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Close the loop

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The way we work has changed dramatically in the last 30 to 40 years. All industries have felt the impact of digitalization, but perhaps, none more so than retail, which is particularly fast–paced. In recent years, it has encountered many challenges that demand faster innovation – but also plenty of opportunities to get ahead of the competition.

COVID–19 accelerated many of the industry's challenges. As bricks–and–mortar stores were forced to shut overnight, online shopping options became crucial for retailers. Now, 88% of retailers sell online, and 43% of consumers make regular monthly purchases on the Internet; 59% even made a direct purchase through social media in 2021[1].

While physical stores are now back in business, the way people shop has changed forever and brands have to embrace the digital to stay afloat. Retailers are now focusing on omnichannel campaigns that unite the online and offline touchpoints consumers engage with. Not only does this experience need to feel cohesive across channels, but it also has to be innovative to satisfy consumers who increasingly expect a thoughtful, immersive, and personalized shopping experience.

Digitalization isn't the only hurdle. Supply chain issues have impacted many retail businesses in 2020 and 2021, while households have experienced higher cost of living, so competitive pricing and profit margins are more difficult to balance.

However, climate change is perhaps the most pressing challenge that retailers must now face. People have become more aware of the impact of human consumption on the planet, and are choosing to spend their money with brands that champion sustainability. In fact, 78% of Americans are more likely to buy a product that is labeled "environmentally friendly" according to a GreenPrint survey[2].

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Within these obstacles lie strong opportunities for the retail sector. Generation Z are entering the workforce and becoming consumers with real spending power, while demand for a more innovative – and sustainable – retail experience can work to the industry's advantage. Adopting automation helps to support innovation as well as streamline operation costs to help fight against inflation.

To come out on the right side of these challenges, retail companies need to standardize, streamline, and find more innovative ways of working to free up time and money for progress. And they're aware of it; 72% of retailers use – or plan to use – automation to decrease staff members' hands–on–time[3].

That's where Smartsheet comes in.

Smartsheet is a single solution that solves thousands of challenges for retail.

A cloud–based single source of truth, Smartsheet's platform automates workflows, brings tracking and reporting into one place, and connects teams wherever they're located. In doing so, it modernizes how retail works.

Whatever comes your way, Smartsheet won't let you down.

[1] https://www.retaildive.com/spons/the-top-retail-trends-in-2021/606745/
[2] https://www.businesswire.com/news/home/20210322005061/en/GreenPrint-Survey-Finds-Consumers-Want-to-Buy-Eco-Friendly-Products-but-Don%E2%80%99t-Know-How-to-Identify-Them
[3] https://squareup.com/us/en/townsquare/future-of-retail

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Go to market faster

Streamline projects to drive efficiency

Embrace automation

Retail is a complex industry, covering the design, manufacture, buying and merchandising, shipping and selling of products online and in stores. Unsurprisingly each stage of the supply chain involves different processes and creates a lot of data. In fact, the retail industry is governed – and often slowed down – by the large data sets it generates.

To make matters worse, the data is used by multiple teams who typically use different applications. For retailers, it can seem like an impossible task to innovate how they work, accelerate products to market, and stand out from competitors.

Automating workflows helps ease the burden of managing data. Smartsheet's platform standardizes and automates processes at all stages in a product's journey to market, from raw material sourcing, development and production, inventory management through to shipping and stock taking in stores. This speeds up operations.

It also helps staff to work smarter. Tracking and reporting are brought together in one platform, accelerating approval processes, too. So, workers can focus their time on more high–value tasks. Automated processes not only save time, but reduce risk of error, and most importantly, get products to consumers faster.

It's a common misconception that automation technology is complicated to install and use. Smartsheet is simple and easy for anyone to work with. A no–code platform, you don't need to work in IT to get a handle on how to use Smartsheet because it's intuitive and slots into your organization easily. It quickly makes working with data more efficient, boosts productivity, and allows your people to do what they do best.

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Streamline operations

Retail operations are intricate and fast-paced, with development teams typically balancing multiple seasons at one time. Workers are under constant, mounting pressure to do things better and faster to keep up with the latest market trends and deliver. The need to simplify wherever possible is prevalent across departments.

Often, challenges facing teams appear to demand retail-specific or bespoke solutions. But investing in multiple applications can be costly – and cause issues with communication. Smartsheet is an all-purpose platform that adapts to the retail problems you face, removing the need to buy a new solution every time an issue raises its head.

