With the multitude of options, highly technical language, endless features and benefits of each platform, assessing complex solutions can be an overwhelming task for time poor retailers and online marketers, that should require guidance and advice from industry experts. Keeping this in mind we thank all our valued industry contributors and sponsors, in ensuring that the Power Retail E-Commerce Platforms Special Report shed some light on the complex, yet intriguing world of e-commerce platforms, while providing insights and best practice advice about the solutions available to online and multichannel retailers.

Nirosha Methananda
Content Creator
Power Retail
E-Commerce Platforms – The Low Down

WORDS: Nirosha Methananda

Fundamental to any e-commerce website, is the platform upon which it’s built. This not only forms the basis of an online business, allowing online transactions to occur, but in the rapidly evolving world of multichannel retailing it may be the solution through which to drive your business into the future.

Though the basic definition of an e-commerce platform is a ‘software solution that enables transaction via the internet’, these platforms have quickly developed into comprehensive, all encompassing online retail solutions. Companies are then able to target, capture, engage and retain customers, providing software to transact online.

Further to this point Gartner, in its ‘Magic Quadrant for E-Commerce’ report, lists the following elements as being what an e-commerce technology provider includes as a part of a online retailing solution – indicating that retailers should be looking for a platform that goes beyond simply providing software to transact online:

- Provides all key commodity e-commerce components, such as shopping cart management, product catalogs and settlement processes required for business-to-business (B2B) and business-to-consumer (B2C) e-commerce.
- Provides a Web 2.0 Rich Internet Application (RIA) customer experience with shopping tools, such as sliders for search and single-page check-out, and the ability to leverage user-generated content, such as product reviews, wikis, blogs and Really Simple Syndication (RSS).
- Leverages external web services (e.g., Google Maps, Google Analytics and product reviews) and internal web services (such as fulfillment systems, ERP or call-center-based web services) to complete the customer experience.
- Integrates with other points of interaction, especially those that improve and grow quickly, such as mobile smart phones and web-capable phones.
- Supports multiple forms of payment options for B2B and B2C sales.
- Provides product/service recommendations in real time.
- Enables improvements to site search and external search engine discovery (for example, Google, Bing, MSN and Yahoo).
- Enables personalisation of the overall online experience.
- Offers appropriate ownership models, such as licensed software, web hosting services, software as a service (SaaS), outsourcing and open-source software (OSS).
- Has a large, deep set of technology and service partners.

**THE USUAL SUSPECTS – COMMON PITFALLS AND TRAPS**

Investment into an e-commerce platform is usually consummate to the size and maturity of a business. With the current attention given to the growth of online retail within the Australian market, more and more retailers (if they are not already) are undoubtedly feeling the pressure to transact online.

Yet more often than not this results in unplanned and rushed transactional websites – enter the addition to the Australian online retail landscape of established heavyweight David Jones. The company’s e-commerce site was met with criticism from industry peers and experts, which had David Jones’ CEO Paul Zahra recently admitting that the site is “certainly not best practice”. However he continued that the company is working on a strategic solution, commenting “We prefer to be the tortoise rather than the hare and actually learn from other people’s mistakes before we go and invest heavily.”

While unfortunate for David Jones investing in a solution that was less than par, this is a good learning for other retailers, that there are considerations to make when selecting and implementing e-commerce solutions.

**REFERENCES:**

An online store is like any bricks and mortar store. It’s not like if you build it they will come, you need a support structure and someone making decisions about the day to day operations,” comments Hilton. “Also as an online retailer, ensuring you have a strong support channel across all centre and logistic is vital.”

“The most common mistake that we see is, that websites are too complex to maintain and grow – the merchant gets frustrated and eventually the whole thing dies,” concurs Debrincat.

“Often the platform is too technical and businesses struggle to maintain the backend, cannot add products easily, manage stock levels, etc,” he continues. “A lot of it is to do with user training and knowledge. We’ve found that giving retailers good training capabilities, forums, FAQ’s, opportunities to interact with other retailers, guides and videos, makes their use of the platform much simpler. Training is a vital part of making the whole process work.”

Another common problem is underestimating the actual work required for enabling the platform. “Deciding what products you’re going to sell, why and the pricing model also plays a factor in the success of your e-commerce business,” points out Hilton. “Product information needs to be up to scratch. For example, think about the amount of information required to sell a digital camera online (e.g. specs, connections, weight, images, etc). This information must be collected from suppliers/distributors and put into a format that will be enticing to the customer.”

These sentiments are echoed by Phil Grech, Founder, FourFires Solutions, “Rolling out platforms is not that difficult; it’s all about logistics, for getting images and data into the platform, in terms of organising fulfilment, data and business timings. For example, defining a process for rolling out platforms is not that difficult; it’s all about logistics, for getting images and data into the platform, in terms of organising fulfilment, data and business timings.”

“Often the platform is too technical and businesses struggle to maintain the backend, cannot add products easily, manage stock levels, etc,” he continues. “A lot of it is to do with user training and knowledge. We’ve found that giving retailers good training capabilities, forums, FAQ’s, opportunities to interact with other retailers, guides and videos, makes their use of the platform much simpler. Training is a vital part of making the whole process work.”

Retailers need to be mindful of the solutions they are choosing and how they fit in with the business and also understand the resources and work required in order to present a competitive online offering. No longer do the traditional rules apply, information is key and attention spans are short – content needs to be engaging, or the consumer may very well move on to the next site.

MINDING YOUR BUSINESS REQUIREMENTS
A key aspect of evaluating e-commerce solutions is assessing your internal business requirements and then depending on your process, formulating a Request for Proposals (discussed by Martin Newman on page 17).

“Retailers need to define their business goals and objective and this comes back to doing internal analysis in order to establish and make these decisions,” recommends Paul Wilson, Managing Director, White Labelled.

Further to this, Domjen advises that retailers should consider the following factors when assessing business requirements:

- Readiness of the business for e-commerce
- The businesses’ e-commerce maturity
- Management Support
- Governance and Control
- Expertise and Skills
- Maturity of the Vendor
- Training and Education

Once complete, retailers can then begin to assess e-commerce platforms based on how they fit within their business requirements.

“The key is making sure the strategy is supported business wide and establishing the budget associated with the project – this will often determine which platform a retailer is able to implement,” says Wilson. He warns, “If working with an agency, make sure the agency has proven e-commerce experience and can make independent platform recommendations to meet the business needs, rather than going with a familiar solution that may not necessarily fit the business requirements.”

