

## **Climate Concerns, Cost-of-Living Pressures and Purpose-Driven Consumption: How Younger Generations Are Redefining Retail**

**PARIS, June 15, 2026–** As climate concerns intensify, household budgets come under pressure and consumers increasingly seek meaning in their purchases, younger generations are fundamentally reshaping the retail landscape. Quality, sustainability, traceability and circularity have become decisive purchasing factors. As Europe's leading retail event and a catalyst for industry transformation, [NRF 2026: Retail's Big Show Europe](#), taking place in Paris from 15–17 September 2026, will showcase the brands driving change and leading the way to create net positive environmental, social and community benefits..

No longer persuaded by marketing promises alone, today's consumers expect brands to back up their claims with measurable action. In response, retailers are accelerating their sustainability efforts across the board, from improving energy efficiency in stores and deploying zero-emission last-mile delivery solutions to providing real-time carbon footprint data for products.

### **Buying Better: Sustainability and Digital Innovation Become the New Standard**

The era of impulse buying and disposable products is giving way to more mindful consumption. Today's young consumers favor brands that can seamlessly combine digital efficiency with concrete environmental commitment, forcing retailers to rethink their distribution models.

British brand **Lush**, specialized in fresh, handmade cosmetics, has emerged as one of the most iconic players in retail waste reduction. Renowned for its solid, packaging-free products and initiatives to limit plastic use, the retailer demonstrates that customer experience, innovation, and environmental responsibility can successfully go hand in hand.

This convergence of commercial performance and environmental impact reduction is proving to be a strategic imperative for building long-term loyalty among younger generations.

Ruth Andrade, Environmental Partner at Lush and upcoming speaker at **NRF 2026: Retail's Big Show Europe**, said: "*Packaging is ultimately destined to become waste. At Lush, younger generations are pushing us to look beyond mere reduction — they demand regeneration. The challenge for modern retail is to prove that we can eliminate plastic on a large scale while creating an even more sensory and desirable customer experience, both in-store and online.*"

### **Radical Transparency: Technology Powers a New Era of Traceability**

Consumers no longer accept vague claims about sustainability. They want clear, immediate access to information about product origins, manufacturing conditions and environmental impact throughout the entire value chain.

To meet these expectations, retailers are embracing a new generation of responsible technologies. The upcoming introduction of the Digital Product Passport (DPP) is accelerating the adoption of blockchain and advanced product identification technologies. These solutions make it possible to verify every stage of a product's journey, from sourcing and production through to the point of sale. As a result, scanning a product in-store is becoming an increasingly common way for consumers to access detailed information about a company's environmental and social performance.

Annabelle Serres, Event Director of **NRF 2026: Retail's Big Show Europe**, commented: *"Helping consumers buy better requires more technology — but above all, smarter technology. Today, predictive AI and advanced algorithms enable businesses to produce more accurately, reduce waste and source materials more responsibly."*

### **From Ownership to Access: Circularity Takes Centre Stage**

The retail industry is reinventing itself to meet growing expectations regarding environmental and social responsibility.

AS Watson Group, one of the leading international health and beauty retailers with a strong presence across Asia and Europe, is deploying numerous initiatives aimed at reducing its environmental footprint. The group is notably investing in the energy efficiency of its stores, reducing operational emissions, and promoting more responsible products to consumers.

Frenkel Tel, Innovation Director and UX Lead at AS Watson and upcoming speaker at **NRF 2026: Retail's Big Show Europe**, added: *"At AS Watson, we are convinced that the transformation of retail depends as much on innovation as it does on responsibility. Our challenge is to make sustainable choices more accessible for consumers while actively reducing the impact of our operations."*

Meanwhile, **NAU!** is an eyewear retailer hailing from Italy recognized for its pioneering and sustainable approach to the sector. The brand prioritizes recycled or bio-based materials—notably through its eyewear collections made from salvaged plastic — and designs its glasses with a focus on reducing environmental impact throughout the entire product lifecycle.

Monica Salvestrin Broggi, Co-founder, Product and Marketing Director at NAU! and upcoming speaker at **NRF 2026: Retail's Big Show Europe**, said: *"At NAU!, we have proven that eco-design is not a luxury, but an accessible industrial choice. Designing frames from recycled plastic while preserving Italian style and craftsmanship is our way of reinventing eyewear."*

**Appointment for the panel discussion: [Crafting Value in Sustainable Retail](#)**

**Tuesday, September 15**

**4:00 PM – 4:30 PM**

A must-attend event to understand how the sector's most committed players are reshaping the future of retail today.

**The Next Now** – the future doesn't wait. It's already here.

For more information, visit <https://www.nrfbigshoweurope.com>

Press registration [here](#).

#### **About Retail's Big Show Europe**

Europe's most important retail event will take place in Paris from 15 to 17 September 2026. Be inspired by top retail leaders from across Europe in one of the world's most dynamic, consumer-focused markets. Over three days, retail professionals from around the globe will gain access to high-level content, explore the latest industry solutions and innovations, and discover cutting-edge technologies in the Innovators Showcase and Startup Hub.

#### **About NRF**

The National Retail Federation passionately advocates for the people, brands, policies and ideas that help retail succeed. From its headquarters in Washington, D.C., NRF empowers the industry that powers the economy. Retail is the nation's largest private-sector employer, contributing \$5.3 trillion to annual GDP and supporting more than one in four U.S. jobs — 55 million working Americans. For over a century, NRF has been a voice for every retailer and every retail job, educating, inspiring and communicating the powerful impact retail has on local communities and global economies. [nrf.com](http://nrf.com)

#### **About Comexposium**

Comexposium is one of the world's leading organizers of professional and consumer events. The Group organizes 400 trade shows, exhibitions, conferences and one-to-one meetings in 80 cities across 20 countries, including SIAL, the world's leading network of events for food industry professionals; Wine Paris and Vinexpo, the leading global network of business events dedicated to wines and spirits; Who's Next; Les Assises de la cybersécurité; Foire de Paris; Retromobile; the Salon du Chocolat; and L'Étudiant.

Comexposium brings together communities of professionals and enthusiasts around the world through an omnichannel strategy designed to meet the real needs of its clients. Headquartered in Courbevoie (Île-de-France), the Group employs 1,200 people across its various subsidiaries.

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