



Trading without interruption

Secure networking that powers stores, sites, and revenue streams

Contents

- 1 **Retail still runs on non-negotiables**
- 4 **Where things are heading**
- 5 **What's getting in the way**
- 6 **Is your tech stack holding you back?**
- 7 **Change is the only constant in retail**
- 18 **Why retailers need tech partners**
- 19 **Why partner with us?**

Retail still runs on non-negotiables

The shape of retail has evolved dramatically in recent years, but one expectation has never changed: trading cannot stop.

Whether a sale happens in a flagship store, a pop-up, an airport kiosk, or on a mobile checkout page, that standard remains absolute. Every transaction must work every single time, without delay.

Retailers have transformed their operations to meet this expectation. They've moved from a predictable network of stores, backed by a central system, to a dynamic ecosystem of formats and channels that must perform consistently, regardless of how they're built or where they operate.

Unified store models are starting to bring structure to this complexity. Leading retailers are designing modular environments that can scale across regions while still allowing for local adaptation. It's a pragmatic, data-driven way to grow, but it only works if every location connects and performs to the same standard.

Meanwhile, the traditional boundary between physical and digital investment has disappeared. Most retailers are now funding both, because customers move between them without thinking. A promotion might start online, convert in-store, and ship via an entirely different fulfilment route.

These ambitions have increased reliance on the underlying network infrastructure.

Where things are heading



Retail ambition has never been higher

Retailers are testing new formats, channels, and revenue models to capture growth wherever customers are spending. WHSmith's expansion into travel retail is a standout example. It's prioritising high-traffic environments where speed and convenience outweigh floor space.

Others are reshaping their estates more broadly by doubling down on growth areas while exiting sites that no longer perform.



Innovation is advancing across domains

Artificial intelligence is already reshaping retail forecasting and replenishment, with leaders such as Iceland using it to tighten availability and reduce lost sales.

In-store retail media is unlocking new revenue streams, while technologies including self-checkout, dynamic pricing, and colleague-enablement tools are being refined for greater impact rather than replaced outright.



Not every challenge can be engineered away

Regulation is tightening, from how products are promoted to what can appear on shelves. Talent remains scarce, particularly in hybrid roles that bridge operations and technology. And staff safety has become a pressing issue, with some retailers turning to measures like body-worn cameras in higher-risk locations.



These factors are manageable on their own

Together, they create an operational landscape of rising complexity. One that demands stronger systems, smarter processes, and a renewed focus on resilience.

What's getting in the way

When complexity isn't supported by flexible foundations, issues surface that every retailer will recognise.

For example, store rollouts stall because robust connectivity isn't in place. New formats perform flawlessly in one location but falter in another because of nuances that weren't accounted for. Supply chain improvements hinge on better data, but that information often arrives late or is incomplete.

In-store, the impact is immediate: card payments fail, and handhelds disconnect. Teams spend valuable time working around problems instead of serving customers. Online, slow performance or payment delays lead directly to abandoned baskets and lost sales.

These interruptions erode performance over time.

- ✦ Declining revenue
- ✦ Weaker customer trust
- ✦ Reduced staff confidence

The bigger incidents are rarer, but far more damaging. A breach or prolonged outage:

- ✦ Stops trading
- ✦ Undermines confidence in leadership
- ✦ Destroys brand reputation
- ✦ Puts customers at risk

Is your tech stack holding you back?

Retail leaders are under pressure to support growth, control costs, reduce risk, and deliver better customer experiences. That depends on a technology foundation that works consistently across the business.

Many retailers lack that foundation. Stores often run on different connectivity models, legacy networks sit alongside broadband, and cloud services are layered on top of infrastructure that was never built to scale.

This creates operational problem



Store openings are delayed because connectivity is not ready.



Security policies vary by location, increasing risk without being noticed.



EPOS transactions are slow at peak times because traffic is not prioritised properly.



When something breaks, it takes hours to isolate whether the issue is the app, the provider, or the network.



Click & collect systems rely on data that is slightly out of sync.

A secure, reliable, and flexible network determines whether each store behaves consistently. It dictates whether payments, inventory, and fulfilment traffic are prioritised correctly; whether cloud and edge services perform uniformly; and whether problems are diagnosed quickly rather than escalated between teams.

With a secure foundation, innovation becomes an enabler instead of a burden. New digital services, from AI-driven forecasting to real-time inventory and frictionless checkout, can scale across an estate without creating new points of failure.

