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The Content & Commerce Collision

Delivering Inspired Selling Experiences to the Connected Consumer

Introduction

Marketing and commerce have collided. As digital selling has evolved to replicate or replace the in-store buying experience, marketing content has become an integral component to inform and instill confidence in online shoppers that cannot handle physical goods. Because touch points (Web, store, mobile, social) are no longer tied to a single step in the purchase process, it has become impossible to predict whether consumers will use digital environments to research or transact. Therefore, valuable brand content must be dynamically delivered alongside a variety of other content and data elements related to the product, customers, and commerce to create a single destination that inspires, informs, sells – and most importantly, adapts to each shopper in the moment. This is the era of inspired selling.

The Challenge

In the early days of the Internet, companies created informational “brand” sites to tell stories and share information, typically run by the Marketing group. Then, organizations were created to sell goods online, the eCommerce group, who erected simple online storefronts built on a product catalog and shopping cart. As capabilities and consumer demand grew for buying online, the amount of data and content in each camp skyrocketed. Marketing and eCommerce teams continued to operate independently, and purchased separate technologies to support their different roles and goals. Marketing stayed focused on “romancing”¹ the customer with brand stories that engaged and promoted discovery, while eCommerce focused on efficient selling to the spearfishing shopper.

As consumer expectations changed and technology evolved, these separate technologies (typically WCM used by Marketing, and eCommerce platforms used by the eCommerce team) developed similar capabilities. Traditionally, WCM technologies focused on non-transactional, unstructured marketing content and the content lifecycle while commerce platforms supported transactional interactions, products and merchandising.² However, overlap in WCM and eCommerce platform capabilities occurred in areas such as site layout, experience management, search, navigation, and personalization to meet the demand of the separate Marketing and Commerce organizations.³ How these siloed organizations measure success is also blurring: Marketing has adopted similar success metrics of the eCommerce group (driving conversions, monetization) with eCommerce groups prioritizing loyalty and engagement.⁴ The convergence of technology and goals has prompted questions and confusion over a go-forward approach for driving a single Web site experience, as elements of both traditional WCM and eCommerce platform technologies are needed.

¹ “Content And Commerce: The Odd Couple Or The Power Couple?” Forrester Research, November 2013.

² “Content And Commerce: The Odd Couple Or The Power Couple?” Forrester Research, November 2013.

³ “Content And Commerce: The Odd Couple Or The Power Couple?” Forrester Research, November 2013.

⁴ “Key Trends Driving B2C Commerce” Oracle, May 2014.

The Connected Consumer and Anywhere Engagement

Enter the connected consumer who wants seamless, relevant experiences anywhere they choose. They expect to engage with a single site for all of their needs. If they are researching a product, they don't want to look for static pages with content like videos or PDFs while browsing; they want this content in the context of their product search. Content, commerce, and experiences no longer fit in a box. Touchpoints like the Web site, mobile, stores, social, and service are no longer confined to a particular stage or role in the buying cycle. When consumers can research, buy, advocate, and seek help from anywhere, channels don't exist: it's just interactions with data, filtered by the need they have in that moment. As consumers use any combination of touchpoints for any stage of their journey, anywhere engagement is the new normal—and the new challenge—for brands organized around traditional channels and operational roles.

Today's splintered experiences are symptoms of legacy organizations and systems, which frustrate customers and lose opportunities. Whether experience-based or sales-based, brands are forced to look at their online presence as a collective experience, breaking down legacy silos, notions of internal responsibilities, and what "role" content, commerce, and other elements play. As companies stray from their traditional goals to adapt to the goals of the consumer, knowing who the consumer is across the enterprise is the first step toward delivering the inspired selling experience.

The Opportunity

There is a great deal of discussion on what an ideal inspired selling experience should be, but in the early days of converged brand and commerce experiences, few organizations have successfully executed a strategy—with many in the planning stages now. The challenge and the opportunity is engaging the shopper amidst the changing complexities of your business and their world, at every point in their journey. Whether they are exploring your brand or transacting, a longtime loyalist or an anonymous user, a big spender or budget conscious, a mobile or desktop user, your customer's experience is everything – you must serve them relentlessly.

