

# How a productivity platform drives retail success



# Introduction

*Retailers continue to confront a turbulent economy, but those that are meeting this moment with far-reaching transformation—of their technology infrastructure, operational models and business strategies—are achieving great success.*

Today's shoppers are looking for extensive personalization, user-friendliness and consistency, and they prefer to buy from retailers that can deliver seamless omnichannel shopping experiences across all of their preferred channels.

Fulfilling these rising expectations—while continuing to manage costs and improve the accuracy of inventory forecasting—isn't an easy task. Achieving this aim will require improved productivity and efficiency across all aspects of a business, both within retail organizations and with external partners, vendors and suppliers. It will also demand better access to data and current information across the enterprise, as well as greater organizational cohesion. Retailers will need to deploy automation in the right places, they'll need to update their technology stack with an eye to greater integration, and they'll need to better coordinate their operations, bringing business partners and vendors into the loop. For success in the current business climate, everyone needs to be pulling for the same team.

Today's most successful retailers are taking advantage of innovative tools that empower them to maintain visibility across the most important aspects of their operations, implement real-time inventory monitoring, and have a data-driven overview of the entire customer journey. This will make it possible for individual stores to be agile and responsive to changing market conditions, employee needs and consumer expectations. To enable seamless communication, task automation and real-time information exchange, growing numbers of leading retailers are implementing productivity-enhancing solutions that do far more than provide employee chat.



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To enable seamless communication, task automation and real-time information exchange, growing numbers of leading retailers are implementing productivity-enhancing solutions that do far more than provide employee chat. These tools help teams be more efficient and productive, better informed and aligned, and more engaged and empowered. But they also have built-in automation that can accelerate workflows, while serving as central repositories of searchable knowledge that can connect everyone throughout the organization.

*Ideally, retailers should have access to all of these capabilities in one open, extensible platform that includes a wealth of pre-built integrations and no-code workflows. This makes it easy to introduce artificial intelligence (AI) and automation in areas where they will have the biggest impact within the organization.*



# Empowering retailers to unlock new growth opportunities

*Today's consumers often know exactly what they want, expect multiple options to be immediately available when they're shopping, and desire personalized experiences at every step in their shopping journey.*

They spend a great deal of time researching and evaluating products online before making a purchase decision. This means that associates need an abundance of data on the products they carry and the customers themselves in order to live up to shoppers' expectations.

Retailers that want to keep up with current trends—including the rise of omnichannel shopping, changing consumer habits and narrowing profit margins—will need to implement technologies that can transform their operations across the board to improve customer experience while reducing costs.

**30%**

Research has shown that consumer companies with high digital and analytic capabilities see a 30% increase in digital sales growth on the front end.

Source: [McKinsey](#)

**15%**

While reducing inventory costs by 15% and decreasing employee turnover by 50%. This will have a significant impact on the bottom line.

Source: [McKinsey](#)



According to McKinsey & Company, retailers that want to achieve success in today's competitive marketplace will need to focus on technology transformation in six critical areas. **These are:**

1

**Omnichannel integration** is key for ensuring that the customer's shopping journey is consistent across channels and personalized to boost loyalty and engagement. A productivity platform that integrates a broad array of tools, including e-commerce platforms and analytics, can support seamless omnichannel experiences for retail customers.

2

**Datafication** enhances retailers' visibility into their operations at scale. With a leading productivity platform, every employee has access to data from multiple integrated systems, making it possible to make smarter, better decisions across the entire organization.

3

**Technology modernization** can help retailers stay nimble to keep up with shifting supply chains, fluctuating inventory and changing consumer expectations. Connecting tools and data across the organization will give employees—on the front lines, in the back office, and elsewhere—the ability to communicate in real time and the visibility to align around common goals.

4

**A product-led approach** is important for ensuring a consistent (and top-notch) experience for customers. Productivity platform tools make it possible for engineering, design and IT teams to work in tandem with external partners and vendors to bring products to market faster.



5

**Automation** is a must-have in a market climate that demands increasing efficiencies. To bring products to market faster, improve employee productivity, and integrate e-commerce and consumers' online experiences, retailers need a platform that can create end-to-end automation for everyday tasks and workflows, with no coding required.

6

**Becoming talent-driven** (particularly when it comes to technology talent) will become increasingly important for retail success over the next few years. Retailers can boost employee productivity and satisfaction with a platform that allows for streamlined information sharing. In addition, technology solutions that enhance communication and support organizational cohesion—by helping to improve culture and deepen interpersonal relationships—can help retail organizations attract and retain talent.



# Helping insights travel to every part of the organization: How Slack unlocks retail organizations' full productivity potential

*A productivity platform that combines a broad array of integrations with real-time communication capabilities gives stakeholders access to data—along with data-driven insights—in real time.*

And when these capabilities all come together in a single digital workspace, their availability can empower retailers to unlock new growth opportunities.

As the fastest-growing productivity platform in the business world today, Slack can do all of this and more. Slack connects stores to corporate, of course, but it also makes it possible for employees across the organization to automate processes in ways that create far-reaching efficiencies. Plus, Slack enables everyone in the company to share knowledge, enhancing associates' experiences, making training easier, and creating more productive teams.

Slack can serve as both an open line of communication and an easily searchable archive of information. This makes it ideal for two-way exchanges between corporate headquarters and frontline employees in stores. Associates can share feedback with leadership in real time, while receiving directions, marketing and merchandising insights, and the latest news from corporate.

Slack gives individual employees immediate access to all the information they need to be as productive as possible, including information about shift changes, merchandising plans and career development opportunities.



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At the same time, it enables the entire organization to leverage the streamlined, labor-saving workflows that automation makes possible. Real-time information sharing and active feedback loops will make associates feel valued at work while streamlining their job responsibilities. The end result is that people feel a greater sense of connection and engagement, while experiencing the accelerated productivity that comes with greater automation.

Economic and market conditions are always evolving. Consumer trends are transforming at an accelerating pace, while the labor market and the broader economy go through shifts and adjustments. To keep up, retailers must focus on updating their technology in ways that make it possible to provide personalized omnichannel experiences, greater inventory visibility and more efficient operational processes.

*As a productivity platform, Slack makes all of this possible by serving as a centralized hub where automation can be incorporated into workflows, where business-critical information can be shared across the entire organization, and where people can connect—empowering everyone from the C-suite to the sales floor to do their best possible work.*





## About Slack

Slack is on a mission to make people's working lives simpler, more pleasant and more productive. It is the productivity platform for customer companies that improves performance by empowering everyone with no-code automation, making search and knowledge sharing seamless, and keeping teams connected and engaged as they move work forward together. As part of Salesforce, Slack is deeply integrated into the Salesforce Customer 360, supercharging productivity across sales, service and marketing teams. To learn more and get started with Slack for free, visit [slack.com](https://slack.com) or connect with us @SlackHQ.



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