

Press Release

Digital Trends in Commerce 2021

Digital transformation + data transformation = commerce transformation

Geneva/Frankfurt, 24. February 2021 – What should e-commerce players keep an eye on in 2021? With everyone selling online, companies need to find ways to differentiate their shopping experience from the competition. Commerce experts Benjamin Adler, Lead Experience Design at Namics, and Luís Nunes, Head of Digital Experiences at Isobar, identify the leading trends for 2021. The two companies, Namics and Isobar Switzerland, merged at the beginning of this year to become Merkle in the DACH region by April. The experts have already joined forces to analyze the upcoming trends in the field of commerce.

In order for organizations to reach the next stage of their commerce maturity, they will need to transform both their digital activities and data strategy, as also described in the [2021 Merkle Customer Experience Imperatives](#). Consumers expect brands to anticipate their needs, be there whenever and wherever they need them, and offer rewards for their continued loyalty. Data and content are ultimately the fuel that drive a company's connection with its prospects and customers on all digital channels. Businesses need to realize, that they must act differently, both in the way they build these capabilities and in how they operate them. If they do, they will manage to provide contextually relevant and personally informed customer experiences that drive commerce success.

This understanding leads us to two trends that we are currently seeing in the market:

Trend 1: Commerce experiences will go beyond simple transactions and will shape brand perception.

Commerce can be the all-encompassing relationship with your customers, but it's been boxed into a silo – the “store.” This does not mean necessarily a physical or digital store, but a store in the sense that customers will flock to the brand to access what it has to offer. We now live in a customer-driven market, and we are entering a post-store era. E-commerce must evolve from isolated transactions to delivering enduring customer relationships. Commerce experiences will increasingly be brand experiences – not only because lockdowns limiting in-store experiences, but also because of all sorts of interactions irrespective of digital or physical are shaping how a brand is perceived. Although online-shops have become the 24/7-accessible flagship stores, it is ultimately all micro-instants where an interaction takes place that should carefully reflect the brand and its values.

Benjamin Adler, author of the Whitepaper [“E-Commerce must evolve”](#), recommends: “Have a clear view on where to meet potential customers online and how to do business with them by conducting continuous customer research. Live and breathe user-centered design methodologies with customer-centric ways of working. Establish a culture of experimentation and testing with a razor-sharp focus on conversions.”

From implementing foundational capabilities, such as social media, customer relationship management or email marketing, to being an organization with differentiated exclusive experiences is a journey in itself. Isobar Switzerland and Namics have been consistently able to create frictionless ecosystems that drive engagement with the customer anytime and anywhere. These implementations have benefits such as an open communication and interaction channel between customers and the different brands, being performed across multiple touch points and that span throughout the entire customer journey and range of experiences.

“In order to meet our clients’ needs, we have been building integrated and orchestrated solutions, often together with our premium partners such as Salesforce or Adobe, that enable omnichannel interactions, allow for personalized content and services at scale, with disruptive experiences on product marketing or loyalty that redefine the connection between brand and customer”, Luís Nunes explains.

Trend 2: Commerce experiences will be designed for data maximization.

A commerce transaction denotes an interaction, an inflection point in the customer experience where, in most cases, the maximal level of attention is paid to the brand. Therefore, it holds the potential to allow the brand to know and understand customers, to turn them from casual buyers into subscribers, and eventually grow them into loyal advocates. It also represents a pivotal moment to augment your data pool. If the same approach is applied to every interaction, the knowledge around customers and thus the wealth of data grows exponentially. Therefore, it is so essential for businesses to step up their data game. In 2021 it’s even more important to master rapidly changing approaches to the acquisition, management and mining of valuable data that informs customer experiences – in real time and in a privacy-safe manner.

“Going forward, on the one hand, organizations will need to fully maximize their first-party data assets through more productive interactions with their customers and prospects. On the other hand, they also need to leverage strategic partnerships to deliver second-party data,” Adler explains.

Customer data gives companies a competitive advantage in delivering helpful and relevant personalization that improves the customer experience (for customers) and lifetime value (for businesses). This requires a customer experience design for data maximization, experiences that incentivize clients to share their data – and a strong infrastructure founded on an enterprise-level identity management capability, that is able to deal with this data and operationalize it.

“An example is the Adobe Experience Platform (AEP), an enterprise platform that allows brands to leverage data from across a multitude of touchpoints in order to deliver differentiating digital experiences, in real time and at scale,” Nunes says. *“By pioneering implementation of AEP together with our client, a leader in connected LED lighting systems,*

software and services, we will improve direct to consumer sales by using personalization and people-based marketing.”

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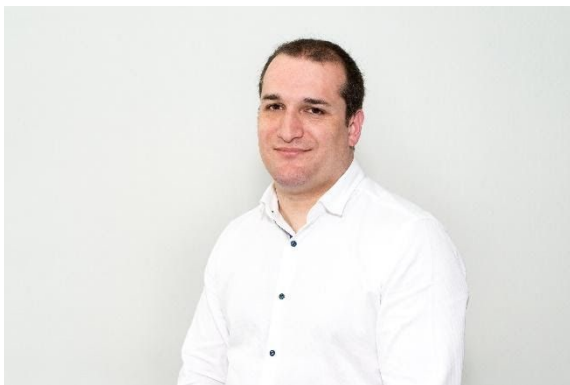
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About Isobar

We are a global digital agency transforming businesses and brands through the creative use of digital. Our 6,500 digital experts in 85 locations across 45 markets in Americas, EMEA and APAC deliver experience-led transformation, powered by creativity through our end to end service offering. Isobar's clients include adidas, Coca-Cola, Enterprise, KFC, Nestle and Philips. Isobar is part of dentsu, a wholly owned subsidiary of dentsu International. www.isobar.com

About Namics – A Merkle Company

Namics creates winners in digital transformation. As an award-winning digital specialist, Namics pursues the mission of providing holistic support for customers in their digital transformation: From vision to reality - thanks to many years of expertise in strategic consulting, innovative concepts, creative work and technological implementation from a single source. Around 550 employees support the following clients from a wide variety of industries including ADAC, Boehringer Ingelheim, Bucherer, Daimler AG, DriveNow, Hoval, Jelmolli, Kaufland, KUKA, Medela, Migros, Siemens, Swiss Life, UBS and Victorinox. For further information visit www.namics.com.

Namics and Isobar Switzerland are currently merging and will [rebrand as Merkle across the DACH region](#) from April 2021.

About Merkle

Merkle is a leading data-driven, technology-enabled, global performance marketing agency that specializes in the delivery of unique, personalized customer experiences across platforms and devices. For more than 30 years, Fortune 1000 companies and leading nonprofit organizations have partnered with Merkle to maximize the value of their customer portfolios. The agency's heritage in data, technology, and analytics forms the foundation for its unmatched skills in understanding consumer insights that drive people-based marketing strategies. Its combined strengths in performance media, customer experience, customer relationship management, loyalty, and enterprise marketing technology drive improved marketing results and competitive advantage. With 6,800 employees, Merkle is headquartered in Columbia, Maryland, with 19 additional offices in the US and 33 offices in Europe and APAC. In 2016, the agency joined the Dentsu Aegis Network. For more information, contact Merkle at 1-877-9-Merkle or visit www.merkleinc.com.