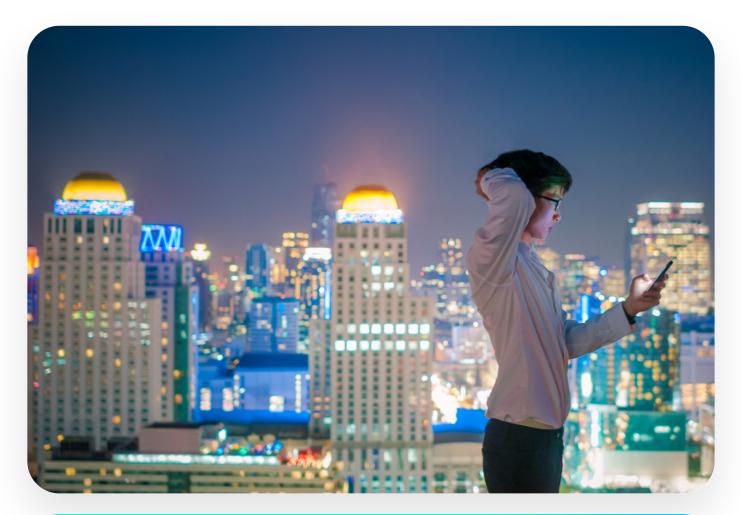


The disconnect between digital commerce innovation and adoption



What leaders need to know



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1. A ticking clock for retail disruption



Closing the Innovation Gap in Retail

Retail is evolving faster than many businesses can keep up. From AI-driven chat and ESG compliance to omnichannel store tech and personalization, innovation is everywhere yet adoption remains slow.

Whether it's replatforming store systems, embracing conversational commerce, or unifying product and creative content, there's a growing disconnect between what's technologically possible and what's actually being implemented. More than half of businesses blame **cost**, **complexity**, **or talent shortages** for failing to implement crucial innovations that could accelerate growth – but the real issue may be the mindset and strategic misalignment.

This white paper examines the root causes of this disconnect and outlines how retailers can better align their digital investments with organizational capabilities. Using Forrester's research as a backdrop, we show how **Contentserv's Product Experience Cloud** -Product Information Management (PIM), Digital Asset Management (DAM), Product Experience Management (PXM), and additional tools like Feed Management and Digital Shelf Analytics - helps retailers unify data, optimize operations, and scale personalized customer experiences across all channels.

Understand the cost of inaction and how a unified, data-centric approach can bust adoption barriers, deliver exceptional product experiences, and position your retail brand for ongoing digital commerce success.

As Forrester highlights in Predictions 2025: Digital Commerce, most retailers are lagging behind:

"Only one in 10 major North **American and EMEA retailers** will update store systems to 'omni-fy' tech."

Here's what you'll learn:

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Top challenges

blocking retailers from full-scale digital transformation.



Forrester insights on the future of digital

commerce.



Actionable strategies

to "omni-fy" store systems, adopt conversational commerce, and attract in-demand digital talent.



Real use cases

showing how Contentserv solutions bridge the innovationadoption gap to generate real ROI.





2. The state of digital commerce in 2025: Are you ready?



From innovation to reality: Where are we missing the mark?

Digital commerce is evolving at lightning speed. The technology is here. The readiness is not.

Retailers have access to powerful new capabilities:



Conversational commerce moving from basic chatbots to advanced, AI-powered shopping assistants.

Omnichannel store transformations unifying online and offline, And streamlining BOPIS (buy online, pick up in-store), loyalty programs, and real-time inventory.

Sustainability & ESG data, becoming increasingly central to Consumer loyalty, prompting transparent supply chain and ecofriendly product lines.

Yet, many retailers step cautiously.

According to Forrester:

"Just 10% of major North **American (NA) and EMEA** retailers will commit to broader overhauls that tie store systems more closely to digital."

Why? Because instead of real transformation, most retailers pursue incremental change - patching problems rather than solving the root issues.





Forrester's key predictions: The widening divide

Retailers are at a tipping point as digital innovations quickly outpace adoption. Challenges such as outdated systems and the changing demands of digital talent are contributing to this divide, significantly impacting the future of retail.

