DISCOVERY

GLOBAL START-UPS
POWERING
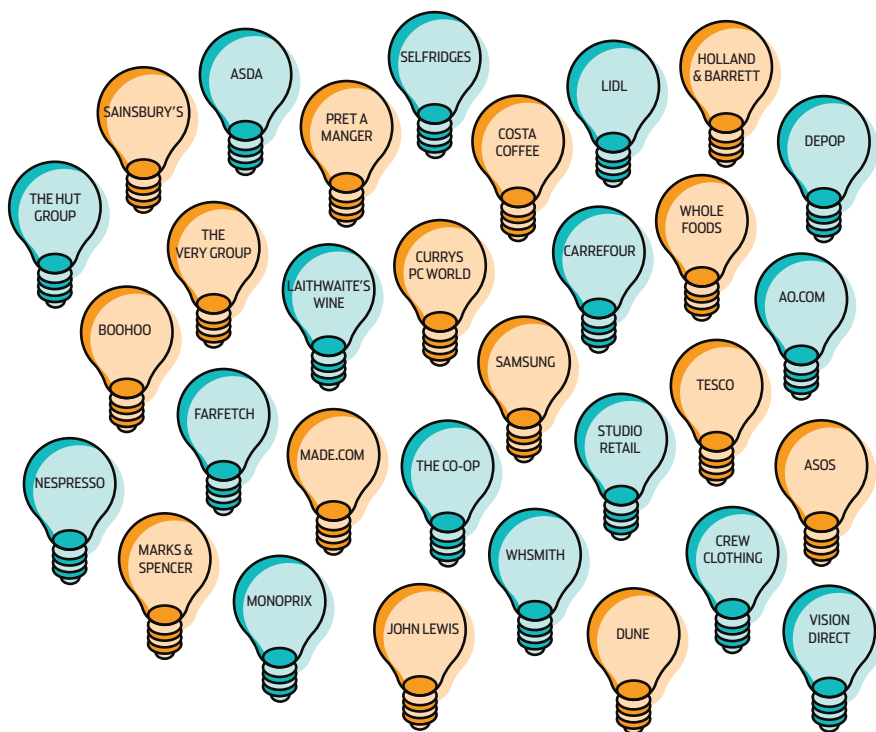## RETAIL INNOVATION

RWRC
AN ASCENTIAL COMPANY

AT A GLANCE

I n a market where transformation is happening at the speed of light and fallout from the pandemic continues to be felt, retailers are seeking out new ideas and solutions that can help them to survive and compete. Discovery does the hard work for them.

Running for its second year, Retail Week's Discovery report showcases the top global tech start-ups accelerating retail innovation – enabling businesses to

identify partners for future success. From marketing and operations to CX and in-store efficiency, this report features case studies on how 40 cutting-edge start-ups are working with high-profile retailers and brands to transform their businesses.
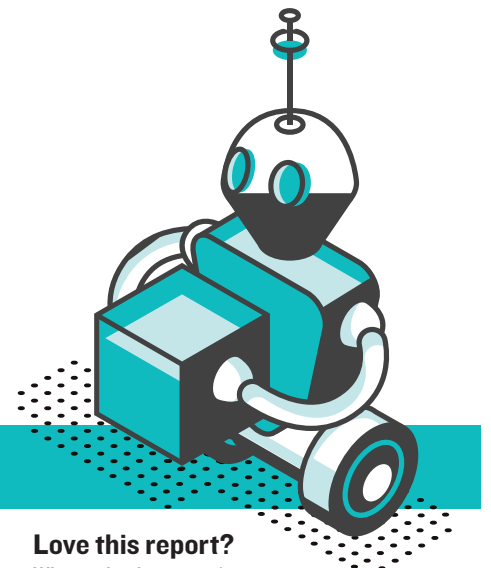
In a world where the disrupted can now become the disruptors, this report showcases how retailers like you could stand to benefit from the raft of incredible start-up innovations and solutions on the market.

METHODOLOGY

Start-ups featured in the report started trading on, or after, January 1, 2014, and have worked with a retailer/retailers to help them transform their business either through a pilot or full-scale solution. Entries were submitted from October 2020 to January 2021 with the shortlist decided by Retail Week's editorial team and the Discovery judging panel.

The Discovery start-ups are working with retailers and brands from across the world

SELFRIDGES · ASDA · SAINSBURY'S · PRET A MANGER · LIDL · HOLLAND & BARRETT · COSTA COFFEE · DEPOP · THE HUT GROUP · THE VERY GROUP · LAITHWAITE'S WINE · CURRYS PC WORLD · CARREFOUR · WHOLE FOODS · AO.COM · BOOHOO · SAMSUNG · TESCO · FARFETCH · MADE.COM · THE CO-OP · STUDIO RETAIL · ASOS · NESPRESSO · MARKS & SPENCER · WHSMITH · CREW CLOTHING · MONOPRIX · JOHN LEWIS · DUNE · VISION DIRECT

RWRC: DISCOVERY

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Love this report?
Why not book in one of our experts to find out more about the tech innovation that can help your business get ahead.
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DISCOVERY

MEET THE JUDGES

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Chief executive of CO:CUBED, which helps Fortune 100 companies launch start-up accelerators, optimise corporate venture funds and build new businesses

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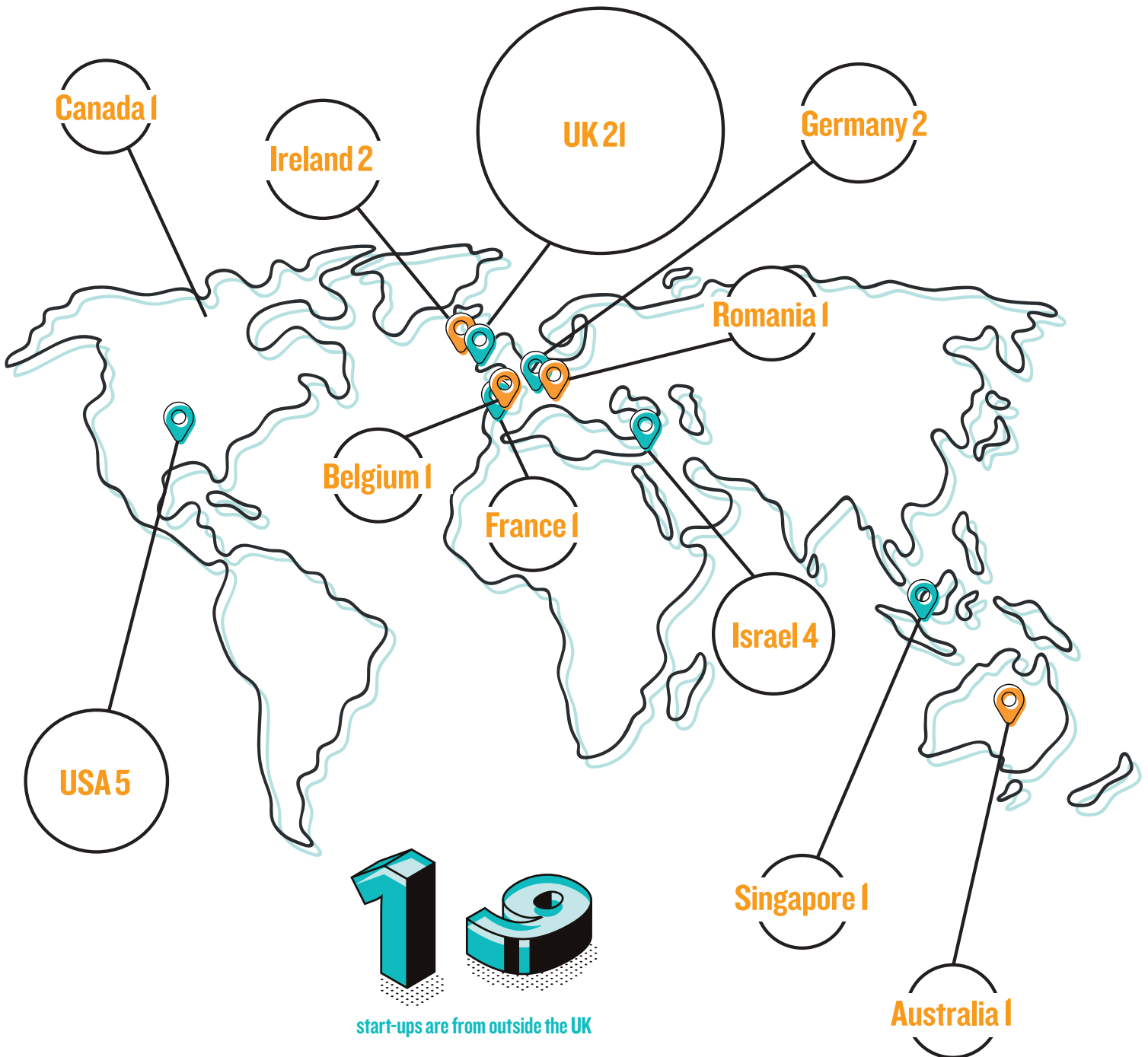
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Retail Week head of insight

