



Multichannel commerce

The Secret To Unlocking Ecommerce Success

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The state of ecommerce

Ecommerce is sitting on the tip of every retailer's tongue. The COVID-19 pandemic hit and revolutionized the way we approach shopping. In the first quarter of 2020, [ecommerce jumped to a 33% market share from 16% in 2019](#). McKinsey and The Bank of America recorded this as a literal decade of growth in one quarter.

Of course, during this period, people had no choice but to turn to ecommerce for their shopping needs because of the limitations of physical movements. Retail players who only had brick-and-mortar stores needed to move online to respond to market changes quickly. From fast-moving consumer goods (FMCGs) to non-essential products and services, every industry had to accelerate digitization immediately.

Fast-forward to today. Ecommerce growth continues to rise as ecommerce sales

reached **\$1.09 trillion solely in the US in 2022** according to [Comscore's State of Digital Commerce report](#). Ecommerce isn't just a trend—it's here to stay.

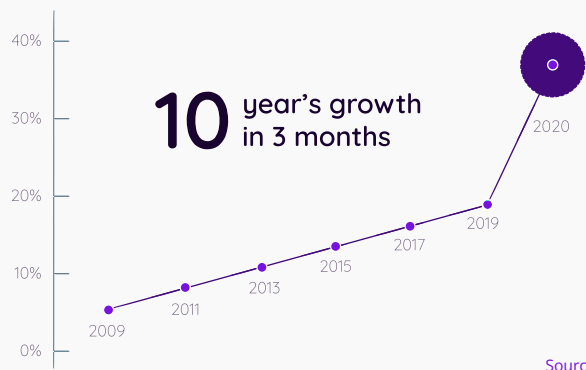
To make the most of the opportunity that selling online has, you need to make sure you set yourself up with a multichannel strategy. This means you need to have your products available to your customers on a variety of channels. Here's why:

- + Customers have the luxury to buy products on the channel they prefer (and there are lots of channels to choose from)
- + Customers value convenience more than brand loyalty

You'll find that your customers use not only one but multiple

channels during their buyers journey. From searching and browsing to product comparison and actually purchasing the product, your customers will go to whatever sales channel is most comfortable for them—and you better make sure your products are there, or you'll miss the sale.

US ecommerce growth during COVID-19



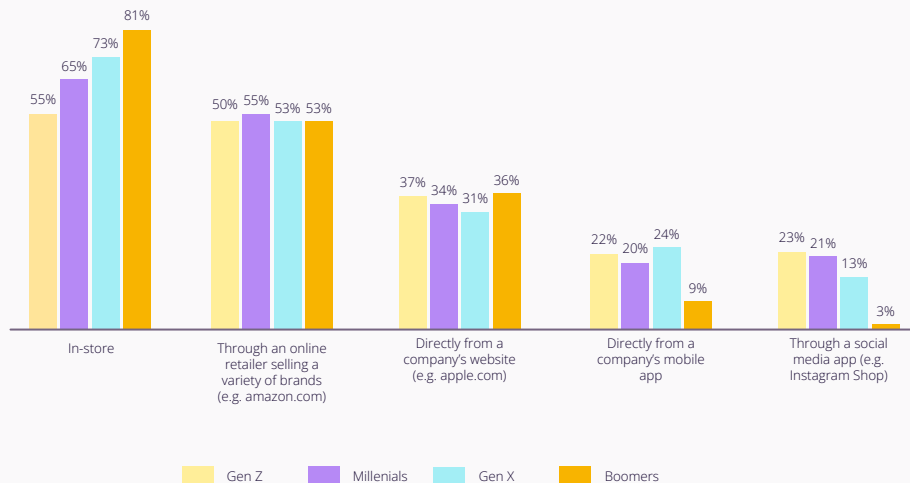
A shift in shopper habits

With new shopping channels popping up, new trends and shopping habits are coming along for the ride. The buying journey is no longer straightforward. Each buyer's journey is unique as customers can start a product search from one channel and complete the purchase on another channel.

