

Pluck and IBM: driving value through social commerce

A single-platform social commerce solution that enhances merchant websites with engaging, interactive experiences, driving business value throughout the customer journey



Highlights:

- Enables, rewards and measures interaction and conversation across the customer journey
 - Offers unmatched application breadth for a single-source customer interaction platform
 - Enables flexible customization and configuration for a distinctive, brand-specific experience
 - Facilitates future-focused growth and change, allowing brands to add applications as needed
 - Surfaces customer behaviors and insights, helping brands understand and serve their audience
 - Integrates deeply with IBM software solutions for quick, efficient deployment
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As consumers become savvier and more social in their purchasing patterns — turning to online resources for research, dialogue and interactive shopping — the importance of providing an immersive, engaging social commerce experience continues to grow.

Too often brands and retailers respond in one of three ways. They rely on product reviews as the sole component of the social commerce experience, limiting customer engagement opportunities. They work with multiple vendors to create social features at every point of customer interaction, which requires complicated integration. Or they attempt to build a complete social commerce experience in-house, which can be expensive.

Pluck and IBM provide a better approach — a comprehensive, single-platform social commerce solution that enhances websites with conversation and interactive experiences that drive measurable business value throughout the customer lifecycle. From acquisition to engagement, from product investigation to advocacy and customer delight, this innovative solution helps marketers build loyalty, attract new customers and improve outcomes at a wide range of touchpoints.

Solution Overview

Encouraged by the demonstrable impact of ratings and reviews on customer conversion, brands and retailers are looking for ways to make the entire process more social. One solution that can address the entire path to purchase is preferable. They understand that consumers expect a seamless, simple shopping experience. And they want the ability to tailor that experience to unique business and brand requirements. This is why Pluck and IBM deliver a powerful social commerce solution that extends customer interaction well before and beyond the point of purchase, all on a single platform.



The Pluck platform is designed to integrate easily and deeply with IBM WebSphere® Commerce software using WebSphere-native applications. This gives marketers access to a broad array of powerful social commerce capabilities, including Ratings, Reviews, Forums, Blogs, Photo and Video Galleries, Groups, Member Profiles, Gamification, Social Sharing and more. Marketers can deploy these capabilities on websites in many combinations across the entire customer journey to build an expansive, immersive and connected customer experience.

Pluck-powered conversation and interaction help marketers create content that attracts new, intent-driven audiences to the brand's website. For instance, Product Category Discussions among knowledgeable customers and brand experts generate credible, educational information useful to early-stage shoppers, while Pluck social experiences engage consumers in core brand passions and surface brands' best customers.

With applications like Ratings and Reviews, brands and retailers can improve conversion rates and average order values and simultaneously identify brand advocates. Other tools help marketers reward and promote customers who add the most value to the e-commerce experience. Whatever a brand's social commerce needs, the solution from Pluck and IBM helps marketers bring shopping communities to life.

Powerful social applications, one platform

Highly configurable and customizable, the solution allows marketers to add applications directly to existing web properties for a unified, brand-consistent shopping experience. For low-effort interaction, marketers can deploy Pluck Ratings and Reactions, allowing customers to use single-click feedback to engage in ongoing dialogue. These responses provide valuable insights about customer satisfaction and opportunities for improvement. Additionally, the reviews exist as robust educational resources for potential customers searching for a brand or product to trust.

Pluck Forums provide a versatile and scalable platform for discussion and are an excellent vehicle for helping to increase engagement and accelerate conversion. Forums serve as a robust resource for customers who want to learn more about the product features that are important to them, or want to understand exactly how a product is used in the real world. In addition to supplying customer- and staff-supplied product category information, Forums facilitate conversations among customers and encourage peer-to-peer education and influence. Involving enthusiastic customers in first-line, post-sales product support helps reduce call center costs, while allowing customers to build online relationships that are tied to a specific brand.

Another powerful source of customer engagement is Pluck Blogs, which allow brands and consumers to share long-form content that strengthens search engine optimization (SEO). With heightened search visibility, brands can attract more visitors to sites, where the content encourages long-lasting community engagement and open discussions on a broad range of topics. Blogs can also help surface a community's most committed, influential and expert members. Marketers rely on these highly influential members to help acquire and engage new customers.

To encourage high-value customer behaviors, brands can use Pluck Gamification. Integrated throughout the solution's broad platform, Gamification uses "games" and rewards to incentivize deeper consumer engagement, turning enthusiasts into ambassadors for a brand. Marketers are able to weight customer actions based on importance to their business goals, awarding points and badges accordingly, while leader boards help customers track their progress against peers. By aggressively promoting ambassador behaviors through rewards and visibility, brands and retailers create a naturally attractive incentive for customers to engage with the brand and contribute valuable content.

Designed to support brands' most strategic customer interaction initiatives, the solution from Pluck and IBM gives marketers access to the whole platform, not just individual components. From Blogs and Gamification to Forums and Ratings, all of these applications support social interactions and social commerce management in a way that helps marketers enrich and control the customer experience. Brands and retailers can start with the tools that make sense today, then continue to add new functions to different sites as needs change.

In addition to creating immersive customer engagement, the solution can tap into IBM Digital Analytics to reveal insights and intelligence that can help brands improve performance. When combined with powerful analytics, information derived from social commerce can help marketers understand the community they support in new and important ways. Analytics can build metrics around growing volumes of social content and identify areas that drive the most traffic. Using reports and dashboards, the solution helps brands quickly identify how products are performing and what customers think, so they can make changes faster and more confidently.

