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know how...

# Your Unified Commerce Recipe:

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## A Building Blocks Guide

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# Introduction

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There is much talk in Retail & Distribution businesses these days on the idea of Unified Commerce. Many see Unified commerce as a progression from omni-channel commerce. The latin word omnis simply means “all” compared to the latin unif which means “to make one.”

What we see, therefore, is a move in the market place from simply selling through all channels to making the channels appear as one. It is difficult to image how you can make selling from Bricks & Mortar the same as selling online via your own site or via a market place. The detail of the buying journey for each channel is necessarily different. The goal aimed at in Unified Commerce is that the experience of the customer when buying through different channels is one.

In other words, Unified Commerce is a simple Idea: At every stage of interaction with your organisation: Your customer's Experience is the same and reflects your Brand Values.





Whilst the simplicity and purity of this idea has appeal, it has not come about by a desire to make the “Perfect Retailer” but from learned experiences and feedback from customers on annoyances and mini-failures from dealing with retailers. Typical examples of these issues are:

- A promotion code for a percentage discount that can only be redeemed online not in store.
- Telesales operatives being told what the web site says about a product, feature or availability which is unknown or different to them.
- Instore marketing material being out of date compared to a smart new website.
- Marketing databases having different data compared to saved addresses available on line. E.g. Name if someone gets married or worse divorced/deceased.

It is easy for IT management to understand how the above can happen given that call centres/marketing databases/online stores & Brick & Mortar POS systems are often all of a different type. This might lead to a cry to have better integration between systems. Indeed poor integration might be an issue for many businesses. However, before a solution is jumped into for a problem, it is important to reflect that the simple idea of Unified commerce actually requires a relatively complex delivery. E.g. Consider an up market

retailer which has quality of service as a key brand value. What in detail are the interactions on a web site that will give a customer the same feeling of quality as if they approached a polite, bright and well informed member of staff in one of their stores?

The delivery of Unified commerce, therefore, requires not only a review of the type and connectivity of all key business solutions but also a review of the business processes that deliver services to the customer. Indeed, for some businesses, there may be a need to reflect and modify what the business' USP and brand values are in the face of a rapidly changing and challenging retail marketplace.

It is easy, therefore, to switch off to Unified commerce and just concentrate on “Selling more.” This, however, is a mistake. In today's market place customers are very savvy and expect consistency of service and adherence to brand values as a given. They also expect to move between channels seamlessly and they expect their suppliers to be customer centric and provide personal and personalised products & services. Brands/businesses which do not provide a unified experience will, therefore, eventually lose to those that do. In today's marketplace with so much choice, consumers and buyers will often value perceived quality above price. A quality brand image will, therefore, maintain margin. So besides protecting your business Unified Commerce also enables growth.

