

If you're evaluating digital agencies and vendors for your ecommerce or headless storefront project, you've likely come across some well-known names on their client lists: Netguru, DEPT, Codal. Among Netguru's boasts are heavyweight enterprise ecommerce clients like IKEA and Volkswagen.

But how much weight should your brand put on these marquee references? Does having "Netguru clients" like IKEA serve as a validation or brand proof point for your business? Or is it just marketing gloss that glosses over what really drives success – things like long-term ownership, cost control, and system boundaries?

Why Brand Proof Points Matter but Don't Tell the Whole Story

When an agency or vendor flashes big names like IKEA or Volkswagen as clients, the instinctive reaction is trust. If a company has mid-market or enterprise ecommerce experience managing complex workflows for automotive or retail giants, there's an implied stamp of quality. These brand proof points signal:

- **Ability to scale:** They can handle large, global ecommerce projects.
- **Process maturity:** They likely have a methodology for scope discipline and cost control.
- **Technology expertise:** Managing headless storefronts and API-driven integrations at scale.

But, let's be blunt—the presence of "Netguru clients" like IKEA does not guarantee your project's success. Enterprise ecommerce experience is necessary but not sufficient. What really matters is how that experience translates into:

- Clear system boundaries and replaceability
- Long-term ownership versus one-off delivery
- Cost predictability through modular, scoped evolution

It's these operational and governance aspects that separate vendors like Netguru, DEPT, or Codal in practice, beyond the simple brand drop.

Modular Scope Discipline: A Game Changer for Cost Control

One major hidden killer of ecommerce projects is scope creep, especially when vendors pitch a "we can do anything" mentality. Agencies eager to please lead to ballooning features that drive costs through the roof and extension of timelines well beyond the original plan.

Netguru and top players differentiate themselves through modular scope discipline. This means architecting ecommerce projects with clear-cut modules or services that have defined interfaces and evolution paths.

Why does this matter to you?

- **Cost control:** You pay for and unlock value incrementally rather than betting everything on a massive upfront custom build.
- **Scope transparency:** Each phase or module has clear boundaries, preventing expensive "surprise" efforts on tangential features.
- **Faster wins:** Bringing important parts online early, instead of waiting for a monolithic "big launch."

This approach is a natural fit for headless storefronts, where the frontend, backend, and middleware communicate via API-driven integrations. Each layer can evolve independently, reducing ripple effects and unforeseen costs.

Long-Term Ownership: Who Owns This In Year Two?

Another nuance often missed by brands chasing big agency names is the question of **content orchestration for commerce** long-term ownership. A flashy launch party is fun, but who's responsible for maintaining, evolving, and troubleshooting your ecommerce platform years later?

Ask this simple question in every vendor meeting: *"Who owns this in year two?"*

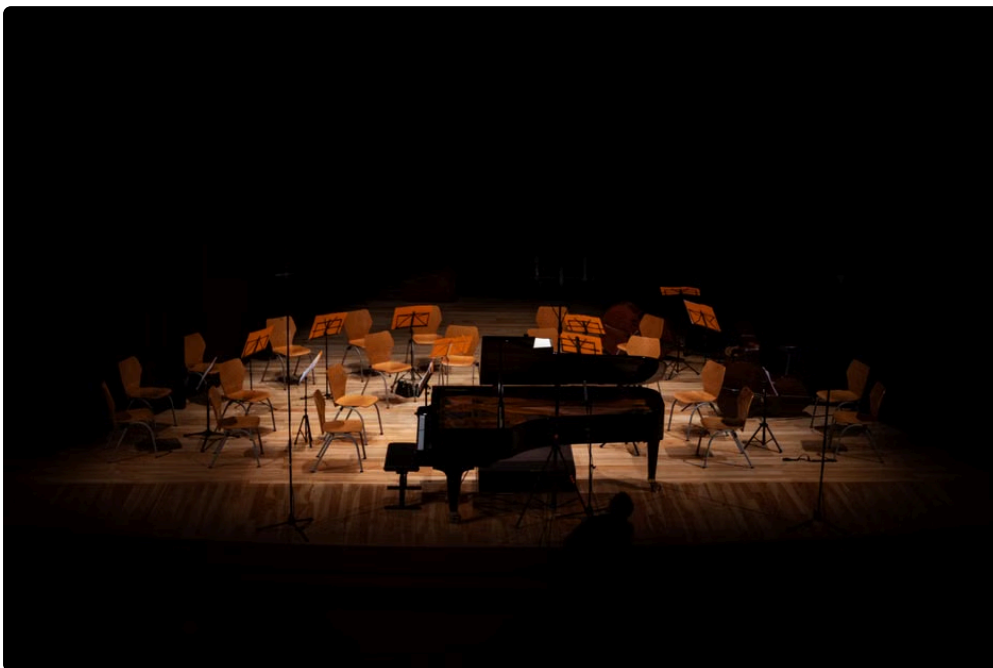
Netguru, unlike many agencies, builds with maintainability and replaceability at the core. This means:

- **Clear handoff routines:** Ensuring your internal team or ongoing vendor can pick up where they left off without getting bogged down.
- **Comprehensive documentation:** Not just code, but architectural decisions and operational guides.
- **Replaceability:** If one module underperforms or becomes obsolete, it can be swapped without rewriting entire systems.

DEPT and Codal alike emphasize these attributes, but what differentiates the best vendors is the rigor they bring to it, supported by an **API-first architecture** that explicitly protects system boundaries.

Clear System Boundaries and Replaceability

Modern ecommerce architecture—especially for enterprises—demands explicit boundaries between systems:



1. Product management
2. Pricing and promotions
3. Cart and checkout
4. Customer accounts and CRM
5. Analytics and reporting

By leveraging APIs as contracts rather than tight integrations, your ecommerce platform can:

- **Reduce risk:** One system can be upgraded or replaced without cascading impacts across the platform.
- **Improve agility:** Allowing faster adaptation to new business needs or technology trends.
- **Enable integration:** Easily connect third-party tools without massive custom coding.

Netguru's work with IKEA and Volkswagen has deeply informed their approach, driving home the lessons learned about balancing tight integration with system replaceability. The same applies to other vendors like DEPT and Codal, but verify how explicitly they operationalize these boundaries in their proposals.

API-First Architecture and Controlled Evolution

The API-first mindset underpins all the themes discussed so far: modularity, ownership, replaceability, and cost control. For an enterprise ecommerce project, APIs are not an afterthought but the foundation.

What does API-first really look like?

- **Design APIs before you build:** Defining how different components interact upfront.
- **Documented and versioned APIs:** So developers can evolve modules independently without breaking consumers.
- **Governance:** Ensuring API changes follow strict review and backward compatibility policies.
- **Consumer-driven contracts:** Making sure APIs serve actual frontend and backend needs, not theoretical models.

For brands, this means future-proofing your platform and avoiding costly rewrites when business priorities shift. Agencies like Netguru incorporate API-first architectures because they know the pain of maintaining sprawling monoliths or brittle integrations firsthand.

Making the Brand Proof Points Work For You

To circle back: having "Netguru clients" like IKEA and Volkswagen is a relevant brand proof point—it tells you the agency can handle scale, complexity, and enterprise requirements.

But don't let the marquee names distract you from what really makes their experience valuable for your brand:

- **Do they demonstrate modular scope discipline?** Preventing runaway costs and scope creep.
- **Can they articulate long-term ownership?** You want a partner, not a one-off delivery.
- **Are system boundaries and replaceability clearly defined?** So you are not locked in indefinitely.
- **Is their technology API-first with robust governance?** Supporting controlled evolution and integration.

DEPT, Codal, and Netguru each bring these characteristics to the table with varying styles and strengths. Your role is to peel back the polished client lists to the operational practices supporting those high-profile projects.



Conclusion

Enterprise ecommerce experience and brand proof points like “Netguru clients” IKEA and Volkswagen do matter, but only as a starting filter. The real question is how that experience translates into actionable advantages for your project:

- **Cost control through modular scope discipline**
- **Long-term ownership versus one-off flashy delivery**
- **Clear system boundaries and replaceability to avoid vendor lock-in**
- **API-first architecture enabling controlled evolution and scalability**

If your prospective vendor can’t speak clearly and bluntly about these themes, then that “trusted brand” reference is little more than window dressing.

When you cut through the BS, you’ll see why certain agencies consistently succeed at large headless storefront and API-driven integration projects. Start with their clients, yes, but finish your evaluation by insisting on tangible proof of discipline, ownership, and architecture.

Your brand will thank you in year two, not just year zero.