Bridge The Commerce/Content Divide
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Executive Summary

The best brands seek to deliver a truly holistic, unified experience for their customers. They give detailed attention to every aspect of look and feel because they are aware of the importance of every step in the digital customer life cycle. The online commerce experience is no different and demands a high level of integration and unification throughout.

In July 2014, Acquia commissioned Forrester Consulting to evaluate how companies are using online content and commerce platforms to deliver a unified experience in the age of the customer. To further explore this trend, Forrester developed the hypothesis that companies need to integrate content and commerce operations, processes, and technologies to truly deliver cohesive digital experiences that will resonate with customers.

In conducting 153 online surveys and five in-depth interviews with web content management and eCommerce platform decision-makers in the US, France, Germany, and the UK, Forrester found that companies selling products and services online are leaving money on the table due to their failure to unify content and commerce.

KEY FINDINGS

Forrester’s study yielded four key findings:

- The “two-site syndrome” leaves revenue on the table. Many companies suffer from the two-site syndrome, where support for the “discover” and “explore” phases of the customer journey is disjointed from the “buy.” This results in a digital experience that is difficult for a consumer to navigate and ultimately leaves revenue left on the table.

- A unified, collaborative strategy improves conversion. Brands that have a collaborative approach to both technology and commerce see improvements in all metrics related to commerce, from time-to-market to conversion.

- Senior leadership has a more optimistic view on collaboration. Senior leadership believes collaboration between commerce and marketing teams is high; however, directors, managers, and individual contributors ranked collaboration 20% lower than senior management.

- Commerce winners are differentiating with content. Delivering rich and varied content types is essential in order to stay ahead of the pack, and decision-makers need a solution that can support and leverage them all.
The Content And Commerce Divide Is Deep And Wide

Corporate marketing and eBusiness teams have long operated separately because these teams have their own unique sets of goals and key performance metrics. Companies often split these departments into their own silos, with collaborative oversight existing only at the C-level positions. Marketing teams most frequently report into marketing leaders, and eBusiness teams report into business leaders. In fact, more eBusiness teams report into corporate IT (23%) than report into a marketing director (19%) (see Figure 1). Clearly, alignment between commerce and marketing teams is lacking — separate teams mean separate goals. A brand manager at a North American automobile manufacturer told us, “For commerce, our teams track sales and demand, whereas web teams track consumer ratings and site traffic.”

With marketing and commerce leadership separated, it’s not surprising that nearly 60% of companies we surveyed have siloed marketing and commerce departments as well (see Figure 2). This leads to separate processes and technologies including — but not limited to — web content and commerce teams.

**FIGURE 1**
Commerce And Content Teams Have Separate Executive Leadership

“Where do the following teams report into today?”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Team Type</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Marketing (CMO/SVP of marketing)</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>eCommerce/online sales (COE/shared service)</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Product/line of business (SVP or equivalent)</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corporate IT (includes CIO or CTO)</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Distribution/operations (includes COO)</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Base: 91 web content management/eCommerce platform decision-makers in organizations where brand management teams are separate from eBusiness teams

Source: A commissioned study conducted by Forrester Consulting on behalf of Acquia, August 2014

**FIGURE 2**
Nearly 60% Have Separate Marketing And Commerce Teams

“Which of the following best describes who in your organization is responsible for the commerce purchase funnel and the brand marketing for your organization?”

- One team handles both commerce and brand marketing responsibilities: 39%
- Other arrangement: 1%
- Don’t know: 1%

*The commerce teams are separate from the marketing teams, and each handle unique responsibilities around the commerce purchase funnel: 59%

“The commerce teams are separate from the marketing teams, and each handle unique responsibilities around the commerce purchase funnel: 59%”

“Rate the following shared areas between eCommerce and brand marketing teams on a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 is entirely separate and 5 is entirely shared.”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Entirely shared (5)</th>
<th>Neither entirely shared nor entirely separate (4, 3, or 2)</th>
<th>Entirely separate (1)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Technology platforms/systems</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategic leadership (e.g., divisional/departments)</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>59%</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Operational leadership (e.g., project teams)</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>62%</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Base: 153 web content management/eCommerce platform decision-makers in organizations where brand management teams are separate from eBusiness teams