Omnichannel paralysis:

"Only one in 10 major NA and EMEA retailers will update store systems to 'omni-fy' tech."

Legacy tech is holding retailers back from delivering seamless, channelagnostic customer journeys. Low conversational commerce uptake:

"Just 20% of brands will add conversational commerce, despite customer openness."

The customer is ready. Retailers aren't.

Creative-commerce misalignment:

"Less than 25% of commerce leaders will align with creative for a total commerce view."

The result: fragmented campaigns, inconsistent branding, and lost engagement.

Talent is walking away:

"One-fifth of digital commerce talent will seek, but not find, flexible, innovative new roles."

Retailers who ignore modern work expectations – or rely on clunky legacy systems – risk losing key talent.





3. Challenges hindering adoption: Breaking down the barriers



The real cost of "no budget": What's truly at stake

"Rather than undertake large replatforming projects, 34% of global digital business strategy decision-makers in retail and wholesale are focusing on small tech changes as a top priority for customer-facing tech."

Forrester

Retailers often say they "lack budget" for store transformations or new systems. But what's the cost of doing nothing? While prioritizing small, incremental tech fixes may seem like a cost-effective strategy, it often leads to much higher long-term expenses.

Competitive erosion

Fixing small tech "pain points" won't help you keep up with leaders who adopt robust, futureoriented solutions.

Skyrocketing complexity

Piecemeal fixes create integration nightmares, draining IT budgets in hidden ways

Opportunity cost

If you're not innovating, you're missing out on customer engagement channels that can dramatically increase loyalty and revenue.

It's worth asking: Is "we can't afford it" valid if the alternative is being left behind?



Outdated technology and store systems: "We've always done it this way"

Legacy POS, Excel-based workflows and partial ecommerce integrations are everywhere — but they're holding businesses back. What worked a decade ago is now slowing down operations:

Disconnected channels

prevent unified data on stock and customer behaviors.

Slow innovation cycles

that make even small updates to the store experience become major headaches.

Inconsistent brand presence

due to disjointed systems that rarely display the same promotions, pricing, or product details.

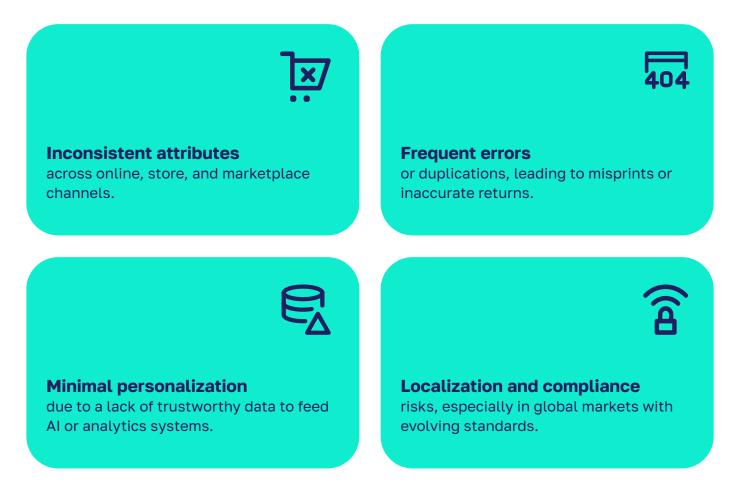
Forrester's data shows that only **10%** of major North American and EMEA retailers will commit to broader overhauls, suggesting a significant chunk remain stuck in legacy thinking – and risk irrelevance.





Disparate data and silos: Is data the real roadblock?

As companies scale across D2C, marketplaces, and social platforms, poorly organized product data has become a major growth-blocker — frustrating both customers and internal teams. Common hurdles include:



Omnichannel success hinges on a single source of truth where every user can tap into the same, real-time product information.



Shifting talent and workforce expectations: The war for skills

Digital commerce employees want purpose, autonomy, and tools that work. But:

"One-fifth of digital commerce talent will seek, but not find, flexible, innovative new roles."

Forrester

And with layoffs in the tech sector, competition for that talent will be fierce. Outdated systems and rigid policies will push your best people out the door and lead to:



High turnover among forward-thinking employees.

