

THE MODERN COMMERCE DAY REPORT

HOW THE MACH MOVERS AND MAKERS
USE STATE-OF-THE-ART COMMERCE
TECHNOLOGY TO INNOVATE AND GROW.

Powered by  **commercetools**

BRANDS

boohoo

T R I N N Y L O N D O N

EXPRESS



HARRY ROSEN



LAKRIDS
BY BÜLOW

SHARPER
IMAGE



NORDIC
NEST

MARS

salling group

★ PRET ★



TRENTHIM
TELL YOUR STORY

THE GREEN DEAL

REWE

PARTNERS

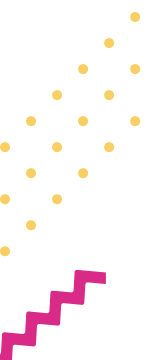


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01. WELCOME TO THE MODERN COMMERCE DAY REPORT 2021

I am pleased to announce that commercetools hosted “*Modern Commerce Day*,” on June 16, 2021. The virtual event, streamed live, was a resounding success. Our team worked diligently to bring our customers together to give them a stage to share their projects, learn from each other and network, as well as motivate brands in the process of digital transformation. We wanted to help inspire change and growth for brands stuck facing (what we have coined) the “commerce possibilities chasm™.”

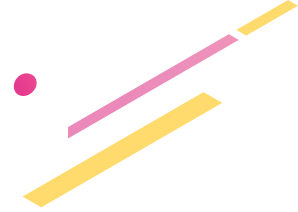
The chasm is a place many, many companies find themselves in one point or another – stuck in a purgatory of sorts where both their business and tech teams are underdelivering on the possibilities commerce offers today. They may know all the buzz words – omnichannel marketing, customer journeys, micro-moments, AR/VR, IoT and more – and understand the importance of them. But thus far, for a multitude of reasons, they haven't gotten to a place where they are easily able to capitalize on their technology to deliver these modern commerce experiences.

Each of our sessions was hosted by an individual who has helped their business or others cross the commerce possibilities chasm. We've distilled the 34 sessions into an easy-to-read report that offers a plethora of easily digestible takeaways from the event. There are stories, statistics and specific examples that offer an inside scoop on what's going on with the big players in eCommerce, what strategies are driving their success, and what challenges they've faced to get where they are today. Hopefully, you'll find a quote, or two, or four, that sparks your curiosity, or a statistic that compels you to want to learn more about a brand.

If you have additional questions, or want to contact a speaker directly, just let us know. We'd love to hear from you.

Enjoy,

Andreas Rudl
VP Global Marketing, commercetools



“THE SECRET OF CHANGE IS TO FOCUS ALL YOUR ENERGY, NOT ON FIGHTING THE OLD, BUT ON BUILDING THE NEW.” – SOCRATES (399-470 BC)

Bravo! If there was one resounding sentiment expressed more than 40 speakers the newest edition of commercetools' *“Modern Commerce Day”* event series, this was it.

Bravo for Microservices-based, API-first, Cloud-native, Headless (MACH) technology. As the inventor of MACH technology and founding member of the MACH Alliance, Munich-based commercetools organized the one-day event to bring retailers, manufacturers and brands together with practitioners, thought leaders, industry analysts, advisors and best-of-breed solution providers to discuss next-generation commerce. The majority of the speakers were technology leaders from brands who have shut down their old, monolith platforms and transitioned to commercetools' MACH-driven commerce solution. While most speakers shared their transition story, some focused on simply explaining the world of possibilities MACH opens up for commerce. Regardless of industry, company size, business model or path to transformation, the categorical message across the board was clear – MACH defines what modern commerce is today, providing the speed,

flexibility, performance and scalability brands need to meet the demands of consumers.

