



ROBUST TECHNOLOGY INFRASTRUCTURE FOR THE NEW ECOMMERCE ERA

Ft. Lauderdale - Toronto - Bogota - Santiago

A PE INSIGHT BY
trajectory



Introduction

If the last couple of years has taught technology operational improvement specialists anything regarding the retail sector, it's that a retailer's need for an efficient, reliable and scalable eCommerce technology infrastructure has never been greater. The last two years have demonstrated the requirement for retailers to either up their existing eCommerce game or offer an eCommerce channel for the first time. The global retail sector will never be the same again.

Trajectory client La Bota Roja, a mid-sized 80-year-old retailer, understands this fundamental shift better than anyone. Having never operated online before, La Bota Roja's story of how they swiftly set up an eCommerce infrastructure including an eCommerce storefront supported by ERP inventory management, demonstrates that eCommerce ecosystems are accessible to even mid-sized brands if they choose the right technology solutions, the right implementation partner with the right methodology.

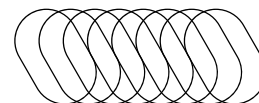


There isn't a world where people revert back to their 2019 behaviours, and part of that is just a comfort level



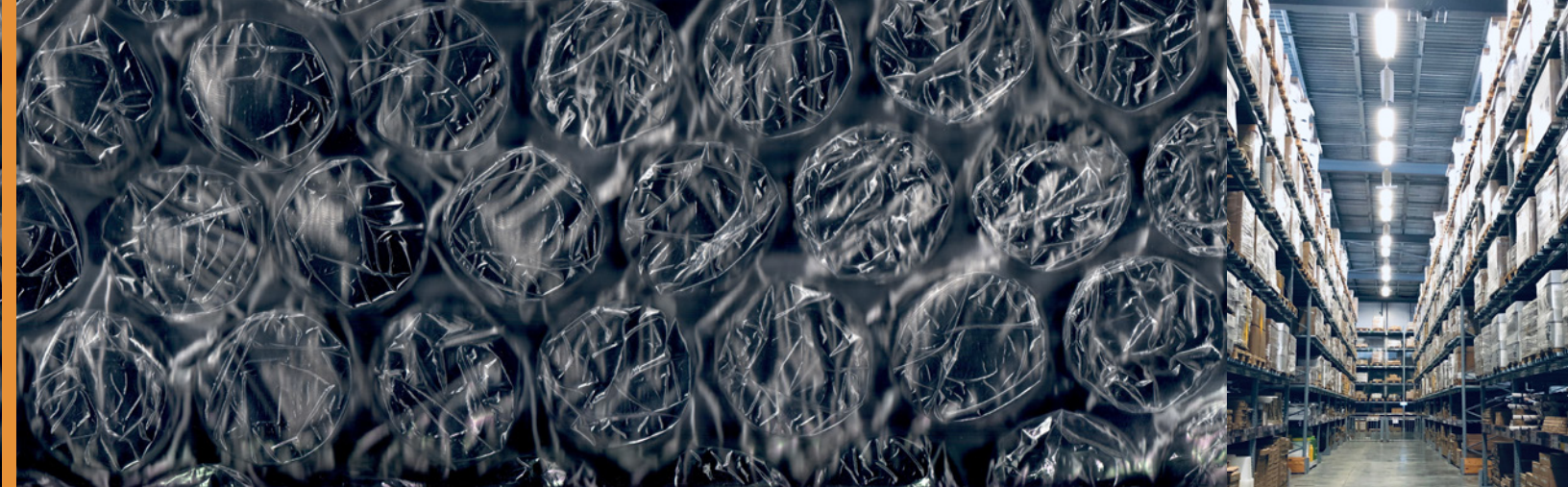
Best Buy CEO,
Corie Barry, as part of her remarks at CES 2021

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THIS INSIGHT WILL COVER THE FOLLOWING:

- What the current eCommerce revolution is about.
- Current key eCommerce trends.
- Key success factors for companies considering embarking on an eCommerce technology infrastructure upgrade.
- How La Bota Roja successfully navigated their eCommerce transformation.

