

MARKET NOTE

ETP Group Launches ETP Unify to Expand the Potential of Retail Enterprises with Its Unified Commerce Platform

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EXECUTIVE SNAPSHOT

FIGURE 1

Executive Snapshot: ETP Group Launches ETP Unify to Expand the Potential of Retail Enterprises with Its Unified Commerce Platform

This market note discusses the launch of ETP Unify, a unified commerce platform for retailers, which combines retail and ecommerce capabilities. It highlights the challenges faced by retailers because of increasing customer touchpoints and the need for inventory coordination. The platform aims to provide seamless data flow, operational consistency, enhanced customer loyalty, and inventory optimization. The report also discusses the importance of unified retail commerce in providing a personalized shopping experience and the key characteristics of ETP Unify, including its microservices-based architecture and cloud-native software-as-a-service (SaaS) solution.

Key Takeaways

- ETP Unify is a unified commerce platform that combines retail and ecommerce capabilities, addressing challenges faced by retailers because of increasing customer touchpoints and the need for inventory coordination.
- The platform offers a comprehensive commerce solution that integrates retail and ecommerce operations into a singular platform, supports customer relationship management across channels, and incorporates AI/ML technologies for operational agility.
- ETP Unify is built on the MACH architecture framework, emphasizing flexibility, scalability, and resilience. It is a cloud-native SaaS solution designed to fully exploit the advantages of the cloud, including on-demand resource scaling, high availability, and reduced operational costs.
- Adopting unified commerce solutions, such as ETP Unify, is crucial for retailers to maintain a competitive edge, as they consolidate all commerce-related data into a single database, enhances operational efficiency, and facilitates sophisticated management of retail operations.

Source: IDC, 2024

IN THIS MARKET NOTE

On March 28, 2024, ETP Group announced the launch of their new ETP Unify offering, which acts as a unified commerce platform for retailers. The platform combines retail and ecommerce front- and back-end capabilities, providing a solution to challenges faced by retailers given the increasing number of touchpoints with customers and their need to coordinate inventory availability and delivery. A unified platform ensures seamless data to flow across channels, consistency in operations, enhanced customer loyalty, and inventory optimization.

Highlights of the ETP Unify Offering

- Product information management: Setting up products, attributes, catalogs, hierarchies, and so forth
- Inventory management: Tracking of inventory levels across locations in real time
- Pricing management: Setting up price lists, promotions, and so forth.
- Order management: Processing orders from various channels, order routing, fulfillment
- Point of sale (POS) and retail operations: Billing, exchange/returns, in-store product catalogue, and cash management at stores
- Customer relationship management (CRM): Managing customer profiles and relationships across channels with intuitive clienteling
- Reporting and analytics: Recording and evaluating various sales, inventory, and customer reports
- Store management: Overseeing user access control, target setting, cash deposits, and so forth
- eCommerce integrations: Linking with marketplaces and last-mile delivery partners and application programming interfaces (APIs) for custom integrations
- Omni-channel capabilities: Fulfilling online orders from stores with endless aisle capabilities
- Mobile point of sales (MPOS): Leveraging capabilities to flexibly service customers in store

IDC'S POINT OF VIEW

Today, customers engage with retailers both digitally and physically. IDC's *2023 Retail Innovation Survey* revealed that generating loyalty and addressing multiple friction points in customer journeys, such as payments, pricing, last-mile delivery, and post-sales customer support, are the top 2 pressing challenges for retail organizations in Asia/Pacific regarding omni-channel commerce and customer experience. The result of the survey demonstrated that the retail industry faces opportunities and challenges as the number of channels and touchpoints for customer engagement grows.

Customers today have various ways of discovering products and services, including YouTube, social media, online advertisements, digital marketing content, company events, peer referrals, conversations with company representatives, product catalogs, point of sale, product feedback surveys, and emails for upselling/cross-selling. Retailers face difficulty providing accurate, up-to-date, and synchronized data across all these touchpoints, which is crucial. The purchasing process has also undergone significant changes, as customers can now buy from multiple sources such as a retailer's website, a marketplace, physical stores, franchisee stores, or via social commerce. The various channels complicate the buying process across discovery, evaluation, and purchase; and can result in customer dissatisfaction or the cost of additional processes (such as refunds or expediting).

