

WHITEPAPER

NRF '25 RETAIL'S BIG SHOW **EUROPE**

16 - 18 SEPTEMBER 2025 | PARIS

COMEXPOSIUM

NRF National
Retail
Federation



Having invested heavily in their ecommerce platforms, supply chain technology and digital platforms, retailers have refocused on their stores, committing to measured expansion, new formats, and concepts harmonised with their digital offers.

The new mantra is "Retail Together "

This first whitepaper examines how retailers are developing their unified commerce strategies, incorporating technology within their retail offerings and the role of the store.

It also features insights on how retailers see the year ahead and major technology advances they anticipate in 2025.

Welcome to NRF 2025: Retail's Big Show Europe

The best of Europe and the United States will come to Paris in September, as Paris Retail Week transforms into the continent's biggest retail show : Retail's Big Show Europe.

Welcome to the first whitepaper as we introduce NRF Retail's Big Show Europe, which will bring together the long-established heritage of Paris Retail Week with the authority and global recognition of the National Retail Federation.

It will truly reflect our theme: Retail together.

The event will also combine the power of the two most established and modern retail markets in the world, Europe and North America, and is launched at a unique time in retail's evolution. It has been five years since the pandemic and lockdowns that closed stores and led many to predict the death of the store and shopping centres. Consumers were forced to shift their shopping behaviour online, which led to the rise and fall of brands around the world.

And yet retail proved itself to be resilient, agile and able to reposition itself for a new generation of shoppers. As was clear at **NRF 2025: Retail's Big Show** in New York City in January, the retail industry has emerged as a seamless, unified commerce sector that continues to invest in all its routes to market.

Now the industry is on the edge of another

profound change, as AI is introduced into business operations from **supply chains to AI agents** — another major theme that emerged from Retail's Big Show in New York.

But retail is also a pragmatic industry and faces the challenges of a consumer who, in many parts of the world, feels more uncertain amid political change, ongoing regional conflicts and the continuing squeeze on **shoppers' wallets**, which means that **customers are more value-conscious** than ever.

Retail has always been an industry of generational winners and losers, entrepreneurs, global brands, aspiration, enjoyment, leisure and convenience. To be successful it is essential to be part of **Europe's biggest retail launch**.

The event will be the most comprehensive retail gathering in Europe as we cover all the major themes, challenges and opportunities facing the major European retail markets and all the major disciplines, including:



- Seamless unified commerce
- Store design innovation and equipment
- Logistics and the supply chain
- CSR and ESG
- Marketplaces
- Payments innovation
- CRM systems
- The intelligent use of data

Retail Together

Visit the best of the best stores in Paris!

Along with conference sessions and exhibition space, NRF 2025: Retail's Big Show Europe will also offer insightful store tours throughout Paris.



*Tours of Hermès, Le Bon Marché, La Grande Épicerie, Galeries Lafayette Paris Haussmann, Printemps Haussmann and La Samaritaine will be part of the mix at **Retail's Big Show Europe** in September.*

Retail Store Tours, the official provider of store tours for **NRF 2025: Retail's Big Show Europe**, is a specialist in developing new and customised store tours each year based on feedback from retailers around the world. The tours expose retailers to new business models, best practices, and innovative stores. This year, tours will focus primarily on how successful retailers hire, train, and retain employees.

Store visits will highlight the different ways retailers handle hiring and training their employees, and how those techniques contribute to employee success and retention, creating a powerful, empathic, and engaged front line.

*"A solid front line provides positive results to the bottom line," said Daniel Hodges, **Retail Store Tours** CEO.*

"Apple, Nordstrom, Sephora, and many others have employee training as a top priority and daily ritual. They see training as a key factor in retaining employees. The experts who lead our tours and the ambassadors we meet with at each store have deep knowledge of retail and connections to executive decision-makers."

Retail Store Tours is also the official store tour partner of the NRF 2025 and 2026: **Retail's Big Show** in New York and Singapore.

