IBM

Watson Commerce

An omni-channel order-to-activate solution for telecom

Highlights

- Legacy systems are deeply embedded in some services still offered by CSPs; "rip and replace" strategies of those systems are expensive, disruptive and high risk.

- For every dollar spent on IBM solutions impacting marketing, sales and merchandising, companies realize an average of nearly 16 times return on investment.[1]

- Watson Commerce provides solutions without a disruptive large-scale transformation and deployment.

It's a fact in the telecommunications industry that legacy systems continue to provide support for vital services, such as landline telephones and leased lines—those systems cannot be ripped out without significant disruption and business risk.

Yet newer, more flexible systems may give Communication Service Providers (CSPs) the best opportunity to deliver exceptional customer experiences across all channels, from web and social to call centers and physical stores.

The so-called "big bang" approach promises CSPs a quick, new world of unified customer experiences, but seldom delivers; failing to recognize how deeply embedded legacy systems are in the enterprise and the value they still provide.

CSPs cannot afford to waste time and money with a "rip and replace" of their OSS/BSS that will only put them further behind—every day competitors are challenging their product strategies and reducing profitability, while mergers and acquisitions have brought together companies, people and systems.

The complexity challenge
The issue of moving to the new while harnessing the best of the old is complicated by a convergence of independently developed products and services, for consumers and businesses, which can no longer survive in silos.
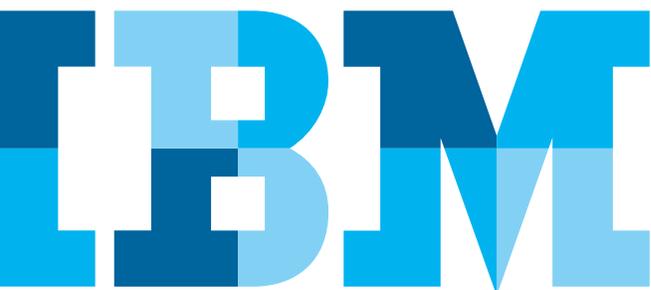
Many CSPs have the same requirements as the most complex retailer (buy online, ship to/pick up from store), but with the added complexity of business sales. VPNs, global wireline networks and security are a few of the additional complexities CSPs face–which result in quoting and pricing considerations that most retail applications can't handle.

For both B2B and B2C orders, provisioning and activation are more complex than virtually any other business, resulting in few product rollouts per year. Add to the equation the fact that CSPs are often constrained by business processes that rely on multiple legacy systems, and the challenges become more daunting.

These trends are causing many CSPs to evaluate their digital engagement strategies together with the investment and value of their legacy systems.

IBM® Watson™ Commerce provides solutions to help CSPs solve the challenges of today's market—without a disruptive large-scale transformation and deployment.

Yesterday joins today to become the future

Only Watson Commerce offers industry-best e-commerce/ Order Capture, Order Management, Enterprise Configure Price Quote (CPQ) and OSS/BSS integration capabilities— in one suite.

Catalog-driven customer order management

IBM provides a catalog-driven, dynamic approach independent of product offerings, technology and vendor applications. CSPs are able to integrate multiple OSS/BSS systems through multiple channels so the customer journey is seamless as contacts move between web, store and call center. IBM offers integration with provisioning, trouble ticketing, fault management and activation systems for a coordinated experience.

Omni-channel order orchestration

Like retailers, omni-channel order orchestration has gone from a good idea to an essential capability for today's CSP. IBM Order Orchestration solutions help CSPs optimize operations by aggregating, managing and monitoring orders across entire fulfillment and capacity networks, including stores, distribution centers and network factories to streamline and optimize execution. The solution helps CSPs proactively monitor order processes to identify any issues before the customer does and notify participants of issues and exceptions before they occur.

Watson Commerce provides strategic inventory orchestration and management to efficiently promise and fulfill orders by tapping into a network of carriers and fulfillment partners, and intelligently orchestrate the entire fulfillment process.

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- **Save the sale**—finding an in-stock location and getting the product to the customer to save the sale when faced with an in-store stock-out
- **Cross-channel fulfillment**—the flexibility to fulfill an order from any channel's inventory pool regardless of the order capture channel, including third-party suppliers
- **Real-time available-to-promise (ATP)**—having the visibility and order sourcing flexibility and intelligence to promise online and special orders from not only currently available inventory, but also inbound, in-transit inventory
- **Sourcing from end-of-life (EOL) inventory**—having the visibility, order sourcing flexibility and intelligence, and in-store capabilities to fulfill online orders from stores in such a way that end-of-season or end-of-life merchandise can be sold at full price rather than having to be marked down to selll

Watson Commerce ensures the post-sales experience remains exceptional for customers. The IBM solution helps optimize the reverse logistics process by automating the returns process. Directed workflow processes and automatic item reclassification based on the quality of the returned item provides a positive experience for customers while efficiently managing all inventory.

CSPs that are able to combine the customer order with the delivery of services are at a distinct advantage. Watson Commerce helps model and manage extended services network and present a comprehensive view of virtually all activities to internal and external participants. The solution facilitates rules-based promising to select an individual service provider or can allocate an entire crew at each step of the project.

