

Thoughts from the Top



featuring

Kristen Groh

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Kristen currently leads the Consumer Products industry for North America and has been with Publicis Sapient for 9+ years. She is responsible for growing and managing a large portfolio of client business, leading a cross-functional team and driving net new business in the CG vertical. She believes that experience drives brand affinity and data beats opinion. Kristen is located in Chicago.



Describe for us the shifts in the consumer landscape over the past few months.

With everyone in a work-from-home mode and not going into stores as often, it has significantly shifted consumer behaviors to shopping online. Early on, we saw quite a few retailers struggling with supply chain and distribution challenges that their businesses were not equipped to handle.

We saw consumers start to shift to brands that had a direct to consumer (D2C) solution for them.

In line with the D2C offering, we have also seen new channels emerging, such as the social media players. If you look to Instagram, Facebook and even TikTok,

they now have some component of commerce capabilities built into their platforms.

From the manufacturers' perspective they face major challenges. One of them being that the retailers are seeing an uptick in ecommerce and are pushing the costs for last mile distribution back down to these manufacturers, reducing their profit margins. Alternatively, those who are going direct are having to absorb these costs, sourcing their own supply chain and delivery, warehousing and distribution centers – all aspects that were not a part of their system prior to the pandemic.



How is Salesforce helping clients in facing the impacts COVID has had on their business?

Salesforce reacted early by creating an easy out-of-the-box solution for their clients to stand up D2C. We were able to partner with Salesforce on a 4-week stand-up as well as partner with a third party who was able to come in and support the distribution portion of the offering. This allowed for customers to easily shift their model to keep pace in the current environment.

Salesforce also recently announced a new offering, Digital 360, which is a good progression from what we saw in standing up the initial D2C offering that now incorporates not just Commerce Cloud, but wraps in Marketing Cloud and Experience Cloud (formerly communities) as well. It all rolls together in

a single offering that could be the next evolution as CG companies go Direct to Consumer.

One of the indirect value propositions on this all-in-one offering and going direct to consumers is the first party data capture.

One of the key pieces in this evolution is the launch of Audience 360, which is Salesforce's version of a CDP which ties together the D2C offering, the data as well as the insights to further personalize and better engage with customers. We are excited to have been named one of 5 inaugural partners on this launch which will help drive further drive engagement for our clients.



Can you share an example of where we have helped a company transition to D2C?

In the middle of March 2020, there was a lockdown in France due to COVID which resulted in all retailers being required to close. Our client, a luxury pet food company, was put at risk as over 60% of their business was done through brick and mortar locations. In partnership with Publicis Sapient France, they worked to better serve household pets through launching an emergency D2C Flagship Store Express for France.

The goal was to migrate over 100+ SKUs of dry cat and dog food alone, create a secure payment processor that included guest checkout, as well as a help page and call center. After only 2 weeks, we were able to successfully deploy this solution, resulting in over 230+ unique orders in the first week through only organic traffic and conversion rates were up from around 2% to around 6% on average.



What is the best way for Salesforce to engage with Publicis Sapient?

When we have an opportunity where we can come together to the table with the client and recognize Salesforce as having a unique offering that helps deliver the value proposition we have defined along with the client. The 360 solution is a great example of that, where it brings together all the pieces of what

we are trying to do and brings together the whole ecosystem of engagement. It's that moment when you hit the sweet spot of aligning their offering, and we are able to help our clients solve their business and technology problems.



What about the "Salesforce Ohana" and culture that sticks out in your mind?

There is truly end-to-end inclusivity within the Salesforce culture; there is excitement from developers and administrators all the way through to executives. They have created a space that allows people to grow with it regardless of how they are engaging with Salesforce and regardless of level. The other thing that stands out is that there is a lot

of knowledge and interest in the business problem. Every conversation is authentically centered on the clients, and Salesforce does a great job at creating an environment where they go beyond seeing you as an implementer and instead partner to create the best solution for a client.