Providing after-sales service to them is a crucial aspect of the customer journey and retailers know its significance. Customers discover new products through various touchpoints, and retailers engage with them through multiple channels after their purchase. With so many channels available, retailers consider serving their customers through all touchpoints essential to offer a unique experience. To address these challenges, retailers are turning to new technologies to make shopping easy on their sites or marketplaces where they sell, which leads to increased sales, revenues, improved customer loyalty, and enhanced customer experience.

Unified retail commerce refers to the practice of integrating back-end systems with customer-facing channels through a single platform. It takes omni-channel retail further by integrating all channels and touchpoints into a single, centralized platform or system. This approach aims to provide a seamless and personalized shopping experience across various channels, such as brick-and-mortar stores, ecommerce websites, mobile apps, and social media. By consolidating sales channels, processes, and data, retailers can gain a comprehensive view of customer behavior and preferences, leading to better customer service, improved inventory management, and enhanced overall efficiency. Unified commerce also enables businesses to track customer interactions and purchasing history across different touchpoints, allowing for a more tailored and frictionless shopping experience. Ultimately, the goal is to create a more connected, customer-centric, and efficient retail experience that meets the expectations of today's customers. It also represents a shift toward a more integrated and customer-focused retail model, allowing businesses to adapt to the evolving shopping behaviors of consumers across various channels.

ETP Unify

ETP Unify is a cloud-native unified retail commerce solution offering retailers a centralized hub for seamless management of diverse commerce operations. It brings the user a comprehensive retail and ecommerce functionality in one, and an easy-to-use interface. All information stored in one database empowers retail associates and managers to have all the information and tools at their fingertips to serve customers across channels and help retailers create an elevated consumer experience. It encompasses ecommerce, mobile commerce, CRM, order processing, inventory control, marketing, and analytics. ETP Unify streamlines and integrates these essential functions into a cohesive and efficient system.

Key Characteristics of the ETP Unify Offering

- Provides a comprehensive commerce solution that integrates retail and ecommerce operations into a singular platform utilizing a unified database. This design facilitates a cohesive view of inventory, pricing, promotions, and more, across all sales channels. Additionally, the platform streamlines the integration process with brand merchandise management and ecommerce channel management across in-house and external marketplaces, enhancing operational efficiency.
- Supports the management of customer relationships and data with uniformity across digital and physical channels, offering omni-channel order fulfillment capabilities, such as the execution of ecommerce orders through brick-and-mortar outlets, optimizing the customer experience and the opportunity to leverage inventory availability by utilizing physical stores as distribution points.
- Adopts a microservices-based architecture, thus the solution offers flexibility in customization, deployment, and scaling. It incorporates AI/ML technologies to automate complex processes such as order routing and inventory management, ensuring operational agility and improved decision making.
- Offers a user interface (UI) designed for responsiveness and versatility, accommodating a wide range of devices from tablets to screens with 2K resolution. Enhanced security

measures, including robust application gateway protections and multilevel authentication, ensure the safeguarding of data and transactions.

- Leverages an intelligent order routing engine that enables the optimization of ecommerce and online order fulfillment, while maximizing physical retail stores for inventory based on availability and proximity.
- Enhances conversion rates through the integration of unified product catalogues accessible to customers in-store. This system manages customer profiles and purchase histories, ensuring consistency regardless of whether purchases are made online or offline.
- Allows a frictionless customer journey via a single platform in which customers can access their purchase history, loyalty points, and other benefits accrued across various channels.