To achieve this, organizations are now looking for new capabilities: technology that can deliver a single, relevant digital destination for their customers, incorporating rich marketing content alongside pricing, inventory, and personalized merchandising that drives conversions,⁵ which can be leveraged by Marketers and Merchants.

The desire to create a single digital experience where content and commerce are readily available has forced companies to ask whether their WCM or eCommerce technology should drive the presentation of their digital experience. WCM technology is ideal for driving non-transactional, engaging brand experiences. But as expectations shift to a single customer destination, deciding which path to take to deliver inspired selling experiences is not straightforward for most organizations. Some will take an approach with WCM and commerce each delivering elements of a page in a side-by-side approach, others have the eCommerce platform leading the experience, and others will lead with WCM. But some of these approaches require substantial integration projects, duplicated efforts, and inability to leverage all data—perpetuating fragmented experiences. In the following, we will discuss why leading with eCommerce technology is the most viable approach for digital environments when the goal is to scale experiences that drive revenue.

Content is Only Part of the Story: Prioritize The Customer and Their Context

Content is an important part of the customer journey, but so is data and material coming from a myriad of other systems. More importantly than content or commerce is the notion of the two other Cs: the customer and their context. If these are not known, content (alongside many other things) cannot be relevant.

The scale required to deliver relevant content versus the scale and power required to deliver contextually relevant selling experiences (where content is a component) differs by orders of magnitude. This is why the eCommerce platform should take the lead in experience delivery for selling experiences.

To deliver inspired selling experiences to meet an infinite number of unpredictable customer needs, the digital experience needs to have everything available, ready to dynamically filter and adapt in an instant. Content like copy, PDFs, video, and rich imagery that a WCM handles

⁵ “Content And Commerce: The Odd Couple Or The Power Couple?” Forrester Research, November 2013.

well needs to be readily available, but so does data and content coming the product catalog(s), CRM system, customer profile, user reviews, search and navigation, ERP system, social content, personalization engine, local availability, in-store data, PIM system, merchandising, order management, recommendations, pricing, service, the shopping cart, and more. Not only should your digital experience technology be able to leverage the unpredictable cocktail of data and content the consumer requires in in real-time, it also needs to dynamically present this unique experience in context of the moment and across time. The amount of data that will need to be leveraged for a growing number of consumer interactions will only grow. The eCommerce platform was purpose-built to solve these problems.

WCM systems were designed to allow Marketers to deliver engaging, personal brand experiences; not to integrate with dozens of systems and scale large volumes of data to drive online sales. To build these types of experiences, Marketers hand-curate pages with dynamic elements that may update depending on a consumer's personalization profile or stage within the marketing funnel. This approach stumbles in its ability to meet every user's need, especially in the post-campaign world.⁶ What consumers may want cannot be predicted, and hand-building every potential static experience is impossible. Discovery and buying is now the same experience: the ability to scale any experience to anyone one is critical. Leveraging WCM for presentation of any commerce elements (like search and navigation, products, personalization and experience management) is an approach that not only requires substantial custom integration costs, but one that simply cannot scale for commerce demands; requiring duplication of internal effort, inability to leverage all data, fragmented customer interactions, and inability to scale totally dynamic adaptable experiences.

Surfacing relevant content in a Commerce-driven digital experience is a much simpler approach.

Power and scale for commerce must be inherent in the digital experience platform. Even if online commerce represents a fraction of overall company sales today, your organization must be prepared for substantial eCommerce growth – which is projected to increase from \$294 billion to \$414 billion over the next four years in the U.S. alone.⁷ ECommerce platforms are

⁶ “Making the Shift: How Great Marketers are Changing Their Focus from the Campaign to the Customer” Oracle, June 2013.

