



HEADLESS COMMERCE: LEVERAGING SFCC AND MOBIFY

Abstract

The world of e-commerce is adapting to new ways of engaging and servicing consumers. The new normal has changed consumer's demand patterns, they need digital, at-home, low-touch options across both sales and service journeys.

As online traffic has increased, customer demand is evolving. Enterprises are adapting to meet these challenges by enabling digital commerce across the entire consumer journey. Our point of view presents one of the viable technology options to businesses for multichannel commerce enablement in these challenging times.

Salesforce acquires Mobify

Mobify, an e-commerce software startup which specializes in “Front end as a service”, has now been acquired by Salesforce. Mobify specializes in optimizing business websites across multiple platforms, including smartphones and tablets. Mobify has created a Progressive Web App (PWA) based front end platform which can integrate with headless commerce engines to separate an e-commerce platform’s front end design from the back end commerce infrastructure. Salesforce is focusing on headless commerce with its enrichment of open commerce APIs. We believe that the combined offering provides a good solution stack for customers interested in enabling mobile centric frontends for Salesforce commerce implementations.

Mobify’s solution is aimed at helping brands customize their commerce experiences and deliver shopping experiences across any channel. By

acquiring Mobify, Salesforce is enhancing its commerce footprint with focus on headless commerce. This is consistent with most of the industry leading platforms in the commerce space which see value of headless / decoupled commerce

engines in the cloud. The acquisition will offer solutions addressing the needs of customers looking for a scalable, experience rich UI while leveraging Salesforce commerce functionalities as behind the scenes commerce engine.

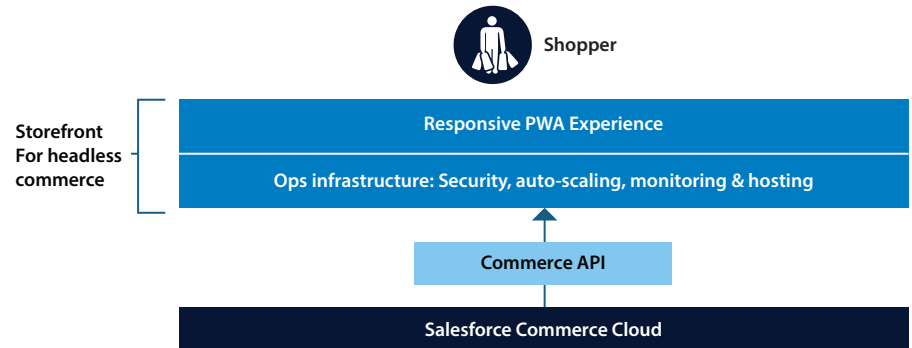


Fig 1: Storefront for headless commerce includes a Progressive Web Apps (PWA) experience and the infrastructure to build, run, and evolve the storefront.

Source: The Enterprise Guide to Storefronts for Headless Commerce (<https://resources.mobify.com/rs/052-PJG-701/images/2020-SF-Edition-Headless-Storefront-Guide.pdf>)

How we see this combined solution

Area	Typical Concerns	Mobify + SFCC benefits
User Experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mobile is the preferred “Glass” • Digital native customers want very fast responsive experience. Mobile web experience falls short. • Only a small percentage of customers will download business custom app – specifically if they are new / first time customers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PWA apps provide access to key native app capabilities like caching, device capabilities access to uplift the responsiveness without the mandatory app download • Mobify platform leverages PWA approach for their SaaS offering
Outsourcing the Front end and backend operational concerns	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Client businesses may lack skills to operational manage the commerce back end infrastructure • Storefront operational management brings in additional concerns of security, accessibility, device testing etc. which can be hard to manage for business’s IT team. • Ad-hoc or promotion / business event-based scaling / scale down to meet business demands are difficult to manage by inhouse IT 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SFCC platform provides cloud-based commerce services with scale and operational management capabilities. • With Mobify, the storefront scaling, security, operational management can be outsourced
Time to market	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In Covid-19 scenario, which is establishing a new normal, businesses want quick, agile projects and short go-to-market timeframes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As per Mobify, 8-10 weeks quick launch can be achieved
Flexible architecture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Headless / service driven architecture is being increasingly adopted across industry • Decoupled “head” can leverage best of breed CMS, and dedicated expert services like personalization, recommendation etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SFCC Storefront Reference Architecture (SFRA) with headless API brings in industry best practices

Table 1: Our perspective on potential benefits of this combined offering

Reference Architecture for Headless SFCC

We see potential to extend the architecture with best of breed ecosystem.