Andreas Rudl, Global Vice President Marketing at commercetools, says it makes sense that MACH is at the forefront of these discussions. “Microservices, APIs, Cloud and Headless (MACH) are just the way you build applications today. The legacy monolithic applications that are hosted today were built 20 plus years ago,” he explains, pointing out, “Large companies like Amazon, Google and Netflix have thrived due to their adoption of MACH principles.”

One of the keynote speakers, Jo Graham, CIO of Bohoo, a UK-based online fashion retailer that owns 13 brands, left the storytelling to her CTO and Chief Architect. Instead, she focused on dispelling the fear executives have of the transformation process. “Our role as leaders is to drive our team, encourage our team and enable the business,” she says. “It’s a bold move. You have to be brave – but it doesn’t feel like as big of a risk when you’ve got the support you need from the business and a great team.”



02. TOP 5 TAKEAWAYS OF MODERN COMMERCE DAY 2021

The amount of information delivered and knowledge shared during the “**Modern Commerce Day**” event was mind-boggling. The speakers not only shared insights, ideas and advice, they gushed quite a bit about the benefits of transitioning to MACH technology and the pure joy of working on commercetools’ headless commerce platform. The takeaways from the experience are countless. That said, we’ve extracted five key takeaways that will get you thinking about how your technology stacks up, and what your next step might be.

01. FEAR NO MORE

It doesn’t matter how big or small your company is or how many offices you have, modern commerce makes you a global brand. Even if your footprint is small, launching a promotion, stocking up for a holiday or finding that your product is suddenly in high demand, should never cause panic within your company. “Ability to scale” was by far the most frequently cited reason for transitioning to MACH. Greg Fancher, Chief Technology Officer at **Express**, shared a recent story of an overly aggressive promotion that went

viral. “We saw a spike in traffic that was over 3x higher than the busiest hour of Black Friday. Its peak was more than 10% of all commercetools transactions in that hour. If this would have happened with our monolith system, the system would have crashed, we would have lost sales and spent hours bringing the system back online. With commercetools, we first noticed the situation when we got alerts that our systems were autoscaling. We carefully watched the business, and our customers didn’t notice a blip.”

02. THINK LOCAL- AGILITY WITH A CENTRAL CORE

At first thought, this may only appear to be relevant for global companies. For example, **Danone** has been able to use MACH architecture to build a modular system that gives each of their markets autonomy to work at their own pace and develop features that meet their customers' unique needs. However, MACH also enables brands to provide access to partners, vendors and their employees (i.e., the Harry Rosen case study below) to customize with very low risk. According to Russell Lincoln, Global Head of Direct to Consumer at Danone Early Life Nutrition, "In the beginning, our ownership of the platform was quite high, but now we have enough markets and enough maturity that they as a community are now driving the roadmap and driving how our future goes." Luke O'Connell, Chief Architect, points out markets are able to pull out components as needed. "We get all the good stuff," he says. "commercetools is at the heart of this because it is, through and through, built to be MACH first and it delivers on that promise, allowing our ecosystem to talk together seamlessly."

03. PERSONALIZATION MADE EASY

The idea of making your data work for you isn't the story here. What you need to know is how easy MACH makes it to capitalize on your data. "With MACH, you can connect the dots," says Christoph Gerber, CEO of **Talon One**. By integrating with commercetools, his company has been able to help companies utilize their data to make informed, customized promotional decisions. "Ideally you are talking about a segment of one," he explains, "You control which promotion is to be created for what person. We look at the whole data landscape to make the best decisions on who and what to target." After all, he points out, "If you are a food delivery company, why would you target me on a burger promotion when I never want a burger? I want sushi."

04. AGILE TECH - AGILE BUSINESS

For the past few years, the focus has been on embracing agile technology, however, multiple speakers pointed to the importance of ensuring your business teams implement agile practices. Tina Lykke Kristensen, Senior Digital Manager, Nonfood eCommerce of **Salling Group**, stresses that her company is “only as good as the purpose we share.” She explains that in order to accomplish anything, “We have to calibrate our different purposes – and calibration happens through conversation and creating new ideas together.”

