EBOOK

Get Future-Ready with Composable Solutions from EPAM + Sitecore

Keeping up with the Speed of Composable Solutions

Contents

Introduction

Keeping up with the Speed of Composable Solutions

Brands must move at lightning speed to meet sky-high consumer demands that shift at a rapid rate. Today, consumers expect a compelling experience everywhere they shop.

Seamless, omnichannel interactions are the new normal. And these experiences need to be personal. The focus is on appealing to potential customers wherever they are — based on their data. These elevated experiences require a new set of agile and resilient, yet flexible, tools.

The global pandemic has also supercharged digital experiences and made competition fierce, globally. To stay ahead, brands need to move beyond a monolithic architecture, which is slow to respond, expensive to change and can result in outdated solutions.

Additionally, there is a greater need for brands to pick their solutions from channel engagement to transaction, fulfillment and point of sale — and integrate new tech systems in a modular fashion. The aim is to future-proof digital experiences by swapping, in and out, new tools at speed and as needed. This requires an agile technology stack that doesn't break the bank to change.

Generally, the demands on brands are legion, whether it involves supporting multiple languages or logistics providers, new content or payment systems. The B2C mindset is also trending into B2B. All of this is why businesses now need complete control.

Technology companies are developing composable solutions in response.

These solutions — encompassing commerce, content and digital experiences — are exciting technological and business advancements that aim to address the gaps that monolithic solutions present. The concept of composable was first defined in 2020 and is now gaining momentum. However, going composable requires new levels of thinking.

Those who get it right will set new bars of excellence for digital experiences forever.

" **As modern engineers, it's always important to break things down and be able to interchange different platforms, as well as reuse services. With composable, we now have ultimate flexibility.**"

WALT ROLLE
Global Head of Sitecore Competency, EPAM

" **It's so important today to deliver standout digital experiences to your customers at every touchpoint. It's one of the best ways to make your brand memorable and provide a competitive edge.**
A composable digital experience platform (DXP) empowers your team to be more agile, enabling you to create and deliver content faster to meet the ever-changing needs and expectations of the modern consumer. EPAM, together with Sitecore, can help you build a composable strategy that easily adapts into the future."

DAVE O'FLANAGAN
CEO, Sitecore

Defining Composable Solutions

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What is Composable?

Composable solutions are just that — brands can compose the platform they need from best-in-breed tech providers. Each component of the tech stack is independent from every other part. The architecture is open, flexible and built on packaged business capabilities (PBCs). These are applications or services developed around a particular business function, such as personalization, search, content operations or a unified view of the customer.

Composable solutions separate the user interface, or the front end, from business logic, enabling organizations to build exactly what they need for their business rather than wrestle with predefined technology-driven use cases. For instance, when applying composable to commerce, brands can fine-tune the experience for search, ordering, payments, catalog browsing and inventory visibility.

Brands need options that are flexible enough to change along with their business. With composable, they can focus on picking interchangeable building blocks from PBCs, using what is right for them instead of being confined to a rigid template or standardized solutions.

> " By 2026, all the top 20 cloud platform and SaaS providers will offer component marketplaces to enable customers' composable strategies, differentiating by quality, convenience and security."

Gartner®, Yefim Natis, John Santoro, Jo Liversidge, Stephen White, Gregor Petri, Paul Vincent, Anne Thomas, January 2023, **Gartner Research - Predicts 2023: Composable Applications Accelerate Business Innovation**

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What Does it Do?

A composable approach lets brands build a customer experience, a digital storefront, content or a commerce system in a way that is customized to their specific needs. It's business centric, focusing on optimizing different solutions and offering personalized customer experiences.

Each solution can address a unique business function — loyalty, checkout or point of sale. By cherry-picking functionality from best-of-breed solutions, brands have much greater flexibility. Composable is about creating a curated, a-la-carte experience. A particular company doesn't own a composable approach. It's a methodology.

" Composable solutions allow brands to be agile and keep ahead of the voracious market conditions. No one just wants to keep the lights on — they want to stay ahead of the competition."

WALT ROLLE
Global Head of Sitecore Competency, EPAM

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What are the Benefits?

