

A white paper co-developed by



WHITE PAPER

# ASIA BRAND.COM

Mapping the journey for strategic  
digital commerce transformation in 2022

# The Role of “Brand.com” in Asia

*Why official brand websites matter more than ever*

When we talk of a brand's digital transformation, we often think about the growth opportunities associated with online marketplaces, from Amazon in the West to Tmall in China, or Lazada, Zalora and Shopee in South-East Asia to name a few.

While marketplaces offer the promise of wide and diversified customer bases, their models are geared toward product marketing, and offer little flexibility in the way of brand experience. With their products listed alongside ever growing competitors, brands end up competing on functionality or pricing rather than the aspirational and emotional value that differentiate them in the eyes of many customers.

## **Brand.com goes where marketplaces cannot.**

On brand.com, customers get to experience a brand's full universe, from its history to its products, marketing content and loyalty platform. The moment customers land on a brand website, the brand has the ability to guide and interact with them, to inspire newcomers with unique content, welcome back existing customers with special offers; in essence to create a unified user experience that combines branding, marketing, sales and customer care, covering their whole journey from interest to purchase to loyalty.

As the digital dimension of the offline brand universe, brand.com is a cornerstone of omni-channel customer experience. Rather than a parallel channel to offline, it allows consumers to jump in and out between what they see and feel in store, and what they can discover, review or even purchase from the comfort of their own home.

In Asia, the time is ripe for brands to put brand.com at the center of their digital commerce strategy: the region has been experiencing phenomenal growth in online retail, with annual sales expected to reach \$2.8 trillion by 2025, up from \$1.7 trillion in 2020 – a growth of 65% over five years.<sup>1</sup>

In South-East Asia, where much of this growth is happening, 55% of shoppers have used brand.com throughout the path to purchase journey, and 41% of brand.com shoppers indicated that brand.com

gave them an immersive experience (compared to 35% of marketplace users). Interestingly, across product categories the purchase value via brand.com is on average 20% higher than marketplaces.<sup>2</sup>

Beyond the opportunity of growing Direct-to-Consumer sales, a brand.com provides the most direct access to customer data, an essential asset in Asia's competitive retail environment.

But the task of creating a truly powerful brand.com is far from simple. From the underlying platform to the design (UI and UX), product strategy, check-out and fulfilment, not forgetting analytics and automation, this paper looks to map the main challenges and opportunities that brands face as they embark on their digital transformation in Asia.



Creating an omni-department, omni-channel and omni-market brand.com is a discovery process. Many brands begin this process with an idea and strategy of what a new or upgraded website might do for their business – but along the way we often introduce a host of tools that can enhance their initial vision and can help further enhance their customer journey.

Charles Chan  
Founder and Managing Director  
CLEARgo

# The Big Digital Picture

## Omni-department

➤ *Getting all hands on deck*

The process of digital commerce transformation goes beyond the creation of a single digital asset. Creating a truly omni-channel experience requires complete integration with a brand's existing infrastructure, including its ERP and CRM systems, third-party logistics providers, the many different payment options available across markets, and so on.

The success of such a feat relies heavily on a brand's ability to rally its various departments – from e-commerce to marketing to customer service and even legal and logistics - around a shared understanding of the strategic role of brand.com within the brand's retail strategy.

This is easier said than done: while 77% of senior APAC executives believe that marketing and IT have a shared vision to unlock creativity and innovation, only 27% agree that their disparate marketing and technology teams collaborate successfully today.<sup>3</sup>