05. LOWER TCO, MORE POSSIBILITIES

While brands may point to total cost of ownership (TCO) as a key factor holding them back from digital transformation, the idea that TCO is higher for MACH systems is simply incorrect. Andreas Rudl, VP Global Marketing at **commercetools** says that brands are viewing the initial investment cost as part of TCO. Both **Gartner** and **Forrester** have shown the highest portion of TCO costs are actually maintenance and labor costs (typically up to 85% of the entire “project” cost). The transparent, cloud-native structure and on-demand pricing MACH vendors offer, along with the ability to eliminate upgrade costs, actually lowers long-term costs.

03.

INSIDER INSIGHTS

When you ask a group of passionate tech leaders to talk about their journey to digital transformation and how commercetools helped turn their technology into a friend instead of a foe, you are sure to get some great sound bites. There were funny anecdotes, horror stories and quite a few ah-ha moments along the way. Here's a round-up of some of the best things we heard from the thought-leaders who are driving the conversation in digital commerce.



"Recognize the solution, empower your team, get the hell out of the way."

Jo Graham, CIO, Boohoo.com



"We have lowered our operations costs, reduced our time-to-market, made it easier to recruit talented employees and vastly improved our mobile experience. We received an award for the best German connected retail solution and...we're just getting started."

Tina Lykke Kristensen, Senior Manager, Non-Food eCommerce, Salling Group



"Your project isn't over just because you go live."

Johan Liljeros, GM North America, Avensia



"Headless is not just running the eCommerce website, it's also about digital experiences. There's potential to expand into voice, IoT, apps...there is so much technology coming in the next 2 to 5 years that this enables. That's an important point."

Michael Ewald Hansen, eCommerce Director, Lakrids by Bülow



"What's great about MACH is that it's not the IT team dictating on releases and when things should happen. Instead, we get out of the way. It's up to the business to decide when they want those things, how soon they want them and how much time they need."

Paul Richardson, Director of Delivery Management, EPAM



*"Sometimes **when** you need to get things done will drive the strategy rather than **how** you need to get things done."*

Mihaela Mazzenga, CTO, SharperImage.com



"Planning is nice. As much as you are drawing the perfect architecture on paper, sometimes things push you to move quicker...COVID hit in March...and we said, 'We don't want to invest any more in our current architecture.'"

Ian Rosen, EVP Digital & Strategy, Harry Rosen Inc



"Speed, flexibility, sustainability – that's what we were looking for in an eCommerce platform."

Matthes Kohndrow, Product Manager eCommerce, Audi



"Our big investments in API-first technology...absolutely, they're paying off and they're worth it."

Gary Schorer, Director of Technology, Vistaprint



"Our businesses do business in very different ways. They have different customers, they want to be able to build and extend their sites, and it is just so easy for them now. I could not have even imagined that 20 years ago."

Melissa Eckert, General Manager eCommerce & Supplier Network, Cimpres Technology



“commercetools might not have been the obvious choice for a start-up, but when you have a global vision, you need to have a solid foundation.”

Filip Elverhoy, Co-Founder, The Green Deal



“Our business is not technology. It’s making clothing that keeps people going in arctic and subarctic conditions. We know that we are not going to out-innovate Apple or Amazon when it comes to our technology stack. But what we do know is that as customer preferences change, develop and find new channels, we feel confident we can quickly innovate within those channels and create customer experiences as part of the holistic framework we have. We don’t have to be a first mover, but a very quick adapter.”

Matthew Woolsey, Global President, 66°North



“We immediately saw improvements in site performance that drove conversions [...] and when I say site performance, I literally mean, ‘response time.’ ”

Greg Fancher, CTO, Express



“It’s a bit old-school to not go MACH, to not go headless.”