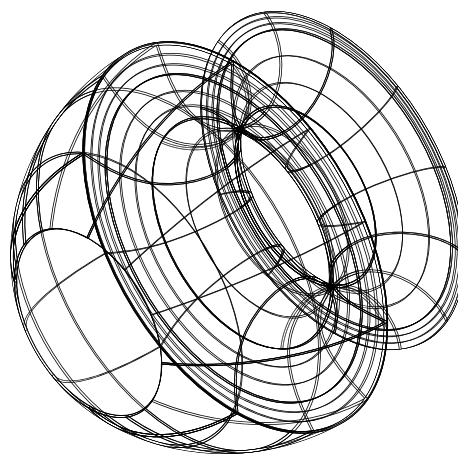


eCommerce Revolution

It comes as no surprise that one of the big impacts on retail in recent years has been the shift to online shopping. As evidenced by recent data from Shopify, one of the world's largest online storefronts, their previous Cyber Monday sales records were crushed in 2021 when worldwide sales on the Shopify platform totaled \$6.3 billion: over double their 2019 Cyber Monday sales, and 23% higher than 2020.²

Consumer behaviour has changed forever. We have become used to having all available options at our fingertips, suggestions for what we may be interested in based on search patterns, and the added bonus of delivery to our homes. We have become more fickle - expecting exactly what we want, at the best possible price and as quickly as possible.

What does this mean for retailers? At a minimum, they have to provide an eCommerce storefront - the more intuitive and efficient, the better.



The retailers who excel will be those who are able to create an engaging and consistent customer experience from first touchpoint to purchase, both online and in-store. What will it take to achieve this goal? The implementation of a scalable eCommerce technology ecosystem consisting of an online storefront coupled with a robust back-end ERP solution. Shopify has acknowledged this reality with the creation of their Shopify Global ERP Program, that allows best-in-class ERPs to integrate with the Shopify App store in order to consolidate sales, financial and inventory data, creating a streamlined customer experience.³



eConsumer Trends & Challenges

Some key consumer trends that must be addressed in this new eCommerce era include:

01

EFFICIENT PURCHASE PROCESS

According to Google Research, consumers are looking to meet their needs in the most efficient way possible, whether that means shopping exclusively online or researching online before heading to the store.⁴

02

EASY SEARCH FOR BEST DEALS

According to Google Research, consumers seek easy navigation, suggestions, reviews and better deals. Consumers consider themselves “deal finders”. 59% of US consumers say they prefer to shop online to get the best deal possible, which is also the number one thing people say they enjoy about shopping.⁵

03

MORE TARGETED OFFERINGS

According to Gartner Research by the end of 2025, all global multi-channel fashion retailers will use AI and automation to create more targeted assortments, reducing item choices by up to 30%.⁶

The trends above present challenges for retailers. According to a December 2021 Nielsen Report entitled, “Navigate the top challenges facing CPG and retail advertisers in 2022”, top challenges include:⁷

1. GROWTH & BUDGETING

Retailers are going to have to find ways to optimize their sales funnel, encouraging their existing customer base to buy again and find new customers through engaging multi-channel advertising material.

2. MEASUREMENT & TRANSPARENCY

It's a proven fact that reliable data improves ROI. Having an eCommerce technology infrastructure in place that provides visibility into key sales, financial and operational data, and that facilitates the ability to effectively leverage that intelligence to improve operational capacity and efficiency, will in turn improve ROI.

Given the increasingly competitive and complex retail landscape, **What can retailers do to put themselves in the best strategic position to succeed?**