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Retail Week commercial content editor and former Startups.co.uk projects editor

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IN NUMBERS

The start-ups featured in the Discovery report are truly global – almost half are from outside the UK

Canada 1

Ireland 2

UK 21

Germany 2

Romania 1

Belgium 1

France 1

Israel 4

USA 5

Singapore 1

Australia 1

19

start-ups are from outside the UK

INTRODUCTION

Virtual try-on assistants, vertical farming, 'save now, buy later' payments, in-store marketing robots, bookable shop space... these are just a handful of fresh-thinking players featured in the Discovery report.

It is this fresh thinking that is required if retailers and brands are to remain competitive and balance bottom lines with customer expectations as disruption from the pandemic persists.

Drawing on case studies from this report, the ROI from retailer-start-up partnerships is clear:

• Marks & Spencer has trialled a partnership with instant virtual try-on start-up Texel to drive purchasing intent; customers that use the tool are five times more likely to purchase and 30% less likely to return items

• Samsung has benefited from a 20% increase in basket revenue and 28% uplift in items per basket from working with AI-powered product bundling start-up Increasingly

• Carrefour UAE is using Simbe Robotics' inventory robots Tally to monitor all-important inventory availability and has now expanded this to 12 stores

• Lidl has used ParcelLab's automated personalised shipping message service to engage 85% of customers receiving shopping emails to return to its website

Sustainable growth > Keeping the lights on

Retailers must keep their ear to the ground to understand where the next disruption is coming from and what the trends are – and they must consider the start-ups at their disposal to support them.

Many retailers have been quick to adopt new technology and implement different systems to cater for the shift in sales channel and consumer communication during the pandemic. However, much of this work has been centred on keeping the lights on and staying afloat amid the crisis.

For sustainable sales growth and to maintain relevance, structural change, strategic tech investment and new shifts in thinking are required.

While the likes of M&S and JLP have found benefits in working with big tech firms such as Microsoft and Google to support moves towards cloud-based infrastructure, big business change via these tie-ups doesn't always come fast enough. Start-ups can offer extra agility, flexibility and effectiveness.

From robust back-end support to shelf-edge innovations that catch consumers' attention, and everything in between to aid in-store and online operations, the curation of start-ups in this year's list covers all bases.

> **"Retailers must keep their ear to the ground to understand where the next disruption is coming from"**

RETAILERS MUST REBUILD AFTER COVID CRISIS – START-UPS CAN HELP

Ian Shepherd is non-executive director at Bensons for Beds and author of *The Average is Always Wrong*. Former CEO at retailer GAME, Shepherd also runs the consultancy Moving Tribes where he advises retailers, digital start-ups and consumer businesses. Shepherd has been among the Discovery judges for the past two years.
Ahead of our start-up celebration in Chapters 2 and 3, Shepherd reflects on what the events of the past year mean for the role start-ups will play in retail's future.

L ast year's report feels a bit like it was released a lifetime ago. Even then, in April 2020, there were early signs of the impact the pandemic was going to have on the retail sector, but none of us would have guessed that we'd only just be emerging from lockdown now, more than a year later.

Yet, revisiting the report, the themes our start-ups were exploring seem almost prescient. Some were revolutionising logistics and distribution, so critical to the online revenue streams that have kept so many retailers alive during lockdowns. Others were exploring localisation and placemaking, which will be core to the rejuvenation of high streets, now that non-essential retail has reopened.

And many of them, whatever aspect of retail they were reinventing, were using data, analytics and complex machine-learning models to bring a new forensic focus to retailers across marketing, operations and supply chain management.

Above all, 2020's report, when re-read after the year we have all had, is a beacon of hope.

A different retail sector is possible, a million miles from the old world of 'How many stores are you going to open?' and 'What was your like for like last quarter?' – a retail sector that marries the instinctive customer understanding any good retailer has with the innovation and laser-like focus that new technology allows.

Time for reinvention and rebuilding

Indeed, the paradox of the pandemic is that, among all the struggling to survive, we can see further evidence that this brighter future is possible.

This year retail businesses have demonstrated an astonishing capacity to adapt and reinvent themselves. Change programmes that we might once have thought

DISCOVERY

would take years and cost millions have been accomplished in weeks on a shoestring.

Many of the sacred cows of what is and isn't possible for a big retail business have been slaughtered along the way.

In last year's report, I wrote about some of the barriers retailers often came up against when working with the start-up community. In the main, they were cultural and technological – some mix of "Our systems can't cope with change" and "Our business processes aren't built to deal with start-ups".

I hope that one of the positives to come out of this challenging year is that many of those barriers have been shown to be illusions.

So what next?

The challenge for retailers will be to retain the flexibility, speed and willingness to innovate that has emerged during this crisis, and put those characteristics to work in the rebuilding phase.

There will be much to do: high streets to reinvent, new channels to integrate and new suppliers to work with.

Core to much of that, I suspect, will be the smart use of data and analytics. Business is going to be more complicated in the post-Covid era. Customer expectations about being able to shop seamlessly across all of your channels will have risen.
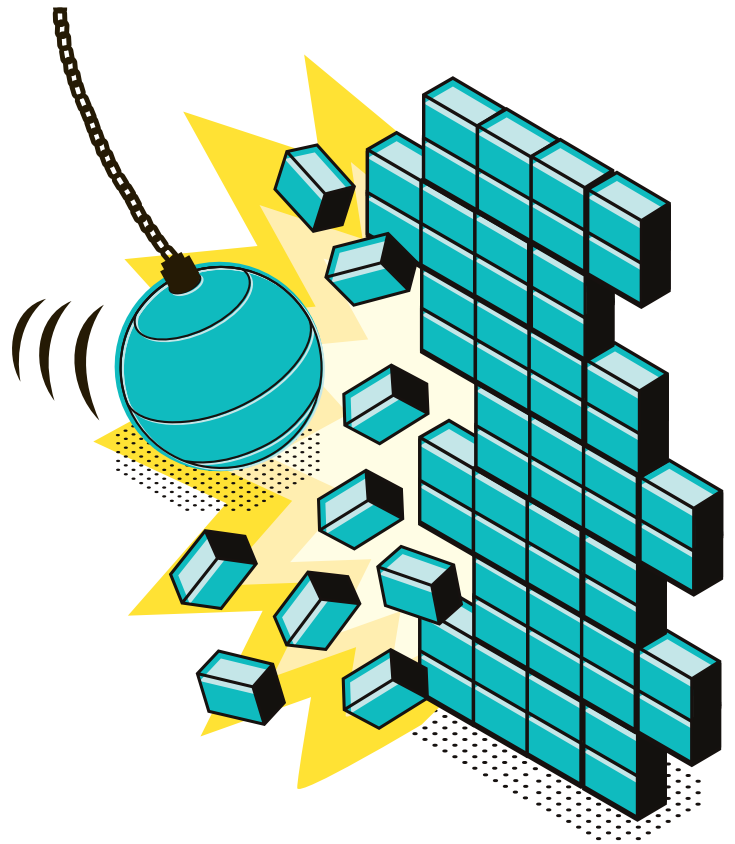
Entirely new channels, indeed, have emerged in lockdown, such as video-call sales appointments in store.

