

GUIDE

# Experience Commerce: A strategic guide for executives

How to achieve greater ROI, competitive advantage and win customers for life

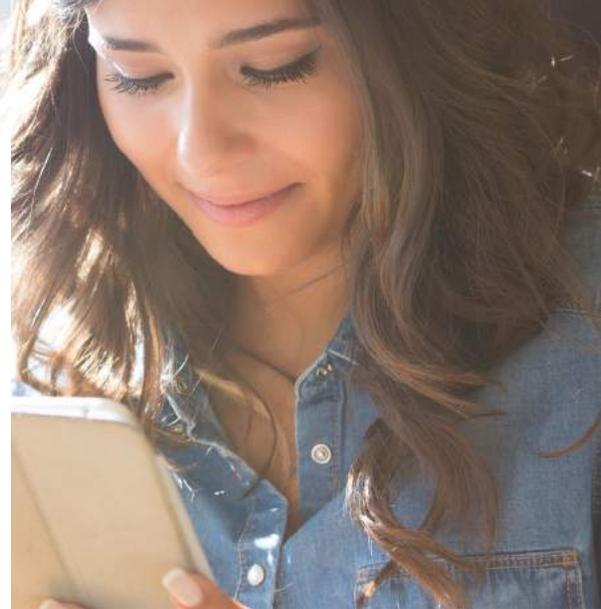


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# Successful commerce is about delivering great experiences

As consumers, we all know a great experience when we have one. We also know a bad one. We know how that makes us think, feel, and act at the time – and influences us the next time around.

That’s how smart brands are building lifelong customer loyalty – they go beyond a marketplace and create memorable experiences that engage their customers. Without this, companies fall by the wayside.

So how can Digital Marketers, Merchandisers, and ecommerce professionals deliver great experiences for customers, time and again?

## The evolution of customer relationships



### Unknown

Traditional Commerce is transaction-based and largely anonymous. There’s a brief encounter at the cart. That’s it.



### Distant

Experience-driven Commerce offers a veneer of personalization with some hit-and-miss interaction using guesswork.



### Intimate

Experience Commerce engages with customers on a 1:1 level – before, during, and after every transaction. It’s continual.

# 140%

Increased spend from customers who have good experiences than those with the poorest experiences.\*

\* The Value of the Customer Experience, Quantified”  
– Harvard Business Review, 2014

## A critical question: How close are you to your customers?

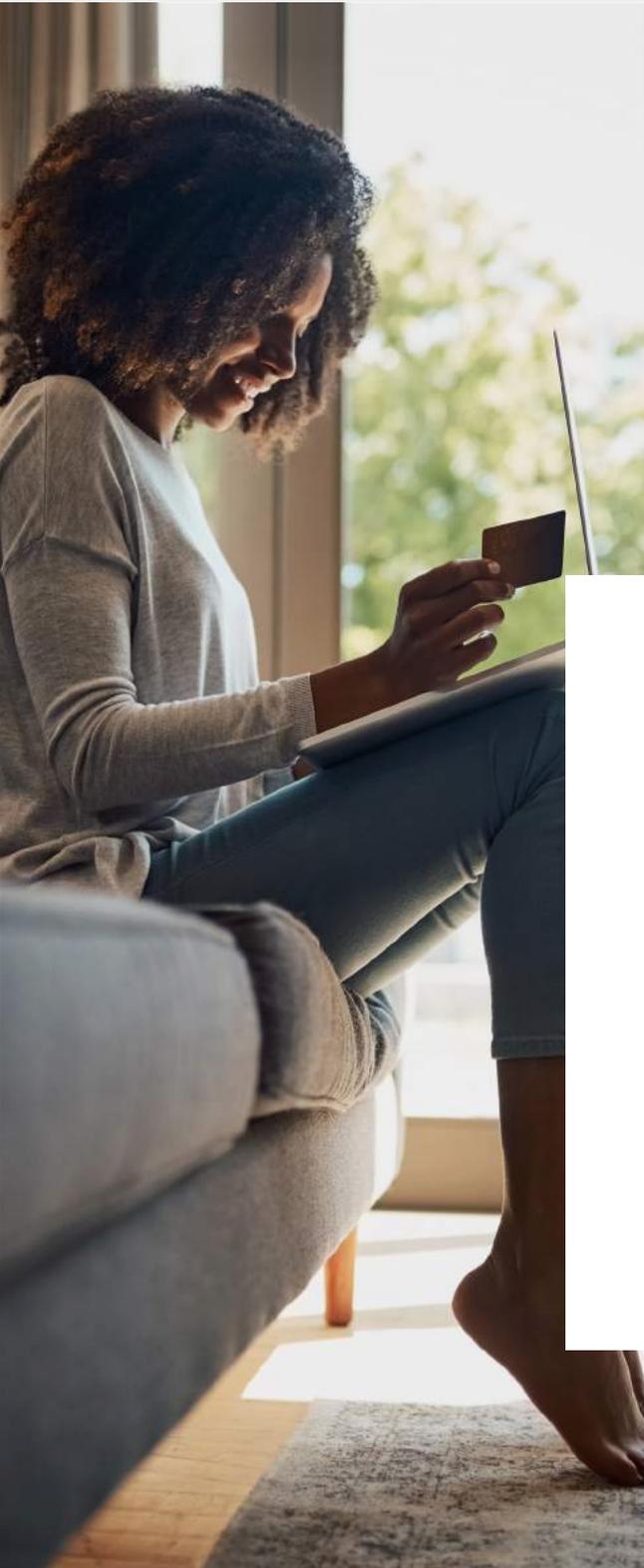
Ecommerce has transformed our world. But it’s often created a mindset where the transaction is king. Buyers are there to fill online shopping carts and check out – not abandon them – and that’s as far as it goes.

