# How to do composable commerce right.

Get a closer look at the flexibility and complexity of composable commerce—and what you need to consider before jumping in.

Composable commerce offers the promise of increased flexibility for building a commerce platform in a rapidly changing environment. But it also presents challenges, such as the increased complexity of developing and managing multiple integrations. Here's a look at the pros, cons, and important considerations as you determine the best way to approach it.

## A commerce platform for a rapidly changing environment.

Composable commerce is an architectural approach that allows you to combine several different business services to create an ecommerce application uniquely suited for your organization. Each technology piece can be changed, scaled, and upgraded—and new ones added along the way—without disrupting other services.

## The flexibility to grow and scale.

According to a report by McKinsey & Company, ecommerce markets are expected to almost double by 2026. As this number grows, so does the need for a more flexible ecommerce platform.

Ecommerce markets are projected to almost double by 2026.

Source: McKinsey & Company

**41%** of retailers planned to make their ecommerce platform a top technology budget priority in 2022.

Source: Digital Commerce 360

Composable commerce, when done right, provides a modern architecture that offers the increased flexibility and innovation required to keep up with ecommerce's rapid growth. Unlike traditional or legacy platforms, composable commerce allows you to evolve your architecture piece by piece to adapt to changing markets, services, and customer expectations. Development teams can easily build, deploy, scale, and add new services and features as needed.

With the freedom to use almost any ecommerce service like content, search, or pricing, you can truly customize and tailor your shopping experience. By adding advanced services like intelligent product recommendations, you can deliver personalized experiences too. And because you only pay for the additional capabilities you need, it's easier to control costs.

# Important things to consider with composable commerce.

Every organization should assess the unique requirements of composable commerce. Combining multiple services from multiple vendors could mean you'll end up playing software developer, which takes a great deal of time and resources. For example, storefront developers need to understand all the different back-end services, including how to integrate, authenticate, and query each one. And if you attempt to stitch too many services together, your time to value will be a lot longer.

Composable commerce lets you choose which business services to integrate into your commerce application—but more services mean more complexity. Here are some examples of possible services options:

Search

Recommendations

Content

Pricing

Catalog

Assets

ERP

Customer journey management

Fulfillment

Delivery

Marketing

Checkout

## More integrations, more relationships, more complexity.

The more custom development required, the more complex things become. For instance, many SaaS commerce services limit native integrations. If you need to build a business-specific logic, then you'll have to adopt a third-party development platform. Suppose you need to implement a custom checkout process that requires complex business logic but your SaaS commerce platform doesn't offer a native integration for this. You may need to adopt a serverless computing platform to build it. This would require custom integration and maintenance and building new user interfaces for your storefront and admin panel. It's easy to see how custom development can increase the complexity of a SaaS commerce solution and require the adoption of additional platforms and user interface development.

## Fragmented technology can mean fragmented journeys.

Great customer experiences rely on customer data flowing freely across systems. But that's difficult to achieve when each service comes from a separate vendor. Your development team will need to figure out how to collect and share all that data across services and then analyze it to create a cohesive journey. When everything is siloed, that's more difficult and more expensive to do.
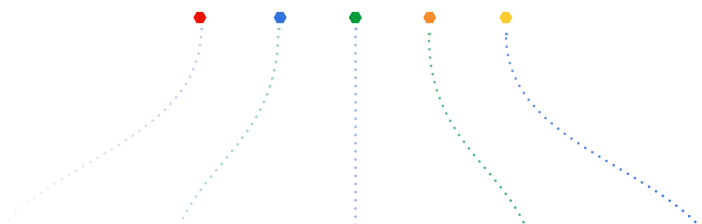
**44%** of marketers said integrating data across more technologies was their most challenging barrier to marketing and technology success.

Source: Ascend2 survey

## Balancing flexibility and complexity.

You may have heard arguments that it's time to "go composable or go bust." Some people will argue the agility and flexibility you get from composable makes it the best choice in a rapidly changing ecommerce landscape. Others will tell you to weigh the value of what you'd gain against the added complexity and extended implementation time and cost.