Never again will it be acceptable to run a retail chain by opening hundreds of essentially identical stores in lots of towns and hoping customers come to you. Active marketing, directly to individuals, will be the entry price for retail success.

One way or another, this year's Discovery cohort – just like last year's – are going to be critical to the future of our sector.

Many of the sacred cows of what is and isn't possible for a big retail business have been slaughtered

CHAPTER

MEET THE START-UPS CHANGING RETAIL AS WE KNOW IT

Personalised marketing, supply chain efficiency, driving staff engagement, increasing store footfall – whatever area in which retailers need support and innovation, the Discovery has it covered.

Operating across all parts of the world, from Europe and America to Singapore and Israel, the 40 start-ups showcased here are enabling retailers to adapt their businesses – and their thinking – to lean into a whole new set of disruptions, trends and challenges.

Discover more about each start-up in the profiles below and find out how you could benefit from working with them.

WHERE THE DISCOVERY START-UPS CAN HELP

SUPPLY CHAIN SOLUTIONS

- Gophr
- Hark
- Infarm
- OLIO
- ParcelLab
- Parcel Perform
- Scurri
- Selazar
- SupplyCompass

STORE INNOVATIONS

- Critizr
- Edgify
- Mercaux
- Oriient IndoorGPS
- Quorso
- Scalene Group
- Simbe Robotics
- Sook
- StorIQ
- Tokinomo
- Trigo
- Yoti

PERSONALISATION, AI AND DATA MASTERY

- Confluent
- Engagement Agents
- Froomle
- Gfaive
- Hyper Group
- Increasingly
- Intelistyle
- Olvin
- Peak
- RevLifter

MARKETING, CUSTOMER AND STAFF LOYALTY DRIVERS

- HyperJar
- Kooomo
- Loyalize
- Outlier
- Product Guru
- Renovai
- Texel
- Wagestream
- WISHI

Confluent

Apache Kafka is an open-source software platform optimised for ingesting and processing streaming data in real time.

In 2015, its original creators launched Confluent to help retailers manage Apache Kafka's technology to make customer-focused decisions in real time.

AO.com, for instance, uses Confluent's cloud infrastructure to combine real-time digital signals with historical information to give each customer what they want, when they want it.

The solution means AO can send sophisticated targeted messages to a returning customer in the moment to drive sales, while the company benefits from freeing up its developers to focus on building new applications.

As online becomes more crowded, the ability to operate in such a hyper-personalised manner gives a unique point of difference.

Critizr

Customer-centricity is a difficult approach to define. It means different things to each organisation, and relies on several moving operational and technological parts aligning.

Critizr has built a multichannel platform – Critizr Connection – designed to help frontline retail staff engage, understand and build loyalty with customers at a local level.

Critizr's technology, used by grocery chains Carrefour and Monoprix in France, is intended to make it easy for staff to communicate with shoppers via multiple channels such as SMS or WhatsApp, and act on their feedback to ensure customer-led decisions are made across a business.

The platform works by alerting managers to new customer feedback, ratings and enquiries for their store in real time.

Staff can then respond and chat, before taking rapid steps on their customers' behalf, to find answers, fix problems or make store-wide improvements.

Edgify

Based: London, England
Started trading: January 2020
Website: edgify.ai
Founders: Ofri Ben-Porat, Nadav Israel
Employees: 21
Can help you with: Faster, more accurate and low-touch checkouts in store

Edgify

With many retailers' tech budgets squeezed, and the need for operational efficiency as acute as ever, Edgify's computer vision-based product-recognition tool is a compelling proposition.

Edgify's tech can be implemented throughout retail stores, in any scale or scanning device, to identify fresh produce, with zero human input on the retailer's side. This benefits retailers by making it easier to manage inventory while offering customers a faster, more efficient checkout process.

It then shares the acquired knowledge or model across a distributed yet collaborative framework of point-of-sale machines. This reduces the risks, costs, and time associated with transferring sensitive data to or from an external server and eliminates the need for a cloud-based learning infrastructure.

Not only does Edgify enhance retailers' existing checkout devices, but it also plays into the trend for consumers to self-serve, evidenced by the growth in use of smart and mobile-based scanning in grocery stores during the pandemic.

With Amazon Fresh arriving in the UK and raising the bar in terms of autonomous grocery shopping experiences, supermarkets will need to continue to modernise to be able to compete.

Several retailers across Europe are trialling Edgify's technology, including major UK grocers, and the start-up says all businesses that have viewed its demo have converted to its pilot programme.

WHAT THE JUDGES SAID: "Edgify appears to have produced a very innovative industry-agnostic computer vision solution. Its work in deploying machine learning and deep-learning models at the edge has the power to disrupt many retail-hardware centred processes, such as weighing, scanning and product identification. These processes are essential parts of so many retail activities, including product location, replenishment, selection, purchase and payment that I can see its application having particularly widespread appeal in digitising everything in the store."

Engagement Agents

Based: Ontario, Canada
Started trading: September 2016
Website: engagementagents.com
Founder: Sean Snyder
Employees: 5

Customer acquisition is more costly than retaining an already engaged shopper, but retailers often don't help themselves by failing to optimise marketing channels at their disposal.

Engagement Agents is aiming to bridge that gap with its software platform that helps retailers and brands to promptly maximise marketing opportunities that come attached to their shopping centre tenancies. It says every retailer pays significantly for their leases, but then doesn't take advantage of the shopping mall's marketing armoury.

Its platform manages everything from shopping centre marketing automation and content distribution to real-time reporting and compliance. By optimising shopping centre's marketing channels, retailers benefit from greater footfall and store sales.

By teaming up with Engagement Agents, Canada-based Glentel has increased the visibility and promotional activity of its companies Wave Sans Fil, La Cabine T Sans Fil, WIRELESSWAVE and Tbooth Wireless in shopping centre partners' digital and physical marketing channels.

Froomle

FROOMLE

Based: Antwerp, Belgium
Started trading: May 2016
Website: froomle.ai
Founders: Koen Verstrepen, Bart Goethals
Employees: 18

Talk to leaders at retailers as diverse as Boots, The Very Group, and Feelunique, and they will all tell you about the importance of personalised customer service and communication in attracting and retaining shoppers. Yet this personalisation requires intense technological innovation.

Belgium-based Froomle is a self-learning recommendation engine that assists in creating personalised online experiences.

With a team of creators that have worked at Netflix and Apple, the tech enables retailers to create personalised parcels and unboxing experiences, personalised emails and product discovery, and it can also be used to personalise retailer content/blogs to pre-selected articles.

For flash Sale retailer Veepee Belgium, Froomle's solution has helped to ensure products displayed on its homepage are relevant to a user's previous shopping history, while recommendations on product information pages were also generated using the same processes. Such processes have helped increase Veepee's conversion rates.

Gfaive

Based: London, England
Started trading: September 2020
Website: gfaive.com
Founders: Andrei Makarov, Maria Makarova
Employees: 11
Can help you with: Fashion and trend forecasting

GFAIVE

Fashion has been one of the hardest-hit retail sectors of the pandemic, meaning those selling apparel and footwear must be on top of their game with stores now open again.

