Data Automation & Smart Integrations: Future Of B2B Commerce

-Praveen Venugopal

1) A warm opening note by Timothy Diep, DCKAP (00:12-02:24)

Timothy Diep: Good morning everybody or good evening, depending on where you guys are at. Welcome to the DCKAP eSessions for 2021. This is our February edition and we'll be talking about how we went live with Cathy's Concepts. So looking forward to this event. We have an awesome lineup of just all the partners that were involved with the process of the Cathy's Concepts website.

Cathy's Concepts is a premier customizable gifts provider that sells items ranging from travel, home, wedding and other related product lines. Information related to new orders, product details, real-time inventory and customer information were to be manually transferred from one application to another. This was one of the biggest pain points with their site.

Orders placed in BigCommerce had to be manually entered into Distribution One, and the latest information on inventory and product details from Distribution One had to be updated manually into BigCommerce. Cathy's Concepts required the automation of data entry related to orders, products, inventory and other key business data from and to their ERP and eCommerce software.

Today, we'll be going over the case study with some of the partners who were involved with this project. I'd like to have a big shoutout to all the sponsors from Distribution One, from BigCommerce and from DCKAP Cloras. These are the guys who will be speaking today. With DCKAP, we are really big in community and we love to bring the ecosystem together. All these different companies have lots of skills, and they're very good at what they do. So if there's anything that we could do to help to even connect you guys to the right technology partner, do let us know. You can reach me at timothyd@dckap.com.

Next, I'd like to bring up Praveen Venugopal. He's a solution consultant with DCKAP and Cloras. Working closely with B2B customers, he comes with a solid eCommerce background. He has spent over seven years of his career with Amazon, and is a PMP certified professional. So I'd like to bring up Praveen, one of my colleagues.

2) Dive in to know what Cloras is all about with Praveen Venugopal, DCKAP (02:24-07:02)

Praveen Venugopal: Sure. Thank you Tim and let me just share my screen here. So first of all, thanks a lot, Tim for the introductions. It was a great session by Adam and Bijal. It was really insightful in terms

of what Distribution One does and what BigCommerce does and now we will talk about Cloras, which is residing between BigCommerce and Distribution One.

Today we're going to be talking about Data Automation And Smart Integrations: The Future Of B2B Commerce. With respect to today's agenda, initially, we'll talk about what Cloras is all about and then we will proceed to a case study of Cathy's Concepts. We will conclude the session with the key takeaway for the B2B merchants from the session.

I'd like to get started with a quote, which says simple can be harder than complex. You have to work hard to get your thinking clean, to make it simple, but it's worth it in the end, because once you get that, you can move mountains. It's a very strong statement from Steve Jobs, who was one of the most influential figures in today's era, I would have to say, and as you could really think about it, it is not just the design, right. We generally associate him with design, but then there is a lot more to it, even with respect to our day-to-day stuff. As long as you're able to give the simple experiences to your customers, that would go a long way. Let's see how that can be done and that's why I just wanted to get started off with this particular quote.

To give a quick intro about myself, I work as a solution consultant at DCKAP. I work closely with the B2B merchants, understand the pain points of customers, and come up with solutions for that. So that's what I have an expertise on.

So now let's dive into what Cloras is all about. With respect to Cloras, it is a Cloud Rapid Automation System. We have been working on integration for over a decade, I will have to say and over the last 10 years or so, we have done multiple integrations of multiple sorts. We have seen this as a persistent pain point from each of our customers. So we keep providing some of these custom solutions.

But then, again, there is always this dependence on the developers and again, the synchronization was not reliable and over a period of time you need to keep investing hours and efforts as part of the integration. So that is when we came up with the product Cloras and we started off with our customers, and then we started working backwards. So that's how we came up with the solution. With respect to Cloras, it's a platform agnostic solution. So you're not really dependent in terms of what we can integrate. We can integrate any of the systems as long as they have an API associated with them.

That being said, Cloras could integrate multiple systems, but then most of our customers leverage Cloras for integrating the eCommerce, maybe just in this particular case, like BigCommerce or ERP, like Distribution One or CRM like HubSpot, or Salesforce, for instance. Having all of this integrated is what Cloras pretty much does. It's an omni channel solution. And yeah, it's not a multi channel. The only difference being, we have everything under the same umbrella, so it makes it easier for the customer. You're not just doing integrations for two systems, and then going on to do an integration for two different systems. It makes it easier. Everything is under the same roof. So that is where Cloras plays a very pivotal role.

We have been fortunate enough to have an elite list of clientele. And some of these are on the likes of Viking Range, T J Snow and some of the bigger brands like Cathy's Concepts. We have been fortunate

enough to be working with a lot of these customers. And we have learned a lot from the community. As I mentioned, we started off the product, starting off with the customers, and then we started working backwards. We have learnt a lot from the customers. And we have evolved and came along a long way. We're really grateful. At this juncture, I want to pay my gratitude. We are very thankful for all of the learnings that we have had, and for having the trust in our product. So thank you for that.