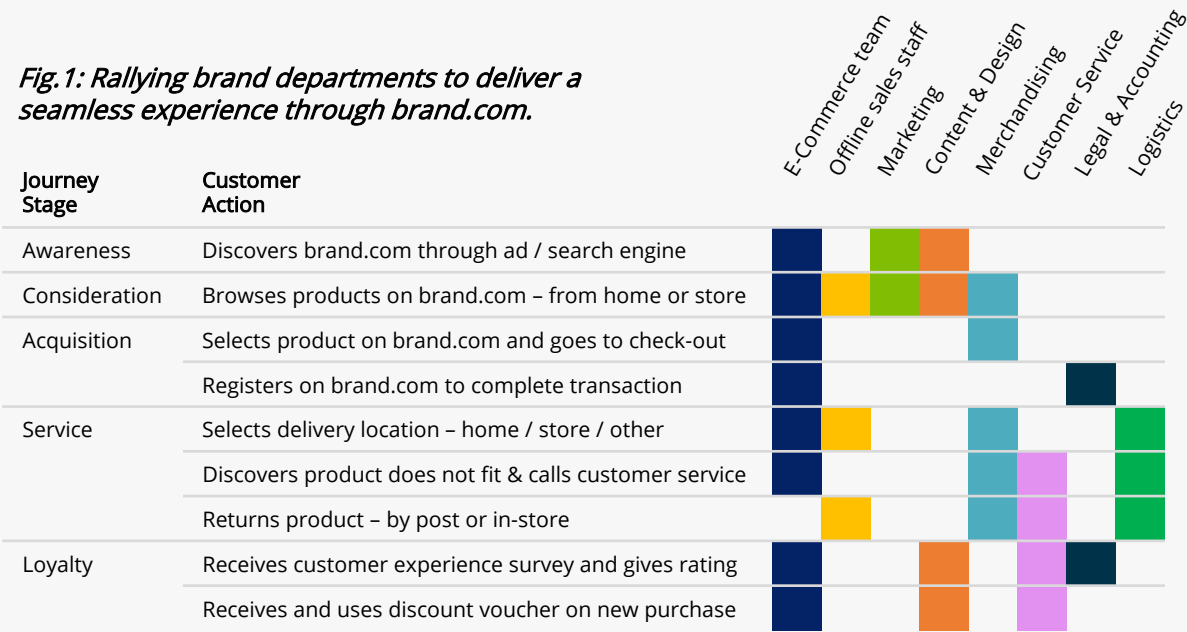
**Yue Hwa**, a prominent department store in Hong Kong and Singapore, is currently carrying out its own review process.

Established in 1959, the company enjoys a firm footing among mature consumers thanks to its differentiated product strategy – it was one of the earliest to sell Chinese imports when other department stores stocked products from Japan and Europe.

After two years of strong sales growth, Yue Hwa was inspired to increase its market reach and strengthen its CRM system through its brand.com. In partnership with CLEARgo and Adobe Commerce, the department store is rehauling its website, and involving all levels in the process.

"As a more traditional department store, online was a new concept for the brand when we launched our first site" shares Yue Hwa's Head of E-Commerce Alan Cheung. "Internal communication has been key to changing mindsets and ensuring buy-in from all departments into the potential of an integrated brand.com. The next stage will be training our store sales staff to make the most out of our brand.com and help them raise the customer experience even further."

**Fig.1: Rallying brand departments to deliver a seamless experience through brand.com.**



## Omni-channel

### ➤ *Crafting a unified experience*

With a host of template solutions available for all types of retail, creating a website to sell products has never been easier. But to create an entirely tailored and omni-channel experience around a brand.com is another concept with added layers of complexity.

Across Asia, consumers increasingly expect the option to buy online and collect in-store, or be offered a host of quick commerce options, loyalty offers, VIP benefits, etc. In 2021, Global Data's survey of 6,000 APAC consumers showed that **convenience** (73%) and **time-saving** (67%) are the two primary drivers of online shopping in the APAC region. Shoppers also relied on online channels to take benefit of **lower prices** (48%) and **variety & choice available** (47%).<sup>4</sup>

From a consumer's perspective, an omni-channel brand experience should feel coherent and interconnected across touch points. A customer might see a product on a retail partner's site or a marketplace, then go view the product in store and check on the brand.com at the same time to easily compare products or seek more information.

From a brand's perspective, crafting such an omni-channel experience requires a careful review of the brand's internal systems, as well as its overall sales strategy across all existing channels, including retail partners, marketplaces and offline stores.

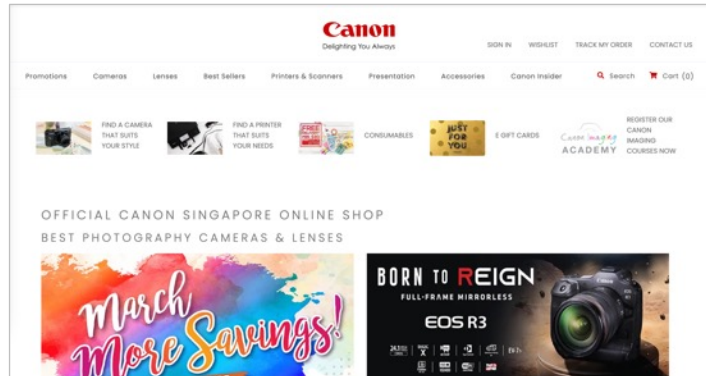
Across Asia, leading luxury, premium and lifestyle brand operator **Bluebell Group** has made this process a priority to meet evolving consumption trends. "In order to complement our sales commissions model, we have introduced systems to track sales driven by offline staff, even when they happen online" previously shared Jacky Leung, Chief Information Officer at Bluebell Group.<sup>5</sup>

“

In the nine months after migrating Marathon Sports and Catalog to Adobe Commerce, online sales have been growing substantially and we saw a 50% growth in loyalty membership. Part of the growth can be attributed to our new site with better UX/UI design, but it's also a result of increased cross-selling, smoother checkout and faster website response from Adobe Commerce.

