

# WELCOME TO THE HEADLESS REVOLUTION: flexibility for survival

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DIGITAL REPORT 2022



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# WELCOME TO THE HEADLESS REVOLUTION: FLEXIBILITY FOR SURVIVAL





## Valtech SVP of Technology Strategy, **Mihaela Mazzenga**, explains how headless technology is revolutionising modern enterprises

**H**eadless is part of a modern enterprise ecosystem, anchored by Microservices, APIs, and Cloud-Native SaaS - coined MACH - and together, this open technology standard is poised to drive value to organisations like never before.

It unlocks value in the three pillars of people, process, and technology; modernising teams and ways of working, bringing back the true software engineering spirit of solving business problems with modern tools vs. restrictive suites or over-indexed bespoke solutions; allowing business users to operate critical system features; shaking up processes and allowing for fast iterations and innovation; while also breaking the old ideals of on-prem systems management and capped scalability, powered by the best of what the cloud has to offer.

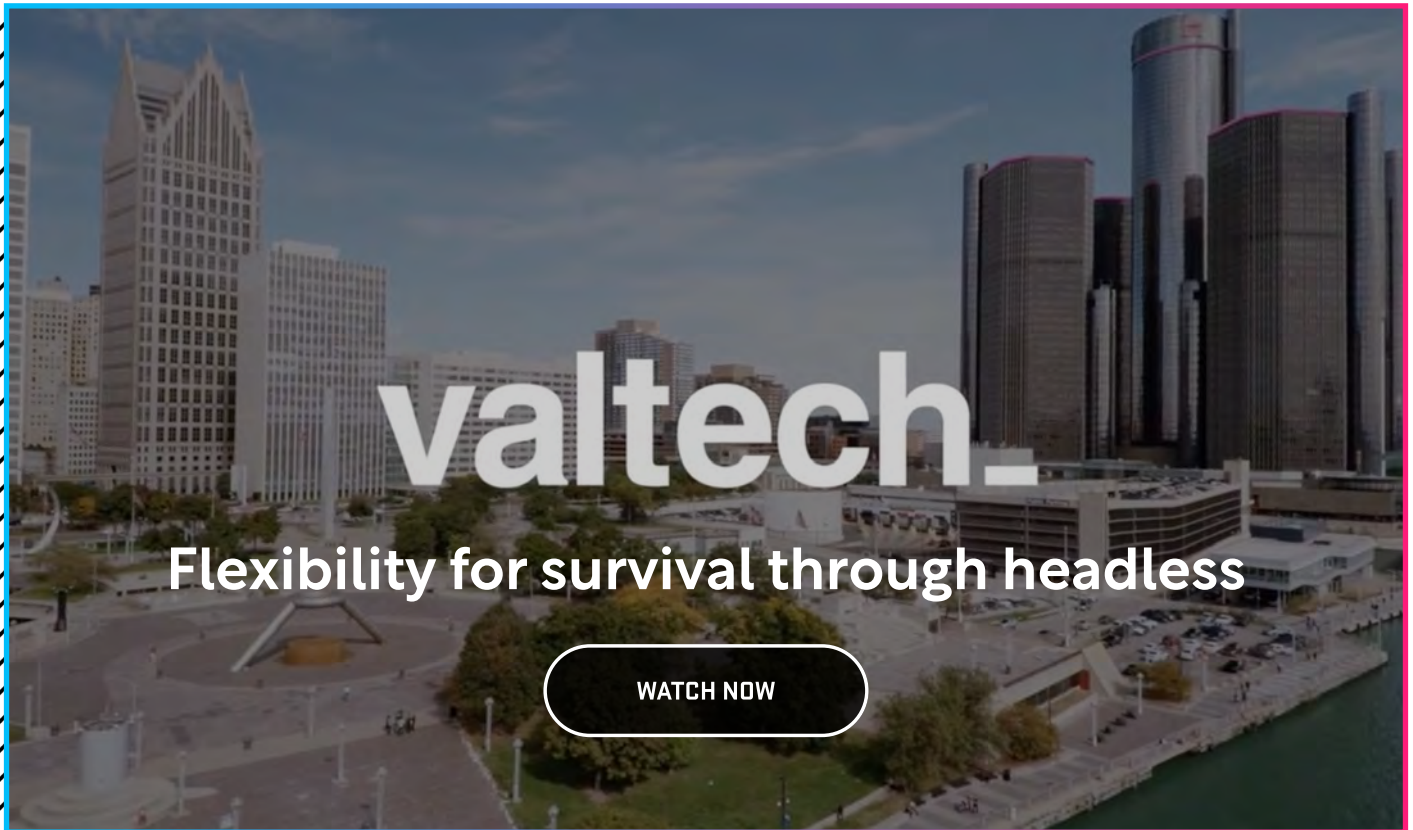
You could also call this a revolution of Anything as a Service (XaaS), but XaaS is only a part of the picture, even as revolutionary as it is. Headless is the concept that ultimately provides direct value, enabling the expansion of customer experiences through modern architectures. The expectation is that XaaS, or more specifically Software as a Service (SaaS), will continue to grow and mature with products transformed into market-driven, pre-integrated, and commoditised offerings.





