



commercetools vs. HCLSoftware

Enterprise commerce decision guide



Why are companies switching from HCLSoftware to commercetools?

HCLSoftware has long been a major player in enterprise technology, offering a broad portfolio of solutions — including Commerce+ (formerly IBM WebSphere Commerce). For organizations already embedded in the HCL ecosystem, staying within that integrated stack may seem like the path of least resistance. But is it?



The commerce solution — one amongst many — provides breadth but lacks depth. It provides a tightly integrated platform with support for conventional commerce use cases, but misses out on what commerce is all about today: The ability to differentiate, adapt on the fly and move fast. Case in point: Future-forward capabilities like agentic AI.

Modern commerce demands more than the basics. And it requires the ability to evolve continuously.

commercetools provides the foundation to drive growth in the AI era, boosting conversions and revenue while allowing businesses to pivot quickly as market trends and customer expectations evolve. This includes the ability to deliver highly customized digital experiences, unify commerce across digital and physical channels, and build an infrastructure ready to support emerging AI-driven capabilities.



Ready to evaluate a move from HCLSoftware to modern commerce architecture?

Here's what you'll find in this decision guide:

- The common pain points with HCLSoftware.
- 4 key advantages commercetools has over HCLSoftware.
- Deep-dives across flexibility, scalability, operational efficiency, unified and agentic commerce.
- How enterprises benefit from commercetools.
- Forward-thinking businesses that made the switch: Kmart and L.L.Bean.
- How to migrate from HCLSoftware to commercetools.



The common pain points enterprises usually face with HCLSoftware

Modern enterprises face mounting pressure to innovate, scale and deliver exceptional customer experiences — yet many struggle with HCLSoftware:

- **Limited adaptability:** HCL's monolithic design, stemming from IBM Websphere and relying on bundled applications, makes it slower to respond to rapidly changing customer behaviors and market trends, risking lost first-mover opportunities.
- **Fragmented AI capabilities:** While HCL supports rule-based personalization, agentic AI and generative commerce capabilities remain largely manual and siloed, limiting the ability to deliver autonomous, AI-driven shopping experiences.
- **Integration complexity:** Compared with competitors, HCL provides fewer prebuilt integrations for critical capabilities such as OMS, PIM, CDP, and personalization, especially in industries beyond retail and manufacturing, increasing development effort and operational overhead.
- **Operational inefficiency and higher TCO:** Manual configurations, complex workflows and limited no-code tooling slow time-to-market, increase reliance on specialized developers and raise total cost of ownership (TCO).
- **Partial unified commerce:** HCL's unified commerce features exist but are tightly tied to its integrated suite, limiting flexibility and scalability for multi-brand, multi-region or omnichannel operations.

In short: HCLSoftware can support enterprise-scale commerce, but its architecture and tooling make it harder to innovate, adopt AI and optimize operations compared with more modern and modular platforms.



4 key advantages commercetools has over HCLSoftware

1. AI-first unified commerce



commercetools unifies B2B, B2C and D2C commerce on a single AI-first platform, enabling scalable multi-brand, multi-region and omnichannel experiences. This also includes autonomous shopping across GenAI channels like ChatGPT, Microsoft Copilot and Gemini, ensuring consistent, scalable brand experiences.

2. Flexibility, adaptability and extensibility



commercetools delivers true flexibility with a modular architecture that supports extensive customization and integrations without vendor lock-in. Built for adaptability and extensibility, it enables businesses to execute complex use cases quickly, free from legacy constraints.

3. Scalability, security and performance



commercetools' architecture automatically scales SKUs and transactions while maintaining high availability and SLA-backed reliability. Its modular design evolves with your business, supporting seamless B2B, B2C and omnichannel operations even under peak loads.

4. Operational efficiency



commercetools reduces operational overhead and accelerates time-to-market by enabling modular deployments and no-code tooling. Teams can rapidly build once and deploy capabilities across brands, channels and markets while focusing on revenue-driving initiatives.



