



# Scaling with unified commerce: A step-by-step guide



# Part 1: Understanding unified commerce



Commerce began as the simple trade of goods and services. Although it evolved through the ages, it has undergone rapid transformation over the past two decades. The explosion of population, technology and the number of products and goods available contributed to new consumer behaviors and retail challenges, making it essential to adapt quickly to remain competitive.

The response has redefined approaches to commerce. From multichannel to omnichannel and now unified commerce, the goal is to better meet consumer expectations and demands. And while customer service has always been important, it has taken on new meaning, making it a necessity for brands to address the customer journey and experience.

## Introducing unified commerce

Unified commerce is critical part of commerce today. It provides a seamless shopping experience across all channels, whether online or offline, enhancing customer satisfaction and loyalty. It allows retailers to maintain consistent inventory and pricing information throughout various touchpoints, reducing the risk of stockouts and discrepancies. Additionally, with unified commerce, retailers can gather comprehensive data about customer behaviors, enabling them to personalize marketing strategies and optimize their product offerings. Unified commerce empowers retailers to adapt to changing consumer trends and preferences and remain flexible in a fast-paced industry where negative experiences can destroy a brand's bottom line.

## The customer experience + unified commerce

The customer experience is more critical than ever: It's not just about selling products but crafting unforgettable journeys. According to a Wunderman study, **63%** of consumers<sup>1</sup> say that the best brands exceed expectation across the entire customer journey. That's from discovery to delivery - and beyond. Technology has made it so that customers expect personalization and a seamless experience at every turn. And when things don't go smoothly, their loyalty ends. A recent survey revealed that over **50%** of customers<sup>2</sup> left a brand they were loyal to in the last 12 months due to a poor customer experience. That leaves little room for businesses to fumble.

To keep up, brands must use every tool in their toolkit to ensure an immaculate experience consistent across all channels and touchpoints. And that's where a unified commerce strategy comes into play.



### IN THIS EBOOK:

In this guide, we'll explain unified commerce and how it differs from other methodologies and fits into an omnichannel world. You'll learn the steps to develop and implement a unified commerce strategy for your brand - and the best practices for getting started. You'll also see how to use unified commerce to stay agile, grow and scale.



# What is unified commerce?

Unified commerce is a comprehensive and holistic approach to retail, seamlessly integrating all channels and touchpoints to create a cohesive shopping journey for customers. Beyond simply merging online and offline, frontend and backend realms, it aims to deeply understand and improve the customer journey, fostering brand loyalty and retention. By erasing the boundaries between digital and physical platforms, retailers can offer a smoother path from discovery to delivery across diverse channels, prioritizing personalized experiences that elevate satisfaction and drive business growth.

**Imagine this:** You gather ingredients to bake a pie. You've got your flour, sugar, butter, salt, seasonings and fruit. But you don't put it together. As is, siloed and unprocessed, you can't eat it - it's random items that taste much better together. So, when you combine those ingredients and cook them up in the right way, the impact is enormous. You have a favorite dessert that delights.

Unified commerce is much the same. It unifies siloed streams of data and makes it more digestible. It captures both frontend and backend views of the customer, allowing businesses to build a better experience. In essence, it gives brands deep insights into consumer behavior, fueling cohesive experiences across all touchpoints. By consolidating channels and data into a centralized source, or unified commerce platform, businesses can unlock dynamic, customer-centric shopping experiences. This consolidation isn't merely about merging technologies; it's about creating a seamlessly integrated stack that harmonizes disparate systems and amplifies data coherence.

Unified commerce transcends the limitations of traditional omnichannel strategies, serving as the ultimate solution for unifying technologies and forging frictionless customer interactions. By centralizing data, brands gain a panoramic view of the user journey, including interactions with chatbots, order tracking, loyalty programs, point-of-sale systems, emails, websites, apps and more. Armed with this comprehensive understanding, brands can pinpoint areas for improvement, optimizing the customer experience for greater consistency and satisfaction while also eliminating discordant tech stacks and fragmented data. It lets you deliver an integrated, measurable, seamless experience that delights - just like pie.



## Unified commerce key concepts



### Unified sales channel data

With a unified commerce platform, data from all sales channels - brand website, brick-and-mortar POS, marketplace channels - is brought together.



### Customer engagement centralization

Unified commerce centralizes all customer engagement data. This includes clicking on ads, viewing emails, adding items to a shopping cart, completing actions in-store, etc.



### Personalization

Insights gained from unified commerce data can be leveraged into a truly personalized experience for every customer. Brands can deliver a customized message or call to action when it's needed most.



### Accuracy & Efficiency

Having unified, real-time data in regard to customer engagement and sales means brands can see precisely how inventory is moving. This allows information across channels to be more accurate than ever. Stock information and pricing will be consistent for customers, and brands can predictively move inventory where needed.

## What is the difference between unified commerce and...

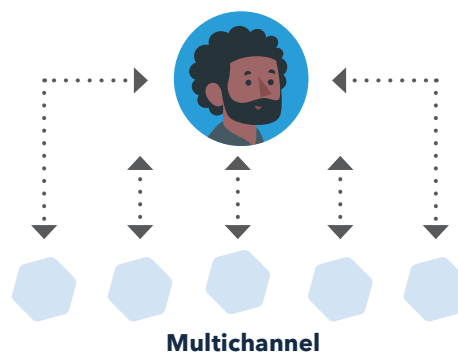
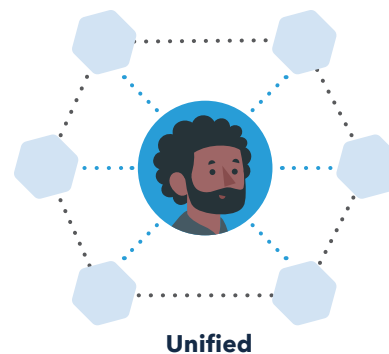
Quite a few buzzwords are swirling around the topic of ecommerce these days. Some are concrete and easy to spot, and some are more conceptual. Here are the most common ecommerce topics that can be easily confused with Unified Commerce:

## UNIFIED COMMERCE VS MULTICHANNEL COMMERCE

Unified commerce and multichannel commerce are both strategies retailers use to engage with customers across various channels, but they differ in approach and scope.

Multichannel commerce involves selling products or services through multiple channels, such as brick-and-mortar stores, websites, mobile apps, social media platforms and third-party marketplaces. However, these channels often operate independently, with separate inventories, pricing and customer experiences. When switching between channels, customers may encounter inconsistencies in product availability, pricing and promotions.

