Retail Trends Playbook 2021

**Driving Operational Resiliency with Connected People and Systems**

Introduction

Retailers today face unprecedented challenges as they respond to the new ways we work, live, and shop. Organizations of all sizes have scrambled to adapt their businesses and move to remote work when possible even as they struggle to understand their future. As retailers look to deliver on evolving customer needs such as contactless shopping and curbside pickup, many are leveraging solutions to maintain business continuity. These solutions can enable teams to be productive and secure from anywhere, rapidly adapt business processes, and stay engaged with customers while securing and managing access to apps, devices, and data. From offering flexible services to creating solution-oriented products and delivering specialized campaigns, machine learning, analytics and other technologies are empowering brands and retailers to understand their shoppers better and deliver differentiated, one-to-one experiences across all retail channels. By seamlessly connecting their people, systems and operations in new ways, businesses are not only more responsive to the evolving expectations of their customers, but are also more resilient in the face of change. Data-led intelligence and digital technology are essential to stay connected, secure and productive in today's newly formed landscape.

About This Report

The **Retail Trends Playbook 2021** is a report by business intelligence platform PSFK in partnership with Microsoft that presents key trends, best-in-class examples and strategies for executing intelligent retail with the aid of data-driven technologies. Supported with expert insights and key analyses of the global retail landscape and consumer needs, the **Retail Trends Playbook 2021** will help brands and retailers define their strategic roadmaps.

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Moving Forward Together
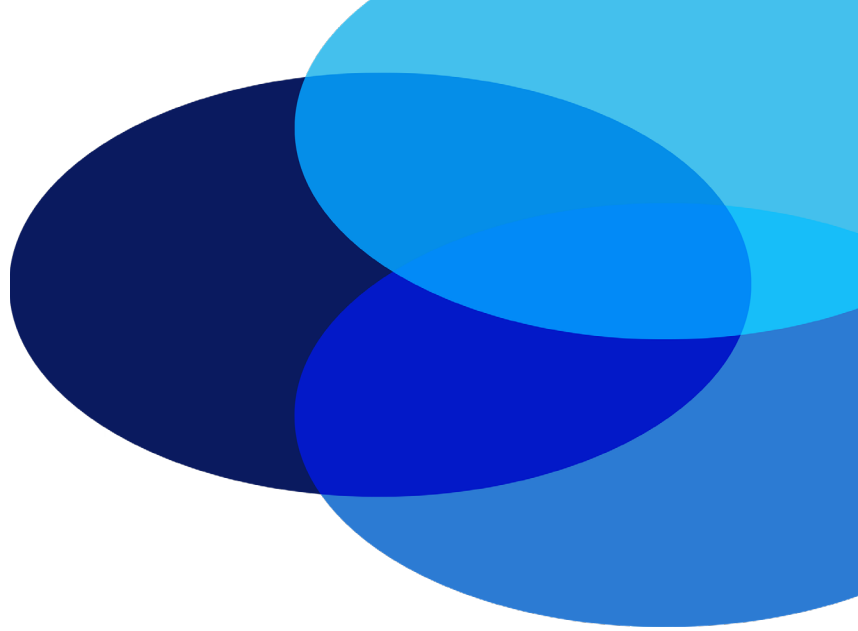
The way we work and live has changed in ways many of us couldn't have imagined. From how we interact with our friends and family to working from home and so much more. For me personally, juggling the joys of homeschooling my children with a packed work schedule has been a true personal test. Yet I know many are facing more critical concerns.

I've had the opportunity to speak to retail and consumer goods leaders from across the world about the ways they are adapting to serve their customers and stay open for business. Faced with drastic shifts in demand, mandated store closures, evolving customer needs, and major health and safety concerns for their employees, many retailers are navigating unchartered waters.

Companies from L'Oréal to Levi's to Ste. Michelle are learning to connect people, systems and operations in new ways. In this new reality, the best way to move forward is together. If you're curious about how we're helping customers respond and adapt then check out these resources.

Finally, a heartfelt **THANK YOU** to all of the retail superheroes out there keeping our shelves stocked, groceries delivered, and so much more in incredibly challenging times—you all are **AMAZING!**

By: Shelley Bransten,
Corporate VP of Global Retail &
Consumer Goods at Microsoft

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4 Accelerated Consumer Needs Shaping The Retail Landscape

In the current moment consumers are facing unprecedented uncertainty. As they adjust to life in a new normal, they're looking to retailers to offer more than business as usual. Customers seek greater choice, transparency and control in how they shop without compromising on the level of personalized sales and service they expect. As their needs change, they trust that their preferred businesses will be able to adapt alongside them.

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4 Accelerated Consumer Needs Shaping The Retail Landscape

1. Transparency & Control:

As consumers seek more control over their in-store experience, an expanded research phase has entered the shopper journey. Faced with numerous uncertainties, consumers are looking for retailers to provide new levels of transparency via live wait times, appointment booking services, and accurate inventory reporting. Beyond knowing what to expect from their visit, customers want assurances that retailers are taking steps to provide the safest environments possible as they decide how, when, and where they'll shop.

89% of shoppers have concerns about shopping in physical stores, with the #1 worry for shoppers is being too close to other people, with 63% of worried respondents citing that as a top concern. In addition, how regularly the store is cleaned was the #2 fear, with 40% of people listing it as a problem. Long lines – seen to enter many stores and at checkout – troubles 39% of our respondents.

Even When Stores Reopen, Shopping Is Going to Look A Lot Different. Fast, 2020

87% of respondents have been experiencing more out-of-stock products both in-store and online recently. 79% said they were somewhat likely or very likely to buy the same product from a different retailer if the desired product was out of stock.

COVID-19 Survey: Consumer Trends and Their Impact on Retail Supply Chains. Blue Yonder, 2020

90% of consumers state that it is important for brands to have the products they want in stock.

Weathering the Storm: Brand Management in the COVID-19 Era. Morning Consult, 2020

2. Connectivity & Support

Despite their safety concerns, shoppers aren't willing to compromise on the quality of their experience. As customers pivot to remote forms of shopping they're turning to retailers who can deliver the hyper-personalized sales and service they expect. In order to provide the high-touch, contactless methods of brand communication and support, retail teams need the right solutions to work together and communicate virtually while providing a heightened sense of consumer connection. From interactive live streams to one-on-one video chats with experts and immersive visualizations, these new tools not only bridge the gap between on and offline channels, but better assist retailers who lack the cross-organizational agility to respond to a sharp increase in customer inquiries.

Consumer willingness to purchase through social media continues to rise, as 58% of those surveyed in Poshmark's report indicate they'd be comfortable buying through a social media page in place of a website.

Poshmark's 2020 Social Commerce Report. Poshmark, 2020

Taobao, an Alibaba owned live streaming platform, experienced a 719% jump in the number of first-time merchants using the site to sell their products between January and February.

"The Next Frontier Of Shopping Will Be Livestreamed." Bloomberg, 2020

Consumer retail spending via chatbots is expected to reach $142 billion by 2024, an increase from $2.8 billion in 2019.

Chatbots: Vendor Opportunities & Market Forecasts 2020-2024. Juniper Research, 2020

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3. Flexibility & Connectivity

Everyday activities, once normal, have taken on a new element of risk, and consumers are prioritizing the retailers capable of rapidly adjusting to unprecedented changes in the business environment. As contactless transaction models, curbside fulfillment services, and improved returns become new expectations, retailers are catering to customers' exponentially greater 'meet me' mindset with safe and flexible solutions.

59% of consumers are more likely to use curbside pickup following the outbreak. This figure increased to 75% among respondents who subscribe to multiple delivery services.

Covid-19 Shopping & Delivery Trends. Commerce Hub, 2020

Americans' wariness about being in stores also extends to how they pay, with 34% uneasy about touching credit card terminals and 32% concerned about passing cash back and forth at the register.

Even When Stores Reopen, Shopping Is Going to Look A Lot Different. Fast, 2020

A Forrester Narvar survey found that 40% of retailers have relaxed their return policies and 27% said it's something they're considering.

"Survey Results: Retailer Sentiment & Action During The Covid Crisis." Narvar x Forrester, 2020

4. Community & Compassion

While social distancing has replaced everyday physical interactions with digital ones, human connections and shared experiences continue to drive consumers' preferences and brand choices. As consumers navigate today's landscape, they expect retailers to lead with empathy and understanding as they introduce new products, campaigns, and messaging, and are placing greater value in the companies prioritizing people over profit by dedicating their resources to supporting their local and national communities.

Social distancing has consumers wanting to engage more with brands, ads, and content. Just 2% of consumers believe brands should pause all advertising, while 48% say brands should create ads that provide information.

COVID-19 Consumer Survey. Unruly, 2020

84% of consumers want brands' social channels to facilitate a sense of community and offer support to those in need during these hard times.

Trust Barometer Special Report: Brand Trust And The Coronavirus Pandemic. Edelman, 2020

77% of consumers agree they feel more positively about brands making an effort to support society at the moment. Additionally, 77% believe that brands should support their local communities, and 80% say that brands should show how they're supporting their employees.

Advertising During COVID-19. Twitter, 2020

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4 Strategies To Help Retailers Navigate Today's 'New Normal'

As the retail landscape experiences massive shifts, the new normal will be defined by the retailers who are able to prioritize the technology and tools necessary to intelligently connect people, systems and operations. In order to create a resilient end-to-end operation within today's new normal, and respond rapidly to a new set of consumer expectations, retailers will need to explore new business models and consider how best to support their employees to ensure business continuity.