3) What makes Cloras stand out (07:03-11:20)

What sets us apart is automated integration. With respect to integrations, there could be integrations you're doing just for as a patch-up. But then you need to have that in an automated fashion. There's no manual intervention. So that is where Cloras plays a very pivotal role. It's a cloud solution. You're not really dependent on on-premises infrastructure, which you need to install, and have everything set up. There is no dependency over here, it's on the cloud.

In case even if with respect to upgrades and all of that, we are always there. We do some basic sanity checks, but then you wouldn't even really know that an update has happened. So that is where it comes into picture. And it's a safe and secure solution, which means that we are PCI compliant, and we are also GDPR compliant. And with respect to Cloras, we do not store any data within the system as long as the customers want to enable them. But then generally, it is disabled by default.

We have a seamless flow designer. With respect to the development aspect of it, we take complete ownership of developing and delivering it for our customers. But then that being said, we also have a developer intuitive interface, which makes it easier for the developers to code within Cloras so that way, you're not really dependent on the Cloras developers down the line.

If you might want to make some minor code changes and all of that, you could do that in-house or you can even engage a third party developer to code within Cloras. And as I mentioned earlier, it's platform-agnostic, and you can have multiple systems integrated at once. We have customers who only integrate four or five systems all under the same umbrella.

The mappings and modifiers are one of the key differentiators of Cloras, I'll have to say. With respect to mappings we have a very intuitive interface. So it is more of a drag and drop interface. There could be two systems, right? In this particular use case, it could be Distribution One and BigCommerce. And you could pretty much drag and drop what fields from Distribution One need to go to what fields on the BigCommerce. Even that can be changed by yourself from the Cloras back end. That makes it easier, even with small updates and all of that you're not even dependent on the developer. So all of that can be done in-house.

Modifiers add an additional flavor to it, I'll have to say. That is what incorporates the business logic. The data is not meaningful as long as you're able to manipulate information before it is sent over to the target system. A good example could be maybe that could be within Distribution One the state name could be AC while on BigCommerce it could be Arizona. Both these systems need to understand the nomenclatures so that it makes it easier for us to communicate data between both the systems so that is where the mappings and modifiers come into picture.

It's a completely custom solution, so it's not a preset solution, right, where you have four or five services, and then you're done. It is a completely customized business solution, which means that even in case you have specific requirements for your business, Cloras will scale up on those lines.

With respect to integration, it could be a real time or a batch-basic pronunciation both can be handled within Cloras. With respect to the scheduler, that pretty much helps the cause. So sort of batch-basic synchronization, you can set up schedules, in terms of how frequently the data needs to update, it could be once a few minutes, or once a few hours or once in a few days. And the real-time synchronization is also equally important, right? Which means that you could process information in real-time. It could be the pricing data, or it could be the inventory information, which needs to be sent across in real-time. So you get complete flexibility on both sides.

4) How Cloras helped Cathy's Concepts (11:22-14:34)

Now let's proceed on to the case study on Cathy's concepts, with respect to the challenge that Cathy's Concepts had faced initially, and then the solution that we had provided for Cathy's. As Bijal and Adam had spoken about it, choosing the ERP and the eCommerce was the first part of the overall equation.

First they had chosen the ERP. Distribution One was specifically aligning in terms of what they wanted to accomplish. BigCommerce was pretty much a scalable solution that they can scale up to any degree. But then with a solution like Cloras, it makes it easier to communicate between both the systems and make sure that the information is consistent across systems, and there is no redundant work which is being done over here.

Specifically, this was a challenge that the team had over here. They had to manually update in BigCommerce and Distribution One, which led to inaccurate inventory and the inventory was not updated. And then it led to return as such. The customer information was manually moved between the systems. Again, it is also a manual process, but then it doesn't make sense to invest your time when you have already done it on one of these systems.

The order fulfillment in terms of carrier tracking and all of that had to be brought back from Distribution One into BigCommerce and then eventually it was error prone, and it led to redundant work. Obviously, with all of this into perspective, it definitely has a negative impact in terms of the sales funnel conversion, because it makes it a little more difficult for customers, or if in some cases, it is a little delayed in terms of when they get to see that. So this was a challenge pretty much Cathy's Concepts was handling in the first place.

With respect to the solution that we had provided with Cloras, we have provided seamless integration between these systems. And these are the services that we had integrated from BigCommerce to Distribution One. Whenever new customers are getting created on BigCommerce, those are moved into Distribution One, and when new orders are created, the orders alongside the customer information are moved to Distribution One on their own, so that they are not doing it multiple times. It was consistent as well.

Regarding the integration between Distribution One and BigCommerce, the order processing information like the carrier codes, and the tracking information was sent back into BigCommerce. This was happening in our batch-based synchronization and with respect to product data, the basic product data was coming in from Distribution One into BigCommerce. And within BigCommerce, the enrichment was happening and that was done by Cathy's Concepts team.

