instances that can have the same content as your local site, translated to their own respective languages.

The remaining markets requiring individual care in content generation can have their own checklists. Where patterns appear, you might want to consider adding components into your design system and CMS that follow guidelines

for the markets they're aiming to serve, which can act as scalable templates for future updates as well.

Support content: Letting technology work for you

Outside of promotional content, all commerce sites should have support content as well, which can present in the form of features like FAQ pages and opportunities to chat live with support agents. This type of content can and should be scaled as well.

The more you can enable your customers to gather their own content and information, the easier it will be for you to scale. Chatbots are a great example of this. Nothing will beat getting to connect in real time with a live support agent, but in recent years chatbots have come a long way in their intelligence and internationalization.

To continue to scale your business and have your support scale at the same pace without needing to hire 24/7 support line staff across the globe, look into programming a chatbot with frequently asked questions, responses, and helpful links. These programmed responses can be easily and automatically translated, to support various international audiences in a few clicks.

Where you can, look at continuing to implement as much self-serve interactive content on your website as possible. Tools like order trackers, loyalty point checkers, gift card balance checkers, and more will allow customers to support themselves with content, saving your support staff time to focus on trickier issues as you grow.



Contentstack Spotlight

230% faster content publishing.

70% faster translations.

60% savings in engineering costs.

50% increase in productivity.

These are just some of the massive time and cost savings that our customers have seen in moving to a composable tech stack with Contentstack headless CMS. Here's what's underneath these numbers: skyrocketing employee happiness, productivity, and effectiveness.

The true value of a CMS built to empower your content teams lies in the degree of independence that your content editors will gain. Reducing dependency on IT to make updates to content on any channel, empowering local markets to operate more freely, and allowing casual CMS users to create content when needed without relying on the core content team— this is possible with a flexible headless content management system with powerful workflows, permissions, and cross-stack automation capabilities. You can let your experts be experts and your teams can work faster, more efficiently, and more collaboratively. Slow, clunky content technology is a relic of the past. The most successful businesses are leveraging a CMS built for content editors to thrive. Are you?

Once the content team is set up for success and you've started down the composable commerce path, the possibilities are limitless. Whether that means launching in new markets in weeks or creating innovative customer experiences with mobile apps, shoppable videos, or digitally-enabled physical spaces, we've helped our customers do it all and more. With MACH (Microservices, API-First, Cloud-Native and Headless) technology, your only limit is your imagination.

Learn more about [Contentstack](#) and read their case studies online: [Pella](#), [Icelandair](#), [Dawn Foods](#).

CHAPTER 5

Customer Data



At the core of all of your focus as a retailer—whether your focus falls more on the business side, the technical domain, or somewhere in between—is the customer.

The customer informs your replatforming decisions, but they aren't present in the build when your new website has not yet launched. After deployment, the customer returns to front and center in the digital space, and you need to be able to serve them at scale, continue to optimize their experience, and lean into new features and integrations that will serve them, with the help of collected data.

This is why an integrated omnichannel retail customer data strategy is integral to serving your customers the best you can to keep your business booming.

It's also worth calling out the complexity that surrounds product and business data, and the challenges that come with continuing to keep this data clean and leveraging it to its fullest extent to optimize your operations. While this section centers around customer data,

we will touch briefly on using product data in partnership with customer behavior indicators for optimized selling.

While continued stabilization and handling of product and business data through retail platforms is out of the scope of this e-book to cover in great depth, this should be acknowledged as another key pillar of your company's data strategy.

Importance of centralized customer data sets post-launch

When you migrate from a monolith to a platform of microservices, by design your services will speak to each other, but their data points will be self-contained.

While this makes for optimal architecting and technical flexibility and security, it can add significant degrees of complexity when it comes to capturing and synthesizing a full-picture view of your customers and their behavior from data points.



That's where a Customer Data Platform (CDP) comes into play. A CDP should be a post-launch priority for all retailers with multiple data sources, a need to target and personalize experiences for their customers, and the ability to prioritize their marketing and development efforts from this data.

Once the legwork of integrating all of your custom sources and destinations is complete, you will have an intelligent data aggregator that can give you a complete view of your customer

from all angles of engagement that you can use to inform marketing outreach, targeting, and future product decisions.