E-COMMERCE PLATFORM MUST HAVEES... Must have features and functions of a robust e-commerce platform.

**PAUL WILSON, MANAGING DIRECTOR, WHITE LABELLED**

- Back-End – Easy to use administration function and workflow processes to manage the website.
- Customisability - The ability to be customisable to meet clients design and branding requirements.
- Usability – Provides a good user experience and utilises best practice design and usability principles.
- Performance Reliability - Able to cope with large amounts of traffic, while serving a fast performing interaction.

**JOHN DEBRINCAT, CEO, ECMORER**

- Security - You are basically building a business on this platform, so you need to know it’s going to be safe and secure, that you and your customers are going to be able to trust it.
- Multichannel Capabilities - Merchants need to look at eBay, Facebook, and similar channels. A good online platform today will support multiple channels in some way or another.
- Site Search - Having good search capabilities on the website is really important. 80 percent of all online sales start with search. Most people think of search as an after thought; however an online store with a few hundred products without a robust search function is not going to be that successful.

**LUKE HILTON, ONLINE RETAIL SPECIALIST, PLAYHOUSE DIGITAL**

- Product Data – A robust product information management (PIM) system, needs to be in place for consistency. Once in place the same ‘single source of truth’ can be used across channels (e.g. mobile, kiosks, etc).
- Purchase Automation – A strong order-management feature/function ensures support channels like customer service and logistics have full insight of customers orders and can fulfil them efficiently.
- Proven ability to Integrate - Choose a platform that has a proven track record of integrating with incumbent systems and leading point solutions (e.g. email marketing, search, etc).
- Scalability - Solutions should grow with your business and allow you to incorporate new brands and cater for internationalisation (e.g. currencies, languages, etc).
## Potential Total Cost of Ownership

### E-Commerce Technology Costs Estimates - SME’s

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cost Category</th>
<th>Small</th>
<th>Medium</th>
<th>Large</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Annual Recurring Costs</td>
<td>$99.00</td>
<td>$99.00</td>
<td>$99.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Domain Name (max cost for .com.au)</td>
<td>$99.00</td>
<td>$198.00</td>
<td>$198.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business Email Address</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>SSL Certificate</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Annual Recurring</td>
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<td>$682.00</td>
<td>$682.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monthly Recurring Costs</td>
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<td>$2000 SKUs</td>
<td>$10,000 SKUs</td>
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<tr>
<td>Website</td>
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<td>$122.00</td>
<td>$120.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SEO Assistance (estimate)</td>
<td>$99.00</td>
<td>$99.00</td>
<td>$99.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SEM (estimate)</td>
<td>$100.00</td>
<td>$200.00</td>
<td>$200.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Payment Provider</td>
<td>Based on monthly and transaction fees by payment provider.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shipping Costs</td>
<td>Based on the number and types of shipments.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total Monthly Recurring</td>
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<td>$321.00</td>
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<td>One Time Costs (Optional)</td>
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<td>Design</td>
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<td>Customisation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total First Years Cost Estimate</td>
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<td>$8,350.00</td>
<td>$16,750.00</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

### E-Commerce Technology Costs Estimates - Enterprise E-Commerce Businesses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cost Areas</th>
<th>Business and Online Shop Size and Complexity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Visitors per day</td>
<td>1000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Products</td>
<td>5000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Integration Points</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online Shops</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Infrastructure (monthly) - servers, hosting, data, backup</td>
<td>$500 - $1000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Integration (one time cost)</td>
<td>$10K - $20K</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E-Commerce Software Licence (annual/monthly estimates)</td>
<td>$5K - $10K or $300 - $400 PM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E-Commerce Software (annual maintenance)</td>
<td>$600 - $2K</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Development and Deployment (one time cost)</td>
<td>$5K - $10K</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human Resources - Directly related to the online store management and maintenance</td>
<td>1-Feb</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anticipated Return on Investment</td>
<td>+6 Months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time to develop and deploy</td>
<td>1-3 Months</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Supplied courtesy of eCorner

## EXPLORING THE OPTIONS: OPEN SOURCE, ENTERPRISE AND SaaS

With a plethora of solutions available, our resident experts go through the differences, advantages and disadvantages of open source, proprietary e-commerce and Software as a Service (SaaS) solutions.

### OPEN SOURCE

Software that has been developed by an organisation or community of individuals that is distributed (usually free) using an open source license.

“The issue with open source for all merchants is that you need the technical capability to make it work. This is not a simple solution, you have to manage it yourself and apply your own fixes and patches,” advises John Debrincat, CEO, eCorner.

“There is a greater potential for security issues and security flaws with open source, compared to off the shelf solutions,” adds Paul Wilson, Managing Director, White Labelled.

“However these are often closed more quickly, because it has a community supporting it. The open source solutions usually have large community forums which allow the platform to be extended in quite a cost effective and are also often quite customisable.”

### PROPRIETARY ENTERPRISE SOFTWARE

“More often this is a license scenario and can be more costly. Often there are limitations and boundaries (compared to open source), if you require your own infrastructure from a hosting perspective. The benefits of this are that it is supported, forever evolving and opens you up to the upgrade and improvements. It is also often scalable and more of an enterprise level platform,” advises Wilson.

### SOFTWARE AS A SERVICE (SAAS)

“Some companies have taken open source solutions and used them to build a SaaS platform, meaning that these websites are in a mass hosted environment sharing infrastructure with hundreds of thousands of other companies. You don’t have to install or download anything, because the underlying software which is hosted on the SaaS platform is doing everything,” explains Debrincat.

“The mass-hosting environment is more about the speed of deployment. SaaS platforms are growing rapidly because they enable people to jump in and get that quick start, without a high level of technical skills.”

“Picking the right solution is based on the number and types of shipments. It’s not just how much you pay each month for the store and hosting, but how much for SEO, SEM, Adwords, how much time you have to put in to maintain it, etc. If you’ve got a $50 solution, requiring five hours a month to maintain it, compared to a $10 solution, requiring only an hour per month for maintenance, which is cheaper solution?”

“These are the issues people don’t think through. Look at the total cost of ownership, worked out over a two-year time window, because that’s typically how long it should take to get your site working fluidly,” he advises.