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4 Strategies To Help Retailers Navigate Today's 'New Normal'

1. Rapidly Adapt To Remote Sales & Services

Unprecedented events have created a new customer hierarchy of needs, and accelerated the pace of business innovation. In order to successfully adjust and future-proof customer relationships and sell, service, and deliver on customer expectations in a remote environment, ideate how to evolve products and services, including new business models and partners. As businesses look to retain a high-touch level of service within a contactless era, prioritize virtual connections, provide real-time digital buying experiences that build customer confidence and trust, and consider all customer interactions through the lens of safety, convenience and accessibility.

Prioritize the necessary technology to adjust to a remote selling environment while staying connected to customers by providing multiple options for everything from payment to fulfillment to accommodate different levels of comfort

Consider ways to streamline the in-store and online shopping experience through digital tools that give customers more control over their experience, and help associates respond to consumer inquiries in real-time

2. Enable Teams Anywhere

As companies adjust to the challenges posed by remote work and new precautions within the physical workplace, seamless collaboration and communication take on even greater importance. In order to enable safe and productive work environments, retailers must prioritize technology that enables teams to collaborate and be productive from anywhere, and allows for instant connections to ensure reliable, real-time access to the support employees may need. Retailers looking to successfully complete this transition should additionally perform an audit of their current omnichannel capabilities, and consider how they can better assist employees in providing consistent levels of personalized customer support, no matter their location.

Create a safe and secure work environment that encourages real-time communication and allows employees to meet and collaborate anywhere

Empower employees to deliver exceptional customer service across all channels, no matter their location, by keeping them informed and engaged

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3. Create A Resilient Supply Chain

Take steps to embed resilience and agility into every stage of the supply chain to be better prepared for disruptions of any scale, and to better meet customers' expectations. Offer real-time inventory visibility to build a foundation for both business and consumer confidence. Leverage data and IoT to create a universal record of items as they move from suppliers to manufacturers to warehouses to stores to customers and ensure that every partner has access. Prioritize the tools, solutions and platforms that will allow for this type of transparency to be shared across consumer channels and organizations in order to better plan for, and instantly adapt to, changing circumstances.

Intelligently connect people, systems and operations in order to quickly deliver insights to the teams that need them most

Break down silos through shared access to data and analytics that offer real-time inventory visibility and minimize disruptions

# 4. Reimagine Retail Realities

As customer and business needs accelerate the adoption of digital platforms and technologies, there is a greater need for the infrastructure and solutions necessary to manage and secure access to apps, data and devices across entire companies and enterprises. Protecting sensitive data while simultaneously encouraging productivity are the defining challenges guiding retailers as they navigate and shape the new normal. From translating the in-store experience online through high-touch digital executions and personalized services to refitting the physical store to balance customer experience with safety, there is an unprecedented spike in the need for remote cloud access and on-premises apps. Retailers will need to have the right solutions in place to adapt their experiences to the changing needs of both customers and employees.

Integrate digital tools and platforms into operations to ensure business continuity through secure remote access

Invest in key infrastructure to improve security for remote work and better equip stores for the changing realities of offline retail

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Foundational Shifts In Shopper Expectations

As retailers collectively navigate a new normal and pivot in the face of an accelerated set of consumer needs, they must not lose sight of a number of foundational shifts in shopper behaviors and expectations already underway. Customers expect greater inventory transparency and accessibility, regardless of how and where they choose to shop. They seek personalized service and experience delivered by knowledgeable associates and they're increasingly willing to share data to receive it. Purpose-led practices, particularly around sustainability, continue to impact purchasing decisions and long-term loyalty.

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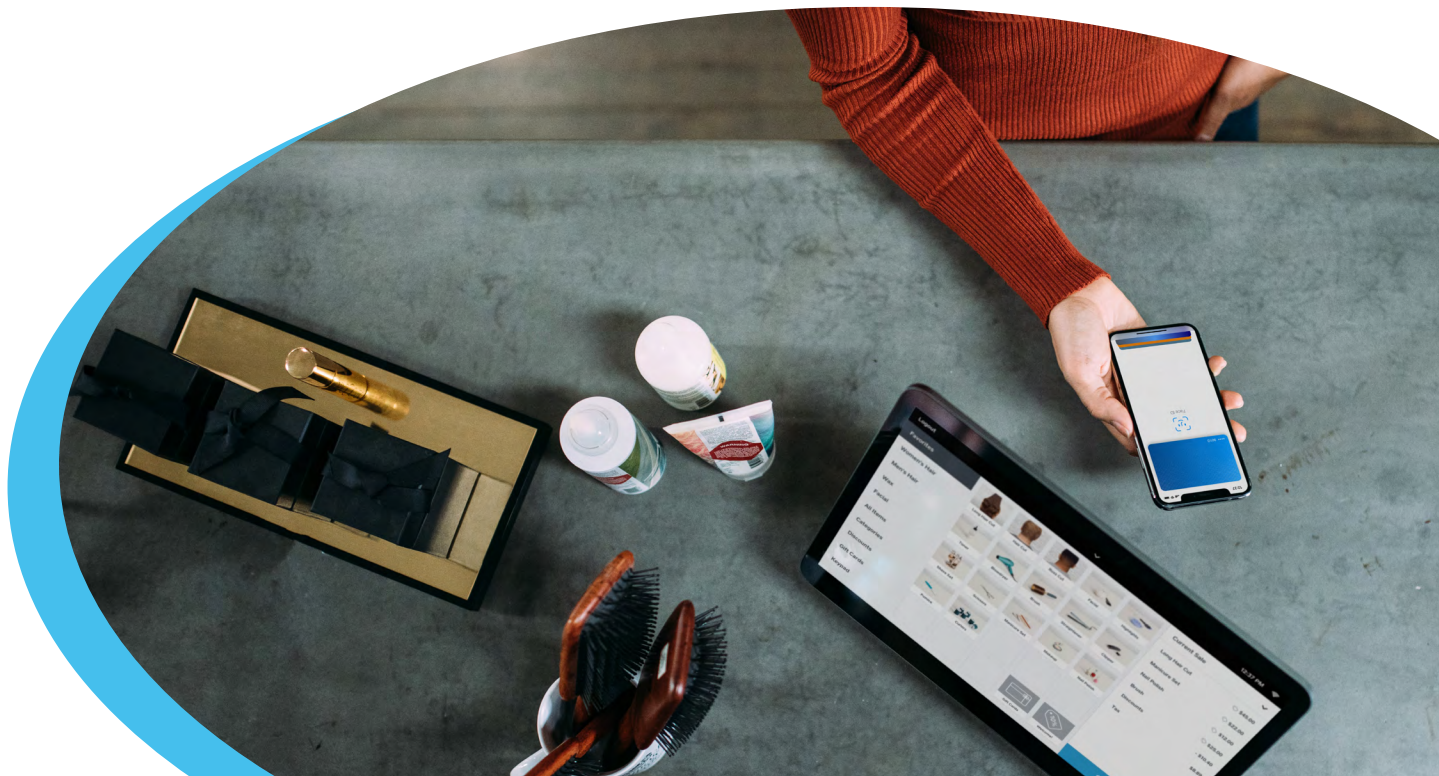
Prioritize The Right Product, At The Right Place

60% of Gen Z consumers polled said the availability of automated pickup lockers affected which retailers they chose to buy from.

Online Shopping & Delivery Habits Of Generation Z. Package Concierge, 2019

50% of consumers have decided where to shop online based on whether they could pick up their order in-store.

BOPIS & The Future Of Order Fulfillment. Radial, 2020

61% of online shoppers used in-store pickup at least once over the past year, however fewer than one in three retailers have optimized seamless processes such as BOPIS.

Customer Service & Delivery Experiences Retail Shoppers Want. Radial, 2019

Look To Employees As Brand Experts For Service & Support

75% of responses about positive shopping experiences were based on an associate helping to solve a problem.

Winning Digital Transformation At Retail. Chase Design, 2020

65% of consumers say that the quality of customer service is a factor when deciding where to make their purchases, while friendly and/or knowledgeable employees ranked as the most important (62%) aspect of in-store customer service.

The ICSC Customer Service Survey. ICSC, 2019

73% of consumers say that good customer service encourages them to spend more money than they had originally planned. 57% of respondents said they would pay more for a particular item or service if they knew they would receive strong service during the shopping journey.

The ICSC Customer Service Survey. ICSC, 2019

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Today's Consumers:

Are Comfortable Sharing Data In Exchange For Better Experiences

70% of consumers globally are willing to share more personal data with the organizations they interact with online, particularly when they see a benefit such as greater online security and convenience.

Global Identity and Fraud Report. Experian, 2019

The portion of consumers who said they're willing to share more data when brands are transparent rose to 73% in 2019 from 66% in 2018.

Global Research Survey. Accenture, 2019

80% of U.S. online adults feel comfortable sharing some personal information with retailers in order to personalize their experience.

There's No Personalization Without Content Intelligence. Forrester, 2019

Expect Personalization At Every Stage

A full 96% of Americans "agreed" or "strongly agreed" with the statement, "I'm more likely to do business with a company that interacts with me in a personalized way (i.e., knows information about me from previous transactions)."

Consumer Preferences for Conversational Commerce Survey. LivePerson, 2019

85% of consumers would like to select the benefits and rewards they receive by personalizing their loyalty program based on their specific purchases and individual preferences.

2020 Loyalty Barometer Report. Merkle, 2020

78% of consumers are more likely to shop at retailers and brands providing a personalized experience.