Hubspot's latest trend report found that different generations prefer different buying platforms. While buying in-store is popular among all generations, buying through marketplaces, companies' direct websites, mobile apps, and social platforms are also popular. The report also shares that customers discover new products on different platforms, whether that's search engines, social media, or Youtube ads.

Multichannel is the future of retail shopping, and the faster brands move online, the better. You will quickly start to see a growing need for a multichannel and omnichannel approach to commerce. And as a result, you will need an adaptation strategy.

How consumers prefer to purchase products (top 5)



Visual commerce continues to grow

As many retailers try to recreate a similar product display online to that in-store, the more they've realized how this type of marketing is only possible with visual commerce. In such a competitive market, digital designers face the creative challenge of illustrating a unique, engaging experience that shortens the path to purchase. The well-known activewear brand, Adidas, is a great example of visual commerce. They include videos, rich imagery for storytelling, 3D visualization, and more to their online store. Occasionally, they also help customers shop for a "look" without having

to navigate the entire website for those items.

More and more brands are dipping their toes into user-generated content to sell to their customers on popular social channels. With product reviews, for instance, [95% of customers read online reviews before buying a product](#), and [97% read reviews for local businesses](#) to get a feel for a brand before making a purchase. On top of that, 49% of people trust reviews


as much as a personal referrals from friends or family. These percentages show just how important it is to include recommendations in your product pages to improve trust and influence buying decisions.

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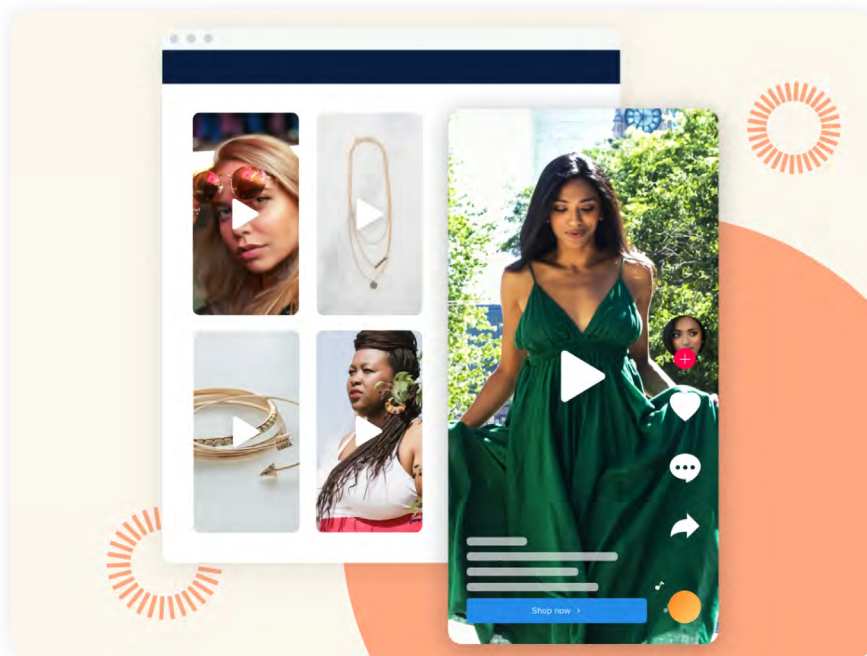
Mobile continues to dominate commerce sales

The average American checks their phone about **144 times a day** and **89% admit to checking their phones** within the first 10 minutes of waking up. They switch between applications such as **YouTube, Facebook, Gmail, Google**, and more, on a daily (or hourly) basis. It's clear that mobile devices have become an essential part of our everyday lives. Consumers are even becoming more comfortable shopping on mobile.

In the US, mobile commerce, also referred to as m-commerce, **sales reached \$431.4 billion** in 2022, with the expectation of reaching \$10.42 billion in 2025.

