Five Priorities Driving the Renaissance of the Store in 2019

Findings and analysis from a survey of retail executives managing in-store technology and operational strategies in the USA
Research demographics

Incisiv conducted a quantitative survey of 77 retail executives across key business functions of retail organizations investing and planning digital transformation in their store ecosystems.

- **23%** Store Operations
- **22%** Customer Insights & Strategy
- **19%** Information Technology
- **18%** Merchandising
- **9%** Multi-channel/Omnichannel/eCommerce/Digital
- **8%** Supply Chain

Retail Format

- **34%** Specialty Retail
- **18%** Apparel & Accessories
- **17%** Department Store
- **9%** Health & Beauty
- **8%** Hardware/Home Goods & Furniture
- **5%** Deep Discount/Dollar Store
- **5%** Consumer Electronics & Appliances
- **4%** Sporting Goods, Hobby, Book & Music Stores

- **80%** Director level or above
- **84%** Over $500MM Annual Revenue
The store 2019: New expectations create greater sophistication

As stores’ role evolves, retailers add functionality through technology and improved operations.

- Customer wi-fi to meet shopper expectations
- Beacons for proximity-based marketing and to track traffic flow
- Order management systems to manage new fulfillment options and single view of inventory
- Mobile POS to each checkout
- Kiosk ordering to add efficiency
- Contactless payment options to remove buyer friction
- Pick-up towers and lockers to increase efficiency
- Clienteling applications for cross-sell/upsell
- IoT to better manage inventory

The store is more relevant than ever as customers now utilize it as an extension of their digital journeys. More than half of today’s retail sales are digital-influenced and this figure is growing. To accommodate, retailers are required to not only implement increasingly sophisticated digital solutions in their stores but in many cases re-design all or part of their stores to enable these new capabilities. This requires significant investment. However, with a strong economy and, for most retailers, a realization that they must reassess their store strategy; 2019 will be a healthy year for investments in improving the store.
New focus, new investment

2019 investments match the store’s role as the hub of omnichannel commerce
Retailers have woken up to the need to re-invest their stores

60% of retailers increasing store level investments 5%+ in 2019. This is greatest increase since 2007.
Emerging technology takes center stage in the store

IoT and AR/VR seeing greater investment than ever before.

Value of in-store IoT applications

- Actively investing: 47%
- Budgeting to invest in our next fiscal: 23%
- See the value but do not have budget to invest: 12%
- Don’t see enough value to invest now but will ‘wait and see’: 16%
- See no value: 3%

70% of retailers are investing or plan to invest in IoT in 2019.

Value of in-store AR/VR applications

- Actively investing: 23%
- Budgeting to invest in our next fiscal: 16%
- See the value but do not have budget to invest: 18%
- Don’t see enough value to invest now but will ‘wait and see’: 27%
- See no value: 16%

40% of retailers are investing or plan to invest in AV/VR in 2019.
2019 investments by priority that will drive the store experience

#1. Product Availability
- Inventory control and visibility
- Supply chain visibility

#2. Shopper Convenience
- In-store marketing initiatives
- Update in-store merchandising
- Store remodels

#3. Immersive Marketing
- In-store marketing initiatives
- Store remodels

#4. Customer Insights
- In-store analytics initiatives
- Omnichannel analytics initiatives

#5. Operational Readiness
- Store process refinement
- Store fulfillment option expansion
- Labor management initiatives
The store experience is driven by #1. Product Availability (1of3)

Omnichannel shopping behaviors drives need for full visibility and access to inventory.

68%* of retailers are looking to improve store experience through better Merchandising & Inventory Control.

A $1B retailer still loses $40M-$75M annually due to out-of-stock. As stores continue to expand their fulfillment options to accommodate for pickup, delivery or shipping of online orders, inventory visibility across the value chain is critical. That is why achieving a single view of inventory is the #1 investment priority for retailers in 2019.

Additional investment areas include providing mobile inventory lookup for associates and customers and utilizing RFID for inventory management.

*Note: Includes participants that include this as high/very high priority

Aldo is streamlining ship from store orders through real-time analytics based visibility into inventory in the supply chain.

Saks Fifth Avenue is investing in data analytics capabilities to drive inventory optimization for merchandise planning and supply chain visibility.

Nordstrom plans focus on accelerating inventory turns, strengthen assortment and improve in-store product display as part of its strategic priorities for fiscal 2018-19.