Although retailers in this category have encountered and tackled new problems over the past 12 months, getting a hold on long-running challenges such as forecasting accuracy and assortment planning will be key to boosting their long-term credentials.

Gfaive's smart fashion-forecasting technology is targeted at enabling retailers to see – and model – the future.

Using AI, Gfaive supports fashion brands in planning collections for upcoming seasons, predicting what sales will be, and identifying and creating bestsellers.

It covers the whole pre-production phase – from prototyping a new item to a first allocation to a store – and blends historical retailer data with relevant fashion trends and external factors to provide three-, six- or nine-month forecasts across three modules. These are an assortment matrix simulator (run multiple scenarios to see how your KPI changes based on your decision), new-item evaluation (see how your new item or an attribute will perform in future) and demand forecasting (on SKU level).

Already, the tech has been used by an outerwear designer brand to create the optimal assortment balance for its spring summer 2021 collection.

WHAT THE JUDGES SAID: "It's a fresh new start-up aimed at solving a really big problem for fashion retailers. Every retailer faces the challenge of assessing and managing the purchase of next year's products, but for fashion retailers that challenge is obviously all the more difficult as they have to forecast the impact of changing trends, colours and designs. The team at Gfaive are responding to that challenge in two ways – by using a retailer's own historical data to make predictions about the future, but also by analysing big streams of external data to identify those key changing fashions for next season. Theirs is a big challenge, but one that offers a big prize for a key retail sector."

Gophr

Based: London, England
Started trading: March 2015
Website: uk.gophr.com
Founders: Seb Robert, Krzysztof Worsa
Employees: 35

Growth in ecommerce demands investment in logistics capability. Same-day-delivery network Gophr has spent the past six years building a system that enables customers to book couriers easily while supplying those delivering the goods with the best routes to collect and fulfil those orders.

Once a booking is made, Gophr's technology automatically notifies the closest and most appropriately sized courier in its network to the pick-up location and guides them to the end consumer.

The Co-op, which launched online in 2019, recruited Gophr for deliveries up to 5km from its stores and the service has now become a key component of its ecommerce offering, expanding exponentially during the pandemic.

Hark

JUDGES' TOP PICK

Based: Leeds, England
Started trading: February 2016
Website: harksys.com
Founders: Jordan Appleson, Andrew Hathaway, Julian Kay
Employees: 22
Can help you with: Optimising energy usage and becoming more sustainable

The sustainability-themed government-led mantra after the pandemic is "build back better", and retailers of all shapes and sizes are looking at ways to reduce their impact on the planet.

Hark, which is working with a major UK grocer, specialises in helping businesses to improve efficiency, maximise yield and reduce waste. It does that through its platform, which connects to, provides visibility of, and automatically controls assets including energy meters, power, security, lighting, heating and ventilation systems.

This Internet-of-Things start-up is riding the smart energy trend, and says its machine-learning platform can identify future failures for retailers and thus allow them to solve problems before they arise.

Real-time data accessible on the platform enables retailers to gauge their energy performance and make changes to optimise their usage.

Such capability will continue to grow in importance for the sector as more pressure is put on big business to reduce its carbon footprint and meet national and international climate-impact goals.

WHAT THE JUDGES SAID: "As retailers aim to become more sustainable in their operations, Hark provides tracking technology to rapidly identify areas of waste in terms of energy usage, allowing businesses to prioritise areas to address. Hark gives retailers real-time visibility of energy consumption across different branches, operations and times of day to assess areas that need improvement. This is only going to become a bigger priority for businesses as they are challenged to operate with more energy efficiency, so Hark's technology has a lot of potential for growth in the coming years."

Hyper Group

Based: Leeds, England
Started trading: May 2019
Website: hyper-group.co.uk
Founders: Damon Bryan, Adam Barrowcliff, Thomas Hill, Peter Denby
Employees: 14

While 2020 was a year of data collection through prolific online customer acquisition for many retailers, 2021 is set to be the year of analysing what to do with that information to retain shoppers.

Hyper Group has built a customer insight and optimisation platform that uses data science and AI to help retailers improve product range, pricing and personalisation decisions.

It promises a cloud data management platform that stops companies having to invest in different providers for each of these tasks.

Studio Retail has embarked on its own journey to put data at the heart of its business, working with Hyper to establish a data science incubator. The initial use of this facility is for marketing optimisation, tailoring messaging to consumers based on past behaviour.

HyperJar

Based: London, England
Started trading: October 2020
Website: hyperjar.com
Founders: Mathew Megens, Paul Rolles
Employees: 45

HyperJar is a free personal finance management app that promises to reinvent how people manage their money while helping retailers to strengthen customer loyalty.

The start-up says it is the opposite of the "buy now, pay later" movement, instead encouraging its users to "save now, buy later". That is achieved by its account holders committing money ahead of spending it to participating merchants on the app – in exchange they receive an "annual growth rate" of 4.8% funded by the merchants themselves. Participating merchants include Shell, Bloom & Wild and Dyson.

For retailers, HyperJar enables them to reward customer loyalty before the purchase takes place, while also providing an additional marketing platform.

The app also acts as a money-organising tool, with users able to create "jars" to allocate funds to the home or childcare, for example.

Increasingly

Based: London, England
Started trading: December 2016
Website: increasingly.com
Founders: Sri Sharma, Satish Jayakumar
Employees: 48

INCREASINGLY

Growing average order value (AOV) is a key target for many retailers, and Increasingly is a company built especially to aid this process.

Recognising that consumers – be they DIY, fashion, beauty or other shoppers – often purchase online for a project or occasion, the AI-powered start-up's technology has been developed to help bundle together full looks, or a range of products to complete a task.

Given access to retailers' product feeds, Increasingly promises upselling opportunities by bundling products and collections onsite, on Google Shopping or in Facebook ads rather than displaying single items at a time.

The platform increases AOV by 33% and revenue by 15%.

Samsung, for instance, reported a growth in AOV as a result of working with the start-up, while other retail clients include bareMinerals, HP, Wickes and Avon.

Infarm

Based: Berlin, Germany
Started trading: May 2015
Website: infarm.com/en
Founders: Erez Galonska, Guy Galonska, Osnat Michaeli
Employees: 900+

infarm

Food provenance is playing a greater part in consumers' purchasing decisions, and environmental impact and locality are becoming increasingly important factors.

Infarm is an urban farming network that offers fresh, sustainable produce grown at what it describes as a fraction of the environmental cost of traditional agriculture.

Instead of operating across warehouse-sized units, Infarm has taken a modular approach, which means produce can be grown in dedicated spaces closer to the point of consumption.

Its vertical farming units can be stacked to allow for more efficient use of space, and in some cases – for example in Selfridges, Marks & Spencer and Whole Foods UK – are installed in stores, allowing customers to buy and eat produce harvested at source.

Next up for the start-up is the roll-out of its new Growing Centres; a local farm and distribution centre in one, equipped with modular, large-scale farming units, each of which can generate the crop-equivalent of up to 10,000 m2 of farmland, with up to 400 times higher efficient food production than soil-based agriculture.
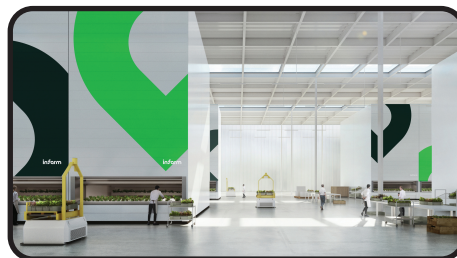
Intelistyle

Based: London, England
Started trading: November 2018
Website: intelistyle.com
Founders: Kostas Koukoravas, Michael Michelis
Employees: 7
Can help you with: Providing a more personalised fashion experience

Compelling customer experiences, personalised services, and relevancy are crucial if fashion retailers are to recover from the traumatic past 12 months.

AI-powered Intelistyle – which works with Tommy Hilfiger and Hong Kong-based luxury retailer Lane Crawford to give in-store shoppers appropriate style suggestions – helps retailers tick these boxes.