### BUDGETS AND TOTAL COST OF OWNERSHIP

When budgeting for e-commerce solutions, Debrincat advises that retailers need to consider the Total Cost of Ownership (TCO) for the platform. This includes the amount you will pay for the platform itself, its implementation, required resources, ongoing maintenance, marketing and promotion, etc.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

“Client requirements and budgets are usually a determining factor. It’s a very cost by case scenario and it’s a matter of understanding what options are available and which platform suits your requirements best,” advises Wilson.

Phil Grech, Founder, FourFires Solutions says, “Retailers need to examine the maturity of their organisations and be honest with themselves in their team’s ability to manage a solution. For example, if a retailer has limited IT capability and their e-commerce requirements are stock standard then considering a SaaS model should definitely be an option. Alternatively, a retailer who does have some built in capability may wish to explore the packaged platform route and/or could also consider the open source market. It really does come down to fit with the individual retailer.”

### E-COMMERCE PLATFORMS 2.0

In its report ‘Welcome To The Era Of Agile Commerce’, Forrester Research introduced the idea of ‘agile commerce’ which is ‘an approach to commerce that enables businesses to optimise their people, processes and technology to serve customers across all touchpoints, of which a driving factor and the basis of this morphism is the e-commerce platform (see ‘The Commerce Ecosystem Evolves To Support A Multitude Of Touchpoints’ diagram).

Forrester suggests that moving towards this model of operation will reduce the overall cost of ownership for technologies, as opposed to investing in and integrating channel-specific technologies. With the clear development and agility of current e-commerce platforms, this trend seems to already be occurring. It is a matter of business identifying their objectives and requirements and then choosing the most appropriate solution.”

*“You never overlook your site as such, always bound to the service through which you’re subscribed,” adds Wilson. In some instances you do get to retain the data, in others you don’t. You can also be limited by the functionality which the vendor releases.”

- **Forrester Research**
- **IBM**
E-Commerce Market Place Overview

When examining e-commerce platforms, there are a plethora of solutions available for retailers to consider ranging from premium enterprise solutions that can cost anywhere from the tens to hundreds of thousands of dollars, to solutions that are free but may require a high level of technical skills and expertise to implement. Given this myriad of choices and the fact that an e-commerce platform is the foundation of any online retail offering, finding the right solution to fit your business, integrate with existing systems and most obviously meet customers needs can be challenging.

Getting Some Perspective

When considering and implementing an e-commerce platform, the number of stakeholders involved (internally and externally) can be numerous. John Debrincat, CEO of eCorner, provides some high-level comparisons between numerous premium end of the e-commerce solutions that are considered at the premium end of the e-commerce spectrum, that allows stores to setup, run, and maintain online stores at no cost. (www.oscommerce.com)

TIME FRAMES

The timeframes for implementing an e-commerce platform can vary enormously, depending on the type of business, what is being sold, what solution you've chosen, how much customisation is required, how much support is offered, etc. Hilton lists potential timeframes and the possible activities involved with implementing a new e-commerce platform.

E-COMMERCE PLATFORM RESOURCES

There are a number of resources available for retailers when considering e-commerce solutions, including the following reports which are highly regarded worldwide:

- Forrester Wave: B2C Vendor Landscape
- Garmer Magic Quadrant for E-Commerce
- AHR Research E-Commerce Platforms: A B2C Vendor Landscape

Though these reports examine solutions that are considered at the premium end of the e-commerce spectrum, they provide a good guide for retailers who are looking for high-level comparisons between various e-commerce solutions. They form the basis of the ‘Expert Opinion’ sections in the following e-commerce platform comparisons.

Beyond Implementation

“You are usually talking at least a 2-3 headcount, when looking at onsite merchandising decisions. You will need someone to manage the day-to-day promotions (lending pages, banner ads, etc) and to ensure you’re inline with the wider businesses marketing calendar, etc.” advises Hilton in relation to required post-implementation internal resources.

“They will need to liaise with buyers, product managers, the wider marketing team, external third party agencies, the call centre – it’s about developing clear communication with all stakeholders.”

OVERVIEW
REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

1. REQUIREMENTS FOR THE END USER FUNCTIONALITY AND EXPERIENCE, INCLUDING:
   • The customer proposition;
   • Site sections;
   • Navigation;
   • Browsing;
   • Personalisation;
   • Search and merchandising;
   • Basket and checkout;
   • Customer communication;

2. BACK OFFICE FUNCTIONALITY, INCLUDING:
   • Category Hierarchy management;
   • Product maintenance;
   • Product visibility;
   • General content management;
   • Personalisation/customization;
   • Promotions management;
   • Call centre and customer service functionality;
   • Analytics;

3. MULTI CHANNEL REQUIREMENTS, INCLUDING:
   • EPOS; and
   • CRM, etc.

4. TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS, INCLUDING:
   • Data security/access;
   • Hosting requirements;
   • Integration requirements, including:
     • Multi channel integration;
     • Integration with existing merchandise systems;
     • Integration with CRM system;
     • Integration with warehouse/stock system;
     • Integration with finance and reporting system;
     • Integration with couriers/distribution companies;
     • Integration with any other custom system (such as, hotel bookings, events, etc).

6. FUTURE REQUIREMENTS, CONSIDERATIONS INCLUDE:
   • Internationalisation; and
   • Adaptability to new technology.

7. REPORTING REQUIREMENTS, INCLUDING:
   • Trading and performance reports for all KPIs;
   • Exception reports; and
   • Financial reports.

You would then review and evaluate detailed proposals against your provided requirements, begin to score vendors against your agreed selection criteria and conduct additional due diligence: including live demos of supplier’s platform. And finally you’re ready to make a recommendation. Follow this process and you’ll have the best opportunity of delivering your new site on time, on scope and on budget with a solution that fits for purpose.

WORDS: Martin Newman, CEO, Practicology

DIY OPTIONS

For those more technically savvy retailers who have a penchant of the do it yourself variety... here are a couple of open source e-commerce platforms for consideration:

- OsCommerce Online Merchant: it is open source and an e-commerce solution that is available for free with an out-of-the-box online shopping cart functionality that allows stores owners to set-up, run, and maintain online stores at no cost. (www.oscommerce.com)

- Zen Cart™: is a free, user-friendly, open source e-commerce solution which can be installed and set up by anyone with the most basic web site building and computer skills. (www.zen-cart.com)

- VirtueMart is an open source e-commerce solution to be used together with a content management system Joomla! (http://virtuemart.net/)

- Shopify is a free hosted e-commerce platform – though it requires very little technical skills, Shopify takes a 3.75% technical commission on all sales. (www.shopify.com)
IBM WEBSHHERE COMMERCE

E-COMMERCE PLATFORMS

STRENGTHS

- Provides powerful business user tools for companies doing business on the web.
- Integrated social commerce capabilities.
- Delivers a seamless, branded shopping experience. This version incorporates personalised, cross-channel shopping experiences.