# Two sides of the story:

## Flexibility    VS.    Complexity

According to Forrester, digital businesses moving forward in the changing market will adapt by pivoting "*...to reengage with commerce solutions that balance ecosystem management, business user experience, and Function-First Tech Buying enablement.*" Business leaders will embrace this with agility in mind by beginning with a specific problem they are solving for, then identify the specific capability required to solve the problem, and finally solve with the technical function that provides this capability directly. This is Adobe's composable approach and what Forrester calls Function-First thinking.

*"Some businesses have a robust, talented developer team who can handle large amounts of complexity and can stitch together multiple systems on the back end. Others might find there are a couple of pieces they want to tie together, but at a certain point, the complexity starts to overwhelm the actual value businesses get out of building,"* says Patrick Toothaker, a senior manager of product marketing with Adobe.

## Too much too fast?

Forrester found that 44% of software decision-makers whose organizations plan to adopt B2C commerce solutions say they are evaluating their commerce platform—or plan to replace it altogether. Some are abandoning proprietary and legacy tech that isn't keeping up with today's needs, embracing the more custom and flexible—yet massively complex—commerce tech ecosystems.

Yet some digital businesses may regret all the integrations and software development they have to do with composable commerce. From custom user interfaces (UIs) to innumerable integrations, these systems require teams to develop and maintain every aspect of their composed system.
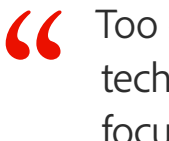
One-third of digital businesses will abandon or restructure midstream projects that prove too complex to execute or maintain.

Source: Forrester

According to Forrester, if businesses aren't prepared for the development, maintenance, and cost of composable commerce, new implementations could fail in their second or third year, and customer UIs could crumble from post-launch neglect. As a result, those businesses could end up pivoting to commerce solutions that balance ecosystem management and business-user experiences. They'll move to a "function-first" tech-buying approach that avoids unneeded, costly, and complicated functions that just increase complexity.

" Too often, businesses chase technology trends rather than focusing on business value. With composable commerce, if you don't take a business-focused approach, you may find yourself playing system integrator with too many fragmented services.

**Surya Lamech**
Senior Manager, Product Marketing,
Adobe

The key is to take a more thoughtful approach from the beginning. Focus first on your business priorities, select a solid commerce foundation, and build from there.

# The Adobe POV—prioritize first, compose second.

Composable is not an all-or-nothing architectural approach. In fact, you don't need to figure everything out on your own—or build a system completely from scratch. To get the most value from a composable approach, it's important to prioritize solutions that can deliver value fast while providing the flexibility to rapidly integrate additional services and deploy features as needed.

The Adobe perspective on composable commerce supports this kind of approach. One where you examine your business priorities first, then decide how you'll compose your application to support them.

# How to get your composable commerce systems up and running.

## Start with a robust commerce platform.

Rather than trying to integrate too many microservices from the start, choose a business-focused commerce foundation—like Adobe Commerce—with essential out-of-the-box ecommerce services. These could include content, cart, pricing, and catalog, for example. You'll be able to get up and running fast with minimal development time. It also has security, resiliency, and compliance built in.

## Launch faster with out-of-the-box UIs.

Out-of-the-box UIs provide a uniform business user experience and deliver value faster since development is minimized. At the same time, well-defined extension points allow merchants to tailor the experience to meet their needs.

