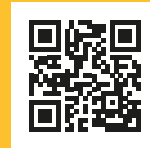


stores + shops

CONCEPT, DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

E-Paper
German Edition



EHI

EXTRA

EuroShop 2026

+ Global innovation festival

Store Highlights

+ International Hotspots

Smart Stores 24/7

+ Which technology fits which format?


Electronic Shelf Labels

+ The key to process excellence



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Time for change

The global environment remains challenging. The economy and trade are focusing on continuously adapting to circumstances. For the retail sector, the focus is on streamlining processes and reducing costs. The increasing number of application scenarios involving artificial intelligence and digital technologies are driving processes forward and opening up new ways to further rationalise procedures and improve the shopping experience. The aim is to review, optimise and automate processes. Economic uncertainty is giving rise to a drive for action, with the retail sector showing signs of movement in an already dynamic environment. Efficiency, lean processes and smart solutions are no longer an add-on, but a strategic necessity. Those who reduce costs today must also invest in their future viability in order to remain relevant. The EuroShop 2026 trade fair for retail (22-26 February in Düsseldorf) will be a platform for discussing these topics. Anyone who cuts costs today must also invest in their future viability in order to remain relevant. The retail fair will be a

barometer and source of inspiration in this regard. It will highlight opportunities for concrete investments in efficiency and innovation.

The dynamism and increasing technologisation are now also reflected in our retail magazine stores+shops. With this issue, we are saying goodbye to the regular publication of a printed magazine and switching to digital versions. This step will enable us to respond more quickly and flexibly to developments in the future and bring content to life.

This booklet is your guide to EuroShop 2026: Be inspired by the diverse range of exhibitors and the trade fair's programme of events. I look forward to meeting you in person at the EHI Retail Institute stand (Hall 6, Stand I 57). Come and see us, because together we can do better!

Katharina Sieweke

Editor-in-chief, sieweke@ehi.org

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Image: Mytheresa

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Image: www.mateusztondel.com



Image: Ben Elmecker

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Image: Itab

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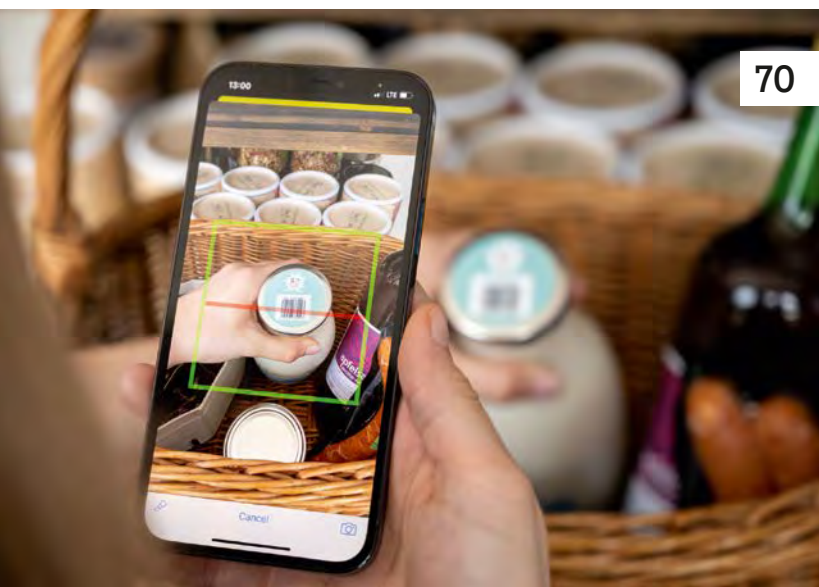


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Let there be *lightness!*

Today's retail design is undergoing a profound transformation. Where in the past product presentation and sales logic dominated, we now see immersive spaces that evoke emotions and narrate imaginative stories. We have selected a number of recent international flagship projects to showcase this trend.

Ilona Marx

Image: Maïa Chã



Tree with signature chocolates: Cédric et la Chocolaterie in Paris sparked a social media hype

Store design has long been a strategic tool and a three-dimensional brand ambassador, translating attitude, values, and visions. Whether fun and playful, detailed and decorative, or soothing and natural, there are various trends currently shaping the international retail landscape. However, they all have one thing in common: they demonstrate how retail, art, architecture, and sensory experiences are increasingly interacting – and that playful lightness has become a new aspiration and credo in the face of multiple crises.

CÉDRIC ET LA CHOCOLATERIE A long line of people is forming in front of the Paris store Cédric et la Chocolaterie, opened in October 2025 by star pastry chef Cédric Grolet on Avenue de l'Opéra. A strikingly young crowd of shoppers is patiently waiting to be admitted to the inner sanctum of the chocolaterie. Once inside, they immediately start filming and taking photos. No wonder: two trees covered in shiny chocolate rise up into the sky in the middle of the room, and larger-than-life pistachios, hazelnuts, almonds, and walnuts, which appear to be made of white, dark, and milk chocolate, are hanging clustered together from the ceiling. An installation of real chocolate dripping slowly down the wall behind the counter fills the room with a sweet aroma. Grolet has not simply opened a chocolate shop; he has created a fantastic world of experience that oscillates between haute pâtisserie and a fairy-tale setting. Associations with Willy Wonka's chocolate factory are indeed intentional.

But the setting is only part of the magic. The sales process itself has its own appeal. The elaborately produced cocoa products are presented by the staff as treasures. Three expert staff members welcome customers at the counter, explaining and celebrating the individual varieties. Once customers have made their selection, the order is passed on and packaged with the utmost care in a separate circular room. The act of purchasing thus becomes a ritualistic performance, staged on a platform where craftsmanship and luxury fantastically merge – a perfect example of how the trend of "playfulness" works in the premium segment. The opening of Cédric et la Chocolaterie caused a stir throughout Paris and on social media. Interior designer Tom Bénard from Atelier Cibé and his equally ingenious client deserve to be celebrated for this hype.



Image: Danilo Scarpati

Strong colours and geometric shapes. Plan B Framework in Milan plays masterfully with both components

PLAN C FRAMEWORK The Milan store Plan C Framework presents itself in a completely different way but is also scenically staged with playful lightness. Here, playfulness is communicated through striking colors, architectural refinements, and the playful intertwining of fashion, design, and (reading) culture. A bright red, spiral staircase connects the ground floor with the basement and also serves as a shelf for books and contemporary magazines from the independent Milanese bookshop 'Reading Room'. Whether or not you intend to make a purchase, you can come here simply to seek inspiration and stimulation. A generous invitation.

The basement features a striking bright yellow carpet and metallic modular walls and systems. This space also serves as an area for events that highlight the store's cultural aspirations. Plan C Framework, designed by creative director Carolina Castiglioni in collaboration with Studio April and the Milanese architecture firm (Ab) Normal, intentionally breaks with classic fashion retail conventions. Instead of minimalist understatement, the focus is on visual friction and intellectual input. The result is a space that conveys lightness and at the same time radiates creative freedom - in perfect harmony with the progressive brand identity.

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Decorative maximalism:
Mecca in Melbourne

MECCA Following years in which minimalism was the top priority in retail design, a countertrend is now apparent. Decoration is becoming a creative force that fosters atmosphere and energizes spaces with emotion. Stores in this category are more similar to galleries, salons, or private interiors than traditional retail spaces. Mecca's flagship store in Melbourne is a prime example of decorative maximalism with curatorial aspirations. Based in an Art Deco building from the 1930s with original terrazzo

Images (2): Sean Fennessy



floors, arcade windows, and faience tiles, Australian studio McQualter created a multi-story hybrid space that combines retail areas with services, art, education, and community experiences. The building on Bourke Street thus appears to be a mixture of gallery, beauty laboratory, and luxurious residence. Handcrafted ceramic elements meet custom-made furniture, while Venini pendant lights provide warm lighting. Products are not presented on shelves, but in scenographic arrangements that invite visitors to explore. The balance between opulence and clarity is remarkable: despite the decorative density, the interior remains uncluttered and calm. Mecca proves that decoration in retail does not have to appear overloaded if it is precisely selected and meaningfully arranged.

At Mecca, the Art Deco design language of the historic location is continued in the interior design

XINÚ Biophilic design is a response to urbanization, digital overload, and the desire for balance and earthiness. Nature is not only invoked, but structurally embedded - through materials such as algae, wood, and stone, natural sunlight, and free-form, organic shapes. The Xinú store in Mexico City is an impressive tribute to the sense-stirring power of nature. Inspired by botanical gardens and traditional Mexican materials, a space has been created that deliberately decelerates. Raw wood, granite, handmade surfaces, and a reduced, natural color palette give the circle-shaped store with floor-to-ceiling windows an almost museum-like, meditative feel. Plants are not mere decoration, but key elements of space. Light falls softly and filtered through the surrounding trees, and aromas become part of the overall experience. Xinú appeals to all the senses and consistently translates the brand philosophy - nature-based fragrances - into architecture.

At Xinú in Mexico City, the country's typical flora becomes an important part of the shopping experience



Image: Alejandro Ramirez Orozco



Image: Xinú



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EuroShop 2026

THE GLOBAL

RETAIL FESTIVAL

22 – 26 FEB 2026



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MAISON MYTHERESA The Maison Mytheresa pop-up store, located in St. Moritz until the end of April 2026, interprets decoration in a nostalgic, elegant, and dramatic style, evoking memories of Wes Anderson films. Draped crimson velvet curtains dominate the interior, providing warmth and privacy while conferring a theatrical character to

the space. The dark hardwoods of the elegant furniture create a classic grand hotel ambience. Saturated colors such as burgundy red, green, and brown tones dominate, but are playfully offset by pink accents in the dressing room. The entire Maison conveys the atmosphere of a private club or luxurious salon: ultra-stylish, yet cozy; intimate yet inviting for social interaction. ■



Perfection right down to the gloved fingertips. Even the bellboys at Maison Mytheresa are worthy of the silver screen

The Wes Anderson reminiscence: Maison Mytheresa celebrates the nostalgic glamour of grand hotels with its pop-up store in St. Moritz



Images (2): Mytheresa

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Global *innovation festival*

A trade fair that doesn't ask what is being sold, but how: EuroShop launched in Düsseldorf in 1966 with this forward-looking claim. From the outset, its focus was on the retail of tomorrow. Today, six decades after its premiere, EuroShop is the undisputed global leader in retail innovation.

In the mid-1960s, self-service, the first discount concepts and open merchandise displays fundamentally changed the retail landscape. Traditional corner shops gave way to new store formats. Against this backdrop, Messe Düsseldorf and the predecessor of today's EHI Retail Institute, the Institute for Self-Service (ISB), launched EuroShop in 1965 as a European exhibition and congress entitled 'Modern Shops and Shop Windows'. The premiere took place in the summer of 1966. From 11 to 15 June, the trade fair attracted more than 30,000 visitors to 17,193 square metres of net exhibition space.



1966

Entrance facade and panoramic view of the first EuroShop exhibition hall in 1966



Images (2): EHI, Messe Düsseldorf



Images EHI, Messe Düsseldorf

Mannequins from 1972

1972

The focus was on shopfitting, refrigerated display cabinets, cash registers and display advertising materials. The 'hot topics' were: 'the modern drugstore', 'selling textiles in a modern way', 'pre-packing of fruit and vegetables', 'fresh meat in self-service', 'self-service for car accessories' and 'frozen food as the product of the future'. Around 330 exhibitors from 11 countries presented their products and solutions for the booming self-service retail sector. Initially viewed with scepticism by experts, EuroShop developed in the 1970s into an industry event that, by integrating new topics

every three years, is both a trend barometer and an innovation platform.

The 1980s marked a technological turning point. Barcodes and automatic merchandise management made their way into retail, followed cashless payment, empties return systems and recycling solutions. At the turn of the millennium, digital technologies gained in importance. EuroShop responded to this development with its own technology trade fair, which has been held regularly since 2001 under the name EuroCIS, following on from its predecessor 'Retail Technology'. Since 2017, seven experience dimensions have structured the trade fair. Complemented by curated special areas and international spin-offs, EuroShop underlines its claim to be a source of inspiration, an innovation platform



Image: EHI, Messe Düsseldorf

1975

Shopping trolley with bag compartment

ISB exhibition stand 1981: The special show 'distributa' presents the high-tech highlights of the time.

1981



Image: EHI, Messe Düsseldorf



Image: EHI, Messe Düsseldorf

1984

Cash desk from 1984

and, at the same time, a trusted industry network. A look at the figures for EuroShop 2026 impressively confirms this development: around 1,900 exhibitors from over 60 countries are expected to attend from 22 to 26 February 2026. This means that the number of exhibitors has almost sextupled since the first event in 1966, with international participation even tripling. ■



Image: EHI, Messe Düsseldorf

1996

In 1996, a virtual reality prototype costing DM 80,000 caused a sensation

Special exhibition 'Shopping Tomorrow': Together with the Tengemann Group, EHI presents a feel-good supermarket of tomorrow



Image: EHI, Messe Düsseldorf

1999



Image: Messe Düsseldorf/Tillmann

2002

In 2002, EuroCIS was still called Retail Technology

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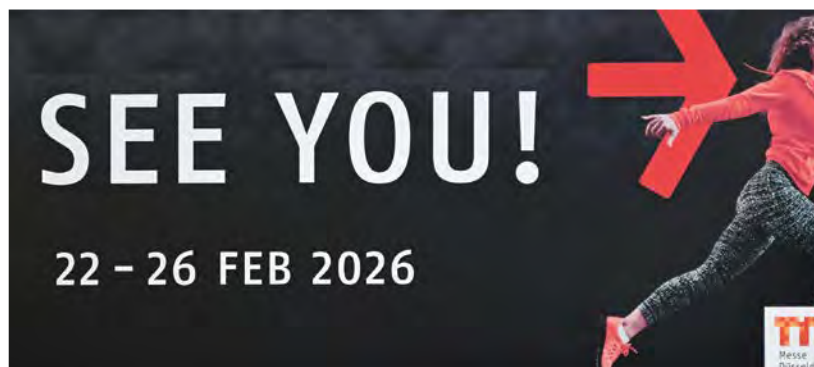


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Images (3): Messe Düsseldorf/CTillmann



More efficient, *faster*, smarter

For 60 years, EuroShop has been the most important meeting place for the international retail industry. The upcoming edition of the trade fair (22 to 26 February 2026) promises to be another explosion of innovation. More than 1,800 exhibitors from over 60 countries and around 85,000 visitors from all over the world are expected to attend.

Katharina Sieweke

EUROSHOP 2026

Facts and figures

Date: 22 to 26 February 2026, daily from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.

Location: Messe Düsseldorf

Exhibitors: approx. 1,800 on over 103,000 square metres of exhibition space

Exhibition areas: Shopfitting & Store Design, Lighting, EuroCIS (Retail Technology), Refrigeration & Energy Management, Food Service Equipment, Retail Marketing, Expo & Event Marketing Service Equipment, Expo & Event Marketing

euroshop-tradefair.com



'Agentic commerce' was the hot topic at the NRF industry gathering in New York in January. The event at the start of the year gave a preview of the trending topics that will dominate EuroShop in Düsseldorf just a few weeks later. In Europe, agentic commerce is still in its infancy, but many retailers are already exploring the potential offered by self-learning agents. Walmart provides a prominent practical example in the USA: the US retailer recently announced that it would link Google's Gemini AI assistant to its product range and loyalty programmes. This will provide customers with context-based product recommendations based on their previous online and in-store purchases.

Agentic commerce will be tangible at many exhibition stands at EuroShop: software developer Slimstock will demonstrate how autonomous agents coordinate product life cycles, supplier information and master data before they flow into operational retail processes. The quality of this data is increasingly becoming a competitive factor. Fraunhofer IAIS is presenting a scientifically based approach with 'RetAI Assortment Fit': the multi-agent system links external market and trend signals with internal targets in order to optimise product ranges dynamically and proactively.

STAGES

Lecture and discussion forums

Seven lecture and discussion forums – all located in the exhibition halls – will provide information on developments, trends and forward-looking best practice examples from the retail sector (in German and English, with simultaneous translation D-GB/GB-D) on all days of the fair. Participation is free of charge and registration is not required. The stages at a glance: Red Stage (best practices in digital transformation), Blue Stage (focus on technology trends), Black Stage (focus on start-ups and newcomers), Amber Stage (rethinking store design), Purple Stage (retail marketing), Yellow Stage (expo & event marketing) and Retail (un)covered (research & fresh perspectives).



✳ EuroShop

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Halle/Hall 4	Retail Marketing
Hallen/Halls 5, 6, 7a, 7	EuroGIS
Hallen/Hall 9	Lighting
Hallen/Halls 10, 11, 12, 13	Shopfitting & Store Design
Halle/Hall 13	Food Service Equipment
Hallen/Halls 13, 14, 15, 16	Refrigeration & Energy Management

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Interactive floor plan:



NEXT LEVEL AI Overall, artificial intelligence will be the main theme of EuroShop 2026. Against the backdrop of the EU AI Act, transparency, traceability and governance are becoming increasingly important. AI is less of an individual application and more of a transformation process: smart processes, opportunities to increase efficiency and optimise the use of personnel and resources are key reasons why retailers are currently planning to strategically embed AI in their companies. Accordingly, AI can be found in almost all exhibition areas at EuroShop. GK Software, for example, is showcasing practical application scenarios for private GPT solutions and presenting 'GK Instore Fulfillment', a technology that integrates stores into omnichannel processes in a targeted manner. Gebit is rethinking the checkout process: with 'Cart Checkout,' the shopping trolley becomes a mobile checkout, including price calculation, loyalty connection, fraud prevention and personalised content directly on the trolley.

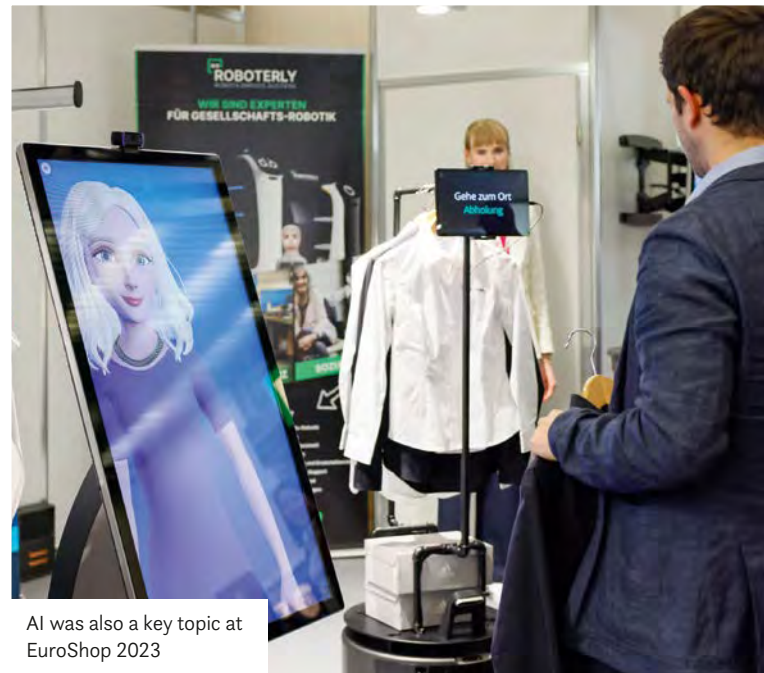


Image: Messe Düsseldorf/CTI/Imann

AI was also a key topic at EuroShop 2023

SPECIAL AREAS

Interactive areas on key topics

Nine areas focus on innovation: pioneers, practitioners, researchers, newcomers and talented individuals present their solutions and invite visitors to engage in dialogue. The Designer's Village is all about creative interior design, the Food Service Innovation Hub focuses on gastronomic concepts for the retail sector, and the Start-up Hub showcases inspiring ideas from young

entrepreneurs in retail. The 'Young Innovators by BMW' presents young German companies with innovative solutions, while the interactive special area 'VM Experience' is dedicated to visual merchandising. The 'Italian Lighting Lounge' focuses on lighting solutions from Italian suppliers. The IFES Global Village is the central meeting place for the trade fair and trade

fair services industry, the Shop! Global Village serves as a platform for all aspects of retail communication, and the dlV joint stand is once again the meeting place for the shopfitting industry. In addition, the Retail WG offers a community space for future concepts for the retail sector.



SMART PROCESS ASSISTANTS The use of AI is particularly evident where it supports everyday processes in stores. Electronic price tags, for example, are evolving from a display medium to a smart process assistant. At EuroShop 2026, various exhibitors will demonstrate how ESL can assist in everyday store operations, for example as a visual guidance system for employees: The Bison Group will show how AI-supported analyses of inventory and sales data can be used to prioritise tasks. For example, when restocking shelves or taking inventory, the relevant items on the shelf are visually highlighted. In-store Solutions is pursuing a similar approach with its interactive 'Vivi Tags': the compact, full-colour, touch-enabled displays show prices, ratings or availability, while also opening up new retail media potential. Aspects of sustainability are becoming increasingly important, such as battery-free ESL technologies based on energy harvesting or e-paper formats. The 'ePoster', for example, can replace printed promotional media. Since e-paper technology only requires energy when the image changes, the built-in battery should last for several years, depending on its size.

AWARDS

Award ceremonies

At EuroShop, international teams of experts present awards for the world's most successful concepts in the fields of retail technology (reta awards), design (EuroShop RetailDesign Award) and science (Science Award) as well as stand design (Exhibitor Magazine's EuroShop Awards).



GUIDED TOURS

Curated tours on trending topics

Six guided tours of trade fair exhibitors and products provide information on key developments in the areas of retail tech, sustainable materials & store designs, energy management & optimisation, food service equipment, and expo & events. The Düsseldorf Store Tour showcases best practice implementations in the retail sector.



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Shops as places of experience and identification, as well as feel-good locations – EuroShop 2023

Image: Messe Düsseldorf/CTI/Imann

SMART STOREPLANNING Shopfitting and store design are also heavily influenced by technology and data intelligence today. In the ‘Shopfitting & Store Design’ exhibition area, Umdasch The Store Makers shows how closely physical and digital elements interact today and how this can be achieved in a variety of ways: from furniture with smart additional features and digital connectivity, such as the Smart Bakery Box, to classic touchpoints such as screens and digital video rails, to software solutions such as the ‘umdasch eXperience Platform’, which provides retailers with an effective solution for managing and monitoring digital touchpoints at the point of sale. The exhibitor Wanzl presents at its trade fair booth a smart food court that integrates digital access, security and control technologies. In addition to efficiency and digitalisation, the creative and aesthetic aspects of store design remain an important topic, as does sustainability, which is increasingly manifesting itself in the choice of materials, circular concepts and durable store solutions. In this context, Pfliegerer, Objectflor, Egger and others are presenting developments that contribute to an environmentally friendly value creation cycle.

Artificial intelligence is fundamentally changing planning, inventory management and customer engagement in retail. Ultimately, it is the moment at the checkout that determines efficiency, trust and the shopping experience. Self-checkout, mobile checkouts and hybrid store concepts require flexible, software-based payment solutions. Many retailers are shifting the checkout process: advice, product selection and payment take place directly on the shop floor. This requires integrated payment infrastructures that combine speed, payment security and omnichannel capability. With the Wero digital payment system, the European Payments Initiative is pursuing the goal of merging national procedures such as Giropay and Paydirekt into a uniform European solution, thereby simplifying payment transactions in retail in the long term.

Payment service providers, acquirers and payment technology providers such as Verifone, Computop, S-Payment, Epay and others will be demonstrating at Euro-

Shop how the various cashless payment methods can be technologically implemented. Also with regard to the most important interface between retailers and their customers. ■



Ulrich Spaan
CEO - Managing Director
EHI Retail Institute

„Define a clear roadmap for AI“

Ulrich Spaan, Managing Director of EHI, talks about the transformation of EuroShop – and why trade fairs play a key role in the future of retail, especially in times of change.

*The interview was conducted by
Katharina Sieweke*

60 years of EuroShop: How has the world’s leading trade fair influenced the retail industry?

The EuroShop was established with the intention of making modern retail more accessible to retail companies. At that time, there was no central location in Europe where solutions for the retail sector were presented in a single place. The response was overwhelmingly positive: the trade fair was initially held every two years and quickly developed into an international trend barometer for the industry. Over the past six decades, the focus of the exhibitors’ offerings has shifted. While shopfitting and sales promotion dominated in the early years, technological topics became increasingly important as the retail sector became more professional. To this day, EuroShop continues to be an important source of inspiration – and has a significant influence on where retailers choose to invest.

As the initiator of the world's leading trade fair, EHI has been closely associated with the event from the very beginning: Which retail innovations were celebrated early on at EuroShop but never caught on – and why?

Innovations that received a lot of media attention but ultimately failed to establish themselves on the market were a recurring phenomenon. These included a shopping trolley tunneling system designed to automatically scan goods – an early prototype of today's RFID solutions. Self-driving shopping trolleys also attracted interest. In retrospect, many of these innovations failed not because they were irrelevant, but because they were ahead of their time. The technology was not yet mature, and customers did not accept it. Migros, for example, presented an early version of self-checkouts, but at the time, they were still too complex to be widely accepted.

The EHI has been guiding the transformation of the retail sector for 75 years – and is itself undergoing change. You became the new Managing Director of the EHI in January: from your perspective, how are the roles of the institute and the trade fair changing in an increasingly dynamic retail environment?