THE SOLUTIONS

IBM WebSphere Commerce Enterprise is an interactive platform designed to streamline processes across multiple sales channels and support multiple sites, complex direct and indirect business models, contractual agreements, dynamic negotiations and role-based member management. It is built on a single platform and can run B2C sites across multiple brands, segments, and countries.

IBM WebSphere Commerce Professional is a comprehensive cross-channel platform for mid-size companies to deliver personalised, cross-channel shopping experiences. This version incorporates cross-channel precision marketing and merchandising, configurable business processes, A/B and multivariate testing, search engine optimisation and personalisation features.

IBM WebSphere Commerce Express is designed for small to mid-size businesses and offers a solution to help growing companies do business on the web.

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

FEATURES:

- Delivers a seamless, branded shopping experience across all channels including digital and physical touchpoints within each channel (see Customer Interaction Platform diagram).
- Integrated social commerce capabilities enable online stores to support product ratings and reviews via integration with vendors like BazaarVoice™ and blogs, photo gallery and social profiles through integration with IBM Lotus®.
- Provides powerful business user tools for merchandising, catalogue management and cross-channel precision marketing campaigns and promotions.
- The platform has been extended with a rich set of open, standards-based interfaces that integrate the platform with supply chain solutions like Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) and Distributed Order Management (DOM) applications.
- Enables smartphone apps as new customer touch points for browsing the online store, conducting side-by-side product comparisons, receiving marketing messages, promotion codes, store location information, inventory availability and completing transactions.
- Companies can sense trigger events like media participation, search term, or referring URL, and take actions to target shoppers with offers such as custom landing pages, mobile SMS text messages or targeted product cross-sells and up-sells through IBM’s Precision Marketing engine.
- Includes a framework for consistent integration with third-party analytics vendors such as ComScore and Omniture.

DELIVERY MODEL: Licensed model, with SaaS option also available.

COST: IBM WebSphere Commerce Express entry-level offering, which is designed for small to medium businesses, starts at around $59,000 but can vary depending on workloads.

CLIENTS: Sears, City Beach, 1-800-Flowers, Office Brands, Staples and Sony.

RETAILER’S PERSPECTIVE - 1-800-FLOWERS.COM

To better enable synergies between its 14 gifting brands, create greater business agility, 1-800-FLOWERS.COM, Inc. needed to replace multiple, diverse, sited e-commerce systems with a unified technology platform.

The company chose IBM WebSphere Commerce, in part because of the flexible and efficient way in which it functions behind the scenes. “With WebSphere Commerce, basically, you’ve got a single website that handles all of the transactions,” said Steve Beese, CIO at 1-800-FLOWERS.COM. “This central engine supports as many customer-facing web stores as you like, and it’s easy to add new ones or roll out new features across brands.”

1-800-FLOWERS.COM teamed with IBM to implement IBM WebSphere® Commerce for two of its gift food brands as an initial proof of concept for the platform. The site, mospopcornfactory.com has seen a consistent rise in conversion since its launch. Using knowledge gained from this first rollout, the company will take a greater role in transitioning most of its other brands to the new platform over the coming year.

“The platform will enable the individual brands to do things they would never have been able to do justify before,” Beese said. “It’s going to give us unprecedented agility. We’ll be able to re-merchandise our products and target our stores on the fly in response to competitive offers. That will make us much more relevant to the customer, which is critical. Customer expectations continue to ratchet up, and this new platform is positioning us to meet them going forward. We’ll have an immediacy and responsiveness that will give us a real competitive advantage.”

EXPERT OPINION - IBM WEBSHHERE

REPORT

The Forrester Wave: B2C e-commerce Platforms, Q4 2010 (IBM WebSphere Commerce v.7)

RETAILER'S PERSPECTIVE

- Provides additional e-commerce capabilities, such as multichannel enablement, a gift registry, an inbound call center solution, SEO, multi-store management.
- Mobile e-commerce support works via a storefront starter template optimised for smartphones and offers carrier and device detection. Additionally offers CPS-based store location mapping, buy-on-mobile with distribution order management integration for inventory visibility, a quick check out function.

GARTNER MAGIC QUADRANT FOR E-COMMERCE

- Represents a highly flexible and scalable enterprise e-commerce solution.
- Combines a rich set of e-commerce capabilities with a flexible service-oriented architecture (SOA) and integration capability, enabling the product to be extended and customised.
- IBM have a rich product strategy focused on core product enhancements.

WEAKNESSES

- Flexibility of the IBM product must be carefully leveraged to avoid the risk of increased total cost of ownership (TCO).

SOME GARTNER CLIENTS AND REFERENCES

- Stated that the platform price was not competitive, its technical architecture did not fit with their organisations, or the ownership model did not match their e-commerce requirements.

IBMS E-COMMERCE PLATFORMS

- Exceptional multi-site capabilities for deploying multi-brands and micro-sites via extended site functionality.
- Robust international capabilities.

Brought to you by IBM
**STRENGTHS**

ATG Commerce Suite is a highly scalable e-commerce platform, which automates and personalises the online buying experience. Combining advanced features and out-of-the-box capabilities, the platform is designed to help increase conversions and order value, and ensure ongoing customer loyalty across channels.

**FEATURES:**

- The platform has supported over 10 million visits, over 1,000 completed orders per day, and more than 30,000 concurrent users.
- Flexibility to configure and extend the platform and applications to suit your specific requirements, allowing integration with many back-end and third-party enterprise systems.
- Provides user-friendly applications that allow close monitoring of the purchase cycle and generation of reports that evaluate site performance and buyer behavior.
- Ability to share resources such as carts, catalogues, products, and promotions across sites.
- Ability to enter global markets; launch new brands and sites, the platform includes appropriate site content for each country, language, and brand using dynamic personalisation capabilities.

**FEATURES:**

- Includes features such as personalisation, customer loyalty elements, search and navigation options and full marketing tools.
- Consolidaates and centralises the management of catalogue data and unstructured content such as user-generated content, images and digital assets, on a single platform.
- Integrates functions such as payment solutions, customer loyalty elements, search and navigation options and full marketing tools.
- Includes features such as personalisation, customer recommendations and evaluations, interactive customer elements, credit notes, product comparisons.