Contact: hello@retailstoretours.com for more information or to book a tour.

Visitors & retailers are back in the French capital

Paris has rebounded from the pandemic and has been reinvigorated by the 2024 Olympic Games. There are only a few vacancies in the city's prime retail districts, according to Newmark Head of Research David Bourla.

"Generally speaking, for the past two to three years, there has been very strong activity in the leasing market across the prime retail areas of Paris. These prime areas have had vacancies of only about 5%," according to David Bourla.

While luxury retail and athleisure have targeted the "Champs-Élysées", he pointed to the L'Opéra District, which had suffered during the lockdowns has since rebounded and, along with Le Marais, has attracted a diverse range of retailers including streetwear brands and food retailers, including international brands like **Krispy Kreme** and expanding retailers such as China's **Miniso**.

"These areas were hit by the drop in international visitors and the slow return to office initially but, with both groups returning, these have become very dynamic areas again," Bourla said.

Many retailers, notably the luxury brands, opened or refurbished space ahead of last year's Olympic Games in the city: Bourla said that although the pace of new openings in luxury has slowed, the brands have bolstered their presence in the city for the long term.

"Visitors to Retail's Big Show Europe will see a city with a very strong and diverse retail market, and there are new developments being completed which will open up opportunities for more retailers to locate on the Champs Elysées," he said.

"While the economic picture in France as a whole is challenging, Paris is its own market and by September many new brands will have opened in the city."



Photo the Nix Company Unsplash



New York store tours
Brookfield

More info:

Arrival of New Foreign Brands in France: a Record Year in ... | [Newmark](#)

The Paris Retail Market & Global Phenomenon of Celebrity ... | [Newmark](#)

The Renaissance of the Champs-Élysées | [Newmark](#)

The retailer outlook: Stores in a unified commerce future

NRF 2025: Retail's Big Show Europe will offer a comprehensive vision of the most important retail trends. Attendees will hear from some of the world's biggest retail executives. Visitors to NRF 2025: Retail's Big Show in New York have already had a preview of their thinking for the year ahead.



Far from physical retail being dead nearly five years after the pandemic lockdowns, retailers have embraced unified commerce, adding social commerce and live shopping, plus click-and-collect to their seamless strategies. For many, this means putting stores at the centre of their brand engagement.

lululemon CEO Calvin McDonald has presided over the Canadian-based performance apparel, footwear and accessories brand for over six years, doubling its sales in his first three years with a focus on elevating the guest experience in both in-store and online. Stores will continue to be a key part of future expansion, and he believes the next phase of growth can be achieved through targeted openings.

"Looking forward, there is nothing stopping the brand from doubling in sales again. In the longer term we are focused on becoming an even more dominant international brand as we expand into new markets. At present, international sales are 25% of total revenue but there is no reason why that can't be 50%," he said at **NRF Retail's Big Show** in January. *"Currently we have around 700 stores globally and the store is still very important to us, as it gives us the chance to educate the consumer, and engage with them."*

He said that while the brand does have shoppers who only buy online, this happens mostly where **lululemon** does not have any stores.

"We are predominantly omnichannel. Physical retail will always be a key part of this offer," he stressed.

"The consumer is looking for value, quality, and experience."

Many successful online-only brands have also branched out into stores, albeit not in the numbers of the expansionist retailers of the 1980s and 1990s.

UK-based gymwear brand **Gymshark** has ventured into stores after starting its life online. After operating a pop-up store in New York between mid-December and mid-January it has announced Bond Street, Manhattan, as its first permanent U.S. location in New York, scheduled to open in spring 2025. It has a gradually growing portfolio of stores in the UK and recently opened its first store in Dubai, with an Amsterdam store to open this spring.



"For us, physical retail has shown real green shoots, and has gone really well. So we're doubling down on that, and we're trying to do even more innovative things," **Gymshark** CBO Noel Mack said of the brand's transition from online-only.