* Base: 91 web content management/eCommerce platform decision-makers in organizations where brand management teams are separate from eBusiness teams

Source: A commissioned study conducted by Forrester Consulting on behalf of Acquia, August 2014
management, eCommerce, digital asset management, product content management, campaign management, analytics, testing, and optimization. Specifically, within this group:

› **Only 30% reported a single departmental head.** Less than one-third said that strategic leadership is shared between marketing and commerce teams. Different leaders have different priorities and goals. This contributes to different experiences for marketing and commerce portions of the digital experience.

› **Only 24% use entirely shared operational leadership (e.g., project teams).** Companies face more challenges to run multiple campaigns when they don’t share operational leadership.

› **Only 32% are on an entirely shared technology system.** Even companies with shared leadership fail when technology for content- and commerce-based experiences are disconnected. This leads to difficulties with consistency across channels, creating fully contextual experiences for site visitors and providing rich content at all stages of the customer life cycle.

What is the result of this content/commerce divide? Companies suffer from two-site syndrome, where support for the “discover” and “explore” phases of the customer journey are disjointed from the “buy” phase (see Figure 3). From a historical perspective, it’s easy to see how companies wound up here:

› **eCommerce groups support transactional interactions, merchandising, and products.** These groups are responsible for the entire order life cycle. This includes the product catalog, pricing, extensive merchandising (cross-selling, up-selling, bundling, etc.), promotions, and fulfillment.

› **Marketing groups support nontransactional interactive experiences.** Marketers are responsible for creating a marketing plan that includes content creation, delivery, campaigns, and customer analytics and insights.

Since these two groups have operated separately, they often have had discrete processes, goals, and technologies. But this has made managing the web experience more difficult. Companies can’t easily leverage the same content on both portions of the website when they store different content types in different systems. Personalization is even more difficult with siloed technologies since they each have their own personalization schemes, and keeping them in sync for a unified personalization strategy is very challenging.

More importantly, consumers find websites difficult to navigate when they suffer from two-site syndrome. They now want to see “glossy” marketing content integrated with product information. The difficulty that users experience navigating through the fragmentation results in revenues left on the table. But content and commerce professionals have found creating these unified experiences difficult given the technologies involved.

**Middle Managers Paint A Less Rosy Collaboration Story Than Their Leaders**

Collaboration is more than a warm, fuzzy feeling — it brings concrete process benefits that net out to hard-dollar savings and revenue improvements. As one brand manager from a North American auto manufacturer told us, “Our time-to-
market times are absolutely impacted because our teams are going back and forth on strategy. This drives conversion rates down and costs up.”

“Our time-to-market times are absolutely impacted because our teams are going back and forth on strategy. This drives conversion rates down and costs up.”

— Brand manager from a major North American auto manufacturer

On average, heads of eCommerce and marketing departments paint a relatively rosy picture when it comes to collaboration — in total, 86% of survey respondents indicated that collaboration between eCommerce and marketing teams are very or extremely high when it comes to creating unified customer experiences.

However, the collaboration picture becomes less rosy depending on who you speak to. Ninety-four percent of the senior-most business or technology decision-makers (C-level, vice presidents, and other executives) for marketing and eCommerce teams feel that collaboration is high or very high. In contrast, director, manager, and individual contributor-level employees on those teams claim that collaboration is high at a 20% lower rate than their more senior counterparts (see Figure 4).

![FIGURE 4](image)

Middle Managers View Commerce/Marketing Collaboration Through A Different Lens

“Overall, how would you rate the collaboration environment between the commerce and marketing teams on creating a unified customer experience through your organization’s eCommerce efforts?”

