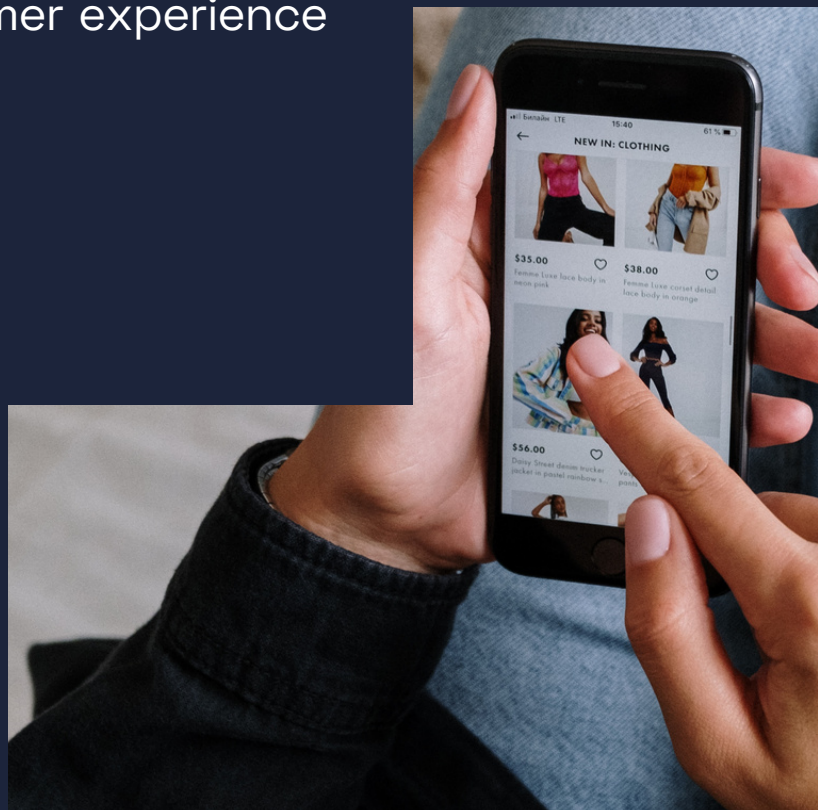


# What is Unified Commerce? Just another buzzword?

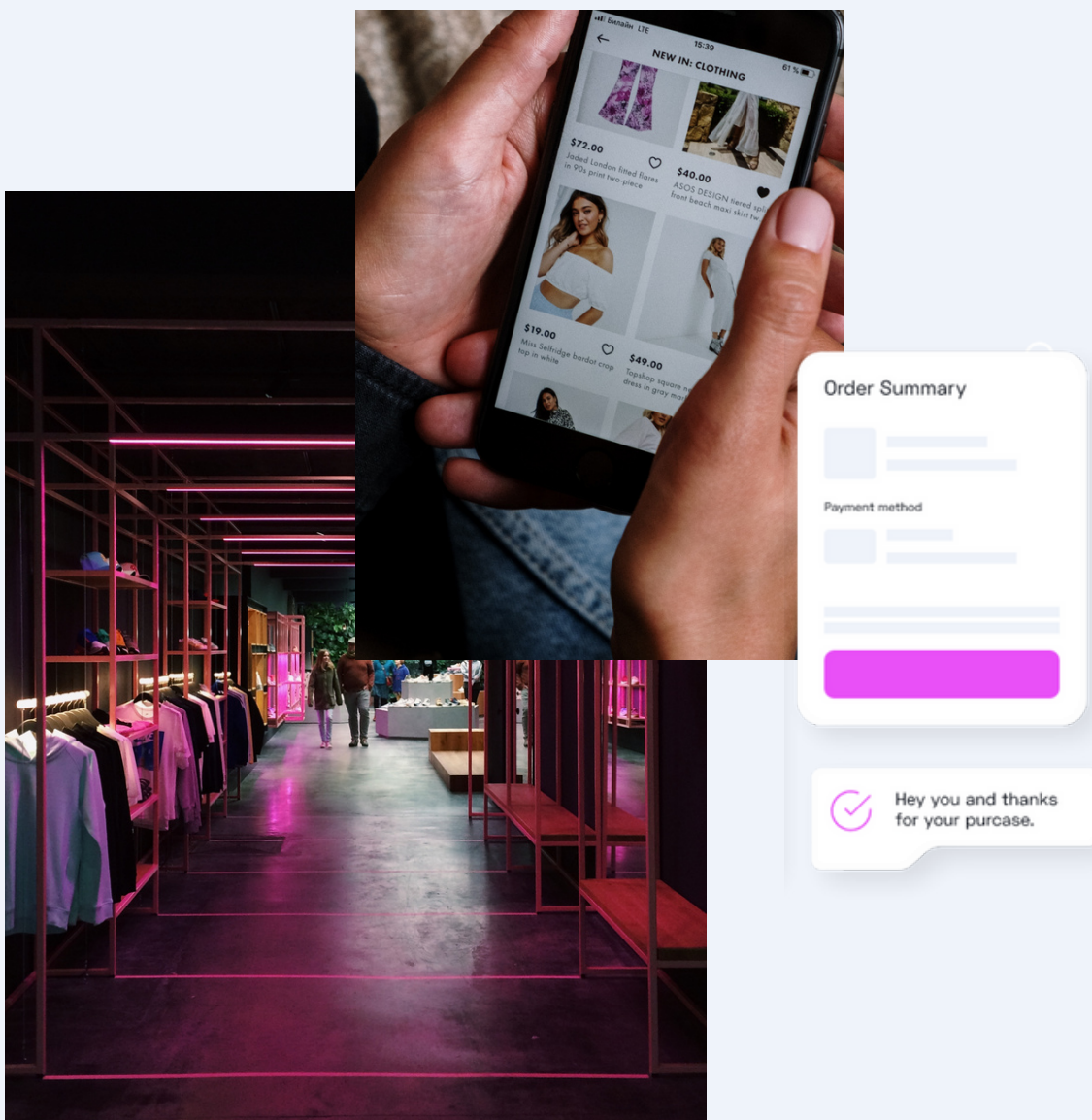
The merchant's guide to a modern  
omnichannel customer experience