H&M is leveraging technology to optimize markdowns, reduce excess inventory, inform product assortment and pricing in the stores.
The store experience is driven by

#1. Product Availability

Retailers increase investment in capabilities that better manage inventory and improve supply chain visibility.

In-place vs. planned technology investments: 2018-2019

**Single view of inventory**

As omnichannel retailing has become table stakes for all formats, a single view of inventory across channels has become the priority for retailers in 2019.

**Mobile inventory lookup**

Extension of order delivery information to mobile remains key driver of incremental investment to mobile inventory applications that saw strong base investment in 2018².

**RFID for inventory management**

RFID based inventory management is not new but it continues to make progress for specific product applications. As costs come down and the need for single view of inventory increases, expect RFID to continue to see investment.
The store experience is driven by #1. **Product Availability** (3 of 3)

Emerging technology shows great promise for managing inventory challenges and improving merchandising strategies.

**Emerging technology and retailer/brand use-cases**

- 63% of retailers see using IoT for inventory accuracy and control as best use case.
- 42% of retailers rate applying AR/VR for store planogramming as a valid use case.
- 30% of retailers view heat mapping for in-store merchandising as effective use case for AR/VR.
The store experience is driven by
#2. Shopper Convenience (1of3)

Execution of omnichannel strategies drives long needed investment in store remodels and layout improvements.

45% *
of retailers are planning to change store layout for better execution of their omnichannel strategies.

38% *
of retailers are planning to add fulfillment options to the store and dedicate more space for fulfillment.

Customers expect convenient and digitally seamless experiences during their shopper journey with the brand. Growth in store based investments in 2019 can largely be attributed to upgrades in store infrastructure in terms of technology, merchandise layouts and new or enhanced areas for product fulfillment. Leaders such as Walmart, Kroger, and Home Depot are re-setting the bar for customer experience and we’re seeing a response from others to keep pace.

*Note: Includes participants that include this as high/very high priority

Aldi plans to invest $5 billion to expand the store footprint and remodel 1800 stores. This includes remerchandising stores to include more fresh, healthy and convenience based product assortments.

McDonald’s is investing $3 billion to continue the store remodeling initiatives to become a ‘Restaurant of the Future,’ with kiosk ordering, new table layouts and dedicated parking for curbside pick-up.

Old Navy is planning an 18 month remodel initiative to improve store layout and add omnichannel capabilities across 1300 stores.

Target is remodeling stores to align local shopper preferences. They will be adding omnichannel capabilities such as storage for same-day delivery, curbside pick up and redesigned store layouts.
The store experience is driven by

#2. Shopper Convenience (2 of 3)

Retailers realize that as shopper imperatives evolve the need to introduce new formats and footprints is required.

39%* of retailers are planning to experiment with a new store format (e.g. smaller footprint, pop up, flagship).

Much of the innovation taking place in the stores is coming in the form of new formats designed to meet a new set of imperatives driving shopper behavior. Customers want their retail experience to be driven by efficiency, convenience, lifestyle and service. Retailers are increasingly experimenting with new store models, especially smaller and immersive footprints drive the next generation of customers to their stores.

*Note: Includes participants that include this as high/very high priority

DSW is experimenting with smaller store immersive experience by combining technology with video, sounds, lighting and attractive store merchandising, including a large vending machine for shoes.

HyVee’s new store format blends fitness and grocery purchase experience together by including an Orangetheory fitness studio in the store.

PetCoach (owned by Petco), an online veterinary platform, launched a small store format with limited inventory and key focus on service.

Sleep Number launched an immersive store experience by adding 360 beds in an experiential environment with assisted technologies for personalization.
The store experience is driven by

**#2. Shopper Convenience (3 of 3)**

Retailers get smart with dressing rooms and go further with Wi-Fi.

**In-place vs. planned technology investments: 2018-2019**

**Smart dressing rooms**
Smart dressing rooms enable a personalized experience by informing consumers about complimentary or similar products for apparel and department store retailers. Technology forward retailers are implementing in 2019.

**Customer Wi-Fi**
While customer Wi-Fi is mature compared to other in-store technologies, it is still a top 5 investment area for retailers in 2019 as retailers experiment with interactive customer Wi-Fi experiences.

**Digital kiosks**
Kiosk investments saw some significant adoption for specific use cases (such as ordering and gift registry) in 2018. 2019 investments are more limited but their ability to add convenience to the shopping journey will drive some investment.
The store experience is driven by

#3. Immersive Marketing (1 of 3)

Digital marketing solutions are enabling retailers to interact with their customers across the shopper journey through engaging technologies and offers.