Christoph Gerber, CEO, Talon.One

04. SIGNS OF CHANGE IN MODERN COMMERCE

“The decision we made in 2019 to declare bankruptcy on our monolith and start over [...] it was a big gamble. It was not an easy decision to make. It hasn’t been easy work to do, and we are not done with it yet. But if you think about it, it only took us a year to start seeing some outrageously good returns.”

Gary Schorer, Director of Technology, Vistaprint

While some speakers recognized the need for digital transformation before their technology became a problem, for others the frustration of working with an inflexible, non-scalable, slow system drove the change. Regardless of their path, all now see MACH architecture as the replacement of the monolithic platforms of the past.

They are not alone in this vision: in a research [commissioned by the MACH Alliance](#), 81% of global IT business leaders surveyed expressed the “strong intention” to increase MACH elements in their front-office architecture in the near future. Unfortunately, 40% also pointed to “resistance to change” as the top barrier holding their company back from transitioning. Andreas Rudl, VP Global Marketing, commercetools, suggests how the MACH Alliance plays a critical role in removing that barrier through education and vendor certification. “They seek to make MACH the de-facto standard for building customer experiences,” he explains. Gireesh Sahukar Vice President Digital of Dawn Foods, says brands can look to the Alliance as their first point of reference, pointing out, “When we started out on this journey, we had to pick vendors and do the assessment ourselves. The MACH Alliance has made that step go away. You can go to the MACH Alliance, and you know that those vendors will fit into your architecture.”

Here, excerpts from speakers across multiple industries provide examples of what spurred their transformation:



"We had a platform based on a linear cost model. As we put more brands on, it was costing us more. There was no economy to scale. We were spending more on best-of-breed tools just so we could give the business what they wanted."

Jo Graham, CIO, Boohoo.com



"Our customer was interacting with digital properties that were way better than what we were putting in the market. It was like when Uber came out – once you've had the great experience of sitting in an Uber, you don't want to go back to a taxi. We have to benchmark ourselves against everyone now. Once I realized my local coffee shop had an incredible digital experience, I said, 'If my local coffee shop can do it, we have to be doing it.'"

Ian Rosen, EVP Digital & Strategy, Harry Rosen Inc



*The sad pre-MACH experience of The Lego Group:
When [the Collector's edition Star Wars Millennium Falcon Set] launched in the U.K., we saw a rapidly increasing traffic graph and rapidly decreasing orders graph. After that we saw a flatline for what seemed like forever. It took some time to get the site back up and we sold out of everything. Then the U.S. launch came 3 hours later, and the exact same thing happened – more excruciating hours spent scrambling to get the site back up. We had a lot of disappointed customers and frustrated IT employees. Ultimately the issue was a small but critical function that calculated our sales tax."*

Simon Young, Senior Engineering Director – Unified Commerce, The LEGO Group



"We had done business the same for almost 100 years. Supplying baking needs to bakers first in the U.S. then globally through sales representatives, taking orders in-person, over the phone or via email. "some point you have to ask yourself, 'What do we need to do to stay relevant for the next 100 years?' "

Gireesh Sahukar, VP Digital, Dawn Foods



"Our monolith system was nearing end of life. We lacked support, performance and scalability...many, many modifications, customizations, optimizations and bug fixes that had all been layered on over 10 years. Many of the people that worked on it are not even there anymore, and the records on what had been changed and added are not very good, if there are records at all. To replace it with another monolith system, there's a pretty straightforward way you would do it. Build the whole thing – test like crazy, move over all the data and pray for the best – I've done that before. I'm not interested in doing the same thing again."

Greg Fancher, Chief Technology Officer, Express



"We were heavily reliant on Shopify, and it was starting to hurt us. The business was starting to ask for features and functionally that were very difficult to build, if not impossible in Shopify."

Jay Jetley, Chief Technical Architect, Trinny London



"We didn't want to pause. We wanted to move from 5 people in engineering to 45 in the same year while still delivering 16 new product launches, entering new markets and building new features."