01 Remain Agile and Proactive

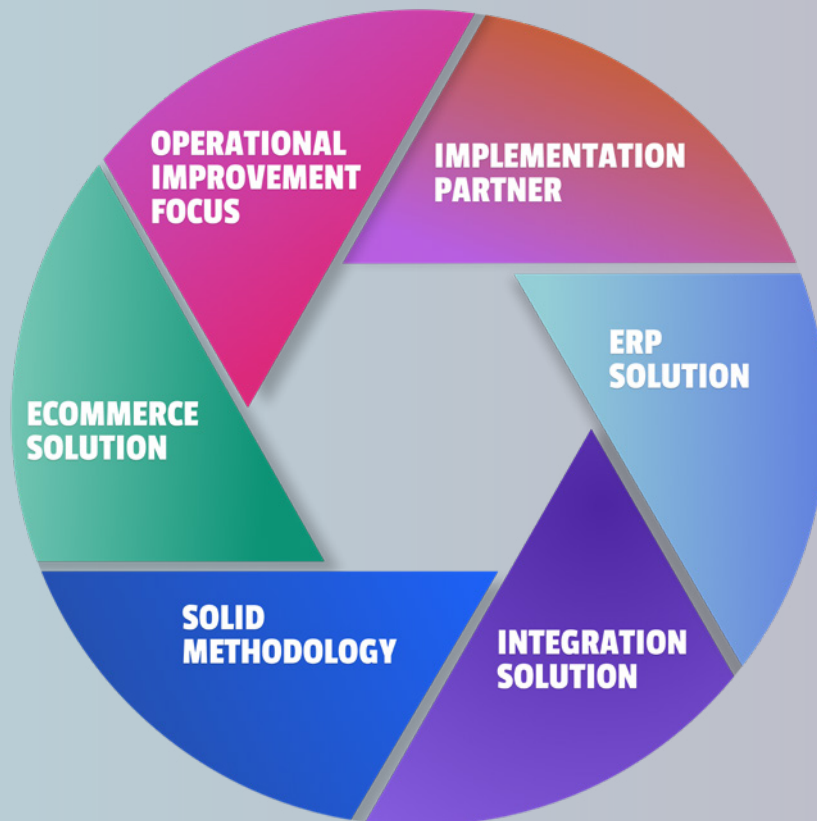
02 Maximize Reach and Improve Messaging

03 Optimize Marketing Efforts

3. TARGETING

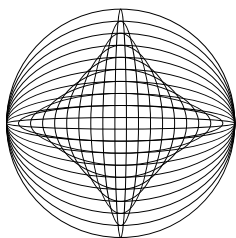
Sales growth potential will be dictated by an organization's ability to effectively hone their messaging to their target audience(s), this new age of marketing communications is not one-size fits all. The more engaging and relevant the messaging is to a target customer, delivered at the right time with the right price point, can shorten the purchase cycle time and increase sales.

A scalable eCommerce technology infrastructure is required to achieve the strategic imperatives outlined above. It is achieved through a combination of the selection of the right ecosystem elements i.e. technology solutions and the right implementation partner with the right implementation methodology.



eCommerce Technology Ecosystem Elements

The Right Solutions eCommerce Technology



An effective eCommerce technology ecosystem is optimal only when the right solutions are combined to build an integrated environment, in which marketing and sales data combine with finance and operational data to provide a holistic view of operations.

In our experience at Trajectory, an ideal ecosystem for mid-market organizations operating an eCommerce channel consists of a **Shopify** or **NetSuite SuiteCommerce** (depending on specific needs) solution integrated with **Oracle NetSuite ERP**.



Shopify VS NetSuite SuiteCommerce

Shopify is the eCommerce platform used by millions of online retailers worldwide, second only to Amazon. Why is shopify such a popular platform? As outlined in The Rive Agency blog **“Why Businesses Choose Shopify as their eCommerce Store”**:

Easy Management of omni-channel sales scalability - the platform can grow with your business while not disrupting day-to-day operations

Franchise Friendly enterprise-level support and international expansion

App Integrations - integrates with CRM and ERP softwares to provide a holistic view of operations

Payment Options - over 100 payment gateways integrated with the solution

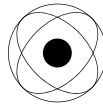
Sell Anywhere - promote products and sell on multiple platforms including: Facebook, Instagram, Amazon

Marketing Tools - includes built-in tools for audience targeting

Store Insights - Advanced eCommerce analytics allows for monitoring and refinement of e-mail and SMS campaigns

Support - 24/7 support including discussion forums at the Shopify Community

SEO-Friendly - basic SEO functionality including on-page structure and optimization are built-in



For many, Shopify is a great choice. But if NetSuite is your ERP and your needs are more operations-centric, NetSuite SuiteCommerce eStore may make more sense. The main benefits of this solution include⁸:

REAL-TIME DATA VISIBILITY/REPORTING

Since the SuiteCommerce solution-related data is part of the NetSuite database, inventory levels reflected on the web site are always accurate and financial and operational reporting always includes up-to-date information (does not rely on syncing of data with a third party system).

