

TRANSITIONING FROM AN SMB TO MID-MARKET ECOMMERCE PLATFORM

Ten Essential Planning Exercises to Ensure a Smooth Launch

If you are a small business owner thinking about re-platforming, odds are that your rapid growth has left your eCommerce ecosystem looking like a Jenga® tower on the verge of collapse. Your business needs are growing beyond the means of the platform, yet you continue to push its limits by adding block after block of piecemealed functionality. Pushing the boundaries of the architecture by building *ad hoc* solutions has created an unstable base that is starting to teeter. With every addition, the entire system becomes less stable, less reliable and more likely to fail. This degradation of your ecosystem coupled with the growing expectation of a frictionless shopping experience by more sophisticated online retail audiences has you quickly losing marketshare to the competition. So what will transitioning to a mid-market platform do? Re-platforming will not only stabilize your infrastructure, but also empower the business to be more competitive and scale for growth as your business evolves. It provides the ideal opportunity to connect or retool existing and third-party assets and integrations. Ultimately a platforming endeavour should move your site onto an elegantly designed, scalable, rock solid ecommerce platform **that maximizes revenue potential.**



If the above describes your current situation, then it is officially time to start actively exploring transition strategies. The following Top 10 list will help you start forming a plan of attack.

Brand Labs developed this Top 10 list to help ease our clients' transition from their current platform to Mozu. In combination, these exercises help key stakeholders know the up-front preparation needed to mitigate risk, control costs and drastically improve their sites' speed to market.



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1 DEFINE GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The goals and objectives behind a transition to the Mozu platform are the measure of a project's success or failure, and should be considered critical. Write them down, be detailed, and clearly communicate them to your internal teams and partners.

2 CONDUCT A SWOT ANALYSIS

A SWOT analysis is a structured planning method used to evaluate the **Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats** involved in a Mozu re-platforming project.

- **Strengths:** characteristics of the new platform that give it advantages over the current
- **Weaknesses:** characteristics that place the mid-market platform at a disadvantage relative to the current platform
- **Opportunities:** elements that the new platform could exploit to its advantage
- **Threats:** elements in the environment that could create challenges for the new platform

3 PERFORM A GAP ANALYSIS

This involves determining and documenting the difference between your business requirements and current capabilities.

4 CREATE A RACI CHART

Considering the tremendous number of moving pieces involved in a proper re-platforming initiative and the sizeable team behind executing a project of this size, understanding the roles and responsibilities of team members is critical for organization.

5 GATHER REQUIREMENTS

The most important step in controlling costs is gathering proper requirements. Brand Labs leaves nothing to the imagination; detail at a granular level should be specified with the deliverable being an unambiguous and close-ended requirements document that's been vetted by stakeholders. Insufficient requirements gathering will result in scope creep and missed deadlines.



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Ten Essential Planning Exercises to Ensure a Smooth Launch continued...

6 DEVELOP A PROPER SITEMAP

- A sitemap is a list of every page on a website.
- Defining the sites' category structure in sitemap form will allow content to be more easily inventoried and help solidify the content migration plan.

7 PREPARE A CONTENT INVENTORY & MIGRATION PLAN

Content migration refers to moving content (e.g., landing pages, product pages. etc.) from the old platform to Mozu. This process requires taking thorough inventory of every page and deciding if and how the content needs to find its way onto the new site.

8 CREATE SITE WIREFRAMES

- Wireframes are a visual guide that represents the skeletal framework of a website.
- A wireframe lacks typographic style, color, or graphics since the main focus lies in depicting site functionality and structure.

9 HAVE A DATA MIGRATION PLAN

- By far, the most important and complex exercise on our list, data migration is the most overlooked and underestimated process in transitioning platforms.
- Brand Labs migration plans move product and customer information from the legacy platform to Mozu while protecting the data, maintaining data integrity, and allowing for its full utilization on the new platform.

10 FIND A GREAT PARTNER

Developing solid agency and vendor relationships is a huge part of guaranteeing a successful transition. Align yourself with companies that don't just fit from a technology standpoint, but also meld with your company culture.

Transitioning from an SMB to a Mid-Market platform can seem daunting. By following these ten exercises, you'll find that all the up front preparation will be rewarded with an on-time and on-budget launch.