Mobile commerce is a competitive space, and the only way ecommerce sellers can guarantee success is through mobile-friendly and well-optimized listings. Focus on product listing optimization for **search and discovery**.

Optimize for multiple channels, marketplaces, and comparison shopping engines (CSEs) using relevant keywords, unique titles, detailed descriptions, rich imagery, and more. Be where your customers are, and watch how they engage with your listings.



More social commerce partnerships

Social media has not only changed the way we communicate but also the way we shop. In 2022, [GWI statistics](#) found that 64% of internet users discover brands through social media channels.

And customers aren't just using social media to discover new brands, but also go all the way through the purchasing process. According to [Statista](#), in 2022, almost nine in ten online shoppers made a purchase through social media platforms. On the other hand, approximately 62% of social shoppers had completed a transaction directly on the platform.

This means social commerce is a must for retailers wanting to reach their customers online and offline. In 2021, TikTok, for instance, announced [a partnership with Shopify](#).

According to [this article](#), “the deal aims to make it easier for Shopify's over 1 million merchants to reach TikTok's younger audience and drive sales. At launch, the agreement allows Shopify merchants to create, run and optimize their TikTok marketing campaigns directly from the Shopify dashboard by installing the new TikTok channel app from the Shopify App Store.”

Shopify already has existing partnerships with Facebook, Instagram, Pinterest, and now TikTok. This just shows how the iconic ecommerce platform has created significant growth for its merchants, allowing them to take advantage of social commerce in a digital age. It even allows you to integrate the look of your Shopify store to your social shops.

Start analyzing your customer data and adapt to how they shop



Multichannel is absolutely necessary

Today's shoppers love shopping on third-party platforms, known as marketplaces. The reason is these platforms offer a one-stop-shop experience, where all kinds of products across various departments are available to buy.

In Spain, for instance, customers do their product research on marketplaces more than other channels. Statistics show that **27% of Spaniards shopped** at least once a month on marketplaces and 7% shopped there more than twice a month. Interestingly, **9 out of 10 shoppers use Amazon**, which makes it the top marketplace in Spain. Additionally, AliExpress and El Corte Inglés follow in second and third place, with 59% and 45% penetration, respectively.

More on the global scale, Alibaba Group became the largest ecommerce retailer worldwide, generating an estimated \$780 billion in annual online sales in 2022. On the other hand, Amazon was the second marketplace

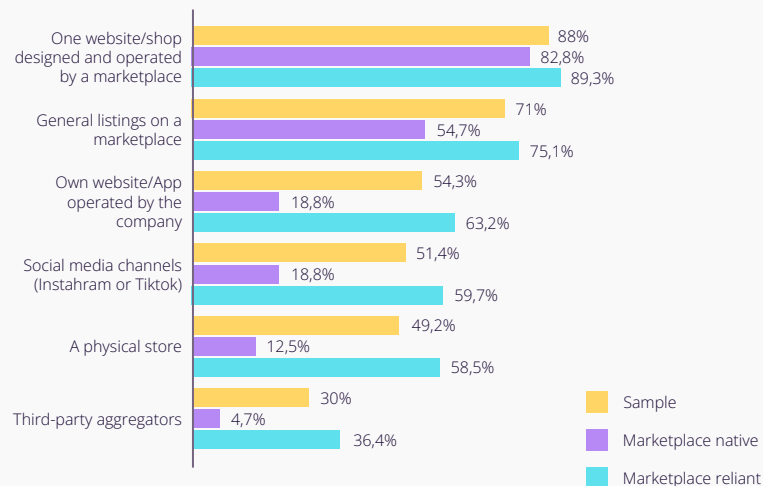
with around \$690 billion in online sales during the same period.

PYMENTS' **Online Sellers: The Future is Multichannel Report**, found that 61% of online sellers increased their marketplace usage in

2022. In fact, the same report shares that 42% of ecommerce business owners sell through four or more marketplaces. This shows that diversifying shopping channels is absolutely necessary.

