

eBook

Collaborating Across the Retail Value Chain With Data and AI

By leveraging the Data Intelligence Platform for Retail



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Introduction

Picture a world where your favorite store knows exactly what you want before you do. Where supply chains anticipate disruptions and adapt to market demands in real time. Where every employee, from the stockroom to the boardroom, is empowered with AI-driven insights. This isn't the retail of tomorrow — it's happening right now.

In an industry where margins are tight and competition is fierce, the ability to harness data and AI is a necessity for survival. The retailers who thrive in this new landscape are selling experiences, anticipating needs and rewriting the rules of customer engagement — all *on top* of selling their actual products and services.

But here's the catch: The sheer volume of data available to retailers today is both a blessing and a curse. Without the right tools and strategies, it's all too easy to drown in a sea of information, missing the insights that could revolutionize your business.

Today, success hinges on the ability to harness data and AI effectively. That's where Databricks comes in. **The Databricks Data Intelligence Platform for Retail** is designed to meet the unique challenges of the Retail industry, empowering businesses to transform their operations and customer experiences. The Databricks Data Intelligence Platform for Retail turns the chaos of big data into opportunities with analytics and AI, enabling you to:

- Predict customer desires with uncanny accuracy
- Build supply chains that bend but never break
- Transform every employee into a data-driven decision-maker
- Innovate at the speed of thought, not the speed of bureaucracy

In the pages that follow, we'll dive into the trends reshaping retail, the challenges keeping executives up at night and the game-changing solutions that are turning data into dollars. You'll discover how industry leaders are leveraging the Databricks Data Intelligence Platform to not just keep up with change, but to drive it.

Retail Transformation Trends

Several emerging trends are shaping the retail landscape, each presenting unique opportunities and challenges for businesses to adapt and innovate. As retailers navigate these developments, they're increasingly focused on leveraging advanced technologies and data platforms to enhance customer experiences, optimize operations and remain agile. Let's explore these key trends in detail.

The rise of real-time retail

Smart retailers are tapping into data from everywhere — social media chatter, what's flying off the shelves and even the ebb and flow of foot traffic in stores. This constant stream of information helps them keep shelves stocked, arrange stores for maximum appeal and blend the best of online and in-store shopping. It's all about being quick on your feet and giving customers what they want, when they want it.

Getting up close and personal with customers

With privacy concerns on the rise and the end of third-party cookies looming, retailers are realizing they need to build direct relationships with their customers. It's not just about collecting data anymore — it's about creating experiences that customers actually want to be a part of. Think personalized recommendations that feel like they're coming from a friend, not a faceless algorithm.

Weathering the supply chain storm

Recent years have shown just how fragile our global supply chains can be. From pandemics to labor shortages to economic curveballs, retailers have been hit from all sides. AI-powered tools offer a solution by giving a bird's-eye view of the entire supply chain. Now retailers can spot potential hiccups before they become full-blown problems and have the agility to change course when needed. In a world where "expect the unexpected" has become the norm, these tools are helping retailers stay one step ahead.

Breaking down barriers across the value chain

Retail has always been a team sport, with success depending on smooth cooperation between manufacturers, distributors and stores. But old-school systems have often kept these players in separate silos. Forward-thinking retailers are now embracing open platforms that connect everyone in the game. This means inventory gets managed more efficiently, shelves get restocked faster and customers get a smoother experience — all because everyone's finally on the same page, sharing data and insights in real time.

It's an exciting time full of challenges and opportunities. And with the right tools and mindset, retailers can turn these trends into their competitive advantage.



Improve Customer Engagement and Insights

The Databricks Platform unifies data, analytics and AI, enabling retailers to build the next generation of customer experiences. By leveraging a single copy of data with unified governance, retailers can:

- Incorporate real-time data from multiple sources, including clickstream data for digital interactions
- Extract insights from all types of data, including unstructured sources like social media and images
- Enrich customer insights through zero-trust data sharing with partners via data clean rooms
- Deliver personalized, real-time engagement through serverless machine learning (ML)

This comprehensive approach allows retailers to create more relevant, timely and personalized customer experiences, driving increased value and deeper insights.

Empower Employees With AI

Databricks enables organizations to augment their workforce with data-driven insights, allowing employees to focus more on customer-centric activities. The Databricks Data Intelligence Platform:

- Provides frontline workers with real-time, relevant data
- Unifies all data sources and types to improve overall decision quality
- Facilitates easy access to information from both upstream and downstream in the value chain
- Enables data teams across engineering, analytics and AI to collaborate effectively

By democratizing data access and insights, employees can self-serve and focus on high-impact customer scenarios, from in-store operations to resolving customer support cases.

Build an AI-powered supply chain

The Databricks Data Intelligence Platform for Retail empowers organizations to create a resilient and predictive supply chain optimized by AI. With Databricks, retailers can:

- Eliminate trade-offs between analysis depth and timeliness
- Generate scalable, fine-grained forecasts to predict or sense demand
- Perform advanced supply chain planning and optimization
- Improve decision accuracy, leading to higher revenue growth, greater incrementality and lower costs

This AI-driven approach to supply chain management helps retailers navigate volatility and respond swiftly to market changes.