QUICK & EASY SET-UP

SuiteCommerce has many pre-built storefront templates to choose from and can be implemented quickly (within 30 days).

NO INTEGRATION EXPENSES/MAINTENANCE

Not having integrations means no related expenses or maintenance.

Trajectory regularly assesses which solution best suits client needs and executes the set-up to work seamlessly within the overall technology ecosystem.

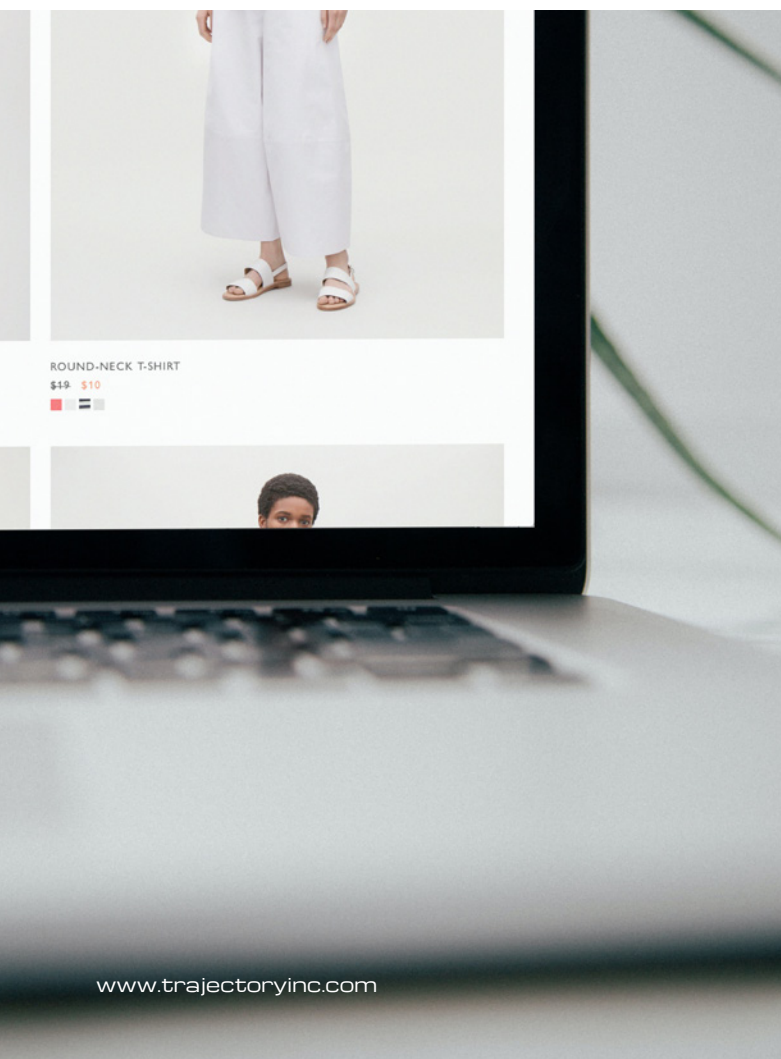


eCommerce Solution Integration with NetSuite



NetSuite is a best-in-class, cloud-based ERP used worldwide. Some reasons to choose NetSuite ERP, (including 360 degree view of data, low IT management overhead, efficiency, scalability and solution flexibility) are outlined in more detail below.⁹

A key success factor for a highly efficient technology ecosystem depends on how smoothly the ERP and eCommerce systems are integrated. For this important function, Trajectory's go-to integration tool of choice is Dell Boomi due to its quality, reliability and ease-of-use.



AGILE INTEGRATION - Boomi is a leading cloud integration and workflow automation solution. It enables agile integration (faster and more efficient than developing custom code yourself).

EASY CUSTOMIZATION - Boomi has drag-and-drop data integration, customizable end-to-end workflows, and pre-built tools.

REAL-TIME DATA SYNCHRONIZATION - Boomi's unified platform allows customers to sync data in real-time. It also resolves quarantine issues and enriches data via a data hub.