(On a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 is [not at all collaborative] and 5 is [extremely collaborative])

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Extremely Collaborative (5)</th>
<th>Collaborative (4)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Senior-most decision-maker, vice president, or executive (n = 52)</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Director, manager, or individual contributor (n = 39)</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>49%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Base: web content management/eCommerce platform decision-makers in organizations where brand management teams are separate from eCommerce teams

Source: A commissioned study conducted by Forrester Consulting on behalf of Acquia, August 2014
“Overall, how would you rate the collaboration environment between the commerce and marketing teams on creating a unified customer experience through your organization’s eCommerce efforts?”
(On a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 is [not at all collaborative] and 5 is [extremely collaborative])

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Extremely collaborative (5)</th>
<th>Collaborative (4)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Shared technology (n = 55)</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Separate technology (n = 36)</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>61%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Base: web content management/eCommerce platform decision-makers in organizations where brand management teams are separate from eCommerce teams
Source: A commissioned study conducted by Forrester Consulting on behalf of Acquia, August 2014

Common Technology Leads To Improved Collaboration

The commerce and marketing collaboration picture crystallizes when separate teams successfully share common technology systems. Simply put, collaboration satisfaction soars. Of those organizations that share technology platforms, over half (53%) rated collaboration between commerce and brand marketing teams extremely favorably, compared with only 19% when technology is not shared between the groups — a 34% delta (see Figure 5).

For split teams that share technology, over 75% believe collaboration improves a wide range of process and UX metrics, including: campaign times, workplace culture, product development, operational and service processes, percent of revenue spent on technology, and conversion rates. Even more telling, teams that don’t share technology systems are 16% to 26% less confident about their collaborative efforts improving these metrics (see Figure 6).

Given the benefits left on the table due to the rift between commerce and marketing teams, it’s logical to assume most companies aim to bring the two groups closer together over the next few years. However, those teams that share a common set of technologies are far more optimistic. Over half (51%) of teams that share technology between marketing and commerce anticipate moving toward more collaboration by year-end, while only 22% of teams with separate technology expect their relationship to change. Looking further out, this divide appears to carry a healthy dose of inertia, as teams that don’t share technology don’t anticipate catching up even by the end of 2016 (see Figure 7).

FIGURE 6
Shared Technology Inspires Confidence In Business Metric Improvement

“How is the current level of collaboration between the commerce and marketing teams impacting the following eCommerce efforts/outcomes today?”
(On a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 is [extremely negatively] and 5 is [extremely positively] — showing only [positive] + [extremely positive])

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Metric</th>
<th>Shared technology (n = 55)</th>
<th>Gap between those with shared and separate technology</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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</tbody>
</table>

Base: web content management/eCommerce platform decision-makers in organizations where brand management teams are separate from eCommerce teams
Source: A commissioned study conducted by Forrester Consulting on behalf of Acquia, August 2014
Marketing teams have traditionally used web content management (WCM) as their primary tool to reach website visitors, while commerce teams have used eCommerce platforms. But an increasing number of areas of functionality for those two technologies now overlap. Successful integration between the two will help companies support rich contextual, multichannel experiences throughout the customer acquisition steps of the customer life cycle.

An integrated platform enables companies to unite the experience between brand exploration and conversation and better enable teams to collaborate on this goal. Specifically, an integrated platform can: 1) present product and nonproduct content at all stages of the customer life cycle that enables them to make purchase decisions wherever they are; 2) run campaigns across more of the digital customer life cycle; and 3) deliver personalized experiences across content- and commerce-based experiences. For companies selling online, this integrated platform almost always has a delivery backbone based on a commerce or content platform. Companies generally take one of three approaches for an integrated web content management and commerce setup:

- **WCM-led.** With this approach, the WCM delivers the experience — including page generation, personalization, and navigation — using content from both the WCM and eCommerce repositories. The eCommerce platform acts as a service layer and does not play a role in delivery. Instead, the WCM accesses eCommerce functionality, such as payments and processing, through APIs.