With respect to inventory, it was happening in a much better frequency, which made sure that they were not having some of these orders which are getting missed because in some cases, they had this concern where there was no inventory but then the orders were being placed. So those are some of the things that we had provided through Cloras.

5) Key takeaway for B2B merchants (14:36-19:00)

I would like to move on to the next piece of it, which is the key takeaway for B2B merchants. So having Cloras in perspective could be one part of it. But then I would like to emphasize on the bigger picture in terms of and again, this is based on the discussions that I've had with a lot of B2B merchants over the last few years and based on the common pain point. One thing that we see which has been hindering businesses to grow, or which has not been considered as opportunity is what I'm going to be talking about right now. And that is basically providing them with a low effort experience.

Providing a low effort experience is the key, I will have to say, because a low effort experience is what drives customers to be loyal with you. And we'll also see as part of the next slide on how that transforms. We start off with the customers and work backwards, just like what we do with Cloras. So that's what we had been doing. If you could start off and see what it is that they want, and keep providing them with low effort experiences, and that could come a long way. So that's what we have seen.

This is a cartoon series, which I used to follow when I used to be a kid, which is Richie Rich. Even then there was a lot of emphasis on the low effort experiences and making things easier. So I just wanted to put this across.

With respect to low effort experiences, even before I delve in further, I would like to quickly touch upon the customer journey. This is something which most of you might be aware of. But then I'll just quickly go through this just to make sure we are all on the same page. With respect to customer journey, there's this initial trigger. Then there is this initial brand consideration in terms of multiple brands that they're considering. Then there is an active evaluation in terms of who they want to choose as a merchant and then the decision is made based on the experience you provide to them.

So if it is a low effort experience, and if they are having a great experience with you, it drives loyalty. And yeah, in case if you're not able to provide them with a great experience, that would drive disloyalty as well, and then they tend to move out of the market.

Ideally, we would like to retain our customers. So that is when we are able to keep providing them with the low effort experiences and that keeps driving loyalty. So that's the ideal situation that we would want to be in. And we spoke about lower effort experiences. And you could be wondering, so this is anyways taken for granted, right? So providing anybody with low effort experience is definitely going to help the cost. But then what I wanted to emphasize here is the magnitude in terms of how it impacts behavior.

With respect to high effort experience, it drives loyalty by over 96%, it's a huge number as you could think about it. And the high effort experience also increases the negative word of mouth by over 81%, it is a huge number such as you could think about it and you're losing out on a lot of customers just because of this. On the contrary, if you're able to provide them with a low effort experience, it reduces the cost by 37%.

The last one is a little more of an interesting stat that you could think about. So again, in today's world, we keep thinking that differentiation is more in terms of the pricing that we can provide for our customers, how we can differentiate from our competition. So that's what we think about. But then with the low effort experiences, 88% of your customers are willing to spend a little more in case they get the low effort experiences. That's what we need to keep doing at each of the phases in terms of the initial trigger or initial brand consideration.

As part of the initial brand, how easily are they able to identify your brand, or as part of the active evaluation. Even if they are looking at your website, do you have a self service model for them to get all of the information? These are the things that your customers are really looking at as part of making a decision and choosing a vendor. These are things that you should be really thinking of, as you're coming up with solutions.

6) Concluding note (19:00-21:24)

With this, I would like to conclude my session. And at this juncture, I'd like to take the opportunity to thank Bijal and Adam and the entire BigCommerce team. So Bijal has been really supportive for us from the Distribution One side which helps the cause, which makes it easier for the customer. Even from the BigCommerce side, it could be Adam and a few folks from the BigCommerce team and what makes it easier.

Even if there are a couple of bottlenecks, it makes it easier for us to communicate with the partnership model that we have. And from a customer standpoint, it makes it easier for the customer to easily have a single point of contact and have everything sorted out that way. At this juncture, I would like to thank both Adam and Bijal for all of the support that you guys have provided for us. And yeah, and that's pretty much what I had. In case if you have any questions, feel free to drop me an email, and I should be able to look at that. Thank you and I'll hand it over to Tim.

Timothy Diep: Awesome. Thank you so much for being here and just stay on the line too. So we're gonna have every other presenter again, and then we'll have a Q & A discussion panel. So, again, I'd like to just thank all the sponsors and all the speakers as well from Distribution One, from BigCommerce and from Cloras. That was a great informative session and just by looking at the poll

section too, it seems like a lot of you guys were looking for some help on integration, that was the number one aspect for maybe some of your pain points, but then also managing data, and even gathering requirements and better designs. So if you guys do need any help with that do reach out.

We will be having a post event networking session after this. Let me let me click on that real quick. I'll share that and you guys could join that immediately after this session. We'll have our sales team, we'll have other people in the ecosystem join that room as well. So that'd be a great way to network if you guys are still available. We'll have our next eSession on March 9, and I look forward to having the next eSession on March 9. If you guys don't have any questions, we'll see you guys then. So talk to you soon.