“API-based digital commerce is being rapidly adopted (as) the standard approach for delivery of experiences by the enterprise”

HYPE CYCLE™  
FOR DIGITAL COMMERCE, 2021



Microservice-based software breaks apart monolithic systems and enables a focus on smaller components that can be designed, developed, and deployed independently. Long gone are the days of massive regression needs and large-scale risk; microservices localise risk by allowing smaller parts to fail and increase quality.

API-first solutions ensure that you have fundamental access to the entire platform via APIs; not that you've started to expose granular functionality iteratively, but that you've exposed all of the functionality from day one. APIs that are backed by elastic microservices are the gold standard. They allow you to seamlessly interact from anywhere.

Cloud-native SaaS brings microservices and APIs together, built natively in the cloud, utilising elastic scale so that independent services access and consume resources relative to their footprints and apply updates automatically. You no

longer have to wait months for system provisioning. Today it's as easy as clicking a 'free trial' button and you're off and running - infrastructure on demand. Previously, not only did you have to wait for servers to arrive, you also had to wait for specialists to configure them, you had to make sure that they were in compliance with security standards, and lots of other different implications which cloud-native SaaS handles for you.

Headless is an experience delivery approach, fully decoupling your frontend technology from your backend system. Contrary to the name, headless is meant to yield many heads, to open the world of possibilities and activate software everywhere and from any touchpoint. It allows you to reuse your core business logic, to compose the best solution for each channel, and delivers efficiency at scale. It is important to note that not all headless is created equal. The anchoring

## Mihaela Mazzenga



TITLE: SVP OF TECHNOLOGY STRATEGY

COMPANY: VALTECH

LOCATION: DETROIT



Mihaela has over 20 years of experience driving digital transformations and architecting best-in-breed SaaS and business-critical software solutions in high availability environments. As an accomplished CTO, she has a strong focus on strategy, product development, and end-to-end technology operations; able to mesh a culture of innovation with driving business value through solutions ranging from behavioural engagement to composable and headless architectures. Mihaela has joined the global team at Valtech, as Senior VP of Technology Strategy, to help push the boundaries of digital revolution and provide technical strategy for value, relationship, and innovation growth. She is a member of the MACH Alliance and a strong advocate for the value that MACH can bring to an organisation.

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MIHAELA MAZZENGA  
SVP OF TECHNOLOGY STRATEGY,  
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technologies - microservices, APIs, and cloud-native SaaS - are critical to the delivery of truly innovative, scalable, and flexible headless solutions where the quality of the composition and orchestration will often dictate success.

The world is changing at a massive pace, and at no other time has it been more important to transform your digital operations. Companies cannot afford to stagnate, they have to implement forward-looking strategies to harness technology for acceleration or risk losing touch with their customers.

With so much specialisation of the technology tools, we continue to push

the conversation farther into business enablement via technology - to discuss what's next vs. continuing to discuss the paradigm shift away from vendor-locked black-box solutions. We are now able to unlock enterprise bimodal capabilities, micro frontends, digitalisation, experience architectures, and commerce everywhere via the power of MACH as a whole. The headless revolution has arrived, and will soon be infiltrating all of your digital channels and delivering on the total enterprise experience. It's time for your business to focus on real value generation - at scale - leveraged by composable solutions.