AI-first unified commerce



Unified commerce platform



commercetools delivers a natively unified platform that removes the need for disparate, “bolted-on” systems.

This enables businesses to manage B2B, B2C and D2C models – across brands, channels, regions and both digital and physical touchpoints – from a single source of truth.

AI-first infrastructure



commercetools provides a unified, AI-first foundation that enables businesses to orchestrate end-to-end agentic commerce.

AI Hub and Agent Gateway provide businesses with both AI-driven shopping across ChatGPT, Microsoft CoPilot and Gemini, and the capabilities to leverage agentic AI in brand-owned environments, respectively.

HCLSoftware



HCLSoftware provides reasonably smooth phygital experiences across online, mobile, in-store and partner channels, with real-time inventory visibility, centralized order management and synchronized customer data.



HCLSoftware relies heavily on manual configuration for core functionalities and offers only isolated AI features.

Its lack of a unified AI-first architecture and limited support for emerging standards such as UCP and ACP create future risks, leaving it less prepared to compete in the next generation of agent-driven commerce.



Flexibility, adaptability and extensibility



HCLSoftware









<p>Flexibility and adaptability</p>	<p>😊 commercetools stands out with a modular, decoupled architecture that lets businesses adopt individual components at their own pace without risking operational downtime.</p>	<p>😐 HCL's core remains rooted in IBM WebSphere Portal. While DX Compose offers a lighter, cloud-native alternative, the surrounding ecosystem is still limited.</p>
<p>Extensibility</p>	<p>😊 commercetools' highly configurable and extensible environment enables rapid adaptation to changing markets, customer needs, products, and promotions, while supporting a smooth “crawl, walk, run” transition from legacy platforms to keep commerce operations running uninterrupted.</p>	<p>😐 HCL offers extensibility through custom modules and extensions, but adapting the platform often requires specialized development and longer timelines, making rapid changes or experimentation more challenging than on modular platforms.</p>
<p>Integrations</p>	<p>😊 commercetools facilitates seamless integrations with best-of-breed solutions, freeing businesses from vendor lock-in.</p>	<p>😐 HCL supports integrations via APIs and connectors, but its approach can be rigid and complex. Integrating with ERP or custom systems often requires significant customization and specialist development, which can slow agility and time-to-value.</p>
<p>Product data modeling</p>	<p>😊 commercetools offers unmatched flexibility to model product and business data exactly to your organization's needs, ensuring that integrations, inventory, pricing and customer information remain consistent across all digital, physical and emerging channels.</p> <p>Its modular architecture allows teams to quickly introduce new product lines, promotions or business models without disrupting existing operations.</p>	<p>😐 HCLSoftware relies on a more prescriptive, suite-based approach that limits how product and business data can be structured.</p> <p>This can require workarounds or customizations to support new products, channels or complex pricing models, slowing the ability to innovate and deliver consistent experiences across multiple touchpoints.</p>



Scalability, security and performance



HCLSoftware

Auto-scaling ability	 <p>commercetools offers a truly scalable, cloud-native platform that automatically handles high SKUs and transaction volumes without performance degradation or downtime.</p>	 <p>HCL's architecture requires significant infrastructure planning — including database optimization, load testing, and custom code adjustments — to maintain consistent performance under peak demand.</p>
Reliability	 <p>commercetools delivers industry-leading reliability with a 99.99% SLA and a proven track record of near-perfect uptime, ensuring uninterrupted revenue during peak periods.</p>	 <p>HCL can support large-scale enterprises with thousands of sites and tens of millions of SKUs; its reliability depends heavily on manual oversight and infrastructure management.</p>
Security	 <p>commercetools is a secure platform with certifications that include ISO 27001, Tisax and SOC II, as well as industry-specific compliance, such as HIPAA. Moreover, it provides a safe and contextualized environment for advanced commerce channels like GenAI (e.g., ChatGPT, Microsoft CoPilot, Google Gemini).</p>	 <p>HCL's platform is secure and used by many companies in regulated industries. However, its legacy architecture and limited modularity can complicate compliance and integration with emerging AI-driven technologies.</p>
Versioning	 <p>commercetools operates with a versionless architecture, enabling continuous evolution without disruptive upgrades or dependency on legacy cycles.</p>	 <p>Enterprises running older HCL Digital Experience and Commerce baselines (for example, 8.5 and 9.0) are approaching anticipated end-of-support milestones and a shift away from perpetual licenses. In practice, this means forced upgrades to newer releases or new subscription-based contracts.</p>