How consumers prefer to purchase products (top 5)

Share of respondents who use selected channels to sell products, by seller type



More retailers adopt headless architecture

Today, it is becoming more complex for retailers to keep up. Traditional ecommerce platforms have their boundaries, many of which do not support the freedom and customization that brands need to compete. Many well-known brands and retailers, for example, Michael Kors and Walmart, have already switched to an API-driven structure that integrates with third-party systems.

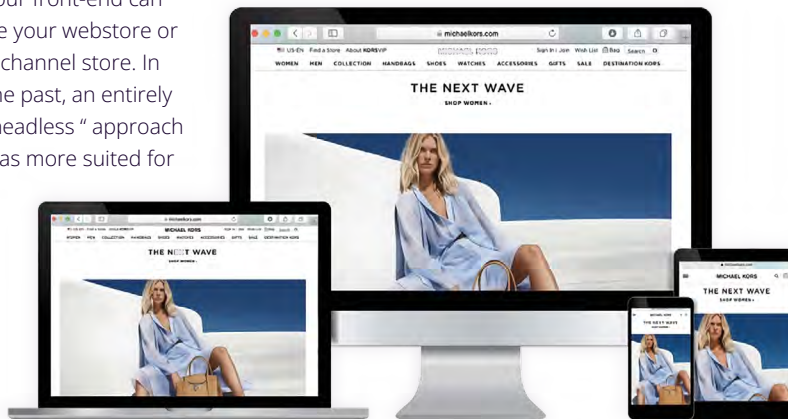
In its simplest form, headless commerce is an architecture that decouples the front-end presentation layer of a website from the back-end's ecommerce functionality. The purpose of this approach is really to give designers and user experience (UX) specialists the freedom to build whatever and however, they want. Without having to deal with feature limitations.

It allows you to still make use of a Content Management System (CMS), Digital Experience Platform (DXP), Progressive Web Application (PWA), or any other front-end, and pair it

with other tools in your tech stack. However, headless architecture can have its drawbacks.

While the customer experience will be incredible – be it due to new channel integrations, growth in international markets, or the introduction of new payment methods – it is a setup that is heavily reliant on the IT department's resources. Without the on-demand skills, your projects will be delayed. Fortunately, a [PIM tool](#), for instance, works a bit like the back-end architecture of [headless commerce](#). You have your rich product information in the tool, accessible to all, and your front-end can be your webstore or a channel store. In the past, an entirely “headless” approach was more suited for

larger companies with big budgets. But times have changed, and smaller B2C and B2B companies are investing in this structure. Your choice all depends on your needs. And to be frank, if you need something done fast, the best alternative is a PIM.



Selling on multiple channels

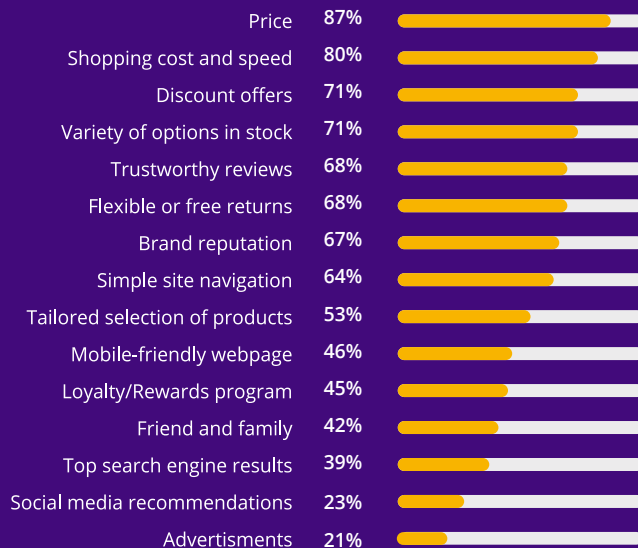
There is no doubt that the pandemic has certainly accelerated digital activity on mobile. But to be realistic, consumers have been using their mobile devices to chat, browse and shop for years. They're glued to their devices; part of the reason why **80% of shoppers browse for items online while shopping in-store**.