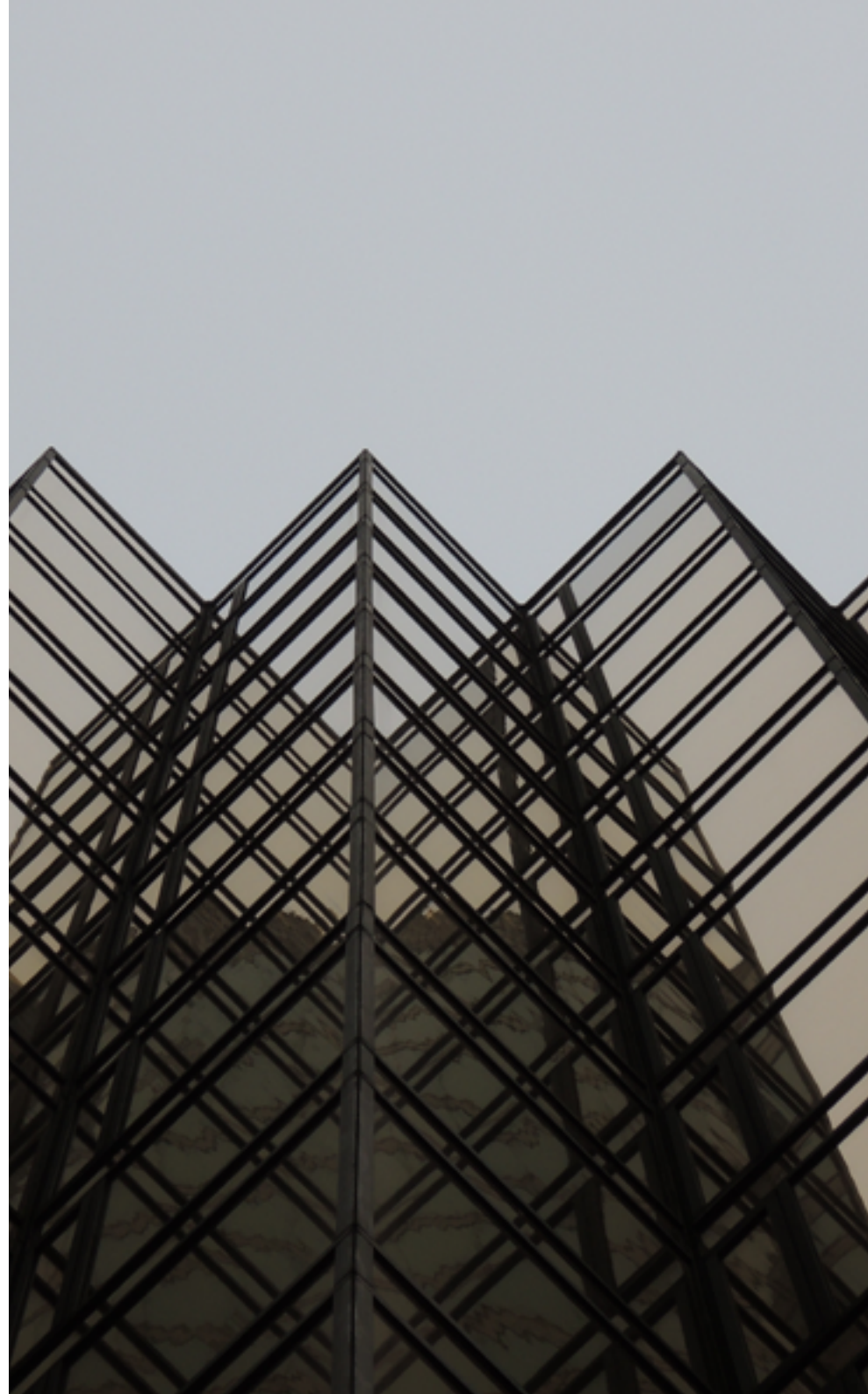
# Achieving Unified Commerce

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Like most business challenges achieving Unified Commerce is best achieved by going on a journey and identifying a road map of business changes, projects and initiatives that can be executed. Each of which can be executed in stages to obtain the most value and gain to the business this giving good ROI on the time and money invested. What does this journey to Unified Commerce look like?

Obviously the journey for each business will be different but different types of businesses will have a similar profile for each business type.

To help understand what your business' journey into Unified Commerce might look like then please find the 'recipe' on the following pages which is closest to your business.



# Recipe No. 1 - For a Manufacturing Company that wants to sell direct to consumers

## Business Questions / Considerations

- What is the Unique Selling Proposition?
- In order to manage the risk to business through other channels what approach is to be taken E.g. Separate Brand / Limited Product Range / "Special" Products
- What channels will be used to take the product direct to the consumer?
- What is the business plan?
- Is product marketing readiness integrated with lifecycle management
- processes, enabling efficiency and automation?
- Are specifications and marketing materials within easy reach of direct sales teams?
- Is there scope for product syndication and the leveraging of digital marketplaces?

With a bold market move, the initial priorities are driven by quality product information delivered into as wide a market as possible to test response. Key areas such as CRM, insights and better marketing content provision will be born out of solid data collection.