Kelvin So  
General Manager of IT  
Swire Resources

In Singapore, global household name **Canon** launched its direct-to-consumer e-commerce shop in late 2015. With CLEARgo and Adobe the company has continued to evolve its e-store to fit the consumption habits to its diversified consumer base.



*Canon Singapore's E-Shop features an extensive range of SKUs to cater to various users, from cameras for hobbyists to printers for home offices/small medium enterprises and even third party products from its partners.*

"We see our e-shop as a complementary channel to reach our customers wherever they are" explains Edwin Teoh, Head of Marketing - Canon Singapore. "We have a suite of offerings from camera to printers to laser printers to even third party products – all which are catered to meet the needs of our customers (both consumers and even SOHOS/ SMEs)."

Another market leader in Hong Kong and China, **Swire Resources**, represents a range of top international brands in the region, including Arena, Speedo, Columbia, Chevignon, Teva, Havaianas, Crocs, Cath Kidston and UGG. After creating e-commerce sites for many of its brands, the company sought solutions to increase online sales for its sportswear retail chains under the Marathon Sports & Catalog, to consolidate e-commerce sites to simplify management and operation, to connect backend systems for faster product fulfillment and delivery and to gain greater visibility into loyalty member preferences across online and offline channels.<sup>6</sup>

Turning to Adobe Commerce for its responsive, integrated enterprise solution, the company was able to achieve faster time-to-delivery with more efficient operations, substantial sales growth over a nine-month period, 50% growth in membership with its unified loyalty programme and accelerated response time on the e-commerce sites.



## Omni-market

### ➤ *Testing new waters*

As part of their growth process, many brands look for tools that will allow them to capture new segments, reach new markets or diversify their business models.

For multi-brand retailers like **Yue Hwa**, a brand.com offers a springboard to achieve all three objectives.

One of the department store's objectives with its new website will be to capture a younger segment of the market – newly married and young families – and this requires diversifying its product offering. To do so, the company will introduce a B2B2C corner with a marketplace, allowing suppliers to setup their own online shop, with their own inventory and marketing capabilities.

As a business grows, a brand.com can become one of its most powerful assets to serve and understand customers across markets.



*Hong Kong and Singapore Department store Yue Hwa will launch a marketplace function on its brand.com to diversify its product mix and expand its consumer base.*

# Crafting a best-practice brand.com in Asia

## The time is ripe...

When done right, a brand.com can become an invaluable asset across departments from branding to sales to HR. While development is a ongoing process, understanding the strategic value of the following steps will put brands one step ahead in the race for successful digital commerce transformation.

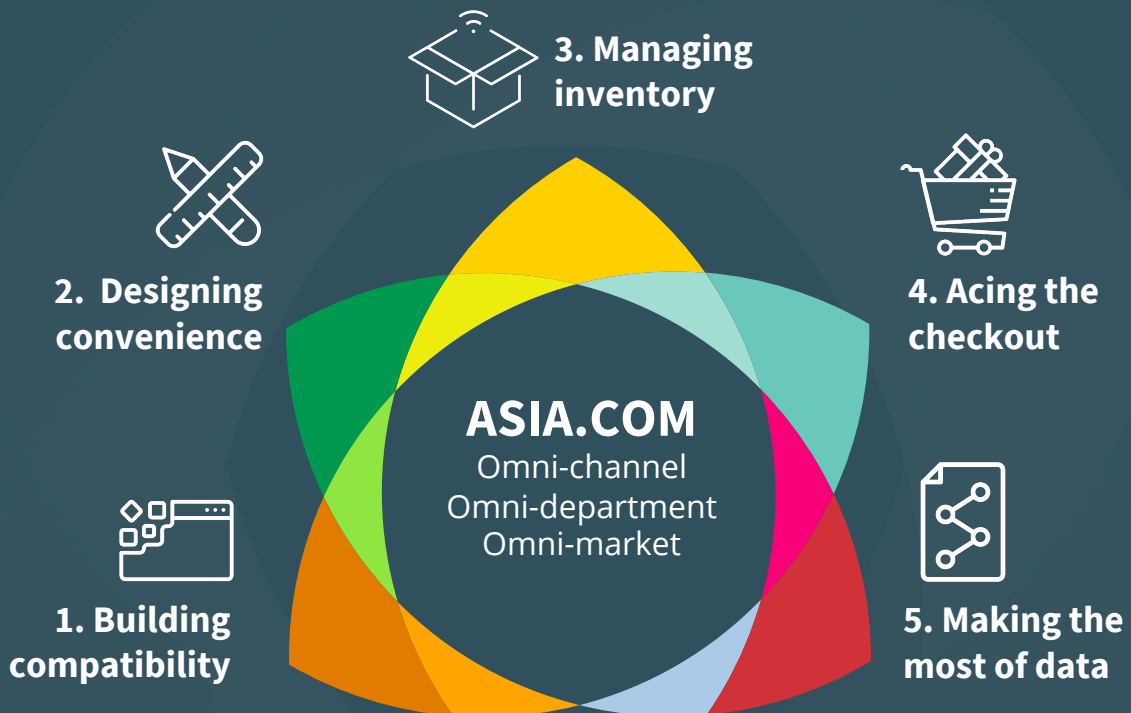
*Between 2020 and 2025, online retail sales in Asia are expected to...*