It is normal that shoppers will first consult other brands and channels before making a single-channel decision. Why? Because even you and I are not ready to buy something the first time we see it.

Thriving ecommerce brands have one thing in common: they're multichannel. They're present on a variety of channels and marketplaces to reach more customers and offer more sales avenues. By using one channel to sell your products, you're willingly sabotaging your brand's revenue and growth potential in a highly competitive market. Expanding your channel strategy for global markets provides convenience for your customers and diversifies financial risk.

Source

What influences shoppers to buy



Choose your channels wisely

Be strategic with your multichannel approach; it needs to be specific to your product, operational size, and business model. Your choice should be based on the following:

- + Are you looking to increase the amount of traffic to your store?
- + Are you looking to engage shoppers who are active on search listings?
- + Are you looking to find new customers who don't know about your business?
- + Are you looking to re-engage customers who have abandoned shopping carts?

Without the bandwidth to support a diversified portfolio, you can do more harm than good. Jumping from one channel to three, five, or 10 means more time and money. If you haven't got an inventory system to record your figures, or a product information management system to centralize product content, you will likely run into some unfortunate stock problems. (These

problems could cost you revenue loss)

So, whether you choose a channel, CSE, marketplace, or a mixture, be mindful of the admin that comes with it. Keep each platform consistent to maintain a positive shopping experience.

What is a marketplace?

A marketplace is an ecommerce website, unrelated to your business, that enables third-party sellers or vendors to sell products and services. Customers generally flock to marketplaces as they're able to search for many different brands or categories in one place, compare prices and find alternative products.

Good to know: Every marketplace and comparison shopping engine (CSE) is a channel, but not every channel is a marketplace or CSE. The reason why is that channels, largely related to social media, are personally created and run. You provide both an informative browsing, and ecommerce presence on social networks where customers can either engage with or shop from your brand in one place. Marketplaces and CSEs, on the other hand, are third-party platforms that enable sellers to create a listing or listing profile on their site. This is done for free, or you're charged a commission fee for the placement. Essentially, you piggyback off their presence instead of your own.



What is a comparison shopping engine?

Most consumers shop according to price. With so many overlapping products, customers prefer to do their research on prices and features to ensure they're making the best decision. Make it easier for these customers, at any point of the buying cycle, to find and compare your product with others.



What is social commerce?

Social commerce is an interactive approach to ecommerce for modern brands. By making the most of global audiences on platforms such as Facebook, Pinterest, Instagram, and TikTok, you can connect with thousands of new customers in minutes.

Many prefer to use this as a sales channel because it's personal and convenient. You're everywhere that your customers are, and you don't have to adhere to third-party restrictions. Another perk is that the social media channel you choose can be identical to your brand identity.

All you do is create a page that mimics your brand's messaging and style. You also control it; therefore, you can personally engage with customers and build loyalty. As your social media presence grows, so will your product traffic and rankings.

Good to know: a traditional web store or a store in Shopify is only one channel. Simply sharing this information on social media

(Facebook) is not another channel. You need to have an ecommerce presence within those platforms to consider it a selling channel.



Pinterest Shopping



Instagram Shop



Facebook Shops



TikTok Shop

How to thrive in multichannel commerce

Operate from a central source of truth

Manage your product information and visual assets in one place that's accessible to the entire organization. A Product Information Management (PIM) will ensure that content is accurate, consistent, and up-to-date. All teams can collaborate in real-time to avoid internal inefficiencies and data silos, which will, in turn, decrease product to market time and increase sales opportunities.

Optimize product content to rank higher

To rank higher, you'll need to optimize your content. Why? Each sales channel has strict criteria that need to be met to provide value

and increase sales. When you manage your multichannel listings in one, single source of truth, it is easier to control content at scale without having to resort to old ways: spreadsheets. Now, you can also manage more sales channels at once.

