



Future-Proof Your Business
With Headless Commerce

A Grocery Leader's Guide

How Food and Beverage Businesses Can
Leverage Modern eCommerce Experiences
to Gain a Competitive Advantage





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INTRODUCTION:

Why Digital Experience Will Make or Break Grocery Brands

You're probably fed up of hearing about how the pandemic has changed the way we do things forever. We don't blame you.

But we can't ignore the impact of Covid-19 when it comes to grocery shopping. In the US in 2021, 62% of shoppers were ordering groceries online at least occasionally, jumping from just 34% in February 2020, according to a [Food Marketing Institute report](#).

By 2022 [an average of 71% of shoppers were buying groceries online](#), with the millennial generation representing the highest proportion (77% reported that they shopped for groceries on the internet). And this growth is set to continue, with [digital grocery sales in the US expected to generate as much as \\$243 billion in 2025](#), according to Insider Intelligence. The truth is, even before Covid-19 caused a spike in online buying, the challenges grocery brands are facing now were already brewing.

While many of the larger grocery brands were early pioneers of eCommerce, the platforms they invested in back then were very much of their time: great for scaling and managing millions of products – not so great for the kind of fast, modern, timely, multichannel digital experiences that consumers have come to expect from retailers today.

A 2022 [Appinio study](#) of 2,500 participants based in the US revealed that when asked to choose the most important features of an online grocery service or platform, 70% said an easy to use platform and user-friendly shopping experience was either important or very important – the highest rated of all the options, ranking higher than free delivery and even price-matching.



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Clearly digital experience matters to grocery consumers and it's something that grocery brands need to get right, not just today but in years to come. But there are a number of technical challenges currently preventing them from delivering that experience.

In this guide, we're going to explore some of those challenges in detail. More importantly, we'll talk about how to overcome them.



The Ever-Moving Grocery Content Goalposts

When you look at the traditional goal of a grocer, it seems pretty straightforward: get the maximum number of people into your store – whether online or physical – and sell as many things as you can to them in the most efficient way possible.

With travel and tourism staff shortages and some of the world’s major flag carriers and national airlines needing huge injections of capital to stay afloat back in March 2020, what does this mean for the future of travel? And more specifically, what does this mean for your customer experience?

This means content on grocery sites has traditionally been limited to a single product image. After all, how many angles of a bag of chicken nuggets does someone need to make a buying decision? The grocery industry has been, and still is, about pushing product in the fastest and most efficient way. However, what’s changing is the type of products and the way customers engage with those products. Grocers still need to push their core food and beverage products at the speed they always have but the introduction of new ranges, from fashion and electronics, to toys and homeware, requires a more tactical approach.

Taking Inspiration From Lifestyle Brands

Take a look at your favorite online lifestyle eCommerce store, whether it’s fashion, cosmetics, home décor or appliances – it’s rare you’ll find a product page that doesn’t have multiple images of the same product. In fact, it’s more likely you’ll find product pages with video, or images of the product ‘in use’ – an item of clothing being modelled, or a piece of furniture in a living room set. If you’re trying to sell products such as

these, that’s the kind of content experience customers have come to expect. And it’s the kind of experience you’re competing with online. This information isn’t exactly breaking news to grocery brands, of course – many have already started creating more experiential eCommerce journeys of their own. Ampliance customer ASDA in the UK, for example, uses its Baby & Toddler Hub to blend educational content with the commerce experience, providing informative content for new parents, while offering product recommendations from their baby and toddler range.

The content on the Baby & Toddler Hub is a far cry from the nuts-and-bolts product information that most grocery brands start with. Instead, you’ll find detailed advice on anything from breastfeeding to choosing a car seat. This editorial approach is less about pushing products and more about building trust with an audience, educating them and creating a community – in turn, increasing customer loyalty. Content-based, story-led experiences like this have become the hallmark of successful eCommerce brands in recent years. Do grocery brands have the power to replicate that success? And if so, who will be the ones to nail it first?

Big Changes. Big Opportunities.

High-quality content experiences like these require a lot of time, effort and resource. But there's a significant opportunity here for the grocers that get it right – an opportunity that far outweighs any cost it takes to get there.

While it's becoming increasingly difficult to compete on price or product alone, there's plenty of room to stand out and be a market leader when it comes to your digital experience. The goal is to create scroll-stopping stories related to what you're selling and use them to build your brand, grow your audience and win back customer loyalty.

Easier said than done, of course, when working with an outdated, monolithic content platform.