# Meet your customers and their expectations with modern B2C commerce

As we set out to write this guide, we quickly realized it had to be done in collaboration with our partners, since Unified Commerce is all about shaping a commerce ecosystem. To make this guide as useful as possible we have talked to both technology and solution partners to get their views. Now, let's deep dive into the concept of Unified Commerce and how you can boost the customer experience when you master the art of having complete integrations with top tech partners.

“Unified Commerce is all about shaping a commerce ecosystem with top tech partners.”

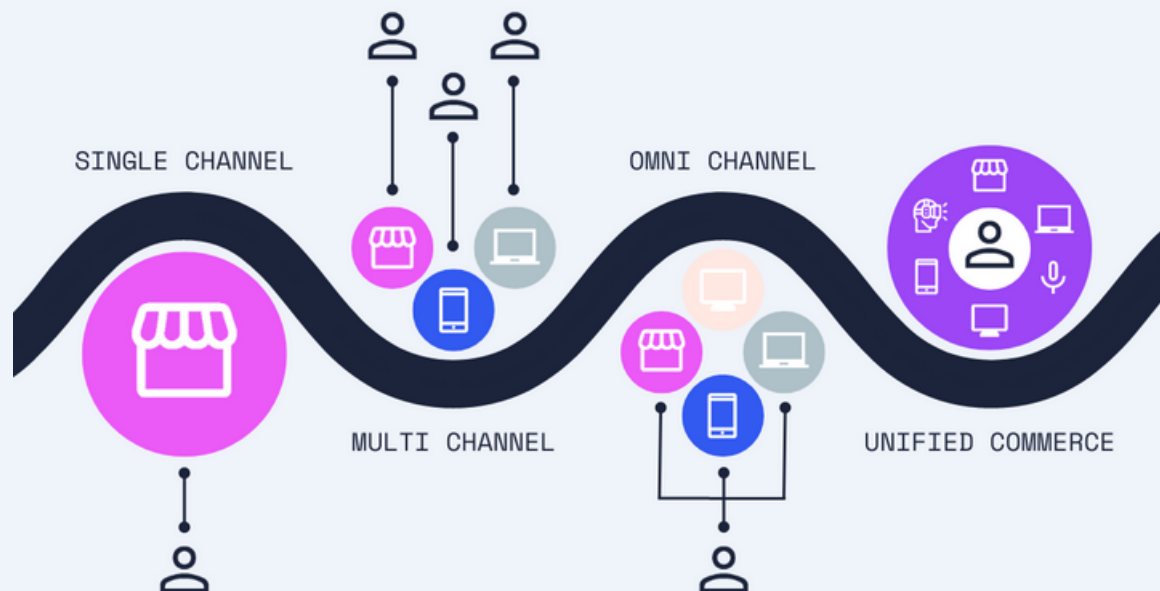


# What is Unified Commerce?

In recent years commerce has evolved tremendously. From single channel, where only one sales channel is offered; to multi-channel, where different physical and digital channels exist, side-by-side; to Omnichannel and Unified Commerce, where the different channels collaborate with each other, and offer a cohesive customer experience at all touchpoints throughout the customer buying journey. But what exactly is the difference between Omnichannel and Unified Commerce? Simply put, Omnichannel primarily concerns the transactional part of sales; while Unified Commerce is more focused on the shopping experience, itself. You can say Unified Commerce is Omnichannel with a focus on the overall experience from the customer's perspective.

“Omnichannel with a focus on the overall experience from the customer's perspective.”

Michael Hallberg, Partner Director Norce



## Unified Commerce puts the customer at the centre

Unified Commerce is all about shaping a commerce ecosystem with the customer shopping experience at the centre. An ecosystem where all channels and all touchpoints throughout the customer buying journey act as a whole resulting in a personalized customer experience. With Unified Commerce, there is no discrepancy in data between different channels. It provides the conditions to communicate and interact with the customer, throughout the customer journey; regardless of what each individual customer journey looks like, or what touchpoints that journey includes. To really succeed, the merchant has all the relevant information regarding the customer; and all data communicating in real time.

# Unified Commerce enables conversion

With all relevant data and information in one ecosystem in real time you get an overview of the customer behaviour and insights that let you personalize communication, campaigns and recommendations based on true customer preferences and needs. You get a holistic customer view, and the customers get a shopping experience without friction. By communicating and connecting the customer all the way to the purchase, the probability increases that the transaction actually takes place in one of the channels that you offer, instead of with a competitor. A modern unified commerce experience will increase conversion and grow your sales and customer loyalty.