Its AI learns by trawling the web for fashion photography and styles before recommending looks based on the latest regional trends and individual customers' body type, hair, skin tone and personal style.

The tech is versatile, too: retailers deploy it for recommendations on web, chatbots, CRM, and smart mirrors – spanning digital and physical shopping experiences. It can also be placed in the hands of store staff to support in-person style advice.

Supermarket giant Asda is another retailer adopting Intelistyle's modern IT architecture. In March, Intelistyle won a £10,000 pilot with the grocer, which will involve using AI to style George at Asda customers through smart mirrors in its Stevenage store. The aim is to increase basket size while enabling Asda to cater to shoppers' diverse body types, skin tones and preferences.

> **WHAT THE JUDGES SAID:** "Intelistyle has amassed an impressive network of retail clients in a short space of time and has identified individual problems across each business that its technology helps. Fashion retail is increasingly dependent on its online offer to create a compelling shopping experience and Intelistyle's technology enables businesses that are newer to online and more adept to it to do this."

Kooomo

Based: Dublin, Ireland
Started trading: August 2018
Website: kooomo.com/en
Founders: Giovanni Meda, Ciaran Bollard
Employees: 37

With ecommerce intensifying during the pandemic, there is a growing number of retailers and brands looking for platforms to support their digital businesses.

Kooomo specialises in providing ecommerce platforms for medium-to-large enterprises with a native CMS.

Using the platform, retailers can create, configure and manage all web content without having to touch a single line of code. It promises access to more than 200 technology integrations, enabling clients to plug in to an array of fulfilment, payment and innovative software partners.

One of the most well-known retailers using Kooomo's technology is Butlers Chocolates, which sells confectionery around the world. Since migrating to the ecommerce platform from previous provider Magento, it has seen an almost 100% online sales increase and a threefold increase in online transactions with its site benefiting from its ability to adapt quickly to the needs of the business.

Loyalize

LOYALIZE

Based: London, England
Started trading: February 2021
Website: loyalize.ai
Founder: David John
Employees: 5
Can help you with: Connecting customers' payment cards to your loyalty programme

The open-banking era, which enables payment providers to grant third-party access to customers' accounts with the explicit permission of the consumer, presents several opportunities for retailers. Customer engagement and loyalty are chief among them.

With the right permissions, fintech companies can now access a customer's banking information via an API integration and that has led to the growth of card linking: a space Loyalize is playing in as it starts working with retailers in the UK.

Its solution allows customers to connect their payment cards (or bank accounts via open banking) to an existing loyalty programme, automatically earning their loyalty on every transaction, online and in store.

Customers are promised a seamless collection of points and rewards without carrying extra plastic cards or presenting apps at the point of sale.

Loyalize clients, meanwhile, can gain access to their customers' spending data in- and outside their own ecosystem. Such comprehensive information is a marketer's dream, as retailers worldwide strive for the sought-after single view of the customer.

WHAT THE JUDGES SAID: "It is a potential game-changer for that central plank of many retailers' data strategy – the loyalty scheme. As it gets harder and harder to persuade customers to keep your loyalty card in their pocket or your app on their phone, what if they could simply register their payment card and earn your points each time they used it? Such a simple idea of course comes with executional challenges – the core benefit of a loyalty scheme is mining the data it generates, and so the team at Loyalize will have to ensure that data continues to flow. But a clever way to bypass much of the initial cost of launching a loyalty scheme stands to put much more data into the hands of many more retailers, which can't be a bad thing."

Mercaux

MERCAUX

Based: London, England
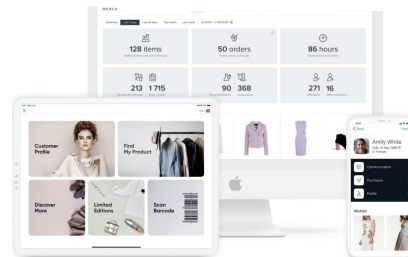**Started trading:** February 2015
Website: mercaux.com
Founders: Olga Kotsur, Alex Petrov
Employees: 55

Mercaux connects retailers' stores to the digital world with its software. Sitting on staff handheld devices, or accessed by customers on self-serve screens, the tech enables businesses to cross-sell, check inventory, take mobile payments and access a tailored shopping experience.

During the pandemic, it launched new modules in keeping with Covid-related restrictions. For instance, Holland & Barrett implemented Queue Scenario, allowing customers to browse for products and add them to their basket while waiting in a queue outside a store. The basket was then transferred via the Mercaux App to in-store staff to complete the order for shoppers safely and efficiently.

With stores now open but the pandemic still lingering, consumer health and safety and store efficiency will continue to be key requirements for retailers.

Olio

Based: London, England
Started trading: September 2017
Website: olioex.com
Founders: Tessa Clarke, Saasha Celestial-One
Employees: 38
Can help you with: Reducing food waste and surplus

OLIO

The pandemic has placed significant focus on social and environmental issues, and retailers are strengthening their commitment to supporting the world around them.

Olio is a free mobile app that connects neighbours with each other, and volunteers with businesses, so that surplus food can be shared and eaten rather than thrown away. Several retailers view the platform as a way of reducing food waste and redirecting what might have been thrown away to a positive social cause.

Pret-a-Manger, Selfridges, and Costa Coffee are among the retailers and brands working with Olio to ensure surplus food is collected from their premises and given to those in need. However, Tesco is the largest client, with collections from all its UK stores, helping rescue 50,000kg of food each week and putting it in the mouths of those who need it.

The start-up has also recently agreed a partnership with FareShare, a food redistribution non-profit, to redistribute end-of-day surplus across Tesco's Booker wholesale branches. Olio volunteers will collect the surplus and redistribute it to the local community via the app.

WHAT THE JUDGES SAID: "Sustainability has become table stakes for the industry and Olio's offering is enabling retailers to step up to the plate and tackle the issue of food waste in their supply chains. Over the last six years, Olio has grown to 2.8 million users and its retailer portfolio is equally as impressive. Its work with Tesco, evolving from pilot scheme to full roll-out across 150 of the grocer's stores every week, demonstrates the power of Olio's USP in driving real change, particularly at a time when there is greater need than ever among communities for free surplus food."

Olvin

Based: New York, USA
Started trading: December 2020
Website: olvin.com
Founder: Sam Amrani
Employees: 12

OLVIN

With customer centricity the target for many retailers, they need tools that help them understand consumer behaviour.

Olvin is an AI-driven business intelligence platform set up to help the retail and hospitality sectors. It analyses billions of data points to make sense of consumer behaviour and presents this information via its "Almanac" web application.

With the platform, any sized retailer is able to use Almanac to instantly access predictive analytics around their areas, stores and consumers. The solution has been designed to work seamlessly in any application: marketing/insights teams at larger retailers, franchise owners or even small, local business owners.

Having won AI and Machine Learning Product of the Year at the Golden Kitty Awards 2020, Olvin also officially launched Almanac at the end of last year.

Several major players in the real estate, consulting, marketing, and food and drink sectors have already shown post-trial interest in its technology.

Oriient IndoorGPS

Based: Tel Aviv, Israel
Started trading: January 2019
Website: oriient.me
Founders: Mickey Balter, Amiram Frish
Employees: 16

The smartphone has developed into a key shopping companion for consumers over the past decade. Oriient IndoorGPS aims to enhance that relationship by improving in-store wayfaring. Its technology provides indoor positioning information and navigation to products in stores – all on a shopper's smartphone and avoiding the need for hardware such as beacons.

In addition to providing a practical in-store navigation service for customers, the tech opens up further consumer communication opportunities to retailers and a chance to better understand traffic patterns. Portuguese hypermarket chain Continente uses Oriient's indoor GPS capability across its stores to help shopper navigation and provide personalised offers at the shelf edge.