Trade fairs remain relevant because they offer something that digital formats alone cannot replace: they bring suppliers, solutions and decision-makers together and provide guidance. At the same time, their function is changing. EuroShop and other leading trade fairs are increasingly evolving into community platforms where exchange, networking and discussion are at the forefront. Pure product presentations are increasingly taking a back seat. A similar development can be seen in brick-and-mortar retail itself, where stores are increasingly being designed as experiential spaces. Research institutes face similar challenges. They need to respond more quickly to change, continuously refine their topics and position themselves as central knowledge and network hubs – both physically and digitally. Technological skills are becoming increasingly important, especially the use of AI to make research more efficient and give the industry better access to relevant data.

What key decisions should retail companies make today in order to remain relevant in a few years' time?

Retail has not always been among the international pioneers. However, many companies are now strategically very well positioned digitally and have developed their organisations accordingly. Nevertheless, it remains crucial not to underestimate technological developments – especially when it comes to AI. Retailers would be well advised to define a clear roadmap at an early stage, both for internal processes and for customer dialogue. Those who keep an eye on technological change and the changing shopping behaviour of younger generations at an early stage increase their chances of remaining competitive in the long term.



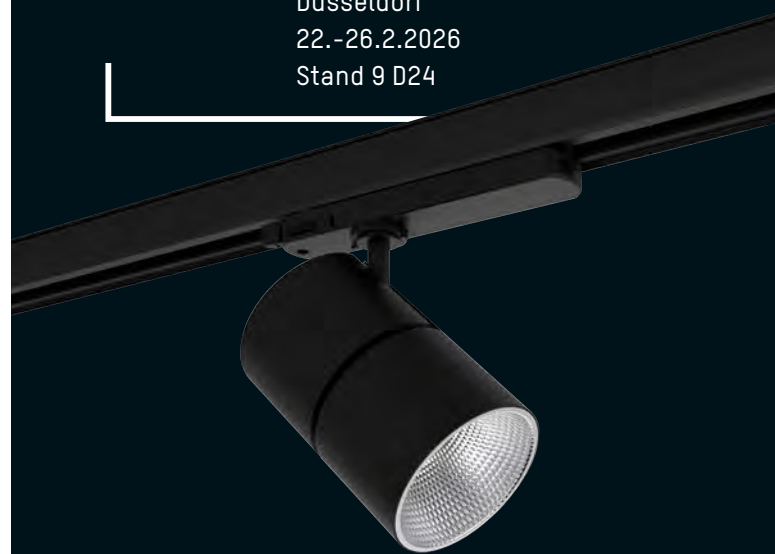
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Since 2008, the EuroShop RetailDesign Award has been presented annually to the world's best store concepts in five categories: 'Food', 'Fashion & Lifestyle', 'Digital', 'Hospitality' and 'Sustainability'. There is one winner per category. The EuroShop RetailDesign Awards 2026 ceremony will take place on 24 February as part of EuroShop on the Amber Stage in Hall 9. Of 122 submissions from 30 countries, 51 projects have reached the final round.

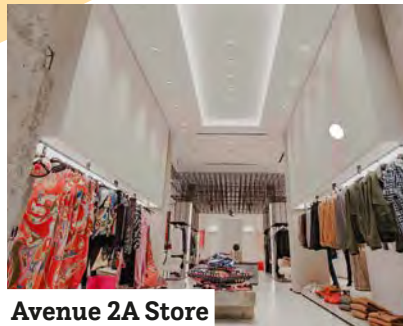
Clarissa Schauff



Asteri Panorama Store

Riyadh, Saudi-Arabien
Opening year: 2025
Sales area: 89 sqm

The Asteri Panorama Store in the Panorama Mall in Riyadh celebrates the beauty of Arab women. Inspired by the night-time skyline of Riyadh, the design combines linear lighting accents and mirrors to reflect the lights of the city.



Avenue 2A Store

Johannesburg, South Africa
Opening year: 2024
Sales area: 473 sqm

With a carefully curated selection of high-end fashion, accessories and home accessories from renowned brands, the Johannesburg store offers its customers an exclusive shopping experience. An elegant café enriches the offering.



Balabala Store Suzhou

Suzhou, China
Opening year: 2025
Sales area: 395 sqm

The Balabala store presents the brand's new 'Growing Together' concept. The 400 sqm store combines fashionable elements with child-friendly areas, including a mini catwalk, interactive changing rooms and a baby zone.



Biogena Plaza

Vienna, Austria
Opening year: 2025
Sales area: 435 sqm

Biogena Plaza is an innovative health and lifestyle concept in Vienna. The architecture combines clear, bright rooms with functional treatment zones, creating an atmosphere that is both functional and inviting. One highlight is the cold sauna.



Bjut by Dr. Max

Prague, Czechia
Opening year: 2024
Sales area: 300 sqm

The store combines luxury, science and wellness across more than 300 sqm and offers high-quality cosmetic brands as well as individual skin and hair analyses. One highlight is the private 'beauty hubs' for treatments in a secluded environment.



BRAC polskie wina

Warsaw, Poland
Opening year: 2024
Sales area: 27 sqm

BRAC polskie wina in Warsaw, the capital of Poland, has been opened in 2014 and is a modern wine bar specialising in Polish, artisan wines. The stylish interior combines contemporary design with retro elements to create a cosy atmosphere in the wine bar.



Breuninger Flagship Store

Hamburg, Germany
Opening year: 2025
Sales area: 14,000 sqm

The store in Westfield Centro Hamburg-Überseequartier spans three floors and offers a selection of international designer brands, newcomer labels and an extensive range of fashion, beauty, shoes and accessories.



C&A

Vienna, Austria
Opening year: 2025
Sales area: 1,718 sqm

The C&A branch on Mariahilfer Straße is one of the largest in Austria. In addition to the latest collections, the range also includes an XL collection for women and offers such as a new children's Halloween collection.



Casa Garbo

Lima, Peru
Opening year: 2024
Sales area: 800 sqm

Casa Garbo is a restobar in the heart of Miraflores. It combines gastronomy, cocktails and entertainment in a unique atmosphere. The concept, a combination of bar and restaurant, was developed by chef Jorge Muñoz.



Conforama Villeneuve

Villeneuve, Switzerland
Opening year: 2025
Sales area: 4,500 sqm

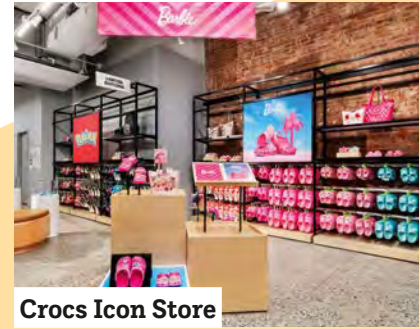
Conforama in Villeneuve is a spacious furniture store with a clearly structured product presentation and modern design. Bright, spacious rooms offer a comprehensive range of furniture, household appliances and home accessories.



Coyo flagship store

Gurugram, India
Opening year: 2025
Sales area: 6,000 sqm

Coyo in Gurugram is a modern flagship store for women's fashion with over 50 international and Indian brands. The 6,000 sqm store offers a stylish shopping experience with a lounge, dressing rooms and personalised styling.



Crocs Icon Store

New York City, USA
Opening year: 2025
Sales area: 390 sqm

The Crocs Icon Store in New York City offers a unique shopping experience with exclusive collections and limited editions. The modern interior, designed by Briggs Hillier, combines urban energy with interactive elements.



Cupra City Garage

Vienna, Austria
Opening year: May 2025
Sales area: 476 sqm

The innovative flagship store combines modern design with Vienna's historical identity. In addition to showcasing the latest Cupra models, the City Garage also offers a Cupra Bar & Lounge for after-work get-togethers and networking events.



Cyberculture Store

Lviv, Ukraine
Opening year: 2024
Sales area: 1,660 sqm

The Cyberculture Store features a unique store design with gaming elements. In addition to goods from Ukrainian producers, products from 80 countries are offered. The store also serves as a public meeting point in the event of infrastructure failure.



Deichmann Via Roma

Rom, Italy
Opening year: 2025
Sales area: 800 sqm

The new Deichmann store on Via Roma presents its wide range of shoes for women, men and children with a clearly structured shelf layout. The bright interior and wide aisles create a shopping atmosphere in a historic setting.



DORS at Design Orchard

Singapore
Opening year: 2025
Sales area: 705 sqm

The concept store brings together over 80 local fashion, beauty and lifestyle brands and offers various interactive areas such as a beauty bar and a playground to try things out. A lively meeting place that represents Singapore's creative diversity.



E-Center Kohler

Offenburg, Germany
Opening year: 2025
Sales area: 5,500 sqm

The E-Center Kohler in Offenburg is a modern Edeka supermarket with a sales area of around 5,500 sqm and over 55,000 products in its range. The long service counters for cheese, meat and sausage products, and fish are particularly impressive.



Elesen Panorama Store

Vilnius, Lithuania
Opening year: 2025
Sales area: 1,650 sqm

This electronics store offers a wide selection of IT, household and entertainment electronics from brands such as Samsung, Apple and Sony. The customer-oriented design was developed by Ikea designers and ensures a pleasant shopping experience.



Euronics Widbiller

Munich, Germany
Opening year: 2024/2025
Sales area: 1,200 sqm

A modern and inviting store concept characterises the Euronics specialist store Widbiller in Munich. Customers benefit from expert advice and a comfortable shopping experience in a sustainable and innovative atmosphere.



Famila Piazza Marina

Palermo, Italy
Opening year: 2025
Sales area: 1,600 sqm

The modern supermarket is a successful blend of tradition and innovation. The design combines natural materials with the cultural identity of the city of Palermo. A particular highlight is the Mizzica Bistrot, which serves regional dishes.



Fernweh Atelier

Essen, Germany
Opening year: 2025
Sales area: 82 sqm

The travel agency with a tropical ambience is part of the 'Manufaktur Ruhr' concept, a platform for the presentation of regional products. The store is aimed primarily at young people and offers comprehensive travel services such as flights and accommodation.



Food Hall Stary Browar

Poznań, Poland
Opening year: 2025
Sales area: 1,200 sqm

The food court, which offers a wide range of international street food such as Greek pitas, Thai cuisine and Korean fried chicken, is located in the Stary Browar shopping centre and offers a welcoming atmosphere with cafés and events.



House of Silhouette

Vienna, Austria
Opening year: 2024
Sales area: 338 sqm

The flagship store showcases the Silhouette, Neubau Eyewear and Evil Eye brands. The design by Ippolito Fleitz combines modern architecture with interactive experiences such as a special refraction capsule for eye tests and a digital fitting room.



Hutgemacht

Würzburg, Germany
Opening year: 2025
Sales area: 35 sqm

Hutgemacht is a shop for handmade hats. The collections are inspired by South American traditions, especially from Peru. The hats are made in the company's own workshop. Traditional craftsmanship is combined with modern designs.



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Intersport Finke

Bielefeld, Germany
Opening year: 2024
Sales area: 2,000 sqm

The Intersport Finke flagship store was redesigned into a modern sports shop after a four-month renovation of the former fashion house. The range covers areas such as running, team sports, outdoor, training, sports style and beach.



Joalharia do Carmo

Lisbon, Portugal
Opening year: 2025
Sales area: 850 sqm

This jewellery manufacturer in the Chiado district offers handmade gold and silver jewellery crafted using Portuguese filigree techniques. The shop features an Art Deco façade and original interior elements such as chandeliers and wooden staircases.



Kaptlen & Son

Cologne, Germany
Opening year: 2024
Sales area: 130 sqm

The store aims to offer its customers an interactive brand experience. For example, with a 'Magic Mirror' that allows products to be viewed from different perspectives and a 'Packing Table' for testing backpacks.



LAP+AI Store Taipei

Taipei, Taiwan
Opening year: 2025
Sales area: 46 sqm

The store focuses on combining fashion and artificial intelligence. Examples include interactive displays that respond to customer preferences, an AI-powered styling assistant and product recommendations based on real-time data.



LCBO Store Queens Quay

Toronto, Canada
Opening year: 2025
Sales area: 2,000 sqm

Located directly on Lake Ontario, the store offers an open, light-flooded room concept. One highlight is the area with over 400 local products, presented with digital displays. The store design is characterised by sustainable materials.



Longo's Store Toronto

Toronto, Canada
Opening year: 2025
Sales area: 3,160 sqm

The Longo's store in Toronto places great emphasis on a modern shopping experience with an extensive range of fruit and vegetables, artisan cheese and meat products, a sushi bar and a high proportion of service areas.



Loop5

Weierstadt, Germany
Opening year: 2024
Sales area: 59,510 sqm

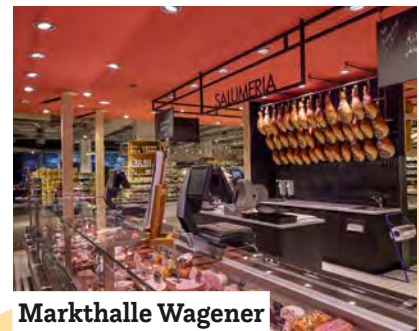
The Loop5 shopping centre in Weierstadt, with 170 shops, impresses with its striking location directly on the A5 motorway and its architecture with references to aerospace and themed corridors such as propeller and wing elements in the interior.



Manolo Blahnik

Miami, USA
Opening year: 2025
Sales area: 185 sqm

The boutique in Miami's Design District embodies luxurious shoemaking and stylish retail design. A striking black and white façade concept with geometric shapes is inspired by the aesthetics of Art Deco pioneer Josef Hoffmann.



Markthalle Wagener

Baden-Baden, Germany
Opening year: 2024
Sales area: 1,700 sqm

The delicatessen market is supplied by over 300 suppliers with fresh products such as fruit, vegetables, cheese, meat, fish, baked goods, antipasti and sushi. The market hall is part of the Wagener Galerie, which has a car park with more than 400 spaces.

**Media Markt Saturn**

Hamburg, Germany
Opening year: 2024
Sales area: 15,000 sqm

The specialist store concept combines a wide range of consumer electronics with digital services and innovative store design. Clear architecture, modern materials and digital touchpoints ensure a contemporary shopping experience.

**Mohey Flagship Store Jayanagar**

Bengaluru, India
Opening year: 2025
Sales area: 7,167 sqm

The Mohey brand is known in India for festive and traditional women's fashion. The flagship store offers a wide selection of wedding dresses, festive outfits and everyday fashion, including sarees, lehengas, kurta sets and matching accessories.

**New Balance Flagship Store**

Stockholm, Sweden
Opening year: 2025
Sales area: 360 sqm

The New Balance flagship store presents the entire New Balance range – from performance running shoes and lifestyle fashion to exclusive collaborations. The store's design combines modernity with Scandinavian aesthetics.

**Norrøna Concept**

Bergen, Norway
Opening year: 2025
Sales area: 200 sqm

The store offers a wide range of outdoor clothing and equipment for adventures in Norway and around the world. The range includes the entire current Norrøna collection, including products for outdoor activities, skiing and mountain sports.

**Rewe Jens Piclum**

Hamburg, Germany
Opening year: 2025
Sales area: 3,000 sqm

Rewe retailer Jens Piclum's store offers over 20,000 items, including many delicatessen products, international specialties and an extensive range of wines. The maritime market hall-style design reflects the location in Hafen City.

**Ritchies Supa IGA**

Balnarring, Australia
Opening year: 2024
Sales area: 3,100 sqm

Highlights of the supermarket in Balnarring, Australia are the fresh produce departments, including a bakery with exclusive products from Brunetti Classico, a sushi bar with hot Japanese dishes and a wide range of food products.

**Saigu Cosmetics Valencia**

Valencia, Spain
Opening year: 2025
Sales area: ca. 500 sqm

The brand specialises in natural, vegan and Mediterranean-inspired cosmetic products. The store offers the entire Saigu product range as well as personalised services such as colour consulting and make-up workshops.

**Hajo Mode Showroom**

Weiden in der Oberpfalz, Germany
Opening year: 2025
Sales area: 130 sqm

The showroom at the company's headquarters showcases the brand's current collection, which specialises in leisure and sports fashion. The room concept focuses on zoning and minimalist design with an emphasis on sustainability.

**Smartseller Store**

Nuremberg, Germany
Opening year: 2025
Sales area: 1,100 sqm

The Smartseller Store at Nuremberg Airport combines duty-free shopping with food and beverage offerings and regional flair. The product range is presented on themed islands. The highlight is a beer section with an impressive light installation.



Spar Frederiksberg

Frederiksberg, Denmark
Opening year: 2024
Sales area: 152 sqm

The supermarket offers a wide selection of fresh products, convenience items and local specialities. Special features include the extensive fruit and vegetable department and a wide range of ready meals and wines.



Super Valu Clonakilty

Clonakilty, Ireland
Opening year: 2025
Sales area: 2,000 sqm

Following the expansion of the retail company founded in 1984, Eugene and Catriona Scally's supermarket offers a wide range of fresh products, including an in-house bakery, a butcher's shop and a delicatessen section.



Tegut

Weimar, Germany
Opening year: 2025
Sales area: 1,200 sqm

Tegut focuses on organic food. Sustainable agriculture, fair trade and environmentally friendly packaging are at the forefront. Highlights include a wide range of vegan and vegetarian foods and regular tastings.



The Georgian at Harrods

London, United Kingdom
Opening year: 2024
Sales area: 1,200 sqm

The Georgian restaurant is located on the fourth floor of Harrods in Knightsbridge. The interior is decorated in Edwardian style. The restaurant is known for its luxurious afternoon tea experience with delicious sandwiches and desserts.



Tippkötter Bikes

Emsdetten, Germany
Opening year: 2024
Sales area: 1,400 sqm

This family-run specialist bicycle shop offers a wide selection of bicycles, e-bikes, cargo bikes and accessories. In addition to sales, Tippkötter Bikes also offers leasing and financing options as well as individual frame size advice.



Union-Zeughaus

Berlin, Germany
Opening year: 2025
Sales area: 250 sqm

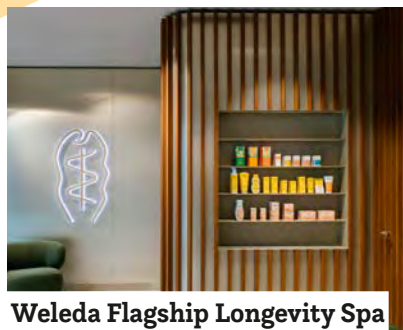
The Union-Zeughäuser are the official fan shops of 1. FC Union Berlin. The shop features an industrial design that incorporates elements such as clinker bricks and steel beams to create a connection to the Köpenick location.



Verus Optical

Rio de Janeiro, Brazil
Opening year: 2025
Sales area: 20 sqm

The shop reflects the spirit of Rio de Janeiro, combining elements of colonial and modernist architecture with the vibrant colours of carnival. Natural materials such as wicker and wood emphasise local craftsmanship.



Weleda Flagship Longevity Spa

Düsseldorf, Germany
Opening year: 2025
Sales area: 270 sqm

Weleda's wellness oasis showcases the theme of 'longevity' – natural health and vitality – as a 360-degree experience. The design focuses on natural materials, warm lighting and earthy colours that radiate.



Whole Foods Market Daily Shop

New York, USA
Opening year: 2024
Sales area: 850 sqm

The Whole Foods Market Daily Shop is aimed at urban customers who value quick and convenient grocery shopping. Natural materials dominate the modern and inviting store design with its clear structure.

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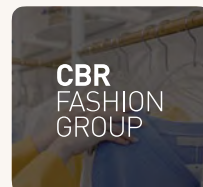
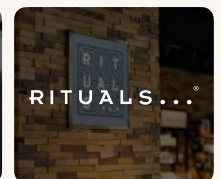
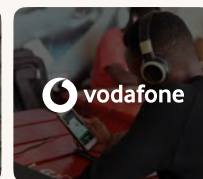
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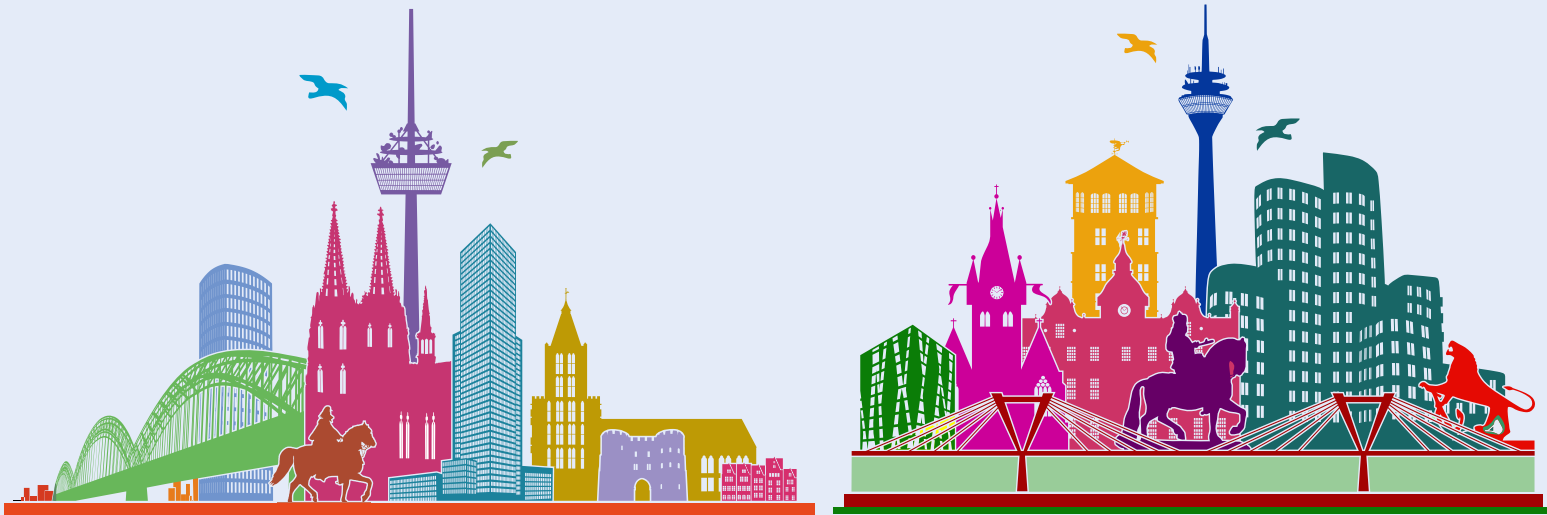
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Storeguide:

Inspiration along the Rhine



Just in time for EuroShop 2026, stores+shops has comprehensively updated its digital storeguide. The interactive overview is aimed at international trade visitors who want to discover the retail hotspots in Düsseldorf, Cologne, and the Rhine region during their visit to the trade fair.

Mathias Kohne



The storeguide brings together selected retail concepts from the fashion, lifestyle, food, and technology sectors and shows how diverse and dynamic the regional retail landscape has developed around Düsseldorf as a trade fair location. Whether flagship stores, innovative store design, or new omnichannel formats: short profiles, images, and maps provide a compact overview and make it easier to plan store tours before or after visiting the trade fair.

EXPERIENCE RETAIL LIVE The guide is a practical addition to the trade fair program, especially for visitors from outside the city. It combines the inspiration provided by EuroShop with real-life best practice examples from city centers and brings trends such as automation, digital customer interaction, and new service concepts to life.

WORTHWHILE DETOURS Two examples from the guide: In Düsseldorf, Bershka on Schadowstraße shows what a highly technology-driven fashion concept can look like: with large-format LED walls, self-checkout counters with RFID technology, and pay-and-go stations. In Cologne, Rimowa has opened a new flagship store right next to the cathedral, showcasing premium luggage on two floors and offering services such as repairs, personalization, and individual configurations. Whether Düsseldorf or Cologne - both metropolises are characterized by a mix of small-scale diversity and large trade magnets.

The storeguide is mobile and desktop-compatible, available in two languages (German/English), and continuously updated: a source of inspiration for anyone who wants to experience retail not only in the exhibition halls, but also on site. ■

ITAB



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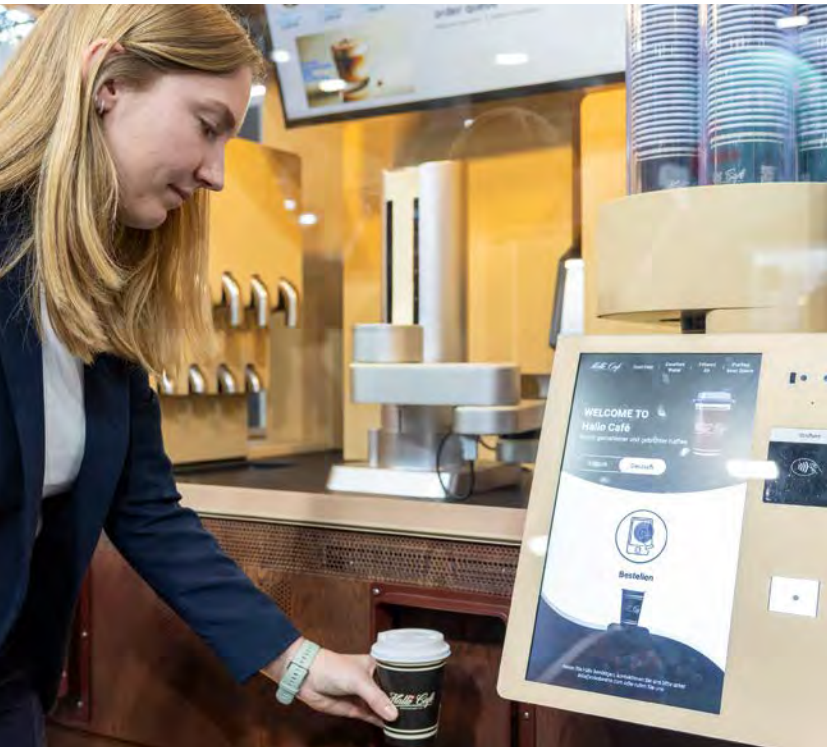
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10

ITAB Group

Image: Messe Düsseldorf/CTillmann



Added value for business and guest experience

Solutions for cooking and baking, convenience systems, food and to-go technologies will be presented in the 'Food Service Equipment' exhibition area in Hall 13 at EuroShop. Special topics such as digital transformation and automation in commercial catering will also be highlighted in a special area.

