



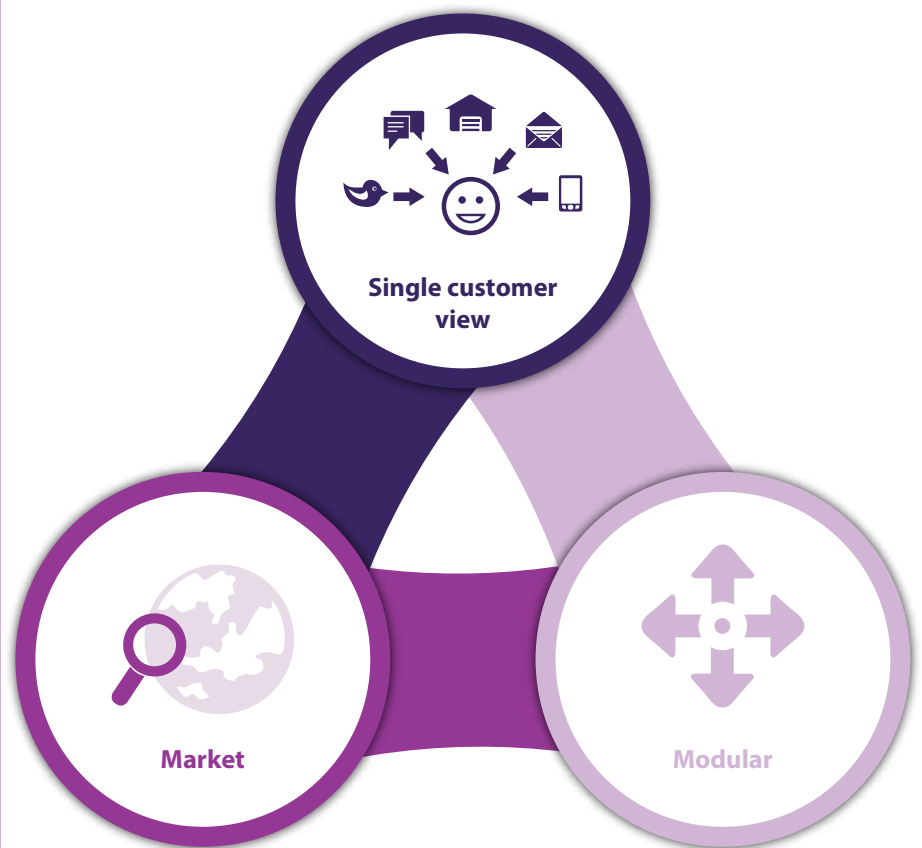
SIMPLIFYING E-COMMERCE: A FLATTER DESIGN FOR E-COMMERCE TRIANGULATION

Abstract

E-tailers have long relied on the triangulation theory with product, customer, and profit as the triangulation points for their business operations. However, as with every other business concept, the triangulation theory too needs to be revamped in the new digital age. Here we make a case for a flatter design for e-commerce triangulation – one that takes into account the mobile and social forces at play in today's digital world.

E-commerce triangulation is not a new concept for e-tailers. In fact, it forms the basis to any e-commerce business today. Simply put, e-commerce is a group of technologies that helps put forth products in front of customers to generate a profit. Every e-retailer's goal is to stretch their triangulation points (product, customer, and profit) to keep up with the competition across channels, growing needs of segmented customers, and ever-increasing shareholder expectations. But with the advent of social and mobile commerce, the basic triangulation theory needs to be overhauled. There is a growing need to create a flatter e-commerce triangulation design to meet the needs of the digital age.

A flat e-commerce design is firmly rooted in the triangulation theory. However, the triangulation points are defined keeping a scalable, palpable, and flexible e-commerce ecosystem in mind. Therefore, the triangulation points for a flatter design, as illustrated alongside, are: single customer view, modular, and market.



E-commerce triangulation

FLAT DESIGN

Single customer view

Maintain a single customer profile across channels using concepts of data harmonization, MDM, and responsive frameworks.

Modular

Various vendor products available in the market such as Omniture, Google Analytics, Certona personalization engine, and Magento e-commerce engine, can plugin with e-commerce ecosystems to engage better with customers.

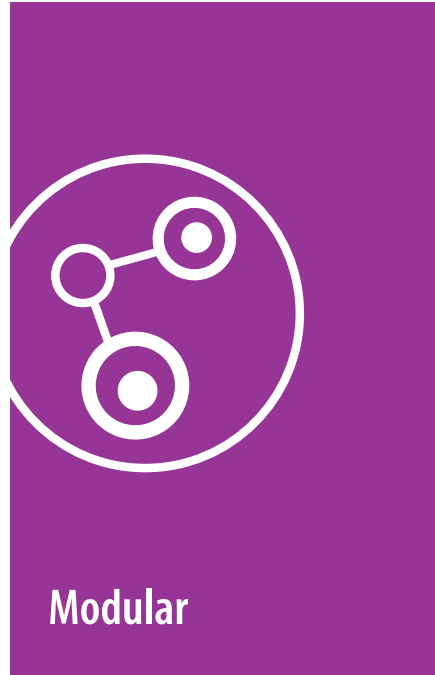
Market

E-tailers can explore SaaS-based products such as Demandware, to establish their sites in new markets in a short span of time.





With 'social revolution' and 'mobile warfare', customer dynamics have significantly changed. New breeds of customers such as social customers and mobile customers have mushroomed in every nook and corner of the e-commerce ecosystem. They compare, contrast, and buy products on-the-go across channels. So how do we keep up with these changes? One way is through a single customer view, which becomes our first triangulation point of flat design. Single customer view provides the flexibility to a customer to maintain a single profile across channels including social media, and complete the buy cycle across channels.



While we may have solved one problem, the bigger hurdle today is customer segmentation. With easy access to the Internet, customers have become diverse and shopping patterns varied. Moreover, customers want same-day order delivery and hassle-free returns. Catering to these needs are new technologies providing search optimizations, personalization, browsing information (recent and frequent), out-of-box e-commerce engines, CRM products, etc. Hence, the modular e-commerce engine forms the basis for the second triangulation point of a flat design. It is important for e-tailers to build an ecosystem where they can plug-in new technology products to keep pace with a diverse customer base and competition.



The social media explosion has propelled the customer's circle of influence to new heights. And the Internet has set an e-tailer's playing field at the world stage. More than an e-tailer wanting to grow globally, the 'global customers' are reaching out to local marketers. Faster time-to-market has become a need more than a want for an e-tailer. This brings us to our third triangulation point, the market. E-tailers must focus on how to take their merchandise or entire e-commerce site to new markets. This will set the ball rolling for maximizing profits and meeting global demands.

In the last two decades, the only thing that has remained constant for e-commerce is change. Flatter design for e-commerce triangulation prepares e-tailers to manage the ever-changing state of the industry, bridge the digital-physical divide, and engage better with customers.

About the Author



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Ankur is a seasoned consulting professional with a keen focus on the retail industry. As the Principal Consultant for E-commerce and Supply Chain at Infosys RCL, he works with retailers across the globe and adds value to his customers by analyzing business problems, identifying improvement opportunities, re-engineering business processes, and implementing custom / package solutions.

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