In the next chapter, we'll discuss some of the challenges that arise when using legacy content management systems, before exploring the steps you can take to start overcoming them.

CHAPTER SUMMARY

- Pushing core products is still important, but new ranges like fashion, electronics, toys and homeware require a more tactical approach to the commerce experience.
- Content-based, story-led experiences have become the hallmark of successful eCommerce brands in recent years.
- While it's becoming harder to compete on price or product, there's plenty of room to stand out and be a market leader when it comes to your digital experience.



The Two Biggest Content Challenges for Grocery Brands

THERE ARE TWO MAIN CHALLENGES THAT GROCERS ARE FACING RIGHT NOW:

1. Rising competition
2. Outdated technology

These two points are intrinsically linked. It's because of rising competition (driven in part by the changing consumer habits we covered earlier) that the current technology adopted by grocery brands is being pushed beyond its limits when it comes to the digital experience they want to provide for their customers.

By solving point two, grocers will have a much better chance of solving point one. So, on that note, let's look at each of these challenges in a little more detail...

“ Only 39% of US consumers exclusively use one online grocery service”

1. Rising Competition

Whichever way you spin it, the grocery market is becoming more competitive every year.

There was a time when consumers would shop at the same supermarket every week. Now, there are multiple options to choose from in any one town or city – which are all relatively similar in price and product 62% of Americans live near three or more grocery stores, while 29% live near four or more, according to a [study by Appinio](#). Of those 62%, 18% are switching between at least three retailers.

You're also competing with multiple brands online, including eCommerce giant Amazon, which is set to account for 23.8% of online US grocery sales in 2023, according to [eMarketer](#) – which, remarkably, makes them second only to Walmart.

At the same time, customer loyalty is becoming increasingly hard to win, with retailers struggling to entice shoppers with loyalty schemes. In any industry, attracting and retaining customers online is an ongoing challenge with moving goalposts.

Only 39% of US consumers exclusively use one online grocery service, which means 61% use two or more, according to the 2022 Appinio study. How then, do grocers engage their audiences online to attract more customers and keep them coming back?

The answer lies in your digital experience. Today you need to be offering fast, personalized content to customers wherever they're shopping from, on any device or channel. Not so easy to do when your current technology is holding you back, of course, which brings us on to the second point .



2. Outdated Technology

Now let's talk about the technology.

Big supermarkets were some of the first brands to 'digitally transform' their approach to selling in the early days of the eCommerce revolution.

The platforms are – let's face it – pretty slow and clunky. They require a lot of manual development work to make any significant changes to the frontend experience, a lot of development resource and time, and plenty of outsourcing costs – all just to keep the architecture up and running.

Of course, the monolithic approach was necessary at the time. Supermarkets had millions of products they needed to get online as quickly as possible. They needed one big system that could scale fast and allow them to update pricing or change product information on a day-to-day basis. The monolithic platforms they invested in really were transformational at the time. By today's standards, however, they lack the speed and agility needed to create the kind of content experiences customers expect from online shopping.

75% of consumers are more likely to buy from brands that offer personalized digital experiences, according to a [study by Yieldify](#) in 2020.

Nowadays, consumers are empowered to do their research before making a purchase decision, seeking brands and products that offer them more than just a basic image and description.

And in another [study by Salesforce](#), 97% of marketers reported an improvement in business results due to personalization. The problem is, no matter what customer experience goals grocers have, many simply can't execute those plans effectively because of their current content architecture. So how do you go about solving these problems?

In the next chapter, we'll explore what grocery brands can do to overcome content architecture issues, transform their approach to content management and become much more competitive as a result.



“The monolithic platforms they invested in really were transformational at the time. By today's standards, however, they lack the speed and agility needed to create the kind of content experiences customers expect from online shopping.”

CHAPTER SUMMARY

- The grocery market is becoming increasingly competitive, with consumers having multiple options to choose from – all relatively similar in price and product
- With customer loyalty becoming increasingly hard to win, improving your digital experience is the answer to attracting and retaining new customers
- The monolithic platforms that grocery brands previously invested in are no longer fast or agile enough to create the content experiences consumers expect from shopping online.

The Answer to Faster, Easier, More Effective Content Management

Though old monolithic content management platforms have previously served grocery brands well, the technology is now outdated and limits grocers in the content experiences they can provide to their customers. So, what's the solution? How can you improve speed, agility and flexibility in your technology stack so that you can create the kind of digital experiences your customers expect??