A recurring theme throughout this e-book is continual reevaluation post-launch for improvement opportunities across your tech stack, your team structures, and your product management verticals. Customer data is another crucial area you should be constantly monitoring and leveraging to be able to serve your customers what they need, when they need it, and how they want it.

As you continue to grow your platform, ensure you're keeping an eye out for new events that should be tracked through your CDP to continue to cultivate more and more refined views of your customers and their behavior.

Scaled targeting as your customer base grows: Activating your customer data

All customers are looking for a personalized experience when they're shopping. Whether on the web or in-store, they want recommendations tailored to them. One size fits all will not win over customers, and in the increasingly competitive e-commerce space where customers are presented with an infinite spread of alternative options, losing customers with no personalization—or worse, bad or invasive personalization—can be especially damaging.

The answer, yet again, is that you let technology help you. CDPs are able to aggregate millions of data points and identify patterns across millions



of customers. They can group them together into similar customer types, create or work with existing personas, and integrate with AI tooling to automatically generate opportunities for individual outreach personalization. Through data-backed programming, your CDP (in partnership with other activation and outreach tooling) can help you present emails, texts, pop-ups, or recommendations to the right customer, in the right place, at the right time.

While this level of personalization is capable of running on its own once it has been programmed with enough real data to be able to do so, it can also be used to enable humans. Your sales associates—online, in-store, or anywhere in between—can access curated customer data profiles and information sets from the comfort of their own phones, pulled up in less than a minute to provide timely support and present them with any information they may need about their customers, even if this is their first direct encounter.

Capturing, leveraging, and activating customer data as you continue to scale your business post-launch is one of the most valuable assets you have at your disposal. Ensuring you are using it in the right way to connect with your customers is crucial to continuing to scale a successful business and positive customer experience.

Product data and live customer purchasing behavior

Live data that you capture about your customers post-launch can tell you valuable information

not just about their behavior and personas, but also about your products.

CDPs are positioned if you set up your sources appropriately to take in a large degree of information surrounding your products and how customers interact with them.

There are a number of personalization vendors designed to support scaled targeting and improved product recommendations for your customers following your launch, with a focus on optimizing product offers and mixes, to put in front of the right customers at the right time.

This type of data will identify what types of products are heavily viewed but low converters; the most commonly stated reasons for return on which types of products; which kind of products are typically purchased together (identifying potential bundling or upsell opportunities); and when a discount offer of a certain percentage on a particular type of product will result in a high enough increase in sales to turn an ROI without taking a critical margin loss, as just a few examples.

The more of this type of data you capture and leverage, the more successful you'll be at scaling your merchandising for customers based on live, ever-changing data, taking the guesswork out of your product presentation mix.

An omnichannel retail view of the customer for scaled commerce experiences

Another benefit of an aggregated customer view with a CDP is the ability to merge physical and in-store data points for a true omnichannel retail view of your customers and their behavior. Long gone are the days when e-commerce and in-store shopping operated in isolation.

More often than not, digitally-driven tooling will be used to support in-store selling, or an online browsing session will end with a booked fitting room, appointment, and physical sale. This blend of the digital and physical spaces into a singular commerce experience needs to be reflected in a holistic customer view and data set.

Though their shopping behavior may differ by the medium, your customers aren't two separate shoppers online and in-store, and it's time we stopped treating and monitoring them as such.

Unlocking omnichannel retail potential starts at the source: the data you can derive from your customers to learn more about how they shop through and between different touchpoints. With these data insights, running scaled commerce experiences of the future is right at your fingertips.



Twilio Spotlight

Twilio Engage uniquely puts real-time customer data and omnichannel engagement together in one marketing solution. It allows you to personalize communication with a customer across any digital channel (SMS, email, help desk, etc) based on customer behavior, enabling you to quickly deliver more engaging and relevant customer experiences that grow customer lifetime value.