Through Trajectory's extensive use of Dell Boomi over the last 15 years, we identified that some clients do not need the full breadth of Dell Boomi functionality. There was a market for a more simplified integration option that would address the needs of less complex customer with less transactional data. Hence Trajectory's integration product **Initus**, was born:

PROVIDES ONLY THE BUSINESS-CRITICAL FUNCTIONALITY

Supports the integration of order, customer, and item-related fields, streamlined sharing of information between platforms.

REASONABLE PRICE

Given that it's a slimmed-down middleware, you only pay for the functionality you need.

DEPENDABLE MIDDLEWARE PLATFORM

Designed and built by experienced Trajectory software engineers in Amazon Web Services, Initus is well-architected and maintained by our Managed Services team, so it's always running optimally.

Key success factors for integration projects:¹⁰

THE RIGHT PROJECT TEAM

Including source and target system experts and integration solution experts from the beginning of the planning process.

THE RIGHT INTEGRATION TOOL

Typically Del Boomi or Initus.

THOROUGH INTEGRATION ARCHITECTURE PLANNING

Completing full requirements gathering prior to architecting the integration is critical. Considering factors such as integration timing, volume constraints, connection method, execution order, business rules identification, data field mapping, error reporting and management at the outset, will make for a reliable implementation.

DETAILED TESTING PLAN

Ensure all business scenarios have been included during the testing process.

**ONCE THE RIGHT
SOLUTION ELEMENTS ARE
IDENTIFIED, THE NEXT
STEP IS TO IDENTIFY THE
RIGHT IMPLEMENTATION
PARTNER TO TRANSFORM
THEORY INTO REALITY.**

The Right Technology Implementation Partner

When undertaking the creation of a technology ecosystem, you need a partner with holistic business experience, beyond just system knowledge. Someone who takes the time to understand your business before designing a solution, and solid execution plan. Here's what to look for when making your selection:

BUSINESS-DRIVEN MINDSET WITH ACCREDITED CONSULTANTS - Look for a team of experienced and qualified business operations experts (MBAs, CPAs, BComms) who also have technical knowledge. This ensures that the ultimate solution will be business needs driven vs solution driven (trying to fit the business into the solution rather than vice versa). Keeping as close to standard system processes as possible is always recommended in order to minimize customizations and maintenance.

DEDICATED TEAM OF CONSULTANTS - Ensure you are assigned a dedicated cross-functional team consisting of consultants, software engineers/ developers and project management professionals in order to have knowledge consistency throughout the project and the different project work streams.

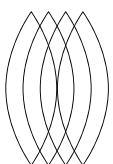
SEASONED PROJECT MANAGER (PM) INVOLVEMENT - A strong PM carefully tracks project metrics i.e. timelines, resourcing and budget, mitigating risk.

BUSINESS-CENTRIC METHODOLOGY - The methodology should focus on the business first rather than the solution, including detailed business requirements gathering sessions/best practice discussions. Once the solution is configured, there should be rigorous testing and training plans to ensure effective adoption by end-users.

BOUTIQUE FIRM: RIGHT-SIZED TEAM - Ideally you want to find a partner who has several years of experience as well as deep bench-strength (over 20 employees), so you benefit from a wide breadth of knowledge and redundancy throughout the project. Also, be sure to inquire if the implementation partner is a single company or whether it's a group of independent contractors working together. There is a big difference between these two models in terms of smooth project delivery and knowledge sharing. The former model typically delivers a better solution more efficiently than the latter model.

SERVICE LEVEL AGREEMENTS - The SLA should include clear deliverables on milestones, communication and resource requirements. Quality Track Record - Speak to references for similar projects to the one you are undertaking, to confirm track record for work quality.

REASONABLE IP GUIDELINES - Your selected partner should be willing to share documentation and code related to the project so that you receive the information needed to run the solution independently post Go-Live.



The Right Implementation Methodology

Once your ecosystem elements and implementation partner are identified, the key success factor for completion is a proven implementation methodology:

1. Assemble an Effective Internal Project Team

Your team should include: Project Manager, Project Sponsor and Project Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) by functional area.

2. Create an Effective Change Management Plan

Engaging key stakeholders in the planning and execution phases and reviewing expectations and benefits, will go a long way to facilitating a smooth implementation.