53%*

of retailers look to improve the store experience through better in-store marketing.

Enhancing customer engagement in the stores has been the calling card for analysts and media for several years now. Also, as pure play retailers bring their digital prowess into the brick and mortar environment and as leaders have fully embraced the customer engagement mantra, the rest of the industry looks to be following suit. In-store marketing technologies have matured tremendously in the last 24 months and retailers are seeing the value with planned investment in proximity-based marketing and advanced clienteling.

However, marketing technologies are often the ‘shiny new object;’ so retailers must be careful to focus their investments in solutions that are right for their format and customer profiles.

*Note: Includes participants that include this as high/very high priority

IKEA boosts the in-store marketing experience with proximity-based mobile notification including welcome messages, coffee offers, family group based messages, and reminders to use the loyalty program.

Lululemon has launched a store with digital mirrors and story fixtures for personalized recommendations. They also added new fixtures for better merchandising and enhanced the checkout service.

Zara enables the customers to view the product assortment of the store through a model-led AR experience.

Missguided offers an immersive high-energy open retail ambience to attract millennial customers by bringing social media into the physical environment.
The store experience is driven by **#3. Immersive Marketing** *(2 of 3)*

Retailers are increasing investment in customer facing and operational technologies to leverage contextual marketing opportunities with customers.

**In-place vs. planned technology investments: 2018-2019**

**Clienteling/Endless aisle application**
Clienteling and Endless Aisle are top investments as retailers look to provide more personalized experience for their shoppers.

**Digital signage**
Digital signage investments remain steady year-on-year as applications remain relevant for merchandising and marketing in the store.

**Proximity-based marketing**
Advances in personalized marketing is making it easier for retailers to provide dynamic offers at time of entrance or check out. Data privacy concerns remain a hurdle for many retailers but proximity-based marketing will see continued growth.
The store experience is driven by

#3. Immersive Marketing (3 of 3)

Emerging technologies begin to deliver value in driving a more engaging in-store experience.

Emerging technology and retailer/brand use-cases

- 39% of retailers see using AR/VR in consumer marketing campaigns.
- 32% of retailers see leveraging IoT to deploy proximity-based marketing campaigns.
The store experience is driven by

#4. Customer Insights (1 of 2)

Leveraging analytics to understand customer preferences and behaviors will drive better decisions and hence better results.

52%* of retailers plan to enhance customer insights through data.

While retailers cite customer experience as a key priority, most haven’t aligned investments and experiences with today’s shopper expectations. Leveraging analytics to drive better decisions on customer facing technology investment and to identify points of friction in the customer journey remain fundamental to the success of digital store initiatives in 2019. More retailers than ever are identifying the value of data to deliver personalized experience across channels and platforms.

*Note: includes participants that include this as high/very high priority

Aéropostale is planning and allocating inventory to its store based on local customer behavior analytics.

Nike launched a new store format whose inventory and ambience is based on local customers buying habits. It also offers extensive customization of products.

JoAnn is adding in-store shopper tracking technology to inform store product assortment and layout to better meet customer expectations.

Marks & Spencer is improving its buying, pricing and designing decisions by using real-time analytics to test customer sentiments about promotions and offers.
The store experience is driven by

#4. Customer Insights (2of2)

In-store analytics capabilities have matured significantly and can now mirror many of the capabilities of online analytics.

In-place vs. planned technology investments: 2018-2019

Cross-channel sentiment analysis
The need to identify customer opportunities across platforms and channels is driving the proactive investment of cross channel analytics.

Video traffic counting/ dwell time analytics
The need to understand shopper behavior to inform product merchandising & layout decisions are key investment drivers in store-based customer analytics.

Emerging technology and retailer/brand use-cases
35% of retailers rate IoT as an enabler to enhance market basket analysis.

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The store experience is driven by

#5. Operational Readiness (1 of 3)

Need for fundamental shift in business operations and culture to enable digital transformation of the store.

51%*

of retailers plan to refine store processes to gain better efficiency.

36%*

of retailers plan to add better labor management practices and tools.

As the role of the store has changed, retailers have added a great deal of complexity to their operations. With the rollout of new digital technologies, the expansion of fulfillment options and the resulting redesigning of stores, operational excellence is critical to effectively execute. New processes need to be in place to account for their increased complexity.

Execution is largely driven by optimizing in-store labor. With just over one-third of retailers prioritizing labor management practices and tools in their stores, we see this as a red-flag. Technology and processes are only as good as the people using them.