“Twilio Engage provides us with a complete view of our customers so we can stay in lock-step with their preferences and behaviours in real-time. With data at the heart of Twilio Engage, we're able to engage and delight our entire customer base while directly impacting our acquisition, conversion, and retention goals.” —Ian Rosen, President & COO, Harry Rosen

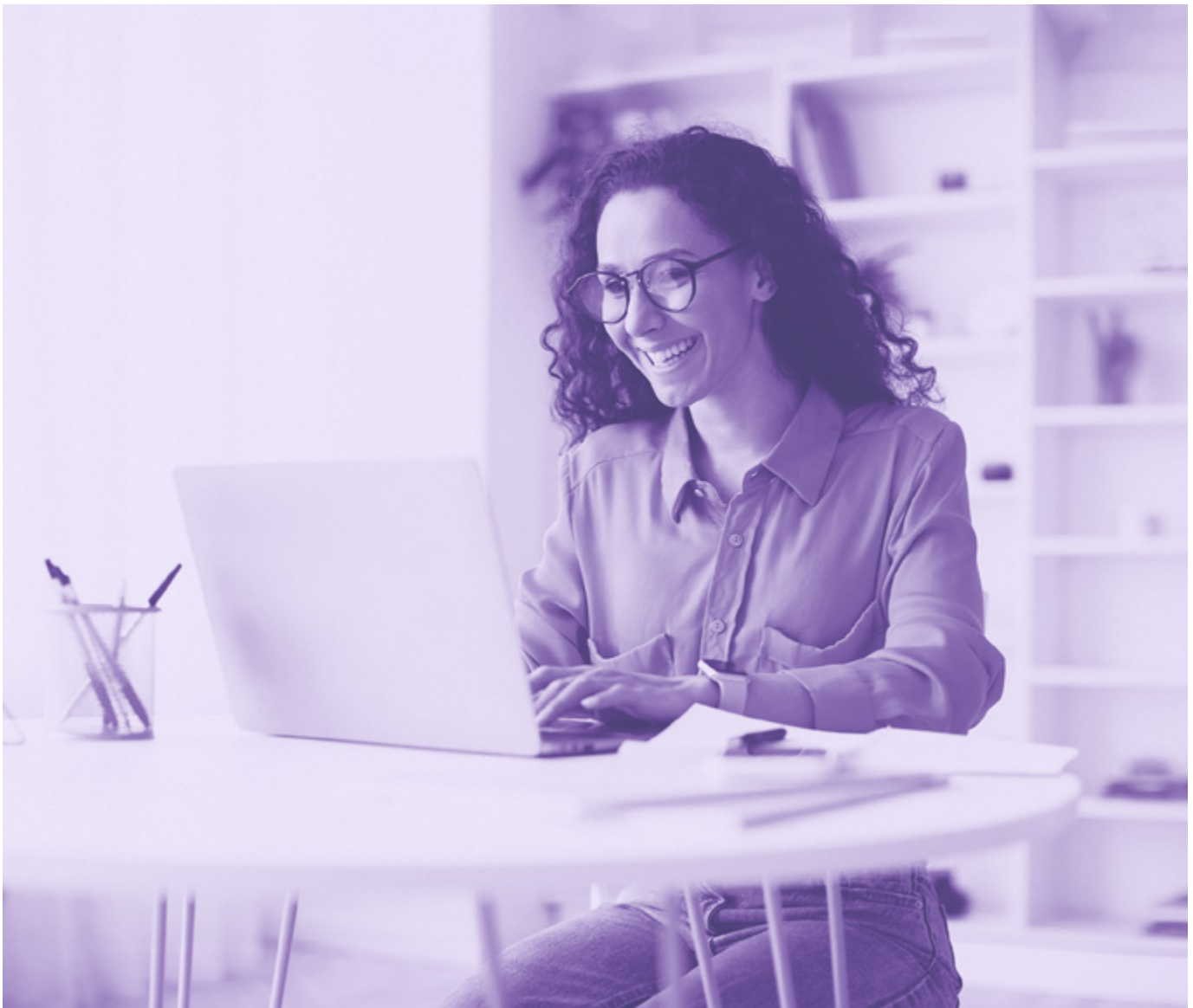
To learn more about how Twilio Engage can support your business goals, check out the [Twilio Engage product page](#).

Conclusion

The five foundations of post-launch scaling and innovation shared in this e-book are just the starting points to set yourselves up for continual scaled advancement. In the ever-changing commerce space—where more than ever physical, digital, and virtual experiences begin to blend—a future-proofed, scalable strategy and

the teams, processes, and technology to support it are crucial.

With your composable commerce tech stack you're perfectly positioned to experiment and grow far beyond the point you're sitting at now, even though that probably already feels like a pretty great spot. The opportunities are unlimited.



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