

# ECOMMERCE STRATEGY DEMYSTIFIED THE DEFINITIVE ECOMMERCE GUIDE

Keys to building high-conversion  
ecommerce experiences





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# Introduction

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Most businesses have grand ideas for ecommerce, but fall short on the execution.

Knowing what you want to sell online is one thing, but knowing how to do it successfully is a different ball game altogether. If you have big aspirations for your online business but having a hard time defining the steps to take to achieve success, this definitive guide will provide all the answers you need.

Succeeding in today's predatory ecommerce marketplace is not easy. There is so much competition online these days that only the fittest manage to make an impact and a select few manage to make a lasting impression. However, with a detailed marketing strategy, you can absolutely make it work. There is no shortage of customers and your success is dependent on finding the right audience and converting them into your customers. After all, it is estimated that ecommerce sales in 2019 will surge to \$4.5 trillion, with 1.92 billion global digital buyers. In such a rapidly growing market, there's no reason you can't succeed if you take a strategic approach and use the right combination of skills and technology.

With that encouraging thought, let's begin our guide to building an effective online marketing strategy.



# What is ecommerce strategy?

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An ecommerce strategy is a summary of how an online store is planning to achieve its goals and improve its position in the market.

Designed with clear intent and focus, an effective e-commerce strategy can be a positive and exciting extension to your business. An effective strategy focuses on the areas where you get the most returns. It becomes the basis for growth. It helps to focus limited resources on the most important and productive activities for the business. A solid ecommerce strategy includes 9 key elements:

## 1. Effective search capability

Designing a high-performing search experience is a key feature for your users because if users can't find what they are looking for, they will buy it from another store. To boost conversions in an e-commerce store you can improve the search usability. Ask yourself - does your e-commerce website platform record or analyze what customers are searching for? If your online store system is able to track this, this means you are probably having effective navigation and search capability. Customers who know exactly what they are looking for want to find the right information as quickly as possible.

## 2. High-quality photographs and product descriptions

Showing good viewable thumbnails in the search results page will help users find the desired product in one click and get a better idea of what are you offering. Include beautiful product images and photos to attract the attention of the potential customer. Unlike the brick and mortar experience, ecommerce customers can't touch the product and their purchase decisions are solely based on product imagery and feedback. It is also important to ensure accurate and comprehensive product descriptions. Make sure you don't just describe the product – can create a comprehensive list of features and benefits. Potential customers want to know everything about how a product would help them and improve their life.

## 3. Home page personalization

Amazon is the pioneer of home page personalization. Their homepage helps people easily find the right product in the personalized block in the first section when you log in. Essentially, home page personalization records what customers viewed or visited on their last session on your website and makes new buying suggestions on every following visit based on past experience in the store. This can also be a personalization based on previous behavior such as previous purchases or based on real-time data such as location, etc.

## 4. Consistency

Consistency is the key to effective content marketing. The world of advertising is constantly evolving and consumers are trying to avoid ads in many ways. To serve consistent and relevant content, you first need to understand your customers and how your product would help them and solve their problems. The key is to focus your content production around your customer's problems and what value you can provide.

## 5. Shopping cart functionality

To prevent customers from abandoning their shopping carts, you should be sure shopping cart functionality is perfect and easily navigable. The way to understand weaknesses is to do tests frequently. Test different options on a page to reduce shopping cart abandonment. During the optimizing process, you should pay attention to revenue not in conversions because this is the main business goal. Clear the checkout page and remove distractions and/or possible places to exit. This will prevent any confusion during the checkout process. Plenty of conversion studies have shown that the fewer clicks during checkout, the higher your conversion rate will be.

## 6. Email lists

If your online business isn't using email marketing as an outlet, you are missing out on huge sales. Use sign-up forms, give something in exchange for an e-mail address like a discount code or even a small present. Make sure you win the customer's trust and never send out emails without the user's consent, otherwise you risk winding up in the spam folder. Don't forget to include an option, where the customer is able to join your mailing list as part of the checkout process. Also, be sure to include sign-up option at the end of your blog posts. If the visitors enjoyed the content, they will be happy to keep in touch and get information about news, discounts, and promotions and will leave their e-mail.

## 7. Social media

The social media strategy your marketing team prepares should be connected with your content strategy. The content creation from your e-commerce website should be published and shared on social media, as this guarantees you a larger audience and boosted visibility. Visual social networks such as Instagram, Snapchat, and Pinterest, are usually best for online shops that are selling products, however, don't underestimate Twitter and Facebook as more than 75% of all internet users are also there. Effective use of social media can drastically improve conversion rates.