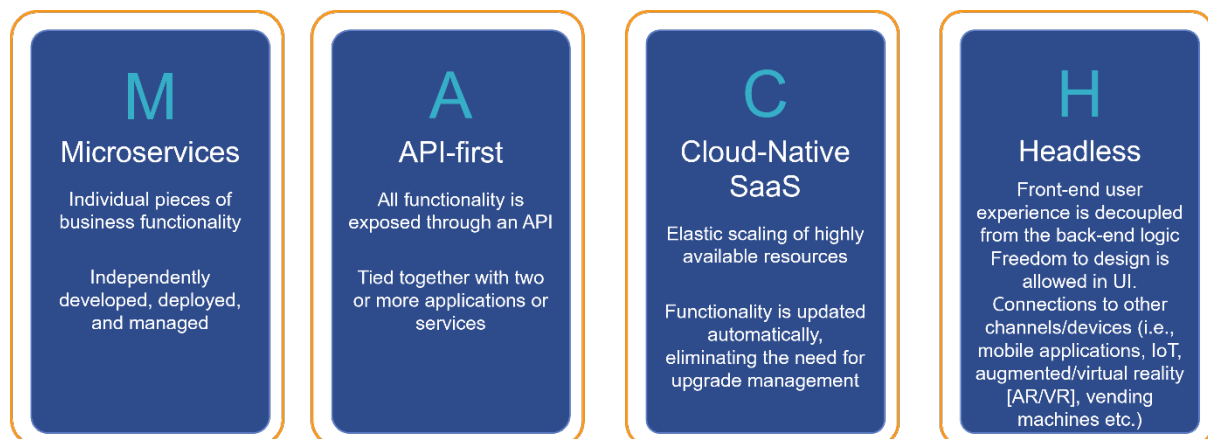
Other Considerations

ETP Unify is a modern software solution built on the MACH architecture framework, emphasizing flexibility, scalability, and resilience (refer Figure 2). The platform is based on four foundational principles: microservices, API-first, cloud-native software as a service (SaaS), and headless architecture. Microservices allow for greater development, deployment, and maintenance flexibility by utilizing a collection of independent, small, modular services. The platform prioritizes the development of APIs, ensuring that all functionalities are accessible through standardized programming interfaces, making it easy to integrate with other systems and allowing for seamless connectivity between different platform components.

ETP Unify is engineered as a cloud-native SaaS solution that leverages the scalability, resilience, and flexibility of cloud computing environments. This means the platform is designed to fully exploit the advantages of the cloud, including on-demand resource scaling, high availability, and reduced operational costs. Finally, the platform adopts a headless architecture, separating the back-end services from the front-end presentation layer, which enables developers to create custom user experiences across different devices and channels without altering the back-end logic. This architecture offers businesses the agility to rapidly adapt to market trends and consumer preferences by decoupling the development of the user interface from the core logic and functionalities.

FIGURE 2

MACH Architecture



Source: ETP

Concluding Thoughts

Adopting unified commerce solutions such as ETP Unify is pivotal for retailers aiming to maintain a competitive edge within an increasingly digitalized market landscape. The capabilities announced in the platform launch allow brands and retailers to address the growing consumer demand for convenience, personalization, and seamless interaction across various channels, including online platforms, mobile devices, social media, and physical stores. ETP Unify consolidates all commerce-related data into a seamless single database, which facilitates a comprehensive overview of commerce activities, thereby enhancing the operational efficiency, productivity, and profitability for retailers across the spectrum. Integrating marketplace management and multichannel capabilities with a unified inventory view allows for sophisticated management of retail operations, optimizing stock levels across all sales channels and ensuring a cohesive customer experience. This integration facilitates real-time inventory visibility, enabling retailers to accurately forecast demand, minimize stockouts, and reduce excess inventory. It also allows for the seamless execution of omni-channel strategies, in which customers can purchase, return, and exchange products through any channel they prefer, thus enhancing customer satisfaction and loyalty. Moreover, ETP Unify is equipped with an extensive array of analytics and reporting tools, enabling retailers to monitor performance metrics effectively and to make informed strategic decisions.

LEARN MORE

Related Research

- *IDC PlanScope: The Visual Commerce Platform* (IDC #EUR151815424, February 2024)
- *IDC FutureScape: Worldwide Retail 2024 Predictions — Asia/Pacific (Excluding Japan) Implications: Positioning for Success — Opportunities for Tech Sales and Marketing Leaders* (IDC #AP50547623, December 2023)
- *IDC FutureScape: Worldwide Retail 2024 Predictions — Asia/Pacific (Excluding Japan) Implications* (IDC #AP50547723, December 2023)
- *IDC PeerScape: Livestream Shopping in Retail — Practices for Contextualizing Consumer Experience* (IDC #US50025023, November 2023)
- *IDC's Worldwide Digital Transformation Use Case Taxonomy, 2023: Experiential Retail* (IDC #US50023223, September 2023)
- *IDC PlanScope: Customer Loyalty in Retail* (IDC #US50024023, July 2023)
- *Worldwide Retail Commerce Platform Software Providers 2023 Vendor Assessment* (IDC #US49436223, May 2023)

Synopsis

This IDC Market Note discusses the launch of ETP Unify, a unified commerce platform for retailers, which combines retail and ecommerce capabilities. It highlights the challenges faced by retailers because of increasing customer touchpoints and the need for inventory coordination. The platform aims to provide seamless data flow, operational consistency, enhanced customer loyalty, and inventory optimization. The report also discusses the importance of unified retail commerce in providing a personalized shopping experience and the key characteristics of ETP Unify, including its microservices-based architecture and cloud-native software as a service (SaaS) solution.

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