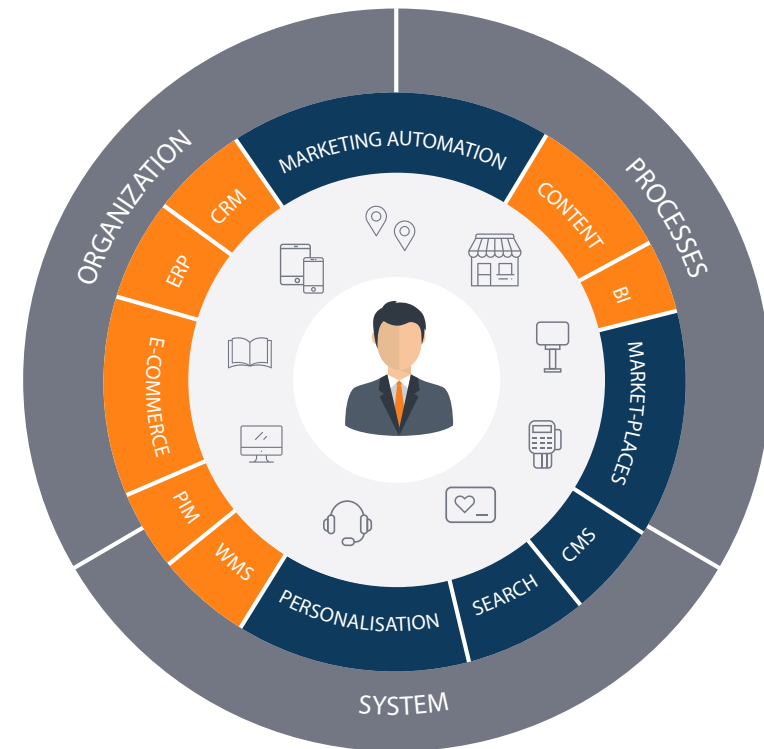
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# Recipe No. 2 - For a Multi-Channel Product Distributor

## Business Questions / Considerations

- How efficient is your content management process?
- What is the cost of acquiring a customer?
- Do you have appropriate customer loyalty schemes?
- Are you clear on what the values are for the brand(s) that you have?
- Do you have the correct product assortments for the brands that you support?
- Is your cost of distribution competitive?
- Are you providing suppliers with efficient and expedited means to onboard their product information?
- Is there a clearly defined approach to managing retail partners' specific onboarding needs?
- Can retail partner relationships be strengthened with on demand marketing materials on newly available ranges?

Focused on delivering as much value to retail customers at a very competitive price point, the key driver here is robusticity across supply chain, quality of messaging and accurate / marketable product information. Also critical is the ability to flex data delivery to a range of varying customer requirements and formats.



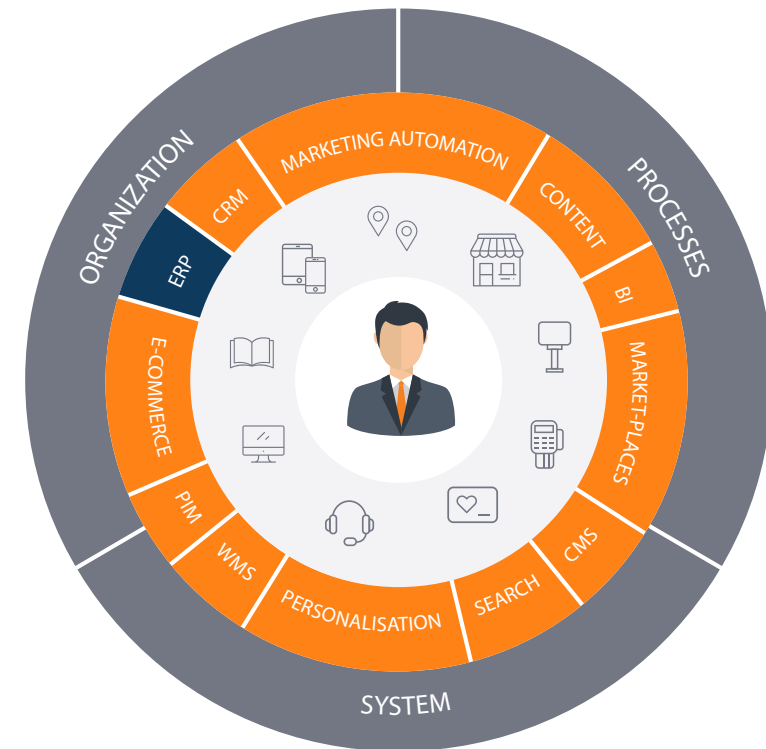
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# Recipe No. 3 - For a Multi-Channel Retailer

## Business Questions / Considerations

- What channels are used to take the product direct to the consumer?
- Are you clear on what the values are for the brand(s) that you have?
- Do you have the correct product assortments for the brands that you support?
- Is Personalisation for a customer effective enough?
- Is your cost of distribution competitive?
- Do your customers have 100% confidence in your order fulfilment and customer service capability?
- Is there a clear vision of the improvement priorities across all customer touchpoints?
- Are your digital product and product marketing teams able to react and proact in response to market trends and events?
- Are you providing suppliers with efficient and expedited means to onboard their product information... and how can they contribute more value?
- Are you leveraging data, product information and customer history to deliver relevant and personalised customer experiences?
- Is there a strategic and connected vision shared at the intersection of digital and IT systems?
- Does your product information reduce friction and spend through the conversion funnel by enhancing SEO?