- **eCommerce-led.** In this approach, the eCommerce platform delivers the experience, and the WCM platform plays a simplified role as a content repository and helps enforce governance around content creation processes. In this scenario, it can be difficult for companies to justify investing in a high-end WCM system, since they would leave so much delivery functionality on the shelf, so companies tend to source more basic systems.

- **Hybrid.** In this approach, the WCM and eCommerce platforms share responsibility for the delivery of the experience. Integration focuses on the front end, such as single sign-on and sharing CSS and HTML templates to drive a consistent experience across all areas of the site.

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**FIGURE 7**
Shared Technology Inspires Confidence In Business Metric Improvement

“*How do you expect the relationship between commerce and marketing teams to become by . . . ?*”

(On a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 is [become more independent] and 5 is [significantly more integration] — showing only [more integration] + [significantly more integration])

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Shared technology (n = 55)</th>
<th>Gap</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The end of 2014</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The end of 2015</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The end of 2016</td>
<td>85%</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Base: web content management/eCommerce platform decision-makers in organizations where brand management teams are separate from eCommerce teams

Source: A commissioned study conducted by Forrester Consulting on behalf of Acquia, August 2014
Ultimately, companies that have successfully integrated their commerce and content platforms — regardless of which is in the lead — have been able to better support a singular, contextual experience than those that have separate, distinct content and commerce platforms. Furthermore, integration leads to concrete improvement on key metrics. One brand manager for a consumer packaged goods firm said, “Our integrated experiences have driven higher times on site and increased page views.”

**Understand The Challenges In Harnessing Data For Personalization**

An integrated platform can support personalized experiences across the customer life cycle for digital customers. However, the path to personalization is not easy, as companies have dealt with separate repositories of data. One IT director from a European telecom provider told us, “We only personalize on static segment data today as we’re still having problems getting data. That’s not to mention that even if we had the [data], we’d still be unable to quickly react to a shifting market based on that data.”

Less than half of firms surveyed have implemented even the most basic form of personalization today. This limited adoption is not due to lack of interest, however, as no less than two-thirds of firms surveyed are planning to implement or expand every type of personalization investment (see Figure 8). Unfortunately, this dramatic interest contrasts with the disconnect in what management believes about what types of customer data can be leveraged. While senior management is generally optimistic in what personalization their organization can confidently leverage, middle management is less confident in what can be leveraged — particularly third-party data (see Figure 9). A unified technology strategy aids the ability to leverage data.

**Support More Content Types To Drive Differentiation**

The sheer volume of content, content types, and content categories that commerce and marketing teams must master is immense. And that’s just to keep pace with baseline user expectations. One marketing communications manager from a European auto manufacturer expressed that her team has mastered beautiful product imagery, supported user-generated content with “share your story”

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**FIGURE 8**
**Firms Have Big Plans To Increase Personalization Investment**

“Which types of web/eCommerce personalization efforts is your company investing in?”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Personalization</th>
<th>Planning to Implement in the next 12 months</th>
<th>Planning to Implement in a year or more</th>
<th>Interested but no plans</th>
<th>Not interested</th>
<th>Don't know/NA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Implemented and not expanding</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>12% 5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implemented and expanding</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>15% 10% 5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pilot in progress</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>17% 11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Automated, algorithm-based targeting/personalization</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>14% 7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Predictive/real-time personalization</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Base: 153 web content management/eCommerce platform decision-makers
Source: A commissioned study conducted by Forrester Consulting on behalf of Acquia, August 2014
campaigns, and both on-site and social video publishing. She said, “The number of unique visitors has increased YOY, as have page views and time per session primarily due to the content, amazing pictures, and product configurator tools.” And yet, at best, she said they only manage to keep pace with the frontrunners today.

In order to differentiate from the competition, organizations reported that they focus on at least six content types today. Support for no particular content type is clear “low-hanging fruit.” A spread of 27% to 53% of these content-mature firms chose from 17 different content types to differentiate their eCommerce experiences (see Figure 10). Separate technology strategies lead to scenarios where some content types are more readily available in some part of the website experiences than others (i.e., commerce pages may have product information but not be able to easily incorporate service content such as videos). An integrated platform can support varied content types and enable practitioners to leverage these content types across the digital experience.

