



By putting shoppers at the center of its business, Adidas keeps winning.

Speed and agility have been hallmarks of great athletic performance since the earliest Olympic games, and likely before. But speed and agility in retail? That's not so easy.

A leader in athletic sportswear, shoes, and fashion, Adidas is disrupting manufacturing and retail with bespoke design and a digital approach that puts consumers at the center of everything the company does. Joseph Godsey, SVP of Digital Brand Commerce, explained that the company "is truly trying to build differentiated experiences, identifying key consumer segments and mapping out experiences tailored to their needs."

Athletic gear maker Adidas is a Trailblazer in digital and online marketing.

The Adidas website is a key part of a platform through which the brand can offer premium, connected, and personalized experiences. Godsey said, "We ensure that our work in digital is aligned with our core belief: Through sports, we have the power to change lives. We realized that digital is the best way to enable this through the relationship we can create with consumers."

The company's most important store is no longer a physical store: It is the dot-com sites, and Salesforce is an important partner for delivering the company's digital transformation.

Digital first: Adidas consumers begin their journey in the digital experience.

Traditionally, retail shoppers started their purchase journey in a physical store. More recently, those same shoppers are using both online and offline starting points. For Adidas, the website is now the dominant channel, with more and more consumers starting their journey digitally.

During the most recent holiday season, for example, a significant share of revenue in the U.S. came from millennial shoppers, almost every one of whom started the purchase journey online, according to Jacqueline Smith-Dubendorfer, VP of Digital Experience Design.

This evolution from brick-and-mortar retail to digital commerce has enormous implications for companies trying to keep up with people's changing preferences. For Adidas, it meant prioritizing the digital experience by investing in a suite of Salesforce products, including Commerce Cloud and Service Cloud. It's an investment with tremendous upside, as the shift to digital provides opportunities for Adidas to get closer to consumers and understand each one individually.

Commerce and customer support get an upgrade thanks to Salesforce.

With Service Cloud, Adidas empowers its staff of 1,100 care agents to deliver faster, smarter service in whichever format consumers prefer — phone, email, web, or social — all from a single application. As a result, customer service is more efficient for the company and, crucially, more personalized and convenient for consumers.



Commerce Cloud has enabled Adidas to rapidly form relationships with shoppers anywhere in the world. Today, the company runs more than 50 stores across more than 40 countries, and can create, manage, and update its global presence quickly and easily, cascading changes across properties with a few simple clicks.

With Salesforce, Adidas gets to know its consumers, one shoe buyer at a time.

Smith-Dubendorfer credits Salesforce with giving Adidas the ability to treat consumers as individuals, and answer key questions about the customer in each interaction: Do we know this person? Where did they come from? What are they interested in?

“Those data points then enable us to adapt what we present, when we present it, and how we present it to ensure that we deliver as close to what that customer is looking for as we can,” said Smith-Dubendorfer.

Beyond simply presenting information or content to a shopper, Adidas uses its knowledge of individual consumers — and their preferences, gained through Commerce Cloud — to create better products and, in an increasing number of cases, even custom-made products. These products can be manufactured on the fly and delivered to consumers remarkably fast.

Consumers are co-creators in the Adidas brand.

By allowing shoppers to build custom products, executive leaders at Adidas know they’re opening up their brand and relinquishing control to consumers — an expected result of putting consumers at the center of the business.

The Salesforce Platform has been integral to this process, because it creates the digital interface that enables the company to engage with shoppers. “Salesforce has a unique positioning with best-in-class platforms across an array of areas from commerce to marketing to service. The powerful part is when those solutions start to be interconnected, at a data layer and at a capability layer,” said Godsey.

Salesforce helps Adidas bring its brand to life.

The consumer-centric, digital-first strategy that Adidas has been pursuing is now paying dividends with record-breaking growth at a time when the retail industry is struggling. In 2016, the company’s overall sneaker sales grew substantially. Around that time, the company announced 24% currency-neutral growth in North America for its brands, and reported a 59% increase in ecommerce globally, which equated to approximately €1 billion in online sales.

The Adidas digital channel, powered by Salesforce, is essential to the company’s growth and future success, according to Smith-Dubendorfer. “The scale and consistency at which we’re able to deliver and bring our brand to life is incredibly important,” she said. “And the partnership we have with Salesforce has enabled us to do that across many, many markets. It is enabling us to be faster to market, to deliver better experiences quicker, and to drive scale and consistency in a way we weren’t able to do before.”