## CHECKLIST

# What is Unified Commerce

- Customer shopping experience at the centre
- All data communicating in one ecosystem
- All channels communicating in real time
- Personalized communication and offers



# Technology that enables Unified Commerce

In order to create a commerce ecosystem, let's start with the architecture. A composable commerce solution enables you to shape the ultimate customer journey. By selecting and composing the various parts of an e-commerce solution with components that solve your exact business needs in an open architecture you get a flexible, scalable, and tailored core. Through a modular cloud-based architecture with microservices and packaged business capabilities, you can accelerate your digital transformation at an attractive running cost. When all sales channels are synchronized in real-time, a purchase can start in any channel and end in any other. Composable commerce enables you to integrate with a wider customer journey and gives you the freedom to optimize the customer experience and convert more sales.

## A composable commerce solution enables you to shape the ultimate customer journey

Microservices-based means that the functionality is divided into separate consumable parts that are divided into business value or business process.

Packaged business capabilities (PBC) means software components representing a business capability. A PBC can consist of one or several microservices bundled together.

With Unified Commerce, there is no discrepancy in data, between your various channels. Information such as prices, inventory status, or orders are always current, between channels; since the various systems interact with each other, and function as part of one and the same entity. With adapters to top technology partners, you can tailor a best-of-breed commerce experience with the exact functionality you need for a harmonized customer experience.

### CHECKLIST

# Technology that enables Unified Commerce

- Composable commerce
- Best-of-breed: Adapters with top tech partners
- Microservices
- Packaged Business Capabilities

# Functionality that enables Unified Commerce



## In-store terminal

Use in-store terminals, so that customers can easily order from web shop warehouses. Customers can order from a broader product range, home-delivered; and the sales transactions are accredited to the stores.



## Dynamic Store finder

Make it easy for your customers to locate the store nearest to them and get directions for how to get here.



## Status of store inventory

Give your customers the ability to check a product's inventory status, for each store, directly on the product page.



## Click and Collect

Place your home delivery order online; or reserve and pick up your order, at a store near you.



## My pages

Let the customer access their order history, the current status of placed orders, and an overview of their membership points balance.

So, what is key to a unified commerce experience according to some of our technology partners?