Parcel Perform

Based: Singapore
Started trading: June 2016
Website: parcelperform.com
Founders: Dr Arne Jeroschewski, Dana von der Heide
Employees: 53

With the expansion of ecommerce over the past year, the need for retailers and brands to have comprehensive visibility of their logistics networks is only set to grow.

Parcel Perform provides companies with a global carrier management platform, linked to more than 700 logistics firms, that allows businesses to track, manage and optimise their delivery operations in real time.

Among the brands working with Parcel Perform is Nespresso, which uses the start-up's single-API data layer to receive standardised tracking and performance data across all global carrier partners.

Nespresso now uses the platform daily to assess where relevant action is required, and impressively it has halved 'Where is my order?' queries since using the service.

Outlier

Based: California, USA
Started trading: January 2021
Website: outlier.ai
Founders: Sean Byrnes, Dr Mike Kim
Employees: 50

Using AI and automated business analysis, Outlier helps retailers to optimise their business strategy and marketing campaigns. The technology can be used to analyse billions of critical data points and flag patterns in that data, while surfacing the most important insights automatically.

Outlier says one retail client uses the technology to collate data from its own website, Google and Facebook, while others have identified unseasonal demand for product categories, and taken action to maximise sales that otherwise may have been missed.

The technology can provide help across multiple departments within a retail business: its deployment is a natural fit for marketing, product, engineering and merchandising teams.

JUDGES' TOP PICK

ParcelLab

Based: Munich, Germany
Started trading: July 2015
Website: parcellab.com/en
Founders: Julian Krenge, Anton Eder, Tobias Buxhoidt
Employees: 100
Can help you with: Final-mile fulfilment and customer service

In a fast-changing environment with new rules, regulations and restrictions driven by the pandemic, businesses have had to up their game when it comes to customer communications.

Be it updates on delayed home delivery, new returns policies, or general changes to shop and online operations, there has been a lot for retailers to convey in the past 12 months.

Shipping software platform provider ParcelLab allows online retailers to take control of their end-to-end customer communication. It does so via technology that supports tailored messaging around delivery updates and returns information.

The tech company, judges' pick for a second consecutive year, has helped retailers such as Lidl to provide automated, personalised shipping messages and an integrated order status page to its customers.

Eighty-five per cent of customers return to Lidl's website via the shopping emails, helping to improve the retailer's loyalty rates.

According to ParcelLab, targeted post-purchase messaging adds value and leaves a lasting impression on customers. Such engagement will help retailers stand out in an increasingly crowded ecommerce marketplace.

WHAT THE JUDGES SAID: "We have seen a huge channel shift online over the past 12 months, accelerated by home-based consumers and the enforced closure of 'non-essential' retail. During this time of increased demand, it has been really pleasing to see many retailers improving the customer experience with clear communication about deliveries so that customers can keep track of their purchases and know when to expect them. What we liked about ParcelLab's solution was the white-label aspect, allowing retailers to personalise the messages sent to their customers and giving them the opportunity to drive traffic back to their online shop. All touchpoints are branded with the retailer's familiar tone and style, which maximises customer engagement and loyalty. With its visual, customer-friendly mobile platform, even returns are made simple and engaging."

Peak

Based: Manchester, England
Started trading: November 2014
Website: peak.ai
Founders: Richard Potter, Atul Sharma, David Leitch
Employees: 173

The biggest retailers around are hiring data and analytics directors to help shape future strategy, as the digital age continues to drive more sources of data into their businesses.

Peak believes data to be retail's most valuable asset, and it says its AI-based system has been created to aid people in making decisions over complex information faster, more consistently, and more accurately than ever before.

Working with companies that have experienced significant growth in the past year, including AO.com, Asos, Boohoo, KFC and Superdry, Peak combines multiple sources of data with AI to generate information used by these organisations to predict demand and manage supply chains in order to drive sales.

Product Guru

Based: Glasgow, Scotland
Started trading: July 2018
Website: productguru.co.uk
Founder: Simon Coyle
Employees: 8

Retailer/supplier relationships have come under the spotlight this year, and transparent communication and collaboration between the two are now paramount to future success.

Enter Product Guru, which has built an online hub or "virtual trade platform" designed to support the relationship and foster connections between retail buyers and suppliers.

For suppliers, the platform provides a space to market their brand by uploading details of products to customisable virtual product cards in their Product Guru account. For retailers, it provides a centralised online space where it is simple and quick to find new and exciting products that their customers will love.

Retailers including Tesco, Oxfam, WHSmith and John Lewis have joined virtual pitches via the platform, with these organisations talking up Product Guru as a time-efficient way of conducting important supplier conversations.

Quorso

Based: London, England

Started trading: January 2016

Website: quorso.com

Founders: Julian Mills, Dan Slowe

Employees: 23

Can help you with: Monitoring and managing store performance

I n an era when ecommerce has taken a larger part of the retail pie, businesses will be analysing the efficiency of their store estates like never before.

Quorso, which counts US party decorations chain Party City as a key customer, provides retailers with an "Agile Stores" app to help store teams act on the data sent to them by head office – and then measure success based on those actions.

Party City feeds sales information into the platform, allowing each shop worker to gauge commercial results achieved because of their work. Colleagues across the business can see results and learn from each other, boosting internal competition in the process.

The pandemic has been a trigger for localism, as people are spending more time in the communities in which they live and travelling less for work, and Quorso's technology enables retail users to tailor tasks on a local and store level. This type of geographical personalisation could be a key selling point as retailers apply localism tactics to their recovery plans.

WHAT THE JUDGES SAID: "Retail is detail and sometimes it's the small things that are difficult to notice that can add up to make a big difference to a retailer's performance. I really like the way that this tool uses AI to analyse and compare POS data to zoom in on anomalies and identify suggested actions for individual store managers. The tool drives sales improvements, saves time and improves the in-store experience for customers. It also proves that machines are smarter than humans for these types of tasks. From the feedback given, it is evident that store managers using the tool really value it."

Renovai

Based: Tel Aviv, Israel

Started trading: January 2020

Website: renovai.com

Founders: Alon Gilady, Alon Chelben, Avner Priel

Employees: 10

H omeware, furniture and furnishings have performed well this past year, with online sales in these categories jumping significantly as consumer attention turned to home renovation and decor during lockdowns.

As remote shopping accelerates, so too does demand from customers who want to envision exactly what items will look like in their homes before purchasing. Renovai offers AI visual shopping assistance to lifestyle brands so customers can do just that.

Its "Complete the Look" (CTL) tool can be added to online product pages, giving shoppers the opportunity to see their selected item within a rendered room setting, while its "Virtual Designer" tool ascertains a shoppers' tastes.

It then allows them to craft an exact measurement stage floor plan and professionally design their room with suggested colour palettes and furniture.

Made.com has been piloting the tech and found customers using CTL stayed on the site for twice as long as the average visitor. Other leading retailers that implemented the solutions generated more than 25% revenue increase and a 12% conversion rate uplift.

RevLifter

Based: London, England
Started trading: June 2016
Website: revlifter.com
Founders: Simon Bird, Ryan Kliszat
Employees: 32

I n a competitive ecommerce space, brands need to do what they can to ensure their messages reach consumers at the optimum time.

RevLifter helps retailers to reach potential customers with hyper-personalised incentives at different stages of the online shopping journey.

The start-up's platform uses AI to understand real-time signals from users' on-site behaviour, and retailers can leverage it to raise customer spend, upsell, cross-sell, or geo-target shoppers.

Retailers using the tech include Currys PC World, The Hut Group and The Very Group, as well as Laithwaite's Wine.

Laithwaite's has been able to serve relevant vouchers to shoppers based on basket and pay-per-click activity, resulting in an upturn in conversions.

