

One of the most talked-about promises in modern ecommerce transformation is that you can launch a composable **MVP composable commerce for retailers** (Minimum Viable Product) in four months — compared to traditional replatforming projects which typically take 18 months or more. But is that really achievable? Or is it just another buzzworthy claim from agencies and platform vendors?

After over a decade leading commerce delivery with hands-on experience from discovery workshops through war room cutovers and post-launch incident reviews on both monolithic replatforms and MACH-based headless commerce stacks, I'm here to unpack what's behind these timeline expectations. Drawing on insights from leaders like **Netguru**, **Valtech**, and **DEPT**, this post dives deep into the delivery approach, integration governance, ownership models, and how an evidence-based partnership evaluation will save your project from costly delays and disappointments.

Understanding Timeline Expectations: Traditional vs Composable

The classic full-site replatform typically clocks in at around 12 to 24 months for medium to large enterprises — sometimes even longer. This is due to the significant scope of work, including:

- Building or redesigning the entire frontend and backend stack
- Migration of data and customer accounts
- Integrations with ERP, CRM, payment gateways, and fulfillment
- Complex QA cycles and UAT with business stakeholders
- Full regression testing and performance optimization

18 months is a realistic average for these projects. It's not just a random number; it reflects measured delivery schedules from agencies like **Valtech** and **DEPT** who regularly run these extensive replatform programs.

What About the 4-Month Composable MVP?

Composable commerce, underpinned by MACH principles (Microservices, API-first, Cloud-native, Headless), promises agility and rapid time-to-market by decoupling functions into interchangeable services.

Companies like **Netguru** have demonstrated the ability to deliver a focused MVP in around four months. But it's crucial to understand what that MVP looks like:

- **Scope is tightly defined:** Only core user journeys and critical features are in the MVP.
- **Integration governance is streamlined:** Minimal essential integrations are scoped initially.
- **Delivery ownership is clear and centralized:** Typically a single accountable lead driving milestones and coordination.
- **Built for iteration:** The MVP is not a "full launch" but a foundation to iterate rapidly.

Launching a composable MVP in four months is real — but it requires disciplined scoping, experienced teams, and a strong post-launch operating model ready for continuous iterations.

Delivery Approach: Why Ownership Matters More Than Tools

Too often, teams get caught up debating headless commerce vendors or touting an "accelerator" without substantiating how delivery will be orchestrated. I always ask early on: *Who owns integration testing?* And this is a great litmus test of delivery maturity.

Successful fast-paced MVP delivery depends on:



- **End-to-end delivery ownership:** One accountable person or team that coordinates frontend, backend, and integrations.
- **Clear integration governance:** Don't underestimate integration testing effort and dependencies.
- **Iterative development approach:** Plan for phased delivery and feedback loops rather than big bang launches.

Leading agencies like **DEPT** embed these principles to avoid common failure modes we see post-launch, including:

- Undefined ownership causing missed bug fixes
- Integration handoffs without central coordination leading to incidents
- Vague timelines pushed by platform-agnostic sales teams, setting unrealistic expectations

Case in point:

I maintain a running list of post-launch failures to show clients real-life risks behind aggressive timelines with poor delivery models. The takeaway: Technology choice alone (MACH, headless commerce) does not guarantee fast delivery. Ownership and governance do.

The Role of Integration Governance in Timeline Realism

Composable commerce brings multiple specialized services communicating over APIs. Integration testing is often the critical path in deployment. A rushed schedule without explicitly assigned integration ownership invites risk.

Here's a simplified table of integration governance elements and their impact on timeline:

Governance Element	Description	Impact on Timeline
Single point integration lead	One person/team owns entire integration testing scope	Streamlines coordination; uncovers issues early
Integration test plans aligned to MVP scope	Clear, documented plan matching iterative releases	Helps avoid regression surprises; accelerates testing cycles
Automated integration regression suite	Test automation across APIs and microservices	Speeds up repeated tests in multi-sprint cycles
Staged deployment & rollback protocols	Procedures for incremental production releases	Reducing pressure on final launch; safer experimentation

Netguru and other MACH-savvy partners often lead clients through mature integration governance practices — an essential ingredient to achieving aggressive 4-month composable MVP timelines without compromising quality.

Post-Launch Operating Model: The Unsung Hero

Too often, teams celebrate “launch” and disappear, leaving client IT to handle ongoing incidents and iterative improvements. This kills momentum and often validates skepticism about “fast composable” projects.

Effective composable implementations include a well-defined post-launch operating model with:

- **Dedicated support and triage teams:** Ready to respond to integration and performance issues.
- **Continuous improvement cycles:** Scheduled sprints for enhancements and defect remediation.
- **Clear KPIs and monitoring dashboards:** For user experience, page load times, transaction success rates.
- **Shared ownership across business and IT:** Ensures quick decision-making and prioritization.

Partnerships with firms like Valtech exemplify this approach, embedding post-launch operational care into their engagement, rather than exiting the scene once the site “goes live.”

Evidence-based Partner Evaluation: Cut Through the Marketing Noise

You ever wonder why when selecting an agency or vendor to deliver an ambitious composable mvp, beware of hand-wavy case studies featuring “accelerators” and “platform-agnostic expertise” with no concrete scope or delivery approach described.

Ask your partners for evidence, including:

1. Actual delivery timelines broken down by phases
2. Who owns integration testing and how it’s managed
3. Examples of implemented post-launch operating models
4. Incremental iteration plans aligned to business outcomes

Another sign of credibility: their track record with both traditional replatforms and MACH/headless commerce projects. DEPT, for example, brings cross-model experience, helping clients avoid pitfalls unique to each approach.

Summary: Is 4 Months vs 18 Months Realistic?

Yes — but only under the right conditions:

- **The MVP scope is razor-focused on delivering business value early.**
- **Delivery is owned end-to-end by a skilled team focused on integration governance.**
- **A post-launch operating model is baked in from day one for continuous iteration.**
- **The partner is evaluated on evidence-based criteria — not marketing fluff.**

Traditional 18-month replatform projects remain valid for enterprises requiring extensive overhaul and a complete feature reset. But composable commerce and MACH architectures enable faster time-to-market with a validated MVP, provided the organization respects governance and delivery discipline.

When you hear claims like “4 months to launch,” keep asking, “Who owns integration testing?” and “What’s the post-launch plan?” Because without those answers, you’re just buying into hype.

Partner with agencies like **Netguru**, **Valtech**, or **DEPT** — those who can demonstrate a proven delivery approach accompanied by rigorous governance — and your timeline expectations will align closer to reality.