**EXPERT OPINION - ATG COMMERCE 9.1**

**STRENGTHS**

- A strong ability to integrate into the enterprise and provides strong multichannel capabilities. Combines a strong and well-rounded ecommerce feature set with an array of targeting, personalisation, and customer interaction tools.

**WEAKNESSES**

- Has the opportunity to deliver rich multichannel capabilities to clients but will need to improve product content management and order management components of its solutions to complete that vision.

**Gartner Magic Quadrant for E-Commerce**

- Delivers a complete, multichannel e-commerce solution with strong personalisation, shopping cart management, product catalog, RIA capabilities, multi-site, multi-language and multilingual capabilities.
- Offers search merchandising, which improves the data returned in a search based on the user’s interests.
- iPhone application is integrated with core ATG capabilities, such as search, merchandising and personalisation.
- Offers an online community (community.atg.com), where customers, partners and ATG personnel can collaborate.

**AMR Research E-Commerce Platforms: A B2C Landscape**

- Much more highly functional and useful administrative and business control centers for site administration capabilities.
- More application server options, including Red Hat jBoss, allowing greater flexibility and potentially lower total cost of ownership.
- Extremely strong customer analysis, targeting, and segmentation functionality.

**EXPERT OPINION - HYBRIS**

**STRENGTHS**

- Key differentiators are in strong product content management tools, catalog management, enterprise integration, and globalisation/internationalisation capabilities.
- A well-defined ability to extend the product and customise it to develop differentiated e-commerce sites across a variety of verticals.

**WEAKNESSES**

- Hybris is recognised by Gartner’s European clients, but is not as well-known in other regions, such as North America or Asia/Pacific.

**Gartner Magic Quadrant for E-Commerce**

- Provides promotions management, which includes coupons, personalised offers and online support for gift card redemption.
- Provides cross-selling and up-selling by analysing the profiles of customers, and can enable real-time behavioral personalisation.

**AMR Research E-Commerce Platforms: A B2C Landscape**

- Strong B2C and B2B capabilities, comprises of a solid technical architecture, all residing on single technology stack.
- Easily able to establish multi-country sites in short time frame with little additional expenditure.
- Print management and POS integration provide multi-channel capabilities.

**WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW**

**ATG COMMERCE SUITE**

**WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW**

**HYBRIS B2C PLATFORM**

**WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW**

**HYBRIS B2C PLATFORM**
MAGENTO

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW
FEATURES:
• Allows control of multiple websites and stores from one administration panel, with the ability to share as much or as little information as needed.
• Enables third-party application integration capability through web services API and with Google Website Optimizer for A/B and multivariate testing.
• Includes data and analytics capabilities providing various reports including sales, abandoned shopping carts, low stock, search terms, product reviews, totals invoiced and refunded, etc.
• Search Engine Optimisation friendly URLs, auto-generated site map and Google site map.
• Scalable for international markets allowing for localisation, multiple currencies and tax rates.
• Includes marketing tools including, multi-tier pricing, bundled product options, customer group-specific pricing, up-sells, cross-sells, wish lists, catalog promotional and flexible coupon functions with the ability to restrict to stores, etc.
• Checkout options include one page checkout, options for account creation, saved baskets, multiple shipping address, and integration with third party gateways including Amazon Payments, PayPal, Google Checkout.
• Order Management functionality includes: order creation and fulfillment, invoicing, shipping documentation, email notifications, phone order creation.

DELIVERY MODEL: Open Source, Licensed and managed services options.

CLIENTS: Ted’s Cameras, Bing Lee, Samsung, Lenovo and Nespresso.

THE SOLUTIONS
Magento Community
Magento Community is an unsupported e-commerce platform, which is designed for use by those willing to spend the time and resources needed to solve issues independently. It is recommended for expert developers and technical enthusiasts working in nonmission-critical environments.

Magento Professional
Magento Professional is supported by Magento Solution Partners and recommended for small businesses, requiring a warranted, scalable product with additional revenue-generating features not found in the Magento Community solution.

Magento Enterprise
Magento Enterprise is fully supported by the Magento team. It includes advanced features compared to the Magento Community and Professional versions. This version of the platform is recommended for businesses of all sizes requiring a production-ready, scalable, enterprise e-commerce solution.

RETAILER’S PERSPECTIVE
Ted’s Cameras recently re-launched its online store in a move to ramp up its multi-channel strategy and address the growing online demand for its product range online. In development since mid last year and built on a Magento platform, the new website aims to create a more effective and user-friendly shopping experience for Ted’s customers.

“We wanted a platform that made it easier to get around the site – add things to the cart, add things to the wish list, improve navigation,” says Grant Tildsley, Ted’s Online Sales and Development Manager. “We wanted to streamline the order process and close the loop.”

The new platform allows Ted’s point of sale system, including prices, product information and stock levels, to be integrated into the site.

RETAILER’S PERSPECTIVE
Chris Highett, Merchandise Manager for the St. George Illawarra Dragons shares his recent experience of implementing the ePages platform.

“We required an up-to-date platform that would assist in gaining greater market share. Being the St George Illawarra brand we have a far reaching supporter base across the country and internationally, so what we needed to implement a new platform that was not only user friendly, an enjoyable experience for the customer, but also helped with data capture. We were looking for a more sophisticated e-commerce platform, which allowed us the opportunity to enhance our design, as well as gather customer traffic and data. We also needed to look back a bit of the market share and want to be the first point of contact for sale of Dragons merchandise, as opposed to other retailers.

“Ultimately, it was about the flexibility in terms of lead time and pricing – the site was delivered within four weeks of engaging eCorner, so their ability to be flexible and understand our requirements was key.”

“The site was launched on Friday 11 March and within the first week we had a basket overview of 332 baskets. We’ve also had people from Papua New Guinea, Indonesia and the US visit the site. In terms of marketing, the data were actually capturing it’s making life so much easier. “Because the processes are new so streamlined, it’s easier for us to deliver on customer expectations, we’re offering more in terms of product offerings and we can almost generate ideas of what consumers need to purchase through the upsell and cross-sell opportunities. We also got the pop-up videos of our team members, which personalises the online experience to our community. “The whole experience has been a really good one. I was nervous to begin with thinking that it was going to be a long tedious process. But reassurance from our consultant has made it a fantastic learning curve. We’re really excited about the opportunities that are available to us now.”
Connecting the Dots
Integrating your E-Commerce Platform

With a whizbang e-commerce platform, that has all your products loaded, smart navigation and a brand new design, customers are going to be tracking in droves to your website – right? Not exactly... if you don’t ensure that your online marketing efforts aren’t working cohesively with your new system, how will anyone know about your new site? Furthermore if you don’t ensure that the new platform is integrated with post-purchase systems and processes (e.g. supply chain and fulfillment), you may end up with unhappy customers who do not want to visit again!