Winfried Lambertz

Food service equipment includes kitchen technology such as refrigeration systems, counters, and baking and cooking appliances. These ensure smooth processes in commercial catering and enable food and beverages to be served efficiently. Automated processes can simplify workflows, improve energy management, and reduce preparation time – all of which add value to the business and the customer experience.

Fish and delicatessen display cabinet from Hagola



Image: Hagola

The concepts in commercial catering are diverse, ranging from special convenience and to-go solutions to themed restaurants or entire food worlds. Market hall catering, show kitchens and live cooking stations demonstrate how dining and shopping can be combined into a holistic experience.

KEEPING FOOD FRESH At EuroShop, nearly 90 exhibitors will not only present products and solutions for the catering industry, but also bring them to life. Equipment for presenting chilled and hot food, for example, is indispensable for any commercial caterer. At EuroShop, Hagola Gastronomietechnik will be showcasing its delicatessen carousel, which is particularly suitable for displaying fish and delicatessen products on crushed ice, as well as its new combination of cold and hot display cases. Both are customised product solutions based on the standard product range. The new display case concept allows cold and hot display cases to be combined. Equipped with transparent and energy-efficient thermal insulation glazing, the display cases ensure that food stays fresh. With the beverage refrigerated counters, wine climate cabinets, cocktail stations and coffee stations from the Hagola product range,

Image: Wiesheu



Image to the left: To-go concepts that enable both in-house consumption and takeaway are also gaining importance in commercial catering

Image above: Automated in-store baking with a system solution from Wiesheu

a wide variety of solutions can be planned to suit individual requirements.

Current challenges facing commercial catering include general cost increases, resulting in declining margins and a shortage of kitchen and service staff. These challenges can be met with digitally controlled kitchen appliances and automated systems. Examples include digital menu boards, self-order terminals, AI-supported ordering and kitchen processes, and food forecasting systems to reduce food waste.

BAKING IN THE STORE Lower Saxony-based company MKN focuses on networked commercial kitchen appliances that are centrally controlled via an online platform, enabling even untrained staff to prepare high-quality food. The southern German supplier Wiesheu is presenting automated baking stations for use at the point of sale. The spotlight is on the modular system solution 'hi, bread' for the automation of in-store baking in food retail. Wiesheu promises food

FOOD SERVICE INFORMATION HUB

Forward-looking technologies

A special area in Hall 13, located in the Food Service Equipment exhibition area, highlights digital transformation and automation in commercial catering. Exhibitors will demonstrate how digital solutions and AI-supported technologies can support efficient catering operations. The focus will be on forecasting systems, digital ordering, payment, vending and robotics.



Baking automation directly in the shop

Image: Messe Düsseldorf/CTillmann

retailers greater efficiency through reduced overproduction and lower operating costs with optimised energy consumption. The company is also presenting the 'Raum-Champion E3', which can be equipped with up to 18 trays, and the 'Bäck'n'Snack Station', a space-saving two-in-one solution for the production of fresh baked goods and snacks. ■

Successful in-store baking isn't about size – It's about WIESHEU.

WIESHEU combines reliable baking technology with smart automation, digital oven management and a strong service network. The result: fresh goods from morning until closing time, from convenience stores to hypermarkets.



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Düsseldorf
Hall 13
Booth C86

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WIESHEU



And the nominees are...

Which retail companies can be proud of receiving a reta award this year? On February 23rd, 2026, as part of the EuroShop, EHI is honoring this year's recipients. The jury selected 28 innovative projects from 75 international applications in the following categories: Artificial Intelligence, Checkout & Smart Store, Customer Experience, Employee Empowerment, Supply Chain Excellence, and, for the first time, Martech Innovation. The following is an overview of all finalists.

Katharina Sieweke

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

This category honors the advancements of retailers regarding AI technology that enhances decision-making, personalization, and efficiency in retail, such as AI-driven chatbots, Gen AI applications and Predictive Analytics.

Albert Czechia – Mettler Toledo Albert Czech Republic is modernizing its checkout and service processes with Mettler Toledo's AI-powered product recognition solution, Fresh AI. The solution ensures fast and precise identification of unpackaged goods without barcodes at checkout and reduces error sources, such as products getting mixed up during manual data entry. Employees are freed from routine tasks, real-time data enhances data quality in POS systems and, in a long-term sense, boosts the customer experience.

Galeria – KPS Galeria relies on AI-powered dynamic pricing to manage more than 2 million items across 92 stores. The fully automated, data-driven solution enables the retailer to continuously analyze real-time market data, monitor competitor prices, and identify trends in demand in order to optimize its own prices. This has enabled Galeria to increase sales by 230 percent and boost margins by 50 percent.

Netto Marken-Discount – Trigo Vision Thanks to computer vision technology, Netto Germany now uses its CCTV infrastructure to detect unpaid items, fraudulent activity, and suspicious behavior patterns at the self-checkout systems in real time and notify staff directly. This approach allows Netto to shift from reactive monitoring to proactive prevention, while also paving the way for new digital services.

Peek & Cloppenburg Düsseldorf – Ahead& Peek & Cloppenburg Düsseldorf is setting a new standard in content production by using a platform for fully automated, brand-compliant content creation. The solution uses synchronized, proprietary AI engines. These provide images and visualizations of products and standardized avatars, and more. The agnostic architecture allows new AI models to be integrated. As a result, production costs can be reduced by up to 80 percent, and production volume can be increased, with content being displayed within a few hours.

Sonae – Sensei Sonae MC is setting new standards in the food sector with a 1,200 sqm autonomous smart store in Leira, Portugal, offering over 11,000 items. Purchases are tracked in real time at fresh food counters for baked goods, fish, and meat using a combination of AI, computer vision, and sensors. Scanning and queues are a thing of the past,

and receipts are generated digitally in real time. The result: increased customer satisfaction and foot traffic, as well as improved staff planning and optimized inventory management.

CHECKOUT & SMART STORE

This category recognizes innovations that streamline the purchase process or enhance in-store experiences, such as autonomous stores and smart shelves.

Lekkerland Innovative AI-supported grab-and-go technology is being used in the 70 sqm Rewe-to-go store at Frankfurt Airport. Proprietary software enables quick access via payment card, while IoT technologies support the sales of coffee and age-restricted items. The goals are to optimize the shopping experience and reduce staff costs.

Colruyt Group – Expresso Deutschland Colruyt has launched the next generation of smart shopping carts in Belgium. Using a system of cameras and weighing sensors, these carts can scan products, including loose goods such as fruit and vegetables. Integrated sensors also allow for location-based marketing. PIM, POS, and loyalty programs integrate seamlessly into the application. It ensures faster checkout processes and lower staff costs in stores.

Coop Czech – Contio 24/7 shopping at more than 100 locations: Coop offers opening hours with and without staff in stores in the Czech Republic. Technically, the concept is based on digital access control with identity verification, self-service payment terminals, and comprehensive, centrally controlled video surveillance. This allows the retailer to secure the profitability of locations with low customer traffic and reduce staffing requirements outside of peak hours. Overall, these hybrid stores are recording growth in sales of around 10 to 15 percent.



Contactless payment at Rewe To Go at Frankfurt Airport

Image: Lekkerland



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22 to 26 February 2026, Hall 6, Stand I 50



Image: Umdasch The Store Makers

Large-format LED wall at House of Silhouette in Vienna

Famila-Handelsmarkt Kiel Famila has developed a self-checkout platform including hand scanners and smart carts that can be seamlessly connected to POS, ERP, and loyalty program systems. Shoplifting prevention is achieved through random checks based on behavior patterns. All self-service checkouts are centralized and provide real-time analytics.

L & T – GK Artificial Intelligence for Retail, Vusion Thanks to the introduction of digital price tags and an Intelligent Pricing Engine (IPE), L&T can now automatically implement price changes throughout the store in real time. The IPE uses continuous analysis of demand trends, inventory levels, and external market data to deliver accurate, dynamic pricing decisions. The application replaces the former manual and error-prone process and strengthens the company's ability to compete in the omnichannel market.

CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE

This category highlights technologies that improve how customers experience the brand and shop across all touchpoints. This includes solutions like instore navigation, mobile applications and personalized service tools.

China Resources Vanguard – Hanshow Technology The Chinese grocery chain has piloted a marketing solution based on NFC-enabled electronic shelf labels. ESLs serve as interactive touchpoints. The ESLs not only display prices but also give access to coupons and promotions. Customers interact directly at the shelf by tapping their smartphone – no app or QR code scan needed. The application uses the existing IT infrastructure and is scalable.

House of Silhouette – Umdasch Digital Retail Digital features such as a 30 sqm LED wall and a virtual fitting area make a visit to the eyewear specialist store an experience. Physical and virtual touchpoints come together to form an overall architectural concept.

Kaufland Stiftung & Co. KG – Schwarz Digits, Bizerba Kaufland is transforming its fresh food counter areas into efficient omnichannel hubs by combining the digital ordering process with AI-supported object identification. Items pre-ordered via app, terminal or other digital channels are immediately displayed to customers on the scales and cash register displays. AI helps to automatically identify products. This reduces waiting times and increases throughput without the need for additional staff.

Media Markt Saturn – Accesa IT Group “Smart Manual”, a specially developed AI-supported solution, is designed to make operating instructions for products easier to understand. The chatbot, which can be activated via QR code or web link, is available 24/7 and provides answers to customer queries based on an extensive knowledge database.

Spar Kosova – Spaaza Spar in Kosovo is replacing traditional plastic cards with a digital, cross-brand loyalty program. The cloud-based app is available in Albanian and English and can be used in all Meridian Group retail locations. “Kartela Plus” enables gamification and personalized promotions, to name a few. Analytics dashboards cross-reference POS data with information on purchase frequency, cart size, demographics, and promotional response. The loyalty program has over 50,000 active members generating 18 percent of sales.

EMPLOYEE EMPOWERMENT

This category honours solutions that empower staff through technology, improving communication, training, and overall job satisfaction, such as Workforce Management tools, task management and gamification apps.

Deichmann – Qualitize Deichmann has introduced the Qualitize Employee Empowerment app, a central digital platform for all administrative processes that is seamlessly integrated into the shoe retailer's IT infrastructure and can be used on iPhones, iPads, Android devices, and PCs. AI-powered features such as automatic translations, summaries, and image editing options increase efficiency and data quality. The result: less administrative work, less redundant tasks, faster problem solving, and higher employee satisfaction.

Rossmann – Scheer IMC Rossmann has designed an interactive de-escalation training program and integrated the technology into the IMC Learning Suite. Employees practice realistic conflict situations in a playful way using audio dialogues. One of the goals is to make employees feel more confident when interacting with customers. The program is currently being rolled out to 33,000 store employees.

Fressnapf With "Ask Mia," the company is using an AI-supported add-on to its in-house knowledge and task platform to make its expertise on animals available in all stores. The tool, developed in-house, is based on an LLM model and provides store employees with context-specific expert knowledge. The application is available on mobile and stationary devices.

Thalia The AI-supported, in-house developed recommendation assistant "Minerva" supports Thalia staff in providing customer advice, which is becoming increasingly complex amid a rapidly growing and diverse product portfolio. Additional objectives include reducing employee workload and ultimately enhancing the omnichannel experience.

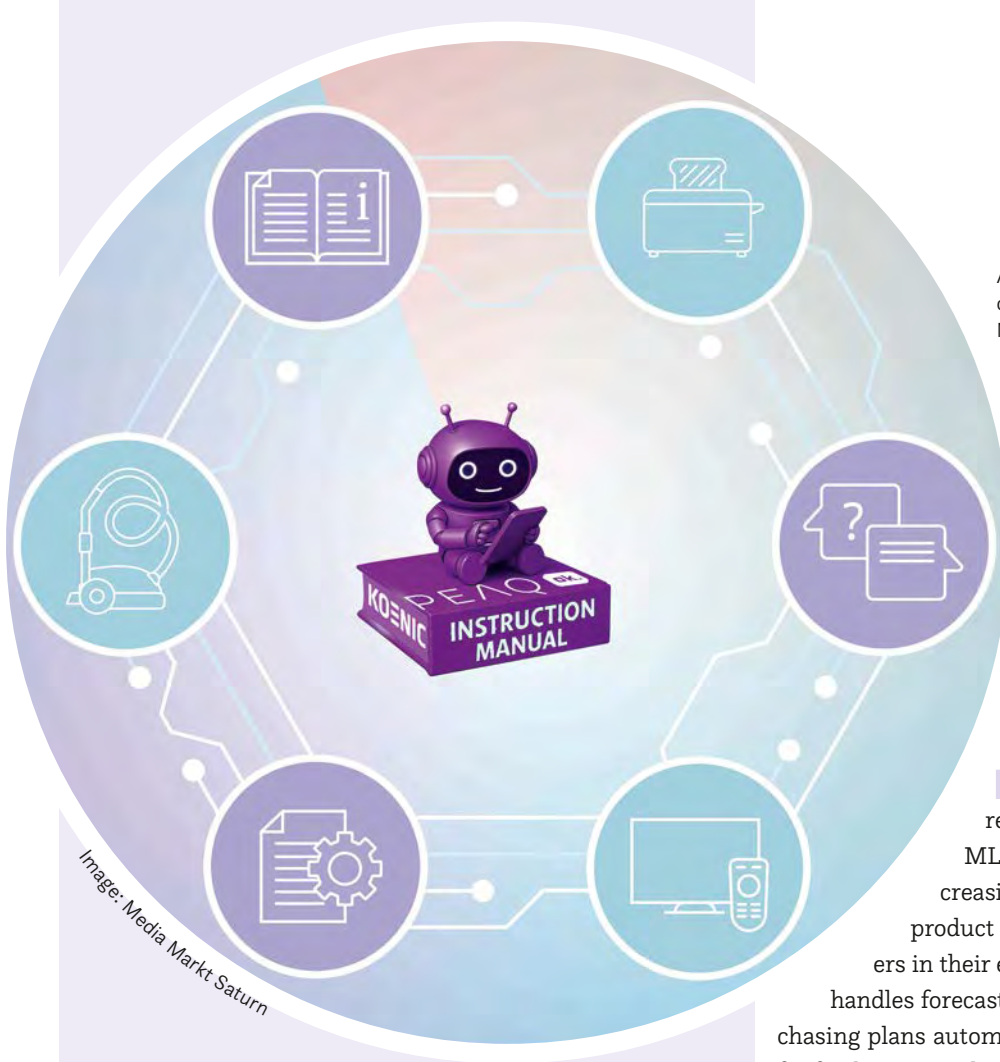
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AI-supported customer service at Media Markt Saturn

Image: Media Markt Saturn

Media Markt Saturn – MMS Technology, ZES B.V. Media Markt Saturn handled around 3 million repair orders in the 2024/25 fiscal year. One challenge in the repair process are cases marked “No Failure Found” (NFF): devices that were returned without any apparent defects, often due to incomplete or unclear fault descriptions upon receipt. AI-supported fault descriptions based on Gen AI and Gemini models now help to avoid costs and returns.

SUPPLY CHAIN EXCELLENCE

This category acknowledges innovations that optimize the end-to-end supply chain, improving efficiency, transparency, and sustainability, such as IoT devices and sensors or Blockchain technology.

Beeline – CAS Concept and Solutions, SAP Deutschland The fashion accessories retailer has implemented a fully automated end-to-end solution for merchandise planning and distribution based on AI, machine intelligence (MI) and SAP technologies to manage its ever-growing network of locations, which currently stands at more than 35,000 stores. The result: greater efficiency through improved product availability and inventory levels, which in turn leads to lasting international growth.

CIA Conad – Relex Solutions Italian retailer CIA Conad relies on an AI and ML-based planning system to meet the increasing complexity caused by an expanding product range and growing number of suppliers in their eight distribution centres. The system handles forecasting, inventory optimisation, and purchasing plans automatically, serving as a tech foundation for further network and product range growth.

Coop Sverige – SSI Schäfer Coop has developed a highly automated and energy-efficient logistics facility in Sweden to reliably supply its more than 800 stores despite a growing assortment of products and increasing service expectations. Featuring a fully integrated material flow system with two temperature zones, AI-supported quality assurance and optimised packing configurations supported by over 30 palletising robots.

Globus Holding – Consenso, SAP Deutschland The Saarland-based company uses Intelligent Data Modelling (iDM) to improve the quality of their master data. The SAP Hana application has replaced the Excel-based quality assurance system. Over 100 regulations check millions of data records each day. The majority of errors are corrected automatically. The result: reduced workload for employees while maintaining consistent data quality and reducing follow-up work.

Marco O’Polo – KPS Marco O’Polo is responding to the increasing complexity of the international supply chain with an omnichannel replenishment platform. This enables the fashion retailer to optimise inventory management, forecasting and procurement with real-time data and AI-supported projections. KPI-driven inventory replenishment and automated processes improve product availability, reduce storage costs and increase flexibility in responding to market developments.

MARTECH INNOVATIONS

This special category celebrates innovations in marketing technology that empower retailers to plan, target, and optimize communication and engagement, like retail media, campaign automation, loyalty platforms and customer data systems.

BWG Foods – Sociolocal The Irish food wholesaler and franchise operator supports local retailers with a scalable martech platform designed for social media marketing, thereby ensuring consistent brand management. The mobile solution can automatically create posts, deliver brand-compliant contents and adapt them to local settings. This reduces the workload for retailers and increases the frequency of posts, coverage and commitment to the brand.

Koçtaş – Tanı Marketing Technologies With the Loyalty-as-a-Service (LaaS) platform 'Joyalty', Turkish hardware store chain Kampany can launch campaigns within minutes without IT support. The solution is based on an API-driven microservice architecture, enabling omnichannel data integration, hyper-personalisation and real-time interactions.

RTG – Cyreen The global trade cooperation, which includes Globus, Bartels-Langness, Bunting, Georg Jos. Kaes and Netto, has introduced the C.A.P. system (Connecting Ad Impressions with Purchase), a proprietary in-store retail media technology which maps the complete customer journey in the store. Shoppers are recognised via RFID trolleys and baskets; campaigns are activated in response and linked to anonymised checkout data. The actual sales effect can thus be measured precisely. ■

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sales.de@quinyx.com
T +49 15735998657

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info@gk-software.com
T +49 3 74 64 84 0

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LANCOM Systems GmbH

Contact: Patrick Großschopf
vertrieb@lancom.de
T +49 2405 49936 333

Hall 6/F50

markant



Markant Gruppe

Contact: Erik Müller
Euroshop2026@services.markant.com
T +49 781 616-0

Hall 6/I 58

OMS
RETAIL



OMS Retail GmbH

Contact: Sebastian Warnsmann
s.warnsmann@oms-retail.com
T +49 511 51528301

Hall 6/B22

Pan Oston



Pan Oston GmbH

Contact: Markus Oldemeyer
markus.oldemeyer@panoston.de
T +49 32221095079

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S-Payment GmbH

Contact: Tanja Moll
vertrieb@s-payment.com
T +49 711 782 99-200

Hall 6/D24

Hall 9: Lighting



Molto Luce GmbH

Contact: Bernd Diesenberger
diesenberger@moltoluce.com
T +43 7242 698-0

Hall 9/D24



Signify GmbH

Contact: Stefan Zander
stefan.zander@signify.com
T +49 160 742 90 87

Hall 9/D43



TRILUX Retail GmbH

Contact: Guido Fox
guido.fox@trilux.com
T +49 163 5976797

Hall 9/A02

Hall 10: Shopfitting + Store Design



ITAB x HMY

Contact: Christina Hein
marketing.germany@itab.com
T +49 221 37633-0

Hall 10/A34..B34

Hall 12: Shopfitting + Store Design



Schweitzer Project AG

Contact: Christian Milk
christian.milk@interstore-schweitzer.com
T +49 173 3717 982

Hall 12/C45



umdasch The Store Makers

Contact: Dominik Reichartzeder
dominik.reichartzeder@umdasch.com
T +43 664 8373 883

Hall 12/C19



Wanzl GmbH & Co. KGaA

Contact: Sigrid Brewka-Steeves
sigrid.brewka-steeves@wanzl.com
T +49 8221 7295182

Hall 12/A26

Hall 13: Food Service Equipment



MIWE Michael Wenz GmbH

Contact: Daniel Krönert
D.Kroenert@miwe.de
T +49 9363 68 8124

Hall 13/A64



WIESHEU GmbH

Contact: Andreas Schmitt
andreas.schmitt@wiesheu.de
T +49 1727330383

Hall 13/C86

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DAS HERZ DER FRISCHE



BITZER Kühlmaschinenbau GmbH

Contact: Jörg Wittmann
joerg.wittmann@bitzer.de
T +49 151 58058689

Hall 14/A38



HAGOLA Gastronomie-Technik GmbH & Co. KG

Contact: Edgar Hanken
info@hagola.de
T +49 4444 201-0

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marketing@rivacold.de
T +49 71165883-0

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Schott AG

Contact: Yannik Paul
yannik.paul@schott.com
T +49 151 67414852

Hall 14/A30

Hall 15: Refrigeration + Energy Management



Epta S.p.A.

info@eptarefrigeration.com
T +39 2 55403211

Hall 15/B24-B42

Hall 16: Refrigeration + Energy Management



Arneg S.p.A.

Contact: Tiziana Raiteri
tiziana.raiteri@arneg.it
T +39 334 640 09 89

Hall 16/D23-D41

Light as a way to connect with customers



In the Siemens showroom in Löhne, Molto Luce combines brilliant lighting with acoustic ceiling modules – for a more atmospheric and improved shopping experience.

Lighting is becoming more and more important as a key part of future-focused retail concepts. At EuroShop 2026, the lighting industry will show how shop lighting is moving from being just functional to becoming an integrated and individual design element that boosts customer experience and willingness to buy.

Brigitte Oltmanns

Retail formats, functions and styles merge to create extraordinary shopping worlds: garden centres become gastronomic oases, and daytime cafés transform into cocktail bars at night. High fashion is presented in a minimalist, industrial aesthetic. Light sets the scene for brand and theme worlds. In the interplay of light, space and emotion, the focus is on the holistic lighting effect, which becomes a key success factor for the desired individual overall concept of a store that aims to combine identity and a feel-good character. 'Successful retail lighting must not only look good, but also contribute measurably to business success,' is how Trilux defines the range of tasks for modern shop lighting. And this applies

to a wide variety of retail sectors: food retailers, discounters, luxury boutiques, car dealerships, pop-up stores and specialist retail formats.

CONCENTRATED RETAIL EXPERTISE Given limited personnel and technical resources, retailers need expert support from the lighting industry to implement complex lighting concepts. The major players are taking different approaches to meet rising expectations for unique and sustainable shopping experiences while simultaneously reducing the burden on retailers. Trilux has just repositioned itself through a merger with its competitors Oktalite and

Image below: Copper and green plants create a low-threshold meeting place with the brand in the Cupra City Garage. A mix of special luminaires and solutions from the Trilux retail portfolio show the new car models from the VW subsidiary in the right light



Image: Trilux

Flexibility, sustainability and interchangeability are essential themes in the new aisle spotlight from Molto Luce

Image: Molto Luce



Image: Henning Moser

In part of the Umdasch stand at EuroShop 2026, Zumtobel is focusing its trade fair presentation on the integrative 'New Retail' solution as a new form of customer engagement in brick-and-mortar retail

Ansorg (see short interview). This is not only about technical brilliance and enhancing the atmosphere of retail spaces, but also about simple planning and installation, as well as the roll-out of new inspiring concepts.

At EuroShop 2026, Trilux booth visitors stand will be able to experience different retail worlds live. The salesroom presents itself via an individual, tailor-made lighting concept, either as a meeting place like a lively market square or as a stage for emotionally charged brand presentations. But even a minimalist design concept that radiates spaciousness and tranquility through appropriate lighting and lets the exclusive product speak for itself can take atmosphere and brand impact to a new

level. As individual as the lighting concepts are, they all serve a common goal: to enhance the customer journey in a lasting way.

COLLABORATION WITH PARTNERS Austrian lighting expert Zumtobel sees collaboration with partners from other industries as an opportunity to create innovative space concepts that transform stores into sensory, interactive worlds of experience. At EuroShop 2026, Zumtobel will be appearing as an official partner at the stand of shopfitting specialist Umdasch The Store Makers, presenting its 'new retail' solution with dynamic lighting concepts for the various themed worlds. Together with partners 4D Magic and the design agency Kochstrasse, neuropsychological findings will be combined with digital marketing, content and lighting

under the heading ‘New Retail’ and merged into a spatial and atmospheric experience. For example, a retailer can use a rainy evening to focus attention on products related to wellness and relaxation. The system does not know who the visitor is, but it supports the presentation with a suitable ‘feel-good scenario’. The interplay of lighting design, neuromarketing and behavioural psychological analyses aims to create a flexible, unobtrusive atmosphere that conveys orientation and attention, evokes a positive emotional response in customers and can thus also stimulate their willingness to buy.