While multichannel commerce involves operating through multiple channels independently, unified commerce focuses on integrating channels to create a unified and consistent customer experience. Unified commerce goes beyond simply offering products across different platforms; it aims to maximize customer satisfaction, retention and loyalty by providing a seamless shopping journey.



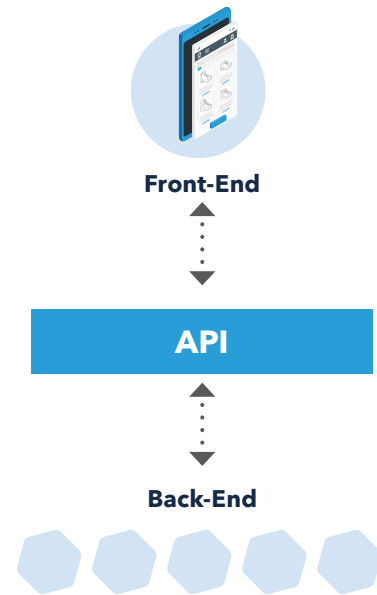
# UNIFIED COMMERCE VS HEADLESS COMMERCE

Unified commerce and headless commerce are both approaches used in retail to enhance customer experiences, but they differ in their focus and implementation. Headless commerce refers to the technology that separates frontend sales and backend management - it decouples the frontend presentation layer from the backend commerce functionality. In headless commerce, the backend systems responsible for managing inventory, processing orders and handling payments are separated from the frontend user interface. This allows businesses to deliver content and commerce experiences across various digital touchpoints (such as websites, mobile apps and IoT devices) using APIs. Headless commerce provides flexibility and agility, allowing businesses to innovate and adapt quickly to changing customer needs and technological advancements.

In a headless commerce model, the visible front end - for example, the point of sale, website, mobile app, etc. - is separate from the hidden backend - like CRMs, content management systems and order management systems. The connective APIs allow brands to easily switch vendors and platforms with little to no disruption.

When compared to headless commerce, unified commerce focuses on providing a seamless and consistent customer experience across all channels while headless commerce focuses on the technical architecture and flexibility of delivering commerce experiences through APIs and decoupled systems. Unified commerce encompasses both frontend and backend aspects of retail, while headless commerce primarily addresses the backend infrastructure and content delivery mechanisms.

## Headless Commerce

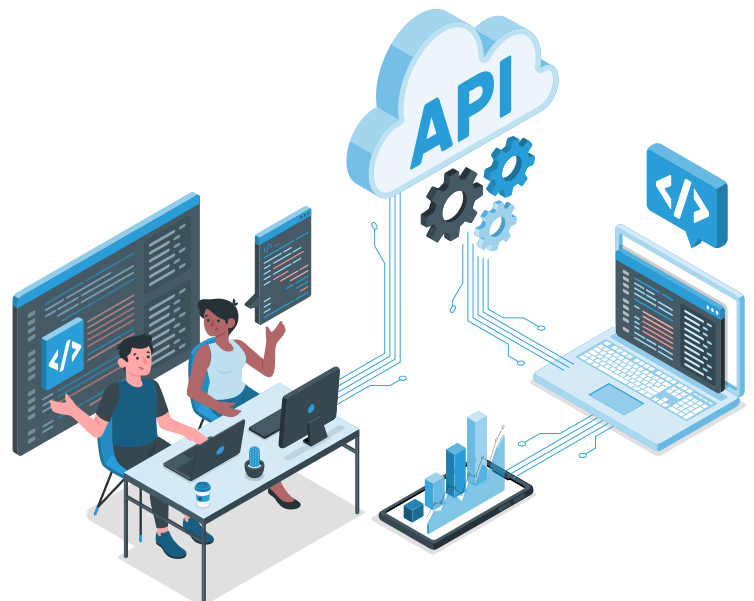
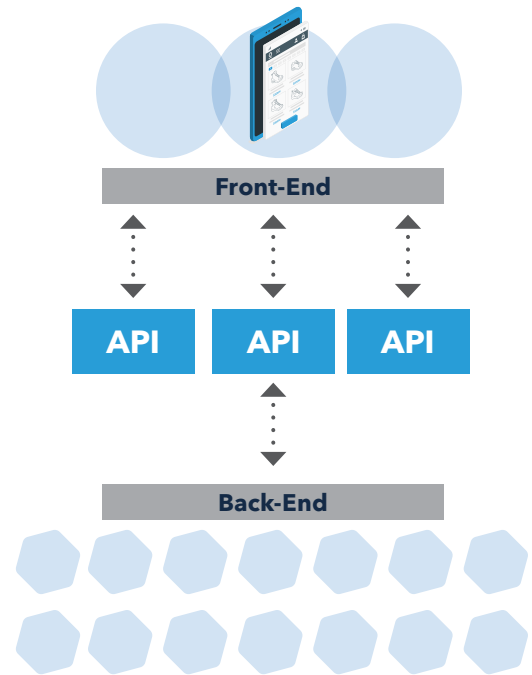


# UNIFIED COMMERCE **VS** COMPOSABLE COMMERCE

Composable commerce is a broader concept than headless commerce and encompasses the idea of assembling commerce capabilities from individual, interchangeable components or services. It involves breaking down commerce functionalities into modular building blocks, which can be combined and orchestrated to create tailored commerce experiences. Composable commerce emphasizes flexibility, scalability and customization, allowing businesses to adapt their technology stack to evolving business requirements.

While headless commerce focuses primarily on separating the frontend from the backend to enable flexibility in content delivery, composable commerce extends this concept to the entire commerce stack, emphasizing modularity and the ability to compose commerce capabilities from interchangeable components. Essentially, headless commerce is a specific architectural approach, while composable commerce is a broader philosophy encompassing modularity and flexibility across the entire commerce ecosystem. Compared to unified commerce, composable commerce emphasizes modular flexibility and customization in building commerce capabilities. In contrast, unified commerce focuses on integrating channels and touchpoints to provide a consistent and seamless shopping journey for customers.