⁷ “US eCommerce Forecast: 2013 to 2018” Forrester Research, May 2014.

already the “glue” that leverage information from dozens of systems to surface contextually relevant, adaptable experiences. Traditional “brand experiences” and “selling experiences” are now just part of a collective experience with content coming from across the enterprise. Organizations need the ability to index all information and surface the right material in context along each user’s journey (including targeted content), pivoting between inspiration, discovery, selling, and support at any time. Only a commerce solution purpose-built to deliver totally dynamic, personalized experiences at scale – leveraging all data and content in the moment – can meet this challenge.



Figure 1. Content is an element of a wide variety of disparate information that must be leveraged in an adaptable, real-time experience.

Knowing the Customer in Context

Without a 360° view of the customer across online and offline interactions, experiences can only be generalized, or loosely tailored to a large group of similar customers. The eCommerce platform knows the customer in the moment and across time, leveraging and understanding customer data from across the enterprise to make interactions hyper-personalized. Commerce platforms manage online activity, capturing click-stream behavior, search and browse patterns, preferences like brand affiliation and price range, social tendencies, in addition to complete

order history, redeemed offers and more. If the user is anonymous, the Commerce platform can listen to actions in real time to surface relevant dynamic content.

To further complete the customer story, eCommerce platforms leverage data coming from anywhere – including offline behavior across the enterprise. In-store purchase behavior, events that were attended, and campaigns they received are understood, in addition to any history with other touchpoints like the call center and service. The ability to leverage every data point available on the customer makes for more relevant (and more lucrative) digital experiences. Leading with the eCommerce platform enables the ability to personalize every interaction: both experiential elements like the display of select imagery or custom product assortments, to more precise elements like specifically recommended content, products, cross sells, and more.

Marketing and Merchants Must Work Hand-in-Hand

The goal should be to enable business users from both Marketing and Commerce organizations to collaborate when creating and managing experiences. Let's say it's time to create a holiday campaign. A Merchandiser and Content Marketer need to work together, leveraging a single toolset to ensure inspired selling experiences are delivered. Together, they will need to update the catalog and any pricing or promotions, create a landing page, add elements like video, community content, and imagery, update the page attribution, and personalization of the entire experience (including search, content targeting, promotions, product assortment, merchandising and more) – not just elements of the page. All of these activities should be done as one update: one approval workflow and one publishing process, viewed in the authoring environment as well as a single preview environment.

If Marketing or Merchants currently own your site experience, if you have any requirement for personalization, do any revenue online, have a need for any type of discovery (product or brand) and want to deliver across any touchpoint, Oracle Commerce is uniquely suited to solve these challenges.

Oracle Commerce: A Fundamentally Different Approach

Oracle Commerce is a Digital Experience Platform that approaches content, commerce and experience in a fundamentally different way than any other solution on the market. Oracle Commerce is specifically designed to handle the challenges around creating, automating and scaling inspired selling experiences to everyone – anonymous or known.

With Oracle Commerce, *context* drives the customer experience, not prebuilt static pages.

Leverage Any Data and Connect to Deliver Any Experience

To run any digital environment today, availability of up-to-the-second data is critical. Oracle Commerce has a unique Data Anywhere Architecture to leverage any data in any form, from any system (Oracle, third party or homegrown) to serve dynamic customer experiences. This patented technology handles the large volume, variety, and velocity of data that is critical for delivering a fully-featured experience. Data is imported and indexed into a schema-less, in-memory database for rapid connection of customer, product, and experience elements in a scalable model that can expand to leverage data types and formats as your business grows more complex. This model provides numerous integration methods to exchange information with third-party tools that support standard integration methods (including Web Services, SOAP XML over HTTP, RMI, JMS messages, and direct Java API calls). The core of the Oracle Commerce Data Anywhere Architecture is the Repository API which allows users to employ a single approach to accessing disparate data types, including SQL databases, LDAP directories, content management systems, and file systems.

The power to connect customer, product, and real-time clickstream data makes Oracle Commerce experiences relevant, personalized, and engaging. Consumers can explore, buy, research, advocate, and seek help on their terms in a scalable model.



Figure 2. The Data Anywhere Architecture has the ability to leverage all data to scale experiences.