Right now, it is all about speed to market. The competition is at a fever pitch, and hyperscalers have set the bar high. In this era of great expectations, consumers will only accept a good user experience. Businesses now require new tech capabilities that are truly customer-centric, and this is where a composable approach has its benefits.

The freedom of composable can reduce operating costs by enabling brands to choose what they need, execute specific tactics with less complexity and avoid significant changes to the back end. Organizing this concept as PBCs helps align teams fast, providing a natural response to market demands.

Composable also allows you to use best-of-breed software, which means you always get top-end performance. When orchestrated through a service layer, composable technology can protect the team from breaking changes as capabilities expand. This means solving challenges in weeks, not months, while reducing the risk of technical debt.

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What are the Challenges?

Monolithic architecture — and the technical debt it has imposed on businesses — can also prevent brands from moving beyond these systems to achieve better business outcomes with composable commerce, experiences and content.

Businesses have become locked into monolithic systems and, in the process, the costs and timelines have become prohibitive for integrations, upgrades and enhancements. Composable solutions are an antidote to this, as they provide more flexibility in choice and reduce vendor lock-in.

Composable also involves a different learning curve for development teams. Thinking about innovations and workloads must become more modular. When teams have the freedom to choose what best-of-breed solutions to use, of which there are many, it can be overwhelming.

> " Traditional platform strategies fall behind because they are too rigid and mired in legacy technical debt, stalling potential for innovation. On the other hand, being future fit prioritizes possessing a select number of lean, adaptable platforms that have the scale, flexibility and ecosystems to maximize business impact."

LIZ HERBERT
Forrester, October 2022,
The Future Fit Platform Strategy

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Where are the Opportunities?

A composable approach is the ultimate tool for brands to offer the best customer service, personalized shopping experiences or loyalty. The pandemic forced many brands to adopt many digital solutions at pace, start small, go to market, and then adapt and iterate their offering to the customer based on feedback, mistakes or success. This ability quickly turned into a competitive advantage.

Testing a new market strategy or digital solution without excessive development is now easier using composable solutions. This is a favorable approach in this phase of the economic cycle when resources — money, time and talent — are more constrained. With composable solutions, businesses can access thousands of tools, all within their niche.

Selling in today's market involves different offerings to different countries and customizing for content, language, costs and storefront features in an omnichannel world. Modularity enables developers to innovate quickly and easily and integrate complementary business capabilities over time. This allows for the agile evolution of services without disruption or increased risk to other areas of the technology stack. Brands can capitalize on these opportunities in real time if new solutions, digital channels or functionality emerge.

> " Strategic platforms possess the scale and modularity to allow for an ease in innovation. Heavy customization or technology sprawl do not weigh them down. And strategic platforms can be adapted quickly — by adding new functionalities and streamlining components that lack business value."

LIZ HERBERT
Forrester, October 2022,
The Future Fit Platform Strategy

A Guide to Success with Composable

Develop a Composable Mindset

A set of technological solutions may enable composable solutions, but they also impact people and their operations. At the outset of going composable, companies need to understand that deploying composable solutions is a business transformation project. It allows each business function to innovate on its terms and create a composable business. Also, the sum of each PBC can affect every other capability.

Adopting a composable methodology means that businesses must think about how whole systems will change and must have a holistic mindset. Mindset change stops brands from siloed thinking and provides a clearer view of technical challenges. The orchestration of PBCs matters — it defines customer journeys, how businesses operate and how they deliver goods and services. That's why organizing PBCs is best done at the start of a composable project.

Backcasting is an excellent starting point. This is where businesses define their future state regarding digital capabilities and begins by identifying the real business challenges to overcome. Once businesses establish their future state, they can work backward to map out incremental milestones for the composable solutions framework they need to implement to achieve the future vision. Doing so will help organizations define their roadmap and determine how composable fits into long-term business objectives. This involves getting the right stakeholders in the room to discuss how to implement composable solutions.

> " Composable gives businesses so much more opportunity affecting people, processes and technology. The sum of the composable elements is greater than the parts."

PAUL MCCORMICK
Managing Principal of Experience Consulting, EPAM

How to Build Your Strategy

Companies must create a roadmap to design and develop a composable strategy that accounts for all workloads and commerce functions. The roadmap must feature a clear digital marketing design and framework, as this will prevent each team from experiencing blind spots. The aim is for a sequence of prioritized, digestible projects.

