Columbia Road Digital Commerce Canvas Guideline

Part 1: Introduction

Columbia Road Digital Commerce Canvas is your go-to tool for mapping the big picture of your digital sales and customer acquisition. It helps you to keep the big picture and holistic business understanding in mind when beginning improvement efforts. When moving forward, the canvas helps to prioritise and focus. We have found significant value in simply flagging the most crucial pain points and opportunities in each cell.

Still, first and foremost this canvas is a *communications* tool to be used internally and with key stakeholders. With one glimpse you'll be able to visualise goals and bottlenecks.

What is Columbia Road Digital Commerce canvas?

Our digital commerce canvas includes all aspects of your business that have an effect on your ability and success of selling products and services, and acquiring customers in digital channels. It is based on the know-how of all our experts who have numerous years of experience in digital business. On top of that, we constantly reflect and validate it in our digital commerce projects and update it based on latest findings.

This canvas is the top layer of our Digital Commerce Blueprint. In the blueprint, cells of the canvas have been divided into sub-items, many of which can be massive components of a company's business. As a whole, the blueprint is a powerful tool and checklist for analyzing, planning and redesigning each single aspect related to the digital commerce of a company. We will introduce the Digital Commerce Blueprint in more detail at a later time.

Benefits of the canvas?

The canvas can be used for a quick holistic review of different aspects of a company's digital commerce. It works best when you take a specific angle, something you have been working on recently. We have been using it for a quick review of:
- Pain point and opportunity analysis
- Target state planning
- Mapping responsibilities
- Holistic effects of a particular decision on digital commerce (e.g. technology, strategy, sales channel)
- Identifying key aspects affecting customer experience

In very short, one or two hour workshops, we have been able to, for example, open our customers' eyes to the complex cause-effect relationships of digital commerce and identify all the roles and responsibilities that are needed to run successful digital commerce. It is a very light way of kickstarting a more thorough process and making sure from the get-go that each single aspect of digital commerce is being taken into account.

Furthermore, it is a tool for communication: First, by making key stakeholders discuss each aspect of digital commerce on one go and, second, having a document that enables shifting focus from sub-optimization to the big picture of digital commerce with one glimpse.

How to use the canvas?

After choosing your angle, just print and hang the canvas on the wall and have a one or two hour workshop. During that workshop, go through each of the cells in the canvas and mark your findings in the respective cells.

For example, when analyzing the current state of your digital sales, mark the biggest challenges with red post-its in the cells that the challenge is related to and, respectively, the main strengths with green post-its. Or, alternatively, you can mark for each cell what are the roles you need for running them and, thereafter, fill those post-its with names.

Part 2: How to make most of the canvas

Digital Commerce Canvas = the principal elements of digital commerce

Now, let's quickly go through each cell in the canvas, so that you know what is relevant in each and what are the major aspects to take into account when evaluating and revisioning your digital business.

The canvas consists of three levels, the heavy key items being in the middle. Thereby, one *can* state that the canvas distantly resembles a hamburger. So of course we decided to run with that metaphor. Anyway, here we go:

The bun and tasty sauce on top:

As always, you should not do any business moves without knowing the big picture and strategy - and the same goes for the Digital Commerce canvas.

You need to have defined what are the *implications of business and digital strategies for your digital commerce* and, the other way around: How should digital commerce enable business and digital strategies. Based on these, it's useful to define a vision for your digital commerce, which then helps to prioritize items related to other cells and for daily operations.

Based on your strategic targets, you have to define what are the aspirations for customer experience: Should digital commerce be a highly personalized service that helps your customers to conveniently walk through their particular customer journey? Or is it enough that it's merely a catalogue that supports customer's decision making before and after contacting your sales representatives.

The juicy beef in the middle:

Only when you know what you are aiming for with digital commerce, as discussed above, you can evaluate and design the basic building blocks that maximize digital revenue and customer value.

The grey boxes in the model are the basic building blocks of digital commerce. There are numerous approaches to design each of them and an endless amount of components that can be applied for each. The success of your digital commerce is determined by how you define, design, and operate each of these cells. Your unique way of building the puzzle is how your digital business differs from the competitors.

Not all of the cells weigh the same in respect to effort or impact but, none the less, you cannot do digital commerce without having a solution for each of these. Of course, what type of business you are running affects the relevance of each of them - logistics is potentially not such a big factor in service business (often it matters, though).

The key learning point? Digital sales channels, including webshop, are a major aspect of digital commerce, but they are just one key piece of the puzzle. Often our customers have been sub-optimizing this while the key wins would have been somewhere else in the canvas. For example, a webshop is worth nothing if logistics do not work.

The salad and bun that provide texture at the bottom:

The aspirations and target state for all the above should define, how the two bottommost aspects are designed. However, all too often we have seen that all digital commerce discussions start with IT while the organization is a non-thought-through continuation of the needs of legacy business. On top of that, both of them are often optimized for traditional business' operative efficiency and product orientation even though digital business is all about flexibility and long-term growth.

IT solution architecture is the growth soil of digital commerce. It has to be optimized to enable the unique digital commerce puzzle that you are aiming for, composed of the cells above. In its core, it has to be modular and flexible enough to adapt to the constantly changing needs of digital commerce. Do I have to mention that it should not bring grey hairs to the CFO?

Finally, people and how they operate. The most simple thing to remember: You should have a digital commerce "shopkeeper" role. Additionally, *digital commerce affects all aspects of the business* (which is also the key message of the canvas). The great challenge is, how do you ensure that all the cross-organizational items are constantly synced and have very clear areas of responsibilities? Who should own digital commerce or should it be a horizontal matrix type of unit of its own? How to fit the fast moving digital commerce with the typically slower pace rest of the business?

Ps. Why Digital Commerce instead of eCommerce, digital business, online sales etc.? We believe that sales and customer acquisition in digital environment is not only about having a shop online. It is about aligning all the items described above, ensuring an optimized customer experience throughout the customer's journey toward meeting her need, which then ends up in purchase and, hopefully, more purchases later on. Digital Commerce can also be about direct ERP integrations with B2B clients and complex digital business models. Therefore, we think that a holistic term such as digital commerce is more fitting to the context that we are operating in.

DIGITAL COMMERCE CANVAS

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BUSINESS STRATEGY, BUSINESS MODEL, DIGITAL STRATEGY, GOALS, KPIS

CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE

MARKETS & SEGMENTS	BUYER PERSONAS	CUSTOMER RELATIONSHIP MANAGEMENT	CUSTOMER ACQUISITION & MARKETING	CUSTOMER SERVICE
SALES CHANNELS (OMNICHANNEL)	LOGISTICS	WAREHOUSING AND INVENTORY	ORDER MANAGEMENT & RETURN HANDLING	PRODUCT CATALOG & INFORMATION
CONTENT	ANALYTICS, REPORTING & FINANCIALS	PRICING	LEGAL & PRIVACY	PAYMENT & INVOICING

SOLUTION ARCHITECTURE

ORGANISATION, RESPONSIBILITIES, OPERATIVE MODEL