"I can't think with Regent Street [in London] of a better way to show up for our community than by putting up a store which can transform to a gym on Europe's most prestigious shopping street."



The retailer outlook: Stores in a unified commerce future

French beauty giant **Sephora**, a brand that has had a physical presence in the U.S. since 1998, also stressed at **Retail's Big Show** that stores were core to its offering and that it would continue to invest in new formats.

"Stores have come back stronger than ever and last year we embarked on the largest capital programme in our history, going back to redesign every store in North America, some lightly and some major,"

Sephora President and CEO North America Artemis Patrick said. *"We tested a new format that made it easier to update and making fixtures more modular, so for example we can move the fixture with a more agile footprint."*

The company has updated 111 U.S. stores so far and the majority of stores will have been completed in the next five years, while all new stores will be designed in the new format.

She added: *"Too many times retailers talk about 'store of the future' driven by the design team. There's nothing wrong with those for a flagship, but what are you doing in smaller stores? Because the experience needs to be the same wherever you go."*

Selvane Mohandas du Ménil, managing director of the **International Association of Department Stores (IADS)**, believes that in 2025, AI will be a necessary but *"insufficient condition for department stores to be successful"* and stressed that it is a matter of accelerating, no matter what, even if the road ahead is unclear.

"Shoppers increasingly turn to the convenience of online platforms and local stores, leaving traditional department stores grappling with reduced foot traffic. This shift is compounded by fierce competition from online giants and international retailers, compelling department stores to rethink their game plan to stay in the race," he said.

"For them, the rapid integration of digital technologies needed necessitates substantial investment in infrastructure modernisation and personnel training, especially as attracting and retaining skilled talent becomes crucial to supporting digital transformation."



Photo by Mathias Reding

Furthermore, sustainability has emerged as a critical concern, with consumers exhibiting heightened sensitivity toward ecological and ethical practices. This has compelled retailers to adopt more sustainable and transparent measures, further impacting their profitability.

"Fortunately, there are some remedies to these multifaceted challenges, the most promising being AI. AI is revolutionising the shopping experience, delivering personalised recommendations that keep customers returning for more. It predicts inventory needs precisely, slashing costs and preventing those dreaded out-of-stock moments," he added.

"By automating mundane tasks, AI liberates staff to focus on what truly matters: Engaging with customers and enhancing their experience. And with powerful data analytics, AI deciphers market trends and consumer behaviours, empowering retailers to pivot their strategies on the fly."

IADS has identified several mega-trends, from regional alliances (a growing transnational trend in Asia) to new markets (**Printemps** going to New York, **Galeries Lafayette** and **Saks Fifth Avenue** going to India), mega-mergers (**Neiman Marcus** and **Saks Fifth Avenue**), or simply returning to the core retail fundamentals like **John Lewis** in the UK.

Meanwhile, **Fanatics Collectibles** is to open its first-ever store this spring on Regent Street, London, with a focus on sports and entertainment trading cards and trading-card games, featuring **Fanatics Collectibles'** brands.

The retailer outlook: Stores in a unified commerce future

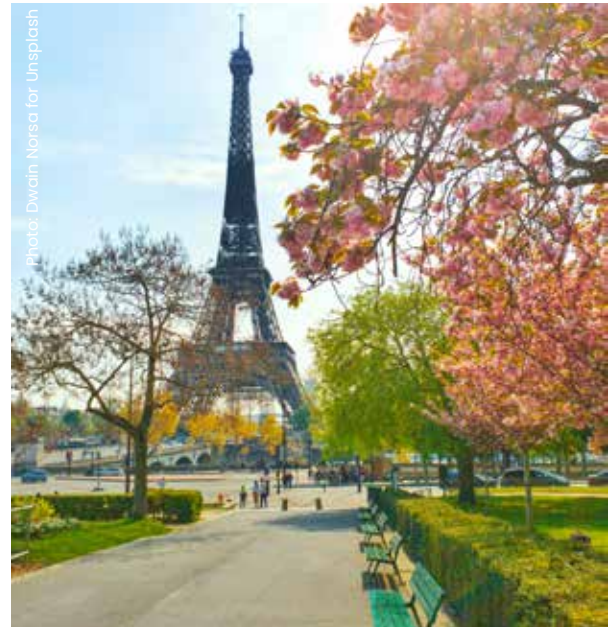
Along with retail space, the store will feature a 'breaking studio' to livestream premium packs being opened and a personal card creation suite. But the core role of the store will be to jump-start the trading phenomenon in the UK and Europe in the same way it has taken hold in the U.S.