Create Rich, Dynamic Experiences and Scale Them to Everyone

Whether customers want to research, buy, advocate, or seek help, Oracle Commerce delivers an always-relevant experience. At the heart of Oracle Commerce is Oracle Commerce Experience Manager, a Web-based application for business users to create and scale sites and experiences across touchpoints without engaging IT. Prebuilt components allow business users to have granular control over creation and management of the entire experience, including layout, search and navigation, display of products, merchandising, personalization, promotions, marketing content, rich media, recommendations, integrations, and more. Total control is in the hands of business users to deliver engaging curated experiences, a streamlined dynamic selling environment, or hybrid experiences to balance business goals with customer intent.

Marketers and Merchandisers can create a general, default experience and apply rules to leverage any type of behavior or data to dynamically adapt and present always-relevant experiences based on the user's context. This way, experiences can be set up once, and relevance is guaranteed across an unpredictable number of paths and needs. These experiences automatically optimize for viewing on mobile Web, apps, tablet, and desktop experiences.



Figure 3. Oracle Commerce Experience Manager allows business users to easily create dynamic experiences, and scale them across touchpoints to meet an infinite number of customer needs.

Personalize Every Interaction with a Universal View of the Customer

Personalization and relevance are at the foundation of Oracle Commerce, offering a full spectrum of personalization capabilities to meet diverse needs and business goals. The ability to have a 360° view of customer data, product data and real-time experience data in a single location creates opportunities to personalize and tailor every inspired selling interaction. Prebuilt and customizable personalization strategies allow for any level or type of personalized content, merchandising, or experience including dynamic personalization, choreographed scenarios, granular segmentation, profile-based personalization, or a hybrid of techniques. Business users can implement automated personalization to everyone (whether they are anonymous or known) or focused strategies for more granular customer segments and profiles. In any strategy, rules ensure that any or all elements of the experience are personalized based on the customer data available in conjunction with the user's real-time context. If no customer data exists, real-time context is used to dynamically personalize the experience, and information begins to be compiled in a profile. Oracle Commerce gives organizations the ability to tune targeting and personalization of content, media, browsing, buying, merchandising, search and navigation, and loyalty according to their unique business goals and cross-brand strategy.

