

Smarter retail

How Enterprise Intelligence
is bringing digital
experiences in-store.



verizon[✓]
business

Retail is forever evolving. As technology advances, and consumers expect increasingly more personalized, digital experiences, the lines between online retail and traditional bricks-and-mortar stores are becoming blurred. Consumers no longer think about their shopping experiences as either physical or digital – to them it's just shopping. With both in-store and online experiences playing a critical role, today's retailers need to find new ways to delight consumers by providing smarter, connected, omnichannel retail experiences.

The high street is still alive and kicking.

Online retail has grown exponentially over the last few decades. People enjoy the speed, convenience and security of shopping from the comfort of their own home – not to mention the ability to quickly and easily compare prices, deals, product reviews and shipping times. Despite this, many still enjoy the tangible feel of going to physical stores and browsing items in person.

“ Many shoppers still enjoy the tangible feel of going to physical stores.¹

These real-life, in-store visits are also proving valuable for retailers. [Research by Deloitte](#) shows that the average value of in-store transactions was around 10% higher in July 2021 than in March 2019¹. And of the customers who spend the majority of their time researching products in-store, 90% choose to also make their purchase in-store. It's no wonder, then, that retailers aren't yet ready to close up shop and move their whole operation online.



¹ Deloitte, 2021, InSight Consumer preferences embrace a mix of physical and digital.

Smarter retailers are mixing tradition with innovation

Online, digital, tech-enabled purchasing is still important to shoppers, however. To offer the kinds of experiences modern customers demand, retailers need to adapt their in-store offering to include more digital elements, for example:

- In-store Wi-Fi for customers
- Mobile apps which enhance the physical shopping journey
- Immersive digital experiences (such as smart mirrors)
- Personal recommendations for customers (based on purchase history)
- AR/VR in-store assistants
- Frictionless shopping with simple digital payments

Research from Salesforce backs this up, showing that 88% of customers expect these digital elements to become more prevalent.²

The 2022 Connected Retail Experience Study suggests that 62% of retailers are satisfied with their overall store experience.³ Despite this, just 39% are satisfied with their in-store digital experience. Clearly, there's still work to be done. Forward-thinking retailers understand the future of in-store retail is moving to a more connected model. And they know they need to move quickly – transforming digitally to make their stores more connected, data-driven and secure – to win and keep customers.

“ **Just 39% of retailers are satisfied with their in-store digital experience.** ³

It's not just about customers, though. This move towards smarter, connected, data-rich operations will also help retailers understand more about what's happening within their own business. It can enable them to streamline processes and improve their operational efficiency. It can give them a clearer view of their supply chain, making it easy to identify and mitigate issues before they arise. And it will help them develop greater resilience to react to unexpected disruption.



² Salesforce, 2023, What Are Customer Expectations, and How Have they Changed?

³ Verizon, 2022, Connect Retail Experience Study.



Change is under way.

The good news is that many retailers have already started this digital transformation – or they’re planning to do so. 42% of specialty and department stores have already deployed customer Wi-Fi, and 78% are planning to have it by 2025. Similarly, 15% of grocery and general merchandise businesses have customer Wi-Fi in-store, with 42% planning on deploying. Meanwhile, 22% of specialty and department stores have rolled out a mobile app with in-store features, and 66% are looking to follow suit by 2025. 10% of grocery and general merchandise businesses have the same kinds of innovation, with 39% planning to launch soon.⁴

“ **66% of specialty and department stores have plans for a mobile app with in-store features.** ⁴

Digital displays and signage are also set to play a key role in stores, enabling immersive, informative, engaging experiences for customers. 28% of specialty and department stores say they intend to implement interactive displays and 22% of grocery and general merchandise businesses will do the same.⁵ And that’s not all. Future-thinking retailers are also exploring integrating other smart technologies into their stores, such as AR/VR assistants and frictionless shopping with cashierless checkouts.



⁴ Verizon, 2023, Connected Retail Experience Study.

⁵ Rose de Fremery, 2023, How Enterprise Intelligence can help shape the future of retail stores.

Better customer experiences start behind the scenes.

As well as using technology to enhance the customer experience, many retailers are also investing in innovative ways to improve their operational efficiency. They're enhancing their networks to securely handle ever-increasing amounts of customer data. They're investing in smart, Internet of Things (IoT)-enabled tools and sensors to more closely monitor supply chains – helping them spot disruption early and streamline processes. And they're investing in smart software to closely monitor stock and automate time-consuming tasks – increasing efficiency and freeing up resource.

53% of specialty and department stores say they're looking to implement real-time inventory management into their operations. Grocery and general merchandise businesses plan to follow suit. Similarly, 38% of specialty and department stores are adopting artificial intelligence (AI) to make their operations smarter, as are 28% of grocery and general merchandise businesses.⁶

“ **38% of specialty and department stores are adopting AI.**⁶ ”

And that's not all. Retailers are investing in other technology innovations to help make their operations smarter, including:

- **Curbside sensors for pickup** – to simplify the complex process of preparing retail orders, including everything from monitoring inventory to managing curbside pickup and tracking curbside wait times.
- **Digital shelf labels** – which enable retailers to digitize and streamline in-store operations, plus improve customer experience with customized merchandising and inventory information.
- **Intelligent video** – helping retailers with everything from tracking customer flow and numbers to reducing theft and loss, improving incident response times and tailoring service to key individuals with VIP recognition.
- **Robotics for associate tasks** – managing time-consuming tasks like stock check and inventory management, freeing up employees to focus on providing better customer experience.
- **Mobile point of sale (POS) solutions** – enabling customers to check out quicker and simpler, reducing queues and wait times.



⁶Verizon, 2022, Connected Retail Experience Study

Building the future of retail with Enterprise Intelligence

Emerging technologies offer lots of promise. They can enable retailers to work more efficiently. They can be used to develop new connected experiences for customers. And they can help retailers communicate with shoppers in new, more exciting, more engaging ways. Organizations who embrace these technologies, and prioritize digital innovation to build smarter, more efficient and more agile enterprises will come out on top.

For transformation to succeed, retailers need to bring together their disconnected systems to create powerful, modular, intelligent solutions that enable new functionality, smarter insights and faster decision-making. This is what we call Enterprise Intelligence. And it's the key to unlocking the future of smart retail.

How Verizon can help you build a platform for tomorrow, today.

As a retailer, you understand that it's smart to invest in new technologies. However, to be successful, it all needs to be backed up by a strong network infrastructure that delivers the necessary speed, low latency and abundant bandwidth. That's where Verizon comes in. We can help you plan and implement a broad digital transformation strategy that enables you to enhance customer experience and improve operational efficiency.

Together, we can build and maintain a robust, secure network infrastructure that supports new technology innovations and helps you get more out of them. We can set you up with Network as a Service (NaaS) Solutions, which delivers a cloud-based, resilient, agile network infrastructure. NaaS Solutions gives you the performance to run multi-access edge computing (MEC), AI and machine learning (ML) and AR/VR to enable highly advanced retail applications.

When private 5G,⁷ NaaS, MEC and more come together to give you a platform for the future, it's not just digital transformation. It's Enterprise Intelligence.

Learn more about how Verizon can help you explore and adopt the technology that's reinventing retail. [Click here](#)



⁷ Private 5G is not available in all locations.