Shoppers Demand Superior eCommerce Experiences: Consumer Expectations in 2019. Avionos, 2019

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Today's Consumers:

Value Sustainable Initiatives & Services

42% of Millennials say they have begun or deepened a business relationship because they perceive a company's products or services to have a positive impact on society and/or the environment.

Global Millennial Survey. Deloitte, 2019

52% of Gen Z consumers in Asia "try to have a positive impact on the environment through their everyday actions."

Purpose Over Profit: How Generation Z Is Redefining Business, 2019

The majority of Gen Z (54%) state that they are willing to spend an incremental 10 percent or more on sustainable products, with 50% of Millennials saying the same.

State Of Consumer Spending: Gen Z Shoppers Demand Sustainable Retail. FirstInsight, 2020

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Prioritizing Key Opportunities

#1: Anywhere Commerce: Bridging Digital & Physical Worlds

So much of delivering customer satisfaction rests in ensuring that brands and stores have the right products in the right place at the right time. With consumers now driving heightened expectations around each brand interaction, retailers are joining the best of digital and in-store to deliver a seamless and safe customer experience. This materializes in digitized physical stores, where customers' movements and selections are used to quickly refine product selections and redesign store flow to create more impactful, safer experiences. Meanwhile the hyper growth of digital commerce has led to retailers revamping their ecommerce presence as well as, bringing the level of service and one-to-one support customers expect to receive in-store online through live chat agents and on-demand virtual support.

Adopt an anywhere commerce mentality to consistently meet customers with the experiences they expect across all channels.

Deliver seamlessness across all channels by ensuring customer access to the goods and services they expect to find.

Optimize in-store technology to streamline and minimize points of friction from browsing and discovery through checkout and delivery.

Build closer connections with consumers by bringing the in-store experience online through 1-to-1 interactions.

#2: Rise of the Firstline Employee

A valuable asset in creating a shopper's first impression of a brand, frontline employees play a significant role in customer acquisition and retention. In order to safely optimize the level of service customers receive, retailers are empowering their workforce through connected solutions, tools and technology. This comes to life through mixed-reality based training tools and real-time communications between executives, managers and frontline employees via connected portals and devices, eliminating lags between corporate policies and company-wide adoption. As the role of frontline employees shifts in response to today's increasingly digital retail landscape, retailers are tapping into these same tools to retrain store associates for telecommunication and digitally-based customer service positions, ensuring that employees are able to provide dynamic customer experiences across every channel.

Provide the necessary tools for employees to remotely access pertinent consumer and product information, and in turn deliver optimal levels of service.

Encourage top-down connected communications by providing interactive portals for employees to share ideas and gain feedback in real-time.

Simplify the onboarding process by incorporating mixed reality and video-based learning tools into employee training procedures.

Consider how equipping employees with tech-enabled devices on the floor can facilitate a more seamless customer experience, from delivering product insights to one-step checkout.
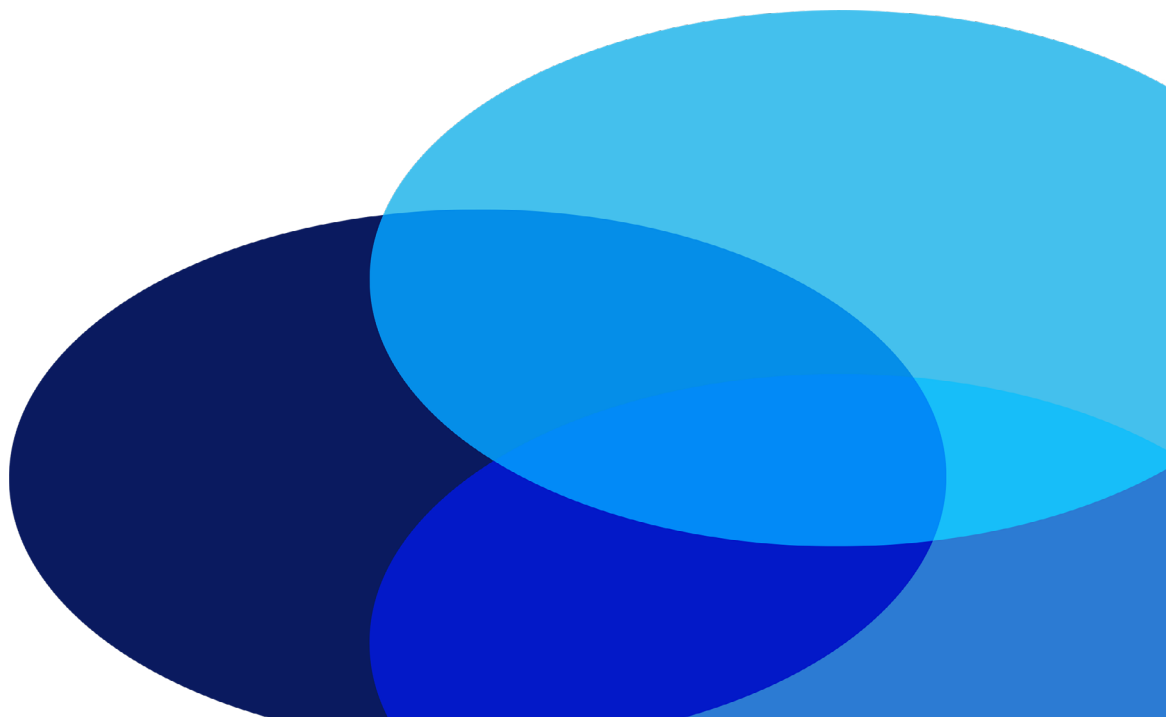
# #3: Proliferation of Data & Resulting Opportunity for Personalization

The new consumer responds to a one-to-one approach, both in-store and online. As consumer expectations shift at an unprecedented scale, artificial intelligence is driving ROI via personalized product, promotions and experiences. To deliver this type of custom experience at scale, retailers are leveraging connected solutions, AI and real-time observations to create the 360-degree customer profiles necessary to deliver the insightful, safe, and efficient shopping experiences consumers expect across every brand interaction. Moving the personalized experience one step further, retailers applying predictive analytics and machine learning to their digital offering are anticipating consumers' needs, and meeting them with custom-made recommendations.

Combine real-time insights and AI to create the 360-degree customer profile needed to deliver 1-to-1 services at scale.

Apply machine learning and AI to customer data sets to enhance experiences based on learnings from previous interactions.

Update preferences in real-time through opt-in intelligence as consumers navigate both the virtual and physical world.

Leverage predictive analytics to anticipate customers' needs and preemptively provide relevant solutions and recommendations.
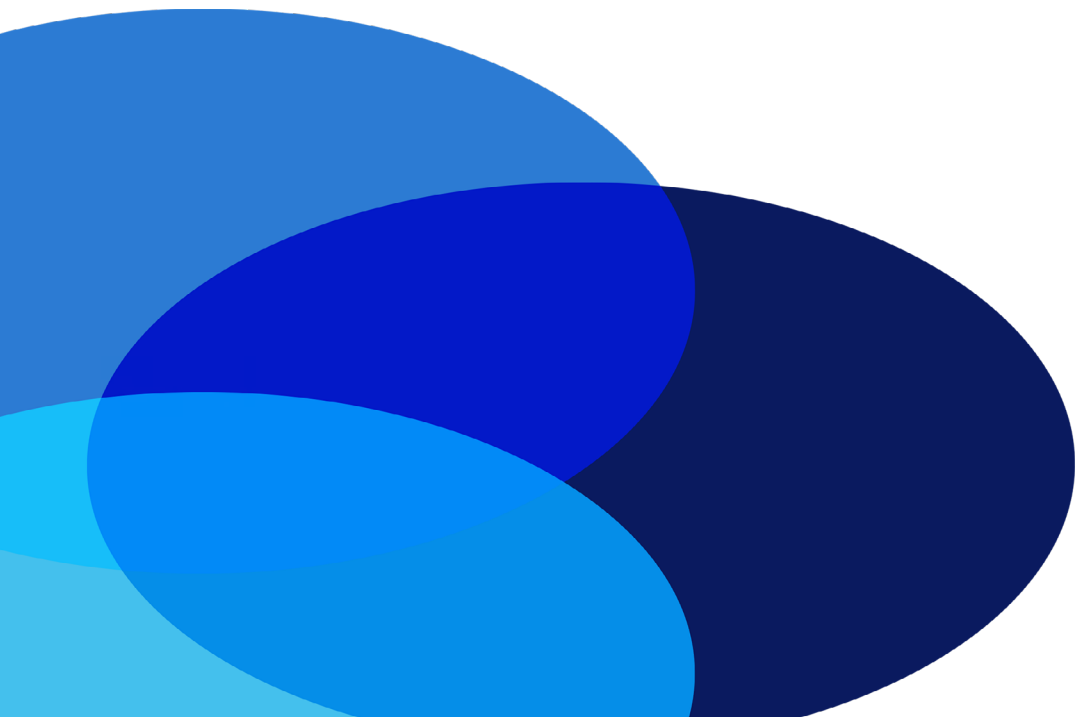
#4: Sustainability As A Competitive Advantage

The adoption of technology in enabling sustainable initiatives and optimizing operations is paramount. From a personal safety perspective, the consumer of the future will demand transparency throughout the entire shopper journey, and want to know where a product was sourced, what the conditions were for all workers involved, and the entire delivery process of each order. To deliver that level of transparency, retailers are bringing supply chain and distribution logistics front of house, and incorporating them into the consumer experience. In doing so, retailers now have an unprecedented view into their operations, allowing for greater streamlining across supplies and workforce production, in turn creating a more sustainable, efficient ecosystem throughout the entire supply chain, as well as the consumer journey.