Introducing Composable Commerce

Composable commerce is a development approach that brings together best-in-class solutions into a single custom application that's built for specific business needs. Rather than relying on a single vendor to provide a standard functionality, businesses can choose their own commerce experience services, such as checkout or search. All of these services exist as part of the eCommerce ecosystem, each functioning in a specific role in the customer journey.

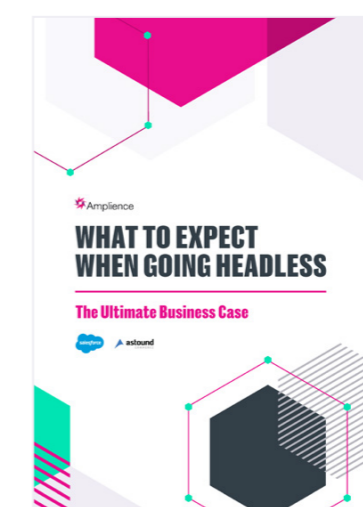


THE BENEFITS

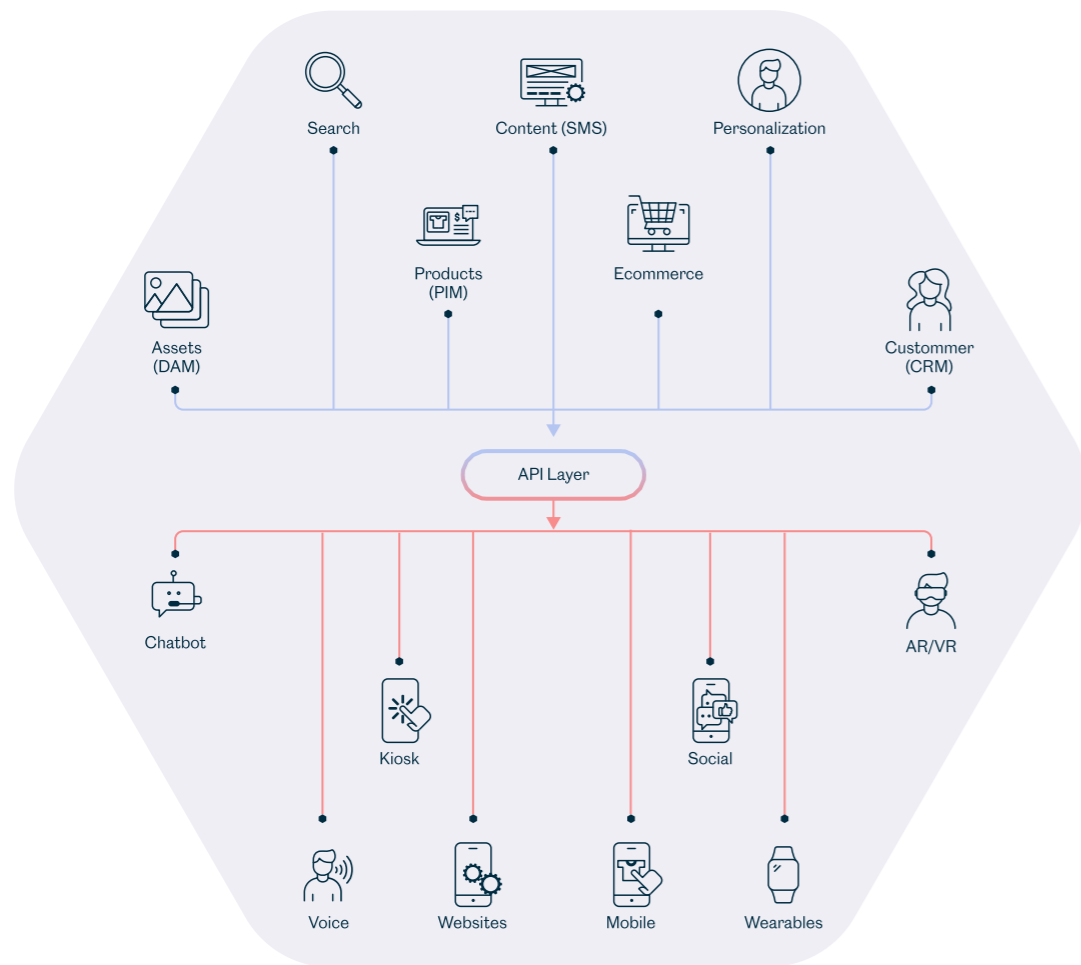
- **Adapt and scale, fast:** with a modular architecture, each component of the composable commerce experience is deployed and managed independently, including shopping cart technology, customer relationship management and analytics. You can swap components in and out as your business needs change and you can take advantage of new experiential technology – without affecting the rest of your architecture.
- **Reduce your time-to-market:** create and launch new eCommerce solutions to improve your customer experience using out-of-the-box integrations and prebuilt components that plug seamlessly into your existing tech stack.
- **Define your own personalized customer experiences:** using prebuilt data solutions, you can obtain commerce data – a combination of customer and product data – to achieve personalization at scale, enabling you to tailor messaging and experiences to your customer, wherever they're shopping from.
- **Improve your teams' productivity:** launch new content faster, test and learn, iterate, and see value quickly. Composable commerce empowers business users with speed and agility, removing development bottlenecks and reducing release times.