LIGHTING TECHNOLOGIES WITH SAVINGS POTENTIAL

In recent years, the focus of further development in LED shop lighting has shifted noticeably towards holistic effects and successful customer engagement. Nevertheless, issues such as light quality, energy efficiency and sustainability remain high on the agenda for retail companies and lighting manufacturers. This is revealed once again in the

new EHI study ‘Energy Management in Retail’. According to the results of this study, lighting remains the second largest ‘energy guzzler’ in food retail, accounting for 20 per cent of energy consumption. In non-food retail, shop lighting is the top electricity consumer, accounting for 56 per cent. Energy-saving lighting technologies therefore account for 68 per cent of investment costs in non-food retail. ‘Further efficiency gains, combined with improved product lighting and thus lower costs, should help retailers to manage the cost disadvantages they face compared to online retailers,’ says Austrian EuroShop exhibitor Molto Luce. With the presentation of the new ‘Tario’ aisle spotlight system for food and non-food applications, Molto Luce aims to support retailers in their brick-and-mortar presence. According to Molto Luce, the lighting system impresses with its brilliance, flexibility, sustainability and interchangeability, and its wide range of options and innovative interchangeable optics allow it to be adapted flexibly and effortlessly to changing requirements. ■

“We make retail shine”

Thomas Korflür and Joachim Schürholz explain why Trilux, Ansorg and Oktalite are now operating under one umbrella brand.

Your trade fair appearance is dominated by the recent brand merger. What are the goals behind this?

Schürholz: The merger of all three companies to form the new Trilux Retail Ltd. is a logical response to today’s market requirements. Our customers expect comprehensive solutions – from lighting design and international rollouts to long-term partnerships. Thanks to the expertise of Ansorg and Oktalite and the technical innovation of Trilux, we cannot only meet these expectations, but exceed them.

What specific advantages does your merger bring to the retail sector?

Korflür: We combine premium expertise and volume competence under one roof and are the only provider to cover the entire spectrum – from standardised food solutions to individual premium concepts. Retailers benefit from a comprehensive product portfolio and even better service from a single source. Our combined strength makes us the preferred partner for international retailers, for example, who are looking for a reliable



Thomas Korflür
Managing Director
Trilux Retail



Joachim Schürholz
Managing Director
Trilux Retail

full-service provider. Together, we will set new standards in terms of breadth and depth in the German and European markets.

What is your current market position in Germany and Europe – and where do you see further potential for expansion?

Schürholz: We have a market share of around 20 per cent in Germany. Our European focus countries also include France, Spain, Italy and the United Kingdom. Together with German retail partners, we are currently setting up our first pilot stores in the United States. This development is particularly significant, as around 30 per cent of global retail investment decisions are made in the United States – a market that has been largely inaccessible to German lighting manufacturers until now.



Smart lighting for inspiring retail spaces

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WHAT TO EXPECT AT EUROSHOP 2026

Retailers started to implement LED lighting around ten to twelve years ago. That lighting is reaching the end of its life and is increasingly failing. To address this issue, while helping retailers to drive down their operational cost and meet their sustainability objectives, Signify has developed its new Ultra-Efficient LED lighting which consumes 50 percent less than the first-generation LEDs. Signify will present a unique solution for a fast

upgrade of the popular light lines, the new Philips Maxos unify. While doing such upgrades, retailers want to include lighting controls to gain an additional 30 percent energy savings. The world leader in lighting will show its latest innovations in this space; simple to install wireless as well as robust wired control, a new range of sensors to enhance energy savings, data insights and more to be unveiled.

Stores are increasingly using wooden furniture and Signify will present its new Premium Ambiance lighting that enhances the look of wood and leathers while adding ambiance to the store. For fresh food, Signify will showcase solutions for optimal preservation and presentation.

The coming years will be marked by new regulations, such as the European Building Directive, and the

updated EN50172 standard for emergency lighting. Visit the Signify booth to learn more about these regulations, their impact on the lighting installation, and how to comply with the new requirements.

Enhance your store performance and visit Signify at booth **D43 in Hall 9**.

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The modular 'Play' display system brings dynamics and vitality to the space

Image: Hans Boodt Mannequins

Between art and impulse buying

The days of fibreglass mannequins are over. Recyclable materials, modular systems and more diverse body types now dominate the display mannequin market. The figures are becoming more flexible and lifelike, serving a wide range of purposes – from barely visible hangers to artistically designed character heads.

Angelika Frank



Image: Best Mannequins

The 'Prosthetic Mannequins' collection from figure manufacturer Best Mannequins is inclusive and diverse



Made of soft polyurethane: the flexible collection by Angelina Mannequins

Image: Angelina Mannequins

Bonami from Belgium relies on 'Bonplast', a modern, break-resistant mono-material made of PC/PP, which is 100 percent recyclable, extremely lightweight and already dyed throughout, eliminating the need for painting. Excess material from production is recycled into unbreakable, lightweight hangers with custom colouring. Angelina, a manufacturer from Greece, uses soft PU with bio-based components, combined with Oeko-Tex-certified cotton covers and metal frames. Belgian supplier Best Mannequins works with bio-based resins, recycled plastics such as ABS, PP, PS and PLA, and also develops compostable mannequins and sustainable clothes hangers made from wheat straw. IDW from Lithuania uses 100 per cent recyclable polystyrene from recycled materials, works with renewable energies and has strict CO₂ management.

Mannequin suppliers Genesis and Kesslers present 'Eco Form' materials that are fully recyclable and biodegradable, emitting up to 97 per cent less CO₂ than fibreglass. Hans Boodt Mannequins from the Netherlands emphasises movement and aesthetics with its 'Radiant' collection. The man-

nequins have expressive arms and elegant wooden hand models, allowing for lively, natural displays. The range is complemented by transparent, 3D-printed torsos that enable minimalist and modern presentations and can be flexibly adapted to different brand identities.

CIRCULAR THINKING AND SERVICES The topic of circular economy is also increasingly influencing the services offered by manufacturers. Moch Figuren from Cologne offers its own renovation service, which turns used figures into products that are almost as good as new – a clear signal against the throwaway trend. Bonami, Best Mannequins, IDW and Genesis offer comprehensive repairs, repainting, fast spare parts service, detailed recycling guides and return options for old mannequins. Best Mannequins advertises technical documentation, spare parts delivery within 24 hours and cost-effective repairs that are designed to significantly extend the life cycle of mannequins. Rental models for seasonal events, pop-ups or trade fairs give exhibitors flexibility and promote sustainable usage concepts.



Bonami's 'Future Clear Transparent' is made from 100 per cent recyclable Bonplast and features a magnetic system for easy handling



The modular collection from IDW with interchangeable arms consists of five female and three male mannequins

Image: Genesis Mannequins

MODULARITY AND FLEXIBLE BODIES

Modular construction and lifelike poses are more in demand than ever. Bonami relies on interchangeable heads, arms and faces so that the basic body can be gradually renewed with contemporary details over the years. With its 'E-Motion' and 'Mirror Mirror' collections, Best Mannequins offers rotating and adjustable joints in the neck, torso, arms and legs. These features allow for natural changes in poses – without any technical motor skills. Angelina's figures, made of soft PU with a flexible metal skeleton, hold every pose permanently and are therefore well suited for museum displays, theatre and folklore exhibitions. IDW combines articulated waist and head areas, which allow dynamic poses without electronics, especially in sports or outdoor areas. With the 'Radiant' collection, Dutch manufacturer Hans Boodt Mannequins demonstrates how functional flexibility and aesthetic sophistication can be combined. The new models open up a wide range of possibilities for innovative, visually striking and lively shop displays.

DIVERSITY AND BODY IMAGES Social change is clearly reflected in the portfolio of models. Moch is replacing faceless mass figures with naturalistic heads and true-to-life types in order to better reflect current fashion trends and social diversity. Best Mannequins is expanding its range of ready-to-wear sizes between 36 and 46 to include children's and teen models, figures with prostheses, wheelchair users and transgender mannequins for luxury brands. With its 'Inclusives' series, IDW emphasises body positivity and diversity in skin tones. Manufacturers are responding to growing demand for subtly realistic heads with delicate details, expressive facial features and sculpted hair, especially for the discerning Generation Z. One example is the 'NXT' collection from Best Mannequins.

DIGITAL AND EMOTIONAL The use of digital technologies has also long been established in the manufacture of display mannequins. 3D software such as 'ZBrush', 3D scanning and 3D printing accelerate manufacturing processes and enable virtual prototyping or VR visualisation for coordination with retail customers. Nevertheless, demand for fully networked, sensor-equipped or motorised mannequins is low, mainly



'Comme des Garçons' by Moch figures: An avant-garde, minimalist design language adapts to eccentric fashion

for cost reasons. Instead, manufacturers rely on analogue intelligence with emotional appeal: flexibly designed bodies, sculptural hairstyles and finely structured surfaces – from raw recycled materials to velvet-covered busts. Models covered with natural linen also continue the tradition of haute couture. The new generation of mannequins enables expressive storytelling through sustainability, craftsmanship and high-tech. Shop windows become stages where figures not only present fashion, but also show attitude and convey identity – a new era in visual merchandising. ■



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Store design 2026: *economical – sustainable – innovative*

Even though cost pressures are high and many uncertainties remain in planning due to the fragile economic situation, retailers are still very willing to invest in their brick-and-mortar stores. At the same time, store construction budgets have only increased very moderately in recent years. The new EHI Store Monitor highlights the consequences this has for willingness to invest and the efforts of store planning departments.

Claudia Horbert

The EHI Store Monitor 2026 is based on extensive personal interviews with the heads of the store design and furnishing departments of 49 leading retail companies from various industries in the D-A-CH region between April and December 2025. These interviews clearly reveal that 75 percent of the retailers surveyed are focusing even more heavily than before on optimizing their existing store portfolios in their project and investment planning. New stores are

„Across all retail sectors, the focus today is more on enhancing the quality of store concepts than on developing them from scratch.“



Claudia Horbert
Director of Shopfitting +
Retail Design Research
EHI Retail Institute

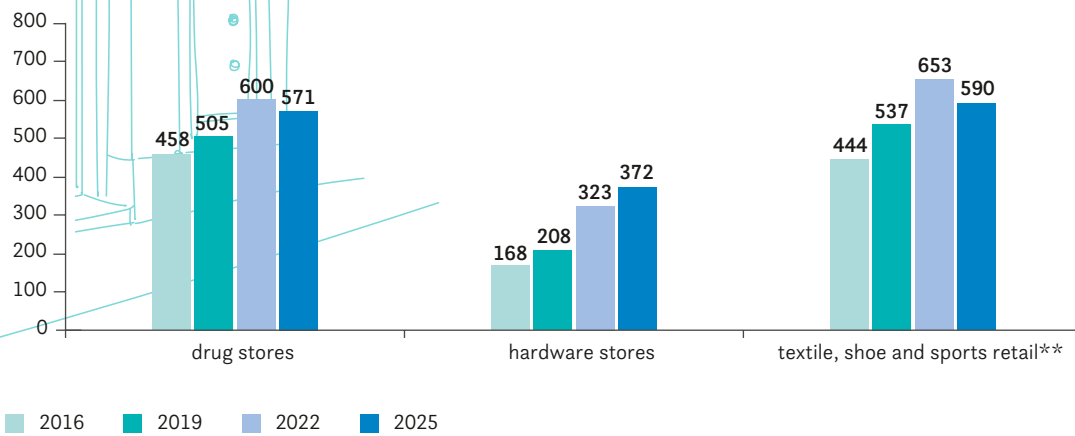
opening mainly by price-oriented non-food chains and drug-stores and grocery stores, but often as relocations, so that there is hardly any significant gross expansion.

For a new retail outlet in the grocery sector, the investment in furnishings per square meter (sqm) of retail space (RSP) in 2025 will amount to €961 in supermarkets and small consumer markets (up to 2,500 sqm RSP), while for large consumer markets with a retail space of 2,500 sqm or more, the furnishing costs come to €711/sqm RSP. Compared to the key figures, last surveyed in the EHI Store Monitor 2023, this corresponds to an increase of 13 percent in supermarkets and 5 percent in large consumer markets. Cooling technology remains a clear investment focus in the food retail sector, driven by more consumables and the accelerated conversion to energy-efficient refrigeration systems, because of a further strengthening of the F-Gas Regulation. According to many of the food companies surveyed, this now leaves less for store design after they have consistently invested in high-quality store imagery in recent years. Given that this is still the objective, those responsible for store design are planning to use more affordable materials, modified qualities, and the reuse of store fixtures to achieve savings in furnishings – an approach that has long been a key feature of investment planning in the textile retail sector.

GROWING PRESSURE TO IMPROVE EFFICIENCY The costs for refitting a specialist store in the textile, shoe, and sports retail sector have, compared to the EHI Store Monitor 2023-figures, dropped by 9.6 percent to €590/sqm RSP. This

Key investment figures in selected non-food retail sectors 2016 – 2025

Furnishing costs* in Euros per RSP

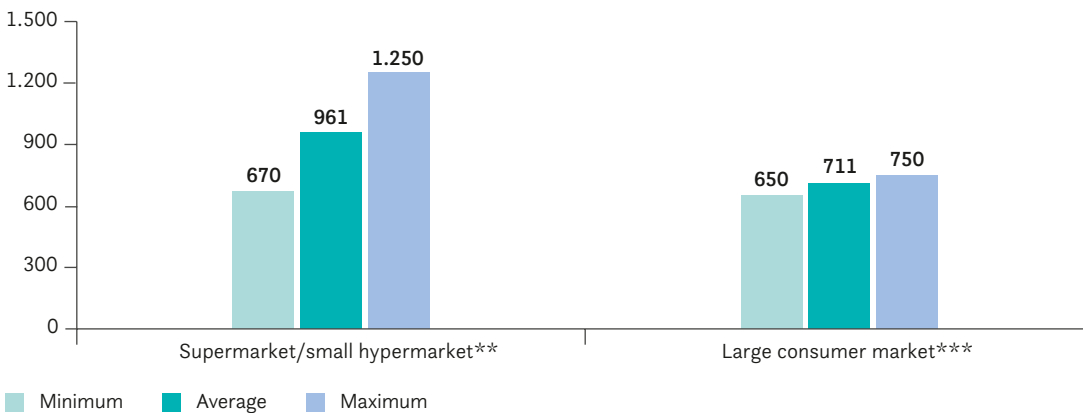


Initial furnishing expenditure for
 * market/shop opening, information for the German market only
 ** including large textile retail outlets and department stores
 Source: EHI

Key investment figures in food retail

Bandwidths for different store types

Furnishing costs* in Euros per RSP

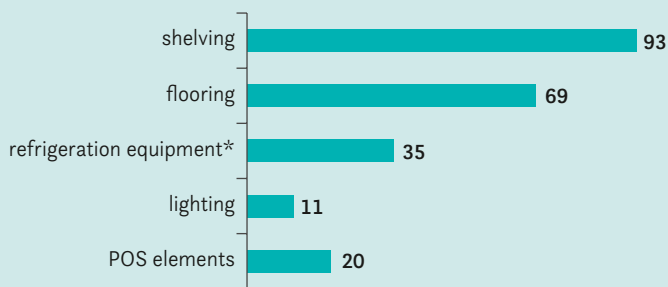


* Initial furnishing expenditure for market/shop opening, information for the German market only
 ** up to 2,500 sqm sales area
 *** from 2,500 sqm sales area
 Source: EHI

The re-use of store furnishings

Which components are re-used?

Figures in percent



n = 45 multiple answers possible

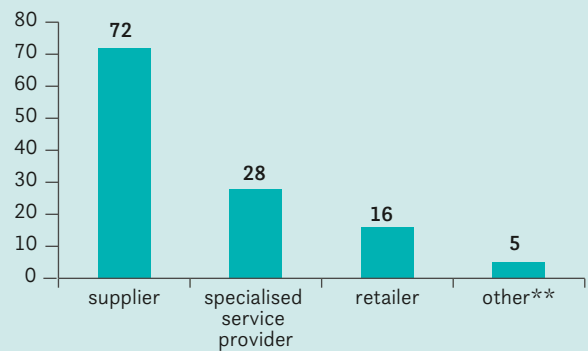
* food retail only

** e.g. craft businesses from the local network

Source: EHI

Who is responsible for finishing, transport, and storage?

Figures in percent



mainly applies to those companies that, according to their own statements, have had to work with a declining or stagnant store design budget in recent years. Despite the continuing high demand for effective product presentation and creative merchandising, the retailers involved in textile retail have apparently succeeded in recent years in focusing not (only) on appearance in their concepts, but also on efficiency.

In today's retail industry, the focus has moved away from completely redesigning store concepts and is now more about qualitative improvements – with a view to further cost savings through continuous optimization of store fittings over their entire life cycle. This means thinking about the future right from the planning stage, with a longer life cycle for concepts. In store design, the focus is shifting to standardization and further streamlining of furnishing programs by reducing variation and reusing store fixtures. This reduces overall cost pressure and at the same time contributes to the sustainability of store concepts.

The retail companies surveyed continue to use an average of 50 percent of their facilities after remodelling and conceptual developments and have a positive view of the establishment of circular systems in shopfitting. Despite considerable costs for reprocessing, storage and transport,

for example, 42 percent of the companies surveyed have set up their own systems or cooperate with suppliers who already offer suitable processes for their products. However, retailers believe that many service providers are still not willing to cooperate and lack workable business models to make circular systems a real win-win situation for both sides.

SHOPFITTERS ARE CHALLENGED Besides the growing demand for upcycling existing store fittings, retailers also have higher expectations of their partners' innovative capabilities and technical (consulting) expertise when it comes developing and updating store fittings with a focus on cost value and sustainability. Shopfitting companies in particular must respond to these new developments instead of "continuing to produce familiar parts in large quantities," according to one of the interviewees. However, this offers new opportunities for both sides, as retailers are interested in new (sustainable) materials and product innovations and are keen to engage in closer shared development and revision of new and existing furniture types, ultimately with the intent of further optimization through genuine value engineering. ■

Study

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Shops with *value-adding benefits*

Shifting consumer and shopping habits are also changing the expectations for brick-and-mortar retailers. In many retail sectors, the role of physical space is evolving from a sales floor to an environment for experiences. The boundaries between sales and entertainment are becoming increasingly less distinct.

Claudia Horbert



Image: Brian T. Sliak (on behalf of Crocs)

Image above: Perfect staging at the interface between brand, product and customer at the Crocs Icon Store, New York
Image on the left: Digital tools to enhance the shopping experience at Dr. Max's BJUT flagship store in Prague

More and more stores are offering space for interaction, services and partnerships with new partners. At first glance, this seems to be sacrificing valuable square metres for lounge areas, catering, workshops, service, cultural and sports areas, and even dedicated community spaces: Places where the local community can meet, with amenities tailored to the shared interests of the respective customer groups. Taking a closer look, however, reveals that this approach creates a shopping experience that is more than just selling and starts exactly where online retail cannot compete. While not every retailer is able or willing to become an experience retailer, individual features such as special highlight areas and an ever-changing selection of themes and brands (e.g. via pop-up areas) can also contribute significantly to this. Instead of relying solely on fast-moving items and well-calculated product ranges from the warehouse management system, curated offers that exceed previous industry and product range boundaries create variety and orientation for customers – also helping to differentiate the retailer from competitors who offer the same or a similar product range.

TECHNOLOGY AS A DESIGN ELEMENT Modern store concepts are receiving valuable support from new technologies and digital tools, which are being used to speed up processes and improve service quality, thereby offering real added value for customers. These include AI-based applications for

optimised product ranges and their presentation, including the reduction of out-of-stocks, click + collect services and self-checkout terminals. An integral part of store design, self-checkouts are increasingly becoming a design element themselves. In fashion and sports retail, for example, self-checkouts are designed as compact stand-alone solutions instead of hiding them in the back corner of the store as they were in the past.

Store design bridges the gap between brand, product and consumer – it creates space identity and provides a framework for consumer interaction with products. To ensure the most dynamic use of space possible, areas for events, promotions or special (product) presentations should therefore be integrated into the store concept from the very beginning. This makes highly flexible furnishings and modular systems, which can easily be adapted to changing product ranges, promotions and seasons and can be used across different departments, increasingly important.

SUSTAINABLE SHOPFITTING The re-use of shop fittings after renovations and in the further development of store concepts is also becoming increasingly important. This reduces cost pressure and also contributes to sustainable shopfitting. Sustainability issues have meanwhile found their way into planning culture and material choices. In addition to wooden materials, which have long been a symbol of

Image on the right: Ikea City Store – since May 2025 at Oxford Circus, London

Image below on the left: A visually appealing store design characterises this branch of the food retailer Tegut

Image below on the right: Pure relaxation at Biogena on Vienna's busiest shopping street



Image: EHI

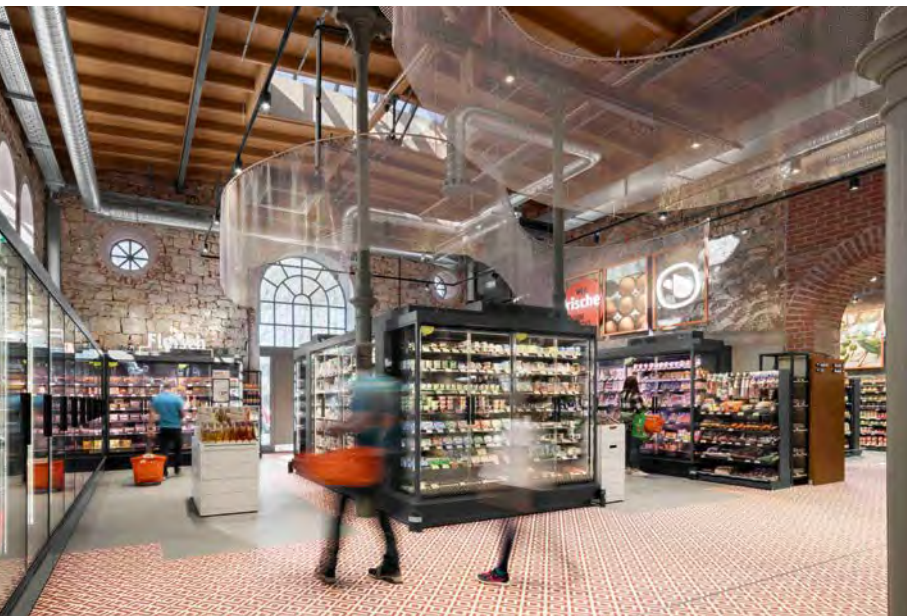


Image: Ben Pakalski



Image: David Wedenig

sustainable construction and furnishing, many concepts go even further: Recycled building materials, second-life materials, local resources and renewable raw materials define the new design aesthetic. Even plastic is experiencing a revival – as a recycled element, for example from packaging waste or textile scraps. On the customer side, retailers are increasingly offering second-hand, rental or repair options.

However, today's retailers are not only facing new dynamics in terms of the design and use of their space, but also in the development of different concepts that retailers are now using in the market. With smaller, specialised spaces, retailers are bringing themselves closer to their customers and their specific needs in urban locations. In this context, it was helpful that the portfolio streamlining of many retail companies, also as a result of the pandemic, suddenly made attractive locations available for these innovative concepts

in central locations. The new stores are also moving closer to the local community in terms of architecture – with open façades, floor-to-ceiling windows designed with seating areas as box seats for outdoor views, and spacious, inviting entrance areas. Inside the stores, common everyday products with local references to the location or the history of the building in which the store is located often add an extra local touch and a connection to the local community.

The continuous development of concepts and design means that brick-and-mortar retail has repeatedly demonstrated creativity and innovation despite numerous crises and challenges in recent years. Combined with new ideas for culture, entertainment and leisure, it remains an active and vibrant part of successful city centres and shopping districts, and therefore a popular attraction for an exciting shopping experience. ■

Places of *interaction*

In brick-and-mortar retail, it is increasingly about creating emotional added value that online retail cannot convey. How does this change the role of physical stores? And what consequences does this have for the design of stores?



Heidemarie Kriz
Retail Architect & Designer
Top Retail Expert 2026

Brick-and-mortar retail is not losing its importance, but its function is changing fundamentally. When products, prices and availability can be accessed digitally at any time, physical space is transformed from a mere point of sale into an experience space. Emotional added value no longer comes from an abundance of goods, but from relevance and atmosphere – the store thus becomes a stage for brands with identity.

The focus is shifting from efficiency to impact. The space no longer has to show everything, but only the right things. Storytelling, multisensory elements and genuine interaction are becoming increasingly important. Advice is becoming more personal, the staging clearer, while processes are becoming increasingly invisible. At the same time, the space must remain flexible in order to adapt quickly to new formats, services or community uses.

For the design, this means that architecture, materiality, colour and light must specifically support emotions and build trust. The store becomes the physical anchor of an increasingly immaterial brand world – an authentic experience that cannot be replaced online.

Physical retail is not only still thriving, but it is looking better than ever! In a world where consumers can buy everything online, physical stores are now for emotion and experience. Storytelling, personalisation, expert human service, curated solutions, hot new drops, wow social spaces...this is what defines great new retail experiences. Design is a tool to bring this to life, with storytelling through art, materiality and textures, where low and high tech meet in creative ways. It's all about surprise and delight, so there are no rules that cannot be broken in service of enhancing engagement. Although the best store design is human and inspiring.



Matthew Brown
Founder
Echochamber Ltd



Prof. Sabine Krieg
Dean, Professor of Retail Design
Peter Behrens School of Arts

In retail, it is increasingly important to create emotional added value, as cities are losing their individuality despite densification and retail spaces are becoming increasingly uniform. The dominance of capital-rich chains brings purchasing power, but displaces diversity and local characteristics. Physical space must be supplemented with original, regional and participatory formats – additions rather than replacements. It is crucial to think of the city from a human perspective: as a social space with places for interaction. People need safe, well-designed spaces, new lighting constellations, changed mobility routes and intergenerational offerings – neighbourhoods with their own profile, tailored to the specific needs of the local area. Diversity is not seen as an exception, but as the norm. The design follows less of a master plan and more of a human interaction between commerce, the city and society.