It also allows for the management of nearly all customer service-related questions and related updates from a central point. Tracking, executing and managing the relationships between product fulfillment and truck rolls as part of "the perfect order" is no longer a disjointed set of operations.

Master Data Management

CSPs have critical data about customers, suppliers, products, accounts, and more, that is often inaccurate, missing, duplicated and incomplete, or scattered across business processes and applications throughout the Telco, rendering these systems ineffective and increasing business risk. IBM Master Data Management can help pull together multiple data sources into one manageable system for better multichannel integration, decreased product development cycles and reduced customer churn.

Telco e-commerce order capture

A robust e-commerce system is essential for a true omni-channel experience for both B2C and B2B channels. IBM WebSphere® Commerce helps CSPs deliver exceptional customer experiences across all channels, including web, mobile, social, call center and physical stores. Many CSPs offer complex bundles, including hardware and service plans that have many interdependencies. IBM makes it easy for CSPs to sell such bundles through the e-commerce channel with a configuration engine that helps customers easily and accurately configure product and service bundles in a self-service way. WebSphere Commerce also scales easily to support many sites with multiple languages, currencies and customer contracts on a single platform.
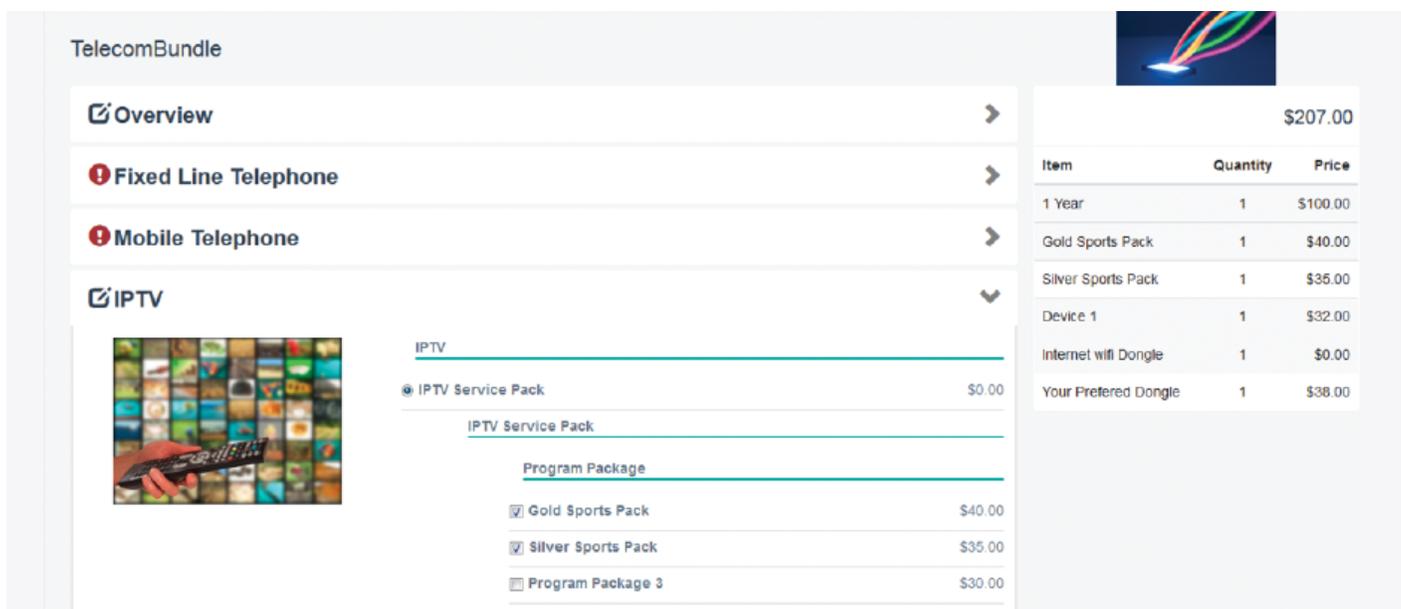

Figure 1: Robust B2C and B2B capabilities of Watson Commerce provide a single view of bundled services from multiple systems.

Field and call center CPQ

CSPs can automate the most complex cross-channel selling processes, including the configuration of complex products, services and bundles. Business users can manage product and pricing data and help customers and partners find, compare, configure, and purchase the right products and services. IBM CPQ can be utilized across multiple selling channels—including e-commerce, call center, store and field sales—and enables B2B, B2C and B2B2C sales models. It also allows internal users to centrally coordinate pricing and price changes across diverse product lines, and internal sales representatives, customer service professionals and partners to create and negotiate professional quotes. In addition, it automates quote approval process and provides visibility into the whole quoting workflow, from opportunity to quotes creation to approval and order placement.

The constantly evolving needs of today's telecommunications marketplace have pushed traditional approaches to business process management (BPM) to the limit. CSPs need more business agility to address concerns around the maintainability, ownership and reuse of business processes, coupled with the need to integrate effectively with a heterogeneous range of underlying OSS/BSS solutions, as well as directly with a range of suppliers and business partners.