Taher Khaliq, Chief Technology Officer, Trinny London

05. NUMBERS DON'T LIE



"If your technology solutions cannot keep up, then your business won't be able to keep up with consumer expectations."

Mihaela Mazzenga, CTO, SharperImage.com

Ultimately, business comes down to numbers. Brands want to see technology that not only makes consumers happy, but delivers low total cost of ownership, high return on investment and generates revenue. As Salling Group's Tina Lykke Kristensen put it, "We've seen the power of data and it rocks. We calibrate all of our measures on how it creates convenience to our customers."

Below, statistics shared by the speakers prove without a doubt the benefits of a MACH platform have dollar value.

25% ↑

A year ago, Dawn Foods had no eCommerce website. Today, 25% of orders received now come through the site the company launched last July, and the average value of each online order is higher.

"Customers are telling us that for the first time in their interaction with Dawn Foods they can see the entire portfolio of products. We keep hearing, 'We didn't know Dawn carried carried vegan certified pastry mixes. We were getting that item from another vendor!"

Gireesh Sahukar, Vice President of Digital

5X ↑

In 2017, Lego's platform was able to handle 7 orders per second. Today it can handle 35.

"When we introduced the Collector's edition Star Wars Millennium Falcon Set in September 2017, our site went down during the UK launch and the US launch. In the end, we managed 7 orders per second. With our MACH platform in place, we introduced 100 new products on January 1, 2020. Traffic was crazy. We logged 35 orders per second, 2,000 orders per minute."

Simon Young, Senior Engineering Director – Unified Commerce, The Lego Group

75% ↓

The Salling Group, Denmark's largest retailer was able to achieve a 75% reduction in operating costs.

Tina Lykke Kristensen pointed to a multitude of ways in which MACH enables the company to run more efficiently and effectively.

"Today, most requests can be accommodated within a reasonable effort and investment. eCommerce is no longer a bottleneck. We are really happy with where our MACH journey has brought us so far."

+5

Within 3 months of fully transitioning to MACH, Express added 5 major capabilities to their digital experience.

Greg Fancher, Chief Technology Officer at Express said, not only did the brand add Klarna for payments, but they also added a new version of the BOPUS feature, significantly improved product detail pages, rebranded and restructured their loyalty program and integrated Stylitics Outfitting throughout their site.

"These are pretty exciting things to do. To do them in such a short time is something we never would have been able to do on our old system."

< 3 WEEKS

Vistaprint was able to introduce a new product line with a dedicated online experience in under 3 weeks.

Gary Schorer, Director of Technology at Vistaprint, says when COVID-19 hit, the company quickly decided to start offering both stock and custom print face masks to customers.

"We had live prototypes up in a matter of a few days and were able to go live to customers in something like two or three weeks. We were not only able to pivot, we were able to pivot in a big, impactful way."



0%

Harry Rosen's online business has reported 0% downtime despite their online business increasing 3x and experiencing a 150% increase in page views per session.

The brand built its MACH platform in 6 months, launching it in the middle of the pandemic when its 14 brick-and-mortar stores were shuttered. Ian Rosen, SVP, Digital Strategy says the digital platform is now their largest store.

"Through holiday and the biggest periods and peaks we've ever had – there's been zero downtime. That's one of the most exciting things – that it is truly built to scale."

99.99%

Melissa Ekhart of Cimpres Technology says commercetools delivers a 99.99% availability rate. She points out that with her company running 15+ new websites on the commercetools platform, availability is critical.

"Support is very important to me, both for our customers and also what we receive from partners like commercetools. We can email and Slack them for real-time communications."