## 8. Advertising

Ecommerce shop advertisements help to improve your online visibility and boost sales. Before starting an ad campaign, you should answer these questions: How many visitors does your business' website need for a successful conversion? What is the best advertisement outlet for your products? These answers will help you to make some calculations and predictions and will narrow your advertisement options. Most people choose to start with Facebook Ads or Google Adwords – The most popular and user-friendly platforms for advertising. Whatever you choose, the most important part is to analyze and track the traffic to your website.

## 9. User generated content

According to research, shoppers that interact with CGC are 97% more likely to convert with a retailer than customers who do not. User generated content is any content that is posted by consumers that is publicly available online. This can include video clips, pictures, testimonials, reviews, and blogs. through social media and other sites, regarding your store, brand or product. To create user generated content, ask customers how they think can make your product better. Use campaigns on Instagram with branded company hashtags to encourage customers who love your brand to post images and tag you. Try reaching new potential customers and check if there are viral social channels you are not already using.



# How to build an effective digital marketing strategy?

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1. Develop a mission statement
2. Build buyer personas
3. Competitor analysis
4. Set your goals
5. Produce engaging content
6. CRO
7. Retention and analysis

## 1. Develop a mission statement

A mission statement defines who you are as a business. It's the first thing that customers will see on your 'About Us' page and will define your brand story. Mission statements are particularly useful for larger organizations, or those who work across different sectors, as they provide focus and consistency across different areas.

## 2. Build buyer personas

Buyer personas are fictional, generalized representations of your ideal customer. They help your team to understand and visualize your audience in order to focus marketing efforts towards this demographic. You can use existing customer data to form personas, as well as interviewing a representative customer group for more in-depth insights. You'll need information such as demographics, what channels the customer uses and who influences them.

## 3. Competitor analysis

You may know exactly who your competitors are, but take a deeper look at their digital strategies and it can fuel your own marketing initiatives. You can easily find out which competitors rank highest for key search terms. Then there are a number of helpful competitor analysis tools that will give you statistics on web traffic and what channels competitors' customers are using. Details of their backlink profiles may also give you ideas for your own link building strategy.

## 4. Set your goals

Now that you have a clearer picture of who your customers are and what your competitors are doing, you should set some measurable goals in your marketing strategy. This part of your plan will be ever-evolving, so it's important to revisit yours regularly. You need to set achievable goals which cover all areas of marketing. For example, ask yourself what is an attainable figure for new customer acquisition or engagement on social. You can also audit your current website content and set yourself the target of increasing web traffic by a certain percentage.

## 5. Produce engaging content

Content works in a number of ways to bolster your e-commerce website, so it's key to incorporate a content strategy into your overall marketing plan. Firstly, content is a tool for driving traffic to your website through optimized product descriptions and landing pages. Although you may sell products that can be found elsewhere online, it's important that your content is unique in order to avoid duplication issues.

Another area where content is important is in encouraging conversion through the use of attractive product descriptions and compelling CTAs. A content strategy will cover all channels and content types, integrating them into an overarching plan – from creating a blog of original articles; to driving traffic to your product pages; producing video content for social; or formulating engaging email newsletters.