It is worth identifying the biggest pain points the business experiences and whether these can be overcome with a composable approach. It's also important to identify inefficiencies or where customer journeys fall below expectations, because every organization has its own challenges. Further, it gives the team confidence about what they should focus on.

Additionally, businesses must define their organizational-level key performance indicators (KPIs). What is the business willing to measure, what can they change based on these measurements and, in turn, how will this have a meaningful impact on the bottom line?

Businesses also need to revisit the methodologies they are currently using to see if composable solutions can fit into their framework. For instance, how do agile methods fit in with a corporation's ability to roll out composable commerce, experiences and content? Are other authorities that businesses have signed up to, such as ISO, PMP or ITIL, able to incorporate composable operating methods?

Gearing Up Your Organization

People, processes and technology must be accounted for as you plan for and start your composable journey. The full implementation of composable commerce, experience and content solutions requires a rethink on organizational roles and stakeholders, both internally and externally. Certainly, leadership needs to create a measurement culture to keep projects accountable.

When it comes to composable projects, measuring outcomes and objectivity are crucial. Is your organization well-trained or capable of executing a composable project? If your organization doesn't have the confidence or skill set to implement a composable architecture, make sure your technology partner does.

Evolution, not Revolution, of Tech-Based Commerce

There are several ways to adopt composable architecture. Businesses have the ability and the freedom to phase out parts of their digital platform and phase in more composable elements when needed. It is worth identifying high-priority capabilities first, migrating these and deconstructing any monolithic architecture methodically.

At the same time, any composable project should be delivered quickly and efficiently to show early gains, return on investment (ROI) and effectiveness. If successful, brands can start on other composable projects in a parallel but staggered fashion to achieve incremental gains.
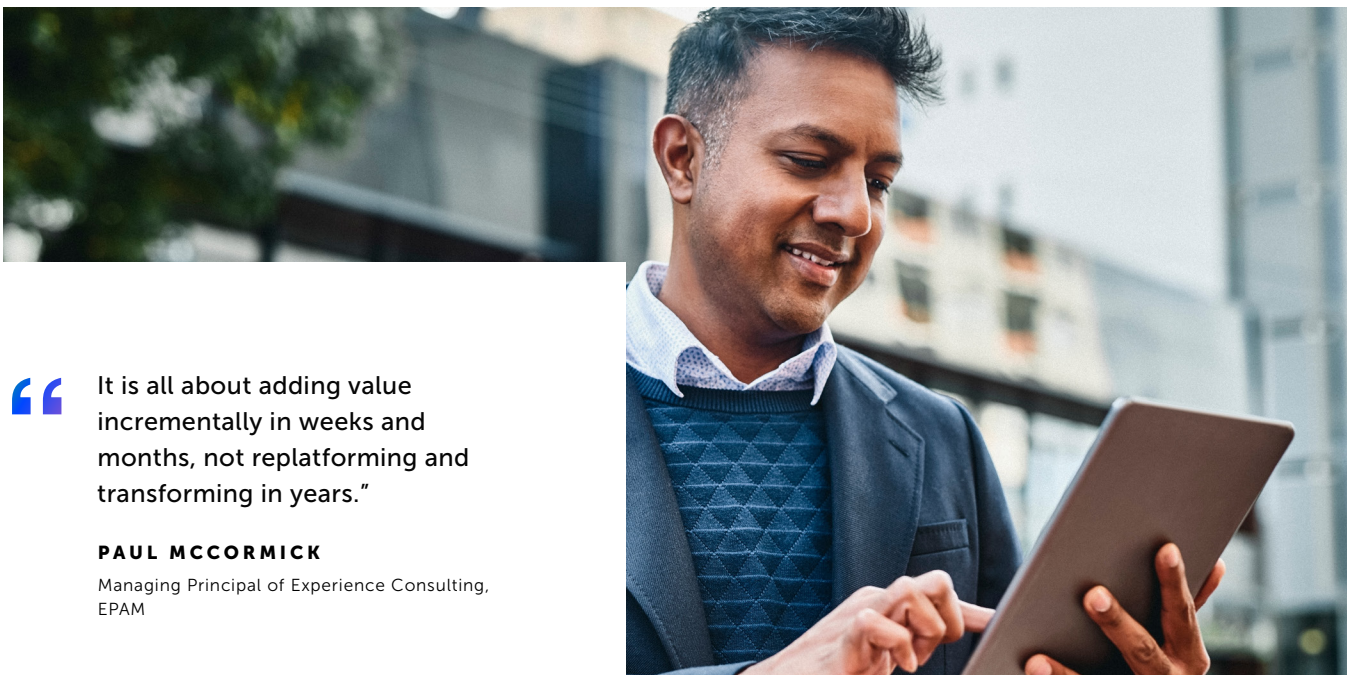
> " It is all about adding value incrementally in weeks and months, not replatforming and transforming in years."