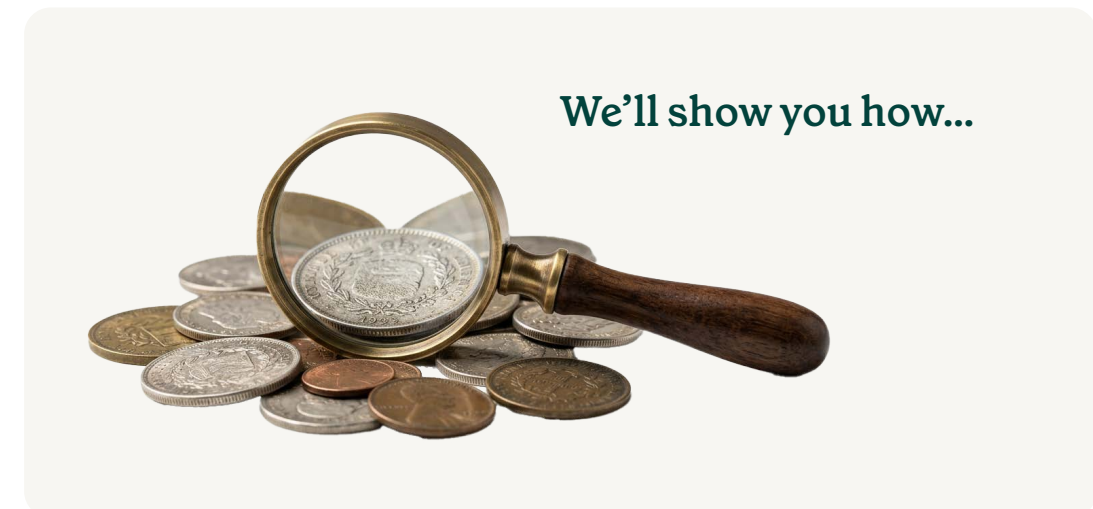
Growth becomes repeatable, and risk becomes manageable.

Change is the only constant in retail

It's an exciting yet demanding time for retailers.

Some retailers are doubling down on areas with proven ROI. Others are exploring new revenue streams, including retail media and AI-driven personalisation.

A secure and flexible tech ecosystem determines how far and how fast opportunities can lead to value.





Unified store

Scaling without losing flexibility

Reusable store formats are helping retailers expand more efficiently. They help central teams maintain brand and operational consistency, while giving local teams the flexibility to respond to demand, store size, and customer behaviour.

Who's doing it well

Aldi South Group

Aldi South's approach to unified stores is modular and adaptable to different store sizes and building types across five key markets: the US, Australia, Germany, Hofer, and the UK & Ireland.



The work covers brand and store design guidelines, building and interior design, master planning, customer communications, tone of voice, signage, wayfinding, ticketing, packaging, and uniforms.

Challenges

The unified store model can be complex. New locations must launch quickly, systems need to behave consistently, and standard processes can't overshadow local customs.

Without alignment, complexity gradually creeps back into an estate designed to be simple.

Where secure networking helps

Secure networking provides a consistent foundation across every site. It applies the same services, access controls, and security policies regardless of store format. That means predictable system deployment and centralised performance monitoring.

- ✦ Faster rollout of new store formats
- ✦ More consistent customer and colleague experience
- ✦ Fewer local workarounds and support issues
- ✦ Central visibility across the estate
- ✦ Scalable foundation for future changes

Where to start

Map how stores connect, how security is applied, and where setups differ. These variations sometimes remain hidden until a rollout slows or a site behaves unpredictably.

Define a baseline for connectivity and security across all locations. It should be flexible enough for different store types, but consistent enough for central visibility.

From there, focus on the areas where consistency delivers the fastest value, such as new openings or high-traffic sites.





Blended investment in e-commerce and physical stores

Customers supported across every channel

A customer might discover a product on social, check availability online, purchase it in store, and return it through another channel. A connected approach increases conversion, improves availability, and enables each channel to strengthen the other rather than compete.

Who's doing it well

Sephora

Sephora gives customers a unified experience across touchpoints. In-store, shoppers can use the app to scan products, access reviews, and watch tutorials before buying. Online customers can book in-store beauty services, moving effortlessly between digital and physical channels. The brand is even testing a ChatGPT-powered assistant in the US to extend this experience further.



Nike

Nike takes a similar approach. Its app learns preferences, curates recommendations, and allows shoppers to reserve items for collection. Journeys can start online, continue in store, and feed back into future interactions.



Challenges

Each stage depends on multiple systems - networks, ecommerce platforms, payments, and fulfilment - exchanging data in real time.

When that flow breaks down, the impact hits hard: inaccurate stock, missed sales, delayed click-and-collect orders, and payment failures. These issues emerge where channels connect, making them both harder to diagnose and more visible to customers.