TOP 10 TRANSFORMATION TIPS

Change is hard. But, in today's high-tech environment, it is critical in order to compete in commerce. Constant innovation is key, and...well, MACH enables innovation in ways never possible before. As Andreas Rudl explains it, *"Releasing to production once a quarter – and knowing it will take 3 to 4 quarters to perfect a feature – is just way too long in today's world. MACH allows for releases as fast as you want. Many organizations using MACH release to production every few seconds!"*

You may choose to approach your MACH transformation cautiously, like Gary Fancher, Chief Technology Officer at Express, who rolled out the brands' new platform over nine months with extensive testing, validation processes and a phased redirection of orders from the legacy monolith to their modern MACH platform. Maybe you are thinking of just diving in headfirst as Jo Graham did with Boohoo.com, who went live with the new platform after her team completed the project in 35 days, accomplishing what her CIO Laura McKellar called, *"Mission Impossible."* No matter what your digital transformation plan is, the advice and ideas below will steer you in the right direction.

01. DEFINE YOUR WHY.

Mihaela Mazzenga, CTO of [SharperImage.com](https://www.sharperimage.com), says to figure out your transformation path, you must first establish your why. She says it involves taking stock of the business issues and concerns of your organization and asking questions like, *"Can my current system support new features easily? Can it scale easily? Is it PCI compliant?"* She believes your motivating factors need to be based on your why. Once your why is defined, the key, says Mazzenga, is to *"use it to educate everyone in your organization."*

02. HAVE A SINGLE VISION, WELCOME MULTIPLE PERSPECTIVES.

Andreas Lederwascher, Business Solution Architect at **Audi**, believes guiding autonomous teams to the target lane starts with staffing your project with people who share the same mindset and vision. Then, he says, ***“Give everyone a voice and the possibility to improve your organization and your product. You will be surprised how many good ideas and improvements we have recognized with that approach.”***

03. INVOLVE THE WHOLE ORGANIZATION.

As Taher Khaliq, CTO of **Trinny London**, puts it, ***“Headless is not a tech platform – it can’t be tech-led.”*** He says this is the key difference between MACH-driven platforms and off-the-shelf platforms. ***“With black-box platforms, all the decisions are made for you. You just need to fit into their workflow, their journey. Whereas tools like commercetools allow you to really build a business that fits your model. What that means is IT needs to be far more aware...it needs to be owned by the business as a whole.”***

04. CHOOSE PARTNERS WISELY.

Focus on finding the ones that can deliver to your needs and are willing and able to meet your deadlines. Ian Rosen EVP Digital & Strategy Harry Rosen Inc of **Harry Rosen**, said in the process he realized it wasn’t about picking the best-in-class vendor, it was about finding the ***“best-in-need”*** vendor. ***“We were saying, ‘Who can accomplish this function the best within our tech stack?’ We went with Ampliance for content management, Algolia for search, commercetools as our promotions engine, cart and commerce backbone, Bold as our checkout provider, and Login Radius for our identity and access management system. We had a lot of players in there, but each one we felt was perfect to fit the needs of each one of the functions for a commerce stack to operate.”***

05. TEST. TRY. THRIVE.

Make a huge list of every single integration along with every single feature, map out testing you can do for each one and then have the team and people who are not necessarily close to the project start testing. Michael Ewald Hanson, eCommerce Director at **Lakrids by Bülow**, explains, ***“Once you get more people and other eyes on it, they start seeing things and trying things that you haven’t really thought about. They ask you, ‘Why is this, doing that?’ Then you can go back and iterate.”***

06. REIN IN YOUR RELEASES.

To minimize external change management issues, Paul Richardson, Director, Delivery Management at EPAM, says take things slow – once your team sees how easy it is to release, the tendency is to want to speed things up. He recommends releasing internally to gather user feedback and train your sales team. When Richardson worked with Dawn Foods, this approach benefited everyone. ***“We try features and capabilities for about a week or 10 days before the customers see it,”*** explains Gireesh Sahukar, VP Digital at **Dawn Foods**. ***“It gives sales the opportunity to see the feature, internalize it and create their own narrative about how to talk about it to their customers.”***

07. START SMALL BEFORE GOING BIG.

Implement a proof-of-concept on a feature first or a single brand. Mark Elliott, Chief Architect at **Boohoo.com**, says this approach is a perfect way to build stakeholder confidence, ***“Identify the unknowns, solve them...it’s really low risk. It doesn’t even have to go live to get some lessons learned.”***

08. RE-ALIGN YOUR TEAMS.

Andreas Rudl, VP Global Marketing at **commercetools**, says the horizontal teams in place at many enterprises that focus on specific technology areas (like database, infrastructure, backend, frontend, etc.) are not effective in a MACH environment.