Scalene Group

Based: Victoria, Australia
Started trading: March 2018
Website: scalene.com.au
Founders: Mick Moore, Pushkar Kumar
Employees: 11

S calene is a retail advisory and analytics consultancy and software business providing advanced data science solutions to help retailers maximise the commercial potential of their channels, stores and products.

With clients across the world, Scalene currently supports a growing client base in the UK including grocers and general merchandise retailers.

Using its proprietary Scalene Space Optimisation SaaS solution, Scalene is helping retailers maximise the profitability of store space – through department and category space allocation to meet local customer demand at site level.

With the step-change in multichannel penetration accelerating the need for retailers to review the role of stores and how customers interact within their spaces, Scalene's solutions are proving to deliver significant, measurable profit growth.

Scurri

Based: Wexford, Ireland
Started trading: June 2014
Website: scurri.com
Founder: Rory O'Connor
Employees: 40

With the growth of online shopping come more complex requirements for delivery and logistics. Retailers across the globe are seeking ways to make these back-end processes as seamless and efficient as possible, so they can focus on front-end, customer-facing propositions.

Delivery management software provider Scurri's technology aims to add value at multiple stages along the ecommerce journey. This ranges from helping to present multiple carrier options at checkout, to choosing the optimal delivery option for each package. It also automatically creates accurate labels and tracks and monitors carrier performance.

Vision Direct uses Scurri's tech to add delivery carriers in multiple international territories when required – particularly useful during the pandemic when supply chains have come under the spotlight – and to manage existing logistics relationships. Recipe box brand Gousto is also a customer.

Selazar

Based: Belfast, Northern Ireland
Started trading: January 2020
Website: selazar.com
Founders: Jack Williams, Gareth Burns, Kevan Bishonden
Employees: 24

Ecommerce players must simplify their back-end processes as much as possible to allow them to remain focused on developing highly compelling products and offering quality customer service.

Selazar has developed what it describes as an "end-to-end, logistics management software solution", which connects the fundamental components of ecommerce – product suppliers, fulfilment centres, couriers and retailers – on one platform.

Retailers can view and manage stock, sales orders, and returns in one central location using Selazar's software. UpCircle Beauty and Starwood Sports are two UK pureplay retailers already deploying the tech to drive sales growth and simplify fulfilment processes, with small to medium-sized retailers a key target market in the year ahead.

Simbe Robotics

Based: California, USA
Started trading: October 2014
Website: simberobotics.com
Founders: Brad Bogolea, Mirza Shah, Jeff Gee
Employees: 44

simbe

Improving in-store efficiency is a high priority for retailers around the world, and several large organisations have deployed technology to aid this process – using autonomous robots for tasks ranging from stock takes to cleaning.

US-based manufacturer Simbe Robotics has developed an inventory robot, Tally, which helps retail teams generate real-time data on product availability, placement, and pricing by operating at the shelf edge of stores.

Its combination of RFID, 2D and 3D sensors, as well as machine-learning algorithms, help to capture ecommerce-level insights in a store environment that can be used to action business decisions.

More than 100 Tally robots have been deployed so far across six countries, with Simbe recently expanding to 12 Carrefour UAE stores, where it helps the retailer monitor all-important inventory availability.

JUDGES' TOP PICK

Sook

Based: London, England
Started trading: March 2019
Website: sook.space
Founders: John Hoyle, Simon Gallagher, Daniel Burnham
Employees: 11
Can help you with: Finding vacant space for pop-up stores complete with a digitally enabled canvas

Sook

The pandemic has fast-tracked retailer store estate downsizing, with several companies such as JLP, Moss Bros and Paperchase reopening with fewer shops than a year ago.

Arcadia and Debenhams' demise also means some prominent physical retail space around the UK now lies unoccupied.

Sook, which has raised £847,000 from private investors since appearing among the 2020 judges' top picks, is encouraging brands to think differently about shop space.

The start-up makes it easy and affordable for anyone to occupy new sites, while helping retailers to create a bespoke environment and showcase product. Brands interested in using Sook's services can access its online platform to book a pop-up space or weekly repeat bookings and design interiors prior to renting it.

For companies looking for more flexible and less permanent tenancies in an uncertain environment, this format clearly reduces risk.

For online brands or individuals seeking physical retail space – such as Depop sellers, which have already utilised Sook's services – it provides pop-up potential and a first step into bricks and mortar.

WHAT THE JUDGES SAID: "Sook has the potential to perform a vital role in reimagining how excess retail space could be used. The reality is that the retail industry has too much space. Many multiple retailers have too many stores and will be attempting to exit these locations in the coming years, especially with the impact of the pandemic and the shift towards online. This is likely to boost vacancy rates and leave voids across high streets. Part of the solution to this will be repurposing empty stores into different uses and temporary pop-up shops could form a very important role. Sook can provide a blank canvas that can be engaging, interactive and encourage people to visit local high streets that have a healthy churn of independent businesses that occupy this space before making way for a new business."

StorIQ

Based: London, England
Started trading: June 2014
Website: storiq.net
Founder: Peter Wake
Employees: 20

A judges' pick in 2020, StorIQ's task management and retail operations platform remains innovative and important for retailers looking to get the most from their shops and store teams.

Since its inception in 2014, the company has worked with several retailers, including Hugo Boss and Crew Clothing. More recently, though, it has helped boost communication and transparency between Marks & Spencer and its international franchise partners.

StorIQ has assisted M&S International in moving beyond an intranet and to a digital platform where file sharing and compliance can be easily communicated.

Specifically, the UK retailer uses communication, task management and photo-sharing tools to support compliance and visibility of brand standards all over the world.

SupplyCompass

Based: London, England
Started trading: April 2017
Website: supplycompass.com
Founders: Gus Bartholomew, Flora Davidson
Employees: 24

Following several high-profile controversies involving fashion supply chain malpractice in the UK, scrutiny on product provenance has never been more intense. Against this backdrop, fashion retailers are promising to work closer with their suppliers to ensure they operate in the most appropriate manner. SupplyCompass is a production platform enabling brands and their manufacturers to build closer working relationships.

Its software, which is used by online luxury marketplace Farfetch, allows manufacturers and sellers to manage product development, sourcing, sampling and orders in one single platform, thereby supporting better communication throughout the whole design and procurement life cycle.

Texel

Based: New York, USA
Started trading: February 2015
Website: texel.graphics
Founders: Sergey Klimentyev, Maxim Fedyukov, Andrey Poskonin
Employees: 30

Sizing discrepancies and the subsequent product returns they create continue to hinder fashion retail's attempts to create smooth ecommerce experiences for consumers.

Texel provides an instant virtual try-on and size-advice widget for those in fashion ecommerce to help them navigate this landscape. Supported by AI and a unique dataset of 3D body models, the technology is designed to create a smooth online shopping experience for consumers enabling them to try on items and ask sizing questions prior to purchase in order to get the right items in the consumer's hand at the first time of asking.

Trials with Marks & Spencer, which has invested in Texel as part of a Founders Factory accelerator programme, have proved positive so far, with customers using the tool five times more likely to purchase and 30% less likely on average to return items.

The start-up has launched free B2C product the Telegram Bot, which allows users to try on a digital garment using a photo of themselves.

Tokinomo

Based: Bucharest, Romania
Started trading: January 2018
Website: tokinomo.com
Founders: Ionut Vlad, Laurentiu Cluve
Employees: 22

In-store marketing and shelf-edge merchandising have barely evolved in years, but with shops now required to work harder to attract customers in a more digital world, change is afoot.

Tokinomo is one company that has set about driving that change in supermarkets, having invented in-store robotic interactive displays for shelf ad campaigns that use sensor technology and a combination of sound, movement and light to make products move (or even dance) to attract consumer attention.

Working directly with FMCG brands, Tokinomo aims to help foster more creative and tech-enabled in-store marketing experiences.