Solution Benefits

The social commerce solution from Pluck and IBM helps brands create a tailored, immersive customer experience, delivering important advantages that drive success:

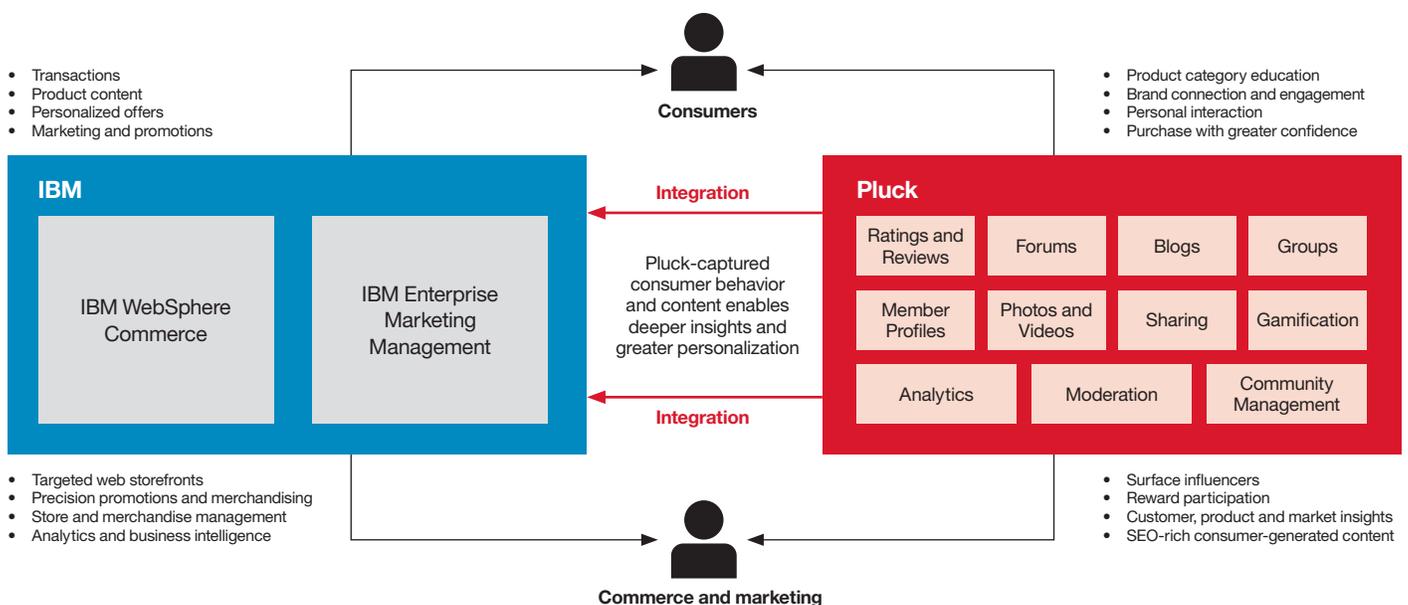
- **Robust social engagement** — Offering a breadth of applications, the solution provides the tools brands and retailers need to drive customer behaviors and support a growing, social community throughout the customer journey, from prospect to advocate. Extensive customization allows brands to deliver a distinctive experience that aligns with the brand essence yet is tailored to specific social commerce needs.
- **Single-platform power** — Using WebSphere-native applications, the Pluck platform is designed to integrate seamlessly into WebSphere Commerce software for faster, easier deployment. This deep integration, along with a broad and deep portfolio of robust applications, helps customers cost-effectively achieve social commerce goals.
- **Future-focused versatility** — The solution gives brands access to all the applications, not just one piece at a time. This versatility enables marketers to adapt to changing customer needs, capture new opportunities quickly and incorporate new features when the time is right.

Pluck and IBM: a closer look

Together, Pluck and IBM deliver a social commerce solution that helps drive business value across the customer journey. Components of the solution from IBM may include the following:

- **IBM WebSphere Commerce software** — WebSphere Commerce software allows companies to deliver a unified, cross-channel shopping experience through contextually relevant content, marketing and promotions, while extending brands across all digital and physical customer touchpoints. WebSphere Commerce software supports B2C, B2B and B2B2C business models on a single customer interaction platform.
- **IBM Digital Analytics software** — This analytics center helps organizations gain a competitive edge through state-of-the-art analytics and comparative benchmarks and knowledge of how the best performers achieve success. It includes a data warehouse on visitors' digital journeys across marketing touchpoints and channels to help turn insight into personalized marketing action.

Pluck and IBM Solution Architecture



The solution from Pluck and IBM adds a new dimension to the social commerce experience, delivering great breadth of applications and deep integration to enable a variety of customer interactions from a single, powerful platform.

Pluck and IBM: enriching customer engagement

Pluck

Pluck, a product of Demand Media's Social Solutions Group, is an integrated community platform for retailers, brands and publishers. It has been recognized for its breadth and depth of features and powers the online communities of more than 600 market leaders, giving these organizations everything they need to build unique social experiences that help them achieve their online business objectives.

IBM

The IBM Smarter Commerce™ approach integrates industry-leading capabilities and offerings from its software, services and systems portfolio to help organizations increase the value they generate for their customers, partners and shareholders. The Smarter Commerce approach integrates and transforms how companies manage and adapt the processes they use to buy, market, sell, fulfill and service their offerings, putting the customer at the center of the value chain. It increases differentiation, customer loyalty, revenue and margin growth.

For more information

To learn more about the IBM Smarter Commerce approach, contact your IBM sales representative or visit:

ibm.com/smartercommerce

To learn more about Pluck, please visit:

www.pluck.com



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