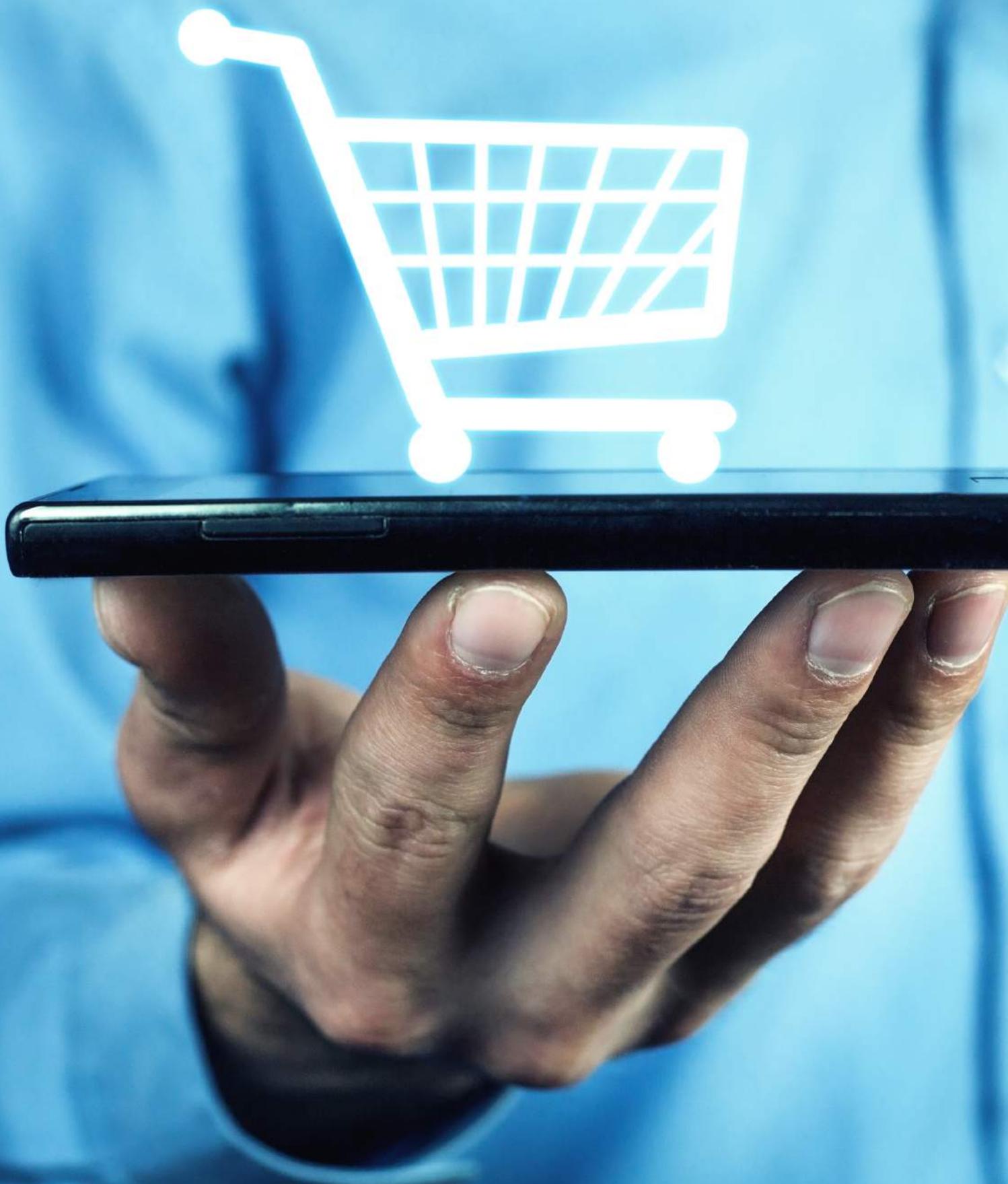
## 6. CRO

Make Conversion Rate Optimization (CRO) a part of your marketing strategy and regularly set aside time to split test any new pages added to your website. Using heat maps and funnels allow you to see where customers are focusing their attention on your site and what journey they take between pages. You can use this information to improve menu navigation, checkout processes, mobile functionality and more through A/B testing. By changing one element at a time, from wording to imagery and the placement of important information and links, you can quantifiably test what works best.

## 7. Retention and analysis

As you add more campaigns to your marketing strategy, remember to test your content through all your buyer personas. Ask yourself - Do your campaigns fit the target audience? And does the content align with your mission statement? You'll also need to track your efforts and the responses to them – whether through Google Analytics, customer feedback or social media statistics. Analyzing engagement and traffic allows you to measure the effectiveness and ROI of each campaign, as well as streamline your efforts for a personalized user experience.





# Start your journey towards digital marketing excellence

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Despite the challenging role of the CMO today, it's actually a great time to lead marketing at an ecommerce company. The old ways of advertising are getting thrown out and the successful CMOs and companies will be the ones that leverage the new ways faster than their competitors. The winners of this next phase of online commerce will make the following moves as they go about creating your digital marketing strategy:

## 1. Master SEO

A marketer must understand the power of search engine optimization (SEO) for ecommerce companies. Therefore, the first lesson is to keep a website perfectly optimized for engine searches in order to increase the discoverability of your online store. This is fundamental because 93% of all traffic comes from a search engine. It's a complex topic that requires a lot of research and explanations, but the usual rule of thumb is to use the best keywords, optimize metadata, improve page load speed, and enhance website performance in general.

## 2. Create quality content

The Internet is flooded with more or less the same ecommerce companies. While they might offer similar SaaS features, there is one thing that can distinguish some businesses from competitors and it is called "content marketing." Content creation gives you the opportunity to prove professional knowledge and authority, thus helping you to expand the fan base. If you are not an expert in content design, there are dozens of interesting essay service agencies and editing tools to consult with.

## 3. Effective paid advertising

The importance of search engine rankings is already well known, but it takes a while before SEO strategies start generating results. With paid advertising, the process becomes much simpler because platforms such as Google Ads or Facebook Ads ensure ultra-precise audience targeting and guarantee to maximize visibility almost instantly.