## Composable Commerce

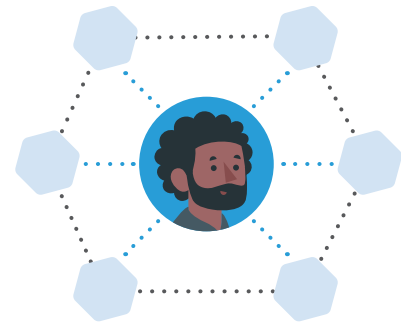


## UNIFIED COMMERCE **VS** OMNICHANNEL COMMERCE

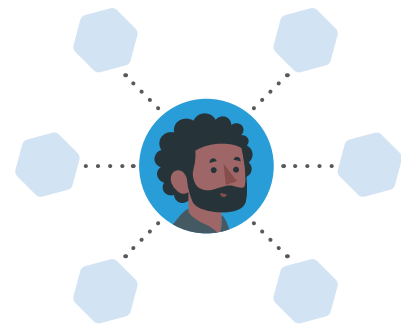
Omnichannel commerce refers to an integrated retail approach that gives customers a more unified shopping experience across multiple channels, including online platforms, physical stores and mobile devices. It emphasizes consistency and continuity throughout the customer journey, allowing individuals to transition effortlessly between different touchpoints. By leveraging technology and data analytics, omnichannel commerce enables retailers to track customer interactions, preferences and behaviors across channels, personalize the shopping experience and drive customer satisfaction and loyalty. Ultimately, omnichannel commerce aims to break down silos between online and offline channels, creating a cohesive and interconnected ecosystem that enhances engagement and drives business growth.

Unified commerce aims to eliminate the barriers in omnichannel retail by breaking down data silos and enhancing data quality. It focuses on improving analytics across various channels to accurately track customer journeys. This strategy creates a single, real-time source of truth, offering retailers better visibility and insight into customer behavior. By adopting a unified commerce architecture, brands can fulfill the promise of omnichannel retail more efficiently, delivering relevant shopping experiences, enabling self-service and offering flexible fulfillment options. This approach not only meets evolving consumer expectations but also drives growth and provides a competitive edge in the market.

Once you understand unified commerce, it's crucial to understand its benefits and explore how you can leverage it. It's also important to develop your unified commerce strategy and goals and create actionable steps toward implementing a unified commerce approach.



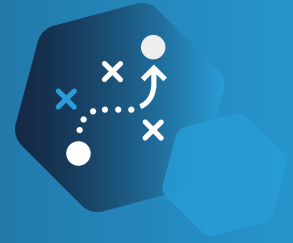
Unified



Omnichannel



# Part 2: The benefits of unified commerce and developing a strategy



Investment in the customer experience is essential for growth. Today's customers seek an exceptional experience, with **61% saying they'll pay 5% more to get one.**<sup>3</sup> When brands are able to consolidate customer data into a single source of truth - they have the beginnings of a highly effective strategy. However, they must ensure the data is accurate, timely and relevant to improving operations and the customer experience.

## What are the benefits of unified commerce?

A unified commerce approach allows you to operate optimally in an omnichannel world. It allows retailers to better fulfill their promises by gaining a centralized, real-time platform for all customer touchpoints. Unified commerce helps brands effectively address key customer experience challenges, benefiting consumers and business alike.

### Benefits to consumers

Unified commerce gives consumers a seamless and integrated shopping experience across various channels and touchpoints, providing numerous benefits that enhance convenience, satisfaction and overall shopping enjoyment. These benefits include:

**Eliminating barriers between online and offline shopping:** Consumers can transition effortlessly between digital platforms and physical stores. This cohesive approach ensures consistency in product availability, pricing and promotions across all channels, enabling shoppers to browse, purchase and interact with brands in a way that best suits their preferences and needs.

**Providing better order fulfillment flexibility and convenience:** Customers have multiple fulfillment options, including buy online, pick up in-store (BOPIS), curbside pickup and same-day delivery. This flexibility accommodates diverse consumer lifestyles and preferences, letting them to choose the most convenient method for receiving their purchases, whether they prefer immediate gratification or the convenience of online shopping.

**Elevating the personalization of the shopping experience:** With unified commerce, brands can leverage comprehensive customer data and insights to deliver tailored, more targeted and relevant recommendations, promotions and content across all touchpoints. By understanding consumer preferences, purchase history and browsing behavior, brands can curate personalized shopping journeys that resonate with individual shoppers, increasing engagement and loyalty.

**Fostering transparency and trust:** Customers gain real-time visibility into inventory availability, order status and delivery updates. This transparency builds confidence and reassures consumers that they can rely on the brand to fulfill their orders accurately and efficiently, thereby enhancing the overall shopping experience and reducing the likelihood of dissatisfaction or frustration.





## Benefits to brands

Unified commerce offers retailers several advantages, transforming how they operate and interact with customers. Here are some key benefits:

**A holistic customer view:** Unified commerce consolidates data from various channels into a single view, enabling retailers to gain a comprehensive understanding of their customers. This holistic view allows retailers to deliver personalized experiences tailored to individual preferences and behaviors.