IBM's dynamic BPM approach can help service providers bring products and services to market faster, streamline order-handling processes and decrease operational costs. IBM's approach extends the capabilities of traditional BPM by introducing the concept of loosely coupled "intelligent business services" constructed using prebuilt telecommunica- tions industry content. Furthermore, the solution integrates with IBM's highly flexible and scalable order-orchestration capabilities to deliver proven order-handling functionality out of the box.
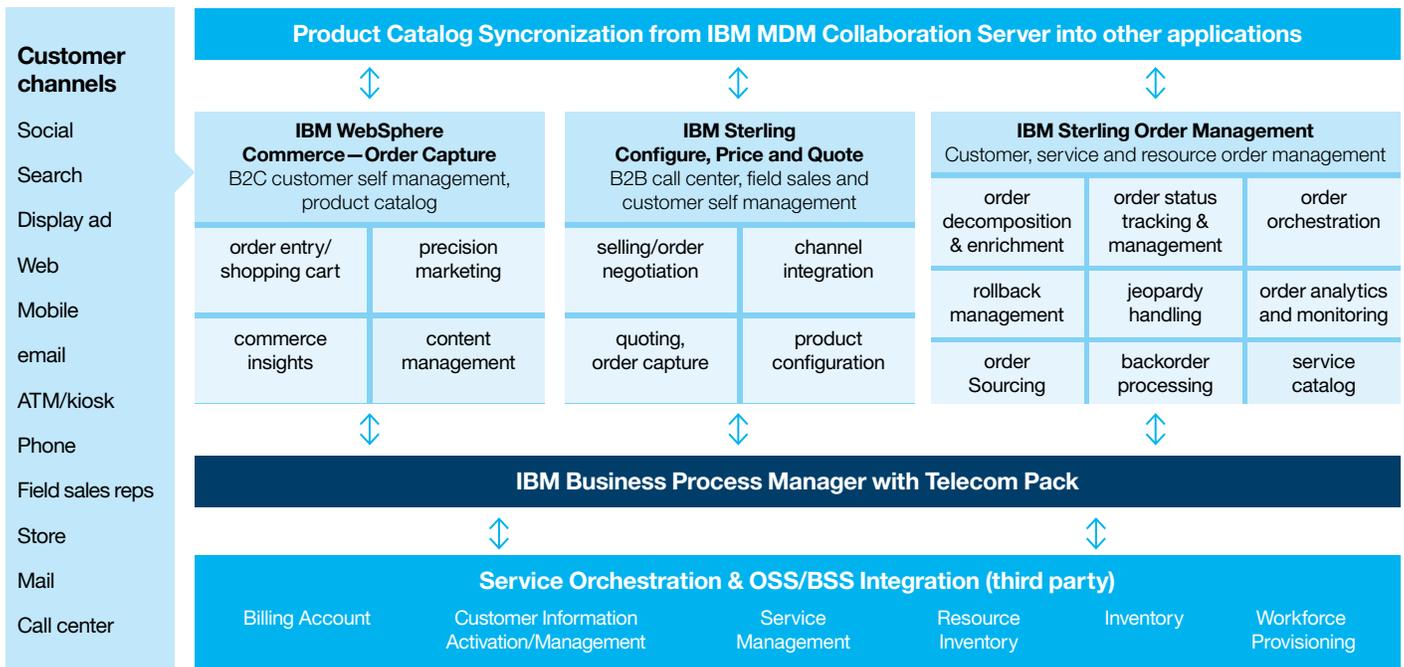

Figure 2: IBM is leading the Industry with Watson Commerce: Omni-channel Order to Activation for Telecom Solution

Benefits

Watson Commerce provides numerous benefits to CSPs, including:

- Keeping existing systems and processes for a low risk omni-channel deployment
- A single face and access point for consumers, call center agents, field sales reps and authorized resellers
- Faster new product introduction—in one year a client increased new introductions from four to 56
- TMF-compliant order management API for more rapid integration to OSS/BSS systems, with a reduction in costs
- Reduced order fallout rate
- Better customer experience and reduced churn
- Postponing or possibly eliminating the "Big Bang" large-scale software deployment, with faster delivery cycles and updated processes
- Fifteen times return on investment for every dollar spent[1]
- The ability to process millions of orders per hour

CSPs also have flexibility in how they can choose to implement Watson Commerce, selecting only the necessary components and creating a growth path to a comprehensive solution that can be deployed in the cloud or on premises— by IBM or authorized IBM Business Partners.

For more information

Omni-channel e-commerce and merchandising solutions from IBM provide a unified approach to managing evolving digital and physical channels.

Visit **ibm.com**/industries/telecom-media-entertainment

Also, please visit the following published analyst reports:

- **Gartner:** IBM a Top Provider of Digital Commerce Platforms
- **The Forrester Wave:** B2C Commerce Suites, Q1 2015
- **The Forrester Wave:** B2B Order Management, Q4 2015
- **IDC MarketScape**

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