### The MACH Alliance

The API economy is now a foregone conclusion. One of the weaknesses of the API economy alone was a lack of a cohesive voice and holistic view of capabilities. Valtech, commercetools, Contentstack, and EPAM being founding members of the MACH Alliance, recognised this gap and realised that the most valuable story is written together, not in isolation. The MACH Alliance was the first attempt at presenting a unified and collective face, creating a collective vision that could guide global adoption.

The MACH Alliance certifies the brightest cloud-native SaaS and headless providers in the world. While headless can be applied to any industry, it has been especially impactful in the ecommerce space, as can also be seen by the heavy amount of investment taking place. The members below provide a great example of a complete end-to-end composable commerce solution:

- **commercetools** (\$308.1mn raised through September 2021) - headless digital commerce
- **Contentstack** (\$89mn raised through June 2021) - headless content management
- **Algolia** (\$334.2mn raised through July 2021) - headless search, discovery, and recommendations
- **Layer0** (acquired for \$55mn in July 2021) - progressive web app and all-in-one dynamic Jamstack platform for sub-second websites
- **Fluent Commerce** (\$28.8mn raised through August 2019) - headless order management, inventory, availability, and fulfillment
- **Valtech** (new investment, valuing company at \$1.4bn) - global digital agency focused on business transformation, strategy, and delivering technical solutions that scale





Gartner notes that companies that leverage composable applications can outpace their competition by 80% regarding new feature implementation, and that cloud-native platforms will provide the foundation for most new digital initiatives by mid-decade.

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GARTNER  
TOP STRATEGIC TECHNOLOGY  
TRENDS FOR 2022



## “The MACH Alliance stamp simplifies things for tech buyers and complicates things for vendors”

JOE CICMAN  
SENIOR ANALYST,  
FORRESTER, JULY 2021

Together, they represent a dream technology stack and solution set; providing end-to-end ecommerce technologies, coupled with strong solutioning and delivery and ready to take on your legacy monolith or bespoke build.

These are all organizations that are comfortable as masters of their domains, and happy to share the spotlight when delivering best-in-breed solutions together. Interest in the alliance continues to grow; from just five members to 30 as of June 2021, along with an expanding ambassador program hosting top technology executives.

The Alliance’s mission is to future-proof enterprise technology and to propel current

and future digital experiences with open and connected enterprise tech. Collectively their voice represents the next generation of technology and business. The ultimate goal is global knowledge sharing and education of these value-driven solutions. One day, everyone will know what MACH is, and their mission will be complete.

### Flexibility for survival

These solutions really require a different mindset, one with flexibility at its core, and being comfortable working in the distributed cloud. All end-users have begun to expect a personalised, seamless omni-channel experience within milliseconds on every device and in every online transaction. Forward-thinking companies will ditch outdated platforms for headless tech stacks that allow them to select best of breed technologies for each layer in the stack. This composable approach provides businesses the ability to innovate quickly based on metrics and customer feedback, be flexible as changes are required due to logistics challenges and provide a future-proof, scalable platform.



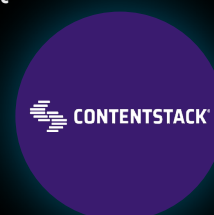
### VALTECH

Valtech ideates modern software solutions (including headless) while accelerating transformation initiatives for clients. This takes intimate knowledge about the clients' business domains, best practices in technology and commerce, and nurturing meaningful relationships with partners. Valtech sees it as their responsibility to bring the headless dream to life through these carefully crafted solutions. And it's not just about the technology, it's also about the people and process. Valtech's responsibility is not only to design and build the best solutions, but also to advise and craft the strategies that unlock value faster, so businesses can deliver the best experiences to their customers at record speed. Valtech understands that each client is unique and so are their technological landscapes. Different challenges require different solutions, which is where vendors like Contentstack, commercetools, LayerO, Algolia and Fluent Commerce, amongst others, come into play.



### CONTENTSTACK

As the pioneering Agile Content Management System and founder of the MACH Alliance, Contentstack empowers marketers and developers to collaborate around content like never before. Together, they can orchestrate superior customer journeys and deliver dynamic digital experiences across channels, audiences, brands and regions. Companies such as Chase, Express, Mattel, McDonald's, Mitsubishi, Holiday Inn, Icelandair, Riot Games, Sephora and Shell



trust Contentstack to power their most critical content experiences. Renowned for its Care Without Compromise™ commitment to customer care, Contentstack has the industry's highest customer satisfaction rating.