„Heritage is the new cool“

Schiesser has been setting the standard in the world of lingerie for over 150 years. With Sonja Balodis as the new CEO and Kai-Oliver Klenk as Head of Visual Merchandising, the traditional brand is gearing up for a fresh start – with a clear focus on the brand, people and experience.

The interview was conducted by Katharina Sieweke



Sonja Balodis

Sonja Balodis took over as CEO of the Schiesser Group in March 2025.

She has in-depth knowledge of the textile industry, from her apprenticeship as a dressmaker and her studies in clothing technology to her international management roles. After working for companies including Apriori (Escada Group) and Gil Bret, she left her mark on Comma for many years, first as Managing Director and later as CEO. She then went on to hold management and board positions at Marc Cain and the S. Oliver Group. Her experience ranges from procurement and product development to holistic management – from medium-sized companies to international corporations, from mainstream to premium.



Kai-Oliver Klenk

Kai-Oliver Klenk is Head of Visual Merchandising at Schiesser and is responsible for the conceptual and strategic development of the visual brand design in brick-and-mortar retail. His focus is on interpreting brand

identity into functional, scalable shopfitting concepts for company-owned POS and shop-in-shop concepts. After training as a visual marketing designer at Parfümerie Douglas, he held positions at H&M, Tom Tailor, S. Oliver Group, Breuninger and Comma, with an increasing focus on nationwide management of retail, franchise and shop-in-shop concepts.

Mrs Balodis, you have a background in international fashion.

What appealing aspects did you personally find in Schiesser?

Balodis: I was impressed by the unique blend of tradition and promising future potential. Schiesser is a brand with enormous appeal, extensive expertise and a clear brand identity. It is also obvious that, following our 150th anniversary in 2025, we want to confidently invest in new approaches. Furthermore, Schiesser is part of an international group, which paves the way for exciting prospects.

As you mention 150 years of brand history: what has made Schiesser successful and what are the most significant challenges today?

Balodis: Schiesser has long been a leading innovator. Jacques Schiesser sparked a revolution over 120 years ago with the introduction of jersey underwear. This spirit of innovation has been a defining feature throughout the company's history. The challenge today is to keep this vision relevant in the changing world: becoming more focused, defining clear key themes, and remaining relevant to multiple generations.

What is the brand's market position and what is your long-term vision?

Balodis: Schiesser is deeply rooted in the hearts and minds of many people across generations. We want to continue to inspire our core audience of 40+ age group, while at the same time introducing the brand to younger consumers. With our new slogan, 'Originals for Originals,' we highlight that heritage is not a retrospective, but rather a promise for the future. Culturally, I am committed to empowering our teams, in terms of organisation, I focus on agility, and in our product range, I favour evolution over radical change.

How does brick-and-mortar retail fit into this?

Balodis: Our stores are the window to the end consumer – our business card. This is where perception, trust and loyalty are established. That is why we consciously invest in concepts that are versatile and provide creative inspiration.

Klenk: Shops need to be cost-effective, but above all, they need to tell our brand story. With our so-called action zones, we have created a kind of reception area combining our collections, brand communication and product inspiration. These zones are modular, flexible and sustainable.

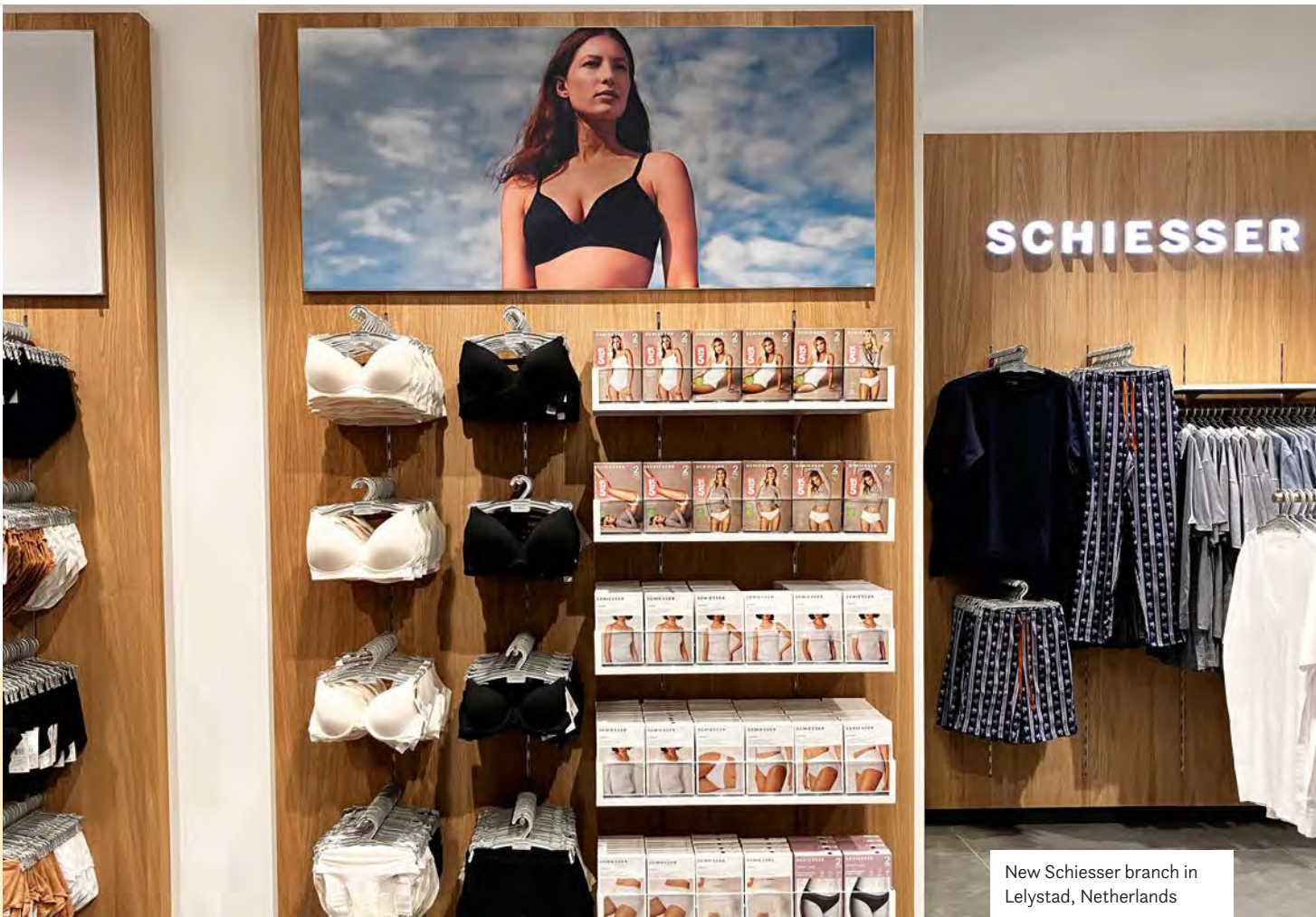


Image: Schiesser

Mr Klenk, how do you interpret brand values in terms of interior design, furnishings and customer experience?

Klenk: We approach things holistically, from the initial draft to the final floor space. In future, our stores will be cosier, more welcoming and more appealing: with more fabrics, softer shapes and a mix of materials. We believe this reflects what our products stand for: comfort and intimacy. At the same time, we are working with digital tools such as screens and fitting guides to deliver content flexibly and in a resource-efficient manner.

What importance does sustainability and modularity have for Schiesser?

Klenk: A significant role. Digital screens save resources, and modular components simplify renovations rather than requiring new installations. We also believe that smart upgrades for existing stores offer a sustainable approach.

How is the store chain growing?

Balodis: We currently run roughly 110 stores and are growing strategically – most recently also internationally, for example in Poland. We are less concerned about having a fixed amount of floor space than about the quality of the locations. If a location is appealing, we can be flexible: at times, we start by focusing on a specific target group or testing smaller store units. This agility is essential in today's retail environment.

How will you reach new target groups?

Balodis: Targeting younger audiences through compelling campaigns, events, and authentic storytelling. Influencer campaigns, such as the one recently held at Lake Constance in autumn, allow us to engage with younger audiences while showcasing our brand values. Many individuals have personal connections to Schiesser, and these are the stories we want to share.

What is the idea behind the new slogan 'Originals for Originals'?

Balodis: Schiesser is the authentic brand – and is for people who are authentic as well. Genuine, distinct, with a history. That can be anyone. This idea shapes our communication, our employer branding, and our brand development.

And what is your vision for the brand?

Balodis: I see myself as a positive driver. My goal is to keep the spirit of innovation alive, to recognise opportunities early on and to think ahead together with the teams: What's next? What is good for Schiesser? If we succeed in this, we will be well positioned for the next 150 years. ■

Hybrid *and* technology-driven

The food retail sector is investing in the lucrative out-of-home consumption market. From the premium food hall experience in Asia to the Spar Group's new gourmet format in South Africa: five international food concepts, all launched on the market in 2025, demonstrate the industry's innovative strength.

Mark Faithfull



Image: World Kitchens

◀ World Kitchens: Food hall with fine dining

In January 2025, World Kitchens opened inside Araneta City's Gateway Mall 2, Quezon City, Philippines. A hybrid food-hall format that features 15 'show kitchens' serving over 250 international dishes, it is embedded in a retail/mall environment and describes itself as a "5-star dining destination" created by Andrew Tan Hock Lai. Spanning more than 2,500 sq m, World Kitchens can accommodate over 700 guests and also features three private rooms. Serving high-end food at a single table, with full table service, it also employs AI technology for ordering.

Image: Coop

▶ Coop: New food-for-now concept being rolled out ▶

UK grocery chain Co-op launched a new chain of food-for-now stores this summer, situated in high foot-traffic locations and designed to showcase the convenience retailer's on-the-go offer. A UK first for a national grocer, the new format – part of the 'grocerant' movement – is around one-quarter the size of its typical convenience shops at circa 50-100 sq m, with the first opening in Solihull in the UK Midlands and with a target of reaching several hundred in the next two to three years. The bespoke store design caters to breakfast, lunch and dinner, including traditional meal deals and hot food served over counter – a first for Co-op – and a new deli-selection. The stores were initially open between 7am-7pm, with the next phase evening trading including Co-op's Irresistible Pizzas cooked and delivered to home. 'It's a brand-new concept, which we believe there is a big demand for and which we can meet with delicious products, quick service, good value and spot on locations,' Matt Hood, Co-op Food MD, said.



Spar Group: New food format in the premium segment ►

Spar Gourmet is the name of the Spar Group's new luxury format in South Africa, which celebrated its premiere in Kwazulu-Natal at the end of 2025. The concept is the result of a long-standing partnership between Spar and independent retailer Mark Anderson. Spar Gourmet is designed as a high-quality, modern grocery store and stands out from the chain's traditional supermarkets. The pilot store offers artisan bread and pastries, pre-cooked gourmet meals, a premium butcher's shop and a wine department. 'Initially, there will only be one store, but we have three or four more planned for this year,' says CEO Angelo Swartz.



Image: Spar



Image: T2

◀ T2: Tea staged with art

As part of Lipton Teas and Infusions, T2 has launched a programme to update its retail offering and redesign its brand identity. The pilot store opened in Melbourne, Australia, in December 2025. The 100 sqm space features a tea library made of black oxidised steel, modular cube displays for flexible merchandising, a large-format hand-painted artwork by Melbourne street artist Bailer, and a continuous 'sensory bar' for product tastings and preparation demonstrations. 'Our goal is to put the experience above the transaction, the theatre above the theme, and the ritual above the retail,' says Wayne Cheng, Design Director at Landini Associates. Additional locations are planned.

Freshippo: Hybrid concept combining supermarket and restaurant ►

With its Freshippo supermarket chain, the Alibaba Group is continuing to drive forward the expansion of grocery stores. Known in China as Hema, these stores are a mixture of supermarket and restaurant. The concept is entirely geared towards the use of digital technologies. After ordering via the smartphone app, the prepared meal can be eaten in the supermarket restaurant or delivered to your home within an hour. The app also records purchase and preference data from orders as a basis for weekly kitchen planning. Freshippo's supply chain supplies both the shelves and the kitchens in the stores, ensuring consistent availability of ingredients.



Image: Freshippo



H&M in Munich is also getting involved in food retailing

Image: Markert



For a cup of coffee

Food retailing refers to a strategy of integrating food offerings into a retail concept. The luxury industry is leading the way in fashion retail, but smaller brands and retailers are also increasingly following suit. Experts see clear advantages in this for customer loyalty and communication.

Barbara Markert

The Lacoste crocodile is baked into the waffle, floats on the orange stripe in the Aperol Spritz and sits enthroned on the cheeseburger bun. And not only there. The famous brand logo has also made its way onto plates and walls in the restaurant of the Shangri-La Hotel in Paris. From May to October 2025, the French brand has booked the luxury hotel for a 'street food experience event': with a finger food pavilion in the hotel garden and a gourmet menu called 'Summer at Lacoste' in the hotel restaurant.

Lacoste's foray into gastronomy is not an isolated case. Many fashion brands, especially those in the luxury segment, are increasingly interested in the restaurant and hotel industry. And for good reason: while fashion sales are stagnating, consumer spending on travel and experiences is on the rise. Millennials and Gen Z in particular see 'food as the new luxury' and are on the lookout for offerings such as

the Lacoste pavilion at the Shangri-La or the Longchamp Beach Club in Forte dei Marmi. The trend has become so important that cafés are now a standard feature of modern flagship architecture. Alaïa, for example, has installed a café in its boutique on Rue Faubourg St. Honoré in Paris, which opened in 2025, Dior serves teas and petits fours on Avenue Montaigne, Louis Vuitton in its flagship stores in New York and Osaka, and Chanel in its branch in Tokyo. Department stores also regularly host fashion cafés as pop-ups: Harrod's collaborated with Prada, Galeries Lafayette with Jacquemus.

STAR CHEFS IN DEMAND Armani and Ralph Lauren are considered pioneers in food retailing. Both have been running restaurants and hotels alongside their core fashion business for years. Their success has attracted imitators such as Bulgari, Coach, Gucci, Tiffany and many others. When it comes to external hotels and gourmet temples, the following applies: the higher the brand status, the more Michelin stars the chef must have. None other than the world's most highly acclaimed chef, Anne-Sophie Pic, who has eleven Michelin stars to her name, is therefore wielding the spoon at the Dior Café in Shanghai.

But you don't have to set the bar that high; venturing into gastronomy makes sense even for small brands and retailers. 'After all, even Ikea, H&M and Zara have cafés,' Delphine Dion, professor at the French ESSEC Business School,

"When you go for a coffee at Gucci, you immerse in the universe of this brand."



Prof. Delphine Dion
ESSEC Business School
Cergy/France

Lacoste experience event at the luxury Shangri-La hotel in Paris in storytelling



Images (3): Lacoste



rightly points out. The consumer researcher and luxury expert explains why food retailing can be a good idea. „Anyone who has ever been shopping at Ikea knows that shopping can be physically exhausting. A café allows customers to take a break and relax, but also gives them the opportunity to chat with others about their shopping experience. This adds a social component to the physical aspect. And then there is the experiential aspect. Dion: ‘In the age of online shopping, cus-

tomers need to be offered an incentive to go to the shops. Access to products alone is no longer enough. The boutique must offer an experience that is better in terms of quality, more social and more varied than what you find when you click on the e-shop.’

CONVEYING BRAND AURA According to Karin Leiberg, Director of Brand Activation and Creative Strategy at Liganova, a Berlin-based agency for brand and retail experiences, this gastronomic trend is also about conveying a brand-specific lifestyle concept. ‘Consumers no longer just buy a

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Image: Markert

A look inside the Mercedes-Benz 'Odeonsplatz Studio' in Munich



product, they buy a brand's lifestyle. Brands must constantly ask themselves how their clientele can become part of their brand community, even if they don't want to buy a product.' The Breton knitwear manufacturer Saint-James shows how this can work in its coffee shop boutiques in Asia and South America. In Mexico and South Korea, it is primarily 'L'art de vivre à la française' that is being sold – along with a few jumpers and T-shirts. With great success. Teas, coffees, cider and treats such as madeleines and caramels, served on typical French furniture, already account for 40 per cent of Saint-James' sales in Busan.

Cakes and cappuccinos also create new entry-level price points that are even lower than those of key rings and lipsticks. Delphine Dion: „When you go to Gucci for a coffee, you immerse yourself in the universe of this brand, even if you can't afford a bag that costs several thousand euros. All the codes that belong to a brand's DNA are reflected in the decoration of these places: on the sofas, the plates... You feel like you've been invited into the brand's home. You feel like you belong to a circle of friends.“ In this way, according to the professor, completely new customer groups could be reached. Even those who are not yet familiar with the brand. 'The boutique becomes an important communication tool. Because customers consume, take photos and post their pictures on social media channels.'

That sounds good, but smaller brands and retailers in particular will shy away from the initial investment that food retailing entails. This raises questions such as: Who will serve the customers? Should the café be run in-house or should a barista be brought into the boutique? Where in the shop should the food offering be located? How can you test whether entering the food retail market is a good fit for your brand without incurring significant financial expenditure? And: Does the trend also make sense for purely online retailers?

One project that attracted a lot of public attention and required only a small investment was the collaboration between Berlin streetwear label WRSTBHVR and the famous schnitzel restaurant Borchardt. The capsule collection of strictly limited edition hoodies and T-shirts with

schnitzel prints sold out in no time, even though they were priced at almost three times the usual cost. The collaboration is seen as a blueprint for how two lifestyle worlds can come together and fuel each other.

IN-HOUSE OPERATION OR OUTSOURCING Good coffee preparation is a skill that must be learned. Therefore, retailers new to food retailing are advised to start with an external barista who brings with them the necessary know-how and flair. A pop-up area in the store allows you to test how customers respond to the new service. If you want to install a permanent café from the outset, it should be positioned so that it is clearly visible from outside.

It is also important that the interior design matches the rest of the shop. Sois Blessed in Munich, a concept store for upscale interiors and high-quality fashion, has cleverly integrated a day bar and a flower shop into its sales rooms. The transitions from flowers to fashion and to the café at the bar are fluid and form a unified whole for customers. Owner Ruth Gombert explains her concept: 'There are some things that money can't buy. In this age of digitalisation, this boutique is intended to be a space where people can recharge their batteries, enjoy some peace and quiet, and have good conversations.' Her plan has worked. Since opening in 2017, Sois Blessed Café on Prannerstraße has become a popular meeting place in Munich.

Mercedes-Benz shows that entire industries can also participate in the food retailing trend: the 'Odeonsplatz Studio' has moved into the former showroom in Munich. A place where 'constantly changing campaigns, exclusive themed worlds and state-of-the-art installations merge into an exclusive brand experience,' according to the website. In addition to exhibitions, conferences and new vehicle models, there is also a spacious co-working and communal area. And, of course, a café for anyone who can't find a cool café elsewhere in this tourist hotspot. ■



Local wood, high-quality natural stone walls, a large mirrored wall and striking lighting characterise the interior of the new Coffee Club

Image: Dallmayr Kaifée

Munich's new Coffee Club

Right next to its flagship store near Marienplatz, Dallmayr has opened its new 'Coffee Club'. The ambience in the large, light-flooded room combines modern coffee culture with the rich history of the company.

Angelika Frank

The architecture was designed by the Munich-based company Arnol/Werner, which is known for its high-quality choice of materials: the red marble from the Dallmayr delicatessen has been reinterpreted as a terrazzo floor in the Coffee Club. The original wood panelling has been replaced by light-coloured local elm wood and combined with high-quality natural stone walls. A mirrored wall creates a sense of space and lightness in the room.

The interior is accentuated by selected designer pieces such as lights from the New York label Apparatus, creating a contemporary ambience. The aim is to create a place where guests can enjoy coffee and immerse themselves in coffee culture at the same time – a modern meeting place for everyone who appreciates craftsmanship, quality and community.

The delicatessen's first floor houses the shop roaster, which continues a historic tradition: until the 1950s, coffee was roasted fresh here every day. Today, Dallmayr produces two exclusive house blends on site, which can be enjoyed in the Coffee Club or purchased to take away. Soon, a small counter directly next to the roaster will invite visitors to sample the coffee. ■



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Rewe Dornseifer relies on Schweitzer's 'Waterloop' technology in its modernised fresh food market in Olpe

Convenience drives premium refrigeration

In the coming years, the proportion of fresh, temperature-controlled products in the food retail sector will continue to rise. And with it, the demand for refrigerated display cabinets. Manufacturers are expecting a significant surge in demand and have high expectations for EuroShop 2026.

Ulrike Lach



Patrick Simon
Sales Manager
Aichinger

"We are seeing a trend towards open architecture, modularity and flexible stand-alone solutions."

The Dornseifer family completely modernized their Rewe fresh food market in Olpe/Sauerland, covering a good 1,000 square meters, in a three-month blitz renovation. The focus of the renovation was the installation of new refrigeration technology. An important focus of the Dornseifer product range is on ready-to-eat and ready-to-heat offerings from its own brand. The demand for refrigeration equipment is correspondingly high in order to make the most of this convenience expertise. Managing Director Jörg Dornseifer decided to install a "Waterloop" system from the South Tyrolean design and shopfitting company Schweitzer for the first time because the technology is more flexible and, thanks to water cooling and heat recovery, more sustainable, according to the businessman. Since the renovation, fresh produce, including dairy products and counter goods, now accounts for around 30 percent of the sales area at the Olpe store.

Dornseifer is not alone in the industry with this strategy. Driven by changing consumer behaviour, food retailers are currently massively expanding their range of convenience products. This is also increasing the

Images (2): Pan-Dur



Space-saving: Pan-Dur presents a new glass door system at EuroShop, in which the doors open vertically upwards and downwards

F-GASES BANNED FROM 2030 Demand for re-frigerated display cabinets is also being boosted by two other factors: firstly, the desire for greater energy efficiency due to rising energy costs and a stronger focus on sustainability. And secondly, the ban on F-gases that will come into force in 2030. Many companies are still putting off investing, observes Patrick Simon, Sales Manager at Aichinger: 'We expect a significant surge in demand and are prepared to carry out the conversion in good time.' Joachim Dallinger, Head of Product Management

and Marketing at Epta Germany: 'New F-gas refrigerants will be extremely scarce from 2027 onwards. The trade needs to push harder for the conversions to be carried out.'

This growing demand for new refrigeration solutions is meeting a market that is currently characterised by a high concentration on the supplier side: shopfitting company Aichinger now belongs to Edeka, Austrian supplier AHT to the Japanese Daikin Group, and the Italian Epta Group in-

demand for refrigerators and display cases. 'Fresh, refrigerated product ranges will continue to expand rapidly, which is why the food retail sector will need 30 to 40 per cent more refrigerated display cases,' says Christian Milk, Schweitzer's sales manager for Germany. Bernhard Bötscher, product manager at the Austrian company Hauser, also believes that climate change will lead to more fruit and vegetables being sold refrigerated in the future.

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Joachim Dallinger

Head of Product Management and Marketing
Epta Germany

“New F-gas refrigerants will be extremely scarce from 2027 onwards.”

egrated Viessmann Refrigeration Solutions into the group in 2025 and recently signed a merger agreement with Hauser. While Christian Milk of Schweitzer believes that this ‘concentration of power’ could reduce the pressure to innovate and be detrimental to the food retail sector, competitors such as Aichinger, Epta and Hauser feel that the new partnerships have left them well equipped to compete.

MODULAR AND FLEXIBLE Aichinger recommends CO₂ refrigeration systems as the superior technology, especially for larger markets with stable layouts, because CO₂ has a low GWP (global warming potential) and is also very energy-efficient when waste heat is utilised. ‘However, we offer all common refrigeration technologies and see a trend towards open architecture, modularity and flexible stand-alone solutions in plus cooling,’ says Patrick Simon. While Aichinger is not exhibiting at EuroShop this year, Schweitzer Group, Hauser and Epta will each have a stand at the Düsseldorf retail fair.

Schweitzer has invested heavily in research and development in recent years and believes it is on the right track with its focus on ‘Waterloop’ technology. ‘We are currently experiencing very high demand, especially from international retail groups. They have recognised the advantages such as simplicity, flexibility and efficiency and are driving forward the roll-out in their stores,’ says Christian Milk happily. He also announces a model offensive for EuroShop 2026: the entire range of refrigerated cabinets has been redesigned and equipped with state-of-the-art inverter technology, integrated compressors and new airflow management. Due to the increasing use of self-service presentation, it is also important that the refrigerated cabinets ‘talk to consumers’, i.e. offer them guidance, explain product ranges and stimulate impulse purchases.



Epta's small ‘Unit’ refrigerated display case is made largely from recyclable materials

Image: Epta

Austrian specialist Hauser is focusing on energy efficiency and sustainability at its EuroShop stand. According to Bernhard Bötscher, the highlights in the product range include the energy-saving ‘Remeta Connect’ refrigerated cabinet, which uses 14 per cent less energy, and the ‘Refino’ glass-door refrigerated cabinet, in which the cooling units are installed on the roof of the cabinet to save space. With its newly developed furniture, Hauser is also responding to the trend towards solutions for small-format city formats and compact smart stores, explains the product manager: ‘This allows even small floor space to be used optimally and offers maximum flexibility in product presentation. At EuroShop, Hauser will also be presenting its newly developed ‘Eco Fusion’ refrigeration technology standard, which uses the natural refrigerants CO₂ and propane in multiple refrigeration circuits and achieves optimum cooling performance even at very high outside temperatures.