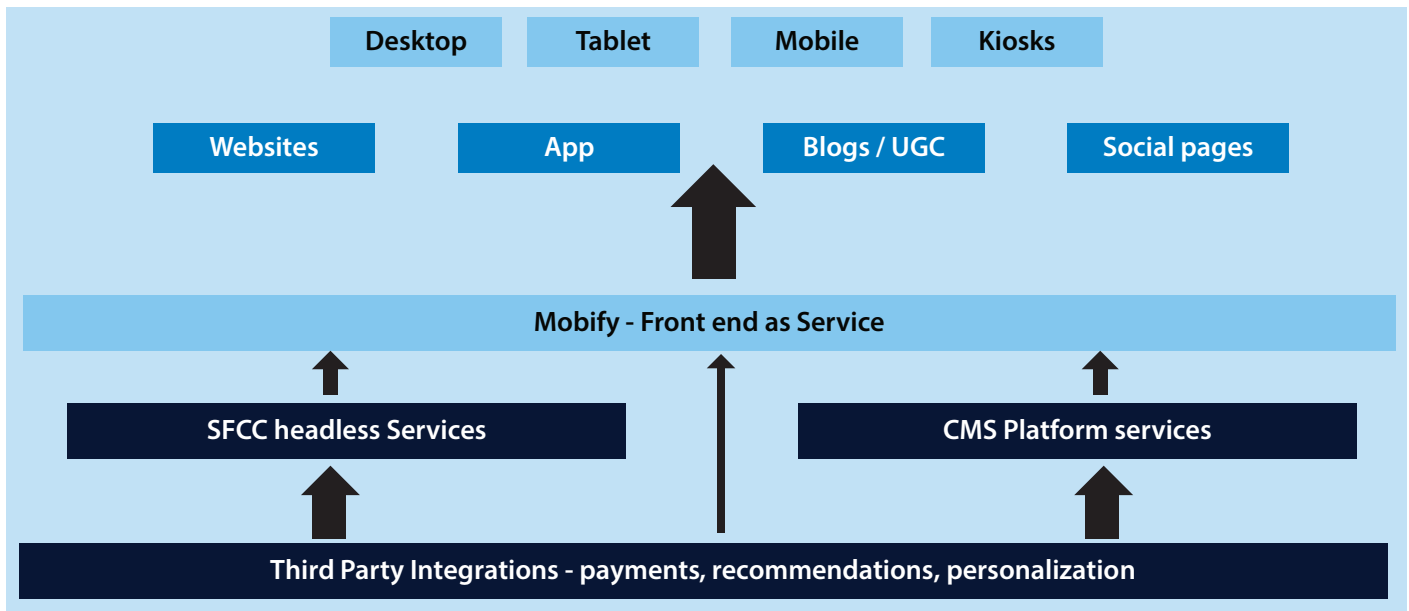


Fig 2: Potential for extending architecture

Businesses which can benefit

- This solution will benefit the most to businesses which are new to D2C, and want quick entry into online commerce with focus on business rather than IT development
- Businesses aiming to leverage focus on mobile channel and want to get PWA capabilities rather than just responsive could immediately advantage from this solution
- Businesses which are proof of value focused, and want to quickly test customer response for new geographies or brand etc. before significant IT investment can use this to derive insights