While it isn't built for specific sectors or challenges, the Smartsheet platform can do the work of multiple applications across different teams, streamlining operations rather than adding more complex software into the mix.

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Because it's cloud-based, Smartsheet unites the supply chain, acting as one source of truth for all stakeholders working on a process or project. It brings people together to face challenges, giving them real-time updates, and streamlining workflows to reduce miscommunication and errors. The efficiency it creates shortens production cycles, which gets products to market faster.

And it's a good fit with most existing retail software. Smartsheet works with your current systems, not against them. For example, Smartsheet supports Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) systems, running reports from them to make the everyday running of retail operations easier to manage.

As Smartsheet reduces the need for retail-specific solutions and saves time by making retail processes throughout the supply chain more efficient, it helps boost a retailer's position as a competitive choice for cash-strapped consumers.

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Teams that talk

Boost visibility, communication, and productivity

Connect your people

When teams work in silos, processes are slower, there's a greater chance of miscommunication, and in the worst case scenarios, errors occur that cost both time and money. For projects and supply chains to flow seamlessly, it's important to connect your people.

Smartsheet's cloud–based solution is a centralized space for teams to share information, overcoming the hurdles of remote working, geography, and sprawling business operations across time zones. Employees can view the latest project developments from any device.

For example, design and production teams can test prototypes, share learnings in real time and develop products faster, which speeds up the whole production process and helps teams meet tight deadlines. **PVH, one of the world's largest apparel companies, uses Smartsheet** to pull projects together, using design templates to improve direct communications between teams across continents and time zones.

This applies to all stakeholders, not just those within your business. Retail businesses often collaborate with external partners, and Smartsheet connects stakeholders both inside and outside your organization for no extra licensing costs. What's more, Smartsheet can apply different access level permissions so that retail businesses can work with partners without worrying about confidentiality. An organization can cut up data and change visibility permissions according to what a specific stakeholder needs to know.

Smartsheet's connectivity supports senior management, too. The platform's self–serve reports and real–time dashboards help managers get a clearer, deeper view of what's going on in a business, and make reactive changes. Greater visibility and oversight enable senior leaders to make confident decisions to drive the business forward, faster.

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Manage resources in real time

In retail, staff turnover is typically fast, especially in consumer–facing roles. This can make resourcing particularly tricky – and time–consuming – especially during seasonal peaks that put strain on employees who are training new joiners at a busy time for business.

Smartsheet takes the pressure off onboarding and resource management. A central space for the sharing of learning materials and onboarding schedules, the platform streamlines – and accelerates – the whole process. New employees get up to speed faster, so your staff can get back to running the business.

Smartsheet did just that for Canadian company DECO Windshield Repair, which hires seasonally in the spring. DECO went from paper, manual processes to an automated digital strategy powered by Smartsheet, saving time during the onboarding process across 140 locations.

The success of this led DECO to choose Smartsheet to support other areas of the business; today DECO's application, onboarding, payroll and offboarding processes are all managed through automated data collection and filtering through the platform.

Smartsheet can also improve work environments for employees. When corporate and retail workers are siloed, the workforce can feel disjointed and distant from one another. And it can pose real business problems if resourcing issues unfold in one part of a business but aren't communicated to other teams that will feel their impact.

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Smartsheet connects teams and enables them to understand the workings of other parts of the business. The platform's real-time updates enable better resource management across all departments – regardless of what location they work in – and creates a more cohesive work environment.

The focus on collaboration creates an inclusive workforce strategy for both corporate and retail teams, and a business benefits from being able to offer rewarding, inclusive employment to staff. Happier staff lead to better executed work, and help make a company more attractive to potential employees.

Fortune Brands recognized this fact when it used Smartsheet to improve relationships between its 23,000-strong multi-national workforce. Smartsheet supports the running of an app for workers, providing a streamlined, efficient platform to organize, categorize, and track the app's content calendar for sharing company updates and critical information.

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Bring the future forward

Innovate for the planet and the consumer

Go full circle

Sustainability is front of mind for many of today's consumers, who are increasingly aware of the existential threat posed by climate change. This knowledge is actively impacting their spending habits, from avoiding packaging made of single–use plastic to taking the distance a product has traveled – and even the raw materials used – into account.

Most public companies are now reporting on their sustainability credentials, and doing so can pay off. As many as 64% of Americans[4] state that they will actually pay more for a green product, making this a clear business opportunity for retail.