Slow digital progress,

since new hires must keep learning archaic systems.

Damaged brand perception

when top-tier talent moves to more progressive competitors.





4. The cost of inaction: How the disconnect hurts retailers



Missed revenue opportunities: Leaving money on the table?

Retailers not embracing advanced omnichannel, data-rich systems often fail to fully:

Upsell or cross-sell based on robust customer profiles or real-time stock. **Expand into new** channels (think social commerce, affiliate networks, or international marketplaces). **Personalize campaigns,** ceding market share to rivals who deliver curated experiences.

In a crowded space, every friction points or missed opportunity chips away at potential growth.

High return rates & fragmented experiences: The hidden profit leak

When product information is inconsistent or inaccurate, shoppers end up disappointed — and returns spike. According to industry research from Invesp, incorrect or misleading product descriptions alone cause around **22% of ecommerce returns**.

But returns aren't just an annoyance – they have real costs:

Operational strain

Every return triggers extra work in restocking, logistics, and refunds.

Customer frustration

Disappointed customers quickly lose trust and may not return.

Brand damage

Frequent returns and negative experiences can tarnish your brand's reputation.

Fixing product data accuracy at its source not only saves money but ensures a smoother, more enjoyable shopping experience that keeps customers coming back.



Lost loyalty and brand erosion: How customers slip away

Shoppers love consistent, reliable experiences – and can quickly abandon brands that fail to deliver them. Without unified commerce:

Pricing mismatches across store and online might cause mistrust.

Poor or missing product details can push buyers to competitor sites in a heartbeat.

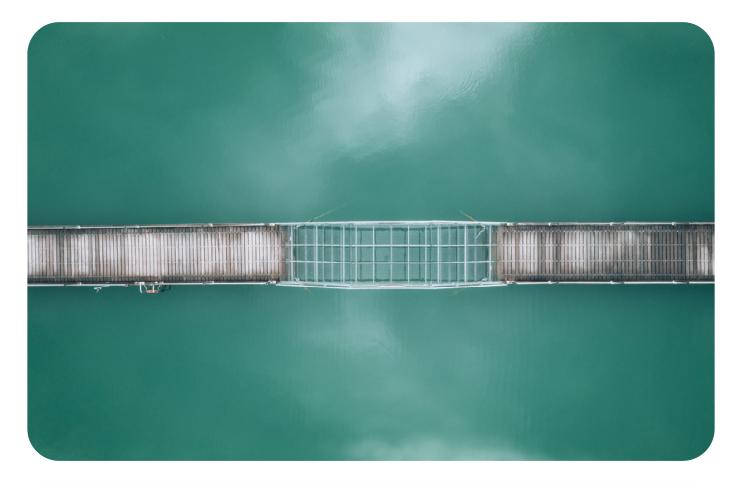
Fragmented loyalty programs

may not sync points or promotions properly, diluting brand appeal.

Falling behind: When competitors set the pace

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5. Bridging the gap: Seizing core opportunities



Omni-fy the store experience: Turning every channel into a growth engine

Only 10% of retailers are investing in store modernization. Though a full store-system overhaul may feel daunting, those who do it see significant boosts:

Connected loyalty across online and in-store, fueling repeat visits. **Real-time inventory** that cuts down on "out of stock" disappointment.

Frictionless BOPIS

(Buy Online, Pick Up In-Store) setups that encourage add-on sales.

With Forrester highlighting that so few retailers are making these moves, the competitive advantage for early adopters is huge.

Embrace conversational commerce: building direct connections

Conversational commerce continues to grow, yet **only 20%** of brands plan to deploy it. Here's why you should consider it:

- **Personal shopper experiences:** AI-powered chatbots can recommend items, share product images, and guide customers through checkout.
- **24/7 engagement:** Consumers expect quick responses, no matter the time.
- **Local or global:** Al-driven chat easily adapts to multiple languages, broadening your market reach.

Succeeding in this space demands accurate, up-todate product data – meaning your PIM and content processes need to be rock-solid. "Just 20% of brands will add conversational commerce, despite customer openness."