BY SITOO

# Creating positive shopping experiences. Everytime. Everywhere.

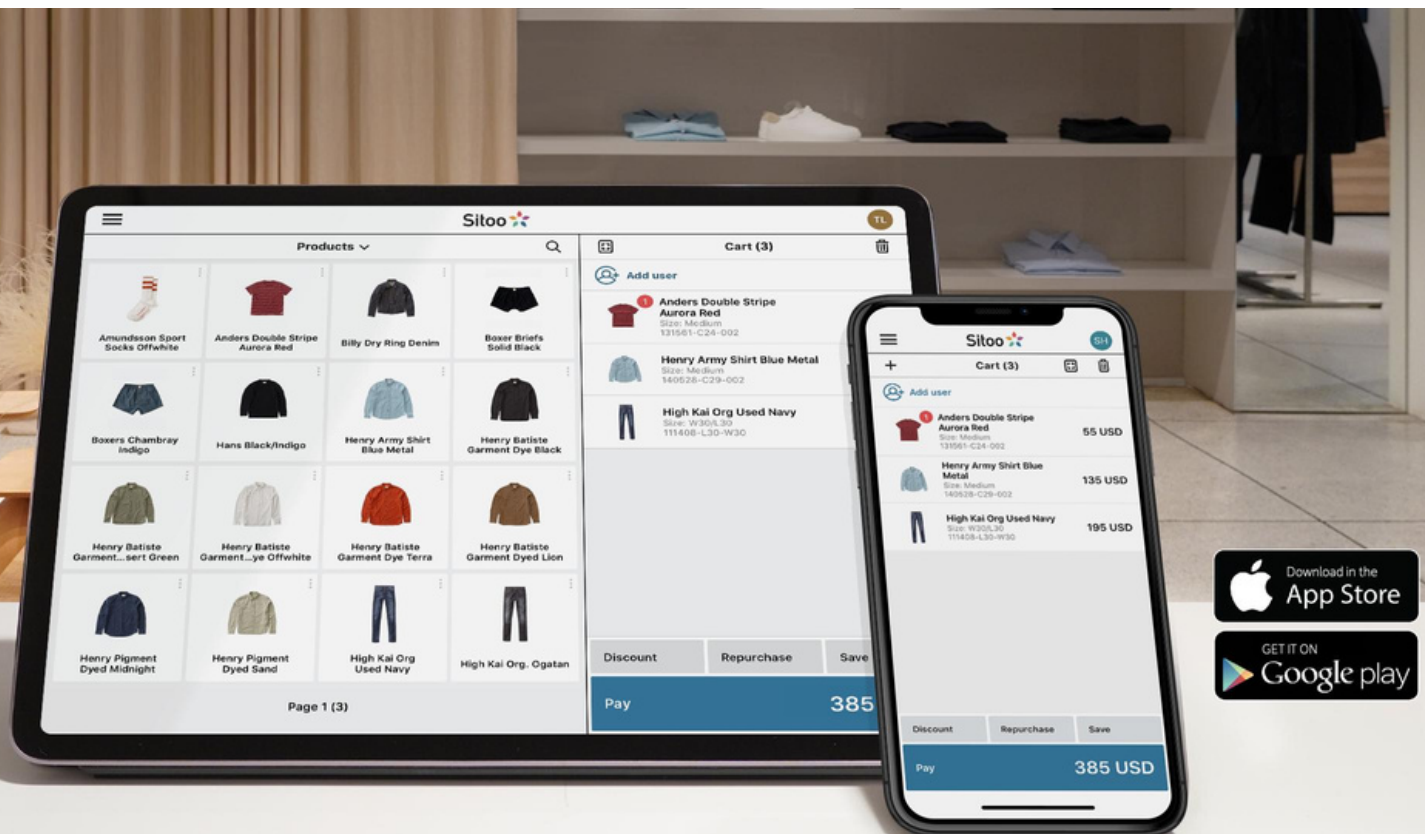
– with a Unified Commerce Platform anchored by POS

Imagine a customer walks into your store... they find the item they've been yearning for and decide to try it on. It looks great but they want it in a different colour, green perhaps? They look hopefully towards your store associates for help. Your store associates want to help but, without the right information on hand and no way to sell stock available in other channels, they know they can't provide a great customer experience. Your associate is deflated, the customer leaves the store disappointed, and you've missed a sale.

