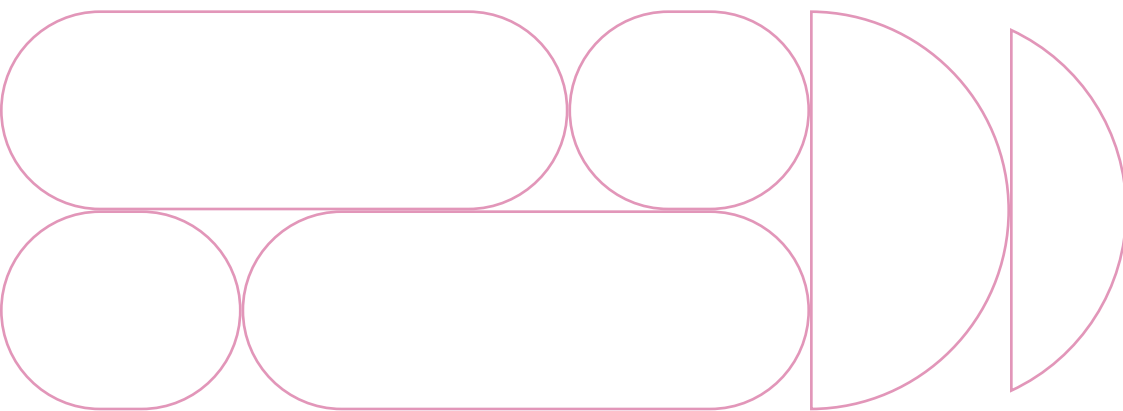


Increasing productivity in retail by connecting corporate to the front lines



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Retail's changing landscape

Whether they're shopping online, curbside or in a store, customers today expect their purchasing experience to be seamless and streamlined.

Retailers must manage a variety of channels to ensure that every touchpoint in the sales process is personalized, user-friendly and consistent—all while navigating a tight labor market and constant disruptions in global supply chains.

To overcome these challenges, retailers need a digital productivity platform that unites their teams and helps them meet customer demands. That's where Slack comes in. Let's take a closer look at the difficulties retailers face today and how Slack can help boost employee productivity while growing customer loyalty.

Macroeconomic conditions are challenging profit margins

Inflation and supply chain disruptions have led to rising costs for retailers, and have squeezed profit margins.

According to Colliers, shoppers say that they will take the following measures to battle inflation:

- **57%** will buy less to spend less
- **52.9%** will look for value by switching to brands or retailers offering promotions
- **52.8%** will cut back on big-ticket items (like furniture and electronics)

Likewise, retailers will also take appropriate action:

- **65.5%** will raise product prices
- **56.3%** will use technology and automation to drive down operational costs
- **48.3%** will reduce product quantities and/or service levels

Source: Colliers, "The Implications of Inflation on the Retail Industry," 2022



Shifting consumer trends

Today's consumers spend a lot of time **researching and evaluating a product online** before making a purchase, and they're equipped with more knowledge about what they're looking for. This means retailers need an abundance of data on both the products they carry and the customer themselves in order to provide a great experience.

This also means brick-and-mortar stores will play a critical role in **driving sustainable growth**. Retailers should look to invest in the in-store shopping experience, including new methods to streamline in-store communication.

51% of consumers

say that they are significantly more likely to order a product if they can check out online and have the option to return it in-store.

Source: [Shopify eCommerce Market Credibility Study, 2021](#)

Whether in-store, through social media or online, the shopping experience needs to be consistent and personalized. The rise of omnichannel retail synchronizes shopping for consumers across all channels by blending marketing and sales together. To achieve this, retailers need a central space where a complete overview of the customer journey is accessible.

Revving up retail for the digital-first economy

To keep up with rapidly changing customer habits and shrinking profit margins, retailers need a digital-first and innovative approach made for the modern economy. This means improving the technology they use to transform operations.

Consumer companies with high digital and analytical capabilities see a 30% increase in digital sales growth on the front end, while the middle of the house reduces inventory costs by 15% and the back office reduces employee turnover by 50%. The right technology truly makes a difference to the bottom line.

According to McKinsey & Company, **there are six areas** that retailers must focus on to achieve true tech transformation. These are:

- **Omnichannel integration.** Ensuring that every touchpoint of a consumer's shopping process is consistent and personalized to drive them to become a loyal customer. This



Retail's changing landscape

includes optimizing personalized marketing, wish lists, appointment bookings, payment and more to drive incentives to buy again. Omnichannel integration will be vital in maintaining competitiveness in today's market.