Where secure networking helps

Secure networking underpins how these systems work together. It ensures reliable data flow between stores, ecommerce platforms, and fulfilment, covering stock updates, orders, payments, and customer data.

A consistent network layer improves visibility and speeds up fault resolution. It also reinforces security by protecting sensitive information across every touchpoint without slowing the customer journey.

- ✦ Reliable stock accuracy across channels
- ✦ Fewer failed or delayed transactions
- ✦ Faster issue identification and resolution
- ✦ Stronger protection of customer and payment data
- ✦ Consistent performance during peak demand

Where to start

Map how data moves between systems. Identify where connections lag or break, then define a baseline for how data should flow, including performance and security expectations.



Staff safety

Protecting colleagues in a volatile environment

Incidents of aggression, intimidation, and abuse are rising in retail, particularly in busy locations. Retailers are responding with tools like body-worn cameras and clearer escalation processes.

The goal is to respond to incidents, reduce their likelihood, and give staff more confidence on the shop floor.

Who's doing it well

Ann Summers

Ann Summers

Ann Summers recently trialled body-worn cameras in three higher-risk stores: Edinburgh, London, and Nottingham. The initiative was driven by growing concerns over staff safety, especially for younger supervisors managing difficult situations.

Over eight weeks, the retailer recorded a **42%** drop in personal safety incidents. Its Edinburgh store saw no police-attended incidents during the trial.

Challenges

Safety tech, like body-worn cameras, depends on reliable connectivity, clear policies, and the secure storage of footage. Data must meet privacy standards and remain accessible without delay. Systems must also perform consistently across different buildings and locations.



Where secure networking helps

Secure networking ensures safety devices connect reliably - even in crowded, high-demand environments. It supports the secure transfer and storage of footage and helps retailers meet compliance and review requirements.

Consistent network policies across all sites reduce operational gaps and make it easier to manage safety at scale.

- ✦ Reliable operation of safety devices
- ✦ Secure handling and storage of video and audio
- ✦ Consistent policies applied across sites
- ✦ Faster access to incident footage
- ✦ Central oversight and visibility of safety measures

Where to start

Start by identifying where risk is highest. That may be stores in busy city centres, locations with a history of incidents, or sites with limited on-site support. Understanding where issues occur most often helps prioritise where safety measures will have the greatest impact.

From there, assess whether the current network can support additional devices and data requirements. This includes connectivity, capacity, and how securely information is handled.

Define clear policies for how devices are used, how data is stored, and who has access. These need to be consistent across locations.



Colleague tech and in-store media

Making stores more responsive

Some of the most effective retail investments are focused on how stores operate in real time.

Colleague tech is improving how quickly teams can communicate, respond, and keep the shop floor moving. At the same time, in-store media is turning physical space into a measurable revenue channel, influencing decisions at the point of purchase.

Both depend on the same principle: responsiveness. Whether it's reacting to a queue at the till or updating a promotion on a screen while a customer is watching, stores need to act instantly.

Who's doing it well

Co-op

Co-op's rollout of headsets across more than 2,300 stores shows how colleague tech is reshaping operations. The devices allow staff to communicate instantly, reducing delays at tills, on the shop floor, or in back-of-house areas. Customers benefit from faster response times and a more consistent experience.



Sainsbury's

Retailers are also realising the impact of in-store media. Campaigns that connect in-store screens with digital channels are delivering measurable results. Sainsbury's, for instance, has reported significant uplifts in sales and engagement for featured products by integrating in-store screen content with online and app-based promotions.



In both cases, the store becomes more dynamic, and the environment itself becomes part of the selling process.

Challenges

The key challenge is reliability. If communication devices disconnect or screens fail to update, the benefits of these technologies disappear. Outdated content, lagging connections, or poor measurement all undermine confidence in the system.

Both types of technology also increase pressure on networks, with more devices, more data, and greater dependence on real-time performance.

Where secure networking helps

Secure networking provides the real-time responsiveness these systems demand. It ensures low-latency communication for store teams, reliable content delivery for in-store media, and secure data flow between stores and central systems.

With communication, content, and data moving on a unified network, performance becomes faster, more reliable, and easier to manage.

- ✦ Faster and more reliable staff communication
- ✦ Improved response times on the shop floor
- ✦ Consistent delivery of in-store media campaigns
- ✦ Real time visibility of performance and engagement
- ✦ Secure integration with marketing systems

Where to start

Begin where delays are most visible. That might be colleague communication, queue response, or promotion delivery. Then assess whether existing connectivity supports real-time performance, especially during peak trading periods when responsiveness matters most.