FOCUS ON SUSTAINABILITY The Epta Group also offers special cabinets for small-space concepts that are either plug-in ready and operate with the natural refrigerant propane or work with cold or hot brine. Another focus is on refrigerated cabinets that can be easily converted from staffed to self-service operation to give retailers more flexibility. Sustainable innovations are the focus at EuroShop. ‘Our new solutions rely on natural refrigerants and recyclable materials,’ says Joachim Dallinger. The group wants to align itself even more closely with the principles of the circular economy. For example, ‘Unit’ is a small refrigerated display case that was recently presented, which is made largely from recycled materials and is easy to repair thanks to its modular design. Digitalisation is also a high priority. This is no longer just about remote monitoring of refrigeration systems, but also about predictive maintenance to ensure the optimal and energy-efficient operation of refrigerated display cases in food retail. ■



High volume of goods despite small footprint: ‘Refino’ refrigerated display cabinet from Hauser

Image: Hauser

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Self-checkout terminal at the Ott butcher shop in Garching. The integrated self-service zone also allows sales after closing time

Which technology is right?

Self-scanning checkouts are the standard payment technology in 24/7 stores. Direct marketers, butchers and farm shops are increasingly relying on app-based payment methods and RFID solutions. Ultimately, cost-effectiveness and customer experience determine the right checkout technology.

Winfried Lambertz

Autonomous and semi-autonomous stores that can operate around the clock without staff have recently gained significant momentum. As of 1 January 2026, the Heilbronn University of Cooperative Education (DHBW) already counted more than 860 smart store concepts in Germany. About half of these are located in rural areas, where they fill gaps in local supply. The range of different 24/7 formats is wide, ranging from simple mini self-service markets to hybrid concepts (with staffed opening hours) to fully autonomous high-tech stores. The 24/7 concepts also include vending machine shops and robotic solutions, where goods are automatically picked and dispensed after being ordered at a terminal.

Common features of almost all staffless 24/7 concepts are small floor space, customer registration via bank card or

Image: Lekkerland/Manfred Daams



Image above:
The fully autonomous 'Rewe ready' smart store at the Kamener Kreuz loading park uses AI-based computer vision technology

Image below:
New self-scanning terminal from Tante M in the City-M pilot store in Backnang



Image: Tante M

app at the entrance, and no cashless payment options. There are differences in checkout technologies: walk-in/walk-out technologies ('grab & go'), self-scanning checkouts, app-based payment methods and RFID solutions are used.

GRAB & GO STILL IN TEST MODE Autonomous 'Grab & Go' stores have the most technologically advanced checkout option: AI technology, computer vision and weight sensors register every item taken from the shelves and assign it to the person shopping. At the end of their shopping trip, customers leave the store without actively paying. The purchase amount is automatically triggered via app and debited from the customer's account.

As of January 2026, there are 25 Grab & Go stores in operation in Germany. The Rewe Group has the most applications. While Rewe's six 'Pick & Go' stores use the just-walk-out technology from Israeli technology provider Trigo, its convenience subsidiary Lekkerland relies on AI-based computer vision technology from Californian provider Aifi in its 'Smart Box' outlets.

'Grab & Go' is still in the test phase, with no roll-out in sight. Fully automated stores mean enormous investments for operators. Only when the technology becomes affordable could Grab & Go stores gain in importance.

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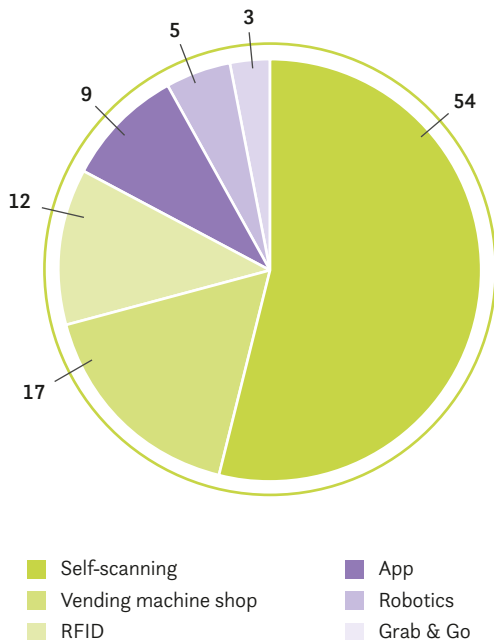
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Distribution of 24/7 smart stores by checkout technologies

Percentage shares



Total number of smart stores in Germany as of 1 January 2026: approx. 860

Source: DHBW Heilbronn

SELF-CHECKOUT CASHIERS DOMINATE The vast majority of 24/7 smart stores rely on self-scanning cash registers as their checkout technology. In the mini-markets of Tante Enso and Tante M, which together have around 170 stores and are the two largest operators in the 24/7 segment, the self-service checkout is usually a simple tabletop solution with a desktop touchscreen and payment terminal. Payment is made with a rechargeable customer card. Only centrally managed items from the dry goods range, including beverages, can be scanned at the self-service checkout. Regional products without barcodes or individual items from the fresh produce range, such as fruit, vegetables and baked goods, are stored in the checkout software and can be selected by customers on the touch display.

The Tante M franchise stores have recently started rolling out the cloud-based POS software 'Korona-Studio' from Combase AG with checkout hardware from Partner Tech. The interface to wholesale partners is intended to enable a 'fully digital process and order chain, which significantly simplifies the management of a Tante M location and ensures efficiency,' according to the smart store operator. The new 'City-M' in Backnang serves as the hub for the current software transfer.

Teo, the 24/7 mini-market concept from Smart Retail Solutions, relies on the Snabble checkout system in its approximately 40 smart stores. To gain access to the store, verification via app or bank card is required in advance. Payment is made at the terminal by card.



SELF-CHECKOUT TERMINALS

What the systems should be able to do

FLEXIBLE ITEM SCANNING

Intuitive scanning with handheld or integrated scanners. Clear display of shopping basket, discounts, coupons and vouchers.

PAYMENT OPTIONS

Support for traditional card payments, contactless payments and mobile wallets such as Apple Pay and Google Pay. Optional: integration of credit systems.

USER-FRIENDLY UX

Large, intuitive touch display, multilingual support, accessible modes and a clearly guided checkout process to make operation easy.

STORE MANAGEMENT & ANALYTICS

Comprehensive management functions for operators such as remote monitoring, live inventory, price control, automatic fault reports and detailed analyses of sales, peak times, shopping baskets and abandonment rates.

24/7 SECURITY

Camera surveillance to protect against theft and fraud. Automatic response to anomalies and notification of customers via audio/video. Connection to support staff.

Source: Shop-IQ

Image: My Enso



Functional table solution with handheld scanner, desktop touchscreen and payment terminal at Tante Enso

Independent grocers from the Edeka and Rewe networks who operate 24/7 stores usually source their checkout technology from the solution portfolio of centrally listed IT suppliers. The hybrid stores of Edeka Jäger, with several branches in the Stuttgart area, Edeka Paul, with two village shops, and Edeka Beckesepp in Waltershofen near Freiburg, for example, rely on the 'Easy eXpress' series from Diebold Nixdorf. The Nahkauf Box, a 24/7 format for independent Rewe retailers, uses self-service terminals from the manufacturer 4POS.

Self-checkout terminals are also increasingly finding their way into butcher's shops and farms with direct marketing. The Rupp butcher's shop in Aichach opens a self-service zone integrated into the shop after 6 p.m., enabling it to sell 24/7. Customers scan or pay for their purchases at a Shop-IQ self-service terminal. Self-service sales after closing time have enabled the butcher to increase his turnover by ten per cent.



The self-checkout terminal in the Rewe Nahkauf Box also accepts card payments only

Image: Rewe

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Image: Smart-Store 24

PAYING WITH THE APP More and more direct marketing providers, such as farm shops and village shops, are offering scanning and payment via smartphone apps. From the retailer's point of view, the main advantage of the app solution is the low investment costs. 'End users simply bring the technology with them when they shop,' says Myriam Haber, managing director of Lokbest GmbH in Wertingen. The software company provides retailers with a complete package for operating smart stores, consisting of access control with QR code readers, an interface for age validation via ID cards, up-to-date product range and inventory overviews, and several payment options. In return,

+ Costs and customer journey are decisive factors

Smart store expert Prof. Dr. Stephan Rüschen from DHBW Heilbronn expects grab & go technology to make a breakthrough in the next few years.



Prof. Dr. Stephan Rüschen
Head of Studies
DHBW

Self-scanning checkout, app, RFID or Grab & Go: what are the most important criteria when deciding on a particular checkout technology for 24/7 smart stores?

First and foremost, it's the cost. The second criterion is the customer journey. How do I ensure that customers understand the shopping process in my smart store? Both criteria are in conflict with each other. The fact that Grab & Go, for example, has not yet reached the roll-out phase is also due to the high costs involved.

Mobile self-scanning with smartphone apps achieves only marginal usage rates in traditional food retail. In the 24/7 store segment, however, the app is a common means of recording and payment. Why?

App technology incurs virtually no hardware costs. It allows direct marketers to keep their farm shops open around the clock. With an average of two to three items, the hurdle for customers to use the app is significantly lower than when shopping at the supermarket, where having a smartphone in your hand tends to be more of a nuisance.

What are the advantages of RFID as a checkout technology in smart stores?

The process effort involved in RFID is usually too high for the operator. However, this is different for butchers, as they have to package their products and the price of the RFID tag plays a minor role in the average price of the products. The real benefit then lies in quality and best-before date control for ultra-fresh products. And for customers, it is of course easier to place the items in a checkout lane where they are automatically detected by the technology without having to scan them themselves.

Grab & Go is still in test mode. Do you still believe in the breakthrough of fully autonomous stores?

For smaller formats such as convenience stores in high-frequency locations, I expect Grab & Go to make a breakthrough in the next few years. As far as larger areas are concerned, I am rather sceptical. That will take longer.

retailers pay a monthly fee plus a commission on sales. Kerstin Peters from Biohof Peters, an organic farm on Lake Steinhude near Hanover, sees the main advantage of the app in that it enables 24/7 shopping: 'We are no longer dependent on fixed opening hours during which an employee has to be behind the counter to serve customers.' The organic farm offers meat products from its own slaughterhouse and a range of food from organic wholesalers. One year after the introduction of the Lokbest system, 1,200 registered users are already using the app, with an average purchase amount of 30,61 euros.

For the 'Dorfladenbox' (around 40 locations in Germany and Austria), the technology provider of the same name not only provides retailers with the software, but also with branding and sales containers. The range exclusively comprises regional products from selected producers in the immediate vicinity. The Dorfladenbox app is required for shopping and also provides access to the store.

STOCK AND BEST-BEFORE DATE CONTROL WITH RFID

The specific advantages of RFID technology are particularly beneficial to butchers who operate one or more smart stores in addition to their regular business – either in an existing shop as a hybrid solution or as a sales container.

Each item in the range is equipped with an RFID tag that stores information such as weight, price and shelf life. At the checkout, the customer places their entire purchase in a checkout chute. There, the products are automatically scanned and the purchase amount appears on the screen. Payment is made by bank card or via an app from the smartphone wallet.

For the butcher, RFID technology means minimal effort, as they have to pick up each individual product anyway to package and label it for self-service. In addition, RFID offers them the advantage of inventory and best-before date control.

The IT company Smart Stores 24 has made a name for itself as a provider of RFID solutions for butchers and farm shops. In addition to the POS system, which can also scan barcodes, the full-service provider from Augsburg also supplies shop fittings and sales containers with refrigeration equipment, digital signage and camera surveillance technology. Fully equipped containers are priced in the range of 80,000 to 100,000 euros. Smart Stores 24 currently has around 100 customer references. 'We have set ourselves the target of 700 butchers by the end of 2027,' says managing director Michael Kimmich optimistically. ■

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The key to *process excellence*

More and more retail companies are now relying on electronic shelf labels (ESL) to connect in-store processes. The range of applications for these smart labels now extends far beyond the display of price information.

Bernd Liening



Image: Kaufland

Kaufland communicates price changes in the bakery section quickly and accurately directly to the shelves.

ter customer service,' says Stefanie Kristes, Senior Expert Retail & Enterprise Solutions at Obi. In addition, Obi benefits from the seamless integration of ESL into the existing Cisco Meraki wireless infrastructure in its stores. This approach means that no additional hardware is required.

In November 2025, it was official: Obi Germany will install an ESL solution from the Vusion Group, a leading international provider of digital solutions for brick-and-mortar retailers, in more than 200 German DIY stores. In addition to digital shelf labels (Electronic Shelf Labels/ESL), the project also includes control via the 'Vusion Cloud' platform. According to Obi, the DIY retailer wants to use this technology not only to display current and accurate prices to its customers at all times, but also to 'transform its processes with new technologies'. One of the goals is to reduce non-sales-related activities on the shop floor, thereby increasing the availability of staff for customer service. The use of digital labels makes it possible to automate price changes and to transmit various information about the shelf and its inventory directly to employees via ESL.

'We are continuously improving the shopping experience for our customers and trying to provide even better support to our teams in Obi stores with state-of-the-art technology. Through our partnership with the Vusion Group, we can significantly optimise our processes in the stores and ensure that our employees can focus on providing even bet-

BATTERIES IN SHELF RAILS dm-Drogeriemarkt is also driving forward the integration of electronic shelf labels into innovative store processes. The technical platform for the ESL solution is the Vusion Group's 'Edge Sense'. The system includes new energy- and time-saving shelf rails and also enables Bluetooth connections. Power is supplied by rechargeable batteries, which are no longer located individually in the labels, but in the shelf rails. The ESLs can also use Bluetooth to transmit location-specific information about each product to employees and customers.

The system simplifies daily tasks for store employees. With instant access to detailed product information via digital labels and mobile devices, they can respond quickly to customer enquiries. 'Edge Sense' also offers the possibility of optimising processes in the merchandise management system. dm-Drogeriemarkt plans to introduce the system in around 70 stores for the time being. In addition, this technology will work in conjunction with robots (Ubica) that are already in use in many dm stores after closing time to take pictures of the shelves and generate inventory, out-of-stocks, misplacements and other data, enabling automated shelf



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Image: dm-Drogeriemarkt



Image: Obi

Image above: dm-Drogeriemarkt is driving forward the integration of ESL into innovative store processes
Image below: Obi is transforming its processes in over 200 German stores with ESL technologies from the Vusion Group

tail space since 2025. The work is scheduled to be completed in May 2026. The 'GK Air Price Optimizer' is an all-in-one software solution for AI-driven price optimisation. Here, too, the ESL solution is integrated into existing processes such as checkout and marketing measures.

ACCURATE PRICING WITH AI GK Software's 'Price Optimizer' uses AI to create market and demand analyses, enabling automated, transparent and profitable pricing for the respective sales channel. Intelligent algorithms help to optimise sales prices at any time and in line with strategy. According to GK, the interactions between consumer demand, market conditions and competition are also automatically taken into account. GK 'Air Price Optimizer' processes large amounts of data, including product data, demand-related information, competitor prices, weather and other relevant influencing factors, to determine the current and product-specific price.

Back in May 2025, Kaufland installed around 100,000 digital price tags in its in-store bakeries so that price reductions could be communicated quickly and reliably. 'In this area in particular, price adjustments are frequent due to seasonal changes in the product range, promotional campaigns or evening discounts,' the company explains. Kaufland had already been using ESL in its fruit and vegetable departments nationwide.

Also in May 2025, Online Software AG presented the new version of its communication platform for the retail trade, 'Prestigeenterprise 6.4'. Among other things, this offers targeted improvements in the scalability of ESL. Although its connection has long been one of the functions of 'Prestigeenterprise', it has now been further developed specifically for use in large-scale installations. As a result, Online Software promises 'noticeably higher performance, improved stability even with very large amounts of data and continued full flexibility in the choice of manufacturer and model'. At the same time, the software platform also enables central control of all price and advertising communication with digital and printed media directly at the POS. 'This enables a modern, cross-media customer approach in the store, while at the same time laying the foundation for retail media installations – the next big topic in the world of retail technologies,' says Jürgen Berens von Rautenfeld, CEO of Online Software AG. ■

work or reordering. For dm, the integration with ESL technology is considered the 'key to process excellence'. Last but not least, the new integrated solution combining ESL and robots is intended to optimise the in-store picking process for click & collect.

The scanning robots from Ulica Robotics, a start-up based in Bremen, capture, recognise and identify the fixtures and fittings and inventory in retail stores. The 'digital twins' created with this technology – ideally on a daily basis – are an accurate, up-to-date data representation of the stores. They are not only used for out-of-stock detection, but also record the actual item positioning, read the ESL information and check that the labelling is correct.

The Osnabrück-based fashion retailer L&T Lengermann & Trieschmann is now also using an ESL solution with the clear goal of increasing competitiveness. Intelligent price optimisation in brick-and-mortar stores is an important lever for this. The company believes that brick-and-mortar stores have been at a disadvantage compared to online retailers due to complex price change processes and a lack of information about customer behaviour. In a development partnership with Vusion and GK Air, L+T has been installing around 20,000 ESL units with NFC interfaces in its re-

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Reaching the SMEs

Vertical fashion chains have been using RFID for several years, and now medium-sized multi-label retailers are also discovering this technology. The results of initial projects look promising.

Ulrike Lach

RFID technology also facilitates self-checkouts



„In our largest branch, covering 1,000 square metres, we are able to process all items in just 20 minutes.“



Stefan Richter
Managing Director
Pier 14

It was a real coup: two years ago, C&A joined forces with technology partner Checkpoint Systems to migrate all 1,300 stores in 17 countries to RFID. Ever since, all logistics processes in stores and distribution centres rely on radio frequency technology. Every item is labelled with a hanging or adhesive tag straight from the production line in Asia. Last year, the fashion retailer was awarded the RFID Journal's 'Best RFID Implementation in Retail' award for this large-scale rollout.

Upon request by the editorial team, C&A chose not to comment on the investment costs and amortisation period. Regardless, company officials are very pleased with the project's results. After more than a year of full operation, the conclusion is that significantly optimised in-store replenishment based on reliable inventory data alone has prevented out-of-stocks and significantly increased sales. Additional benefits include more efficient inventory management, more effective theft detection through better analysis, and faster checkout processes. This applies to both staffed checkouts and self-checkout terminals. Items are

tracked by integrated RFID readers. Customers no longer have to scan barcodes, which can be annoying and often leads to errors. The Düsseldorf-based company sees potential for optimisation with RFID in data quality and track & trace across the value chain.

Like C&A, many vertical fashion retailers that exclusively offer their own brands and oversee the entire supply chain from production to sales now rely on RFID. International retailers include Nordstrom, Gap, H&M, the Bestseller Group and the Japanese chain Uniqlo, which is massively expanding in Germany. The Spanish Inditex Group, with brands such as Zara, Massimo Duti, Bershka and Pull & Bear, is also a pioneering force. The latest innovation at Inditex: since last year, RFID soft tags are sewn into all Zara textile items, where they remain in the apparel and now also serve as merchandise security. They are deactivated at checkout. Sensors above the exits detect any tags that have not been deactivated and trigger an alarm.

HUGE POTENTIAL FOR STREAMLINING In the multi-label retail sector, which is dominated by small and medium-sized businesses that source collections from various brands and market them in their stores, the use of RFID technology is still the exception. However, the number of companies that tag their items with RFID labels as soon as they arrive is growing. This development is being driven by increasing pressure on costs and competition: RFID has the potential to reduce costs through more efficient processes and to meet the increasing demands of customers for product availability through permanent inventory transparency and automated replenishment processes.

Fashion chain Pier 14, based on the island of Usedom, is one of the first movers. Since 2021, Pier 14 employees have been tagging all items in all 14 stores on the Baltic Sea

Image: C&A



Dropping prices for RFID tags make it an affordable option for small and medium-sized businesses as well

Image: EK Retail



Digital signage terminals in the Pier 14 store in Ahlbeck: customers and employees can access product information via integrated RFID readers

Image: Marcel Pieper for Pier 14

coast with an adhesive RFID label when goods are received. Managing Director Stefan Richter sees the biggest advantage of this technology in the ability to take inventory in a matter of minutes using handheld devices. 'In our largest store, covering 1,000 square metres, we are able to record all items in just 20 minutes.' Pier 14 has also been able to significantly streamline many other processes with the help of Berlin-based RFID specialist Syspro and software partner Remira: ranging from availability displays, which are indispensable for online business, to the quick location of individual items on the sales floor and merchandise security, to in-store terminals where customers and employees can query item information via the integrated RFID reader.

HELPFUL FOR STOCK TAKING Mark Wahl from the men's fashion store of the same name in Ertingen, Swabia, got inspired by his colleague on the Baltic Sea and switched to RFID as well. After some early hiccups, such as interface problems with the merchandise management system, everything is now running smoothly. The investment costs of 20,000 euros are paying off much faster than expected, Wahl is pleased to announce. The savings in time and costs during inventory alone are impressive. ■

Stylish self-checkout terminals on display at the new Zara flagship store in Barcelona. The international fashion retailer has been relying on RFID for several years



Image: Zara



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Outdated workflows and data silos make it difficult for retailers to maintain visibility of their inventory, creating inefficient, costly operations. To compound an already challenging data situation, regulatory burdens like the Digital Product Passport will be introduced gradually from 2027 on all goods entering the EU. And last, but not least, customers now expect seamless purchasing experiences and will go elsewhere if they don't get them.

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data also provides full inventory transparency at every stage.

REDUCE ERRORS AND SAVE EMPLOYEES TIME RFID scanning enables employees to quickly and reliably identify incoming goods, check and locate stored items, and activate optimum re-ordering. At point of sale, mobile RFID printers and handheld readers also streamline price management. They also help automate and expedite final checks in micro-fulfilment centres at picking and packing.

SEAMLESS SHOPPING EXPERIENCES INCREASE CUSTOMER SATISFACTION When shoppers want a specific product, or place a click-and-collect order, RFID enables employees to immediately check if it's in stock. And at RFID self-checkout stations, where

RFID-tagged goods are scanned simultaneously, checkout is done in seconds saving customers queuing time.

A COMPLETE RFID ECOSYSTEM FROM ONE SINGLE PROVIDER TSC Auto ID offers not just a comprehensive range of RFID mobile printers and computers for retailers but also consumables like RFID labels. Its devices stand out for their ease of use, long battery life, wireless connectivity and wide selection of accessories. TSC supports retailers throughout the entire RFID implementation process, acting as a single point of contact for the complete retail workflow.

Target-oriented *integration of AI*

www

More
information:

From pilots to transformation: Although AI projects are now part of everyday life in retail, the holistic, strategically integrated application of artificial intelligence is still the exception.

Katharina Sieweke

The recent EHI initiative 'AI in Retail' supports retail companies in moving AI beyond the phase of stand-alone applications and systematically integrating the technology into their organisations, processes and decision-making structures. Retailers, technology providers and experts come together in workshops to share experiences, learn from their peers and jointly develop existing best practices. In workshops, participants discuss specific use cases, identify success factors and develop a system for the strategic integration of AI in retail companies. The initiative is addressed to IT, AI and data science managers in the retail sector.

+ „AI has long been a reality in retail, but many applications remain stuck in the pilot stage.“

stores+shops interviewed Imke Hahn, Director of IT Research at the EHI, about what the initiative participants can expect.

Why is this the right time for such an initiative, and what added value does it offer the market?

AI has long been a reality in retail, but many applications remain stuck in the pilot stage. As technologies continue to evolve quickly and requirements for scalability, governance, and regulation increase, the call for a clear strategic direction becomes ever more important. This is exactly where the initiative picks up: it pools experiences from the retail sector, applies technological dynamics to create actionable structures, and promotes the transition of AI from a pilot project to an integral part of the organization: hands-on, team-based and consistent from a retail perspective.

What are the key workshop topics?

We partner with selected solution providers with AI expertise to develop an exemplary system for strategically embedding



Imke Hahn
Director of IT Research
EHI Retail Institute

AI in your company. This system covers the aspects of structures, workforce, processes and data. This forms the foundation for creating a maturity model for assessing the current situation, a structured overview of key aspects of integration, practice-oriented do's and don'ts, and a list of questions for direct application in AI projects. Naturally, there is also plenty of opportunity for discussion and fun.

How will the results of the initiative be reflected in practice?

The results of the initiative will complement the EHI study 'AI Integration in Retail' as a specially dedicated section. ■

The EHI logo consists of the letters 'EHI' in a white, bold, sans-serif font, centered within a solid red square. The background of the entire poster features a network of glowing orange and white lines connecting various points, with several hands reaching in from the edges, suggesting a collaborative and interconnected environment.

EHI

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From physical terminals to integrated platforms

Less cash registers, more AI and self-service: Advanced functionalities require maximum efficiency and performance. In a challenging economic environment, retailers are focusing on strategic investments in checkout technologies.

Çetin Acar

Checkouts are undergoing radical changes and increasingly are becoming smart, networked platforms that combine efficiency, flexibility, and technological innovation. Increasing demands for availability, integration and user-friendliness are coinciding with a continuing decline in the number of systems and locations. While the average lifespan of checkout hardware and software continues to increase, topics such as artificial intelligence, self-service concepts and mobile checkout solutions are noticeably accelerating the transformation of checkout and making it a central element of modern retail strategies.