## COMMERCE TOOLS

Modern commerce that's at the forefront of innovation — ready for today, tomorrow, and beyond. Our headless commerce solution gives you far more agility and speed to connect to any touchpoint you want now, as well as touchpoints developed in the future. We are challenging and changing the world of enterprise commerce software. By enabling brands to cross the Commerce Possibilities Chasm (TM), every new communications channel becomes a commerce possibility - from in-car, video content and A/R, voice, and IoT-enabled machines, to the devices of the future that we can only now imagine.



## LAYER0

Layer0's mission is to make the Web instant and simple. Layer0 is the first Edge solution that streamlines development workflows by integrating edge logic into application code, and offers sub-second page loads by extending the edge all the way to the browser. For businesses, sub-second websites deliver real results. Leading companies, such as Shoe Carnival, Kate Spade, and Universal Standard have boosted website traffic, conversions, and revenue. For builders, the Layer0 platform offers a suite of caching, productivity, and observability tools that enable teams to release up to twice as fast.



## ALGOLIA

Businesses are turning to Algolia's Search and Discovery platform to modernize their online user experience with a composable approach, allowing companies to quickly transform their sites and maximize ROI with a search plugin powered by AI. Algolia powered experiences enhance engagement, increase conversion rates, and enrich lifetime value to generate profitable growth. More than 10,000 companies including Under Armour, Lacoste, Birchbox, Stripe, Slack, Medium, and Zendesk rely on Algolia to manage over 1.5 trillion search queries a year.



## FLUENT COMMERCE

Fluent Commerce is focused on distributed order management and offers a highly flexible, extensible platform. Fluent Order Management supports agility so you can react quickly as market conditions change and includes the essential components for unified, headless commerce. Fluent Order Management allows you to track stock availability in near real-time, provides you with a single view of inventory to reduce overselling and underselling, the ability to sync inventory data across all systems, and optimization of order sourcing and allocation—by proximity, throughput, aging, markdowns, and more. Fluent Commerce works with global and regional brands such as JD Sports, L'Oréal, GrandVision, Aldo, Ted Baker and Marks & Spencer.



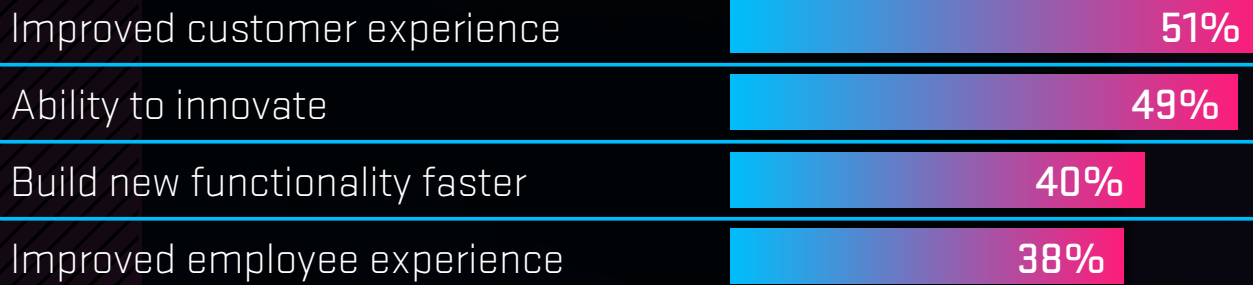
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VALTECH



## WHY GO HEADLESS?



CONTENTSTACK,  
HEADLESS CMS SURVEY

Never has it actually been easier to let go of the past and to innovate on something new. Not only can you break down the walls of all-in-one systems, you get to leverage the best tools on the market to build your next software solution and reuse them across multiple digital channels. What this means is that our business logic can literally run from anywhere at any time. One of the core software engineering concepts is reuse, and headless delivers reuse at its best.

Our world is exponentially more distributed and specialised, and of course the cloud had a massive part to play in that adoption. Now, headless and composable applications provide the perfect hybrid to bring all of us together and to focus on solving the real business problems. 🌐





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