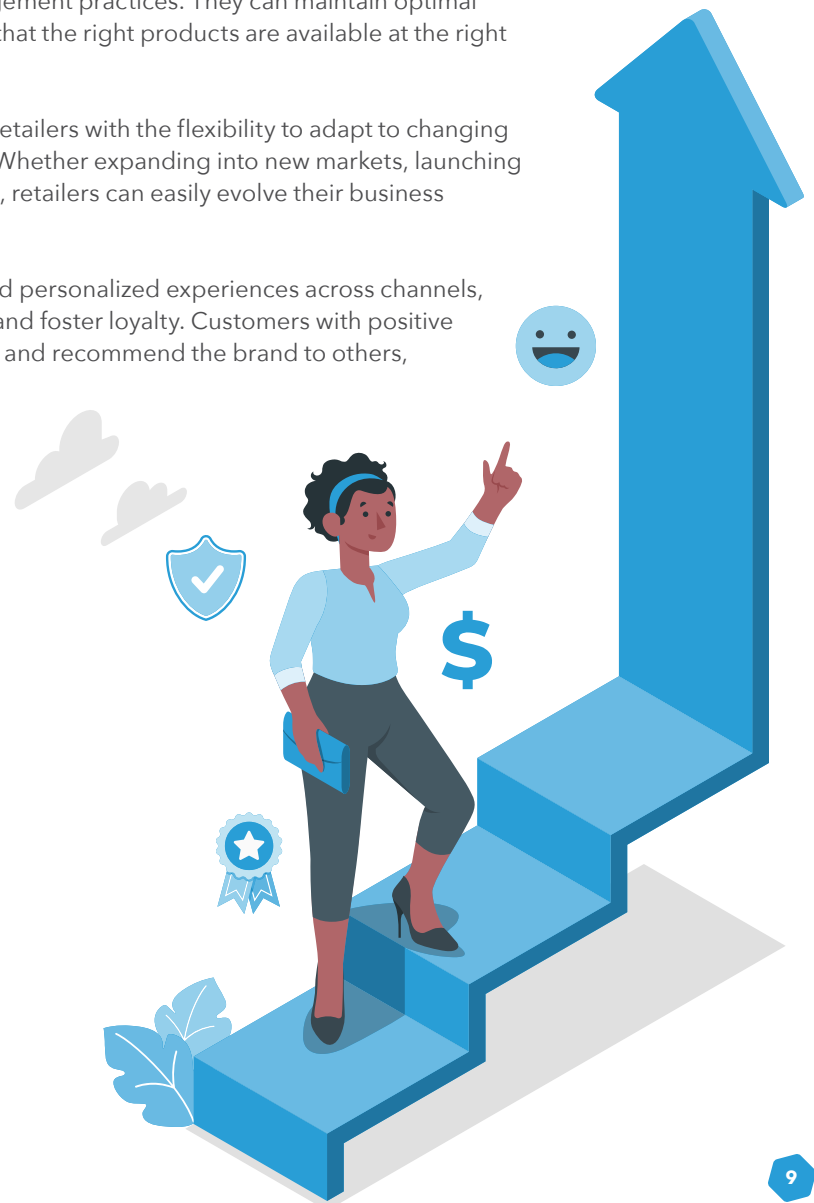
**Improved operational efficiency:** By integrating systems and processes across channels, unified commerce streamlines operations for retailers. This integration eliminates silos and redundancies, reducing complexity and improving efficiency in tasks such as inventory management, order fulfillment and customer service.

**Ability to create a seamless shopping experience:** Unified commerce lets retailers offer a seamless customer journey and shopping experience across channels. Customers can research products online, make purchases in-store and access support through various touchpoints without encountering friction or inconsistencies in the process.

**Optimized inventory management:** With real-time visibility into inventory levels across the entire supply chain, retailers can optimize their inventory management practices. They can maintain optimal stock levels, reduce overstock and stockouts and ensure that the right products are available at the right time and place to meet customer demand.

**Flexibility and scalability:** Unified commerce provides retailers with the flexibility to adapt to changing market conditions and scale their operations as needed. Whether expanding into new markets, launching new sales channels or integrating emerging technologies, retailers can easily evolve their business strategies without disrupting existing operations.

**Enhanced customer loyalty:** By delivering consistent and personalized experiences across channels, retailers can build stronger relationships with customers and foster loyalty. Customers with positive experiences are more likely to return for future purchases and recommend the brand to others, contributing to long-term success and growth.



## Getting started with unified commerce

Now that you understand what unified commerce is and isn't – and its benefits – it's time to start developing a strategy to move toward a unified commerce model. Like anything, it requires planning and determining how and when to start. During the planning phase:

### Determine data collection and analysis strategies

A unified commerce approach revolves around data, which becomes essential in setting and achieving goals. This makes it critical to begin with data collection and analysis to gain insights into customer behavior, market trends and operational performance. Here's is some of the data you'll work with:

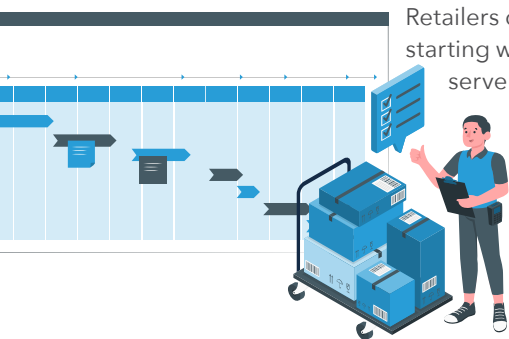
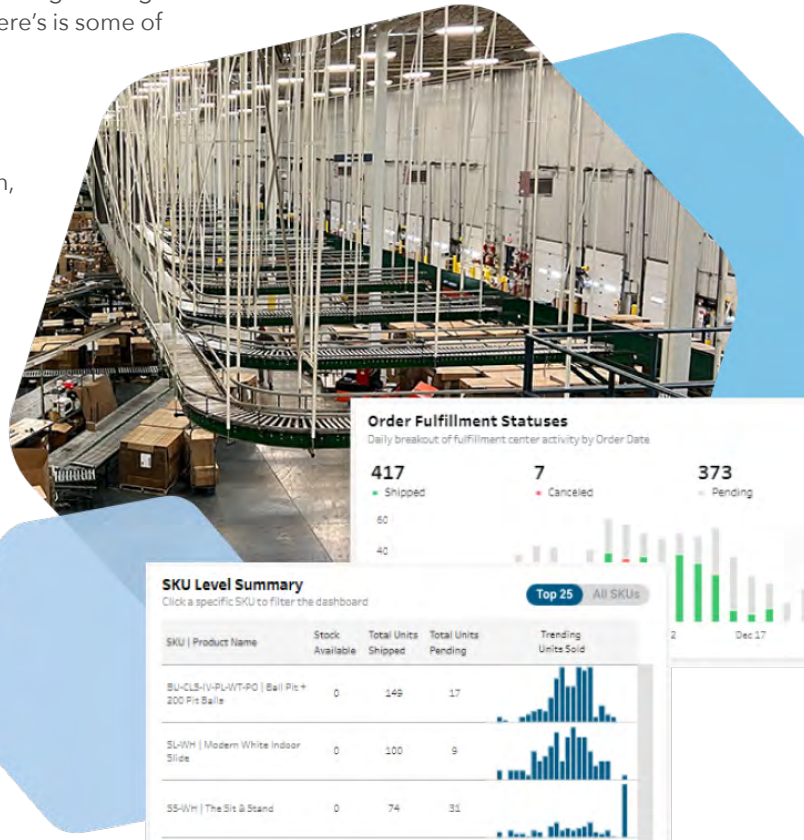
**Customer Data:** Data related to customer interactions across all touchpoints, including online platforms, mobile apps, social media and physical stores. This data can include demographic information, purchase history, browsing behavior and feedback from customer interactions.

**Sales and inventory data:** All transactions, inventory levels and product performance stats. It helps brands understand which products are popular, which ones are slow-moving and how inventory levels fluctuate over time. This information can help optimize inventory management and forecasting processes.