It shouldn't be like this: your customers should always leave your stores happy, and you should never miss a sale.

Your physical stores are a central part of Unified Commerce, and your store associates are the soul of your brand experience. When you give your store associates the right tools, not only will they have all the information they'll ever need at their fingertips, but they'll also be able to sell from any available stock no matter where it is.

When you use a Unified Commerce Platform anchored by POS all the unified data and functionality your associates need, become available through the Point of Sale.



The platform connects all your stores and online sales channels in real time. And with the same data everywhere it's much easier to enable unified commerce functionalities like Endless Aisle, Click & Collect, visualized in-store stock levels online, and more. Plus, you can use your stores as fulfilment centres for orders placed online.

At the end of the day - it's simple - your customers want to know what's available. They want to start shopping online and finish in store or vice versa, and if needed make online returns in store.

“Empowering your store associates with a mobile-first POS and a Unified Commerce Platform is the perfect way to stand out from your competition, make retail operations more cost-efficient, build customer loyalty to generate long-term sales and make sure everyone goes home happy.”

Jens Levin, CEO Sitoo

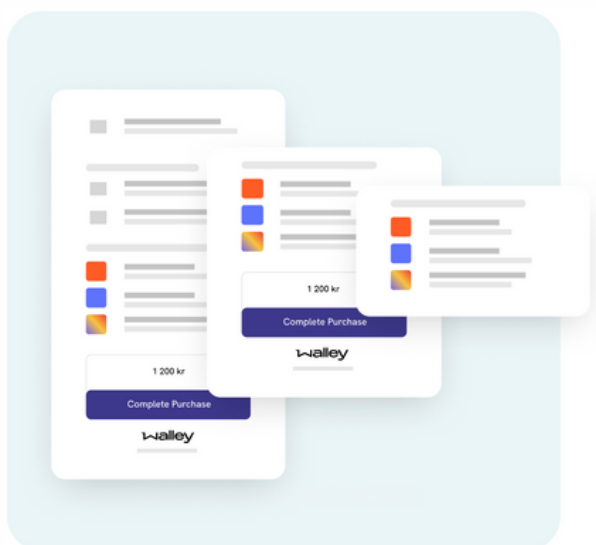


BY WALLEY

# Smarter, easier, and safer payments for Unified Commerce

Consumers today demands more from every experience and unless you are flexible, that can be difficult to deliver. A McKinsey study states that 71% of consumers expect companies to deliver a personalized experience and interaction. 76% gets frustrated if this is not offered. In order to improve customer experience, merchants must offer a variety of easy payment options and a personalized and frictionless experiences in all channels. Sounds easy? Unfortunately not, merchants often have a complex setup where many system parts must integrate with each other but are technically isolated. This challenges communication across channels which limits the customer experience and your operation excellence.

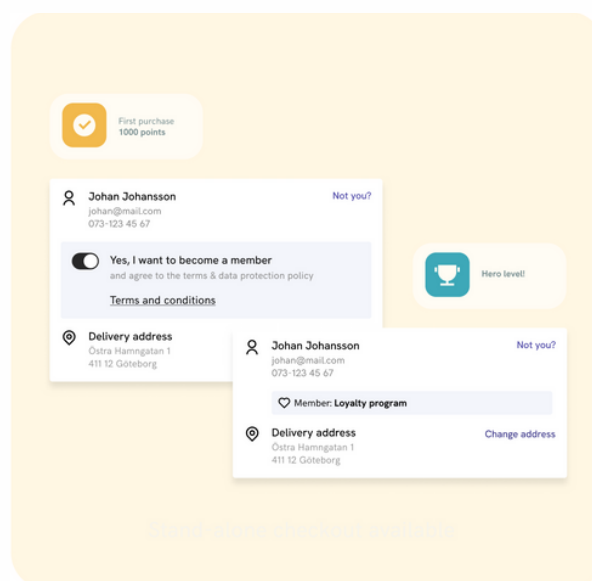
## Enhance customer experience through Plugins and Adapters



In order to offer the full user journey and customer experience, such as identifying the buyer, you need to show relevant delivery and payment options, membership in your loyalty program and present personalized upsell offers. All these must have great usability, otherwise it will complicate the experience for the buyer.