Automate processes that are manual

Speed up internal processes and achieve accuracy through automation. Ecommerce is a cut-throat industry, and you cannot be spending hours updating product information or calculating stock. Streamline any manual task, and centralize all relevant information in one, accessible place. This gives staff the freedom to perform without bottlenecks or having to juggle multiple tasks. Errors happen, and when your teams are pressed for time, they're more likely to deliver poor results.

Tie your tech stack together with the right tools

Retailers are responsible for the impact of their customer's journey with their brand. Multichannel commerce is only possible if your internal organization operates smoothly and efficiently. Implementing the right tech stack to collaborate, analyze, convert, maintain, communicate, or delight customers will greatly change the way your business functions.



Make multichannel commerce possible with a PIM

A **Product Information Management (PIM)** tool should sit at the heart of every retail organization. It is a constant in all the ecommerce chaos and a centralized place to manage your product information across an ever-growing number of marketplaces and channels.

There is no shortage of channels available to you – but they're demanding. Each platform requires a strict criterion of information that is unrealistic to manage in a clunky spreadsheet.

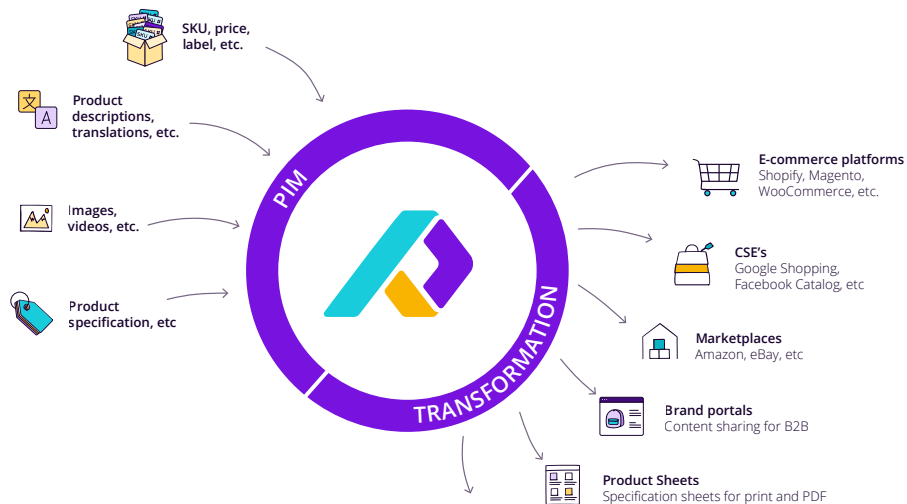
Whether you're required to shorten, tweak or optimize content, it is all possible in a next-generation PIM. If you consider how ecommerce has grown – more and more

people wanting to sell and buy products online – you wouldn't ignore the opportunity to innovate.

Even if you're a Fortune 500 retail organization with an established headless commerce structure or one that's in the early stages of migrating to headless commerce, a PIM is a nifty model. For the latter, it can act as back-end architecture for your website. You have your rich product information in the tool, and your

front-end can be your webstore or a channel store.

For smaller businesses with a traditional ecommerce structure, a PIM is equally as valuable. It can help you automate the creation, optimization, and management of product information, analytical data, visual assets, and other materials for internal and multichannel distribution.



About Plytix

Plytix is a Product Information Management (PIM) platform designed to help you manage product content at scale. It's the single source of truth that will get you to market faster and smarter.

Without clunky spreadsheets and outdated information, your team can find, edit, share and analyze accurate information across all your sales channels with just a few clicks.



Hi, I'm Trevor!

If you want to learn more about how PIM can help you in your multichannel commerce journey, [book a demo](#) with us today.

You'll get to speak to me, a real person, I'll help you understand where PIM fits in this large puzzle of multichannel commerce.



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