PAUL MCCORMICK
Managing Principal of Experience Consulting, EPAM

The Need for a Definite Business Case

Brands need to build a solid business case for composable solutions with input from all stakeholders. Adoption of new composable solutions should be determined by real business needs, balanced with cost, time to market, complexity and resource investment. If ill-defined from the beginning, then composable projects can fail.

It is good to think of composable projects in a multifaceted way on the customer experience or order management layers. There are also different channels you should consider, such as customer journeys on mobile, web or social. Composable solutions can be articulated and implemented in many different ways.

> **It's direct, iterative conversations that are fact-based, presented during the roadmap and executed during the project that will ensure composable solutions get implemented."**

WALT ROLLE
Global Head of Sitecore Competency, EPAM

A Checklist for Composable

If you are wondering where to start when assessing the composable landscape, ensuring you take the right approach and accessing the right resources, follow this checklist:

- Work out your key challenges
- Identify your capabilities in tech stack development
- Define the critical gaps hindering success
- Create your composable roadmap
- Consider ROI and cost versus the benefits of rolling out composable
- Implement your digital initiatives based on a roadmap
- Prioritize continuous learning, feedback and accountability

> **It's about making sure that businesses are clear on what they want to get out of composable solutions. It's why we put the solutions through a rigorous assessment process."**

PAUL MCCORMICK
Managing Principal of Experience Consulting, EPAM

EPAM & Sitecore: A Formidable Team

Why EPAM

Today's complex marketing technology stacks can involve any of the following: content management, commerce, analytics, search, AI/ML or cloud. EPAM is a global, full-service digital transformation company with competency centers (CCs) that operate as value-creation networks in each area. In addition to our horizontal CCs, we have platform CCs, including one for Sitecore. Sitecore offers a composable stack of platform options, and you can use one or all of them, depending on your business needs.

Our CCs enable our experts to implement composable projects of any size. We also have some of the most experienced systems engineers in the business. Whether your brand needs experts who can formulate JavaScript or needs work on headless applications, EPAM has broad and deep industry and technology expertise to get the job done. And we can provide on-demand collaboration during your project.

Why Sitecore

The new Sitecore has been built for the modern tech environment and with composable solutions as its North Star. Sitecore is also highly experienced and established in the composable space, with a long track record and a wide range of implemented projects. Sitecore can enable a composable approach that involves bringing multiple solutions together across the customer journey.

Composable & Commerce Go Hand-in-Hand

A three-pillar approach for your brand's customer engagement capabilities could include content, experience and commerce. Typically, your roadmap will prioritize projects related to these pillars. Whether commerce is a priority or a future phase, you can leverage composable solutions to help your team break down complex transformations without sacrificing flexibility.

One platform that makes this possible is Sitecore OrderCloud. This solution exposes key functions, such as catalog, buyers, sellers, cart, orders, payments and fulfillment, as APIs and extensible data models to enable them to fit your ecosystem.

OrderCloud's capabilities, paired with your other pillars, like content creation, channel delivery and personalization, provide the whole self-service experience.

Recently, EPAM updated a 15-year-old monolithic architecture with Sitecore OrderCloud. In this future-state solution, all commerce workloads could be replaced without disrupting approximately 10 other systems. OrderCloud enabled the brand to tackle one major roadmap area with minimal risk while prioritizing the modernization of additional pillars, proving the solution's effectiveness.