- **Datafication.** Oftentimes, traditional retail platforms host data across different systems, preventing scalability and true widespread visibility into operations. Retailers should move to a cloud-based data platform that uses automation to showcase data in a unified way for everyone in the organization.
- **Tech modernization.** Traditional retail operational platforms are not nimble enough to keep up with shifting supply chains, fluctuating inventory and rapidly changing consumer expectations. Retailers should look to upgrade to technology that enables them to improve flexibility and scalability with fewer applications.
- **Product-led.** Retailers need a full IT infrastructure that focuses on developing and managing business capabilities for e-commerce. This means tech (such as engineering and design) is included in the planning of all products to ensure a consistent experience for consumers.
- **Highly automated.** In order to get products to market faster, improve employee productivity and create a smooth experience for consumers online, retailers need a software delivery system that unlocks the power of end-to-end automation.
- **Talent-driven.** A skilled IT department will become more critical to the functioning of retailers in the coming years. Developing an internal team and operating on a platform that allows quicker resolutions of tickets for employees and customers will be the keys to success. Retailers also face frontline staff shortages due to a shifting job market and will need to work on retaining top talent.

Retailers can no longer rely on traditional architecture to execute operations in today's retail landscape. They need tech solutions that are nimble and customizable to fit their needs in order to prepare for unexpected future challenges.

Enter Slack: The productivity platform that helps retailers unlock organization agility, transform store operations and retain top talent.





What is a productivity platform and why is it important for retailers?

Slack brings automation, knowledge and connection together, allowing retailers to unlock new levels of productivity and exceed customer expectations. With Slack, retailers can achieve more efficient operations and more reliable customer service. Here's how Slack enables digital-first collaboration for retailers:

- **Automation** → Automate everyday tasks in and outside of Slack, with no coding required
- **Omnichannel integration** → Slack integrates with more than 2,600 tools, including e-commerce ones, so retailers can provide more personalized shopping experiences
- **Knowledge sharing** → With Slack, information can be easily sourced, searched and accessed so that employees can make better, smarter decisions
- **Tech modernization** → With various systems working together and the ability to communicate in real time, every department is connected and aligned to achieve company goals
- **Product-led** → Work alongside external partners, such as suppliers and vendors, in Slack Connect and get products to market faster with a quicker approval process
- **Talent-driven** → More than 75 of the Fortune 100 companies use Slack because it helps them boost employee productivity and satisfaction

Slack empowers retailers to reduce costs, improve employee productivity, retain top talent and provide better customer experiences. Let's take a look at how.

From corporate to the front line

Retailers must align employees, middle management and corporate communication to improve productivity across their entire organization. To do that, they need a platform that boosts automation, enhances knowledge-sharing and connects everyone to help insights travel throughout every level of the organization. Slack enables this by creating rapid feedback loops from customers, marketing, merchandising, area managers, store managers and store associates in one platform.

Let's take a look at three use cases that every retailer could benefit from.

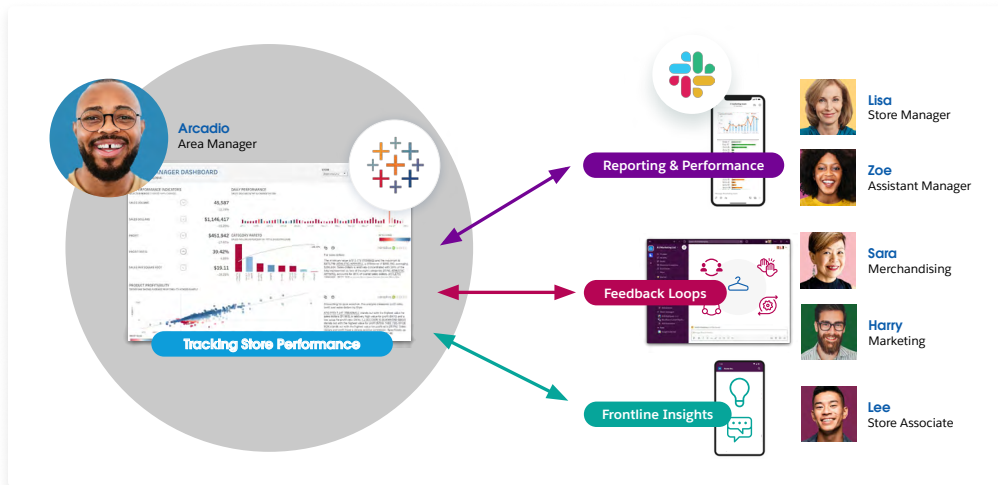


What is a digital HQ and why is it important for retailers?