"One of the key ways that we enhance collecting is by bringing more fans into the world of collecting. In the U.S., there are a lot of collectors relative to fans. When we look at Europe, the fandom is far greater than the number of collectors. You're looking at a tiny group of collectors relative to a very, very large fan base," **Topps** President of **Trading Cards** David Leiner said.

"There are nearly 1,000 hobby stores we support in North America but only a few dozen hobby stores in Europe. So, the store will be the marketing platform, featuring athlete appearances, store takeovers from the likes of Formula One or the Premier League, leveraging London's position as an international city."

The hope is that the store will act as a catalyst. **Fanatics** is also looking at other European cities for similar stores. While Leiner said that it is early days, the company would like to see it as an accelerant, while he said he *"wouldn't take Asia off the table"* to similarly jump-start collectibles.

This use of a major city flagship as a branding platform for wider expansion is not new, but is a strategy that has been less prevalent post-pandemic. In 2025, the store looks set to take centre stage again.



7 technology trends for 2025

Exhibitors at NRF 2025: Retail's Big Show Europe will present a host of innovative technologies. Here are seven industry insights outlining how category specialists see the major trends for 2025 developing.

Trend 1: Opportunities from AI and retail media

"AI has already started to transform the retail landscape and will continue to do so dramatically in the coming years, reshaping how businesses operate and interact with customers," Mirakl Chief Customer Officer Sophie Marchessou said. "AI is moving to become a strategic differentiator in retail operations, revolutionising personalisation at scale, enabling retailers to provide hyper-relevant experiences across every touchpoint."

She believes that the technology is transforming core operations, from inventory management to demand forecasting and pricing strategies, making businesses more efficient and responsive to market changes. For platform business models, this impact is even more transformative. AI algorithms are becoming essential for managing complex marketplace operations, streamlining seller onboarding, automating product matching, and maintaining quality control.

This allows retailers to scale their assortment exponentially while maintaining high standards and ensuring a consistent customer experience. However, implementing AI also requires expertise. Retailers need to partner with technology providers that deeply understand their unique challenges and can tailor AI solutions to their specific needs, she stressed.

In addition, she believes 2025 will mark a *"pivotal shift"* as retailers recognise that building a strong retail media offering goes far beyond traditional display advertising — and is about creating sustainable performance for all stakeholders while enhancing the customer experience.



Photo Mohamed Nohassi Unsplash

"What's particularly exciting is how the marketplace model is revolutionising retail media's potential. These platforms are becoming comprehensive advertising ecosystems where retailers can potentially double their retail media revenue. The key to success lies in scalable solutions that can efficiently onboard thousands of sellers and brands while maintaining control through self-service capabilities and AI-driven relevance," she said.

"The future belongs to those who can build this virtuous circle of value creation for all ecosystem participants."

7 technology trends for 2025

Trend 2: The rise of omni-modal commerce, AI and smart glasses

Recent advancements in AI signal the dawn of a new era in commerce, one that we can define as *"omni-modal commerce"*, **Nincotech** Founder Nicolas Diacono said.

"This shift is occurring even as many retailers are still catching up with the omnichannel revolution."

He points to the rapid development of AI-powered search tools such as **Perplexity** and **ChatGPT** and believes that search is fundamentally altering online visibility and search rankings. Meanwhile, AI agents like **OpenAI's GPT Operator** are autonomously executing complex online tasks, including booking travel arrangements.