**Marketing and promotional data:** Data from marketing campaigns, promotions and advertising efforts to assess their effectiveness in driving customer engagement, sales, and brand awareness. Understanding the ROI of marketing initiatives can inform future marketing strategies and investments.

**Operational data:** Data from operational processes such as order fulfillment, shipping and customer service are used to identify areas for improvement and optimization. This data can highlight bottlenecks, inefficiencies and opportunities to enhance the customer experience.

**Technology and infrastructure data:** Data that assess the performance and reliability of existing technology systems and infrastructure to ensure they can support the requirements of a unified commerce approach. Use to identify any gaps or limitations that must be addressed to enable seamless integration and data sharing across channels and within the centralized unified commerce platform.



Retailers can gain valuable insights into their current performance by starting with data and determining what to analyze and use. These insights serve as the foundation for setting strategic goals and objectives for implementing a unified commerce approach, ensuring alignment with business priorities and customer needs. Ongoing data monitoring and analysis are essential for measuring progress toward goals and making data-driven decisions to optimize the unified commerce strategy over time.

## Set clear scaling goals

With an abundance of data at your disposal, there are a multitude of directions you could pursue. However, a strategic approach involves setting clear goals and prioritizing initiatives rather than attempting to tackle everything simultaneously. Begin by identifying objectives that demand minimal resources, allowing you to focus your efforts efficiently and make measurable progress toward your overarching goals. What actionable things can you do now? For example, could you partner with a 3PL that has a WMS (warehouse management system), OMS (order management system) and TMS (transportation management system) that already work together.

### You can also do things like:

- **Implement omnichannel inventory management:** Sync inventory across all sales channels to gain accurate, real-time visibility and give customers access to product availability.
- **Adopt a cloud-based POS system:** Integrate your POS with your ecommerce platform for consistent and unified transactions across online and offline channels.
- **Enhance website functionality:** Incorporate responsive design, fast loading times and intuitive navigation as well as creating a seamless experience across devices.
- **Integrate marketing channels:** Deliver consistent messaging and promotions throughout email, social media and SMS, ensuring a consistent experience.
- **Offer flexible fulfillment:** Give multiple options, including BOPIS, same-day shipping and more.

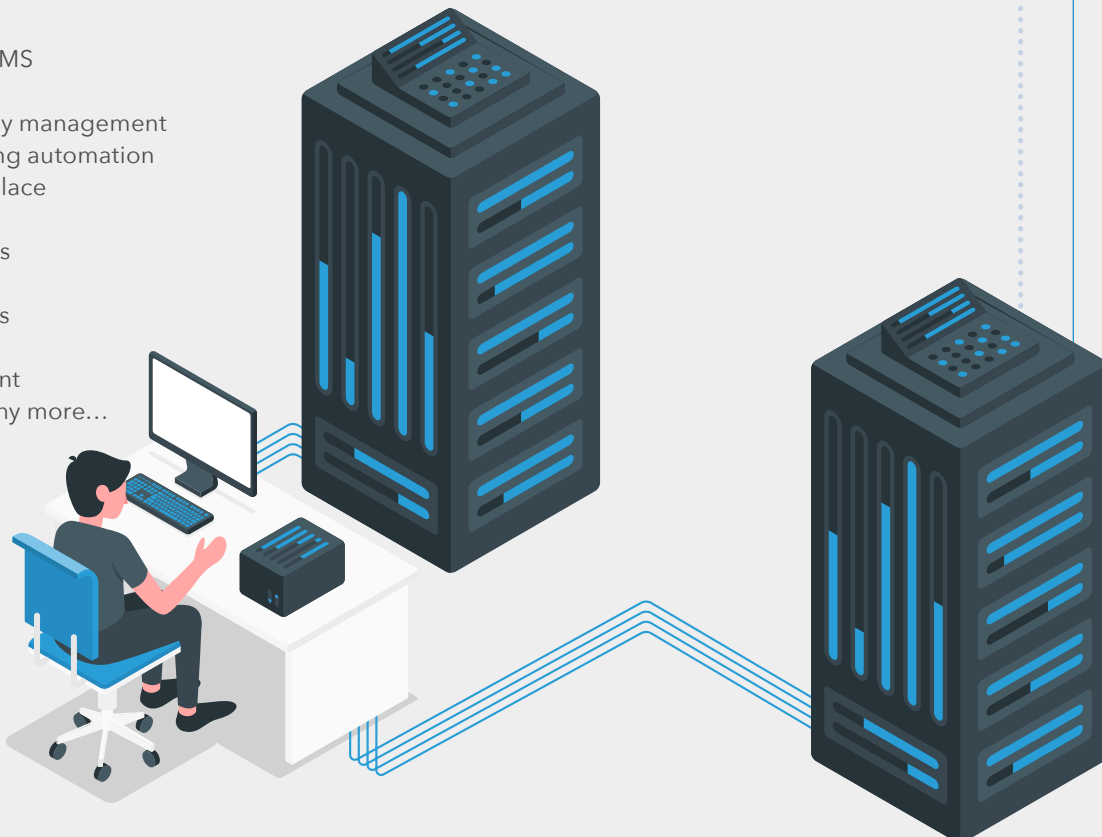
By starting with easy or singular steps, businesses can lay the foundation for a unified commerce strategy and gradually expand their capabilities.



## Select the right retail technology solutions

Selecting the right retail technology for a unified commerce approach starts with evaluating your current tech stack. Think of all the software you use throughout the customer journey and for operations. Consider anything that measures, tracks or provides insights. Ask yourself, does it provide the data you need now, and does it integrate? Some of the common solutions retail businesses use include:

- POS
- OMS/WMS
- CRM
- Inventory management
- Marketing automation
- Marketplace
- Email
- Chatbots
- Pixels
- Analytics
- Social
- Storefront
- And many more...



## Steps to take for the right tech

If you need software that better aligns with your goal and emerging strategy, take these steps to choose the right tech solutions for a unified commerce strategy:



1

### Step one

Assess current needs and future scalability. Evaluate your business requirements and growth projections to identify tech solutions that can scale with your business and accommodate evolving needs.

2

### Step two

Prioritize integration capabilities. Look for solutions that seamlessly integrate with existing systems, including POS, ERP, CRM and e-commerce platforms, to ensure data consistency and streamline operations.

3

### Step three

Focus on flexibility and customization. Opt for tech solutions that can be customized to align with your unique business processes and requirements, allowing for greater flexibility and adaptability to changing market conditions.