It is not uncommon for organisations so heavily focused on trading to place secondary importance on the unification of WMS and CRM as part of their customer experience planning. Customers need 100% trust in fulfilment capability and the services that support it. This could serve as a warning.



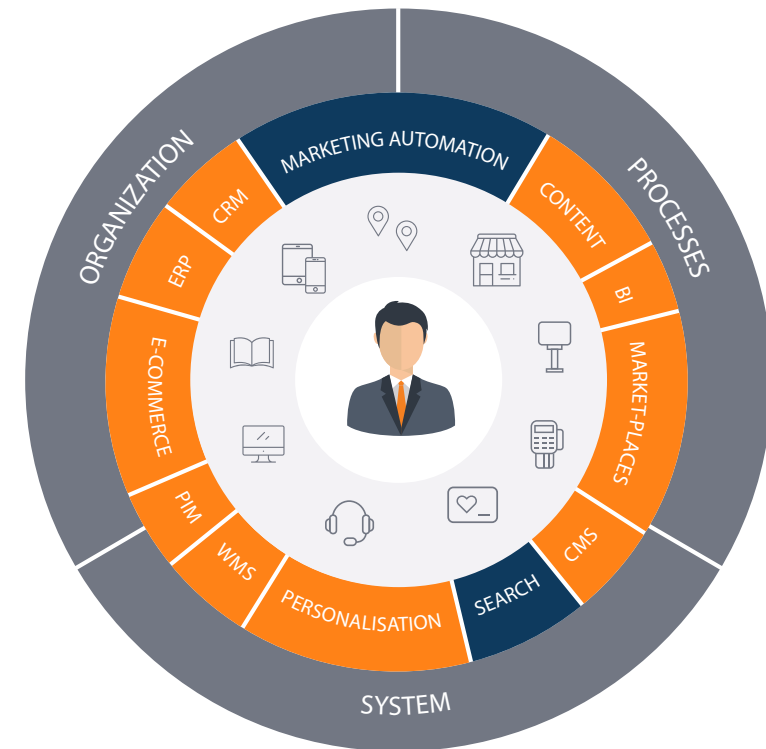
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# Recipe No. 4 - For a Global Brand

## Business Questions / Considerations

- Are the correct strategies in place for growth in the various territories?
- Are localisation issues reflected correctly in the Product ranges and brand values?
- Is the mix of channels correct for each territory?
- Is the launch of new products controlled effectively across all territories?
- Is your cost of distribution competitive?
- Is the acquisition of new B2B customers managed correctly?
- Is your customer loyalty process providing consumers with a personalised and relevant experience?
- Are you able to leverage fully the brand opportunities provided by social and syndicated marketplaces?
- How do you deliver value and gold standard product information to retail customers effectively?
- Does the quality of your product information and supporting consumer experience reinforce and drive your brand message and vision?

Brands are becoming increasingly conscious of the need to provide richer experiences to loyal and repeat customers. Research clearly demonstrates that new customers expect more engaged and personal relationships when interacting direct with brand owners.



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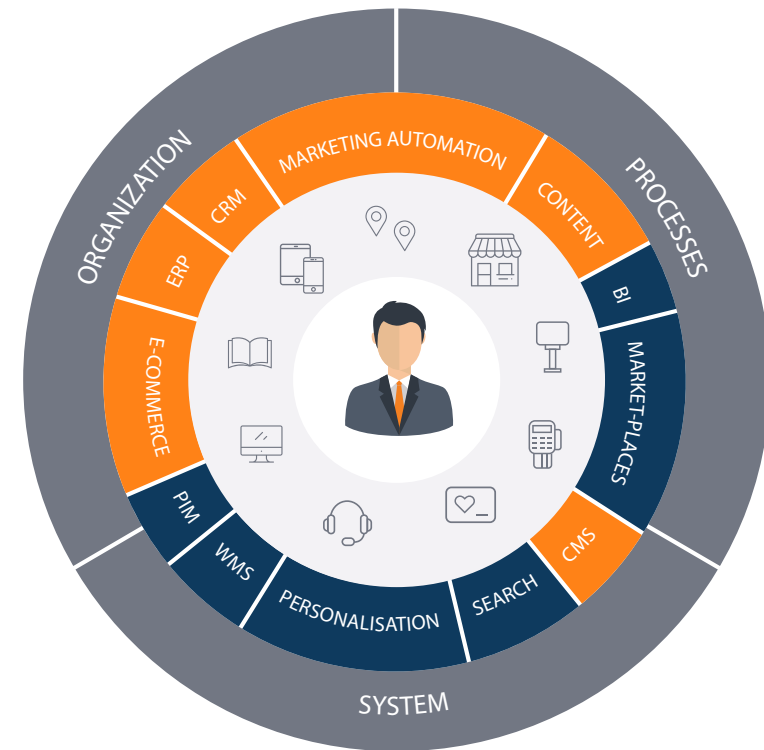