## Adopt advanced capabilities as needed.

Next, roll out advanced composable services like intelligent search or intelligent product recommendations and other services like sales channels and payments as you need them. With services that natively work together, you'll minimize the time required for customizations—enjoying all the benefits of microservices without all the complexity and cost.
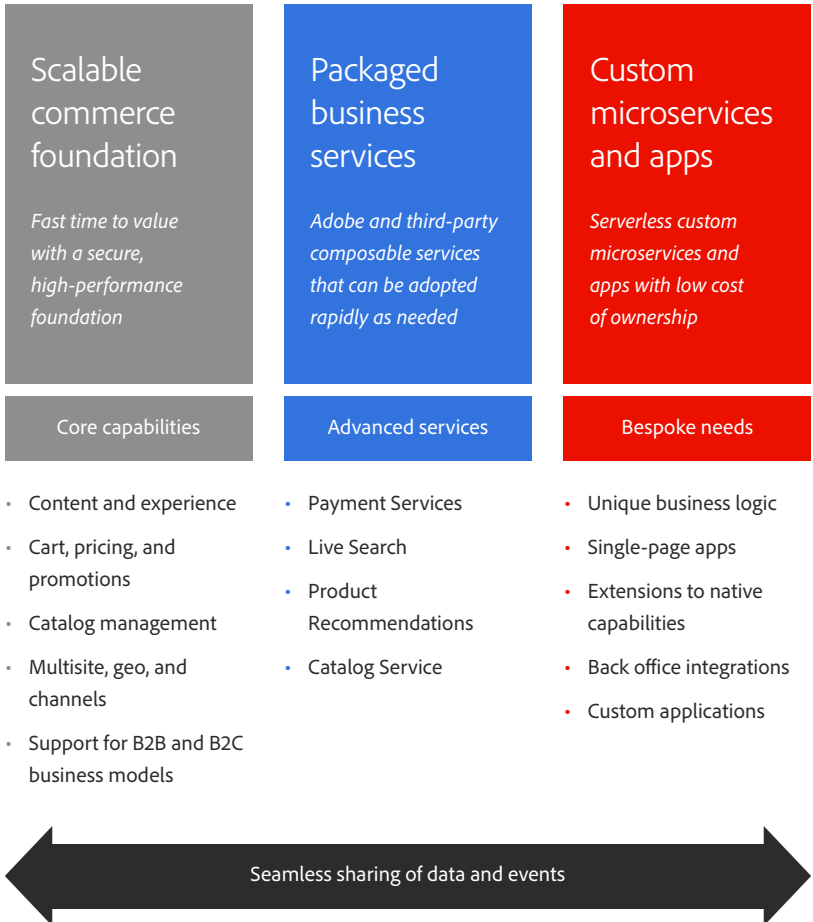
## Easily integrate third-party services.

Adobe Commerce also provides an API orchestration layer that enables upgrading, replacing, and extending services without the complexity of connecting to and authenticating with them, along with an eventing framework that lets businesses share data across the integrated services. Your team can get new services up and running quickly for increased business agility.

## Extend native capabilities.

Even with a strong foundation, advanced native capabilities, and easy integration with third-party services, you may need to extend your capabilities and tailor them for your unique needs. Adobe Developer App Builder works natively with Adobe Commerce, making it simple to build microservices and apps in a serverless environment so you won't need to procure and manage third-party extensibility frameworks. It's an extensibility solution that provides all the services you need to ensure security, compliance, and governance. It's not just easier to integrate, but you can do so with peace of mind.

# A simpler approach to composable commerce.

## Scalable commerce foundation

*Fast time to value with a secure, high-performance foundation*

### Core capabilities

- Content and experience
- Cart, pricing, and promotions
- Catalog management
- Multisite, geo, and channels
- Support for B2B and B2C business models

## Packaged business services

*Adobe and third-party composable services that can be adopted rapidly as needed*

### Advanced services

- Payment Services
- Live Search
- Product Recommendations
- Catalog Service

## Custom microservices and apps

*Serverless custom microservices and apps with low cost of ownership*

### Bespoke needs

- Unique business logic
- Single-page apps
- Extensions to native capabilities
- Back office integrations
- Custom applications

Seamless sharing of data and events

# Adobe can help you get it right.

With Adobe as your partner, you can get started right away creating the ideal composable architecture for your organization. Adobe Commerce provides an agile, business-focused foundation with all the ecommerce features digital businesses need, native integrations for advanced services, and a solution for extending those capabilities. You'll have the platform and tools to easily integrate services—from both Adobe and other vendors. And with native integration into Adobe Experience Cloud, it's easy to add additional services such as Adobe Experience Manager Sites, Adobe Experience Manager Assets, Adobe Target, and Adobe Customer Journey Analytics. The result is a rich commerce platform with lower maintenance and cost of ownership. Learn more about how we approach and support composable commerce here.

# Sources

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