“From a web content standpoint, what do you do to differentiate your eCommerce experience today?”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Content Type</th>
<th>Senior-most decision-maker, VP, or executive (n = 52)</th>
<th>Director, manager, or individual contributor (n = 39)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Product content</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>53%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Informational content</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Videos</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marketing content</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>User generated content</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Existing social media</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increased ease of checkout</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cross-branding</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>On-site ads</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cross-selling</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service content</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Template/instructional content</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commenting within experience</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partner promotions</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Merchandising content</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personalized experiences</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gamification</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Base: web content management/eCommerce platform decision-makers
Source: A commissioned study conducted by Forrester Consulting on behalf of Acquia, August 2014

“From a web content standpoint, what do you do to differentiate your eCommerce experience today?”

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“From a web content standpoint, what do you do to differentiate your eCommerce experience today?”

“The number of unique visitors has increased YOY, as have page views and time per session, primarily due to the content, amazing pictures, and product configurator tools.”

— Marketing communications manager from a major European auto manufacturer
Key Recommendations

For companies creating unified digital experiences for customers, eCommerce and marketing organizations must collaborate more closely on both organization and technology strategies. Another manager with responsibility for creating unified experiences said, “We are seeing progress as a result of our integrated system, with customer services improvements that are driving new customers and improved customer retention.” Current levels of collaboration show a positive effect on many key business efforts, especially conversion rates and operational processes.

Companies hoping to create unified experiences for marketing and commerce end-to-end for their customers must revisit their working relationship and their technology strategies. Specifically, they should:

› **Unify the organization to drive even better experiences.** Unified technology across commerce and brand marketing teams is not an end goal, but rather a means to an end. Organizations that have removed collaboration barriers drive better, faster, and more differentiated customer experiences. As an IT director from the European telecom provider told us, “Marketing teams can share goals and working environments, which drives marketing costs and time-to-market down. We now have the time to figure out where to concentrate our efforts where we benefit our customers and ourselves most.”

› **Work together on an “outside-in” approach to customers’ needs for integrated digital experiences.** Technology is not a silver bullet. You need to understand your customers’ need first. Marketing and commerce teams can work together to leverage “soft” customer strategy investments around journey mapping and voice of the customer programs, in conjunction with proper analytics across web, email, social, and mobile channels. They should also identify the weak spots that are a priority to customers and elevate those areas to the top of the digital customer experience investment queue.

› **Leverage middle management insights for a true reading on marketing/commerce collaboration needs.** The data is clear: Senior leadership believes collaboration between teams is especially rosy today, and they’re routinely more optimistic than manager-level stakeholders. When investigating this dynamic in your organization, survey stakeholders from the organization and at varying levels of seniority to get an accurate picture of the collaboration across brand marketing and eCommerce teams.

› **Strategize together to integrate and extend technology platforms across teams.** Organizations must bring commerce and content leaders together during technology planning and selection initiatives. A common set of technology, content, and customer data provides a better foundation for collaboration between marketing and commerce teams. As the IT manager for a European telecom services firm told us, “Going forward, we’re prioritizing streamlined work between commerce and brand. We have some systems that don’t fit today, because they distract from what we’re trying to achieve for eCommerce. It’ll take time, but we’re actively investigating options.”
Appendix A: Methodology

In this study, Forrester conducted an online survey of 153 organizations selling products and services to consumers online in the US, France, Germany, and the UK to evaluate how companies are integrating their content and commerce operations, processes, and technologies to deliver cohesive digital customer experiences. Survey participants either influenced or were final decision-makers for their organization’s web content management systems or eCommerce platforms. Additionally, Forrester conducted five in-depth phone interviews of the same audience. The study began in July 2014 and was completed in August 2014.

Appendix B: Supplemental Material

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