



Trends

The changing face of retail

In a period of economic uncertainty, finding ways to save money while addressing customers' need for value and maintaining their loyalty is ever more critical to a business' survival and success. The retail industry is in an unprecedented state of flux. Falling trade barriers, global sourcing trends, and new emerging markets have propelled globalization to greater importance. New technology constantly transforms the way customers interact with businesses. And as customer demands shift, and whole new channels of interaction emerge, retailers are presented with both the opportunity to create new, differentiating shopper experiences and the challenge of keeping up with the rapid pace of change.

With information literally at their fingertips, the shopping experience increasingly becomes the differentiator, as shoppers demand the best value in meeting their wants and needs.

Three key areas are shaping the business priorities of our retail customers today:

The demand-driven supply chain

A new global demand chain has emerged, powered by information in the hands of people. To satisfy today's value-driven customer needs, retailers must become customer-centric enterprises. At the same time, the increasingly global nature of the industry means that companies are both sourcing and selling products in more places around the world. To be successful, retailers need to collaborate in real-time with customers and suppliers to facilitate information access throughout the entire demand and supply chain.

Retailers are also experiencing shorter sales cycles. In response, retailers are looking to reduce time to market for products and increase supply chain visibility. They also must improve inventory management and product availability-delivering products where and when the customer needs them.

A focus on environmental and social sustainability

With increasing government regulation and pressure from value-driven customers who make conscious decisions to support businesses that reflect their values, social responsibility and environmental sustainability, have become a central focus in how retailers do business today. As a result, many organizations have developed "green" agendas that address energy demand, alternative fuels, renewable sources, waste management, and their carbon footprint.

Disruptive technology

New technologies are continually driving innovation and change in the retail industry. Radio-Frequency Identification (RFID) created a major shift in the way retailers monitor and understand product delivery and use. Social networking technology is dramatically changing how customers form impressions about products and brands. And other emerging technologies such as video analytics, predictive simulation, and biometrics will help shape future shopping experiences. Retailers need a platform that will help them easily integrate, and ultimately benefit from, these new developments.

Addressing Role-Specific Challenges

Every role in a retail organization comes with its own challenges.

The salesperson



With a lifestyle that includes constant access to information while at home and on the go, the new generation of salespeople and cashiers expects instant and comprehensive access to information and data.

The store manager



To remain responsive to rapidly changing customer preferences, store managers need to be connected to their customers-aware of what they are buying, what they are blogging about, and what information they are sharing with their friends on social networks and through e-mail. Store managers must also be connected to the latest trends in their specific industry, such as emerging fashions.

The supply chain manager



Logistics and supply chain departments are under mounting pressure to manage a global demand and supply chain, whether undertaking collaborative planning, import management, or logistics. Managers require systems that are unbound, global, and digital and that provide access to business processes and workflow-not only for employees in the retail organization, but for employees of partners and suppliers, too.

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