SEARCH ENGINE OPTIMISATION AND THEY SHALL FIND
The practice of optimising your website in order for search engine discoverability, Search Engine Optimisation (SEO) is vital for any online activity.

"SEO has been around for long enough now that e-commerce platform vendors and providers simply need to factor it in and include it as a best practice feature of an e-commerce platform," comments Paul Wilson, Managing Director, White Labelled. "There are obviously SEO strategies that further supplement those SEO best practice features for internal linking and offsite linking. You supplement those SEO best practice features as standard to support those activities, such as search engine indexing. In this space, it is more than likely that all the hard work will not be leveraged to its maximum extent.

"More and more features are being built into platforms to support marketing efforts, such as social network and EBay integration, posting products to price comparison engines, etc. Most good platforms will have those features as standard to support those activities," advises John Debrincat, CEO, eCorner.

RETAILER’S PERSPECTIVE – ENSURING SEARCH ENGINE OPTIMISATION
"Our SEO strategy has seen our consultants (external SEO and e-commerce platform agency) take a holistic and knowledge-sharing approach - right from how we tag terms, to descriptions of products, to articles on the site - we rely on them for guidance." Chris Highett, Merchandise Manager, St George Illawarra Dragons

SEO strategy. It is about the sum of all the components working together that defines how well you do in this space and this is determined by the person who chooses to manage your e-commerce business.

ANNOUNCING... MY NEW WEBSITE
While e-commerce platforms are becoming increasingly diverse in their offering of online marketing activities, without a solid plan of action post-launch in order to drive traffic to the site and create awareness, it is more than likely that all the hard work will not be leveraged to its maximum extent.

"More and more features are being built into platforms to support marketing efforts, such as social network and EBay integration, posting products to price comparison engines, etc. Most good platforms will have those features as standard to support those activities," advises John Debrincat, CEO, eCorner.

RETAILER’S PERSPECTIVE – ENSURING INTEGRATION
"There were definite no barriers in terms of ensuring all marketing efforts worked in unison with our e-commerce platform. We put our marketing plan forward to each of the agencies we considered and asked the question: ‘can your platform deal with this?’"

Chris Highett, Merchandise Manager, St George Illawarra Dragons

"However, for tactics such as newsletters, if there is not a system built in, generally the integration of third-party systems will make it easy to create newsletter subscription lists and put content from the store into the newsletter campaigns with offers."

"For businesses that are only just embarking on the online journey, Luke Hilton, Online Retail Specialist, Playhouse Digital warns, “A bricks and mortar business will have an existing marketing plan – it’s a matter of ensuring all of your digital initiatives are tied together. Make sure you are keeping yourself in line with the overall business marketing strategies."

THE CONVERSION FACTOR
Conversion, the icing on the cake, indicates the return on investment (ROI) of your e-commerce platform and justifies your budgetary spend. However with consumers becoming increasingly product savvy, expecting price competitiveness, user reviews, multiple delivery options and a relevant experience, converting visiting customers is not a straight path.

Your e-commerce platform can become the vehicle through which to get to know your customer base and encourage conversions. An e-commerce platform can also contribute to conversion through the following factors, outlined by Debrincat:

• Providing trust and safety in the retailer through a robust platform and design.
• Through the speed of the platform – in the online retail world there are three seconds in abandonment and if your pages don’t load within this time customers will not stick around.
• Website usability and design influence conversions on online stores.
• Feature processes such as checkout process, cross-sell and upsell also assist with conversion.

“Some retailers install the Rolls Royce of platforms and just do not use them to their fullest extent, which is when you see the greatest results,” advises Wilson. “You need to push all platform tools to encourage conversion. An integrated platform, with the inclusion of third-party systems such as email, search and analysis comes together to assist in converting customers.

“Also understand the lifestyle of your customer and communicating to them through every step of this process and using your e-commerce platform effectively to assist you, will ultimately lead to conversion.”

FINDING OUT WHO’S WHO IN THE ZOO?
While implementing new technologies, solutions, marketing activities and post purchase processes all contribute to the success of an e-commerce business, there’s a resource that is often overlooked that drives the business forward nonetheless.

"Your ecommerce store is like a shop – it’s not going to run itself. Those retailers that start an online store, that sell products, but don’t manage them, will eventually fall," cautions John Debrincat, CEO, eCorner. "If your online store is getting so orders a day, then you need to have a person managing the store in real time and making sure that product is going out to customers and having that personal and direct contact with customers."

"If you think of an e-commerce platform like a racing car, the driver and mechanics make the car go," suggests Phil Grech, Founder, FourFires Solutions.

“More than the systems and technology, the most important thing is getting the right people. Hiring an e-commerce manager who has actually been there and done that and understands the ins and outs of e-commerce is crucial. A person in this role should have retail and marketing experience, plus a combination of some technology experience – someone who has been there and done it before. You want someone who has learnt hard lessons and grown from them. This person should also have their ‘finger on the pulse’ on where things are going within the industry and communicate this accordingly,” Grech concludes.

WHO IN THE ZOO?
FINDING OUT WHO’S WHO IN THE ZOO?

White Labelled are a leading ecommerce consultancy providing a full service and outsourced offering to Australia’s largest and well known multi channel and pure play retailers.

With a client list that will collectively sell $200M+ online annually – the White Labelled team know ecommerce and work with all leading platforms like Magento, IBM Websphere, Hybris and ATG coupled with extensive experience integrating a myriad of ERP, POS and back end systems.

It’s not rocket science, and with a proven process and methodology it really is simple to maximise your ecommerce investment and generate real results.

Simply contact the White Labelled team to learn more.

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future proofing your investment

considering that the Australian online retailing industry is forecast to be worth $33.3 billion by 2015, future proofing is key to good business practice. With the rapid development and uptake of technology, it may not be a case of long term planning for e-commerce platforms, but a matter of keeping your finger on the pulse in order to learn what’s just around the corner in the evolution of online retail.

the road is long – strategy is key
future proofing your business is not just about keeping up with technologies and having the latest and greatest just because it’s there. For instance, much of the buzz around social networks has seen many retailers jump on board with no real strategy, planning or idea of how to successfully leverage this. Social networking strategy is something that is only now becoming a priority for many businesses.

