

**Viewpoint****Stephen Hurrell**VP &
Research Director

Retail Resilience in Digital Commerce

The opportunity exists for retail organizations to improve the digital commerce experience they offer their customers by moving beyond existing, monolithic commerce systems that aren't designed for today's needs. Consumers now demand simpler and more personalized digital experiences—especially in consumer products and retail—but limited support exists within legacy approaches to customize and configure digital commerce and to offer an elegant mobile-first experience. Many retail organizations still utilize static commerce applications that do not adapt to the retail industry and merchandise types.

This lack of flexibility includes the inability to adapt and integrate with other software across the enterprise, and it is an issue that must be overcome. To achieve the goal of robust straight-through

processing within digital sales channels, retail organizations must identify when they are using commerce systems that were not designed to operate natively in the cloud or that don't feature an extensible platform that can integrate to key enterprise systems like ERP, financial management, sales, service or marketing.

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Too often, digital commerce has operated without data-driven insights about customer and commerce activities, and this means that the retail organization cannot offer experiences tailored to individual customers. Through 2024, after concerted investment into digital transformation, one-half of retail organizations will require a new digital business and technology agenda for organization resilience. To deliver these experiences, retail organizations must be able to integrate customer data with the digital commerce platform to provide a unified view of customers. This unified view can then enable

personalized customer experiences in an agile, reliable and manageable way for retail business today and in the future.

A fast-paced digital commerce environment that can adapt to rapid and continuous change is required to respond to ever-shifting consumer demand and the competitive marketplace. There is now a new generation of technology operating natively in the cloud that improves extensibility and reliability, both of which are key factors as retail organizations seek to improve their resilience and ability to maintain business continuity. This includes platforms utilizing API-delivered digital commerce content in so-called “headless” configurations.



Here are three key best practices for today's modern digital commerce that take advantage of current technology:

- Deploy adaptive digital platforms with microservices architectures for reliability and greater business agility.
- Prioritize configurable, low-code commerce platforms that can be extended to meet consumer demand and expanded with partner technologies. These headless platforms can meet the broadest array of needs for retail organizations as they seek to provide digital commerce experiences in the ways that consumers demand them.
- Adopt methods for smarter, more personalized digital experiences powered by AI and machine learning that can provide contextual value to the consumer. Be sure to look for advanced analysis (for example, based on customer sentiment data) and integration with customer data platforms to further personalize experiences for the consumer.

Personalization in support of the customer experience grows increasingly important. Through 2024, two-thirds of organizations will conclude they need to supplement or replace their existing digital commerce technology deemed ineffective in supporting an omni channel and personalized customer and product experience. Determine how these best practices can accelerate the value of digital commerce for today and sustain future needs related to crafting the best possible consumer experience.

Retail organizations must operate in a continuous manner in which digital commerce meets and exceeds consumer demand for mobile and personalized experiences. Adopting modern digital platforms will support this requirement while also lowering TCO by having more extensibility that can be leveraged. Furthermore, the rapid pace of technological change requires an increased level of agility so the retail organization can respond to the types of commerce experiences desired. Achieving this agility is possible by adopting a microservice architecture designed for interoperability and that can be extended for your specific retailer needs. Another important capability for digital commerce is integrating with customer data platforms and analytics to not just understand commerce, but to refine and guide the consumer to the retail products and services they desire. The modernization of digital commerce has yielded platforms that encapsulate the experience and expertise from the last decade in this space to help organizations supercharge their efforts.

Examine how your digital commerce environment is designed for business continuity to reliably operate 24/7 on any device in a simple manner. Adopt best practices designed to support the customer experience and ensure that you have the platform extensibility that provides the agility you require. Your digital commerce tools should provide experiences that exceed your customers' expectations and help develop the customer loyalty you would like to achieve. Ensure that the entire product experience facilitated by your digital commerce investment for retailer organizations is designed to meet or exceed the business and technology requirements of today and tomorrow.



Stephen Hurrell - VP and Research Director, Ventana Research

Stephen Hurrell is responsible for the overall research direction for the Office of Revenue at Ventana Research, including the areas of digital commerce, price and revenue management, product information management, sales enablement, revenue performance management and subscription management. His focus areas include product and CS leadership, data-driven applications in sales enablement, financial reporting and planning, and billing and monetization platforms.