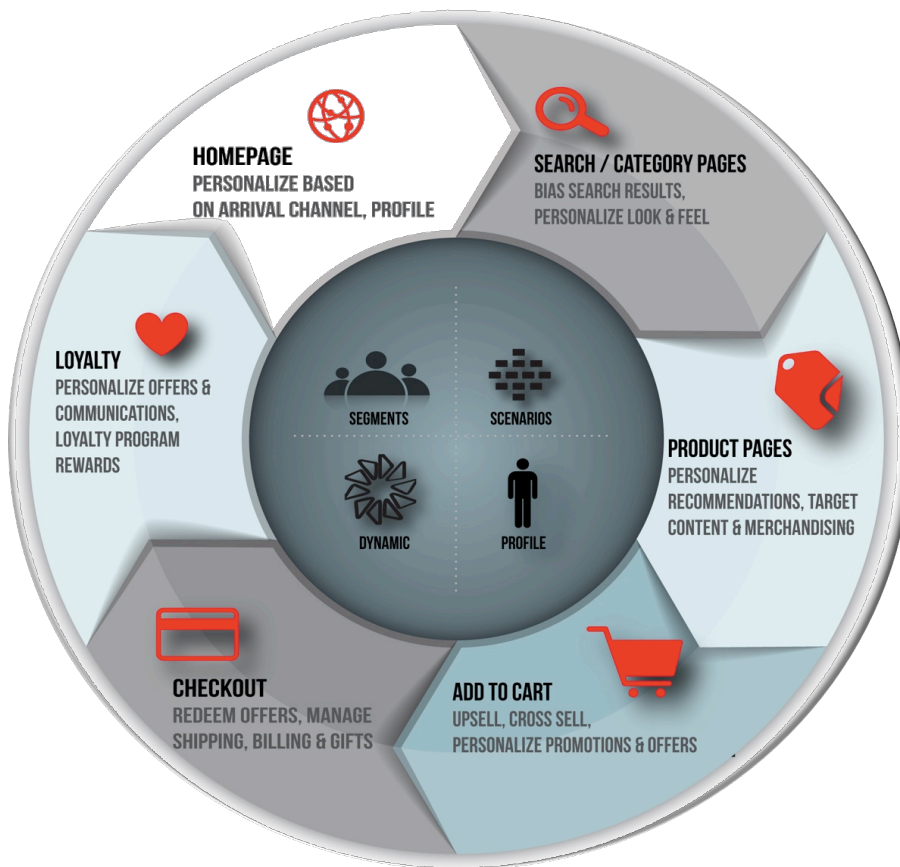


Figure 4. Oracle Commerce leverages real-time behavior and any available data to personalize every interaction for known or anonymous users.

Expand to New Geographies, Touchpoints

Oracle Commerce features a multisite architecture to speed the launch and simplify the management of optimized microsites, mobile environments, in-store associate applications, social sites, affiliate sites, international stores, deal-of-the-day sites, and private loyalty clubs. Organizations can easily share resources like data, shopping carts, catalogs, personalization, promotions, and integrations across touchpoints without starting from scratch or having to duplicate efforts.

Oracle Commerce also provides support for internationalization, including multi-language support (in 35 languages), multi-currency support, and other localized aspects so your business can grow and expand in to new geographies without re-creating and managing multiple sites.

Measure Effectiveness of All Experiences

Actionable insight and reporting to measure commerce performance and the effectiveness of the site experience come standard. Business users can continually observe results and tune experiences via Oracle Experience Manager to ensure that goals for engagement, loyalty, personalization effectiveness, sales, merchandising, and content are performing to plan.

Integrate With the Most Complete Customer Experience Product Portfolio

Oracle has the most complete, top-rated customer experience product assortment on the market. If Oracle Commerce alone cannot meet all needs, integrations with the Oracle suite of products will provide everything organizations need to deliver industry-leading customer experiences, regardless of goals, vertical, or business model.

To get closer to customers as they research, buy, advocate, or seek help at any point in the customer journey, Oracle has a top-rated solution.

- **Deliver Inspired Selling Experiences with Oracle Commerce:** rated as a Leading Commerce and Experience Management platform by Gartner and Forrester for a decade.⁸
- **Create and Manage Digital Assets with #1-rated WCM provider, Oracle WebCenter Sites** the #1-rated Web Content Management platform.⁹ Create and author non-catalog content, syndicate content, establish a workflow, leverage the built-in Digital Asset Management (DAM) system.
- **Create Demand, Nurture Relationships and Enable Sales Across the Customer Lifecycle with the Oracle Marketing Cloud:** includes #1-rated Email Platform,¹⁰ and #1-rated Lead-to-Revenue platform.¹¹
- **Listen to and Understand Your Customers Where They Spend their Time with Oracle Social Cloud:** Leading Social Relationship Management (SRM) platform

⁸ “The Gartner Magic Quadrant for eCommerce Platforms” Gartner Inc., 2005, 2006, 2008, 2010, 2011, 2013.

“The Forrester Wave™ for eCommerce Platforms” Forrester Research Inc., 2005, 2006, 2009, 2010, 2012.

⁹ “The Gartner Magic Quadrant for Web Content Management” Gartner Inc., September 2012.

¹⁰ “The Forrester Wave™: Email Marketing Vendors,” Forrester Research Inc., Q1 2012

¹¹ “The Forrester Wave™ Lead-To-Revenue Management Platform Vendors,” Forrester Research Inc., Q1 2014

including social listening, sentiment analysis social aggregation, and social analysis capabilities.

- **Deliver a Trusted Concierge Experience with Oracle Service Cloud:** top-rated pre and post-sales digital service.

Oracle has hundreds of industry-leading applications for CRM, forecasting and planning, Retail, Big Data and more.

Contact Us

To learn more about Oracle Commerce Digital Experience Management and integrations with other Oracle technologies, visit oracle.com/commerce.



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