Re-platforming Your eCommerce Site

The Why and How of Transitioning to the Mozu Limitless Commerce Platform

This whitepaper discusses the business imperatives for merchants to consider when re-platforming their eCommerce site, the case for why Mozu is a best-in-class choice for a new platform, and a proposed framework for transitioning to Mozu in an efficient and market-relevant manner.

What Is eCommerce Re-platforming?

Re-platforming your eCommerce site, in the context of this whitepaper, means the migration of a merchant's current eCommerce site to a new platform to achieve their business goals.

Why Re-platform?

There are six primary reasons why a merchant should look to re-platform their eCommerce site:

Business Growth

The current site is not able to scale up and deliver a better experience to customers and visitors because of rapid growth of the business. Customers face longer page load times and more frequent site downtimes, leading to loss of business.

Business Complexities

Business has expanded, requirements have become more complex and the current system is not able to cater to the changing requirements fast or inexpensively enough. Examples include the need for an omni-channel strategy to integrate seamlessly to stores, mobile, marketplace or social channels, or the ability to exchange data with the ERP system.

Increasing Inefficiencies

In order to address both growth and complexity of the business, a merchant would have launched multiple initiatives over the years but because the foundation is weak, keeping the old platform running requires significantly more effort, leading to higher operational and IT costs.

Technology Changes

The rapid adoption of new technologies such as mobile and social has changed the face of eCommerce. The eCommerce platforms that were engineered 10-15 years ago will not able to keep up with these changes. This will impact technical development operations if the platform is based on old technology and skills are not available easily in the market. Technology changes also bring in both, competitive demands and the need to address customer expectations.

Competitive Demands

New players with modern platforms capable of providing sophisticated user experiences from the get-go are a constant threat. Merchants need to be able to sustain and deepen user loyalties, in addition to acquiring new customers. This is not a piecemeal or one-time effort, rather, businesses need a platform that can provide agility and grow with the demands seamlessly.

Customer Experience

Consumers today are used to a heightened level of personalization and intuitive interaction from eCommerce sites. A site is no longer just about the purchase; it is a guide to the continued and ongoing buying journey. Consumers expect conveniences such as wish lists, recommendations, reviews, and promotions.

What Is Mozu?

Mozu is a modern, multi-tenant SaaS-based enterprise commerce platform architected from the ground up to address the commerce needs for the global enterprise. It provides multi-site/multi-brand capabilities and comprehensive omni-channel functionality in a current, API-first, multi-tenant platform.
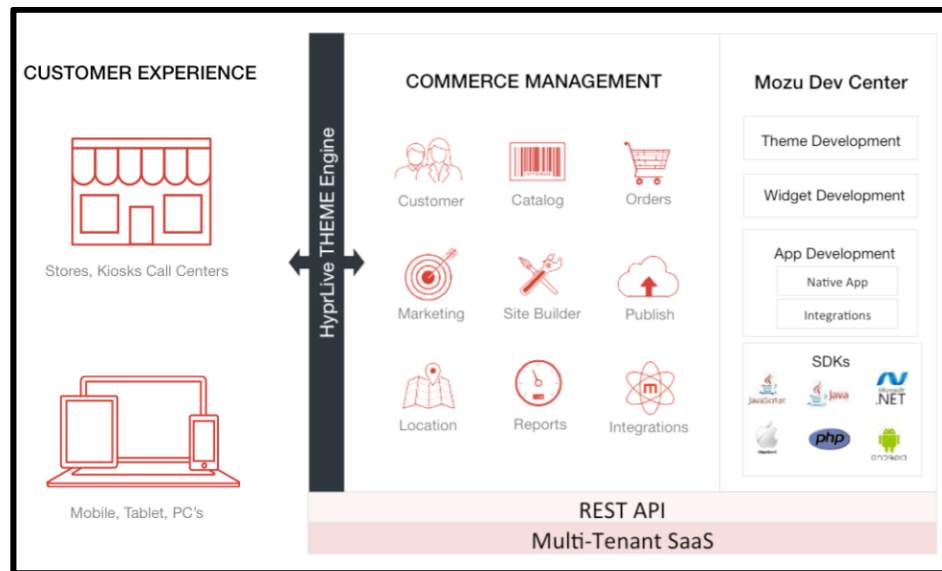

Figure 1: The Mozu Limitless Commerce™ Solution

Why Mozu?

Once the decision to re-platform has been made, the question is, which platform is the right fit?

Compared with other **SMB eCommerce players**, Mozu provides richer commerce functionality, the ability to create and present differentiated digital experiences, a higher degree of control, and a far more scalable platform that keeps pace with growing businesses.

When compared to **Mid-market open source platforms** that offer enterprise license-based options, three things stand out. First, Mozu's modern architecture provides for a rich API and SDKs on multiple platforms and enables merchants to create unique experiences far quicker and at a much lower cost. Second, because Mozu is SaaS-based, merchants do not need to worry about scalability and performance – Mozu addresses the problem with a modern scalable architecture and its state-of-the-art data centers. Finally, Mozu offers better returns on investment because a merchant has no enterprise license costs, no server or hosting costs, and no additional maintenance costs.

Mozu scores better than **Enterprise SaaS-based players** because of three reasons. First, the architecture allows for greater control over site operations including when and how to roll-out changes to the site. Given a merchant's growing business, this could be very often. Second, unlike older enterprise SaaS players, because Mozu is a new platform, modern functionality is not provided as a bolt-on or a patch, but natively. This improves performance, scalability, and responsiveness significantly. And third, Mozu's pricing is not revenue-based – it is usage-based. Merchants are not penalized for their business growth.