Incorporate IoT-connected sensors and AI into the supply chain to provide real-time insight into each process, from sourcing and production to delivery.

Provide customers with the transparency they demand by providing them with behind-the-scenes access into each step of the customer journey.

Leverage the insights gained from a connected supply chain to optimize allocation of resources and reduce waste, from supplies and energy to workforce and production.

Consider how sustainable initiatives can be integrated from the top down to refine production and operations.
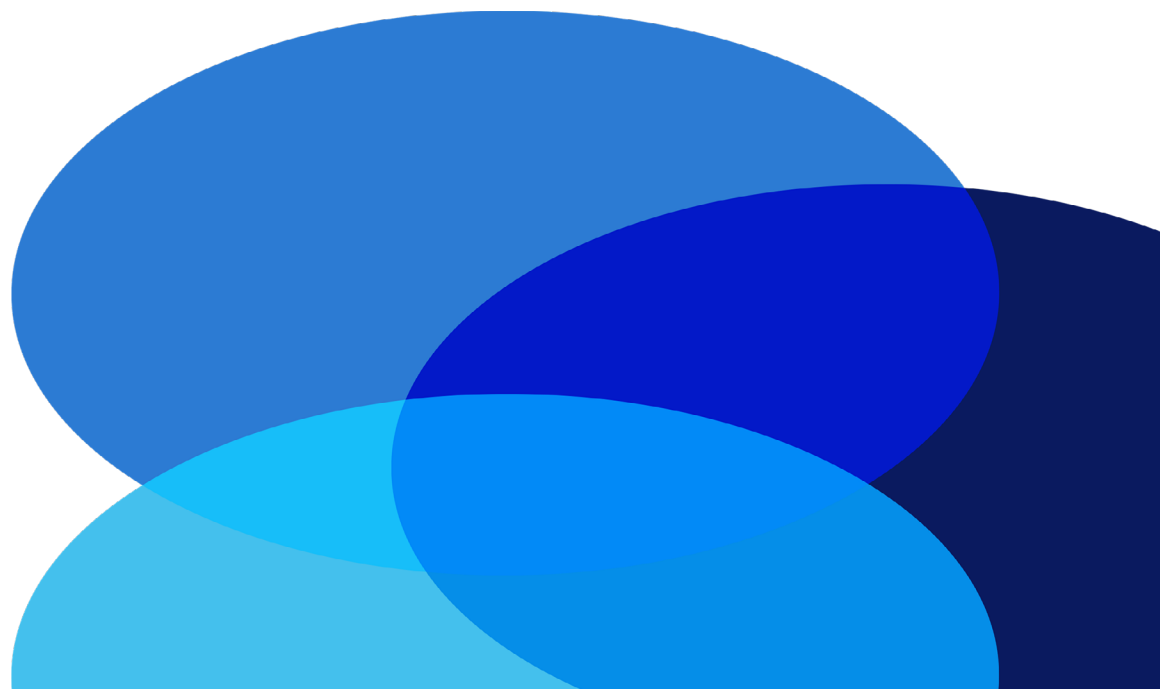
Visualizing Data-driven, Intelligent Retail

An intelligent retail model can create rich, customer-first experiences at all touchpoints, from backend operations to front-of-house innovations. With a data-driven approach, retailers can turn data into dollars by drawing in customers through personalized messaging, merchandise they desire, an excellent support staff and an ultra-responsive retail experience that is underpinned with the power of data collection and analysis.

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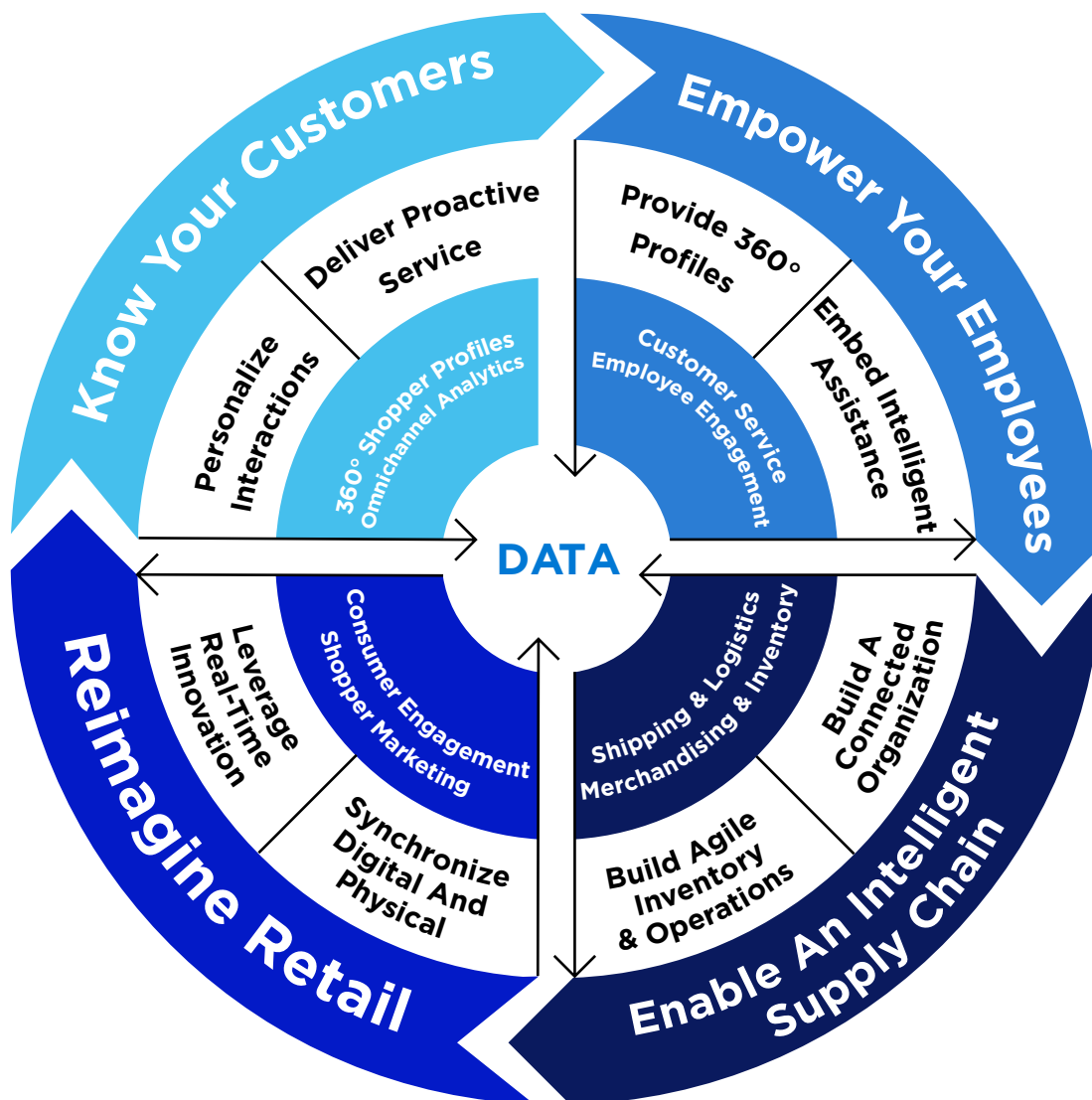
Powering Exceptional Customer Experience
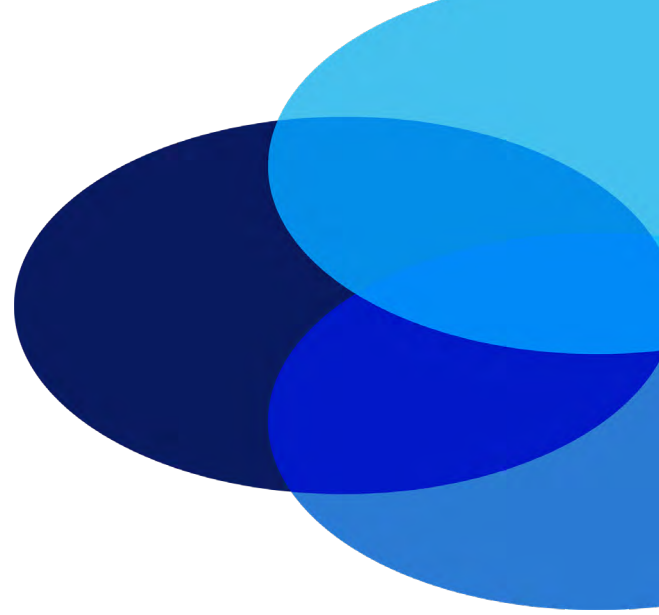
The current retail landscape is defined by disruption. Legacy retailers are competing for market and mindshare with direct-to-consumer startups, brands and ecommerce marketplaces. Consumers now have more choices than ever to fulfill every need, which is accelerating their expectations around the shopping experience.

In the face of this rapid change, every retail business must excel in a number of core areas to keep pace—personalization, staffing, supply chain and cross-channel experience, all while simultaneously ensuring consumer and employee safety throughout each step of the shopper journey. Foundational to each of these new requirements is the ability to leverage data-rich intelligence and ensure these insights are distributed across all levels of the organization.

Know Your Customers

Largely a consequence of poor data collection capabilities, today's brands and retailers struggle to deliver tangible personalization. From the initial discovery stage and product recommendations to post-purchase support, companies need to collect consumer data from all touchpoints and deliver personalized support at every stage of the purchase path. By developing a 360-degree view of what customers need across channels, retailers can eventually provide anticipatory support before it's needed.

