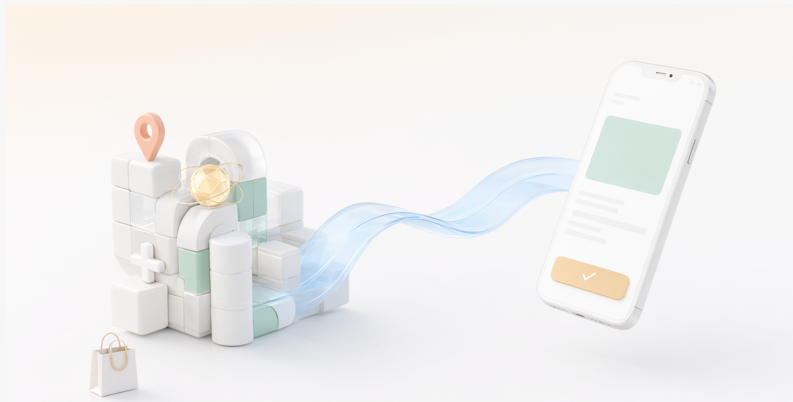
The Four Forces Reshaping Cross-Border E-Commerce Through 2029

Sebastián Castellanos Duque maps legacy costs, mobile gaps, agentic AI and composable commerce for executives betting on Latin America–U.S. e-commerce.



Sebastián Castellanos Duque, COO ARCA WW | Partner at Rappi

MIAMI, FL, UNITED STATES, August 12, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Looking across the landscape of digital commerce assets connecting Latin America and the United States, a clear trajectory emerges. The next wave of industry leaders should make business decissions in the context of adoption viral marketing trends "slash" think about the operating architecture running quietly behind their own curtains.

Throughout my work advising cross-border ventures, I continually observe that companies rarely lose market share because their competitors have better products. Rather, they suffocate under their own technical infrastructure. The operators capturing real value over the coming years run technology that moves at the exact speed of their customers.

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> *Sebastián Castellanos Duque*

Here's my perspective on the four structural forces redefining cross-border e-commerce and how they'll shape business outcomes longitudinally into the future.

1. The Hidden Drain of Legacy Technology
The most dangerous expense in e-commerce rarely appears as a clear line item on a balance sheet. Instead, it takes the form of aging platforms kept on life support. Across the industry, organizations routinely siphon the lion's share of their engineering budgets into legacy systems, vastly underestimating the true maintenance costs over time.

Operating across borders transforms legacy code from a mere inconvenience into a structural liability. Fragile systems tend to buckle exactly when traffic peaks—during major regional sales events and high-volume holiday seasons. For companies managing channels between Mexico, Colombia or Brazil and the U.S., modernization stands as a necessity for capital preservation. The compounding cost of inaction quickly overtakes the investment required for a planned migration.

2. Bridging the Mobile Conversion Gap

Mobile devices drive the overwhelming majority of online traffic across the Americas, yet conversion rates consistently lag behind desktop performance. Shopping carts on smartphones face alarming abandonment, driven almost entirely by avoidable friction during checkout.

Latin American consumers operate mobile-first out of pure necessity. Capturing this purchasing power requires recognizing that a mobile experience cannot function merely as a scaled-down desktop site. Winning in this space means redesigning the buying journey specifically for a handheld screen: frictionless single-tap checkouts, deep integration with preferred local payment methods, flexible buy-now-pay-later models and complete upfront transparency on import duties. Failing to display a landed cost in seconds on a mobile screen directly translates to lost revenue.

3. The Epoch of Agentic Artificial Intelligence

The industry is moving past the era where AI merely generates product descriptions or powers basic chatbots, entering the phase of agentic commerce. These autonomous AI assistants actively anticipate buyer needs, compare products across catalog boundaries and execute complex cross-border transactions conversationally.

Built on unified customer data, this level of hyper-personalization drives dramatic revenue growth and significantly stronger returns on marketing spend. For cross-border operators, autonomous layers absorb the friction that historically killed international carts—delivering bilingual support, localized tax math and delivery promises in real time.

Crucially, AI agents are fast becoming a primary discovery channel. Brands lacking machine-readable commerce architectures, structured data, open APIs and transparent policies will remain entirely invisible to the autonomous assistants guiding tomorrow's buyers.

4. Modular, Composable Architecture

The foundation enabling these advances remains fundamentally architectural. Monolithic, all-in-one platforms function as severe operational bottlenecks. Forward-thinking operators gravitate toward composable, API-first ecosystems, assembling best-of-breed tools for payments, inventory management, personalization and cross-border logistics.

This modular approach allows for the deployment of new features in days or weeks rather than months. Managing multiple currencies, distinct tax regimes and international fulfillment networks demands open APIs. They represent the core mechanism that allows businesses to adapt continuously, completely avoiding the massive renovation taxes traditionally incurred season after season.

An Executive Playbook for Cross-Border Capital
Evaluating a fully online venture or planning an aggressive cross-border expansion requires keeping key strategic principles at the forefront:

Prioritize Architectural Agility: Favoring open APIs and modular frameworks over walled gardens builds systems that permit tool swapping without rebuilding the entire stack.

Measure Total Cost of Ownership: Looking past low sticker prices reveals the true multi-year burden of maintaining aging infrastructure.

Treat Mobile Checkout as Revenue, Not Design: Approaching mobile UX as a primary revenue driver directly impacts conversion rates and customer lifetime value.

Secure Infrastructure Before Scale: Protecting brand assets, domain authority and core data architecture must precede any aggressive customer acquisition.

Deploying capital into digital commerce without a clear operating thesis amounts to a gamble. Guided by the right architecture, it evolves into a high-yielding portfolio strategy.

About Sebastián Castellanos Duque
I'm a strategist specializing in commerce, international business and high-scale operations. By now I'm Chief Operations Officer at ARCA —a global purveyor of luxury natural stone, wood and architectural surfaces supplying flagship projects for brands like Aman, Park Hyatt, St. Regis and Four Seasons across the globe— as well as Rappi Partner, Latin America's premier super-app. I advise executive teams and founders on building scalable cross-border commerce architectures that turn operational complexity into a competitive moat.

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