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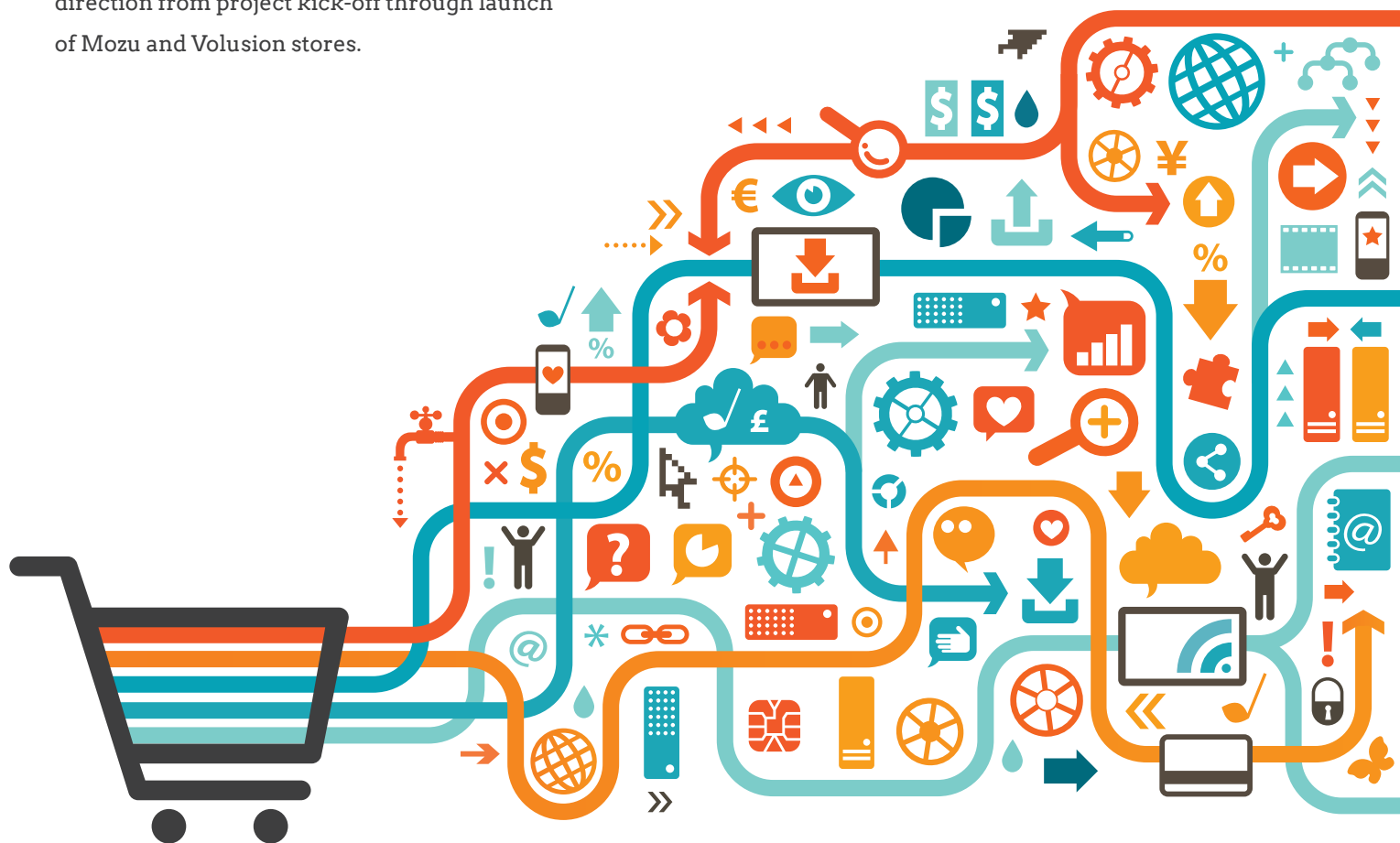


Brand Labs is a full service digital agency designing, building and marketing ecommerce sites on the Mozu and Volusion shopping cart platforms. We've developed a solid 7 year partnership with Volusion, Inc. positioning us perfectly to deliver unparalleled creative vision, technical wizardry and strategic direction from project kick-off through launch of Mozu and Volusion stores.



Limitless Commerce™

Mozu is the commerce solution designed with one mission in mind: to help enterprises manage their entire online presence — commerce, branding, customer engagement and publishing — in a single, powerful and enjoyable experience.



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