Things to watch out

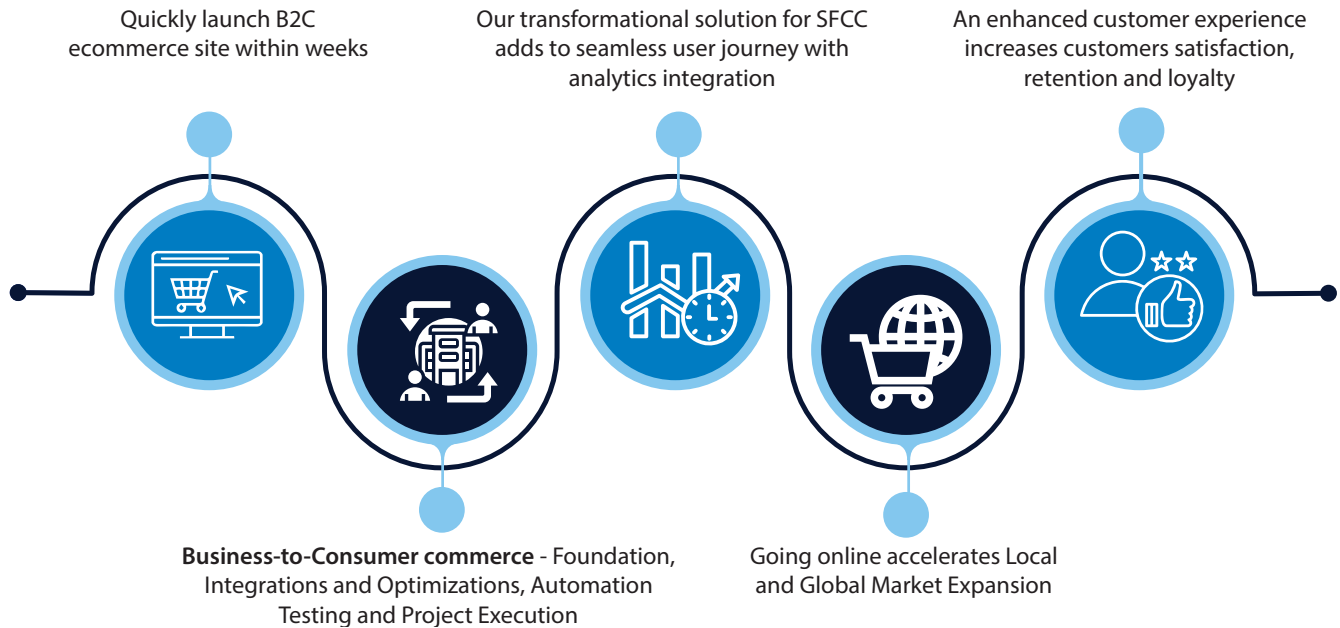
- Businesses with mature IT organizations, experienced in managing cloud-based systems, may not need the operations outsourcing and corresponding costs. In such cases, Front end as a service offering can be a stepping-stone towards fully IT owned operations as the end state.
- Businesses with already existing strong native mobile app customer base may not get direct benefit from PWA enablement though this storefront base can be adopted for new channels like Kiosks etc.
- In future, Salesforce will potentially provide richer integration and dedicated services capabilities from its

platform ecosystem to increase value of this offering

- On the other hand, Salesforce may choose to limit the integrations to competitor platforms like Adobe there by reducing the “best of breed” architecture flexibility for non-commerce services like CMS, analytics, recommendations etc.
- Currently, unlike other leading commerce product vendors, Salesforce (SF) has two separate frameworks for its B2B and B2C offerings. Going forward, unless SF re-builds on a unified framework, from engineering team and product management team perspective, it will be a constraint for enabling new features as they will need to build on two flavors.

How can Infosys make a difference?

Infosys has a well proven structured methodology for fast SFCC commerce implementations which can add additional value. Our integrated solution leverages digital commerce transformation and rich SFCC expertise to quickly build an e-commerce website from the ground up and get their site to market and enhance the experience journey of customers.



About the Authors

Uday Kotla

Global Business Head, Infosys Digital

Uday has over 20 years of experience working on digital enterprise platforms. He has led multiple business transformation engagements for clients across domains such as retail, high-tech, and finance. His expertise includes Digital Enterprise, Cloud Enterprise, IT Strategy, and Enterprise Architecture. His thought leadership, pragmatic approach, and passion for everything digital has helped Infosys define digital roadmaps for many of its clients.

Milind Kelkar

Senior Principal - Enterprise Applications, Infosys Digital

Milind is a senior technology leader in Infosys digital practice. He has extensive experience in driving digital enterprise architecture and has provided technology leadership for several large transformation programs. He specializes in digital commerce, marketing systems and leveraging cloud platforms.

For more information, contact askus@infosys.com

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