Get Your Head Around Headless

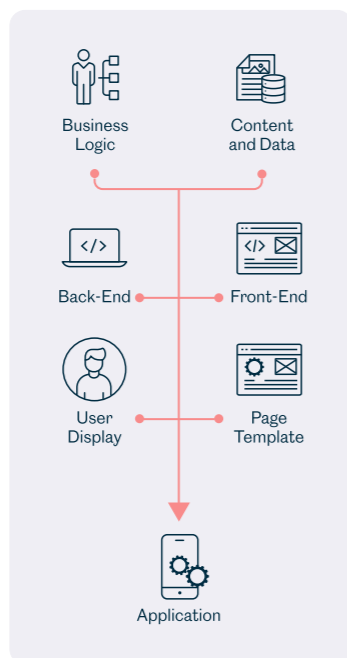
To learn more about headless and composable commerce, take a look at these handy guides.



Headless Approach



Monolith Approach



Real-World Examples of Headless Success

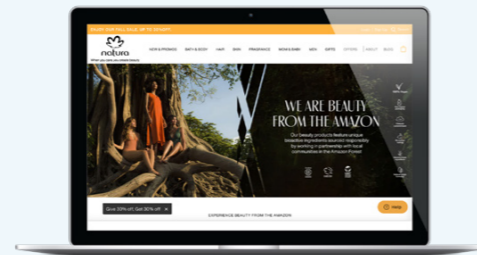
MULTIBILLION DOLLAR UK DEPARTMENT STORE

- Moved from monolith to headless
- 8x more deployments per year
- Boosted revenue faster
- No longer had change freezes during holiday periods



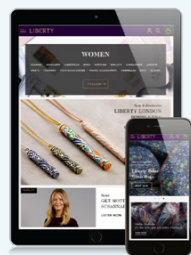
NATURA & CO

- Moved to Salesforce for flexible and scalable headless commerce
- Built an API-led live shopping app in three weeks
- 100% increase in conversion rate during live shopping event



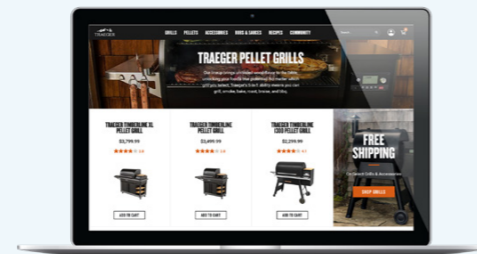
LIBERTY LONDON

- Integrated Ampliance Headless CMS with Salesforce Commerce Cloud 66% reduction in content production time
- Asset management streamlining led to major boost in SEO and mobile traffic
- Acceleration of conversion growth especially in overseas markets



TRAEGER GRILLS

- Moved to headless for commerce experiences
- Site loads 2x faster
- Site conversion increase
- Daily web releases instead of quarterly





What Happens Now?

If you've got this far, you're probably more than a little curious about how we can help transform your content strategy and create compelling digital experiences that convert.

So, why not head over to amplience.com and book a demo.



Pick Up a Few More Fresh Ideas

You can always find the latest big ideas and new solutions from Amplience on our social media channels, so give us a follow on LinkedIn, YouTube, Facebook and Twitter (or whatever it's called now).



Amplience is a commerce experience platform that takes the heavy lifting out of digital content, giving your technical and marketing teams the freedom to create digital experiences without limits. The platform's MACH Alliance-certified architecture delivers maximum speed, agility and scalability.

More than 400 of the world's leading brands use Amplience, including Crate & Barrel, Traeger Grills, Ulta Beauty, Coach, OTTO Group, GAP, Currys, Argos and The Very Group.

Amplience has 200 global employees and has raised \$180 million from investors, including Farview Equity Partners, Sixth Street and Octopus Ventures.

www.amplience.com



Rid the world of bad shopping experiences

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