4

### Step four

Consider omnichannel capabilities: Choose tech solutions that support omnichannel functionalities, such as unified inventory management, order fulfillment and customer engagement, to deliver a consistent and cohesive shopping experience across all channels.

5

### Step five

Evaluate security and compliance features. To safeguard customer data and mitigate security risks, prioritize solutions that adhere to industry standards and compliance regulations, such as PCI DSS for payment processing and GDPR for data protection.

6

### Step six

Assess vendor reputation and support. Research vendors' track records, customer reviews and support offerings to ensure reliability, responsiveness and ongoing assistance in implementing and maintaining the chosen tech solutions.

7

### Step seven

Plan for training and adoption. Develop a comprehensive training plan to educate employees to use new tech solutions and encourage adoption across the organization, fostering efficiency and maximizing ROI.

By following these best practices, you can make informed decisions when selecting tech solutions for your unified commerce strategy and use solutions to drive operational efficiency, enhance customer experiences and achieve business growth.



## Stay flexible

Anyone who runs a business knows that it can take time for things to work, and sometimes, things don't work out the way you expect. Because of changing factors, like consumer behaviors, the economy, cultural shifts and competition, solutions and strategies are not absolute. The key is resilience and adaptability: Being able to remain flexible, and pivot when necessary. As long as you stay focused on remaining unified, you'll learn to implement and adjust as needed.

# Part 3: Implementing your unified commerce strategy



Unified commerce is about making your data work together and accessing it from a single source of truth. It's seamlessly fusing all channels and touchpoints to deliver a consistent shopping journey for customers, merging the physical and digital for a frictionless path that leads from discovery to delivery. It eliminates discordant tech stacks and replaces them with a strong, streamlined interconnection.

Implementing a unified commerce strategy within a business requires careful planning and execution to ensure success. The process involves several key steps that guide the organization toward its objectives. From initial goal setting to monitoring and adjusting, each phase plays a crucial role in achieving desired outcomes. By diligently following these steps, businesses can translate their strategic vision into actionable plans and tangible results. **To implement your strategy:**



## Integrate your sales channels

Integrating your sales channels means aligning various platforms and channels to both streamline operations and provide a cohesive customer experience. To integrate sales channels effectively:

**Assess current channels:** Begin the process by evaluating existing sales channels, such as online stores, brick-and-mortar locations, marketplaces and social media platforms.

**Choose integration tools:** Select integration tools or platforms that allow seamless communication between different channels. This may include ecommerce platforms, CRM systems or ERP software.

**Centralize inventory management:** Implement a centralized inventory management system that tracks stock levels across all channels in real time. This ensures accurate inventory counts and prevents overselling or stockouts. It also gives consumers correct product availability and helps with demand forecasting.

**Sync product information:** Maintain consistency in product information, pricing and availability across all sales channels. Use product information management (PIM) software to update product details efficiently.

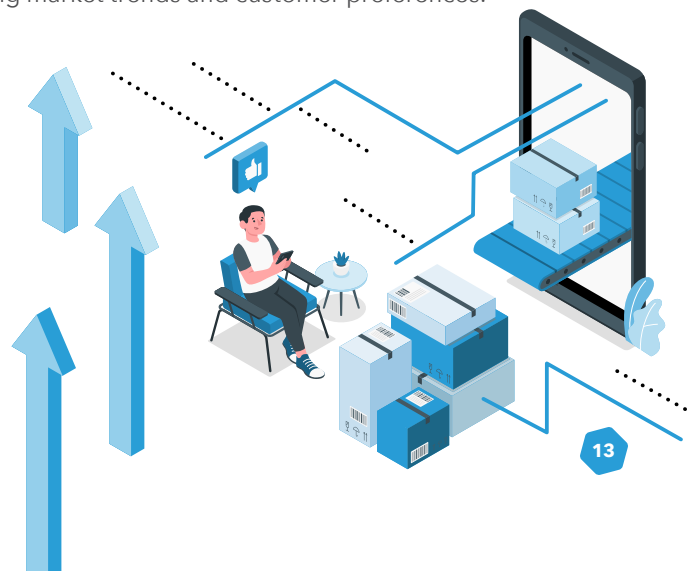
**Enable cross-channel visibility:** Give consumers visibility into inventory availability, order status and shipping options across all channels. This enhances transparency and improves the overall shopping experience.

**Implement unified analytics:** Utilize analytics tools that gather data from all sales channels to gain insights into customer behavior, sales performance and channel effectiveness. This data-driven approach enables informed decision-making and optimization.

**Train staff:** Train employees to effectively manage integrated sales channels. Provide comprehensive training on using integrated systems, handling customer inquiries and maintaining consistent branding across channels.

**Monitor and adapt:** Continuously monitor sales channel performance and customer feedback to identify areas for improvement. Adapt your integration strategy based on evolving market trends and customer preferences.

**Successful sales channel integration creates a seamless and efficient omnichannel experience for customers while maximizing sales opportunities across all touchpoints.**



## Connect your fulfillment channels

Connecting fulfillment channels involves integrating various systems and processes to ensure efficient order fulfillment across different channels. Using the same provider for retail, ecommerce and wholesale operations is also helpful. To connect your fulfillment channels effectively:

**Optimize order fulfillment:** Streamline order fulfillment processes by integrating order management systems with shipping carriers and fulfillment centers. This enables faster order processing and shipment tracking.

**Use a centralized fulfillment system:** Select a centralized fulfillment system or software that can manage orders from all sales channels in one place. This system should support integration with ecommerce platforms, marketplaces and other sales channels.

**Integrate ecommerce platforms:** Integrate your ecommerce platforms with the fulfillment system to automatically sync orders, inventory levels and shipping information. This integration ensures that orders are processed promptly and accurately.

**Link inventory management systems:** Connect your inventory management system to the fulfillment system to maintain real-time visibility of stock levels across all fulfillment channels. This prevents overselling and stockouts while optimizing inventory allocation.

**Sync shipping carriers:** Integrate shipping carrier services with the fulfillment system to streamline the shipping process. This allows you to generate shipping labels, track shipments and provide customers shipping options directly from the fulfillment system.

**Automate order routing:** Implement automated order routing rules to optimize order processing. Assign orders to the nearest fulfillment center or warehouse based on inventory availability and shipping preferences.

**Implement pick-pack-ship workflows:** Standardize your pick-pack-ship workflows across all fulfillment channels to streamline operations. Use barcode scanning and automation tools to increase efficiency and reduce errors during order fulfillment.