Why EPAM + Sitecore

Since 2007, EPAM has been a Sitecore partner, providing end-to-end solutions. EPAM's Sitecore practice is considered number one in the world regarding the number of certified professionals, consultants, platform specializations, projects completed and MVPs. We were also the first company to receive all of Sitecore's specialization badges. This is why we are a Global Strategic Alliance Sitecore Partner.

Sitecore's leading digital experience platform and EPAM's digital expertise enable brands to become more agile and achieve their initiatives. EPAM and Sitecore can help you realize your composable ambitions, especially in a resource and talent-restricted world.

> "EPAM's Sitecore engineers are trained to tackle the diverse needs of transformation efforts today with skills in content management, experience orchestration, headless application development, cloud-based microservices architecture and commerce solutions."

WALT ROLLE
Global Head of Sitecore Competency, EPAM

CASE STUDY 01

INEOS Automotive Goes Global with EPAM

EPAM helped INEOS Automotive deploy a composable strategy for the launch of its new vehicle, the Grenadier, a rugged 4x4 off-roader. The project involved creating a new platform that enabled the company to communicate product features and emotional, relatable experiences to customers.

EPAM deployed a Sitecore-powered digital platform that integrated the digital experience by connecting web, customer relationship management (CRM), social and a vehicle configuration tool. This composable solution increased conversion of self-service orders and reservations. For example, when orders were opened to the global market in May 2022, the solution helped the company rack up 1,500 orders in the first 12 hours.

> "The INEOS Grenadier go-to-market model is very different from other manufacturers, meaning we have to offer a leading digital customer experience. That drove us from the outset to focus on selecting the right technology, in Sitecore, implemented by our Strategic Digital Partner EPAM. Together we have successfully delivered our first vehicle launch and provided a pathway to scale, as our company is evolving."

MATT DUNNAKEY
Head of Marketing, INEOS Automotive Limited

CASE STUDY 2

Life Sciences Organization Accelerates Multiple Brands with Composable

EPAM helped a global, leading pharmaceutical organization deploy a composable strategy that provided new capabilities and enabled business stakeholders. We worked with the company to align its digital marketing priorities to start the project. We then addressed the missing platforms in their technology stack to arrive at a best-of-breed conclusion.

The initial accomplishments were launching high-performance headless websites that could deliver regulated, personalized content to various visitors while capturing all their activity in a customer data platform. Multiple large cross-functional teams successfully launched the MVP and learned how to operate in a composable world. Now, the organization is poised to execute subsequent phases and onboard additional brands to maximize scale and ROI.

Conclusions & the Future

To implement composable solutions, businesses need to adopt integrated composable thinking, methodologies and technology. And composable thinking is not just a term for systems engineers and technology developers. It's about breaking down customer journeys and business capabilities so that you can take all challenges and issues into consideration with a composable approach across an organization.

Does the leadership team, the chief marketing officer or the fulfillment team think in a composable way? If everyone starts to align and evolve in their thinking, solutions, operations and business outcomes will be seen through the lens of composable solutions.

This will eventually lead to objectives and key results (OKRs) for composable commerce, content and experiences within companies and eventual business transformation. Teams can then interrogate these written OKRs to show that composable solutions provide greater conversion rates, faster payments and better brand engagement.

Additionally, in the future, consumers will expect access anywhere. Brands increasingly must build out omnichannel experiences on all social, web and voice platforms, accounting for multiple payment systems, currencies, regions and languages. Composable solutions offer brands the building blocks to create these offerings. Getting on board with composable now is therefore essential.

And, last, expect artificial intelligence (AI) everywhere. In the not-too-distant future, all business functions will encompass some form of AI or machine learning in their workloads. If brands deploy composable solutions, such as Sitecore, it will allow them to use these tools to recommend and even create content, to suggest product choices or assist with logistics. AI is becoming more democratized and used every day. This will supercharge commerce. Deploying a composable approach is one of the easiest ways to integrate AI capabilities across many workloads.

> " Composable solutions give us that flexibility to be able to adapt, inject new capabilities and innovate."
>
> **PAUL MCCORMICK**
> Managing Principal of Experience Consulting, EPAM

GET IN TOUCH

Are you ready to embark on your composable journey? Reach out to **SitecoreConnect@epam.com** to get started today.