## 4. Use retargeting

Retargeting is another precious ecommerce strategy because it allows you to reach out to prospects who already established some sort of interaction on your ecommerce store. For instance, these could be website visitors who left the site without converting. This mechanism takes personalization to the whole new level because you can display ads that perfectly match the interests of every single user individually. In such circumstances, retargeting doesn't only increase the discoverability but also influences the decision-making process and drives more conversions.

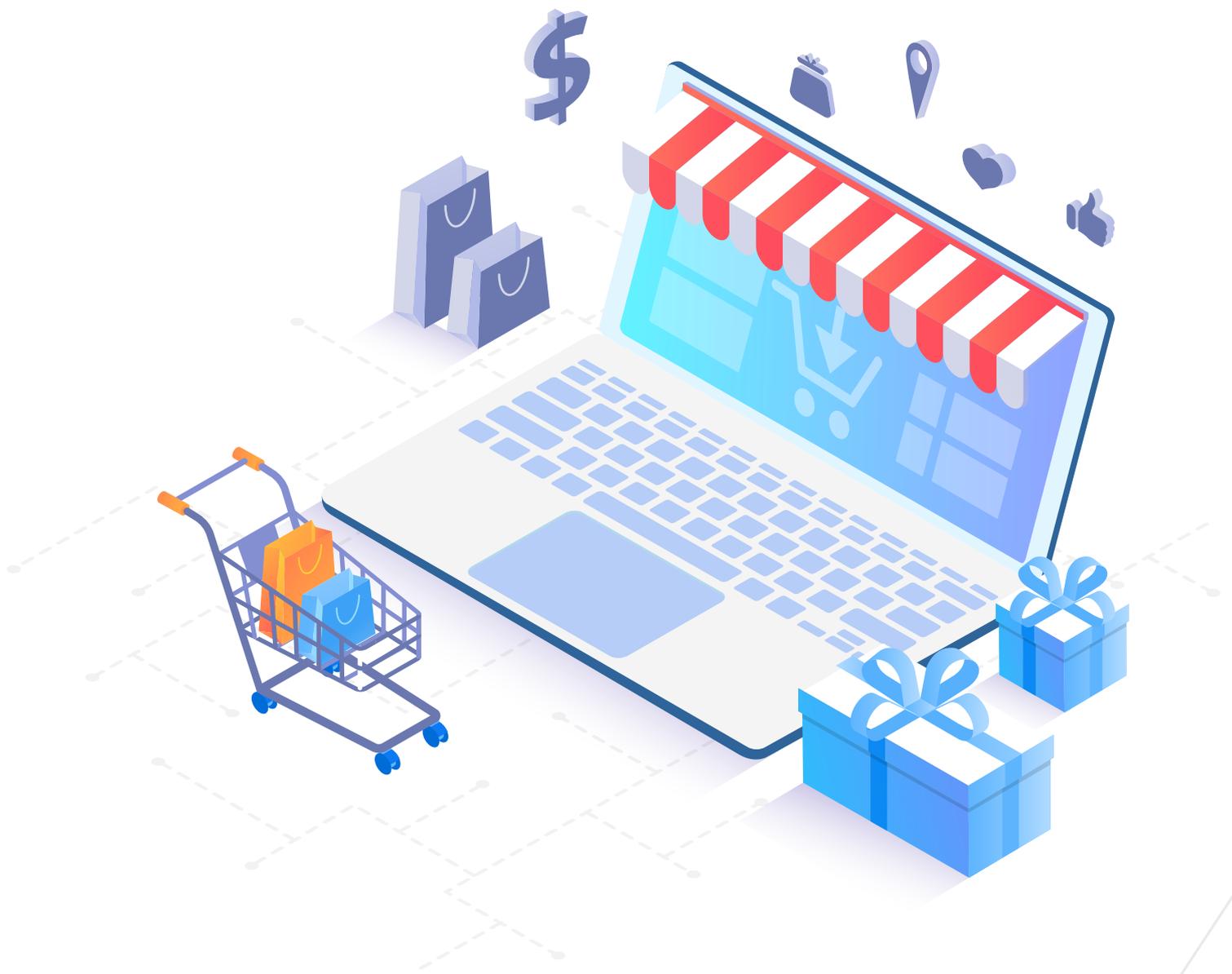


## Summary

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Consumers are moving more of their shopping online and ecommerce companies need to meet the challenges of the ecommerce customer across channels. But the competition in the ecommerce space is intense. That calls for a strategic approach to ecommerce.

Any comprehensive ecommerce strategy needs to start with a clear vision of what a complete digital experience looks like. Making that a reality requires cracking the shopper mindset—and building the technology and organizational capabilities that deliver on the customer’s increasingly high expectations.



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