Forrester



Champion total commerce and creative partnerships: collaboration for innovation

"Less than 25% of commerce leaders will align with creative for a total commerce view."

Forrester

Forrester reports a gap between creative marketing and commerce operations. But bridging them can:

- Blend storytelling with instant checkout: Turn editorial pieces or social posts into immediate sales opportunities.
- Generate cross-industry collaborations (like a fashion brand teaming up with a beverage or travel provider).
- Enhance brand loyalty as customers recognize a cohesive, engaging experience across every channel.

When marketing and product data teams cooperate, magic happens: seamless experiences that charm customers while boosting revenue.





Attract and retain digital commerce talent: building tomorrow's team

Modern commerce pros want to solve exciting challenges – not wrestle with outdated technology. Show them you're serious about **innovation** by:

Automating mundane tasks

(like data uploads or feed management) so employees can focus on strategy. **Embracing flexible work:** Hybrid or fully remote options can sweeten your hiring pitch.

Promoting a culture of learning,

where new tools and ideas are welcomed, not feared.

Given the war for skilled digital talent, these steps aren't just nice-to-have but essential to maintain a competitive edge.







6. Contentserv's holistic solutions: Closing the innovationadoption gap



PLM and product lifecycle collaboration: From concept to market

Product Lifecycle Management (PLM) unifies design, sourcing, and merchandising in one digital workspace:

- Faster concept-to-shelf: Align teams early to reduce miscommunication and rework.
- **Real-time updates:** Ensure everyone – from designers to suppliers – sees current specs, cutting down on costly mistakes.
- Compliance and sustainability:

Track materials or certifications early, feeding that data throughout downstream channels.

• Global collaboration: Accommodate multiple languages or regions without splintering the product development cycle.

PIM and data excellence: Transforming chaos into opportunity

With **Product Information Management (PIM)**, retailers say goodbye to scattered spreadsheets:

- Single source of truth: Keep all product attributes, translations, and descriptions consistent.
- Automated workflows: Quickly onboard new SKUs or update existing ones, saving time and reducing errors.
- Less friction, fewer returns: Provide accurate product data, from sizing to color codes, so shoppers know exactly what to expect.
- Localization at scale: Manage global expansions effortlessly, adjusting data for new markets in record time.



DAM and omnichannel engagement: Visual stories that sell

Digital Asset Management (DAM) ensures your visuals speak with one unified brand voice:

- **Central library:** Store all images, videos, and PDFs in one secure spot, reducing duplicates.
- Automated transformations: Crop or resize for ecommerce, social, or print automatically.
- Faster approvals: Creative teams quickly find and adapt the right assets, improving go-tomarket times.
- **Consistent brand identity:** Only approved assets make their way into campaigns or product listings.

PXM transforms basic product listings into rich, dynamic experiences that drive loyalty.

PXM for personalization and contextualization: Beyond one-size-fits-all

Product Experience Management (PXM) layers personalization on top of your centralized data:

- Smart, context-aware product pages that adapt to region, user history, or channel.
- **Data-driven recommendations,** fine-tuned by real-time analytics.
- **A/B testing** to experiment with content variations and learn what truly resonates.
- **Customer-centric storytelling:** Transform static data into rich, engaging narratives that deepen customer loyalty.



Feed Management and Digital Shelf Analytics

Finally, you can **distribute and measure** that product data effectively:

Feed Management

- **Multi-channel exports:** Push accurate data to search engines, affiliate networks, and social commerce simultaneously.
- **Custom feed rules:** Format listings for each channel's unique specs, reducing rejections or mismatches.
- **Time savings:** Eliminate tedious manual tasks, so teams can focus on improving strategy.

Digital Shelf Analytics

- **Ongoing performance insights:** Track how products rank, pricing changes and customer reviews across different channels.
- **Competitor comparisons:** Identify where your listings are winning or losing against peers.
- **Data-driven improvements:** Uncover missing keywords, subpar images, or incomplete specs to refine listings and maximize conversions.