„Checkout is turning into a smart and connected platform.“

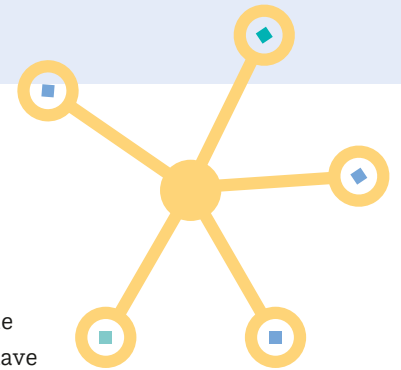


Çetin Acar
Project Manager
IT Research
EHI Retail Institute

FEWER CASH REGISTERS

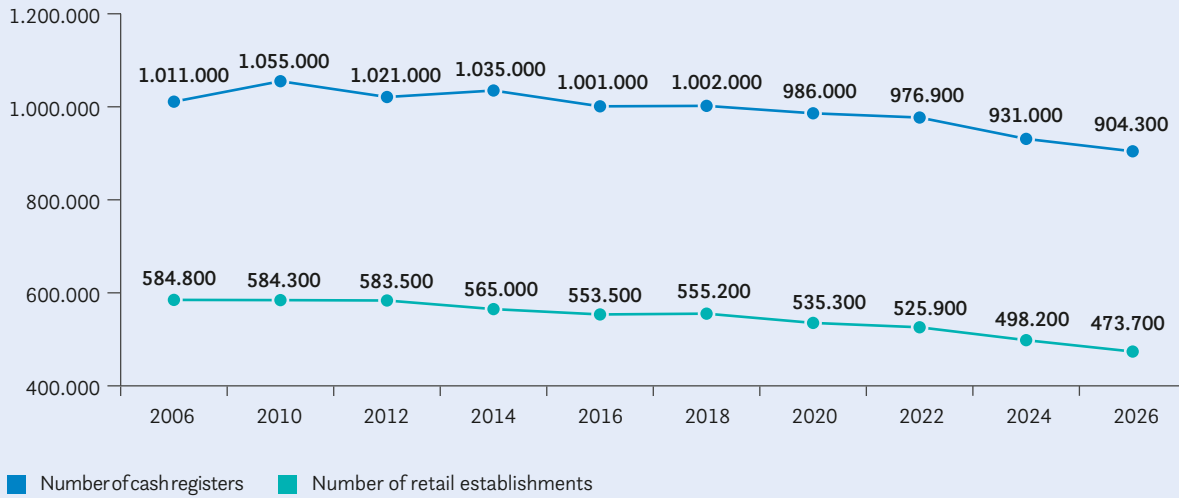
There's been a trend for years where both the number of businesses and the number of cash registers have been steadily dropping, and it's still ongoing. Currently, 904,300 cash registers are in use in 473,700 businesses in the broader retail sector (including gas stations, bakeries, hair salons, etc.) – compared to 931,000 cash registers in 498,200 businesses in 2022. Businesses are closing for financial reasons or because the competition from e-commerce is getting too intense. This is reducing the total number of brick-and-mortar touchpoints, while omnichannel expectations are growing. Even self-checkouts, which are replacing staffed registers at a ratio of at least 2:1, are not able to stop the downward trend.

FIELDS OF ACTION From the perspective of the study participants, three fields of action are strategically prominent: the integration of artificial intelligence, the expansion of self-checkout and self-scanning systems, and the use of mobile devices with comprehensive checkout capabilities. AI applications promise



Statistics: Development number of cash register systems and retail businesses in Germany (2006 – 2026)

Absolute numbers



n = 50, multiple responses possible
Source: EHI

automation opportunities in areas such as fraud detection, real-time product identification, and predictive customer frequency analyses, which can reduce staff workload and optimize processes. Self-service solutions reduce waiting time, enable more flexible staff resource allocation, and enhance customer experience by offering autonomy and speed of payment. Mobile cash registers, whether handhelds or tablets, shift checkout flexibly into the sales area – ideal for peak times, promotional areas, or seasonal peaks.

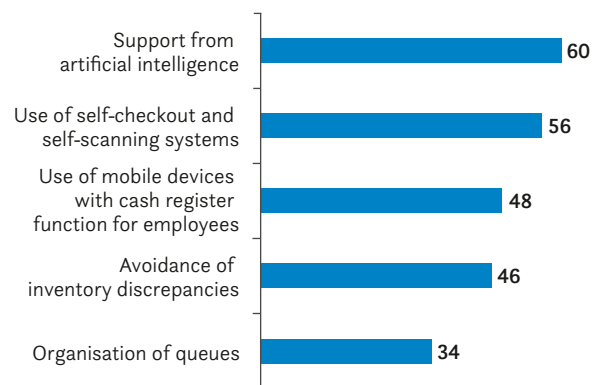
INVESTING IN HARD- AND SOFTWARE Modernization pressure on retail store systems is growing noticeably. The average lifespan of POS hardware is currently 5.9 years, which is above the figure of 5.5 years indicated in the 2024 study. Economically challenging conditions such as high energy costs and weak consumer confidence are curbing willingness for investments. For the first time in many years, price and total cost of ownership are again the decisive criteria in hardware selection. Retailers are therefore adopting a step-by-step approach: instead of completely replacing their systems, they are renewing individual elements such as scanners, printers, and displays in order to maintain cost control. Fast troubleshooting remains a key criterion, as system failures have a direct impact on sales.

Nevertheless, the figures signal positive momentum: 88 percent of respondents plan to modify their POS hardware within the next two years, with around 22 percent of study participants intending to replace it completely.

The situation is similar with software: with an average age of 6.9 years (2024: 6.4 years), there is a clear need for renewal. The willingness to make changes remains strong: around one-half of respondents plan to upgrade their POS software. Tailor-made, customized developments are increasingly coming into focus. Compared to standard solutions, customized software enables seamless integration into the current environment, flexible adaptation to industry-specific regulations, and the quick launch of new features like contactless payments or loyalty programs. Cloud-based

Statistics: Need for action in current payment processes (top 5)

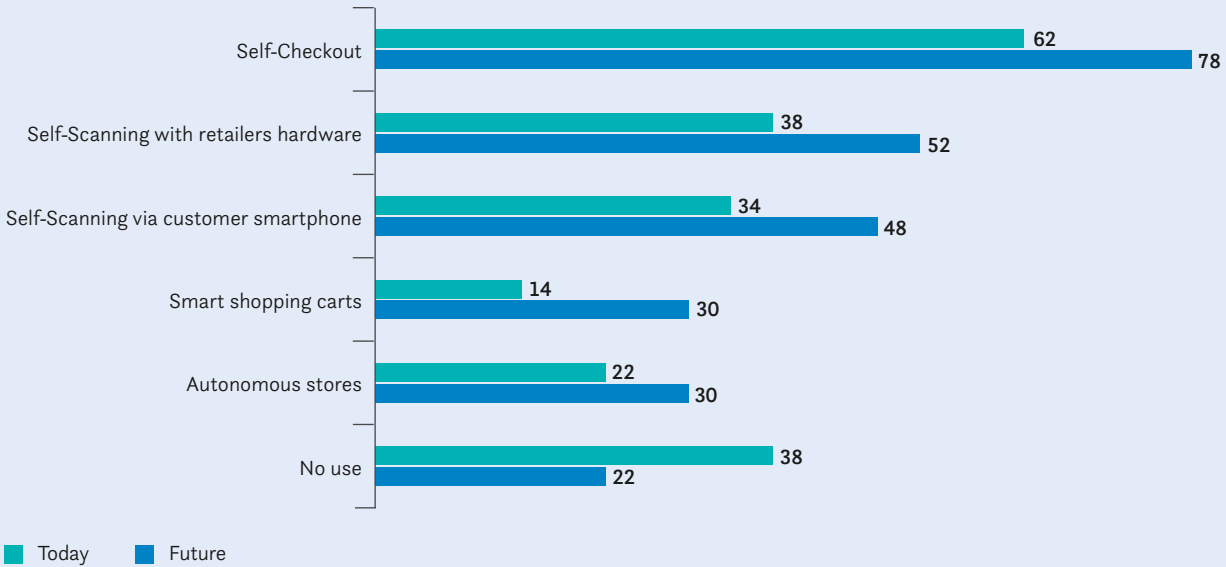
in percent



n = 50, multiple responses possible
Source: EHI

Implementation of self-service systems

in percent



n = 50, multiple responses possible.
Source: EHI

architectures continue to gain ground because they enable centralized updates, scalability, and reduced workload while meeting increased security requirements.

SELF-CHECKOUT AS STANDARD Self-service systems are becoming the standard in modern checkouts across all industries. Standalone self-checkout terminals, handheld scanners, and app-based solutions shift responsibility to customers and reduce staffing requirements. Smart shopping carts that can integrate scanning, weighing, and payment functions add to the mix. Self-service systems are seen as having great potential, offering end-to-end digitalization of the entire shopping process and creating new data sources for personalization. Their popularity in grocery stores and drugstores is accelerating customer acceptance and promoting their spread to other industries as well. The use of artificial intelligence in the checkout process reflects the most dynamic progress: 60 percent of

respondents consider support from AI-based systems to be one of the most important areas for action (2024: 33 percent). AI can support processes with features such as automatic product identification, dynamic checkout line optimization, and personalized offers in real time.

In summary, checkout will reach a turning point in 2026: fewer but more intelligent systems are meeting higher demands. Retailers who are investing in AI, self-service, and mobility are preparing for the era of connected retail. The transformation offers opportunities for streamlined processes, an improved customer experience, and sustainable cost savings – provided that these investments are driven strategically. ■

acar@ehi.org



More information:
Checkout Trends 2026





EHI

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YEARS

“We have been supporting retail with our research for 75 years and offer our members a unique network – this will continue to be our mission in the future.”

ULRICH SPAAN
MANAGING DIRECTOR

Improving retail
TOGETHER

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Image: Itab

Modularity in practice: Itab's 'Vision' hybrid checkout counter is now being rolled out at various retailers, including Edeka Prechtl in Bad Feilnbach

Trend towards flexible systems

The demands on POS systems are increasing: modularity, efficiency and accessibility are shaping current developments in the checkout area. At EuroShop 2026, suppliers will be demonstrating just how flexible modern hardware solutions can be today.

Mathias Kohne



Klaus Schmid
Managing Director
Itab Germany

“Self-checkout solutions have evolved from being purely a customer convenience to becoming a strategic tool.”

Cash register hardware is undergoing radical change. What was designed as a static checkout point just a few years ago is increasingly being transformed into flexible systems that can respond to different operating situations. This development is being driven not only by a shortage of skilled workers, but also by increased requirements for ergonomics and accessibility. With the Accessibility Enhancement Act (BFSG), which has been in force in Germany since June 2025, retailers are obliged to design new payment terminals at self-checkouts to be accessible. However, many providers are already going well beyond this minimum requirement.

HYBRID SYSTEMS A key trend is the flexibilisation of checkout areas. More and more systems can be adapted to suit the situation, for example when staff are short or customer footfall fluctuates throughout the day. One example of this is the 'Vision' hybrid checkout from Itab, which has been continuously rolled out since its introduction last year, for example at Penny in Offenbach and Edeka Prechtl in Bad Feilnbach. The checkout counter switches between

assisted checkout and self-checkout zone at the touch of a button. In SCO mode, the height of the checkout counter can be adjusted to comply with the European Accessibility Act (EAA) and to allow wheelchair access. 'Self-checkout solutions have evolved from being purely for customer convenience to becoming a strategic tool. They are a direct response to the shortage of skilled workers,' says Klaus Schmid, Managing Director of Itab Germany. In addition, Itab has introduced the 'Age Checker': an AI-supported age verification system that checks in less than a second whether customers are eligible to purchase age-restricted products. According to the manufacturer, this can reduce manual intervention by staff by up to 80 percent.

Modularity is one of the defining developments in the hardware sector. Suppliers are focusing on platforms that can be individually configured: a response to different spatial situations, checkout processes and technical requirements. Shopreme, a joint venture of Umdasch The Store Makers, is presenting the 3.1 platform for self-checkout and exit terminals at EuroShop. The Matrix and Vector systems can be expanded with various add-ons, from different scanner-

scale combinations to Windows-compatible tablets. The payment terminal is positioned at a standard operating height and equipped with an adjustable tilt angle. With the optional 'Accessibility+' add-on, the company goes beyond the legal requirements: the terminal includes a tactile and acoustic control pad, wheelchair-accessible storage areas and an optional hand scanner for people with motor impairments. On the software side, screen readers, audio output and high-contrast mode are integrated.

Pan Oston and its subsidiary 4POS are also pursuing this approach. At EuroShop 2026, the company will present an expanded version of its 'Prime Line' POS systems, which it claims are among the first fully modular POS solutions on the market. At the same time, a new modular SCO concept will be presented that integrates both product lines. 'Without modularity and flexibility, you automatically forfeit many other advantages that a solution could offer,' says Michael Gale, Marketing Manager at Pan Oston. The Dutch supplier emphasises that furniture has a longer service life than POS hardware, including peripherals. Flexible solutions are therefore necessary to remain future-proof.

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Image: Itab

Image above: The 'Age Checker' uses AI-supported facial analysis to check the age of customers in less than a second

Image on the right: Accessibility add-on: Diebold Nixdorf's 'Easy Nav' can be retrofitted into existing self-checkout systems



Image: Diebold Nixdorf

RETROFITTING FOR ACCESSIBILITY Legal accessibility requirements can also be implemented in existing systems. With its 'Vynamic Smart Control Easy Nav,' Diebold Nixdorf offers a peripheral device that can retrofit self-checkout systems with accessibility features. It is aimed at people with mobility, visual or cognitive impairments and can also be integrated directly into new systems. 'As we are already familiar with similar requirements from countries such as the USA, we were already well positioned in terms of hardware,' says Nino Hörtrich, Head of Global Marketing Retail at Diebold Nixdorf. Software-based functions such as contrasting colours, inductive hearing loops and screen mirroring via smartphone provide additional support for the application. Ergonomics is not a trend, but a must, emphasises Pan Oston. In some European countries, it is already required by law.

TESTING UNDER REAL CONDITIONS Since early 2026, Georg Jos. Kaes GmbH has been testing how various self-checkout systems interact physically in practice at a V-Markt branch in Munich. The checkout area has been completely redesigned in collaboration with Wanzl, DRS and Shopreme. Customers have access to stationary self-check-

out terminals, hand scanners and Wanzl's intelligent 'Fast-laner' shopping trolley, which is being used in live operation for the first time. The self-checkout zone has been equipped with Wanzl's 'Genesis' checkout counter and Smart Exit technology, which enables fully automated checkout without a receipt. The pilot project will run until April 2026 and is intended to provide insights into which SCO variant customers prefer and how theft rates, dwell times and sales distributions differ. 'This project is an important milestone for us on the way to the digital checkout area of the future,' says Dominik Endres, Head of IT at Georg Jos. Kaes.

Current developments show that checkout hardware is becoming increasingly adaptable. Whether hybrid checkout counters, modular platforms or AI-supported age verification – providers are responding to changing requirements in the retail sector. Accessibility has long been more than just a legal obligation; it is becoming an integral part of modern checkout concepts. ■

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AI agents *handle* payment transactions

AI-based shopping agents will soon be changing the retail landscape. Initial initiatives show that digital agents are becoming increasingly relevant. Will retailers become fulfilment partners for AI platforms in the coming years?

Henning vom Walde and Dr. Matthias Terlau

While consumers are still searching, filtering, comparing and buying for themselves today, digital agents will increasingly take over these steps in the future. They will research products, evaluate prices, check for availability and place orders independently – for example, via wallets or virtual cards. Initial collaborative projects between major technology and payment providers show that this development is already becoming relevant in practice, particularly in the United States.

This poses a key question for retailers: If purchasing decisions are no longer made at the front end but are instead based on AI decision-making logic, what role will retailers have? In future, it will be less about emotional brand imagery or optimised customer journeys and more about whether an agent can technically process, understand and compare offers. This shifts the generation of value in e-commerce from the front end to data and process logic.

MACHINE READABILITY IS THE BASIC REQUIREMENT

The primary requirement for agentic commerce is fully machine-readable product information. The decisive factor is no longer the visual presentation, but the accuracy of structured information: clear attributes, consistent data models and semantic markups. Retailers with incomprehensible or inconsistent product catalogues risk being excluded from the agents' pre-selection process. Data quality is thus becoming directly relevant to sales and customer reach for the first time.

This development is also raising legal questions. Even if AI carries out the selection, the consumer remains the contractual partner. The retailer's information and transparency obligations remain unchanged. Retailers must ensure that all legally required information is provided in a complete, correct and comprehensible manner – regardless of who initiates the purchase, whether it is a human or an agent.



„Payment processing via agents is particularly challenging from a legal perspective when credit cards, Paypal or bank transfers are being used.“

Dr. Matthias Terlau
Lawyer and Partner
Görg

„Companies that ignore agentic commerce risk slowly losing relevance – not in storefronts, but in AI decision-making models.“

Henning vorm Walde
Payment & Fintech Advisor
Executive Interim



AGENT VISIBILITY INSTEAD OF CLASSIC UX Agents are replacing human attention as a limited resource. Traditional conversion optimisation is being overtaken by optimisation of back-end findability. Similar to search engines, a variety of signals determine relevancy and prioritisation: pricing, delivery time, sustainability features, or return policies. Retailers must have an understanding of how these criteria are technically ranked in order to remain relevant in the agents' decision-making algorithms.

AGENT-ENABLED CHECKOUT PROCESSES Automated purchases depend on ordering and payment processes being supported by APIs. Agents require clearly defined interfaces for product selection, ordering and payment authorisation. At the same time, returns, complaints and cancellations must also be processed automatically. Technical standards are currently being defined but have not yet been fully established.

Payment authorisation via agents (agentic payment) is particularly challenging from a legal perspective when credit cards, Paypal or bank transfers are to be involved. Direct debit payments via agents, on the other hand, should be

easier to process. Retailers should also consider stable coins. According to current and future (PSD3/PSR) payment services legislation, strict customer authentication is generally required for card payments. Card organisations are currently developing new interfaces and procedures to make tokenised card and authentication data suitable for use in agentic payments. In practice, pre-authorised standing orders can be used to allow payments within clearly defined limits after a one-time authentication. The legally compliant development of such systems is complex and requires close coordination between retailers, payment service providers and platforms.

LIABILITY AND CHARGEBACK ISSUES Basically, consumers are responsible for any incorrect orders, wrong sizes or poor recommendations made by 'their' agent. For online retailers, however, this could mean an increase in returns. Rights of withdrawal and chargeback also continue to apply. For retailers, this means that processes for tracking agent decisions, clarifying liability issues and resolving complaints must be refined. It is virtually impossible to resolve conflicts appropriately without documented decision-making logic. ■

AGENTIC COMMERCE

What retailers should consider now

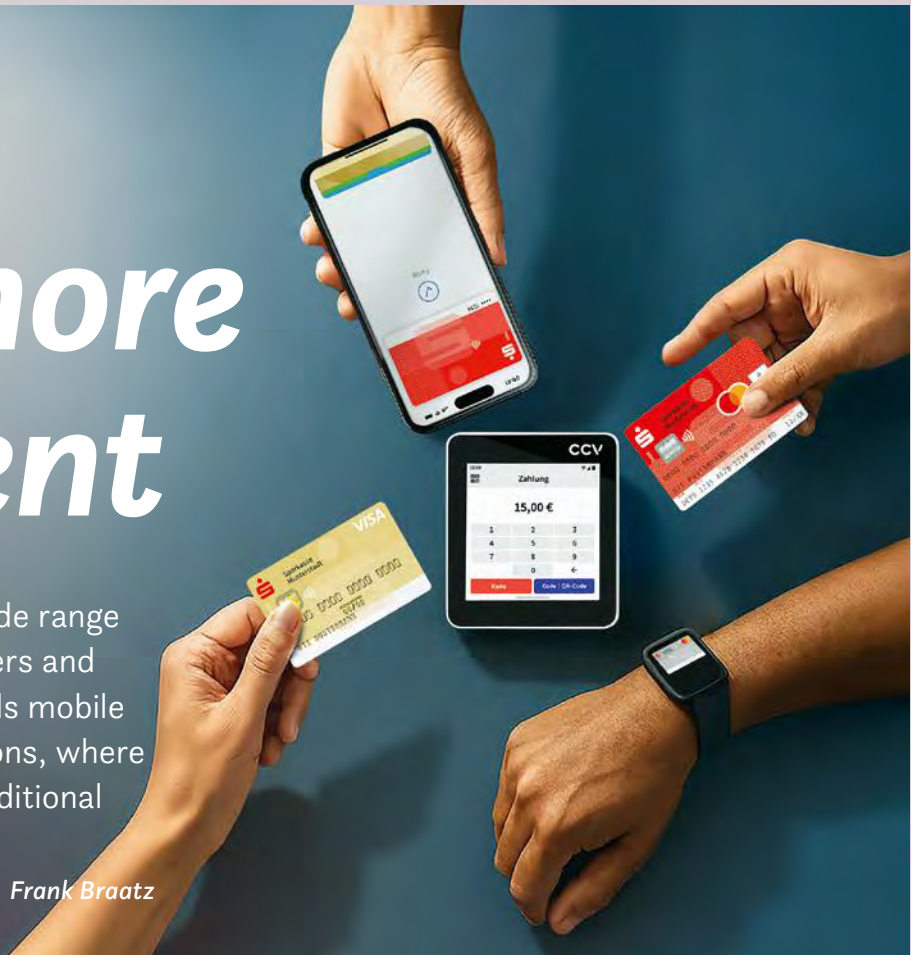
Agentic commerce will not be a passing buzzword, but it also isn't a mass phenomenon yet. Nevertheless, retailers should take action now.

- Start prototyping to recognize agent-based use cases and data gaps at an early stage.
- Structuring product data and aligning it with common standards of global AI and payment providers.
- Establishing agent visibility through consistent features and accurate pricing and delivery information.
- Implementing API-first architectures, including checkout, authorisation and returns processes.
- Updating payment and fraud models to ensure agent-driven payments are legally compliant.

Faster, easier, more convenient

Card terminal manufacturers offer a wide range of solutions to meet the needs of retailers and consumers. The current trend is towards mobile all-in-one devices and 'Soft POS' solutions, where a smartphone or tablet replaces the traditional payment terminal.

Frank Braatz



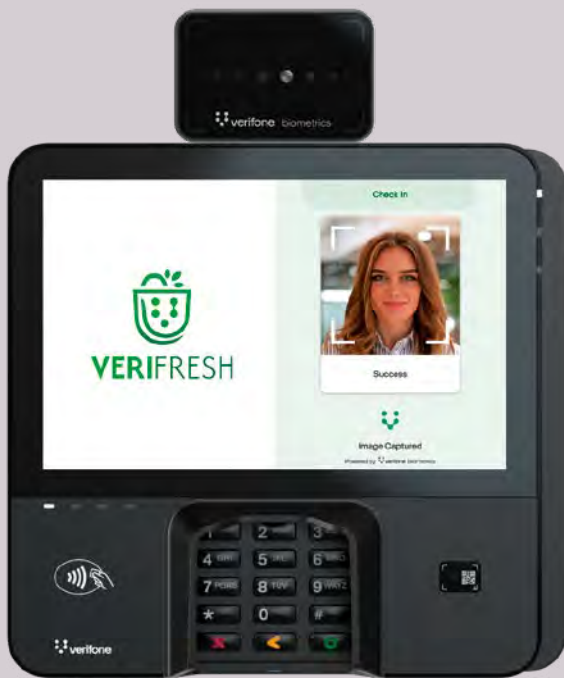
Retailers are turning to POS technologies that are designed to make the checkout process faster, easier and more convenient for customers. This is the conclusion regularly reached by the EHI study 'Technology Trends in Retail'. Such solutions are met with a consistently positive response from customers. At least, that is how the latest research on payment trends can be interpreted from the consumer's point of view. A representative survey commissioned by the digital association Bitkom has shown that cashless payment is becoming increasingly important when it comes to making brick-and-mortar retail more attractive to consumers again. For 71 percent of those surveyed, the ability to pay cashlessly anytime, anywhere would make brick-and-mortar retail more attractive.

In its monthly report for December 2025, the Deutsche Bundesbank writes: „The trend towards mobile payments is becoming increasingly important. One possible reason is speed: in Germany, customers pay fastest in retail stores using their smartphones or smartwatches. A payment takes an average of 14 seconds. This means that there is not only a trend away from cash payments towards cashless payments, but also away from physical cards towards mobile devices.“

Providers of card terminals and related services have developed a wide range of solutions to meet the needs of retailers and consumers.

MOBILE ALL-IN-ONE DEVICES At the end of last year, Adyen announced two new terminals: The 'S1E4 Pro' is a mobile all-in-one POS device that accepts all common payment methods and currencies via tap (contactless), plug-in, swipe and QR code scanning. The device runs on Android 13 OS and allows merchants to integrate and run their existing business applications. The second new model, the S1F4 Pro, functions both as a POS terminal for the counter when docked and as a fully mobile terminal for use in the sales area. The two new terminals will be available to order in Europe in the first quarter of 2026.

Retailers who want to accept card payments no longer even need a special terminal – a smartphone is sufficient. For example, there is the 'Sparkasse POS' (S-POS) app. It was developed by S-Payment in collaboration with Payone and is based on a solution jointly developed by CCV and Rubean under the name 'Soft POS'. For card payments over 50 euros, PIN entry is possible, and since autumn 2024, S-POS has also been available for iPhones.



Pay with a smile:
Verifone integrates biometric
authentication and payment
on one platform



Smartphone card payment

Images (2): Verifone

S-Payment and Payone now offer the 'S-POS Cube', a compact mobile savings bank payment terminal for merchants. The Android device combines S-POS software with robust terminal hardware. The stand-alone solution with Wi-Fi and SIM card allows merchants to use the terminal anywhere. The hardware is supplied by CCV.

