Benefits of Headless Commerce

How businesses can drive innovation and increase agility by decoupling their applications

commercetools
Next generation commerce

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Executive Summary

In digital commerce, we witness a change in customer behavior which calls for new organizational and technological strategies. Brands and retailers need to be able to grow their digital business in a time where customer journeys are increasingly fragmented and new touchpoints are emerging. In this context, the so-called "headless" commerce solutions, in which the customer-facing frontend is decoupled from the backend layer, are becoming a very interesting option. Organizations can build personalized customer experiences, gain the freedom to experiment, increase their agility and scale more efficiently using the headless paradigm. How this can look in practice is also shown in this whitepaper, with a couple of real-life examples from many areas of digital business.

Shopping Is Changing

Paul is late. He is in his car, rushing to the airport, trying to get a few things done before taking off to his business meeting in Singapore. Fortunately, the computer in his car has already found and reserved a parking spot nearby. When he arrives, the fees are automatically deducted from his credit card, and he can head off to his gate. On his way, he uses the voice assistant in his smartwatch to order a few flowers for his wife. And before entering the plane, Paul downloads a novel a friend has recommended to him by tapping a button in the social stream on his smartphone.

New touchpoints are just around the corner, waiting for mass adoption.

Of course, commerce does not always have to be so hectic and last minute. People still take their time visiting beautifully built retail stores or browsing inspiring commerce websites. Paul's example is just one of a million possible scenarios which come to mind every time people talk about modern – and even future – retail. Interactions between brands and retailers on the one side and their customers on the other come in all shapes and forms. Especially brands, with their constant desire to stay close to their fans and have access to them, need to make sure to remain available on all touchpoints Paul and the rest of their audience are using. In digital commerce, we have come a long way since the first retail websites of the mid-nineties. Only very rarely, people sit in front of their desktop computers at home, connected to the Internet via slow landlines and experience products via an 800x600 pixel monitor. In fact, since the end of 2017, the world's mobile traffic has overtaken desktop interaction[1]. A PC-based world has turned into a mobile one. Not even ten years after the iPhone was presented, mobile devices the app ecosystems of Apple and Google are dominating people's everyday lives.

But it does not stop there. New touchpoints are just around the corner, waiting for mass adoption. During the last Prime Day by Amazon, their Echo devices were by far the most popular product. It is estimated[2] that in 2018 more than 50 million smart speakers and voice devices like Alexa, Siri, and Cortana will have been shipped to consumers.

[1] http://gs.statcounter.com/platform-market-share/desktop-mobile-tablet/worldwide/
[2] https://www.canalys.com/newsroom/smart-speakers-are-fastest-growing-consumer-tech-shipments-surpass-50-million-2018