But experiences built solely around transactions are not what today’s customers want. To them, it’s cold and impersonal. If a brand seems only interested in taking their money, then why should they give them any loyalty? So, it’s no surprise when a company can’t differentiate itself, has maxed out its discount offers, cannot lower prices any further, and has no idea what to do next.

Some companies attempt to get customers to sign up for newsletters and then only contact them once in a while – or serve everything to them at once in the hope that something will stick. But it’s like a fake friendship, built on a shallow understanding of the customer that can end up just irritating people.

In contrast, successful brands realize the quality of the overall experience is something much greater than products and transactions. The transaction is just one step in a full and ongoing, two-way relationship where customers return again and again. To compete effectively, the experience needs to rival or exceed the very best that customers have encountered elsewhere.

Put simply, successful brands go beyond the transaction and focus on creating Experience Commerce.



## What's unique about Experience Commerce?

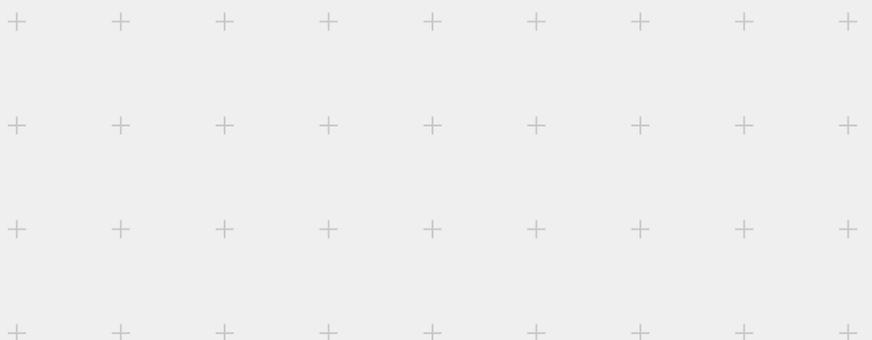
Great experiences are personal, relevant, in context, and consistent across devices. They may start on a tablet during a coffee break, continue the journey on their phone while on a treadmill at the gym, and then make the purchase on their laptop at home in the evening.

We have ideas, we think about them, we make a purchase, we share how we feel, and we remember.

In our minds as consumers, it's all one experience. We don't think in terms of "channels." Life isn't a series of stop/start collisions as we ram into clunky interfaces, databases, and systems (or rather, it shouldn't be).

What today's customers crave are personalized experiences that extend across any channel they decide to use at any time. They should feel easy, natural, and helpful. Companies must be relevant in every step of the customer's journey and serve up interesting, pertinent content at just the right moment. It's about predicting, with a high degree of accuracy, what the consumer might want to see next.

This requires an understanding of consumers as individuals – by gathering and seamlessly interpreting their behaviors across multiple touchpoints.





## For many brands it's not happening. Why?

Experience Commerce doesn't happen by accident. Brands need the right strategy to adapt to new realities, and the right tools to enable this transformation. Without these, they won't be able to deliver on the promise of Experience Commerce.

