Trailblazing a New Way for Online Furniture Shopping

Mobly draws in shoppers with exciting digital experiences — at home and in stores — with Akamai

120K
Malicious requests blocked each minute

200K
Products available

57%
Sales growth YoY

Omnichannel shopping wins customers

Mobly's founders were excited to bring online furniture shopping to Brazil, but needed to overcome some big challenges first, including loading image-heavy pages quickly even in remote areas, blocking cybersecurity attacks, and keeping infrastructure costs down. They found the answer in Akamai's secure content delivery network, with servers located across the country, near customers. The online store thrived, validating the founders' vision, and years later Mobly added brick-and-mortar stores. Today, Brazil's furniture shoppers enjoy an omnichannel shopping experience that spans its app, website, and stores. Novel digital experiences — like augmented reality to see how an item would look in one's living room, and scanning QR codes in stores to view items only available online — delight customers and keep them coming back.

Making sure the website loads quickly in every corner of the world

In 2011, three Brazilian friends who met while studying abroad hatched a bold idea for an online store for furniture and decor. "At the time, investors were skeptical that people would buy a sofa without first sitting on it," says João Batista, Head of Information Security Infrastructure. But the founders knew they were on to something. After all, consumers had already proved they liked the convenience of online shopping for electronics and other big-ticket items.

But a sofa is more personal than, say, a television. To win customers, Mobly would need to deliver an exceptional experience from beginning to end. At minimum, that meant lots of images and a fast page loading time for every shopper. Even better would be exciting experiences not available in a typical brick-and-mortar store — such as augmented reality to see how an item would look in the customer's own living room. "To make it work for all customers, even those in remote areas, we'd need to host the online store on servers located close to them," João says. "Otherwise, pages would take too long to load, and customers new to online furniture shopping might give up and go to a competitor's brick-and-mortar store."

MOBLY

Mobly
São Paulo, Brazil
mobly.com.br

Industry
Retail & Consumer Goods

Company Size
800 employees

Solutions
• Kona Site Defender

Marrying in-person and online shopping

Mobly's founders made their vision come true with Akamai. "Akamai's content delivery network gave us our answer because of its huge network of servers throughout the country," João says. Not having to build a data center also kept infrastructure costs down, which was important for the fledgling company.

Today, Mobly has a thriving online business showcasing 200,000 products. More than one million active customers placed more than 327,000 orders in the first quarter of 2021 alone. "Ironically, sofas are now our best-selling products," João says. In 2019, the company added its first physical store. Today there are 11 Mobly stores, with more in the works.

The company sets itself apart with a rich shopping experience that spans the website, mobile app, and physical stores. "We're combining the best of digital and in-store shopping to create an experience better than either alone," João says. For example, customers visiting a physical store can see products that aren't currently in stock by scanning QR codes. Customers shopping from home with the Mobly app can use augmented reality to point their phones at a space and see how different sofa configurations would look there. If they like their friend's coffee table, they can take a photo of it to see similar items from Mobly.

"We couldn't deliver our omnichannel shopping experience without Akamai," João says. "Experiences like augmented reality use a lot of bandwidth, so they have to be delivered from edge servers very close to the customer."

Business agility when the unexpected happens

Mobly's digital business model saved the day during the COVID-19 pandemic. Eighty-five percent of the company's revenue comes from online sales, an unusually large portion for Brazilian furniture companies. "People suddenly working from home wanted better chairs and more cheerful decor, and ordering online allowed them to upgrade their workspace while staying safe," João says. "We didn't have to go through the digital transformation journey because we were born digital."

Thanks to Akamai, Mobly easily handled a 57% surge in online sales in one year. Profits during that time jumped 55%. "Not only did we attract new customers during the pandemic, we're also seeing more customers make repeat purchases — both online and in our physical stores as they re-open," João says. Great products plus a great experience build loyalty.

Security to prevent downtime and protect customer data

Cybersecurity is a top priority for Mobly in order to maintain customer trust, comply with Brazil's data privacy regulations, and prevent attacks that could interrupt the business. João estimates the cost of downtime at around R$500,000 (US$97,000) per hour. "Akamai automatically blocks suspicious traffic, giving us flexible control over the rules," he says. His team has created thousands of customized rules. For example, some block unusual communications between parts of the platform, a sign of hacker activity. Other rules trigger alerts when traffic volume deviates from the norm for that time of day, another warning sign.

"Akamai blocks 120,000 malicious requests each minute, helping to keep our servers up and protect sensitive information," João says. "We're constantly updating our software, and Akamai also automatically discovers new APIs so we can keep our protection rules up to date. I don't know how we'd do that without Akamai."

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We couldn't deliver our omnichannel shopping experience without Akamai. Experiences like 3D furniture shopping use a lot of bandwidth, so they have to be delivered from edge servers very close to the customer.

João Batista
Head of Information Security Infrastructure, Mobly

João also uses Akamai solutions to protect business applications hosted on Amazon Web Services (AWS). "Akamai and AWS give us a very effective defense against cyberthreats," João says. "For example, nobody, including attackers, can get to our AWS infrastructure over the internet. They need to go through Akamai, which weeds out attacks."

Furnishing the future

In February 2021, a decade after the three college friends came up with their trailblazing business plan, Mobly made its initial public offering. Now João's team is getting ready for more growth. "Our research shows that online shopping as a percent of all shopping in Brazil is set to triple year over year, from 5% to more than 15%," João says. Plans to capture a big chunk of that growth include new, innovative shopping experiences, expedited shipping options for in-stock products, and a superb after-sales experience. "With Akamai, we know we can continue delivering a great experience as we keep growing," says João. The future looks as shiny as a polished glass-topped table.

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João Batista
Head of Information Security Infrastructure, Mobly

MOBLY

Founded in 2011 by Victor Noda, Marcelo Marques, and Mario Fernandes, Mobly is a technology company focused on e-commerce. The company offers 200,000 furniture and decorative items through its website, mobile app, and physical stores located throughout Brazil. In 2021, Mobly celebrated its IPO, under the symbol MBLY3. https://www.mobly.com.br/