# Recipe No. 5 - For B2B Service Providers

## Business Questions / Considerations

- Is the management of resources such as engineers controlled in a fully digital manner?
- Is important content such as technical manuals controlled efficiently and in an error free way?
- If products such as books, consumables, spare parts are part of your service then is your cost of distribution competitive?
- Is the acquisition of new customers cost effective and managed correctly?
- Do your customers have confidence in your ability to deliver services 24 / 7 across all touchpoints?
- Does the quality of your service information and supporting customer experience reinforce and drive your brand message and vision?

The key to a successful service business is being able to deliver to promise. The most advanced technology should be used to determine an accurate promise and then track delivery through its different stages to ensure the promise is kept. Additionally key customers need to feel that they have an advanced customer experience.



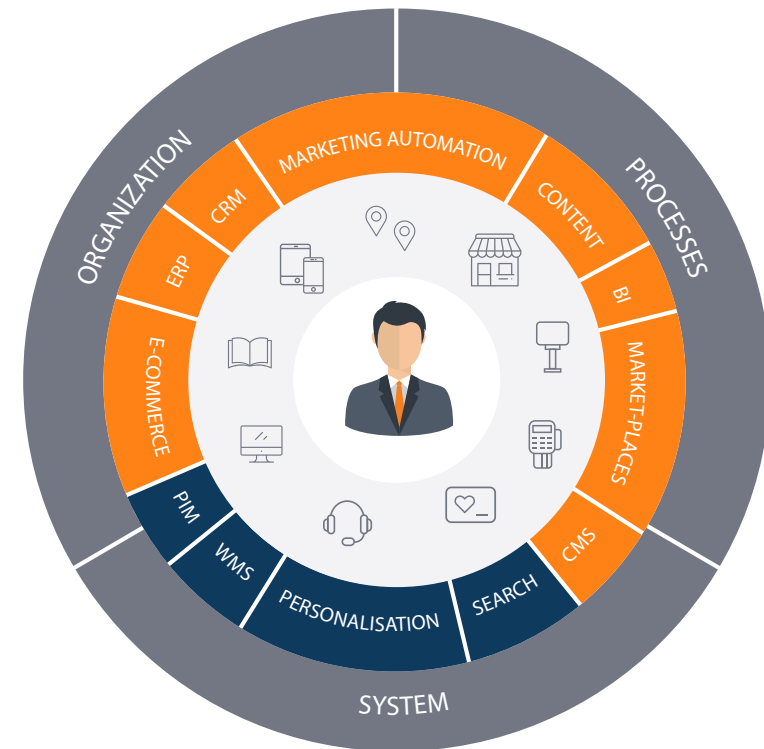
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# Recipe No. 6 - For B2C Service Providers

## Business Questions / Considerations

- Is the management of resources such as engineers controlled in a fully digital manner?
- Is important content such as technical manuals controlled efficiently and in an error free way?
- If products such as books, consumables, spare parts are part of your service then is your cost of distribution competitive?
- Is the acquisition of new customers cost effective and managed correctly?
- Are service offerings packaged correctly for demographic or other consumer groupings?
- Do your customers have confidence in your ability to deliver services 24 / 7 across all touchpoints?
- Does the quality of your service information and supporting customer experience reinforce and drive your brand message and vision?
- Does your product information reduce friction and spend through the conversion funnel by enhancing SEO?

The key to a successful service business is being able to deliver to promise. The most advanced technology should be used to determine an accurate promise and then track delivery through its different stages to ensure the promise is kept. Additionally advanced analytics is needed to review and analyse performance across different customer segments.



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