"As these AI-driven tools become embedded in consumers' daily lives, brands and retailers must rethink their visibility strategies to engage not just human customers but also the artificial intelligence systems influencing their choices," he added.

"At the same time, smart glasses are making a strong comeback. These AI-integrated wearables can recognise their surroundings and seamlessly merge digital content with the real world through AR. These next-generation glasses could potentially replace smartphones, ushering in the era of spatial computing," Diacono said.

"This shift will have profound implications for retail and marketing. Product packaging, advertising displays, and even video content will take on new significance as AI-powered devices identify products and overlay additional information — such as allergens, nutritional facts, or recipe suggestions — directly into consumers' fields of view."

For physical stores, this evolution will underscore the need to double down on emotional engagement and human-centric interactions.

"Maybe it is time for 'slow retail' to take over physical stores. As technology transforms how consumers discover, evaluate, and purchase products, the retail industry must adapt swiftly to remain relevant in an increasingly intelligent and interconnected world," he said.

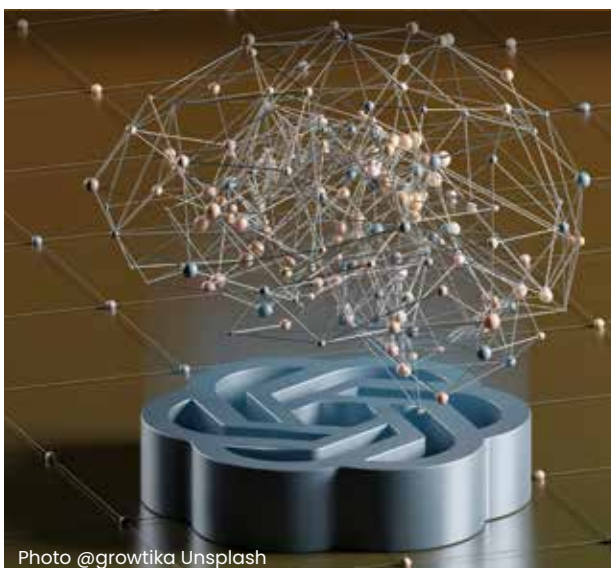


Photo @growtika Unsplash

7 technology trends for 2025

Trend 3: Leveraging personalisation

"In 2025, the leading trend in AI for retail is the growing sophistication of AI-driven personalisation. Retailers are leveraging AI to craft personalised, seamless shopping experiences across multiple touchpoints, proactively anticipating consumer needs and preferences," Contents CEO Massimiliano Squillace said.

"Platforms like Contents, which provide an integrated content governance solution, assist brands in optimising this process by ensuring real-time, efficient content creation, delivery, and distribution at scale."

That thereby enables personalised and scalable customer interactions in a shift that not only enhances engagement but also optimises operational efficiency across the entire retail ecosystem.

"AI is transforming retail content creation by generating personalised product descriptions, targeted promotional materials, and dynamic content that adapts to individual customer preferences," he added.

"It's also enabling automated translation and localisation of content while maintaining brand voice, allowing retailers to reach global audiences more effectively."

Trend 4: RFID and authentication

"In 2025, AI-driven automation and predictive analytics will shape retail, with real-time inventory visibility becoming a non-negotiable for operational efficiency and omnichannel fulfilment," Nedap Marketing Communications Manager Ilse Protsman said.

"RFID-powered digital twin technology is a key enabler, creating virtual replicas of inventory to automate replenishment, streamline operations, and unify in-store and online retail. "

Meanwhile, she said conscious consumerism and the second-life economy are driving demand for greater transparency, with shoppers seeking details on product origins, sustainability, and ethical sourcing.

"RFID, combined with QR codes and digital twins, enables brands to provide this information instantly, reinforcing trust and loyalty. Additionally, RFID is proving essential in authenticating secondhand and luxury goods, ensuring traceability and provenance in resale markets," she added.