If you want one purchase platform that can be used in the e-com channel, but also over distance sales or in-store, it is important to be consistent with the buyers. This will also keep your internal administration costs to a minimum.

To allow a seamless journey, the user should be identified and presented with a personalized experience throughout the purchase lifecycle. An adapter architecture using existing or custom plugins can be utilized to add data from many systems, such as data from CRM systems, relevant upsell or a delivery option based on the user. This will create an optimized purchase journey.





## CHECKLIST

# Creating the best payment experience

- Offer a variety of easy payment options
- Show only relevant payment options
- Present personalized upsell offers
- Optimize with an adapter architecture

BY INGRID

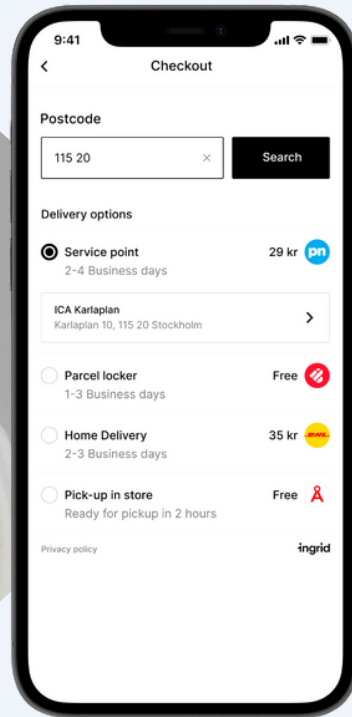
# Deliveries that create a better shopping experience

Deliveries should fit people's lives, not the other way around. It's about time to admit that the delivery offer no longer belongs to the last step of the checkout process — something consumers would normally reach at the end of the shopping journey. Instead, consumers want to shop based on the delivery experience. They want to know which products and which merchants offer the most convenient, cheapest, and fastest delivery option before reaching the checkout. It's the beginning of a delivery-first era in e-commerce.

## Top five tips for deliveries

1. Give your consumers the power of delivery personalization. Consumer habits, locations, seasons, item specifications and estimated delivery times are some of the factors that determine which delivery method customers contextually expect for every purchase they make.
2. Be upfront about the costs of delivery. Consumers tend to abandon their carts when you hit them with high or altogether unexpected delivery costs. It's the most common cause of shopping cart abandonment — it accounts for about half of abandoned online orders.
3. Set up a delivery-first checkout flow. Display your delivery pricing on the homepage or product page — make it one of the first things your consumers will encounter and be able to assess.
4. Make an accurate delivery promise. It's not only the price and speed of delivery that count for a great shopping experience. You need to be focusing on when, not how soon, as well as helping your consumers feel in control of the process by letting them choose a preferred method of last-mile delivery services.
5. Cover all stages of the delivery journey with proactive order tracking. Accurate delivery promises, estimated delivery dates and relevant tracking information from the moment the order is placed are great ways to ensure a predictable delivery experience, reduce delivery anxiety and increase trust in your e-commerce business.

That's why e-commerce merchants need to start integrating with the right end-to-end software to suggest the best delivery options for every purchase and create a personalized brand experience at all stages of the journey — from checkout to delivery.



“Deliveries are very contextual, how the consumers want their stuff varies a lot depending on what they’re buying and when. So, e-commerce brands should offer different alternatives at different pricing points, without putting all their customers in one box — from our experience, not everyone is looking for speed, or only home delivery options.”

Anders Ekman, Co-founder of Ingrid

## CHECKLIST

# For the best delivery experience

- Give your consumers the power of delivery personalization
- Be upfront about the costs of delivery
- Set up a delivery-first checkout flow
- Cover all stages of the delivery journey with proactive order tracking

BY VOYADO

# Unified commerce – yet another buzzword, or a must-have approach?

Customers today interact with brands in a very distributed way. Several touchpoints, one customer journey.

Retailers, like many other businesses, face turbulent times ahead, with customer spending decreasing. The importance of relevant and personalized customer experiences is higher than ever. Those who can provide seamless experiences across touchpoints, online and offline, will succeed.

Yes, unified commerce is a buzzword used across the industry to try to explain a solution to satisfy modern consumers. Unified commerce takes a holistic approach that seeks to integrate all channels and touchpoints into a single, unified platform. In a unified commerce model, data and inventory are managed in real-time across all channels, enabling businesses to provide a consistent and personalized experience to customers regardless of how they choose to engage.