1. Connecting stores to corporate

Too often, the connections between corporate and its stores is slow and mistargeted. For example, mass notifications about company news might not be relevant for all stores. Hearing about the promotion of an area leader in Texas doesn't affect store operations in Maryland, for instance. If employees need to switch between various platforms to complete tasks, like delivering sales reports or finding information on new products, it leaves less room for customer engagement to drive sales.

Here's where Slack can help. Slack helps boost internal connections and propel innovation by bringing teams, processes and technology together in one place. With Slack, corporate can share targeted announcements with stores in various channels based on regional areas, provide a direct line to support teams to resolve issues quickly and produce a searchable archive of information on new products. This leads to improved corporate insights, store-to-store consistency and operational efficiency.



What is a digital HQ and why is it important for retailers?

It also enables internal feedback loops, making it easier to connect with other employees across all departments and levels of the organization. For example, an area manager in charge of tracking several stores' performance can share reporting dashboards directly with their managers seamlessly in Slack instantly, enabling store operators to adjust and respond more quickly. Slack also creates a feedback loop from the front lines, driving faster feedback about merchandising, new marketing campaigns and even direct feedback from customers in near real time. Likewise, stores will benefit from seamless insights, updates to corporate policies and tactical adjustments to store execution.

91%

positive ROI in 10 months or less after switching to Slack

Source: Salesforce Customer Success Metrics Global Report, July 2022



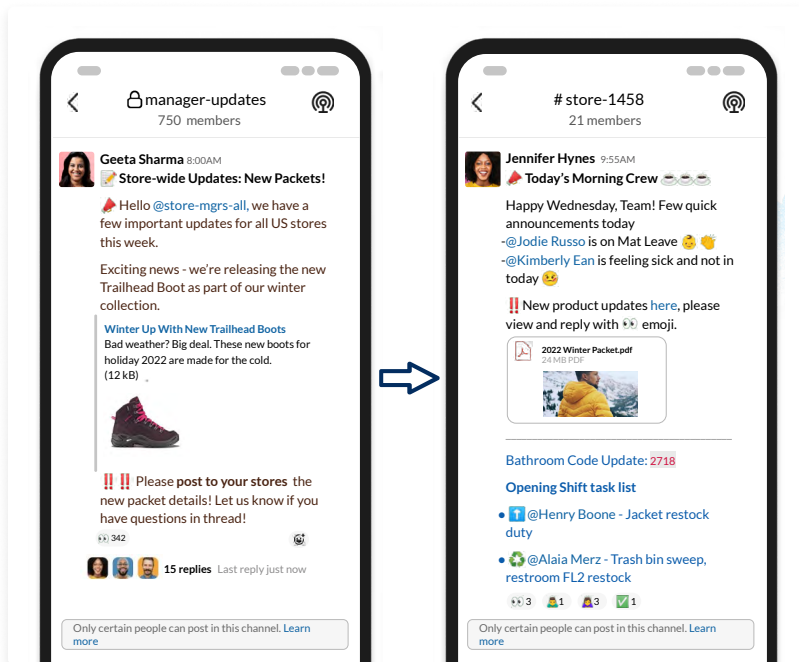
What is a digital HQ and why is it important for retailers?

2. Connecting stores and internal teams to one another

Slack unlocks the ability to connect all stores to one another more efficiently than ever before. This includes sharing best practices across stores, resolving specific issues related to geographical location, ensuring product availability and finding last-minute shift coverage.

Upgrading in-store communication

To provide the best experience possible, retailers must optimize in-store communication. The benefit of Slack for retailers is the ability to customize channel-based communication, allowing teams to share as broadly or narrowly as is necessary. This could include companywide announcements that are public to the whole organization or a regional manager communicating to her team about a new product that is launching in their stores. The regional manager can quickly post in a private channel that's just for her managers and provide the context that they need to execute the new launch.



What is a digital HQ and why is it important for retailers?

Here's where the magic happens. She then asks her managers to post the information to their individual stores. From there, the managers relay the product launch plans to their associates during the daily morning brief in their store's Slack channel. Associates respond with an emoji so the manager knows they've seen the new information. Now everyone has access to this information and can refer back to it whenever they need to. This allows associates who might be out sick or on vacation to stay up to date on new information once they return. That's the power of Slack. It provides ways to connect digitally in a manner that is persistent, searchable and secure.