**Provide cross-channel visibility:** Offer customers visibility into their order status and shipment tracking information. Integrate order status updates and tracking links into confirmation emails and customer accounts for a seamless experience.

**Monitor performance and optimize:** Monitor fulfillment channel performance metrics such as order processing time, perfect order rate, shipping costs and other helpful KPIs. Use this data to identify bottlenecks, optimize processes and improve overall fulfillment efficiency.



By connecting your fulfillment channels effectively, you can ensure consistent and efficient order fulfillment operations across all sales channels, leading to improved customer satisfaction and increased sales opportunities.



## Market your brand consistently

It's an important reminder for retail businesses that consistent brand presentation across all platforms increases revenue by up to **10-20%**.<sup>4</sup> Consistent marketing is also an integral part of your unified commerce strategy. When critically assessing your brand marketing efforts, ask yourself:



### Brand identity

- Are we consistently communicating our brand's core values, mission and vision across all marketing channels?
- Do our marketing materials reflect a cohesive brand identity regarding messaging, tone and visual elements?

### Audience targeting

- Are we consistently targeting the same audience segments across different marketing channels?
- Do we tailor our messaging and content to resonate with our target audience consistently?

### Visual branding

- Are we using consistent visual elements such as logos, colors, fonts and imagery in our marketing materials?
- Do our visual assets maintain a unified look and feel across various platforms and campaigns?

### Channel integration

- Are we integrating our marketing efforts across different channels seamlessly?
- Do we ensure our messaging remains consistent across online and offline channels, including social media, email, website, print and in-person interactions?

### Messaging consistency

- Are we delivering consistent brand messaging and positioning across all marketing touchpoints?
- Do our marketing communications convey a unified brand voice and personality?

### Content alignment

- Is our content strategy aligned with our brand values and objectives?
- Do we maintain consistency in the type, format and quality of content we produce across channels?

### Customer experience

- Are we providing a consistent brand experience throughout the customer journey?
- Do we uphold our brand promise and values at every touchpoint, from initial awareness to post-purchase interactions?

### Feedback and measurement

- Do we regularly gather feedback from customers and stakeholders regarding our brand consistency?
- Do we track key performance indicators (KPIs) related to brand consistency, such as brand awareness, brand perception and customer loyalty?

By asking these questions and evaluating your marketing efforts, you can assess the level of consistency in promoting your brand and identify areas for improvement to ensure a unified brand experience for your audience.



## Make sure your entire team is on board

One of the benefits of using a unified commerce model is having incredibly accurate data. Users that are thought to be two different customers when looking at separate systems are often one single customer when viewed through the unified commerce lens.

With this new and improved collection of data, it's essential that everyone on your team - from marketing and sales to analysts - are all making informed decisions using the same data. It should be your central data source (your single source of truth!). It's better for your bottom line and will prevent confusion between teams.

## Once unified, craft a seamless customer experience

The customer experience is central to unified commerce, serving as the cornerstone for creating seamless and cohesive interactions across all channels. Unified commerce is about providing consistent and personalized experiences, regardless of how consumers engage with your brand. This means prioritizing a customer-centric approach; the catalyst for customer satisfaction, loyalty and retention. It's the building blocks for sustainable growth and gaining a competitive advantage. Unified commerce lets you be flexible, adaptive, resilient and focused on your customer and their journey. To craft the customer experience, you must identify, understand and map the customer journey.





## Map your customer journey

A survey found that **66%** of customers expect companies to understand their needs.<sup>5</sup> Retailers can learn a lot about their customers, their experiences, preferences, challenges and needs by mapping their journey. With access to the data a unified commerce approach provides, you can delve deep into the touchpoints, interactions and feelings online and offline throughout the stages of awareness, consideration, purchase, retention and advocacy. **To map the journey:**



1

Identify all potential touchpoints across various channels, including online platforms, social media, physical stores and customer service channels. This involves understanding how customers become aware of your brand, research products or services, make purchasing decisions and engage with your brand after purchase.

2

Gather data to analyze customer behaviors and preferences at each stage of the journey. This may involve collecting data from customer interactions, surveys, website analytics and sales records. By analyzing this data, you can identify patterns, pain points and opportunities for improvement in the customer experience.

3

Create visual representations of the customer journey map, such as flowcharts or diagrams, to illustrate the different stages and touchpoints. These maps should outline the customer's actions, emotions, motivations and pain points at each stage, providing a holistic view of their experience.



5

Iterate and refine the customer journey map regularly based on customer feedback and insights gathered from ongoing data analysis. The customer journey is dynamic and may evolve over time, so it's essential to continuously monitor and adapt your strategies to ensure they align with changing customer preferences and market trends.

4

With the customer journey map in hand, identify areas where the experience can be enhanced or optimized to meet customer needs and expectations better. This may involve streamlining processes, improving communication channels or introducing personalized experiences tailored to specific customer segments.



**Overall, mapping the customer journey is a valuable tool for businesses looking to gain a deeper understanding of their customers' experiences and identify opportunities for improvement. The experience should be optimized from the moment of the first interaction through purchase and post-purchase to interactions beyond delivery.**

## Continue to adjust

Whether you focus on finding a 3PL partner that can handle your growing business and fulfillment needs or reducing friction between channels, your strategies, processes and decisions should be made using unified data and keeping your customer in mind. Even when objectives are achieved, brands can't remain static. They must continue to adjust to meet evolving needs, stay on-trend and remain competitive - which is easier using a unified commerce approach.

# Part 4: Scaling your unified commerce strategy



Scaling your unified commerce strategy is crucial for several reasons:

## To meet growing demand

As your business attracts more customers and expands into new markets, scaling your unified commerce strategy allows you to accommodate increased demand for your products and services without sacrificing quality or customer satisfaction.

## To remain competitive

In a fast-paced industry, scaling your operations is essential for staying competitive. Investing in scalable technology solutions and processes allows you to keep up with evolving customer expectations and outpace competitors that may struggle to adapt.

## To maximize efficiency and profitability

Scaling your unified commerce strategy enables you to optimize your operations and achieve greater efficiency across all channels. Streamlining processes, leveraging automation and standardizing workflows can reduce costs, improve margins and increase profitability as your business grows.

## To enhance the customer experience

A scalable unified commerce strategy allows you to deliver a seamless and consistent customer experience across all touchpoints, regardless of scale. Investing in robust infrastructure and flexible technology solutions ensures that customers receive the same level of service and satisfaction as your business expands.