What you need to succeed is a system that seamlessly communicates with other systems. All data needs to be gathered in one place to provide a 360 view of your customers, and to allow you to act on insights. Retailers need flexibility to put together their own combinations of systems to support their needs and growth journey.

With Voyado, retailers access sophisticated functionality, presented in an easy way. Data is a retailer's best friend, making it possible to achieve a holistic, personalized and automated customer journey across all sales and marketing touchpoints – with fewer resources.

That is the true value of unified commerce.



**“As we were looking to take the next steps in our personalization and loyalty journey, we realized our existing solution’s limitation when it came to efficient execution. We looked at multiple solutions in the market and decided on Voyado because of their strong focus on retail brands and native capabilities with integrations that matched our current and future needs.”**

Javier Artal Herbella, Head of Business Development at Samsøe Samsøe

ASK OUR PARTNERS

# What is key to a unified commerce experience according to some of our solution partners?

We asked a selected few of our solution partners to give us their view on the requirements and best practices for Unified Commerce and also asked them to give us a prediction for the future.

## ASK OUR PARTNERS

# What characterizes an excellent unified commerce experience?



ARTUR HASSELBLAD  
PARTNERSENSE

To put it short – a great customer experience. Unified Commerce is a smorgasbord of functions and technologies. Selecting the right components for your target audience will create the first step of a really good experience. From a customer’s point of view, some functions are more important than others – for example, logistics, prices, and customer service. Aligning those and providing correct information and products to the customer in all interfaces is one of the things we discuss early with our customers.

When both customer and merchant no longer need to be aware of the channel context when interacting and exchanging data, because everything originates from one centralized source.



FREDRIK WETTERHOLM  
ALSTER



ERIC LUNDKVIST  
KNOWIT EXPERIENCE

It is when a strategy centralizes all your customer, transactional and product data in an ecosystem that can interconnect all internal and external systems. With this in place, you can provide insights into how to improve the customer experience.

Customer centric organisations who manage to create smooth and flexible experiences based on the customer need. As a customer of a brand I’ve chosen, I nowadays expect a seamless experience and that all information is accessible in all points of contact.



LARS-ÅKE WAHLBERG  
NEXER

## ASK OUR PARTNERS

# What is the biggest challenge in creating a modern unified commerce experience?



ARTUR HASSELBLAD  
PARTNERSENSE

Processes and technology are two recurring challenges that we deal with. Creating a good, unified commerce experience requires an understanding of what you as an organisation want to achieve for your customer, which requires you to understand customer behaviour and your target groups. From that, you will need to sort out changes to major processes within your organisation involving sales, customer support, logistics, etc. On the technology part, you will most often start with some legacy – moving the most important parts of that legacy stack into your new omnichannel stack is not always as straightforward as you would think.

Breaking data silos: in particular if data already exists in and is managed by multiple systems. Making all data available with speed, accuracy and still maintaining integrity.



FREDRIK WETTERHOLM  
ALSTER



ERIC LUNDKVIST  
KNOWIT EXPERIENCE

One of the big challenges with Unified Commerce is that by definition organisations put themselves in a dependent position on monoliths and legacy systems. Moving away from these systems and into microservices to support Unified Commerce could be both costly and unsecure. It is important to prioritise and take small, motivated steps and always anchor the vision in the organisation. To be unified takes transformation throughout the whole organisation, from customer relationship management to point of sale (POS) to order fulfilment and inventory management, which will affect many different internal roles, systems, and the whole customer journey.

Organisations with a long history tend to not only spread data across several silos but also build commitment to old processes. Becoming truly customer centric and offer a unified commerce experience is much of an organisational/process/human change management project as it is technological.



LARS-ÅKE WAHLBERG  
NEXER

## ASK OUR PARTNERS

# Who are the three strongest merchants in unified commerce?



ARTUR HASSELBLAD  
PARTNERSENSE

Hard one. Wouldn't point out three specific ones but say that all retailers who moved from "product" to "customer first" and started to build a new experience independently of the timeline on the current technology stack, will become much stronger based on gained experience and aligning their business more with customer demand.

IKEA and Amazon seem to be pretty strong at this from what we can see. All in all I would say that all companies that apply a user centric approach to their product development is on the right track. To become seamlessly present in the everyday life of consumers should be the ultimate goal of any merchant.