3. An Effective Training Plan

The importance of a solid training plan cannot be underestimated. Building the system is one thing, but having users embrace it is another, and the key to system adoption is a confident user group who have been well-trained. An escalation procedure for post Go-Live support is also highly effective.

4. Engage in Business Process Mapping/ Redesign

Implementing a new solution presents opportunities to rethink how things are currently done, and embrace a better way.

5. Migrate your Data throughout the Build Phase

A system is only as useful as the data it contains. Be sure to focus on data preparation and testing from the beginning of the build phase of the project. Practice extracting data from source systems, massaging it into NetSuite formats, and load into the test environment.



“La Bota Roja always values the trust and time of our customers, which is why we’re different and why customers of all generations remember the experience of having visited our stores.”

Ramiro Mendez, La Bota Roja General Manager

LA BOTA ROJA - THE DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION BACKSTORY

Before working with Trajectory, each La Bota Roja department used its own legacy software solutions for daily tasks, including manual spreadsheets for inventory management and PDF creation for invoicing. This time-consuming approach, coupled with frequent on-premises system outages, undermined performance and raised costs.

La Bota Roja’s management team knew it was time to make the leap to a reliable, scalable cloud solution, to consolidate systems, centralize data, improve inventory management, and support the launch of eCommerce operations. It was an ambitious project, one that the team knew they needed to move forward on quickly when pandemic-related lockdowns pushed consumers online in the spring of 2020.

Ramiro Mendez, La Bota Roja General Manager, said that working with Trajectory was revolutionary for the company, and not simply because the new system gives his team greater visibility into their data, which has allowed them to improve their forecasting and warehouse management capabilities. The new solution also eliminated historic operational system issues that had drained resources. Now, Mendez noted, his team can focus on running and growing the business rather than troubleshooting.

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Seamless Omni-Channel Experiences now Drive Retail Success

Nearly 80% of consumers now “see the world as all digital, with no divide” between online and physical domains.¹¹ So, while eCommerce is an essential retail channel, retail success now rests on the ability to create cohesive customer experiences online and in stores.

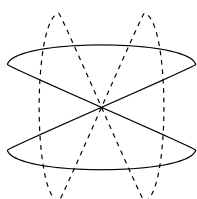
Providing those experiences requires a unified view of retail data for growth and budgeting, KPI tracking, and personalized customer interactions.¹² Unified data is also fueling AI-driven, automated optimization of retail inventory assortments, a practice that “all global multi-channel fashion retailers” will adopt by the end of 2025.¹³

To meet the growing need for scalable eCommerce data integration, Shopify now partners with major ERP vendors including Microsoft Dynamics 365 Business Central, Oracle NetSuite, Infor, Acumatica, and Brightpearl. Shopify's Global ERP Program gives retailers "a centralized system that connects their commerce platform to key business data like financials and inventory so they can optimize operations and processes."¹⁴

La Bota Roja's management team knew they needed a solution that would not only achieve their eCommerce aspirations, but also allow them to stay agile and proactive, maximize their brand reach and messaging, and support continuous measurement and optimization. The team had an ambitious list of requirements for their transformation, including:

- Replacing An Out-Dated Custom Single-Tenant Server Solution
- Optimizing Inventory And Shipping Management
- Integrating Third-Party POS Systems
- Managing Complex Tax Requirements

Because La Bota Roja's previous technology implementation partners had not met their expectations, and because the rapid global move to eCommerce had raised the stakes for successful digital transformation, the retailer proceeded cautiously in selecting the appropriate partner for this major and now urgent project.



The Right Technology Partner And Solutions

FINDING THE RIGHT PARTNER AND OPTIMAL TECHNOLOGY SOLUTIONS FOR THEIR ECOMMERCE ECOSYSTEM

La Bota Roja knew they needed more than technology expertise. They also needed consultants who would take a holistic approach and understand their unique business before planning a technology solution. They sought a technology implementation partner with a focus on value creation and a properly certified, highly experienced team of consultants to navigate their complex requirements with ease.