- **Personalize Interactions On Every Channel & Touchpoint**

- **Deliver Proactive Service & Support**

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Empower Your Employees

Despite their attraction to digital modes of shopping, customers largely prefer interacting with human associates for immediate support and guidance. Retailers need to ensure their workforce is equipped to safely and efficiently respond to customer needs and preferences by democratizing access to customer data and purchase profiles. By having critical data readily accessible, employees are now empowered to handle any and all customer requests, effectively driving ROI and optimizing the customer experience.

- **Provide 360-Degree Customer Profiles To The Frontline**
- **Embed Intelligent Assistance Inside Remote & Physical Workflows**

Enable An Intelligent Supply Chain

Supply chain management plays a behind-the-scenes, albeit strategic, role in how consumers receive or purchase their product as well as the products they are able purchase. As inventory becomes an increasingly important differentiator, stores need to leverage intelligent supply chain strategies to ensure availability of the right products, at the right time to every customer.

- **Build A Connected Organization Where Everyone Can Share From Anywhere**
- **Build Agile Inventory & Operations Resilient To Rapid Change**

Retail Reimagined

Often the retail experience customers receive isn't tailored to their specific needs or preferences. Retailers need to reinvent their business models by prioritizing agile and innovative solutions, and focusing on creating the services, products and experiences their customers crave. By unifying data systems and understanding strengths and weaknesses, companies will be better poised to deliver more relevant and optimized ecommerce experiences, enhanced shopper-level personalization and expand monetization opportunities.

- **Synchronize Digital And Physical Data & Systems**
- **Leverage Real-Time Insights To Drive Innovation**

1 Know Your Customers

Developing and maintaining a two-sided, ongoing relationship with consumers is a foundational strategy of any brand. This goes beyond sending personalized communications to consumers, to actively responding to their needs by developing hyper-relevant products and experiences collected and applied through intelligent processes.

"The next generation of consumers expect personalization at an unprecedented scale. They want every experience to be enhanced based on learnings from their previous interactions. Tastes and preferences are no longer declared but learned in real time through the 'digital exhaust' they create as they navigate their virtual and physical worlds. That's going to put massive pressure on retailers and the technology they have in place today."

Shelly Bransten. Worldwide Corporate VP of Retail & Consumer Goods Industries, Microsoft

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Personalize Interactions On Every Channel & Touchpoint

Brands can utilize powerful algorithms to learn a consumer's behaviors and preferences, reaching them at home more effectively than ever before. Advanced CRM and marketing systems develop a detailed shopper profile through repeated interactions and utilize this information to deliver proactive and personalized outbound marketing and tailored recommendations.

Supporting Data:

"Consumers know businesses can deliver a seamless, personalized, engaging experience—and expect one every time they encounter a brand. The entire organization plays a part in satisfying that expectation."

Christi Olson, Head of Evangelism for Search, Microsoft

"What's important from a Nike shopping experience is that with machine learning and AI, we're able to have every digital experience at Nike be unique and personal. My wish for you one day is to feel that you have your very own personal store curated for you on our app experiences."

Heidi O'Neill, President, Nike Direct

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Chateau Ste. Michelle Wine Estates
AI-powered CRM platform delivers 360-degree consumer profiles at scale

To unify its data channels and improve its overall customer experience, U.S.-based premium wine company Chateau Ste. Michelle Wine Estates integrated Microsoft Dynamics 365 Commerce into each of its wine brands. For each of its wine brands to consistently deliver the luxury experience Ste. Michelle customers expect, and stand out from its competitors, the wine estate leveraged Commerce to combine its customer data from across each of the brands websites, email campaigns, and social. In doing so, Ste. Michelle is able to provide experiences tailored to each customer at scale across each of its customer touch points, resulting in increased sales and conversion rates, and greater trust and loyalty among its existing customers.

chateau.ste.michelle/microsoft.com

Snapchat Dynamic Ads
AI-targeted ads automatically update based on a consumer's interactions

Social media network Snapchat's dynamic ads are continuously updated to reflect current product catalogs and automatically target users based on their past behaviors. Launched just before the 2019 holiday season, the ad program automatically selects different items from the brand's retail catalog to be shown, in-ad, to targeted groups of consumers. This dynamic advertising format helps marketers automatically optimize their ad buys and speak to shoppers' interests in real time.

snapchat.com

Wegmans
Digital promotions tailored to shoppers' previous purchases via machine learning

New York-based grocer Wegmans Food Market has updated its website and mobile app to provide grocery shoppers personalized product recommendations and search results based on past purchases. As shoppers build their personalized shopping list either via the Wegmans app or website, they'll receive digital promotions tailored to them. Additionally, shoppers will experience more personalized search results when they use the grocer's digital tools, as the integrated machine learning technology takes preferences and past orders into account.

wegmans.com
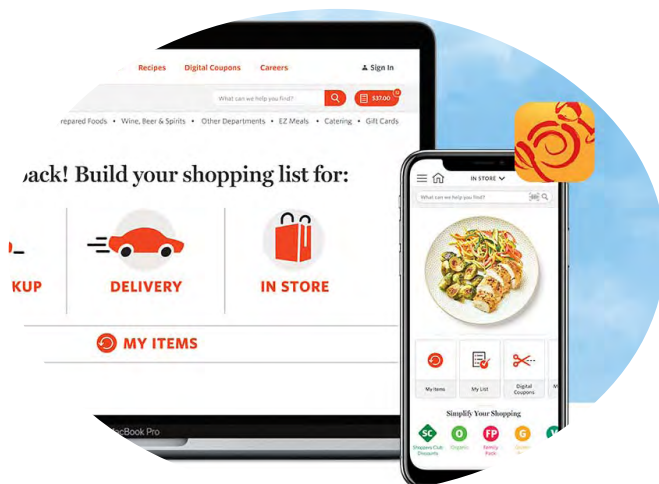
Deliver Proactive Service & Support

As retailers and brands take advantage of internet-enabled technologies alongside AI to better track and respond to shopper behaviors, purchasing habits and broader contextual cues, service will shift from reactive to proactive. Customers will seek out companies who are equipped to offer this next level of personalization, which will evolve towards just-in-time assistance and predictive care.

Supporting Data:

63% of online shoppers are more open to sharing personal information if it means brands and retailers can better anticipate their needs.

Shoppers Demand Superior eCommerce Experiences: Consumer Expectations in 2019. Avionos, 2019

Customer journey analytics are expected to grow to nearly $25.93 billion by 2026.

Global Customer Journey Analytics Market Opportunities, Verified Market Research, 2019

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Powershelf

IoT-connected ecosystem ensures optimal inventory levels at scale

To create a complete ecosystem that connects shelves to stockrooms, checkout and distribution in real-time, retail technology solutions provider Powershelf partnered with Microsoft, in turn creating a platform that provides second-by-second sales, stock, and logistics that can all be seen, analyzed, and controlled from anywhere in the organization. Each in-store Powershelf product continually communicates critical data through the Microsoft Azure cloud. Microsoft Power Platform then helps Powershelf compile the data, analyze it, and communicate it back to consumer products companies—in real time. By providing decision makers with real-time visibility of when and where stock is low, enterprises are able to efficiently anticipate restocking needs at scale, communicate with stockrooms and distributors in a timely manner, and ensure customer happiness.

powershelf/microsoft.com

Schmidt's Naturals

Real-time consumer sentiment leveraged to refine products

Unilever-owned deodorant company Schmidt's Naturals uses an AI-powered platform named Alexander to respond to customer service questions on its social and email channels. Not only does Alexander improve the brand's customer response times by composing an email in milliseconds compared to minutes, but it also monitors brand sentiment on social platforms and engages in customer conversations at appropriate moments. Alexander's interactions are monitored and edited by a team of employees who also oversee the AI's training based on customer responses. As Alexander learns from feedback and refines its responses, the platform is expected to be rolled into other Unilever-owned brands.

schmidts.com

Erica by Bank Of America

AI-powered assistant preemptively provides personalized offers

Financial institute Bank of America incorporated its consumer-facing chatbot, Erica, into its newly launched mobile banking app. The AI-powered banking assistant takes a proactive approach to sending customers personalized offers and services that best suit their current needs. Within the mobile app, banking customers preemptively receive personalized recommendations from Erica. Should they choose to learn more, the chatbot is able to share detailed advice on potential savings customers could realize through specific Bank of America services and promotions.

bankofamerica/erica.com

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Digital Transformation Strategies

Go beyond transactional messaging by embedding meaningful experiences within the context of your marketing to help customers take action and achieve their goals.

Experiment with subscription-based models and proactive notifications to ascertain if these added value services are important to your customers.

Leverage end-to-end data visibility to gain real-time insights into product usage in order to strengthen shopper profiles and allow for greater personalization.

Intelligent Retail In Action

Intermarché

Through its collaboration with Microsoft and partners Accenture, SGS, and Transparency One, French grocer Intermarché is leveraging its supply chain data to provide Intermarché shoppers with a transparent view of where their produce originated. By combining its supply chain data with Azure Machine Learning and eventually other Azure AI services, Intermarché will be able to personalize product offers and promotions to shoppers at scale based on their dietary preferences or allergy restrictions, such as low-cholesterol or dairy-free diets. By providing its customers with a personalized digital grocery experience, Intermarché will be able to leverage the made-for-me-moments that inspire loyalty within today's consumers.

intermarche/microsoft.com

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2 Empower Your Employees

A superior retail experience starts with developing a frontline workforce that is knowledgeable and passionate about products and empowered to solve any problem. Companies are investing in collaborative communication tools and data-powered equipment that democratizes access to information, making analysis readily available to everyone within a company to deliver a more personalized experience.