To be competitive, brands need to do more than change their packaging or their product materials. To commit to sustainability, companies need to adopt a regenerative, circular business model that promotes and prioritizes sustainability at every step in the supply chain. In some instances that may mean collaborating with rivals to share resources, save energy, and work smarter.
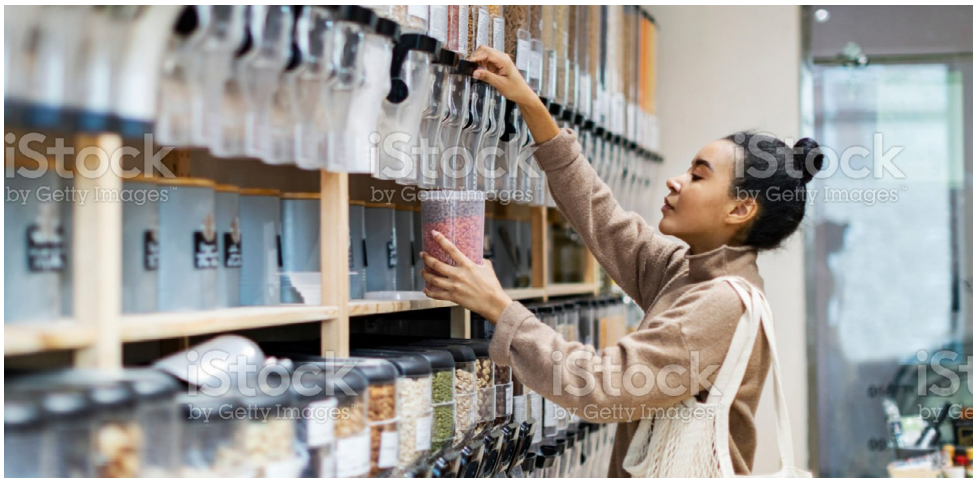
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Smartsheet supports a more circular approach for retail. The platform's automated and streamlined workflows support sustainable practices as it speeds up work, reduces the time and energy employees need to spend on resolving issues, and enables reliable traceability through real-time tracking and self-service reporting. Tracking processes and tracing the provenance of raw materials is a lot easier with Smartsheet.

Smartsheet's dynamic access levels enable secure collaboration with rivals, without sacrificing competition. A retail company doesn't have to reveal all its business secrets to work effectively with others and crucially, become more sustainable. Smartsheet allows you to be selective about what you share with external collaborators so that sharing resources sustainably becomes a real possibility.

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A new consumer experience

Today's consumers expect a connected, seamless retail experience across all channels, which demands omnichannel, integrated campaigns. Behind the scenes, operations have to be joined up and slick to be able to execute and support a connected consumer experience.

Smartsheet brings teams together to share ideas, timelines, advert creative, and translations. The cloud-based workflow prevents information from getting lost, and enables retail businesses to create cohesive campaigns across multiple touchpoints easily. Seamless processes lead to a seamless experience for consumers.

Making a profit is important for any business, especially after the financial strain caused by the pandemic, and the growing need to invest in new innovation can be challenging. Smartsheet supports a retail company's need to adapt and progress, helping it to make time and money savings in its processes and supporting new, more profitable business models.

Companies that want to switch up their offering, and incorporate direct-to-consumer selling models can be confident to innovate in this way as Smartsheet streamlines and automates workflows, freeing up people's time to focus on new processes, which in turn can run through the platform.

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A full lifecycle product

Smartsheet is one tool that applies to thousands of use cases. Smartsheet's flexibility and scalability means it can adapt to your business's changing needs throughout the supply chain. If you grow, Smartsheet will grow with you.

From adapting to and powering new business models to coordinating shop renovations or the opening of new stores, Smartsheet enables teams to track timelines and progress, manage budgets in real time, and consequently, realize new projects more efficiently. As a result, they can bring in new revenue faster.

And that growth is affordable. Smartsheet is a full lifecycle product that will save a retail business time and money across an organization, without incurring huge costs. Smartsheet enables a business to grow sustainably.

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Smartsheet is the Smarter Partner for Retail

Simple to use, integrate, and scale, Smartsheet cuts through complexity to help you streamline workflows and improve the running of your business.

From automating processes, connecting teams, and driving digital transformation, Smartsheet is an intuitive, seamless project management tool for retail. **It's powerful. It's reliable. And most importantly – it's fit for the future.**

To learn more about Smartsheet for retail – and connect with a sales representative – **contact us today**.

Visit **smartsheet.com/contact/sales**

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