“Defining a strategy and business requirements is very important for future proofing your online store,” says John Debincic, CEO of eCorner. “Too often people make technology decisions away from their strategy and outside their business objectives, because they are trends. For example they set up mobile templates without knowing what their customer base is doing and whether there is a genuine need for this technology.”

As with selecting a platform, it is key for retailers to stick to the plan while having flexibility to accommodate any changes in the business needs and retail landscape. Debincic advises, “Create a strategy, create a set of objectives, build objectives and manage to objectives. When you make changes do it because you’re enhancing the strategy, not because it’s a technology thing.”

“What tends to happen in this market is that new technologies tend to get pulled into the business needs and objectives while keeping up with the latest developments within the industry and choosing a platform flexible enough to allow for these changes.”

“E-commerce platforms need to be able to optimise usage of emerging technologies on a continuous and on-going basis.”

Peter Domjen, Director of eCommerce, IBM ANZ Software Group

Peter Domjen, Director of eCommerce, IBM ANZ Software Group says, “We are doing business in a period of new market realities which are driven by: rapidly evolving consumer behavior, technology savvy customers and better informed, educated and active participants who demand personalisation and individualism. E-commerce platforms need to be able to optimise usage of emerging technologies on a continuous and on-going basis.”

Phil Grech, Founder, FourFires Solutions, cautions, “When you are assessing a platform, an important question to ask is what the company has released in the last 18 months and how many versions of the platform there have been within this timeframe. If they haven’t released anything, that’s a good indication of where they are going in the future.”

Looking into the Crystal Ball – Future Trends

Mobile is booming within the Australian market and only set to grow with Fresh & Sullivan’s ‘Australia’s Online General and Mobile Advertising Marketing 2010’ report forecasting that the mobile market will reach $76 million by 2013. Although the uptake of mobile commerce within the local market has been relatively slow off the mark, globally the trend towards mobile commerce (m-commerce) is growing at a rapid pace.

“We know that mobile is going to be a big part of e-commerce, especially when it comes to helping a customer and promoting across channels,” comments Luke Hilton, Online Retail Specialist, Playhouse Digital. “For example, imagine if customers standing in front of a product in-store and can scan a QR code to be taken to a website and see reviews from other customers and receive additional offers – this presents an enormous opportunity for retailers.”

However, Debincic questions, “is mobile a make or break for an online store? I think it comes back to the business requirements. If you add a mobile template to your store, you have got to maintain and need someone to manage it – if it’s not generating a return, then it’s a bad call.”

Another trend that is quickly establishing itself within the online retailing space is social networking. “The interaction and integration of social media initiatives with e-commerce initiatives can create a rich community environment by creating a destination site where buyers actively interact with each other and ultimately purchase what is seen as ‘best of breed’ product or solutions,” comments Domjen.

An emerging trend, which Grech predicts will be the next big thing within the online retailing space, is gaming. This includes features such as the Linked In ‘complete your profile’ feature and/or ‘badges’, an activity which engages and encourages consumers to interact with the website itself or provide further information, in order to gain some form of reward. “It’s evolving to not just buying and selling of products, but sharing and seeing how the product interacts with other elements,” he comments.

Undoubtedly future proofing is about developing a solid strategy and understanding business needs and objectives while keeping up with the latest developments within the industry and choosing a platform flexible enough to allow for these changes.

1 What are the ‘must-haves’ for an e-commerce platform?

An early decision that a retailer needs to make is: ‘are we happy to present a picture and a price of our products to the Australian market, so that all buyers see the same thing’ or ‘should we be offering an online customer interaction capability targeted to our buyers and prospective buyers?’

Today personalisation and contextual selling is available that will increase traffic flow, conversions and share of wallet.

Modern day requirements would include:

• Product Catalogue Management
• Order Management
• Customer/Account Management
• Contextual Interactive Selling
• Scalable/Reliable
• Business User Tooling
• MultiChannel Integration
• A Defined Roadmap

2 How can retailers ensure that their e-commerce platform is working together with their search engine optimisation (SEO) activities?

Converting customers efficiently requires providers to supply the right offer at the right time to the right person in the right context. A successful transaction whether in store or online, leaves the buyer feeling satisfied, even happy with their buying experience. E-commerce requires to be a safe and easy destination site, but combining this with the right SEO elements that can vary based on the user, will provide a higher conversion rate than a ‘one shoe fits all’ approach.

An effective e-commerce platform incorporates SEO and uses analytics to understand user interactions.

3 In what ways can retailers integrate their e-commerce solutions with their online marketing efforts?

Retailers should ensure that their e-commerce platform is flexible enough to adapt to the business’ evolving search engine optimisation strategy. IBM WebSphere Commerce provides leading examples of the most common SEO techniques such as URL Mapping and Site Maps in Google Site Map formats. These should improve the results for most popular search engines in the market today.

4 How can an effective e-commerce platform assist in converting customers?

Converting customers efficiently requires retailers to provide the right offer at the right time to the right person in the right context. A successful transaction whether in store or online, leaves the buyer feeling satisfied, even happy with their buying experience. E-commerce requires to be a safe and easy destination site, but combining this with the right SEO elements that can vary based on the user, will provide a higher conversion rate than a ‘one shoe fits all’ approach.

An effective e-commerce platform incorporates SEO and uses analytics to understand user interactions.

Just as importantly an effective platform allows retailers to dynamically make changes based on A/B testing, funnel analysis and real time user interactions. It should cater for customer centricity, rather than picture and price and demonstrate best practice shopping cart flows such as quick checkout.

5 How should retailers be future-proofing their e-commerce platforms?

Future proofing an e-commerce platform requires that a solid platform roadmap is documented and available. Integration of technology means that emerging technologies like mobile and social are designed, architect and built into the product.

A retailer can be responsive to customer’s needs by having users providing feedback on product requirements. This feedback can be provided in a number of ways: retailers can solicit feedback through blogs on their own site, listening to twitter traffic and Facebook searches with their brand names. Companies like Coca Cola and Nike are very big in this space. Retailers can also solicit ‘wisdom of the crowds’ thinking via online analytics tools like Cooremetrics. Merchandising becomes more relevant and intelligent because buyer’s feedback can be used to recommended ‘this goes with that’ (for example) with clothes and this feedback comes from other customers.