"It is all about relationships. Knowing the clients well enough to anticipate their every need and combining this with value-adding products and services."

Marina Lefkaritis, Private Shopping Director, MatchesFashion.com

psfk   in collaboration with   ::: Microsoft

Provide 360-Degree Customer Profiles To The Frontline

Despite collecting a variety of insights on individual shoppers from their online browsing behaviors, purchase history, loyalty membership and location, most companies fail to develop this information into an actionable customer view. New platforms are bringing these details to the forefront of retail interactions, enabling associates to recognize their customers and deliver personalized service and advice to improve the sales or service experience.

Supporting Data:

"The ambition of using data is not just to automate away, but really to equip [employees] with tools and insights that let them do things they wouldn't otherwise be able to do."

Brad Klingenberg, Chief Algorithms Officer, Stitch Fix

"As AI helps leaders tackle operational tasks more effectively, they can better shift their focus on empowering their people. This means trusting people to approach challenges in their own way and ensuring they are equipped to be at their best. In short, leaders can more effectively shift from being managers to mobilizers."

Michel van der Bel. President, Microsoft EMEA

psfk   in collaboration with   ■■ Microsoft

Examples:

Michael Hill
Predictive analytics power personalized retail experiences

In order to incorporate predictive analytics into its customer experience, global jewelry chain Michael Hill partnered with Microsoft Dynamics 365 when it moved its in-house IT system to a cloud-based platform. Integrating data from multiple sources into a single view, the Dynamics 365 platform is able to provide Michael Hill sales associates with a complete customer profile, including past purchases--both in-store and online--along with preferences and previous budgets, helping employees provide more guided recommendations for each customer across all of Michael Hill's retail touchpoints. By layering AI and machine learning on top of its cloud environment, Michael Hill is able to apply predictive analytics to its customer profiles, taking sales associates' informed recommendations one step further.

michaelhill/microsoft.com

REVOLVE x Snap+Style Business
Integratable CRM tool enables stylists to make personalized recommendations

Online fashion retailer Revolve partnered with technology platform Snap+Style Business to create a personalized digital shopping CRM tool to inform online conversations between stylists and customers. Using the S+SB's StyleWidget, Revolve's fashion stylists can review customers' past purchases and automated recommendations to suggest new products for buyers. According to the Revolve team, this partnership accelerated the turnaround time for online product and style recommendations by stylists by almost 50%.

revolve.com

Nordstrom
Intelligent digital platform creates a more personal customer experience

Fashion retailer Nordstrom adopted live chat, messaging and an AI platform designed to digitally track and engage with online shoppers based on their in-the-moment mood and stage in the shopper journey. In a gamified digital window, customer service agents are able to view the shopper's current cart, search history and past purchases as they browse. Should a shopper decide to chat with one of the service agents, the platform measures the shopper's sentiment by analyzing their word choice and determines if the shopper is frustrated, happy or hesitant, in turn providing agents with the non-verbal cues that online conversations usually lack.

nordstrom.com

in collaboration with **Microsoft**
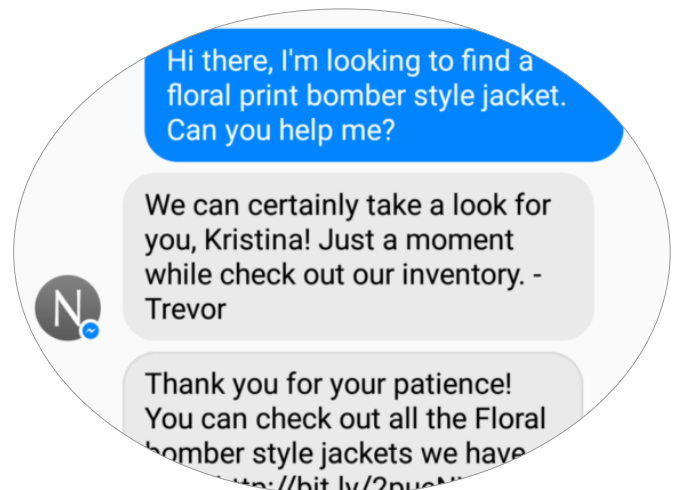
Embed Intelligent Assistance Inside Remote & Physical Workflows

As new merchandise arrives, special offers change and inventory levels fluctuate, sales staff are required to constantly update their knowledge base from shift to shift and even hour to hour. Given the dynamic nature of the retail environment and demands on their time, this can prove to be a challenging task. To help employees better respond to immediate issues or improve the store operations with a forward-looking view, companies are equipping their employees with AI-enabled tools that provide in-the-moment access to key information and analytics and streamline communications between staff.

Supporting Data:

"The needs of our associates in supply chain are evolving, and we want to set them up for success. Skills needed today are different than 15 or 20 years ago."

Steve Miller, Vice President of Supply Chain, Walmart

"Retailers are seeing the need to emphasize operation excellence in their digital strategy. That's where it pays to focus more on simplified workforce communication and task management."

Will Eadie, Global Vice President of Sales and Alliances, Workjam

IKEA

AI-enabled portal connects entire headquarters at anytime, in any place

Recognizing its workforce as 160,000 problem solvers, Ikea's dedication to helping its frontline workers feel empowered and supplying them with the tools to do so led the global furniture supplier to partner with Microsoft. With Teams, Ikea is able to virtually connect all of its employees across teams and departments. By creating a cohesive and efficient communication flow, Ikea's management teams, frontline employees and distribution centers are able to connect, co-create and problem solve in real-time, no matter their location. Streamlining all employee communications into one portal, Teams has been able to help Ikea's employees respond to immediate issues, in turn improving overall operations.

ikea/microsoft.com

Walmart's Intelligent Retail Lab

Connected store creates a closed operational loop

Retail supermarket Walmart's Intelligent Retail Lab gathers real-time information about what's happening inside the store through an array of artificial intelligence-based sensors, cameras and processors to improve its operations. Applying AI to the in-store experience, the supermarket is able to leverage the collected data to make informed decisions regarding product inventory and availability, creating an overall more positive customer experience. Equipped with real-time information, employees know more precisely when to restock products, inspiring consumer confidence and ensuring product quality throughout the store.

intelligentretaillab.com
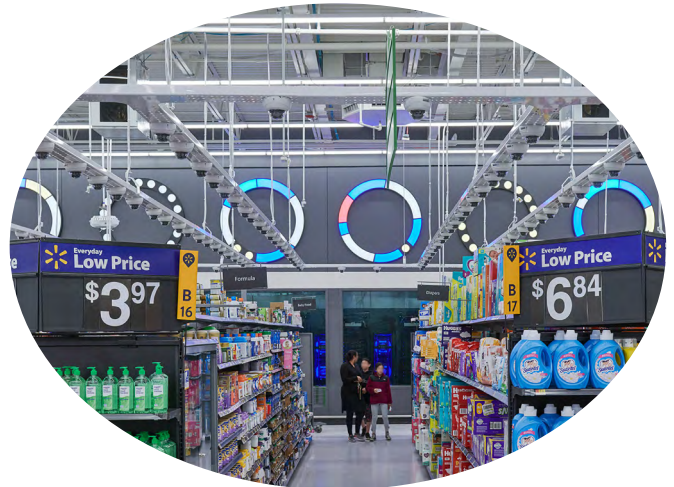
Old Navy

Connected devices allow for instantaneous customer service fulfillment

Connecting employees and inventory in real time, Old Navy's in-store tech rollout includes mobile devices for each employee, on which a host of apps allow them to view live inventory stocks, and where to find replenishment in order to actively fulfill BOPIS orders as they roll in. 'In Stock On Shelf' directs employees to the exact item a customer needs, while should an item be out of stock the 'Order In Store' app allows employees to order, ship and checkout with customers in a one-on-one experience.

oldnavy.gap.com

psfk   in collaboration with   **Microsoft**

Digital Transformation Strategies

Provide associates with in-depth training with tools and technologies that will be used in their day-to-day roles

Consider how data or information is displayed to ensure its digestible and actionable for associates and managers.

Explore how partner technologies can be tailored to effectively address your employees' most common and labor-intensive challenges, and encourage greater collaboration from any location

Integrate AI into these platforms to proactively serve information or alerts and add an additional layer of analysis.

Equip your sales associates with digital tools that connect them to customers virtually, and also provide them with a profile of each shopper, including online order/browsing history, past purchases, etc, in order to offer more relevant recommendations

Customer-First Retail In Action

Office Depot Office Max

To better connect its global workforce of 38,000 employees and improve company-wide solution adoption, office supply retailing company Office Depot integrated Microsoft Teams and Yammer into their company's onboarding process. In order to successfully transition its workflow onto Microsoft 365 and effectively create a culture of digital-first collaboration, Office Depot created a full-scale launch event, where hands-on experiences demonstrated how employees could seamlessly work directly in the Teams platform to collaborate on Excel worksheets, Word documents, and PowerPoint presentations. Further, whenever Teams receives new features, Office Depot offers 60-second demonstration videos based on employee-submitted questions to keep employees up to date. Since implementing Teams, Office Depot has realized increased efficiencies in communication, and seen a 37% reduction in email volume.