28%

increase in sales productivity with Slack

Source: Salesforce Customer Success Metrics Global Report, July 2022

Improving store manager productivity

Arming store managers with the right tools can empower them to drive employee productivity, boost engagement and improve sales. Slack makes this possible by integrating key applications and tools into one place, opening up the ability to automate common tasks build workflows across third-party apps. Slack has more than 2,500 pre-built app integrations, so everything employees need is accessible in one place. This allows store managers to see what is happening at each store in real time, report sales and store performance and use bots to reduce manual tasks from one platform. Store managers can get more done in less time with Slack.

26%

faster decision-making experienced after implementing Slack

Source: FY23 Customer Success Metrics, Salesforce, survey of 1,742 Slack customers, July 2022

Supporting agile product launches

Connectivity between departments and partners allows organizations to be product-led, one of the main components of successful modern retail, according to McKinsey & Company. Marketing teams can use Slack Connect to collaborate with agency partners to get products to



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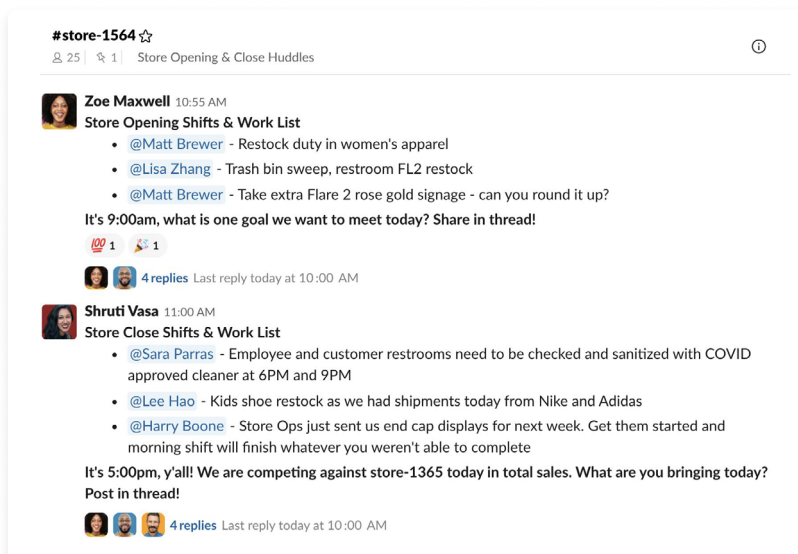
market faster using dedicated channels to brainstorm, plan, share concepts and seek approvals quickly and securely. Slack also allows teams to build simple workflows to automate heavy lifting so products can get to market even faster. Marketing teams who use Slack see **16% faster execution of marketing campaigns**.

3. Enhancing the associate experience

Retailers face competition not only in attracting consumers but frontline workers as well. This means retaining talent will be critical for success. To do that, retailers will need to create a positive work environment that is efficient, organized and celebrates associate success and milestones.

With Slack, retailers can do this by:

- **Simplifying learning.** Streamline onboarding with automated workflows and integrations pre-built in the platform.
- **Creating a positive culture.** Recognize associates for great work and milestones with designated, customizable Slack channels.
- **Improving flexibility.** Give employees the opportunity to directly post shift assignments and find a way to swap them as needed.
- **Providing the tools for success.** Provide real-time data on inventory and a complete overview of the customer profile to help associates improve sales conversions.
- **Streamlining store communications.** Slack facilitates a seamless and effective in-store communication process by sharing important shift information and direction while creating a cohesive and motivating work environment.





Keeping up with constant change

From consumer trends to the labor market to supply chains, economic conditions are constantly changing. To keep up, retailers must focus on updating their technology to provide personalized omnichannel experiences, a better overview of inventory and a streamlined operational process to bring down costs. Slack makes this possible by enabling productivity on a single platform that accelerates work through automation, boosts organizational knowledge-sharing and connects everyone within your organization from the corporate headquarters down to the frontline store associates.

Ready to learn more about how Slack can help you exceed customer expectations and transform store operations? [Get started here.](#)





About Slack

Slack is the productivity platform for customer companies. Customer companies put their customers at the center of everything they do, using data, automation and AI to deliver exceptional customer experiences. Slack is how you get there. We help organizations transform how they work, so they can realize their potential.

The ways companies used to drive productivity can't scale to meet the demands of this moment. For years, businesses have been working with tools that reinforce linear processes (think endless meetings and email threads), leading to siloed, disconnected and disengaged teams.

Slack offers a new approach that helps teams be more efficient and productive with no-code automation, equips them with the knowledge and insights they need to perform, and empowers them to drive their own productivity. Thanks to our open platform, Slack has a large app ecosystem, with more than 2,600 enterprise apps that are ready to go in Slack.



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