**Digital Marketers** must deliver campaigns that extend beyond the product catalog and online shopping cart. Brands must stay competitive and relevant to win consumers' attention. But not knowing where a customer is in the buying cycle makes it difficult to personalize campaigns and go beyond the transaction. It's also hard to evaluate attribution and uncover the tactics that contribute to higher lifetime customer value and better ROI.

**Merchandisers** also face big challenges. They may work with too many systems that are not integrated and legacy systems, so there's no single source of the truth. They desperately need "more modern" usability with a consolidated view of all their commerce tools in real time in order to monitor how products are organized, priced, packaged, and listed in the inventory. But instead they have to spend precious time updating multiple online and offline systems. And even then, it's next-to-impossible to get products displayed correctly.

**Ecommerce professionals** may also struggle with legacy ecommerce systems that are purely focused on shopping cart conversion, recognizing that the conversation starts much earlier and extends much wider. They'd love to be able to understand and manage customer complexity across channels, but insufficient access to the right data, due to inflexible and disparate legacy systems, means they don't stand a chance.

Overall, information and functionality exist within silos – a major problem that stands in the way for all these professionals. Teams are unable to work in harmony. Executives need to invest but are unsure about where. And all of this has a negative impact on the customer. In a fiercely competitive world, this model of marketing and commerce is unsustainable.

You need the same flexible, integrated tool many of the world's leading retail brands are leveraging that allows the experience to extend beyond the transaction.



# What's the answer?

**Content, commerce, and customers are separate in many organizations. One system develops attraction, which may be a CMS, social, or marketing platform. The store is a separate site and marks the end of the attraction journey. The commerce platform then sees the shopper for the first time and wants to start a relationship but knows nothing about them.**

In contrast, an Experience Commerce architecture integrates these systems into a single platform. The results are game changing.

Effective marketing surrounds today's customer throughout the journey. In fact, the transaction could very well be in the middle of the experience.

Commerce experiences become personalized and relevant across the customer lifecycle, tactics, channels, and devices. You create an amazing, immersive experience, rather than just a marketplace where your product is positioned the same way as everyone else.

A unified "Experience Database" enables this, consolidating profiles, rules, and interactions from multiple sources and providing the ability to build unique profiles, per consumer, per device.

With these in place, you can personalize during pre-purchase, at purchase, and post-purchase for each individual account.

This approach allows you to prioritize the customer experience in every connected phase – across every channel.

At last, digital marketers, merchandisers, and ecommerce professionals have a comprehensive and unified set of tools and insights at their fingertips to see clearly for the first time how their customers are behaving. You can deliver the right message to the right person at the right time automatically and create meaningful experiences that drive customer loyalty.





# How is Experience Commerce helping companies today?

Modern, next-gen platforms like Sitecore® Experience Commerce™ represent the culmination of many years' investment in technology, integration, and the unification of tools to efficiently and effectively deliver on an "Experience Commerce" vision. They bring together customer data, content, and commerce – with outstanding results for companies. We're not talking about small incremental changes, but business transformations.

## What's in it for me?

Experience commerce enables you to know every customer and shape every personalized experience across all channels in real time. Rise to this level and you will thrive – achieving a greater and sustainable ROI, competitive differentiation, and winning customers for life.

Sitecore has the tools, strategies, and tactics commerce executives need. And they are available today.

## Next steps

Ready for more information on how we can help you with your commerce initiative? [Contact us now.](#)

### About Sitecore

Sitecore delivers a digital experience platform that empowers the world's smartest brands to build lifelong relationships with their customers. A highly decorated industry leader, Sitecore is the only company bringing together content, commerce, and data into one connected platform that delivers more than 500,000 digital experiences every day. Leading companies including American Express, ASOS, Carnival Cruise Lines, Kimberly-Clark, L'Oréal, and Volvo Cars rely on Sitecore to provide more engaging, personalized experiences for their customers. [Learn more at Sitecore.com.](#)

### Why TA Digital?

Over the past 20 years, TA Digital has positioned clients to achieve digital maturity by focusing on data, customer-centricity and exponential return on investment; by melding exceptional user experience and data-driven methodologies with artificial intelligence and machine learning, we enable digital transformations that intelligently build upon the strategies we set into motion.

[Talk to us](#), today!