Within its retail locations, Microsoft Yammer also plays a pivotal role as the primary communication tool for Office Depot retail associates, allowing them to communicate across physical locations. Through the platform, regional managers are able to share best practices, solutions and techniques between stores, while sales associates are able to effectively communicate on the floor via mobile devices. By developing a cloud-based culture, Office Depot has not only improved security, processes and collaboration, but enabled its employees to collectively work in a seamless manner no matter their location.

officedepot/microsoft.com

psfk   in collaboration with   Microsoft

3 Enable An Intelligent Supply Chain

The optimal infrastructure is crucial for retailers to reduce costs, meet rising consumer needs and improve communication between suppliers and partners. Retailers are adopting a 360-degree view of their entire supply chains—from raw material acquisition to production to last-mile delivery, by adopting intelligent, data-driven processes to not only predict inventory and aptly respond to consumer expectations, but synchronize information sharing amongst all members of the supply chain.

"Our customers are embracing IoT as a core strategy to drive better business outcomes, and we are heavily investing in this space committing $5 billion in IoT and intelligent edge innovation by 2022 and growing our IoT and intelligent edge partner ecosystem to over 10,000."

Sam George, Corporate VP of Azure IoT, Microsoft

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Build A Connected Organization Where Everyone Can Share From Anywhere

Retailers are sitting on a wealth of data, but these valuable insights often get lost between disparate teams and siloed channels. Data-driven communication channels and omnichannel solutions can help optimize fast and responsive communication between factories, warehouses, stores and other supply chain elements, sharing key information between partners through cloud infrastructures and keeping everyone on pace to deliver excellence.

Supporting Data:

"The brands that really struggle are those that operate online and in-store in silos, on systems that were never built with other channels in mind. The key to omnichannel is having a single system for real-time omni data—inventory, customers and orders."

Stephan Schambach. Founder And CEO, NewStore

"Cloud shift is not just about cloud. Organizations embracing dynamic, cloud-based operating models position themselves for cost optimization and increased competitiveness."

Ed Anderson. Distinguished Vice President Analyst, Gartner

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Examples:

Xbox

Single platform connecting IoT devices streamlines delivery operations

In order to track and monitor shipments' conditions for shock, light and temperature and identify product damage in real-time, anywhere, at scale, the supply chain team behind video gaming brand Xbox and Microsoft Surface designed a supply chain visibility solution on Microsoft Azure IoT Control. Providing visibility from plant to store delivery, the supply chain team is able to both ensure each of its products arrive intact, and connect with manufacturers, distribution centers, logistics providers, and carriers to address shipment conditions in real-time. By creating end-to-end, track-and-trace capabilities the supply chain team reduces the risk of loss, minimizes delays, and empowers other businesses to adapt to dynamic global conditions.

xbox/microsoft.com

H&M Group

AI operations deliver greater efficiency throughout the supply chain to better align supply and demand, and create a circular supply loop

By optimizing and connecting its stores, warehouses and fulfillment operations, H&M Group is able to ensure the right product is in the right place at the right time and transported to the optimal warehouse. The retailer's connected operational viewpoint allows for accurate demand forecast, in turn eliminating wasted resources and creating fewer emissions through optimized fulfillment.

hm/microsoft.com

Target

Optimized inventory system makes restocking more efficient

Big box retailer Target is developing a new inventory planning and control system to allow shelves to be restocked more efficiently. The system will be able to locate inventory positioning more precisely throughout the supply chain, allowing Target to reduce the amount of excess inventory in store backrooms and better organize shipments. These changes are expected to minimize the number of footsteps needed to restock sales floors and reduce the number of hours employees spend on replenishment.

target.com

Build Agile Inventory & Operations Resilient To Rapid Change

Companies are continuously collecting a wealth of data about their shoppers, their stores and the broader marketplace, but they often lack the internal capabilities and creative insight to put it to use. Successful brands and retailers are differentiating themselves with data-led initiatives that enable them to quickly adapt or even anticipate shifts to be first to market with new products inspired by local purchase patterns to better serve the needs of their customers.

Supporting Data:

"With our customers, we're seeing the early signs of realizing benefits through AI, most often through improved product quality, production and supply chain efficiencies, and the effectiveness of their service operations."

Chris Harries. Worldwide Manufacturing Industry Solutions Director, Microsoft

"The accuracy of inventory needs to be really strong. If you're taking orders on the website for items that you don't have the inventory for, because the inventory is not accurate or it's in the wrong location, there will be a lot of work on the [packing] floor that can't get through the next phase of the process … everything gets held up."

Adrian Kumar. Global Head of Operations, Science & Analytics, DHL Supply Chain

psfk   in collaboration with   **Microsoft**

Examples:

Starbucks Deep Brew
Personalized recommendations also predict demand

Within its mobile application, coffee chain Starbucks is using reinforcement learning technology to offer customers personalized coffee suggestions—which also inform inventory planning at local Starbucks locations. Starbucks uses Microsoft's Azure platform to power its Deep Brew initiative, which generates custom food and drink recommendations based on time of day, previous orders, and contextual factors such as weather. This recommendation engine is also used to forecast demand for local Starbucks stores, impacting inventory and replenishment orders, predicting staffing needs and anticipating equipment maintenance.

starbucksdeepbrew/microsoft.com

Nike Live
App-connected 'local' stores create dynamic merch experiences and offer seamless fulfillment solutions

Sportswear brand Nike stocks its Nike Live concept stores based on shopping data from local customers, allowing stores to quickly adjust inventory according to demand. Using data collected from its NikePlus app, each store's merchandising mix is dictated by items local consumers are buying. Every two weeks, the store adds new inventory based on the local market's purchasing trends (compared to the traditional turnaround time of 30-45 days). When customers place an order for pickup through the NikePlus app and select one of the Nike Live concept stores, they're able to take advantage of the store's curbside pickup service, or can collect their order from an app-accessible set of lockers located within the store.

nike.com
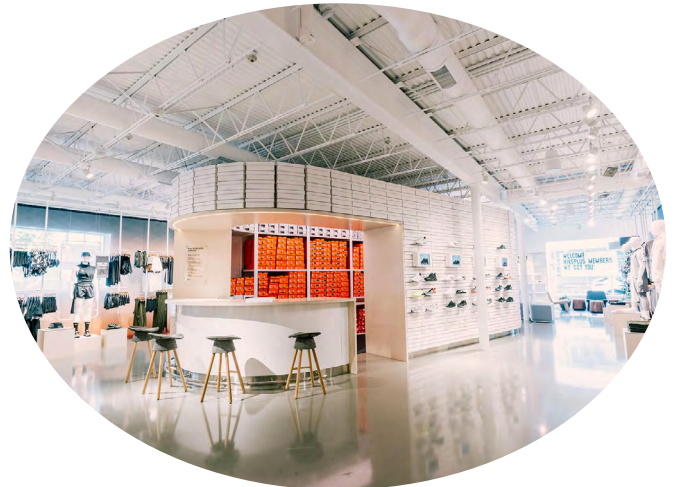
IKEA
Real-time supply chain decisions reduce waste from returns

Homewares retailer IKEA is analyzing supply chain data in real time to improve its returns management process, reducing the company's overhead and environmental impact. At 10 IKEA distribution centers and 50 retail locations, machine learning software is used to route returned and excess inventory to the optimal tail location within the company's network. By making in-the-moment adjustments to its reverse logistics, IKEA reduces operating waste and costs while funneling inventory to the retailer's highest-value channels.

ikea.com

psfk   in collaboration with   Microsoft

Digital Transformation Strategies

Determine what data to solicit from local shoppers, both online and in store, in order to tailor your inventory and even your products to each market

Avoid oversaturation of data collection by identifying key questions and appropriate metrics for collection and analysis.

Use technology, like beacons or RFID, to better optimize store layouts and inform ideal, social distance compliant traffic flows, while also gauging customer interest and merchandising effectiveness

Augment the power of predictive algorithms with human thinkers, customer feedback and qualitative analysis to achieve more thorough, balanced forecasts.

Use machine learning in order to track what consumers purchase and return, enabling you to refine your inventory selection and get new products to market more quickly based on consumer demand.

Customer-First Retail In Action

Walgreens

U.S. pharmacy chain Walgreens transformed its operations and accelerated decision making within its supply chain by moving its on-premises data warehouse to Microsoft Azure Synapse Analytics in the cloud. Users can consume the data through a web app developed in-house, providing Walgreens with a 360-degree view of its in-store and online data in real time. By providing key decision makers with a complete view of inventory and purchasing trends, Walgreens is able to generate insights that help stores correctly stock the products consumers want, efficiently manage inventory levels, and make more informed, data-driven business decisions.

walgreens/microsoft.com

psfk   in collaboration with   ■■ Microsoft

4 Reimagine Retail

Brands and retailers are underpinning storefronts and digital touchpoints with a baseline level of data collection that analyzes and responds to customers' micro and macro-needs, in order to deliver a customized and convenient shopping experience at scale while gathering insights for businesses to create a powerful toolkit to market their products to shoppers. By seamlessly integrating web and app-based digital channels into the in-store experience, retailers cannot only elevate customers' purchase journey, but power end-to-end omnichannel analytics capabilities.

"Organizations are largely still finding a path that balances improving current operations with the opportunities afforded by Industry 4.0 technologies for innovation and business model transformation."

Tim Hanley, Global leader, Industrial Products & Construction, Deloitte

"Understanding 1) the nuances of what consumers expect, 2) how they actually engage with brands via a myriad of digital channels, and 3) integrating these in-demand channels seamlessly to deliver digital-first omnichannel experiences, are the keys to sustainable growth."