Unified commerce: Retailoptimized integrations and automation

Unified Commerce ensures consistent data across ecommerce, marketplaces, store systems, and more:

API-based connections let you integrate seamlessly with platforms like Shopify, Adobe Commerce, or AWS.

Scalable expansions for new regions or advanced channels like AI chat.

Real-time sync for product updates, prices, promotions, and inventory.

Automated workflows to publish channel-ready content the moment it's approved in PIM.

With each step covered, you're not just stitching tech together; you're building a **cohesive, agile ecosystem** designed for modern commerce demands.







7. Real-world spotlight: Retailers closing the gap





Aetrex: Achieving 400% revenue growth through precise, scalable product experiences

About Aetrex

Founded in 1946, Aetrex is a global leader in foot-scanning technology, orthotics, and comfortable footwear. The company has expanded its reach across 13 ecommerce platforms including Amazon, Walmart, and Google — delivering innovative products informed by data from over 50 million foot scans worldwide.

Challenges

Before partnering with Contentserv, Aetrex struggled to manage complex product information manually. Frequent errors and data inconsistencies led to operational inefficiencies, slow time-to-market, and growth limits. Aetrex knew something had to change, especially as its ambitions grew.

Specific hurdles:

- Data inconsistency and errors: Frequent inaccuracies due to manual data entry disrupted operations and productivity.
- Slow integrations: Manual and cumbersome integration processes with Salesforce Commerce Cloud caused delays in launching new products and marketplaces.
- Limited scalability: The legacy product information management (PIM) system was unable to effectively support rapid SKU expansions and marketplace growth.
- **Operational complexity:** Manual handling of product data across multiple ecommerce platforms became increasingly complex, consuming valuable time and resources.



The Contentserv solution

Aetrex implemented Contentserv's PIM, DAM, Syndication, and Feed Management solutions – collectively known as Product Experience Management (PXM) – to automate and centralize product data management across all channels.

"A lot of providers don't have an integration to Salesforce Commerce Cloud, but Contentserv does. It positions us for success now and in the future."

Rui Kojima, Senior Director of eCommerce, Aetrex, Inc.



The results



400% revenue growth, thanks to precise, timely, and consistent product data across multiple marketplaces.



250% jump in marketplace sales, supported by smooth scalability and reliable management of 15,000+ SKUs.



78% faster promotion setup, which meant more days selling instead of struggling with marketing logistics. **Dramatically faster marketplace expansions,** reducing time-tomarket for new marketplaces like eBay from 4–6 months to under 2 months.

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Better operational efficiency, as automated processes replaced tedious manual tasks, freeing teams to focus on strategy and innovation.





Mizuno: Strengthening brand consistency and accelerating global commerce with PIM and DAM

About Mizuno

Mizuno is a globally recognized leader in sporting goods, producing equipment, apparel, and footwear for activities ranging from baseball and golf to volleyball and running. Headquartered in Osaka, Japan, Mizuno operates across Europe, Asia, Oceania, North America, Latin America, the Middle East, and Africa – and sells through both direct-toconsumer channels and a wide network of retail partners.

Challenges

With an extensive product portfolio and multiple regional teams, Mizuno faced growing challenges in delivering a unified, accurate, and consistent product experience across its global ecosystem.

As product lines expanded and ecommerce demands intensified, Mizuno struggled with decentralized data, siloed teams, and inefficient manual processes.

Specific hurdles:

- **Disparate systems and Excelbased workflows** that made it difficult to ensure consistency across markets.
- **Inconsistent product content** that limited the effectiveness of ecommerce and digital marketing efforts.
- Lack of centralized visibility, creating bottlenecks for regional teams trying to launch campaigns or update product pages.
- **Limited scalability**, particularly in coordinating product data across departments and geographies.



The Contentserv solution

Mizuno adopted Contentserv's integrated Product Information Management (PIM) and Digital Asset Management (DAM) solutions to centralize product content, automate workflows, and enhance collaboration across departments and regions.

Implementation was rolled out in phases – beginning with asset management and later expanding to a full PIM rollout aligned with Mizuno's product release cycles. Over time, the company unified data processes across Japan, Europe, and other key regions, setting the foundation for a truly global product experience strategy.