Supply chains, AI, and loss prevention

Better decisions depend on better data

Availability remains one of the simplest drivers of retail revenue. If a product isn't on the shelf or available online, the sale is lost. Yet overstocking creates waste and ties up valuable cash.

AI is helping retailers strike a better balance by moving beyond static forecasting to dynamic, data-driven decision-making that reacts to changes in demand, promotions, and external factors in real time.

Who's doing it well

Iceland

Iceland has deployed AI-driven inventory and replenishment tools across its estate to fine-tune stock management.

The system analyses sales, supply, and demand data continuously, enabling faster, more informed decisions. It also accounts for seasonal peaks, promotions, and product launches. Traditional forecasting can overlook these variables.

Iceland wants to keep products available where they are needed, reduce lost sales, and improve efficiency across stores and distribution centres. The platform learns over time, adjusting forecasts at the Stock Keeping Unit (SKU) level and giving teams deeper insight into what to stock, where, and when.

Iceland

Challenges

If stock data is delayed or inaccurate, replenishment decisions follow the same pattern. A fast-acting system built on unreliable inputs can amplify errors rather than fix them.

There is also a dependency on consistency across the estate. Stores, warehouses, and suppliers all need to feed into the same view of demand. If one part of the chain operates differently, the model becomes less reliable.

Loss adds another layer of complexity. Theft, shrinkage, and operational errors distort stock data, making it harder to maintain accuracy. Traditional methods of identifying these issues are often slow, which increases the gap between what the system believes and what is actually happening.

Where secure networking helps

Secure networking supports the flow of data that these systems rely on. It ensures that stock updates, sales data, and supply chain signals move consistently between stores, distribution centres, and central systems. That reduces delays and helps maintain a more accurate view of what is happening across an estate.

Security is equally important. Supply chain data includes commercially sensitive information, and it needs to be protected as it moves between systems and partners.

In areas such as loss prevention, networking also supports the use of existing infrastructure. AI tools can analyse CCTV and store data to identify risks earlier, but that depends on reliable connectivity and access to data in near real time.

- ✦ More accurate and timely stock data across the estate
- ✦ Improved reliability of AI-driven forecasts and replenishment
- ✦ Faster identification of issues within the supply chain
- ✦ Better use of existing data sources, including CCTV
- ✦ Secure handling of commercially sensitive information

Where to start

Map how data moves across the supply chain and pinpoint where delays occur between stores, distribution centres, and central systems. These bottlenecks often limit AI's impact before the technology itself does.

Review how consistent data inputs are across the estate, then define clear standards for speed, accuracy, and security.

Focus investment where availability most affects revenue or where stock accuracy is already under pressure.



Why retailers need tech partners

Across each of the priorities we mapped, the starting point looks similar:

1. Understand how an estate operates today
2. Identify where the inconsistency sits
3. Define a baseline
4. Move forward without disrupting trading

However, most teams are stretched, and technical talent is in short supply. Operators are keeping stores trading, supporting ecommerce, and managing ongoing change. Large-scale improvements to connectivity and security compete with those priorities, and progress can slow as a result.

Store rollouts, colleague technology, supply chain improvements, and in-store media all rely on consistent, reliable infrastructure. If that foundation varies across an estate, the value takes longer to materialise.



Max Waterhouse
Business Development Director at Nasstar

“Working with a managed service provider brings in focused resource to define a standard, apply it across your estate, and maintain it over time. That reduces variation between sites and speeds up rollout, without placing additional strain on internal teams.

“Rather than managing separate systems in isolation, teams can see how their estate is performing as a whole and respond more quickly when issues arise.”

Why partner with us?

Between shifting consumer habits, supply chain squeezes, rising costs, and the constant demand for seamless experiences, retailers are under pressure to deliver at pace. Our solutions allow you to focus on creating unforgettable customer experiences.



The tech behind transactions

From managing data across channels to automating back-office processes, we design solutions that align with your goals.



Managed services

Our experts will keep your systems running smoothly while you focus on customers. From POS updates to cloud infrastructure and network security, we handle it all.



Empowered teams

Great tech only works if your people can use it. We make adoption easy with hands-on training and expert change management processes that bring your teams along for the ride.



Always on reliability

We deliver resilient, secure infrastructure with 24/7 monitoring to keep your business online and your data protected.



Efficiency that keeps you competitive

We'll help you cut costs, move faster, and deliver the experiences today's shoppers expect.



Trading without interruption

Secure networking that powers stores, sites, and
revenue streams

Every step, optimised

Our wealth of experience is helping retailers
optimise systems and stand out from the
crowd.

Get in touch →



salesenquiries@nasstar.com

0345 003 0000