FREDRIK WETTERHOLM  
ALSTER



ERIC LUNDKVIST  
KNOWIT EXPERIENCE

Amazon, Etsy, and Kjell&Co.

Don't know if I should call them the strongest but I truly enjoy connecting with companies such as: Skistar. They keep evolving and adapting to a competitive landscape.



LARS-ÅKE WAHLBERG  
NEXER

## ASK OUR PARTNERS

# What is the next strong trend within unified commerce?



ARTUR HASSELBLAD  
PARTNERSENSE

In the past years, we've talked much about "seamless" when discussing customer experience, pricing, and logistics. Unified Commerce is not immune to the bigger trends, and we think that logistics and payments will go through a micro iteration to provide an even better customer experience. Decentralisation and re-imaging brick and mortar will also be a micro iteration. AI/ML will be a bigger one, and one that will be applied in marketing, sales, stocking, and other areas more efficiently.

Unifying payments through providers that support transactions in multiple channels, thus making the transaction disconnected from the channel context. This however might be challenged by other platforms such as social media that are trying to establish themselves as a separate transaction engine.



FREDRIK WETTERHOLM  
ALSTER



ERIC LUNDKVIST  
KNOWIT EXPERIENCE

To be able to collect and analyse data in real time - and capitalise on it, in real time.

Making use of existing data in better ways. We're also going to see AI (such as ChatGPT) being used in relevant forms such as; product enrichment, chats etc.



LARS-ÅKE WAHLBERG  
NEXER

BY OMNIARCH

# The future of Unified Commerce

We asked Pelle Pettersson from thought leader Omniarch about Unified Commerce today and also in the future:

First and foremost; the customer. Everything we do today and in the future has to consider the customer's needs and wants. That has to be our core reason to be. On top of that one can invest in the infrastructure needed to provide a unified commerce experience, building on insights from the omni-channel approach.

Discussions about and arguments for Unified Commerce do, as I see it, good in learning from the present and at the same time having the courage to look beyond retail as we know it.



We have come a long way since the dot-com area and recently the pandemic fuelled a growth in tech that enhanced our ability to connect with customers.

As we circle back to what in many ways look like the pre-pandemic days, we have taken giant leaps in both tech and in our collective understanding of what customers want.

Moving forward I think that Unified Commerce is one of several ways to meet predictions on how we'll see a deeper connection in the store-ecommerce relationship. But from my perspective, it is also equally important to look at what's right in front of us.

The pandemic offered growth opportunities for all segments of the market, and within each segment, the players that had already begun the digitalization of ways to market and sell goods and services, gained more in terms of real money even though newcomers gained more from a percentage point of view. So, it's important to have a firm grasp on where you are today and what you aim to achieve in the future.

Is Unified Commerce the future? No. It's already here with several services already offering the technical systems necessary to create a free-flowing pool of data to, from and within all connected systems. The challenge that we see has more to do with a need to educate management and show them the reality before they experience it themselves in the future.



# Do you want to boost the customer experience with Unified Commerce?

Going for a robust and advanced composable commerce-enabled e-commerce engine with adapters will help you enable a great customer experience. If you want more information about functions, strategy, technologies, or business value and how we can be a part of your e-commerce solution, feel free to contact us!

Norce is a Nordic leader in software-as-a-service (SaaS) commerce. We provide retailers, brands and B2B customers with powerful tools for growth. Through a composable architecture, an open platform (API-first) and cloud-based offering (True SaaS), we let solution partners and e-tailors create tomorrow's customer journeys. Together, we accelerate the transformation of digital commerce. With over two decades of continuous evolution, built by e-commerce pioneers seeking to design the ultimate platform for online commerce, the product stands out for its ability to meet the highest standards. Norce is today trusted by some of the Nordic region's most successful companies including Adlibris, Autoexperten, Blåkläder, ICA, Ludvig Svensson, Nobia, Spendrups, Swedish Match, Tress and Ultimate Nordic. Annually, over ten million transactions take place through the platform, to a value exceeding EUR 1,3 billion. Our team of +100 dedicated experts operates from Stockholm, Gothenburg, Oslo, and Gdansk with one common objective, creating superior value for our customers and partners. For more information, visit <http://www.norce.io> or follow us on LinkedIn, Instagram, and Facebook.

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# Accelerating digital commerce



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