Paul Jarman. CEO, NICE inContact

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Synchronize Digital And Physical Data & Systems

As personalization and recognition across channels becomes a greater expectation among shoppers, retailers and mall operators are creating systems that 'log' customers into physical stores. When customers enter, the system automatically triggers recommendations and in-store activations, and informs assistants to deliver personalized service, all while simultaneously syncing customer experiences both on- and offline. Moreover, stores are increasingly adopting AI-powered and voice enabled devices to provide these seamless, connected, and tailored experiences customers now expect, at scale and through contactless solutions.

Supporting Data:

"What these customers want is omni-channel personalization — whether they interact via a website, an app, email, SMS, in-store and so on. They want to be treated uniquely. That's where brands can use the entire data stream, those digital footprints that their customers are leaving. You can use machine learning and algorithms to predict what future action the customer is likely to take, what is the next best action the customer should be prodded towards. That's the world of personalization that is coming up."

Rajesh Jain. Founder & Managing Director, Netcore

Most consumers, 93%, want seamless omnichannel experiences, and yet they are increasingly giving companies a poor rating on seamlessly switching between channels–73% give companies a poor rating, up from 67% in 2018.

Customer Experience (CX) Transformation Benchmark, Global Consumers. NICE, 2019

Examples:

The Home Depot
End-to-end commerce platform triggers personalized product recommendations

Home improvement retailer The Home Depot partnered with Microsoft PromoteIQ to maximize its 170 million monthly digital visitors. With Microsoft PromoteIQ, The Home Depot is able to manage and scale vendor-funded digital marketing efforts both online and in-store. The Microsoft PromoteIQ platform includes an analytics suite to deliver audience insights and help The Home Depot's brands understand incremental sales lift. Now, customers visiting The Home Depot digitally are presented with relevant advertising for products they may need for their home improvement projects alongside content for complementary projects like décor to complete their room. Since the program launched, The Home Depot has experienced a 35% gain in customer engagement and promoted products have seen double-digit growth compared to 2018.

thehomedepot/microsoft.com

Harvey Norman
AI-powered digital advisors create product-specific, geo-tagged push notifications

Australian retailer Harvey Norman became the world's first retailer to launch the Microsoft Synchronized Shopping solution, an AI-powered retail software concept that facilitates a seamless online and offline experience. Shoppers who visit the Harvey Norman website can access an AI-powered product advisor who guides them through a series of questions in order to assess their individual needs and recommend Microsoft laptops and other devices that best suit them. Once the shoppers have selected a short list of devices, the website creates a shopper pass that is stored in their Apple Wallet or Google Pay app on their mobile device. The shopper pass then uses geo-location to push a phone notification once a customer enters the store, helping to efficiently guide them to the location of the PC models that were recommended by the online advisor, ultimately reducing time spent in-store and the need for unnecessary employee interactions.

harveynorman/microsoft.com

Knot Standard
Virtual studio informs customers' curated in-store styling sessions

Luxury menswear brand Knot Standard created an in-store 'Style Wall,' which uses AI and voice to offer customers a 3D virtual studio. Shoppers start by booking an appointment online and are paired with a stylist. Upon arrival, the giant 'Style Wall' screen displays content tailored to their particular interests. For returning customers, their order history and preferences will also be displayed, along with personalized suggestions. The wall responds to more than 200 voice commands, allowing shoppers and their stylist to examine and customize every part of their outfit, from shirt cuffs to fabrics.

knotstandard.com

psfk   in collaboration with   Microsoft

Leverage Real-Time Insights To Drive Innovation

In an effort to better understand and respond to the nuances of their customers, organizations are deriving insights from product interactions, loyalty engagement and shopper feedback to identify areas for improvement. This information is then translated into actionable strategies that can inform decisions around product curation and recommendations, flexible rewards programs and technology investment to continually refine the front-end experience and ensure customer needs are always top of mind.

Supporting Data:

"We needed to innovate how we innovate, because we clearly were not delivering against our growth goals, and we needed to make an intervention. Moving from attitudinal data to behavioral data, the learning is just much more robust and gets you to a better place faster."

Kathy Fish, Chief Research, Development and Innovation Officer, P&G

"It's all data all the time. Data never sleeps. We're constantly generating information that's coming in from the consumer, from our audiences, and from people who interact with our value proposition phase of the process ... everything gets held up."

Amber Hameed, VP Information Systems, Dollar Shave Club

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Choosy
Real-time data informs on-demand product development

Fashion brand Choosy gathers real-time trend data from social channels and translates this information into fashion designs to be produced on demand. Choosy uses a combination of in-house style scouts and AI to analyze 95 million Instagram daily. After trends are identified, Choosy's design team produces product samples in as few as three days and makes them available for shoppers to buy through twice-weekly drops on its website. Shoppers have only a few days to purchase the looks, which are manufactured to order and shipped to customers within two weeks of purchase.

getchoosy.com
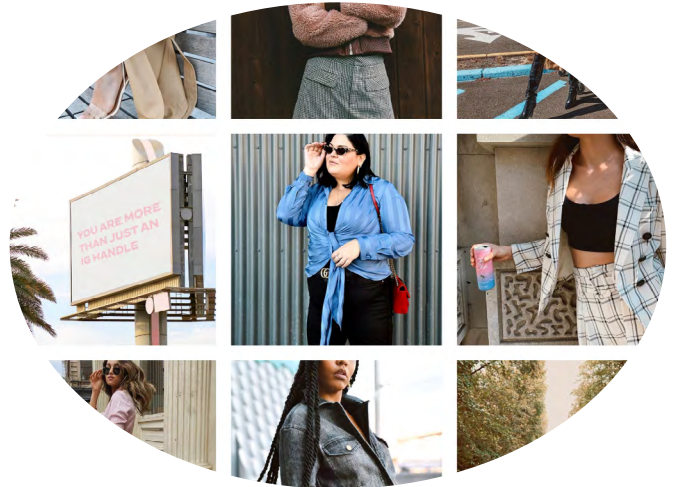
Procter & Gamble
Iterative testing delivers impactful product design

CPG giant Procter & Gamble is embracing 'lean innovation,' launching new products quickly and refining them via iterative testing. This allows them to innovate more quickly than their traditional approach, which required extensive consumer research and testing before a new product was introduced to the marketplace. By launching 'minimum viable products,' P&G is able to introduce new products to market more quickly and gain real-world feedback, much as a smaller, more nimble DTC brand would approach innovation. One product P&G launched through this method is Charmin's Forever Roll, a commercial-size roll of toilet paper that would allow consumers to not change the roll as often, which was launched after testing via Facebook and Instagram ads.

pg.com

Digital Transformation Strategies

Design stores with visitor recognition in mind, in order to reduce unnecessary contact between customers and associates, better assist customers in efficiently locating desired items and tailor current offers and digital signage on a one-to-one basis.

Review customers behavioral maps across platforms to identify products they gravitate towards, best fitting sizes and views before purchase—creating a comprehensive shopper profile.

Establish multiple channels to share customer insights and feedback with teams for actionable implementation—from organization-wide regroups to on-demand snapshots.

Compare customer data across commerce channels to glean insights that inform merchandising, store flows and loyalty programs, among other processes.

Customer-First Retail In Action

Trakomatic

Trakomatic is a Microsoft partner in Asia that is digitizing brick-and-mortar stores with its Azure AI-based solution that provides hyper-personalized shopping experiences to customers at scale. Once a shopper opts in by signing up for the service, they have the option of adding their photo image to their profile. If they do, Trakomatic's video analytics, AI-powered facial recognition and intelligent sensors, all on the Microsoft Azure cloud, do the rest, recognizing them as they enter the store and personalizing the experience--from targeted offers delivered to their smartphone and digital signage that changes based on their preferences to alerting store associates so that they are able to provide a one-on-one experience. Along with providing an enhanced customer experience, Trakomatic's tools are able to measure and improve marketing campaigns' effectiveness, track conversion rates, and help retail associates better manage and forecast location and day-specific traffic.

trakomatic/microsoft.com

psfk   in collaboration with   **Microsoft**

Roadmap To Success:
Key Questions To Guide Intelligent Tech Investment

Data-driven technologies are essential for responding to today's accelerated consumer needs and creating a differentiated shopper experience that is integrated throughout the digital and store experience. However, simply investing in a suite of solutions won't instantly translate into success without first having a strategic vision in place. Having a fundamental understanding of your brand, customers and the experience you aim to deliver can ensure the technologies you apply to the retail experience add value and are executed with integrity.

When customers think of your brand, what feelings, ideas and solutions come to mind?

Defining how your brand engages with its audience and presents its offerings is the first step in deciding what technologies to apply and how you can integrate them into your organization.

How can you differentiate yourself in the marketplace?

Understand the elements of your retail or brand experience that make you stand apart from the competition to lead you to develop the correct tech-enabled strategies to accentuate your strengths and core values.

How can you leverage technology to maximize your strengths and diminish customer pain points?

Technologies cannot only help optimize and deliver an elevated experience that your brand is known for, but also resolve areas of friction customers face along the purchase journey.

How can you communicate your plans throughout the organization and beyond?

Ensure your teams understand a standard, consistent narrative about the digital transformation journey your organization is pursuing. Communicate the goals, technologies and opportunities present with this new era of retail, not only with your employees, but customers as well.

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About Microsoft

Microsoft enables retailers to deliver personal, seamless, and differentiated customer experiences by empowering people, enabling digital transformation, and capturing data-based insights to drive growth.

Learn more about intelligent retail at microsoft.com/retail

About PSFK

An Introduction To PSFK:

PSFK is the world's leading business intelligence platform for innovation in retail. Across every major industry vertical, we help the most progressive brands identify and leverage new customer experience opportunities through a mix of trend reports, immersive events, insight-rich content, ideation workshops and on-demand research services.

psfk.com

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