“Smaller vertical teams that focus on business domains (like pricing, checkout, etc.) are able to capitalize on the benefits MACH delivers.” Simon Young of The Lego Group agrees. He says by forming full-stack teams based on specific areas of lego.com (cart, checkout, loyalty, etc.) ***you can give them the autonomy they need to innovate on their own, to go live to get some lessons learned.”***

09. KEEP TRACK OF YOUR MICROSERVICES.

“You need to keep control of your microservices,” says Filip Elverhøy, Co-founder of **The Green Deal**. ***“It’s easy to make a lot of new microservices and not think about how you should take care of them after.”*** Whether you have under 50 or 250+, he advises having someone on the tech side and business side that understands them. ***“It can be quite costly if you lose control, and it can drive up development costs.”***

10. STAY FOCUSED. GET REWARDED.

Don’t let organizational politics distract you from your vision. Your vision and the needs of your customer have to guide your decisions. Always remember, you can make group decisions, but customers? ***“They are the main expert,”*** says Andreas Lederwascher, Business Solution Architect at **Audi**, who cautions, ***“External pressures lead to bad decisions.”***



AT HARRY ROSEN, “YES” IS THE MAGIC WORD - CASE STUDY

“The main reasons to go with MACH are centered around the customer, not the technology.”

Giles Smith, MACH Advisory Board Member

For a long time, “No” was the response business teams expected from IT. Reasons following the “No” ranged from the simple, “we can’t do that,” to “we can’t get it done in time, it will be too expensive...it’s too risky.”

For Ian Rosen, EVP Digital & Strategy of Harry Rosen, the desire to say “yes” more than “no” is ultimately what led him to transition to a MACH platform. **“When we dream up a journey that we believe would be best for our clients and best to represent Harry online, we didn’t want to hear no,”** he explains. **“Our website in 2018...[was] not the vision we romanced. Putting pictures online was not going to allow us to build the Harry Rosen business. When we asked ourselves, ‘How might we digitize what makes us unique, the answer ended up being headless.’”**

In his session, “Digitizing our Legacy,” Ian Rosen provides two tangible examples of how MACH technology has delivered the experience the Harry Rosen customer expects. First, it has enabled their clothing advisors to offer personalized consultations to their



clients digitally. Advisors have the ability to create custom web pages with specific recommendations for each client. ***“They are making many, many pages each and every day. They select the item, the size, and the color – this can be based on a conversation, on the client’s last in-store visit or on providing items to pair with something they’ve recently bought,”*** he explains. ***“It’s one of those journeys that we dreamt up in the past but were never able to execute it without this flexible technology stack. It’s turned into a huge success.”***

With 500 active associates across 14 stores making five to ten custom web pages a day, Rosen says, the program now represents 10 to 15% of the company’s digital sales. ***“It’s not us having to put products online and grow that business independently, it’s taking our core, loyal customers and giving them permission to shop online with their trusted clothing advisor.”***

MACH has also enabled them to take a long-standing custom at Harry Rosen and modernize the concept. He explains the company has published ***“Harry Magazine”*** for 30 years and it is as popular as ever. ***“Clients tear out pages and bring them into the store,”*** he says, ***“We thought, ‘How do we take this one step further?’”***



The concept evolved into a feature on their website called “Get the Look” which shows a full head-to-toe look on a model. Visitors simply click the “Get the Look” button to view a pop-up highlighting a product detail shot of each item. Visitors simply click on their sizes and can check out quickly.