RFID development in retail will include inventory optimisation and automation, seamless shopping, loss prevention and shrink reduction, sustainability and second-life authentication.

"As RFID adoption scales, it is becoming the backbone of unified commerce, seamlessly connecting digital and physical retail experiences," she said

7 technology trends for 2025

Trend 5: Leveraging the higher worth of unified commerce customers

"One big trend this year is the increasing emphasis on unified commerce experiences in the retail sector. From what we are seeing among our global client base and research, omnichannel experiences are becoming even more essential as customers engage with brands across multiple touchpoints, devices and time horizons to make a single purchase," **Treasure Data** Senior Director of Marketing EMEA Andrew Stephenson said.

The higher worth of unified commerce customers is driven by the need for seamless integration between ecommerce and in-store experiences, with innovations such as click-and-collect services, same-day delivery, and in-store technologies like electronic shelf labels and robots for inventory management, he added.

He also expects AI agents to automate workflows, solve creative challenges, and streamline tasks within

customer data platforms (CDPs). These AI agents, powered by customer data, could enhance businesses' competitive edge by providing actionable insights and personalised experiences.

"The integration of generative AI within CDPs will enable the rapid creation of AI agents, allowing businesses to innovate quickly," he said. *"Furthermore, AI will help businesses overcome data fragmentation and privacy challenges by unifying first-party data and enriching it with supplementary data sources. This will improve data accuracy and enable real-time personalized interactions through messaging, offers, recommendations, and content. Overall, the integration of AI with CDPs will revolutionise customer interactions, driving growth and innovation in the retail sector."*

Trend 6: Dynamic pricing and channel consistency

"Retailers should ensure pricing consistency across channels but not necessarily parity. Price parity assumes that consumers behave the same way across all channels, which isn't the case. Both product mix and price sensitivity vary depending on the channel. Instead of enforcing uniform prices, retailers should adapt pricing strategies based on channel-specific behaviours," **PricingHub** CEO Jerome Laurent said.

The key principles to follow include a consumer-centric approach, with prices consistent within each channel, and AI-driven insights to adjust them based on consumer price sensitivity, location, and competition—without compromising trust. They also include data-driven decision-making, with retailers balancing transparency and profitability, and unified pricing solutions, with a centralised pricing system to maintain consistency, reducing customer frustration caused by price discrepancies across channels.

Finally, commercial mechanisms to explain price differences to customers, with clear communication strategies, such as employee training and in-store messaging, can explain price variations effectively.

"AI is revolutionising pricing by automating decision-making and optimising price points while maintaining consistency across channels. According to the Diamart x PricingHub study (2025), scraping, matching, and product linking are expected to have the most significant impact on pricing practices," Laurent added.

Machine learning, especially reinforcement learning, will help retailers analyse purchasing behaviour and adjust pricing dynamically based on price elasticity per channel, with 85% of retailers expecting significant benefits from AI-driven elasticity modelling.

7 technology trends for 2025

Trend 7: Leveraging RFID for customer experience

RFID should no longer only be considered as a way to track inventory and drive replenishment but instead retailers should leverage this technology asset to improve the customer experience, according to Retail Reload Founder Yves Curtat.

His company provides an app that enables retailers such as Joules, Etam Group and Lacoste to combine QR codes and RFID for sales assistants to engage consumers and present them with only available products.

"This enables the sales assistant to ensure they only propose items where they can deliver on their promise, which means less frustration for the consumer and also means that the in-store staff can interact better with shoppers," he said.

He also points out that it means sales performance can be monitored because the number of proposals made by the staff member and their conversion rate can be tracked.

"For me, the big change in 2025 will be that more retailers start to implement not just RFID but intelligent RFID and leverage a technology they already have in order to make store interactions more efficient and more engaging," he said. "In fashion and sports the likes of Nike and Adidas already RFID tag all their items, so retailers can interact with data and consumers in real time."





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