New technologies such as iPhones and Smartphones, new shopping engines (e.g. TheFind or Spadout), different methods of advertising (e.g. blogging), mean that buyers are demanding more value from the buying experience. With a platform that offers standard features out of the box, retailers can ensure that products can be upgraded easily and enhanced with the latest industry features.

BIO

As Director of eCommerce, IBM ANZ Software Group, Peter Domjen has a deep understanding of Websphere Commerce and its applications. He has worked with organisations of all sizes to implement strategic, targeted online commerce solutions tailored to their unique business requirements.
BACKGROUND
City Beach was established over 30 years ago in Brisbane by two friends who still operate the company today. With 60 stores nationwide and growing, the retailer predominantly caters to the 13 to 24 year age bracket.

Recently, City Beach decided to get serious about implementing its online sales channel. Having never previously undertaken a project of this kind, the business was keen to select a technology partner who could advise them on every stage of the project. The company also aimed to broaden its reach and stay competitive during the holiday trade period and with Christmas rapidly approaching, they had only four months to establish an online trading presence.

STRATEGY
“A lot of the companies we initially spoke to specialised in website building, not e-commerce,” says City Beach CIO Paul Downs. “So when we started discussing what we should do in our warehouse, what’s best to work on the front and back-end of the system – we couldn’t really answer those questions.”

Another major factor in choosing the right partner was City Beach’s key requirement of having the site up by Christmas. For this reason, City Beach chose to work with IBM Business Partner Salmon, who specialise in retail implementations of IBM’s WebSphere Commerce platform and could guarantee deployment within the required timeframe.

Salmon’s Curtis Johnson explains: “Our framework for WebSphere Commerce allows us to provide 80 percent of a client’s requirements out of the box. So for a project that can take over six months, we can get down to around about 100 days. Which is great for retail.”

EXECUTION/SOLUTION
IBM WebSphere Commerce has provided a powerful platform for City Beach’s online sales and content management. The integrated management tools have enabled the business to take care of the day-to-day running of its site, updating products, pricing and stock levels as per the business requirements.

The site incorporates social networking such as Facebook, YouTube and MySpace to cater to City Beach’s teenage customer base. Another vital factor in keeping the retailers audience engaged is the ability to offer a wide range of products and promotions, with constantly updated stock. WebSphere’s flexibility allows City Beach to easily meet these diverse business requirements.

Also by allowing City Beach to collect feedback and customer information, the site equips the business to better understand its customer base and present promotions tailored to insights gained. This means that City Beach can present promotions and images based on who is exploring the site, which significant increase in both revenue and market share.

OUTCOMES
In just 100 days, City Beach implemented an online platform to meet both its present and future needs. The new site has allowed City Beach to become a multichannel retailer with information integrated across each channel so that, for instance, a product sold online can be collected in store.

WebSphere Commerce has also broadened the company’s reach by attracting older demographics which may have been previously deterred by its teen-focused bricks and mortar stores.

Since its implementation, the website has contributed to a revenue lift of over 200 percent, an e-marketing ROI lift of 800 percent and a 200 percent increase in City Beach’s customer database.

The flexibility of the e-commerce platform will allow City Beach to expand its mobile and social commerce footprint in the future. “One of the things we liked about WebSphere Commerce was that it’s future proof. We wanted to get something strategic up front so we wouldn’t have to do a complete rethink if the site really took off.” — Paul Downs, City Beach

HOW DO YOU ENSURE THAT YOUR E-COMMERCE PLATFORM IS UP TO DATE WITH NEW FEATURES AND FUNCTIONALITIES?
It is a possibility that you run the risk of being left behind with new technologies, especially those that are investing in improvements on a constant basis. At the end of the day you’ve got to do what works best for both your customer and business. If it’s functionality that we need we’ll go out and buy it, if we can’t buy it we’ll build it and then go get it later if it doesn’t work correctly!

We also lean heavily on analytics and data to gauge what our consumers are doing, what’s working and what’s not. I don’t think you could run an e-commerce system without an analytics package; it’s like driving blind.

WHERE OUR BUSINESS NEEDS CHANGE, WE ADAPT.
Sometimes it’s pre-emptive and at times it’s reactive. Sometimes we see a change in the market that we might need to adapt to or a process that might not work as well as before. The fact of the matter is that it’s never-ending project – we’ve never got to the point where we can hang up our hats and say that’s it!

DO YOU UTILISE THIRD-PARTY SOFTWARE FOR ANY PART OF YOUR ONLINE BUSINESS?
Part of the problem we had when we first started was that a lot of the technology that we wanted wasn’t available at the time. Since then software has come out that is commercially available at reasonable prices, so in some cases we’ve stopped using our software and integrated with third parties for things such as EDI.
IBM WebSphere® Commerce is a powerful customer interaction platform for online and cross-channel commerce. Designed to dynamically respond to customers online it acts like a good sales person in a store, and is recognised as an industry-leading e-commerce solution. IBM WebSphere Commerce supports business to consumer and business to business models, while providing a rich, differentiated customer experience through a single platform.

With powerful out-of-the-box capabilities and easy-to-use business user tools, IBM WebSphere Commerce delivers a proven, flexible solution that scales to meet your business requirements no matter your industry, size of company, or selling model. State-of-the-art business user tools help your staff create and manage precision marketing campaigns, promotions and efficiently manage catalogues, product assortments, merchandising and connectivity to external systems of record for content, pricing and media.

WebSphere Commerce delivers a smarter e-Commerce solution than any other solution available today. The design and function of the platform was achieved by focusing on four key themes:

- Customer centricity
- Cross-channel capability
- Precision marketing
- Performance leadership

www.ibm.com.au

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White Labelled work with their clients to discover, document and gain a complete understanding of their business end to end so that the best platform to fit their requirements can be recommended. This agnostic approach to the ecommerce platform ensures the best and independent approach is designed for the client and their future business operations.

It’s not rocket science, and with a proven process and methodology it really is simple to maximise your ecommerce investment and generate real results by providing strategic planning and high quality digital solutions that are functional, on brand and technically robust and scalable.

www.whitelabelled.com.au

CONTACT:
Paul Wilson
Managing Director
paulw@whitelabelled.com.au
p: +613) 9832 6655
m: 0414 555 977
812, 9 Yarra Street
South Yarra VIC 3141