Operational efficiency



HCLSoftware

Scalable business expansion	<p>😊 commercetools drives efficiency through its modular architecture, allowing businesses to build capabilities once and deploy them seamlessly across multiple brands, channels and regions.</p> <p>This reduces operational overhead, accelerates growth initiatives and supports rapid scaling.</p>	<p>😞 HCL retains significant legacy complexity, which means deployments and environment management require more time, specialized skills and manual coordination, slowing expansion and increasing operational costs.</p>
Developer and business user experience	<p>😊 commercetools empowers developers with open, standardized APIs while giving non-technical teams intuitive no-code tools to manage commerce operations independently.</p> <p>This reduces reliance on niche skill sets, accelerates development and simplifies platform evolution.</p>	<p>😞 HCL's dated administrative tools and fragmented user interfaces require extensive manual coordination and technical oversight, creating bottlenecks, slowing development cycles and limiting flexibility in responding to business needs.</p>
Time to market	<p>😊 commercetools supports rapid onboarding and task automation through extensive public documentation, templated solutions, expert services and agentic workflows.</p> <p>Teams can quickly implement complex tasks — from dynamic promotions to AI-driven problem-solving — without heavy technical support.</p>	<p>😞 HCL offers fewer prebuilt integrations and requires significant manual effort to implement essential commerce functions, making it harder for business users to operate autonomously and delaying time-to-value for initiatives.</p>



Industry recognition



2025 Gartner® Magic Quadrant™ for Digital Commerce



commercetools is recognized as a **Leader** in the 2025 Gartner Magic Quadrant for Digital Commerce for the sixth consecutive year.

HCLSoftware



HCLSoftware is recognized as a **Niche Player** in the 2025 Gartner Magic Quadrant for Digital Commerce. It's noteworthy that HCL's placement has experienced a downward shift in recent years.



Paradigm B2B Combine 2025 Digital Commerce Solutions



commercetools is a top performer in the 2025 Paradigm B2B Combine Digital Commerce Solutions for B2B, with 12 medals across the evaluated 12 categories, with 8 gold medals, 3 silver and 1 bronze.



HCLSoftware performed well in the 2025 Paradigm B2B Combine Digital Commerce Solutions for B2B, with 12 medals across the evaluated 12 categories, with 8 gold medals, 1 silver and 3 bronze.



How enterprises benefit from commercetools



Drive conversion rates, AOV and CLV to increase revenue in the age of AI

- Boost revenue with AI-driven personalization at scale and seamless customer experiences across multiple business models, brands, regions and channels — something HCL's monolithic and partially siloed AI capabilities struggle to deliver.
- Capture new GenAI channels (e.g., ChatGPT, Copilot) while minimizing downtime during peak traffic, unlike legacy platforms that require heavy infrastructure planning.
- Increase cross-sells, upsells and repeat purchases with unified access to product, customer and order data across digital and physical touchpoints.



Quickly and flexibly respond to changing business needs

- Enable business agility with an infrastructure that's future-proof by design — an open platform that lets you adapt capabilities and customer experiences as behaviors shift.
- Launch new features, channels or brands faster, leveraging a modular architecture and no-code business tooling — a contrast to HCL's slower, suite-based approach.
- Adjust promotions, pricing and customer experiences dynamically in response to market shifts and competitive pressures.
- Continuously adapt without costly replatforms, thanks to an open, tech-agnostic ecosystem and extensible APIs.