*Grow by*

**65%**

*from \$1.7 trillion to*

**\$2.8 trillion**





# 1. Building compatibility

Website builders come in all shapes and sizes, and determine the degree of flexibility brands will have in developing and scaling their brand.com over time and across markets.

The majority of builders will offer template solutions that can get a brand website running in no time. But these templates do come with limitations, especially when it comes to integrating brand.com within a brand's omni-channel environment.

Here are three key ways to build compatibility.

## ➤ *Across platforms*

### *Use Progressive Web Apps (PWA)*

Today's consumer browses, researches, engages and transacts across various screens and, as a result, they expect their experiences to be lightning-fast, seamless and intelligent across devices. **Progressive web applications (PWAs)** have risen in popularity to deliver exceptional cross-device experiences that combine the interactive functionality of mobile apps with the convenience and discoverability of the web. What's more, the total cost of ownership (TCO) for a PWA is lower than that of native apps for iOS and Android.

## ➤ *Across channels*

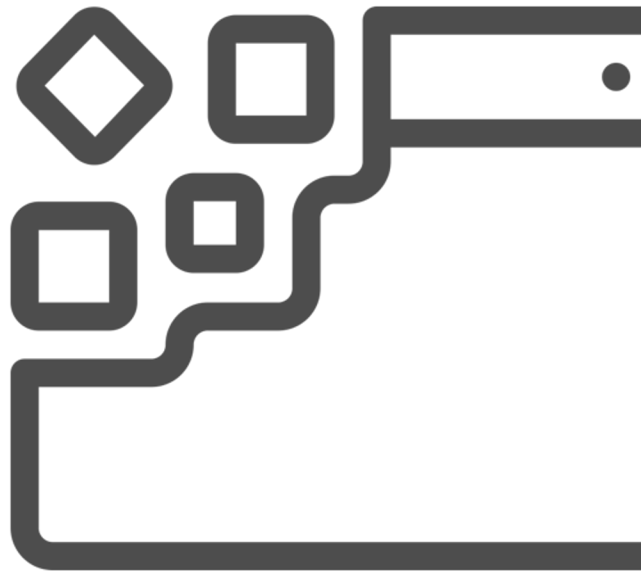
### *Unify your product catalogue*

With CLEARomni's **Product Information System (PIM)** you can create a centralised product repository, facilitate product updates and approval workflow, and enable collaboration between different parties such as merchandisers, suppliers & eCommerce teams. Meanwhile CLEARomni Connect can help integrate the Brand.com with other marketplaces such as Tmall, JD, Lazada, Shopee, etc.

## ➤ *Across markets*

### *Cater to local infrastructure*

**Adobe Commerce** allows for agile internationalisation, catering to local ecosystem and behaviours, including language, currency, local pricing, tax, multi-location inventory, payment methods, couriers, etc. It also provides flexibility to support commerce across the whole enterprise, through headed and headless devices, and for B2B & B2C, within a single platform.





## 2. Designing convenience

In South-East Asia, online represents around 80% of channels that consumers use to browse and discover new products.<sup>8</sup>

If your business has a brand.com and a separate e-shop, your customers will need to jump between the two to find various pieces of information that may not necessarily be linked. This can create frustration.

Today brands are opting to address the full customer experience under one site, covering multiple functions including branding content, a comprehensive product catalogue, a seamless member log-in experience, offline store information and so on.

