

The Critical Role of Staff Empowerment for Self-Service in Retail Environments

In this Mindshare, experts from RBR Data Services and Diebold Nixdorf will take a closer look at the role of staff empowerment in retail—how it drives productivity, enhances customer satisfaction, and improves store operations. They will also discuss the key considerations to use when evaluating the shift left approach.



Alan Burt
Senior Manager, Retail Technology
Lead at RBR Data Services,
Datos Insights



Darrell Maton
Vice President Retail Services,
Diebold Nixdorf

We will see more and more self-service touchpoints going forward, and with that there will be greater empowerment of employees to tackle minor hiccups immediately. We'll also see the integration of AI to train staff and provide specific guidance for self-help. AI enhances the ability to provide a better experience by giving staff more knowledge.

HOW DO YOU SEE IT SELF-SERVICE EVOLVING, AND WHAT INNOVATIONS SHOULD RETAILERS PREPARE FOR?

AI will play a significant role in improving IT self-service. From age-verification to fresh produce recognition up to fraud prevention AI in self-service environments helps ensure a frictionless but secure customer experience. And with growing acceptance, we will see broader adoptions, and therefore, the need for proper implementation and ongoing IT service.

Employees are absolutely crucial to maintain efficient store operations and deliver excellence in customer service. Although technology is undoubtedly becoming increasingly vital to assist staff, particularly where there are labour shortages, humans remain the value-adders!

WHAT'S YOUR TAKE ON THE IMPORTANCE OF EMPLOYEES IN THIS TECH-DRIVEN RETAIL INDUSTRY?

In this fast-paced industry, AI and self-service are on everyone's lips, but the truth is—these are only vehicles for employees to deliver fantastic and more customer-oriented service while giving them more bandwidth to concentrate on core tasks. We're seeing workforce shortages around the entire world. Our purpose as an IT solution provider is to support retailers with transparent management of the multivendor ecosystem while empowering staff to deliver an uninterrupted shopping experience for customers and, in the best case, enable them to fix smaller issues on their own.

Store operations rely on technology more than ever. If a point-of-sale system or self-checkout fails, customers become frustrated, and sales suffer. Empowering employees with the knowledge to address minor issues ensures that these systems stay operational, reducing downtime and enhancing the shopping experience. In addition, it boosts employee confidence and expands their skill set, which can only be a positive.

THE SHIFT-LEFT APPROACH IN IT GAINING TRACTION-- HOW DOES IT BENEFIT BOTH STORE STAFF AND OPERATIONS??

The shift-left approach in IT support is about enabling store staff to handle common technical issues themselves rather than relying on external help desks or field engineers. The key point here: We know before things escalate and make them aware of. When employees can diagnose and fix issues themselves and at their own pace, they feel more confident and valued. Instead of waiting for external support, they take control of their work environment immediately, which not only increases efficiency but also contributes to their professional development and job satisfaction.

We're seeing more retailers investing in remote monitoring and predictive maintenance to reduce reliance on field engineers. AI-powered chatbots are also becoming popular, allowing staff to troubleshoot issues via guided, step-by-step solutions. The key trend is a shift toward minimizing disruptions while maximizing efficiency.

DO YOU SEE KEY TRENDS AND METRICS TO EVALUATE THE IMPACT OF IT SERVICE ON STORE OPERATIONS AND BUSINESS OUTCOMES?

The most critical metric is uptime—how often checkout systems, self-service kiosks, and other retail technologies are operational. Retailers should aim for as close to 100% availability as possible, especially during peak hours. Other metrics include mean time to repair, customer satisfaction scores, and store staff engagement levels.

Each retailer is different and has unique challenges, but training is key. If employees are empowered to carry out tasks without adequate training, then this can have adverse effects on staff confidence. So, training, support and empowerment would be the key themes.

WHAT FINAL ADVICE WOULD YOU GIVE TO RETAILERS LOOKING TO IMPLEMENT A SHIFT-LEFT APPROACH IN IT SUPPORT?

Start with a clear strategy. Identify common IT issues staff can handle, provide proper training, and implement remote monitoring tools. Retailers should also ensure they have a strong support network in place—whether through help desks or designated in-store IT champions—to assist employees in the transition. Mastering such a topic has no end date, it starts with simple things. One a day – adapt, change, improve.

THE TAKEAWAY

In a tech-driven retail world facing significant labor shortages, empowering employees through self-service is no longer optional; it's essential. By equipping staff with smart troubleshooting tools, preventative maintenance, predictive monitoring and targeted training, retailers can reduce downtime, enhance operational efficiency, and improve job satisfaction. The future of employee empowerment lies in enabling frontline workers to take control of their technology, ensuring smoother store operations and a better customer experience while mitigating the impact of workforce constraints. Explore our retail services here.

Learn more about **DN AllConnect ServicesSM** for retail.