Verifone also offers a 'Soft POS' solution called 'Verifone Tap'. This allows merchants to accept all common payment methods, including physical cards and digital wallets, directly on Android or iOS devices. 'Verifone Tap' uses the only software TEE (Trusted Execution Environment) recognised by the EMVCo standardisation organisation to date, which provides hardware-level protection without the need for integrated security chips. This architecture was developed to minimise the need for updates and patches, helping to reduce the total cost of ownership for both merchants and integration partners. The solution supports a variety of devices and offers flexibility in the integration of gateways and merchant applications.

BIOMETRIC AUTHENTICATION Verifone's new products feature a biometric platform that seamlessly integrates identity verification and payments. Verifone Biometrics brings biometric authentication directly to the point of sale. Customers can check in, access loyalty rewards, verify their age and make payments – all with a simple face or palm scan. The cloud infrastructure for biometric data is complemented by Verifone's hardware solutions. Verifone's latest 'Vista' terminals are biometrics-enabled and support the full range of payment options. For retrofitting existing terminals, there is a biometrics module that allows merchants to integrate biometric functions into their existing infrastructure.

There is a growing trend towards Android systems for card terminals. Provider CCV sees continued high demand in this area and offers almost 100 apps for different industries and applications in its own store. Android-based terminals are also becoming increasingly important in the unattended point-of-sale segment because they enable innovative and creative solutions – for example, in deposit return systems. CCV sees the fact that a major retailer is currently equipping its entire terminal infrastructure with Android PIN pads as a clear signal that this technology is ready for the market.

CCV is seeing a positive response to 'Soft POS' solutions, which do not require terminal hardware, particularly from delivery services and the hospitality sector, where mobile and flexible applications offer clear advantages. According to CCV's assessment, traditional retailers tend to use 'Soft POS' selectively, for example to reduce queues at checkouts during peak customer traffic or as emergency checkouts in the event of system failures. CCV intends to continuously expand the range of functions offered by 'Soft POS' solutions. ■



Image: scharfsinn86/adobe.stock.com

Using AI to combat the organised crime

Organised crime is steadily increasing across Europe. According to EHI estimates, the damage amounts to almost one billion euros in the German retail sector alone. Retailers are looking for ways to identify thieves at an early stage. AI solutions can help, but restrictive legal conditions make effective forms of prevention difficult.

Klaus Manz and Eva Neuthinger

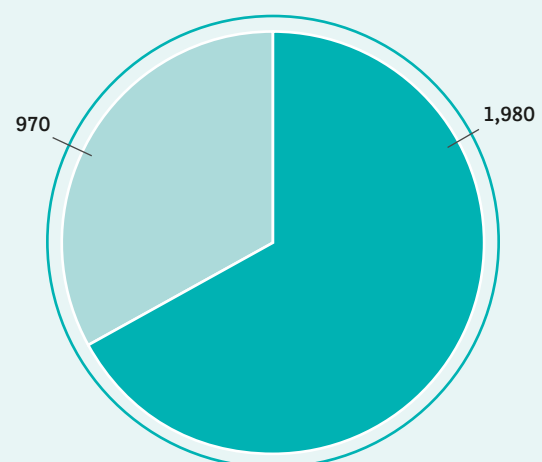
Last year, the European Research Service warned that gang crime is on the rise throughout the European Union. Gangsters are now even recruiting minors more frequently. Experts believe that criminal networks are working to continually expand their reach and thus their influence. According to the latest statistics from the Federal Criminal Police Office, organised crime causes damage amounting to 2.64 billion euros in Germany alone. Criminal proceeds total 831.6 million euros. More than 600 investigations are currently underway, with more than a third relating to drug-related crime.

According to EHI estimates, the damage caused by gang crime in the retail sector amounts to almost one billion euros annually. Organised criminals prefer to target shops with high customer traffic. They sometimes steal large quantities of spirits, branded goods, perfume or electrical goods – anything that can be quickly sold on the market.

LOW ERROR RATE There are many technical prevention options available. Video and analysis solutions filter movement patterns and time sequences or reveal recurring constellations. They can also recognise faces. ‘This is no longer a ma-

Shoplifting 2.95 billion Euros

EHI estimates in million Euros



■ random shoplifting
■ organised shoplifting

Source: EHI survey inventory differences 2025



Kester Brands
Senior Business Development Manager
Hikvision Germany

“The complexity of the issue makes it difficult to implement and apply advanced mechanisms.”



Thorsten Grimm
Key Account Manager End Customers DACH
Axis Communications

“Facial recognition with analysis software is no longer a major challenge.”

major challenge today,’ explains Thorsten Grimm, Key Account Manager End Customers DACH at Axis Communications. However, the company itself does not offer its own analysis software for facial recognition, but merely provides the technical basis with its camera hardware and the open ‘Axis Camera Application Platform’ (ACAP), on which partners can develop and operate corresponding analysis applications. The technology identifies individuals with near certainty by comparing biometric features using an algorithm. This is important because, according to studies, the majority of thieves return. They ignore bans on entering premises.

However, the analysis tools are not (yet) ready for use. This is partly due to significant legal hurdles. ‘The General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and the provisions of the EU AI Act severely restrict the use of biometric methods in retail,’ says Grimm. Biometric characteristics are protected by data protection guidelines. Real-time remote identification is prohibited. Companies are allowed to issue bans on entering their premises, for example, but they are not usually allowed to monitor these automatically using AI.

There are also technical hurdles to overcome. ‘The currently much-discussed fully automated detection of shoplifting or suspicious customer behaviour using AI is currently only scalable to a very limited extent in the retail sector,’ explains Thorsten Grimm. The reasons for this lie, on the one hand, in the high computing power required for such analyses and, on the other hand, in the need to transfer large amounts of data to the cloud. ‘This is already failing in German retail locations due to limited bandwidth,’ says Grimm. Axis Communications therefore offers cameras that can provide pre-filtered image material and metadata. Downstream, AI-supported systems process the data further. ‘This pre-processing directly on the camera – on the edge – significantly reduces the computing effort on site while ensuring a high level of reliability,’ explains Grimm. Axis will be showcasing its solutions at EuroShop 2026.

The topic is complex, partly because the boat of ‘stakeholders’ is getting fuller and fuller. ‘This makes it correspondingly difficult to make decisions and implement advanced mechanisms,’ says Kester Brands, Senior Business Development Manager at Hikvision Germany. The process includes, among other things, the evaluation of all requirements and functional testing of the overall concept. ‘There is a long way to go before such solutions can be rolled out in companies.’ At EuroShop 2026, Hikvision will be showcasing its solutions for the retail sector, which are based on the new ‘Guanlan large-scale AI’ technology.

HOLISTIC PREVENTION CONCEPT REQUIRED Fully automated and context-based interpretation of conspicuous behaviour is technologically and organisationally feasible, but challenging. Axis focuses on providing relevant image data and events in a structured manner, on the basis of which specialised AI systems can recognise certain patterns – such as unusually long dwell times or repeated access to certain shelf areas. ‘However, the evaluation and classification of such indications deliberately remain part of an overarching security or prevention concept,’ says Grimm.

In addition to Axis and Hikvision, other exhibitors are showcasing their solutions at the EuroShop trade fair. One example is Irish software provider Everseen, which cooperates with Diebold Nixdorf, among others, and whose application monitors self-service checkouts with AI support. The solutions from Sensormatic Solutions are also interesting. These enable retailers to analyse processes in their stores via the AI-supported cloud video platform ‘Solink’. The AI application from Gatekeeper Systems, on the other hand, focuses on real-time facial recognition at shop entrances. It identifies registered persons as they enter the store using two independent algorithms. According to Gatekeeper, three of the five largest US retailers use this solution. ■

Boosting digitalisation

Retail media was one of the few growth factors in the advertising industry in 2025. Retailers are increasingly recognising that this is a lucrative source of revenue that needs to be tapped into. Not only retail media specialists are positioning themselves as partners, but also traditional players from the digital signage sector.

Frank Puscher

Is retail media old wine in new bottles, or is it actually a new market segment worth tapping into? Frank Thiedig, CEO of Online Software AG, focuses on this question in his presentation at the EuroShop 2026 conference programme. And he provides the answer himself: 'Retail media will change shopfitting because, as a new source of income, it will further drive digitalisation.' So it's not old wine in new bottles, but something that is really changing.

This also means that digitalisation projects that may have been planned for some time are now being pushed forward. The question of whether digitalisation generates additional sales across the board is being replaced by the certainty that advertising revenue will finance modernisation.

MAKE OR BUY Probably the most exciting question on the minds of visitors and exhibitors at the trade fair when it comes to retail media is: make or buy? Do you want to install the screens yourself and install the software, or should you look for partners to do it for you? The idea of doing it yourself is tempting. For example, there is a well-functioning advertising infrastructure called programmatic advertising. In theory, you can enter the specifications for each individual screen, such as location, size and target group, and start marketing advertising in the area.

In theory. In practice, the issue is more complex. It starts with the selection of the commercials that are to appear on the screens. 'Retailers want to have control over what the customer experiences in the shop,' says Magnus Aufschild, founder of Retailmediatools. The service provider



'Animal Welfare TV': Live stream from the farm

Image: Online Software AG

offers a modular toolkit that retailers can use when they reach an impasse. 'I couldn't name five retailers worldwide who have built up retail media themselves,' says Aufschild. And that includes industry giants such as Walmart, which undoubtedly have digital expertise and where enormous economies of scale beckon if they do it themselves.

But perhaps the first step is not about squeezing the last percentage point of margin out of retail media. 'The average margin in normal food retail is three percent. In retail media, it's 90 percent,' says Chris Riegel, CEO of digital signage giant Scala, who has used the start of the retail media boom to massively expand his European business.



Magnus Aufschild
Founder and CPO
Retailmediatools

“Retailers want to control what the customer experiences in the shop.”

BENEFITTING FROM PARTNERSHIPS The signs for retailers therefore point to cooperation. And there are a whole host of interesting partners at EuroShop 2026. Swabian company Bütema AG, for example, offers one of the most important building blocks for the implementation of retail media with its own content management system. After all, it is not only a matter of controlling the advertising content that is displayed, but also of bringing your own content to the screen, from job advertisements to animal welfare certification. The latter could work, for example, through a cooperation with ‘Tierwohl TV’ (Animal Welfare TV). Ambitious farmers transmit video images from their stables via livestream directly to the shelves in food retail outlets to underline their own quality standards.

The Swabians know that they have a foothold when it comes to in-store screens. However, there is still a long way to go before they reach retail media. That is why they have

sought out partners. Lutz Hollmann-Raabe, the new CEO of Bütema AG, points out: „Shopfitting knows all about MDF boards and hanging monitors. The topic of software is complex.’ With Framen and Laya, they have brought two top players from the outdoor advertising sector on board. They ensure a ‘good connection‘ to the general standard of programmatic advertising. They also ensure that the retailer’s screens appear in the agencies’ booking software and are classified according to the target group. One of the important retail media customers is Rossmann.

Dimedis is also focusing on cooperation. A joint venture has just been launched with the Düsseldorf-based agency Marketing of Moments. The cooperation is intended to enable trade fair exhibitors to use their screens not only for their own advertising, but also to monetise them through third-party advertising. In Düsseldorf, Dimedis is showcasing the ‘Nova Retail Media Ad Manager’ as a plug-and-play solution, among other things.

The Dimedis system is also capable of controlling digital shelf labels. This makes it clear that retail media is not a one-hit wonder, but is becoming a permanent fixture in stores: it’s about digitalisation in every corner – from digital posters to displays, scales with rear displays, kiosk systems, digital shopping trolleys and digital shelf labelling. In theory, everything is marketable.

What is exciting is that some of the data used, for example, to personalise advertising can be derived directly from shoppers’ behaviour. ‘We don’t track customers, we track shopping trolleys,’ emphasises Chris Riegel. And Karsten Grötecke from technology provider Espresso is convinced that retail media can improve the customer experience. ‘You buy pasta with pesto and then walk past the wine rack. Be-

cause of the red pesto, you are recommended to buy wine XY. You continue walking, pass the frozen food rack and are offered tiramisù for dessert. So it’s not about a ‘continuous loop’ of advertising, but rather very specific recommendations related to the current purchase.’ ■

Digital promotion with wine displays



Image: Scala

Beyond Print Marketing

From print to pixel – getting closer to profiling: Retail marketing is experiencing a structural change, and the pace is even accelerating. The Retail Marketing Monitor 2025-2028 clearly shows that 44 percent of total expenditure is devoted to digital channels. Retail marketing is more data-driven today than ever before.

Marlene Lohmann



Since 2007, Retail Marketing Monitor has been compiling a comprehensive timeline of marketing budget trends in German retail. Every year, the Marketing Research Department assesses how retailers are distributing their budgets across different channels and what strategic developments can be concluded as a result. The current survey for the years 2025 to 2028 shows that the shift from analogue to digital marketing has not only consolidated but is also gaining momentum.

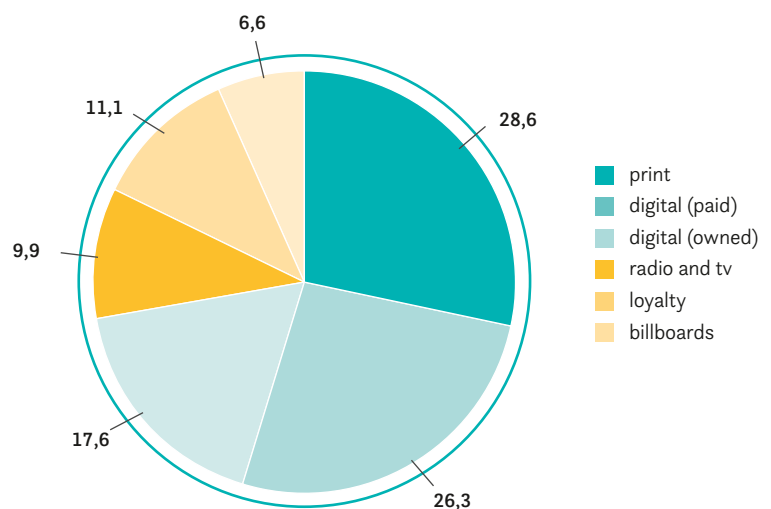
The study is based on an online survey conducted between June and September 2025 among marketing managers from 21 retail companies of various sizes and from different sector industries. Together, they account for approximately £30 billion in annual sales, over 11,000 stores and 150,000 employees. The study analyses how retailers divide their marketing budgets among key categories such as print, digital paid, digital owned, radio and TV, loyalty and outdoor advertising – and how this allocation is evolving.

PRINT STILL STRONG The biggest budget share in 2025 still flows into the print segment (28.6%), followed by digital paid (26.3%) and digital owned (17.6%). Loyalty, radio and television as well as outdoor advertisement together account for just under 30 percent of total expenditure. However, the dynamics behind these figures are obvious: if digital paid and owned are aggregated, digital channels already account for around 44 percent of total expenditure – and the trend is on the rise.

A retrospect highlights the trend: compared to 2024, print is losing budget shares, while digital channels are gaining ground. Outdoor advertising remains stable – probably also because digital out-of-home formats are increasingly building hybrid links between analogue presence and digital quantifiability.

Advertising expenditure in 2025: channel overview

percentage shares



n = 21; figures rounded to the first decimal

Surveyed question: Where will your advertising expenditure be allocated in 2025 according to the following categories?

Source: EHI study Retail Marketing Monitor 2025-2028 compact version

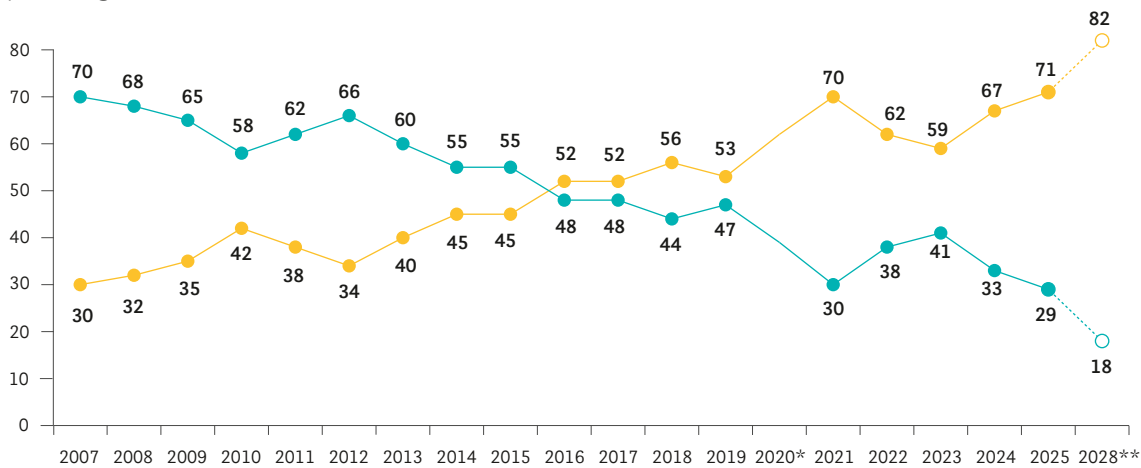
„Digital precision is increasingly replacing analogue coverage.“



Marlene Lohmann
Director of Marketing Research
EHI Retail Institute

Advertising expenditure for print vs. supplementary advertising

percentage shares



■ retail advertising print ■ supplementary retail advertising

Rounded to whole numbers, without decimals; supplementary advertising includes: radio + tv, digital (owned and paid), out-of-home; loyalty

*No data collection due to the coronavirus epidemic, ** forecast
source: EHI study Retail Marketing Monitor 2025-2028- compact version

THE TRANSITION IS HERE TO STAY The long-term data glance reveals: The structural change is already completed. A decade ago, new advertising channels – like digital, TV, radio, and out-of-home – surpassed print for the first time. Since then, they’ve kept growing their lead. Print continues to lose ground, but remains relevant in certain contexts: where haptics, credibility or depth of content are required, such as in customer magazines, print may continue to play a role in the future. But the big picture is clear: the retail communication landscape is undergoing a lasting and irreversible shift.

IS LOYALTY THE GROWTH DRIVER? The forecast for 2028 shows that loyalty programmes in particular are likely to gain in significance, while print continues to lose ground. Paid media is expected to see the strongest growth in digital channels. Radio, television and traditional outdoor advertising are expected to remain stable. The assumption: ‘Digital precision is increasingly replacing analogue coverage.’

In loyalty, there is also a trend towards developing in-house programmes. This could be for strategic reasons: having your own customer data strengthens your data sovereignty and autonomy. Data is becoming the new marketing currency, as it not only enables targeted communication, but also creates genuine understanding of customers.

DATA, PROCESSES, AI Asked about the most significant trends for the years to come, 100 percent of the retailers stated that data management will be the key factor. Process digitalisation was ranked second – which makes sense, as efficient data management is virtually impossible without

automated processes. Artificial intelligence came in third place and is likely to accelerate this evolution even further.

This creates a trinity that will shape retail marketing in the future:

- From print to pixel: analogue channels lose ground; digital channels are on the rise -- especially retailer apps and digital out-of-home
- From pixel to profile: loyalty is the data hub – those who use their customer information wisely, will be less dependent
- From profile to precision: data, AI and automation provide efficiency, relevance and impact.

CONTINUOUS TRANSITION The Retail Marketing Monitor 2025–2028 not only documents a change in budget allocation, but rather an in-depth structural transition. Retail Marketing is getting more data-driven, more technical – and therefore more individualised. The decisive question is not whether the transition will take place, but rather how fast and clever the retailers are able to shape it. After all, the future no longer lies somewhere between print and pixels but is very much already the present.

lohmanna@ehi.org



More information on the study:
Retail Marketing Monitor 2025-2028





Technologization as a catalyst

Shipping and returns management has become a key competitive factor in e-commerce. Faced with rising return rates and increasing customer expectations, AI-supported processes can enable online retailers to meet high customer expectations.

Niklas Stanislawski

Fast delivery was yesterday; reliability is now the order of the day. This roughly sums up the current expectations of e-commerce customers. Moreover, delivery should be free of charge whenever possible.

While same-day and next-day delivery dominated as competitive factors in recent years, today online retailers can distinguish themselves with flexible delivery time windows. This flexibility adds complexity, but it also creates additional opportunities for retailers to collect customer data and offer personalized services. The inclusion of real-time tracking, clear shipping details, and automated updates builds customer trust. It reduces customer service inquiries and directly enhances satisfaction. Sophisticated software solutions tie shipping processes to customer profiles and purchase histories.

This creates opportunities for targeted communication strategies throughout the entire customer journey.

RETURNS MANAGEMENT AS AN OPPORTUNITY Returns are generally perceived as a significant source of additional costs. In fact, return rates in the textile sector are regularly around 50 percent. Other industries also experience high return rates from time to time. Efficient returns management therefore offers great potential, not only in terms of cost reduction, but also when it comes to customer data analyses and process streamlining. Returns provide valuable points of contact with end customers.

How retailers manage their returns processes - from hassle-free returns and clear return labels to transparent refund processes - has a major impact on customers' perceptions. A customer-friendly returns process can increase customer loyalty, as shoppers will have a positive perception of the retailer. In addition, return data provides valuable insights. Why is a product being returned? Is the size wrong? Does the product fail to meet expectations? This data can be



Niklas Stanislawski
Project Manager Retail Logistics
EHI Retail Institute

„Returns management is emerging as a strategic planning tool that has a direct positive impact on customer loyalty, product range management, and profitability.“

Image: Mediaparts/adobe.stock.com

used not only to improve product quality, but also to optimize size guidance, make product specifications more detailed, and personalize the shopping experience. These are all key levers for reducing future returns and improving the overall product portfolio.

AI-BASED ANALYSES Growing technological innovation is also opening new prospects for efficiency and distinction in shipping and returns management. Automated warehouse management systems and efficient robotic solutions accelerate order picking and shipping. Predictive analytics enable package delivery times and return probabilities to be forecasted. AI algorithms analyse return patterns in real time, identify customer behavior, and support automated decisions. AI-powered chatbots can proactively answer customer questions about shipping and returns. Based on historical data, retailers can provide individual shipping recommendations or offer incentives to avoid returns. All of

these solutions are already available and are currently finding application in the market.

In a long-term perspective, AI will fundamentally change returns management: from a reactive, cost-driven function to a strategic control instrument that has a direct effect on customer loyalty, product range management and profitability. Retailers who consistently data-drive their shipping and returns processes, integrate their system landscapes, and gradually scale AI are not only becoming more efficient, but also more consumer-focused. This makes AI a key factor for sustainable competitive advantage in e-commerce. ■

EHI

**Shipping, Packaging and
Returns Management
in E-Commerce 2025**



EVENTS



24/25 March 2026

Retail Real Estate Congress 2026

The event in Berlin for decision-makers from retail and the real estate industry with topics such as sustainability, digitization and innovative usage concepts for the value creation and attractiveness of real estate.



21/22 April 2026

Retail Logistics Congress LOG 2026

The congress, organized by EHI, GS1 Germany, the German Logistics Association and the Brand Association, will present a top-class lecture program in Bonn and show ways to improve logistics processes.



05/06 May 2026

EHI Payment Congress 2026

The largest event for developments in the field of payment systems in the D-A-CH region shows the processes of change in payment in brick-and-mortar retail and online retail. The venue is the World Conference Center in Bonn.

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EHI Retail Institute e.V.

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Katharina Sieweke
(+49 221 57993-21, sieweke@ehi.org)

EDITORS

Mathias Kohne (kohne@ehi.org)
Regina Kruck (kruck@ehi.org)

FREELANCE EDITOR

Winfried Lambertz

EDITORIAL ADVISORY BOARD

Cetin Açar, Benjamin Chini, Michael Gerling, Imke Hahn, Lars Hofacker, Olaf Hohmann, Claudia Horbert, Frank Horst, Lena Knopf, Marlene Lohmann, Horst Rüter, Ulrich Spaan, Ulrike Witt

AUTHORS IN THIS ISSUE

Cetin Acar, Frank Braatz, Mark Faihtfull, Angelika Frank, Claudia Horbert, Mathias Kohne, Ulrike Lach, Winfried Lambertz, Bernd Liening, Marlene Lohmann, Klaus Manz, Barbara Markert, Ilona Marx, Eva Neuthinger, Brigitte Oltmanns, Frank Puscher, Dr. Matthias Terlau, Clarissa Schauff, Katharina Sieweke, Niklas Stanislawski, Henning vorm Walde

GRAPHICS AND LAYOUT

Nicole Råde (raede@ehi.org)
Maike Zimmermann (zimmermann@ehi.org)

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MANAGING DIRECTOR

Ulrich Spaan

PUBLISHING MANAGEMENT

Olaf Hohmann (+49 221 57993-699,
hohmann@ehi.org)

ADVERTISEMENTS AND SALES

Maren Franken (+49 221 57993-43,
franken@ehi.org)

ADDRESS

Spichernstr. 55, 50672 Cologne
Ph.: +49 221 57993-0,
Fax: +49 221 57993-45
Web: www.ehi.org

BANK ACCOUNT

Postbank Cologne,
IBAN: DE50370100500005774502
BIC: PBNKDEFF

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We are happy to advise you

Ph.: +49 221 57993-43

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Your opinion is important to us.

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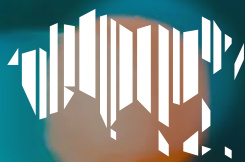
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