Their search led them to Trajectory. The engagement began with a study of La Bota Roja and a full review of their business needs. Based on their findings, Trajectory designed a holistic ecosystem that addressed all of the company's business process needs, end-to-end, including:

- NetSuite ERP: the best cloud-based ERP solution giving middle-market companies a 360-degree view of business performance with a scalable modular structure and flexible pricing.
- Shopify eCommerce storefront: the industry leader for retailers seeking to synchronize store data with back-end systems for better inventory visibility, flexible shipping and payment options, easy change management, and customer portal creation.
- BSALE electronic invoicing solution
- Credit Card Payment Integration
- Shipping Integration

THE RIGHT INTEGRATION TOOL: INITUS

Properly integrating NetSuite, Shopify, and BSALE and local tax authorities was key to delivering a valuable solution. Trajectory's experience since 2008 as a leading integration consultancy allowed the team to develop a custom plan that optimized functionality while reducing time to value. Using Trajectory's proprietary Initus middleware for simple, streamlined, cost-effective integrations.

“Trajectory provides a strong business team that understands operations, and designs sophisticated solutions with the ultimate objective of supporting clients’ exponential growth. We have a strong technical team, capable of executing and delivering the proposed solutions. Finally, we are solution agnostic, so we focus on providing the best possible solutions using the most appropriate platforms based on your unique needs.”

Alex Olano
Trajectory President & Managing Partner

Trajectory's Implementation Approach in Action

With La Bota Roja's business needs and goals understood, a technology ecosystem mapped out, and an integration platform selected, Trajectory began the implementation. Time was of the essence because of the drop in foot traffic to brick-and-mortar stores. The new solution also needed to create a long-lasting, agile foundation for omni-channel growth.

Within eight months, La Bota Roja implemented a custom Order Management module with business-specific processes, an Inventory Management Module including more than 95,000 SKUs, a Warehousing module, their new Shopify online storefront and full integration of the ecosystem.

Trajectory also helped La Bota Roja's team navigate the change management journey with meticulous training so the retail team could on the new solution and business processes.

**THE RESULT:
A STREAMLINED
ECOMMERCE EXPERIENCE,
COMPLETE DIGITAL
TRANSFORMATION**



“Trajectory has a transparent approach that was tailored to our specific needs. They reviewed our problems thoroughly and set the roadmap and budget for how to address them. Having worked with them, we can trust that they deliver on time, with a global professional attitude that adds value to our processes.”

Ramiro Mendez
La Bota Roja General Manager



Working with Trajectory, La Bota Roja is now empowered to manage more than 100,000 transactions involving more than 20,000 SKUs monthly. The retailer also enjoys:

- Holistic business data visibility with a centralized view of all retail data for all departments and channels in one searchable system.
- Centralized real-time inventory management across all physical locations and the online store.
- Efficient warehouse management with automated shipping integration.
- Frictionless online experience via Shopify's best-in-class eCommerce features, including one-tap checkout.
- Continuous, automated data collection flowing into NetSuite for efficient invoicing and financial management.
- Ongoing system support and optimization supported by Trajectory Managed Services.

Wrap Up

Consumer and market trends are clear - providing consumers intuitive, streamlined and high-quality online has become a strategic imperative in the eCommerce space. This is made possible via strong back-end metrics provided by a best-in-class technology infrastructure. Even historic brands that are new to the eCommerce space can get “online” quickly if they make the right technology and implementation partner choices.”

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



VLAD OLANO

Trajectory’s VP of Operations, Vlad has 15 years of experience architecting and delivering complex multi-solution technology ecosystems including Oracle NetSuite, NetSuite SuiteCommerce, Salesforce, OpenAir, Shopify and more, for clients across North and South America. Vlad has learned from experience how to efficiently implement solutions that minimize time to Go-Live and maximize business value for our clients.

Citations

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LET'S CREATE YOUR SUCCESS TOGETHER

Trajectory Group is a boutique business-first technology implementation consultancy focused on helping clients achieve operational improvement via technology transformation. Following a holistic approach, we assist clients and operators with everything from Pre-Acquisition Due Diligence, Blueprinting, Implementation, and post-Go-Live Managed Services of entire technology ecosystems including ERP, CRM, PSA, eCommerce, and System Integration elements. Our cross-functional team consisting of experienced business consulting, technical architecture/development, and project management professionals, follow a business understanding above technology-led implementation methodology, in order to deliver high-value solutions to clients for not only current but future value creation.

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