"The effort of gathering data and checking product numbers, images, etc., had become a major burden. We thought that if we could digitize the tasks related to the entry, revision, and management of product information, we could further enrich the content of our product pages, which would have a positive effect on various departments."

Tsuyoshi Serizawa, Manager, Global Digital & DTC Management Division



The results



Improved efficiency and automation: Daily tasks like content enrichment, SKU management, and datasheet creation were streamlined – freeing up time for strategic initiatives.



Global scalability: A unified hub for product data enabled rapid expansion into new regions and channels while maintaining brand consistency.



Real-time collaboration: Teams across departments and countries now access up-todate, localized content through a shared platform – reducing delays and data errors.

Faster time-to-market: With reliable, enriched data readily available, Mizuno can launch new products across ecommerce and retail channels with greater speed and precision.





Electrolux Group: Empowering store teams & enhancing CX

About Electrolux

As a global leader in home appliances, Electrolux Group delivers a wide range of products – from refrigerators to laundry solutions – across numerous regions. To maintain brand consistency, the company sought to align diverse product lines, marketing campaigns, and global store teams under a single, unified strategy.

Challenges

Electrolux previously relied on fragmented systems, an outdated PIM, and cumbersome Excel-based workflows. This resulted in inconsistent product data, frequent errors, and costly supply-chain disruptions. The group needed a centralized, scalable solution that could simplify complex global processes.

Specific hurdles:

- Regional fragmentation: Different markets managed product data, promotional assets, and translations through separate processes, causing brand inconsistency.
- In-store vs. online disconnect: Store teams often lacked real-time inventory or promotional data, impacting upsell opportunities and brand perception.
- **Complex brand hierarchy:** Multiple product lines, subbrands, and localized marketing collateral overwhelmed its existing systems.



The Contentserv solution

Electrolux chose Contentserv's cloud-based Product Experience Hub as its unified product information platform. This solution seamlessly integrates 15 previously disconnected systems, ensuring accurate and consistent product data across the global enterprise.

"Contentserv's cloud solution stood out for its integration capabilities. We connected 15 different systems, creating a centralized and reliable source of product data for our global operations. It's exactly the robust and scalable solution we needed."



Electrolux Group

The results



20%+ reduction in product data management workload:

Automated processes and a centralized approach significantly reduced operational effort and cost.



Improved data quality: Standardized processes and automated data quality controls minimized errors and disruptions.

Flexible integration: Seamless integration with existing legacy systems accelerated the transition

accelerated the transition without business disruption.



Future-proof scalability:

Electrolux can confidently manage increasing global complexity and continuously evolving market demands.



All three success stories demonstrate how bridging the innovation-adoption gap translates directly into measurable results:



Aetrex leveraged Contentserv's PXM solutions (PIM, DAM, Syndication, and Feed Management) to achieve a remarkable 400% revenue growth, scale across multiple marketplaces, and significantly reduce time spent on promotions and product launches.



Mizuno centralized and streamlined product data and digital assets with Contentserv's PIM and DAM, enabling consistent brand experiences across global markets, reducing manual workload, and accelerating time-to-market – all while laying a solid foundation for scalable digital transformation.



Electrolux Group successfully unified its global product information management, reduced manual workloads by over 20%, and increased data accuracy across multiple brands and regions – empowering retail partners and internal teams alike to deliver consistent, omnichannel product experiences.

These real-world examples underline a simple yet powerful truth: when product data is centralized, processes automated, and collaboration enabled, retailers are equipped to handle even the toughest digital commerce challenges – and turn them into strategic advantages.







8. Looking ahead: Predictions beyond 2025



Buyer-bots, Al, and ESG initiatives: The triple challenge

Forrester predicts one-third of industrial B2B brands will cater to "ESG-conscious buyerbots" that automate purchasing decisions based on sustainability and regulatory data. If your product listings don't highlight such details, expect to lose out as AI-based procurement becomes mainstream. "Nearly a third of industrial B2B orgs will build experiences for ESGmotivated buyer-bots."

Forrester

The composable commerce future: Are you ready to assemble?