This year it teamed up with FMCG supplier Henkel to deliver a campaign for its laundry detergent brand in 20 Auchan stores across France, which resulted in a sales uplift of 159%.

While in 2020, it teamed up with Carlsberg on an innovative Tesco in-store campaign to promote the Somersby Watermelon sparkling cider drink.

Trigo

Based: Tel Aviv, Israel
Started trading: July 2020
Website: trigo.tech
Founders: Michael Gabay, Daniel Gabay
Employees: 80

Consumers increasingly want frictionless and contactless shopping experiences in store, bolstered by the pandemic's health and social-distancing restrictions. For retailers, check-outs are a good place to start in fulfilling this consumer demand.

Trigo offers computer-vision-powered technology which, as well as supporting the opportunity for checkout-free retail experiences, can help fuel operational decisions such as limiting the number of shoppers or allocating more resource for rush hours and automatically adjusting specs such as SKUs and lighting conditions.

Currently operating a trial at a Tesco Express convenience store at Tesco HQ, Trigo wants to introduce its technology to more of the UK's largest retailer's shops across the country. Other supermarket chains are investigating the viability of using this type of technology.

Wagestream

JUDGES' TOP PICK

Based: London, England
Started trading: April 2018
Website: wagestream.com
Founders: Peter Briffett, Portman Wills
Employees: 100
Can help you with: Supporting employee needs and boosting company culture

One of Wagestream's calls to action is "building financial resilience for your workforce" – and there are few more pertinent or necessary mantras for the retail and hospitality industry in 2021.

After a year of economic and employment unease, not to mention uncertainty ahead, payment flexibility for retail and hospitality workers will remain important.

Retailers using Wagestream's charity-backed platform can give their staff access to a percentage of their earned wages whenever they need them, which can help those workers to find funds for an unexpected expense such as a higher-than-anticipated utility bill.

Every time a colleague "streams" some of their earned pay into their bank account, they pay a flat fee of £1.75. There are no loans involved and therefore no interest. The salary is then paid as usual at week or month end, minus what has already been claimed.

Toolstation is among Wagestream's clients, offering the service to its 4,000 UK colleagues with the aim of bolstering their financial resilience and wellbeing, so they don't have to wait until pay day to draw out funds. Colleagues also have access to a range of financial education tools and income tracking, via the Wagestream app.

WHAT THE JUDGES SAID: "We admire the fact that it is improving the employee payroll experience, which has been a particularly slow-to-innovate business function. We're not surprised it has found particular success within the retail sector. Retailers have historically treated store staff especially as a seasonal resource. But this solution offers employees the flexibility to manage their spending, saving and budget more effectively."
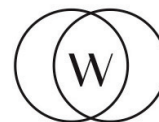
Wishi

Based: Jerusalem, Israel
Started trading: September 2019
Website: wishi.me
Founders: Clea O'Hana, Lia Kislev, Aya Elhanan, Karla Welch
Employees: 40

Virtual stylist platform Wishi offers fashion advice direct to consumers, curating online looks based on styles and budgets shared via an initial personal shopping consultation.

The start-up also provides its technology to retailers, including Farfetch, enabling businesses to outsource personal styling expertise to a third party and help their customers more easily find outfits that suit them and their lifestyles.

Wishi's target market is the busy professional or the fashion-conscious individual always on the go. While much of the world has spent a lot of time at home in the past 12 months, pent-up demand for occasionwear and formalwear could bring Wishi's services to the fore later in 2021.

Yoti

Based: London, England
Started trading: July 2014
Website: yoti.com
Founders: Robin Tombs, Noel Hayden
Employees: 350+

Thanks to the arrival of Amazon 'Just Walk Out'-powered grocery shops appearing in the US and UK, automated in-store shopping is building momentum.

Yoti's ag-verification technology is already integrated into existing self-checkout software to automate age verification. This can be done in two ways. Firstly via age estimate software, which determines if a customer is old enough by taking a photo and using an age threshold. Secondly via digital IDs – consumer-facing apps that allow customers to create a secure, reusable digital ID that matches facial biometrics to government-issued IDs.

This technology, which has been tested in large grocery chains in the UK and US, can speed up transactions and reduce friction at self-checkouts or other points in the customer journey.

WHAT THE RETAILERS HAVE TO SAY

Discovery showcases the best global start-ups powering retail transformation, but don't just take our word for it. Here's what leading retailers and brands have to say:

"Both customer and colleague feedback on these new solutions has been positive, and serves us well in our mission to make wellness accessible for all."

"We continue to look for new ways to innovate and expand access to our products and services to deliver a truly compelling offer for consumers, conveniently. By collaborating with partners, we can offer further flexibility and choice to meet community needs for shopping locally with ease, speed and safety, delivering what our Members and customers want, when and where they need it."

Darsh Chand, head of stores at Holland & Barrett, on Mercaux

"Parcel Perform helps me aggregate my logistics data in a simple overview and provides all the insights I need, not just to save time and effort, but also to ensure I have the information and insights to make the right decision as I manage multiple carriers and monitor their performance."

Matt Arrigonie, Co-op's online operations manager, discussing Gophr

"Since our partnership began, I have been amazed at what has been delivered, the pace and strength your team has shown in adapting to a continuously changing market, and the variations in technologies you have managed to adapt too to integrate seamlessly with our systems – skills that are rare among emerging companies."

Davide Costella, global delivery services manager, Nespresso

Tesco food waste operations project manager Ben Dingley speaking about Olio

"Through their data science expertise and retail optimisation tool set, Hyper is helping Studio to deliver against our goal of data-led transformation. As a multichannel retailer offering customers outstanding value across a diverse range of products, Hyper are helping us to optimise marketing budgets through understanding customer behaviour and allowing us to tailor communications to our customers."

Ed Child, head of enterprise data at Studio Retail

"The team has been amazing to work with: they have been extremely proactive and the results have been fantastic. We have achieved +20% in basket revenue and items per basket have increased by 28%! We are really looking forward to launching Increasingly's Google Shopping product in the coming months."

Rishita Ghosh, performance marketing manager, Samsung, discussing Increasingly

"Infarm's innovative farming platform is a fantastic example of what can happen when passionate agricultural, food and technology experts work together. We operate as part of a complex global food supply chain and want to understand the emerging technologies that could help deliver more sustainable solutions, while also delivering fantastic products with exceptional taste, quality and freshness for our customers."

Paul Willgoss, director of food technology, M&S Food

"We chose to switch to the Kooomo platform as it offered us the functionality and robustness we needed, with the ability to scale quickly. Since migration from Magento, the team has been an extremely supportive and reliable partner and we look forward to working with Kooomo as we plan to grow and expand our partnership further."

Kathy (Keeney) Smyth, marketing manager, Butlers Chocolate, on Kooomo

"By understanding our customers' needs – and responding to them in real time – we're delivering on our promise of having the happiest customers. Confluent is a critical enabler for us, allowing us to treat each moment as a one-on-one marketing opportunity. And, we've only just started. The potential is almost limitless as we continue to learn and innovate."

AO.com engineering lead Jon Vines

"With 250+ stores across two retail banners, it would have been impossible for WIRELESSWAVE and Tbooth Wireless to engage our shopping centres' marketing channels without investing a significant amount in people and financial resources. What would take us days or even weeks to accomplish, now takes minutes with Engagement Agents."

Daniel Phillips, senior director and head, marketing at Glentel, parent of WIRELESSWAVE and Tbooth Wireless

DISCOVERY @LIVE

Meet more of the world's most disruptive retail tech start-ups at the Retail Week Live conference taking place at Magazine, London on October 13-14, 2021. Via live pitches, we're showcasing game-changing solutions for retailers and brands looking to find the next big tech trend that could revolutionise their businesses and help them deliver for tomorrow's consumer today.

DISCOVERY

ENJOYED THIS REPORT? Why not book in one of our experts to find out more about the tech innovation that can help your business get ahead.

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