## To facilitate future growth

Scaling your unified commerce strategy lays the foundation for future growth and expansion. By building a scalable infrastructure and adopting agile practices, you can quickly adapt to changing market conditions, capitalize on new opportunities and sustain long-term success in a competitive marketplace.



## Steps for scaling your unified commerce strategy

1

**Step one  
Infrastructure readiness:** Ensure that your technology infrastructure, including e-commerce platforms, inventory management systems and fulfillment capabilities, can handle increased demand and complexity as you expand.



2

**Step two  
Standardized processes:** Implement standardized processes and workflows across all channels to maintain consistency and efficiency as you grow. This includes order management, inventory tracking and customer service procedures.

3

**Step three  
Scalable technology solutions:** Invest in scalable technology solutions that can accommodate growth without significant modifications or disruptions to your operations. This may involve cloud-based platforms and modular software architectures.

4

**Step four  
Data-driven decision-making:** Leverage data analytics to monitor performance, identify opportunities for improvement and make informed decisions about resource allocation and strategic initiatives.

5

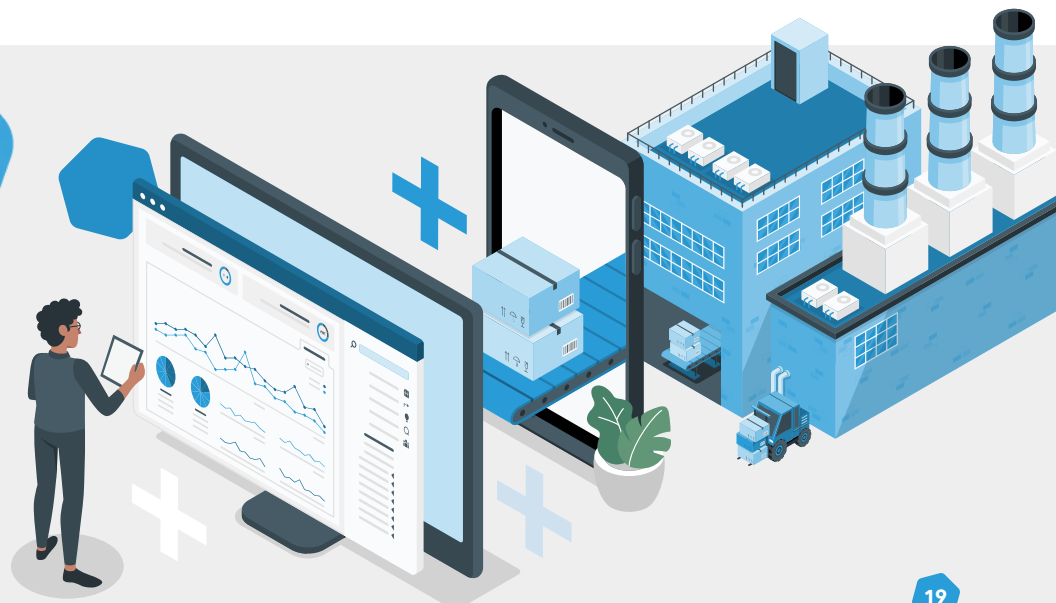
**Step five  
Partner network expansion:** Collaborate with third-party vendors, logistics providers and technology partners to expand your capabilities and reach new markets. This may involve integrating with new sales channels or outsourcing certain functions to specialized service providers.

6

**Step six  
Continuous optimization:** Continuously optimize your unified commerce strategy based on customer feedback, market trends and performance metrics. This may involve testing new features, refining processes and iterating on your approach to ensure long-term success and sustainability.

Continually optimize fulfillment, marketing, channel integration, customer support and touchpoints throughout the customer journey. Measure your success through quantitative and qualitative KPIs. This might include:

- Reaching goals
- Increased sales
- More repeat customers
- Less returns
- Increased brand reviews
- More social mentions
- Higher perfect order rate



## Laying out a path to continuous improvement

It's essential to regularly evaluate your current processes and technologies to identify areas for enhancement and optimization. From there, you can prioritize further improvements based on their potential impact on customer experience, operational efficiency and business growth. Implement enhancements incrementally, using agile methodologies to iterate quickly and adapt to changing market conditions. You should continuously monitor the results of your improvements closely, gathering feedback from customers and stakeholders to inform future iterations and ensure ongoing success.

Unified commerce is the ultimate retail alchemy, blending online and offline realms to create a seamless shopping symphony. It's not just about selling; it's about orchestrating a harmonious journey where customers seamlessly transition from browsing to buying. By merging the physical and digital worlds, unified commerce transforms transactions into experiences, forging unbreakable bonds between brands and their audience.

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# Improving the customer experience with Unified Commerce + Cart.com



Unified commerce strives to effortlessly merge retail channels and interactions, ensuring a uniform shopping journey for customers, whether online or offline. It prioritizes mapping the customer experience to boost retention and loyalty, eradicating boundaries between digital and physical realms. Through centralized data, brands can tailor experiences and optimize operations, driving business growth. This strategy provides deep insights into consumer behavior and enhances shopping coherence and fostering vibrant, customer-centric operations.

**At Cart.com**, we believe both digital and physical (software and fulfillment) are needed to execute unified commerce well. We're leading provider of unified commerce and logistics solutions that enable D2C and B2B companies to sell and fulfill anywhere their customers are. The company's enterprise-grade software, services and logistics infrastructure, including its own network of fulfillment and distribution centers, are used by some of the world's most beloved brands and most complex companies to unify commerce operations across channels and drive more efficient growth.

With the launch of [Constellation Order Management System \(OMS\)](#), Cart.com gives brands a comprehensive solution for unified commerce, allowing seamless management of orders and inventory across various channels and locations. With features like omnichannel order and inventory management, predictive AI and post-purchase customer engagement tools, Constellation OMS facilitates a streamlined order lifecycle from product discovery to delivery across multiple channels.

**Cart.com is Unified Commerce.** [Contact us today](#) to learn how Cart.com can help you.





Cart.com is the leading provider of comprehensive omnichannel commerce and logistics solutions that enable B2C and B2B companies to sell and fulfill anywhere their customers are. The company's enterprise-grade software, services and logistics infrastructure, including its own network of fulfillment and distribution centers, are used by some of the world's most beloved brands and most complex companies to unify commerce operations across channels and drive more efficient growth.