An increasing number of retailers are drifting from monolithic platforms toward composable or microservices-based approaches:

Mix and match:

Add best-of-breed solutions for search, personalization, or analytics without a full replatform.

Faster pivots:

Swap or upgrade modular components as new tech emerges.

Centralized data is still vital:

your microservices can only deliver consistent experiences if they pull from the same source.



Tying commerce and creative teams closer: Collaboration or chaos?

Fewer than 25% of commerce leaders align **creative, marketing, and performance data** fully, but those who do:

- Merge brand storytelling with frictionless purchasing, turning content into instant sales opportunities.
- Create engaging cross-sell or bundle campaigns without guesswork.
- Elevate brand loyalty by ensuring a cohesive, entertaining experience from the moment customers encounter a product to when they check out.

"Less than 25% of commerce leaders will align with creative for a total commerce view."

Forrester







9. Conclusion and recommendations: Turning insight into action



The cost of inaction: What are you willing to sacrifice?

Reticent retailers risk:

Customer churn

sparked by outdated experiences, inaccurate data, or zero personalization.

Shrinkage in revenue from high returns, missed upsells, and inconsistent brand presence.

Talent flight – your

best people want to work for an innovative employer, not one perpetually stuck in fix mode.

Next steps for retail leaders: A practical guide

1. Evaluate your ecosystem

Start by identifying blockers across your digital and physical retail operations — from data silos to outdated systems in need of store replatforming. Look for friction in:

- Product data management: Are your teams relying on spreadsheets or disconnected tools?
- Inventory visibility: Can customers see what's in stock across locations in real time?
- Customer data: Is loyalty fragmented across channels or unified in a single view?
- Checkout and fulfillment: Are store teams bogged down by manual BOPIS or endless POS updates?



2. Prioritize high-impact fixes

Focus on initiatives that solve immediate pain while laying the foundation for long-term scale. Examples:

- Adopt a Product Information Management (PIM) system to streamline product updates across channels.
- Automate feed management to reduce manual errors and improve speed to market on marketplaces.
- **Pilot a store upgrade** with connected POS, digital signage, real-time inventory, and loyalty integration to test ROI before scaling.

3. Foster collaboration

Bring together stakeholders across marketing, IT, merchandising, and store ops. Create cross-functional working groups to:

- Align on data ownership and governance.
- **Standardize** key metrics and success criteria.
- **Break down** silos by integrating tools like PLMs, DAMs, and ecommerce platforms.

4. Encourage a culture of innovation

Your teams are more likely to thrive when empowered with the right tools and mindset. To attract and retain top talent:

- Embrace hybrid and remote flexibility to widen your talent pool.
- Invest in low-code/no-code platforms so business users can experiment without heavy dev lift.
- Run regular innovation sprints or hack weeks to crowdsource solutions internally and create a sense of ownership.



How to get started with Contentserv: Your roadmap to adoption

As part of Centric Software, **Contentserv** offers a complete set of solutions, including:

- **PLM** to align design-to-market workflows and track sustainability from the start.
- **PIM** for accurate, consolidated product data.
- **DAM** for brand-consistent, on-demand visuals.
- **PXM** to personalize and contextualize every shopper's experience.
- **Unified Commerce** to automate data flows across all channels.
- **Feed Management** to simplify distribution, ensuring perfect data everywhere it's needed.
- **Digital Shelf Analytics** to track and refine performance across thirdparty and affiliate sites.

Ready to bridge the gap between innovation and adoption?

Reach out to us for a personalized demo or visit **contentserv.com** to learn how we can help.



10. Appendix and references

Forrester, "Predictions 2025: Digital Commerce" – Key insights and statistics underpinning this white paper.

Contentserv Resources – In-house data on returns, automation benefits, and real client success stories.

Invesp, Ecommerce Product Return Rate Statistics, https://www. invespcro.com/blog/ecommerce-product-return-rate-statistics/



Extraordinary Product Experiences. Unlimited Digital Commerce.

Contentserv is designed for leading brands and those aspiring to get there. Companies across industries trust our intuitive platform to drive real results: increased traffic, higher conversions, faster time-to-market, and maximized ROI.

www.contentserv.com