Finally, a word about leading **enterprise license-based on-premise players**. Most of these vendors have good functionality but the platforms are more than a decade old. These systems are complex, requiring significantly higher implementation and operational costs. Because they are not SaaS based, merchants have to worry about hardware, hosting, maintenance, and support of both the base product and the implementer's customizations. Mozu takes away those headaches and costs, letting the merchant focus on business growth.

How To Build The Business Case For Mozu

Re-platforming an eCommerce site is a significant effort that needs an initial investment. To be able to quantify the ROI and the Payback period, a comparative analysis between the current environment and the Mozu platform must be made. Key attributes around Platform strength, Total Cost of Ownership, Opportunity Cost, and Key Performance Indicators need to be considered in the context of the site's business goals.

Platform Strength is measured against the following parameters – Performance / Scalability, Omni-channel functionality, Enterprise Integration, the ease of using the administration tools, the ability to create unique digital experiences, the ability to extend or replace core capabilities in the system with other applications where necessary, and finally, the platform support for hosting, maintenance, and on-going development.

Total cost of ownership is calculated taking into account the following:

- License and support costs of the eCommerce platform and any third party software such as databases and application servers required for the platform to work
- All hosting and on-going costs related to platform, infrastructure, and application maintenance
- All system administration costs including tools and manpower necessary to keep the site operational
- Initial implementation and on-going development costs – both of which could be different across platforms
- Marketing and Merchandising Costs
- Training Costs
- The costs associated with compliance and reporting

Opportunity costs **are incurred by not re-platforming to the right platform.** A merchant needs to quantify business loss when the site or critical functionality is down or when a customer becomes disenchanted with the experience. In addition, if the system cannot integrate in real-time easily with enterprise systems or web-based services, the merchant's ability to accelerate new offers to market diminishes. The merchant sometimes is also unable to provide support for new business models resulting in loss of potential business.

Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) such as

- Unique and returning visitors that can be handled by the site
- Ability to handle variability in order sizes
- Page load times and bounce rates

Ignitiv's Implementation Framework For Re-platforming To Mozu

Ignitiv is a premier solution partner of Mozu. We have developed an implementation framework that provides a structural approach to planning and executing the effort around re-platforming to Mozu.

This re-platforming approach addresses five areas as we look to migrate from the old platform to Mozu:

1. Harnessing the rich functionality of Mozu
2. Moving the user interface to the Mozu Theming Engine
3. Building interfaces and extensions
4. Building capabilities
5. Migrating data

Harnessing the Rich Functionality of Mozu

Mozu offers rich functionality around three core areas – Commerce Management, Digital Experience, and Customer Relationship Management (CRM). In many cases – especially migrating from smaller platforms – it will offer more than the merchant's existing functionality. It is necessary to analyze both existing functionality that the merchant has and additional features they would like to take advantage of and configure the system appropriately.

Moving the User Interface to the Mozu Theming Engine

Mozu uses its own Theming Engine to display the user interface. Themes are created using the Mozu Dev Center. Themes are designed to be incremental, where various building blocks of a page are called in sequentially to enable flexible and dynamic client-side processing and rendering of data.

Building Interfaces and Extensions

With an API-first approach, Mozu was designed to provide complete access to functionality through its REST APIs. In addition, Mozu has provided SDKs for different languages so that developing interfaces and extensions are a breeze. SDKs are available for Java, php, .NET, JS, Android and iOS programming languages.

Building Capabilities

Mozu also allows a developer to change any core functionality of the system through "Capabilities." Capabilities are built using the same SDKs as Extensions and Interfaces. In essence, Capabilities replaces "out-of-the-box" platform functionality with a custom application.

Migrating Data

Because it is a re-platforming exercise, eCommerce data migration is a sizable effort. Ignitiv follows a structured approach in executing data migration that involves the following:

- **Data Import**: Importing the data using the export mechanisms provided by legacy system. It can be Microsoft® Excel® export or an API-based on-demand export.
- **Data Quality**: If the data model of the legacy system is well designed, the effort around de-duplication is largely reduced. Data cleansing and validation steps make sure the data is ready to be put into Mozu system, in a format required by the Mozu data model.
- **Data Transfer**: We transfer the cleansed data using a one-time sync with Mozu after using scripts to transform data format to what Mozu requires. A Sandbox environment is kick-started with a sample set of data.
- **Data Load**: Once the testing is signed off on the sample data inserted, a full data load is effected, essentially making the system ready for go live.

Conclusion

If a merchant is looking to re-platform their eCommerce site, they need to consider the Mozu platform. Mozu has a modern, flexible API-first architecture that ensures a robust, multi-tenant SaaS solution to deliver both functional richness and control. A successful transition to Mozu will have significant benefits to a merchant ensuring high ROI and a short payback period. A structured implementation approach is desirable to make sure that re-platforming to Mozu happens smoothly, quickly, and efficiently.

ABOUT IGNITIV

Ignitiv is a consulting and technology company focused on omni-channel commerce. Ignitiv delivers solutions to retailers and global brands of all sizes in the areas of eCommerce, Store systems, Mobile, Social Commerce, Inventory, Order Management, Enterprise Integration and Retail Big Data Analytics. We offer a comprehensive set of services around Strategy, Design, Technical Implementation and on-going Management of solutions delivered.

Ignitiv is a premier Solution Partner of Mozu. We work with retailers and brands to build the business case for re-platforming to Mozu, define their re-platforming strategy, design their user interface, migrate their site/s over to Mozu, develop all integrations including to enterprise systems and ensure the site runs smoothly. As a solution partner we are also working on developing themes, interfaces and applications for the Mozu platform.

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