Reduce TCO and improve productivity

- Lower TCO by consolidating multiple platforms, reducing reliance on system integrators and streamlining hosting, maintenance and integration costs — whereas HCL's legacy stack often drives higher operational overhead.
- Free teams to focus on innovation instead of maintenance, increasing employee productivity, satisfaction and retention.
- Scale globally with minimal operational complexity, supporting multi-store, multi-brand and multi-region deployments with high availability and SLA-backed reliability.



How to migrate from HCLSoftware to commercetools

Migrating from monolithic solutions like HCLSoftware to commercetools isn't as complex as you might think. Here's an overview of how you can organize and streamline the cadence of your replatforming process.

Step 1: Discovery and gap analysis

A successful migration begins with a clear-eyed assessment of your current digital ecosystem. By auditing features, identifying critical gaps and prioritizing what truly drives growth, you can eliminate unnecessary complexity and design a future-fit commerce architecture tailored to your needs. From there, define the right migration path: Strangler pattern for an incremental migration or 'big-bang' for a switch from the current system to a new one at a single point in time.

Tip: Use [commercetools' 60-day free trial](#) to create your POC or MVP — without strings attached.

Step 2: Build a migration roadmap

Once your target state is defined, translate it into a pragmatic migration roadmap built on incremental innovation, delivering measurable improvements step by step while minimizing risk. Plan the structured migration of critical data and define how custom extensions and best-of-breed third-party services will integrate into your ecosystem.

Step 3: Data migration and modeling

Start by identifying and cleansing essential data, such as products, customers and active orders, eliminating redundant or outdated information before loading it into your new environment. Structure and migrate data strategically using APIs, integrations and automation tools, ensuring compatibility with modern commerce modeling standards.

Tip: Model your product data faster with AI: [commercetools Smart Product Modeler](#).



Step 4: Customize your platform behavior with extensibility

Want to turn your commerce platform into a true reflection of your business? You can extend and customize out-of-the-box features — add new fields, workflows or APIs — to meet your unique needs and start driving value without waiting for a major replatform.

Step 5: Complete your best-of-breed solutions to complete your technology stack

Once your core data and applications are migrated, you can complete your commerce stack by integrating the best-of-breed tools your business needs — from ERP and OMS to CMS, search and personalization — without vendor lock-in. commercetools' API-first, event-driven architecture ensures these integrations remain flexible and coordinated.

Step 6: Integrate the user experience layer (digital storefront)

The frontend layer is often the most complex part of a migration, but moving to a modular architecture makes it easier to decouple from legacy systems. You can choose to build a custom storefront, partner with a CMS/frontend provider with prebuilt integrations or leverage other headless solutions — giving you full flexibility to deliver a modern customer experience.

Step 7: Test, deploy and improve continuously

Testing is critical in a migration process, helping ensure compatibility, data integrity and system performance. Develop a clear testing plan, run regular load and performance tests and analyze results to identify issues or opportunities for optimization. Once deployed, leverage real-time monitoring and analytics to track performance, customer behavior and sales trends, using these insights to continuously refine and improve the commerce experience.



Ready to unlock the full potential of modern commerce? We're here to help.

Create your MVP or POC

Take advantage of our free 60-day trial and get a glimpse of how commercetools can work for you.

[Your free trial →](#)

Get in touch

Contact our team of commerce experts and tell us about your business goals, so we can advise you on next steps.

[Schedule a call →](#)

About commercetools

For global enterprises, commercetools provides the leading AI-first digital commerce platform, delivering unmatched revenue growth and performance. Our modular, scalable technology is the foundation for innovation — from agentic commerce to conversational experiences — giving businesses the flexibility to respond to changing business needs fast and with confidence.

By removing the constraints of legacy systems, commercetools enables enterprises to realize new opportunities faster, meet the evolving demands of their customers, and expand across offline and online channels, regions, brands and business models without compromise.

More information at commercetools.com.