They’ve even translated “Get the Look” to their store windows. ***“Our windows are pretty legendary and attract a lot of attention,”*** explains Rosen. ***“Now we’ve put QR codes on all the windows for all people to “Get the Look” on the mannequin without walking in the store. It’s become a huge way for us to start the digital interaction with the client.”***



MAKING THE CHOICE: MONOLITH OR MICROSERVICES?

Dave Morris, Delivery Director of **Rewe Digital**, gave a musical spin to explain the monolith vs. microservices debate by using an analogy pitting a one-man band against an orchestra. ***“A one-man band can quickly get into the market, manages himself, orchestrates himself and can earn money quite quickly,”*** points out Morris. On the other hand, ***“It takes time to build an orchestra. It can be quite expensive. You have to coordinate and orchestrate [...] making it more difficult to manage.”*** He concedes that ***“once you have your orchestra in place, you can play a lot of different music.”*** And, he says, ***“If one violinist loses their arm, heaven forbid, the whole orchestra can go on, whereas if the one-man band loses his arm, it’s quite difficult for him to continue to play.”***

UNEXPECTED BENEFITS

No monolithic system has the ability to deliver the speed, functionality, scalability and performance that a MACH-based system can deliver. As our speakers shared, this perfect quadrant of capabilities easily drives tangible revenue across physical and digital channels, enabling brands to design experiences to build loyalty and increase brand awareness, face seasonal spikes and market shifts without fear, test new business cases, turn IoT devices into revenue streams and improve CAPEX. Of course, all that is great for business, but there’s another unexpected benefit tech leaders are noticing that is just as critical to brand success.



“One of the pleasures of this process, at least for me, was that [it created] this sort of palpable level of excitement among the team. The developers working on the project had spent so much of their time and careers in large monolithic applications – and they now had ways in which they were amazingly able to de-risk things. Internally, both for technical and non-technical stakeholders, the fact that you can deploy things and deploy things quickly and see the results straight away, really builds momentum within the company. Everyone can follow along and it creates a sort of inclusion in the company, at least it did in ours.”

Matthew Woolsey, Global President, 66°North



“We rely entirely on an in-house development center. We were stuck in a non-upgradable monolith which was not wonderful for team motivation and made it hard to attract new talent [...] With our new stack, we have the luxury of several skilled applicants to choose from whenever we have open positions.

Tina Lykke Kristensen, Senior Digital Manager, Nonfood eCommerce, Salling Group

PARTING THOUGHTS



“What if it’s not only about the technology, but it’s about allowing your organization to collaborate around the opportunity of this new technology?”

Tina Lykke Kristensen, Senior Digital Manager, Nonfood eCommerce, Salling Group

commercetools believes modern commerce architecture is the enabler of limitless commerce possibilities. While no one can predict what’s next, the significant changes just in the past 10 years serve as a good indicator the pace isn’t slowing down any time soon. commercetools saw the potential of MACH early, says Dirk Hoerig, co-founder and CEO of commercetools. *“We saw this big mountain. We were in front of this big mountain and took the first steps. Now everyone sees this big mountain, they know it’s there. Before it was high in the sky and there were clouds around it.”* **Modern Commerce Day** is just one way commercetools can help brands get ready for the climb. He points out only 5 to 10% of brands have made it to the top, but he feels “A huge wave is coming, and MACH is going to be part of their digital transformation.”

About commercetools

commercetools is a next-generation software technology company that offers a true cloud commerce platform, providing the building blocks for the new digital commerce age.

commercetools is one of the fastest growing enterprise software companies in Europe with 300 employees at its offices in Munich (HQ), Berlin, Durham (US) and Amsterdam (NLD). The cloud-native platform enables brands and retailers to build innovative shopping experiences across all touchpoints like web, mobile, voice, in-car and many more.

To keep up with all the latest happenings at commercetools,

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