*Note: Includes participants that include this as high/very high priority

At Home is leveraging their flexible supply chain strategy to offset the impact of tariffs on Chinese products. This allows direct connection with sourcing partners to reduce cost by production and acquire new products.

DTLR is standardizing its technology infrastructure by upgrading to a cloud-based order management system which deliver consistent experiences to the growing customer base.

Dollar General launched the self-checkout DigiGo mobile application to enable convenient product scanning and contactless payment experience at the store.

The Home Depot plans to invest $1.2 billion dollars to upgrade the store inventory operations by adding warehouses and digital capabilities to the supply chain network.
The store experience is driven by 

#5. Operational Readiness (2 of 3)

Proactive investment in operations to gain scale and drive efficiency.

In-place vs. planned technology investments: 2018-2019

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Contactless payment options</th>
<th>Smart shelves/ESL’s</th>
<th>SD-WAN enabled network</th>
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<td>The major phone and service providers have set the bar for convenience and speed at checkout. Retailers have been slow to adopt but 2019 will be a tipping point for contactless payment.</td>
<td>While electronic shelf labels have had limited adoption, smart shelf technologies are creating excitement around product intelligence and inventory management.</td>
<td>The addition of multiple customer facing and store operations technologies is modeling the business case for store infrastructure investment. SD-WAN should be garnering greater interest than it is as it is an effective tool for managing multiple digital applications.</td>
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2018 22% 8% 14% 2019 30% 12% 17%
The store experience is driven by
#5. Operational Readiness (3 of 3)

Emerging technology applications for operational improvements can drive significant value.

Emerging technology and retailer/brand use-cases

- 48% of retailers see predictive equipment maintenance as a viable use case for IoT.
- 37% of retailers see using AV/VR to provide more dynamic product information in the aisle.
- 8% of retailers plan to add or upgrade shelf scanning robot technology in 2019.
Aggressive investment drives confidence

Close to half of all retailers rate their in-store digital maturity ahead of their competition.
Despite healthy 2019 investment plans, retailers still playing catch-up with shopper expectations

Retailer investment plans significantly lag digital-savvy customer demands.

*Note: Incisiv Consumer Study 2018
Cultural and technology debt still hampers many retailers due to lack of strategy

The required shift in culture is induced through targeted change management while customer engagement strategies can best be executed through reliable technology partners.

Barriers to investment don’t change much year after year. While investment looks to be very strong in 2019, many retailers still don’t have budget to do everything they need or want to do. What continues to be a disappointment is the ongoing resistance to change inside of retail organizations. The world is different, the shopper is different — this means the retailer must be different. Cultural resistance to change will be the Mendoza line between retailers that survive and those that don’t in 2019.

As retailers compete to survive and grow it is necessary to partner with reliable technology providers who can understand the specialized needs of the business. They can help eliminate some of the top challenges such as perceived data security risks, operational risks in scaling projects, providing skilled third party human resources, and ultimately help to reduce overall cost of operations. Retail leaders have adopted this philosophy and have leveraged their technology partners to move further ahead of their competition.

Top challenges impeding retailer investment in store-based technology capabilities in 2019

- Lack of sufficient IT budget: 48%
- Inability to quantify ROI: 44%
- Resistance to change in the organization: 38%
- Perceived data and information security risks: 35%
- Operational risk in scaling transformation initiatives: 34%
- Not a strategic priority for the organization: 29%
- Lack of skilled IT resources in-house: 26%
In summary

Shopper expectations are driving the need to add new capabilities that improve customer engagement and operational effectiveness. This is **adding a great deal of complexity to the store environment.**

Retailers are tackling this complexity by devoting a new level of investment to their stores. They are **leveraging both mature and emerging technologies** to execute on their strategies.

Investment **priorities focus on product availability, shopper convenience and immersive marketing** to improve the customer experience and compete with the both the leaders as well as new entrants in the market.

In addition to technology investments, many retailers are also **launching new formats to meet the changing imperatives that are driving shopping behavior.**

These investments will help retailers to **close the large gap** that still exists between customer expectations and the capabilities retailers offer in-store.

Despite the standard barriers that keep retailers from competing, **a defined strategy with the right technology partners** combined with a concerted effort to address a resistance to change will enable success in 2019 and beyond.
References

1. Forrester Consumer Research 2018-19
2. RIS Store Experience Study 2018
3. Harvard Business Review 2018
Incisiv offers digital transformation insights to consumer industry executives navigating digital disruption. 

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