### *Recognise your customers*

Define the key markers that will allow you to identify your customers between offline and online, and offer them a seamless experience in terms of loyalty benefits, engagement initiatives, etc.

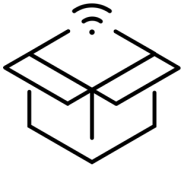
### *Use AI to drive product discovery*

Maximise the relevance of your products to your users with the help of artificial intelligence. Powered by **Adobe Sensei**, the **Live Search** and **Product Recommendations** functions provide AI-based dynamic search result recommendations, vastly increasing your site's relevance and convenience.

### *Serve custom content & promotions*

Draw data insights from membership & dynamic customer segments to serve highly personalised marketing and promotional content.





### 3. Managing Inventory

Developing and managing an integrated product catalogue is among the toughest challenges facing brands when building their digital commerce-enabled brand.com.

Some brands may have large numbers of SKU that they sell in offline, but do not have the resources to put them all online; or they may only set aside partial inventories in the warehouse for the purpose of selling online. But with a brand.com, brands can now sell direct-to-consumer domestically, cross-border or from different countries, on top of their partner marketplaces, or physical stores.

This requires a reliable system that can allocate and organise inventory for each sales channel.

#### *Track multi-location inventory*

**Adobe Commerce** supports multi-location inventory tracking to provide up-to-date and accurate readouts of available stock.

#### *Assign inventory dynamically*

**CLEARomni Inventory Management** can help consolidate inventory from all sources (stores, warehouses, third party sellers etc.), and perform dynamic stock allocation to meet demand across diversified sales channels.





## 4. Acing the checkout

Far from being the last touch point with your customer, building a successful checkout – from delivery options to pricing transparency and local payment options - is one of the most important steps in driving consumer satisfaction and ultimately loyalty.

### *Offer multiple payment solutions*

Through its large partner ecosystem, **Adobe Commerce** provides wide coverage over international payment gateways and support on many local payment options e.g. Wechat Pay, Alipay, Payme, FPS, LINE Pay, etc.

### *Offer multiple shipping options*

Increasingly, customers expect to be presented with a host of delivery options at checkout, from their home to their office to their local store, to designated lockers etc.

**CLEARomni's Order Management System (OMS)** can help brands manage multiple shipping & collect options across various handling parties – from 3PL warehouses to stores to third party suppliers including multi-brand retailers, department stores and B2B2C sites. The system also provides flexible order splitting & fulfilment workflows, important for assigning the right parties to ship a specific order quickly and in the most cost-effective way.





## 5. Making the most of data

According to the Adobe 2022 Digital Trends Experience Index, data and insights (e.g., analytics, data management/customer data platforms) was the most cited technological priority for 2022, with 58% placing it into their top three priorities.<sup>9</sup>

And in a global survey by Accenture, 91% of consumers said they were more likely to shop with brands who recognise, remember and provide relevant information.<sup>10</sup>

From advertising to emails, mobile apps, physical stores, marketplaces and brand.com, customers engage with brands through ever new touch points. Together, these touch points offer businesses the opportunity to derive insights that can guide inventory optimisation, pricing and promotions, re-engagement schedules, or even the UX and UI of the brand.com.

### *Organise your data*

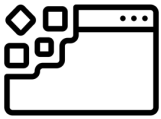
Adobe's suite of products, **Adobe Analytics**, **Adobe Customer Analytics** and **Adobe Commerce Business Intelligence** offer flexible levels of analytics covering specialised functions, from consumer behavior to inventory movement to customer trends.

### *Turn data insights into actions*

Data trends may offer insights, but there are many different ways to act on these insights, to understand customers and engage them with incentives that address their pain points. For instance, a loyal customer might shop from a different location than usual and drop out of a purchase due to high shipping costs; perhaps the brand might offer a lower shipping rate, or suggest local pick-up options?



# Key Takeaways



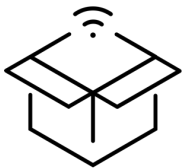
## Building compatibility

Use Progressive Web Apps (PWA)  
Unify your product catalogue  
Cater to local infrastructure



## Designing convenience

Recognise your customers  
Use AI to drive product discovery  
Serve custom content & promotions



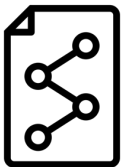
## Managing inventory

Track multi-location inventory  
Assign inventory dynamically



## Acing the checkout

Offer multiple payment solutions  
Offer multiple shipping options



## Making the most of data

Organise your data  
Turn data insights into actions

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