Drive innovation with AI

Databricks enables retailers to accelerate innovation across their organization, empowering them to:

- Decrease time to market for new products
- Enhance product performance and engagement by analyzing customer behavior and insights
- Leverage real-time data to gain competitive advantages in areas like retail media networks
- Enable R&D teams to respond rapidly to consumer signals
- Look beyond their own data through secure data sharing to fill gaps in their understanding of consumer behavior

By harnessing the power of all data types — structured, unstructured and semi-structured — retailers can make more informed decisions about product development, marketing strategies and localized insights.

Solutions for Retail

Retailers face dynamic challenges that require efficient, real-time solutions to remain competitive and deliver exceptional customer experiences. Databricks empowers retailers with advanced data intelligence and AI capabilities, providing the tools necessary to optimize operations, personalize customer journeys and enhance collaboration across the value chain.

Real-time data for retail

The ability to react instantly to customer behavior, sales trends and inventory levels is crucial for retailers aiming to optimize operations and enhance customer satisfaction. Databricks addresses this need through our Solution Accelerator for **Real-Time POS Analytics**, which empowers retailers to unlock the full potential of their data by offering:

- **Instant data processing:** With Databricks, retailers can ingest, process and analyze POS data as it's generated, allowing for immediate visibility into sales patterns, inventory levels and customer behaviors
- **Enhanced operational efficiency:** Retailers can minimize stockouts, improve shelf availability and adjust in-store promotions on the fly to match real-time demand, ensuring that customers find what they need when they need it
- **Personalized customer experiences:** By understanding purchase behaviors in real time, retailers can tailor their offers and engagement strategies, creating personalized shopping experiences that build brand loyalty

These capabilities are already delivering transformative results for leading retailers.

AHOLD DELHAIZE

As a global leader in grocery retail, **Ahold Delhaize** utilizes Databricks to streamline their data processing and enhance real-time capabilities. The company has transformed their approach to inventory management, ensuring more efficient operations and higher customer satisfaction.

“Databricks Workflows allows us to clearly see how every job ran and whether it succeeded or failed. In our previous solution, we had a lot of moving parts . . . With Workflows, there’s only one job and we have all that information right in front of us.”

— Charlotte van der Scheun, Tech Lead, Platform Engineering, Ahold Delhaize

MARS PETCARE

For **Mars Petcare**, ensuring product availability is critical to maintaining customer trust and loyalty. Using Databricks real-time analytics, Mars Petcare has refined their shelf management practices, ensuring products are always available and minimizing the risk of stockouts.

SKECHERS

Skechers has transformed their customer engagement strategies by integrating Databricks with ActionIQ’s customer data platform. This integration allows for real-time data processing, enabling personalized, omnichannel experiences that drive higher customer lifetime value. By leveraging Databricks Delta Lake, Skechers efficiently manages and analyzes customer data, ensuring accurate insights and optimized marketing campaigns.

“Integrating the ActionIQ customer data platform with the Databricks Platform has empowered our marketers with data and analytics, enhancing their ability to engage customers and achieve higher customer lifetime value.”

— Manish Agarwal, Vice President of Data, Analytics and Insights, Skechers

Demand forecasting

Effective demand forecasting is essential for retailers looking to optimize their inventory management, reduce waste and respond proactively to fluctuations in consumer demand. Databricks addresses these needs with our Solution Accelerators for **Fine-Grained Demand Forecasting** and **Time Series Forecasting with Generative AI**, providing retailers with the tools needed for precise and dynamic predictions.

- **Accurate forecasting:** The Databricks Platform allows retailers to integrate data from various sources, applying advanced machine learning models that adjust in real time to shifts in demand patterns
- **Optimized inventory management:** By predicting demand with precision, retailers can reduce excess stock, lower waste and ensure that products are available when and where they're needed
- **Data-driven decision-making:** Leveraging generative AI, the Databricks Platform generates detailed time series forecasts that enable companies to make proactive, data-driven decisions to enhance supply chain efficiency

These capabilities are already driving measurable success for leading retailers.

AL-FUTTAIM

Databricks helps **Al-Futtaim** enhance demand forecasting across their diverse brands, improving inventory management and reducing costs. By integrating real-time data through a unified platform, Al-Futtaim optimizes supply chain efficiency and achieves better customer insights.

“The Databricks Data Intelligence Platform allows every division in our organization — from automotive to retail — to gain a unified view of our customers across businesses. With these insights, we can optimize everything from forecasting and supply chain to powering our loyalty program through personalized marketing campaigns, cross-sell strategies and offers.”

— Dmitriy Dovgan, Head of Data Science, Al-Futtaim

BARILLA

Databricks supports **Barilla** in streamlining their supply chain by leveraging predictive analytics and real-time data integration, enhancing efficiency and sustainability. By utilizing the Databricks Data Intelligence Platform, Barilla optimizes their inventory management and improves production accuracy across their global operations.

“Databricks provides Barilla’s entire data team with the means to quickly process and analyze terabytes of business data. This has cleared a path toward an operating model that is collaborative, highly efficient and environmentally sustainable.”

— Graziano Belmonte, Global Big Data and Advanced Analytics Director, Barilla

Next-gen customer experience

Databricks empowers retailers to create personalized customer journeys, leveraging AI and advanced analytics to enhance engagement and drive customer lifetime value. Through Solution Accelerators like **Customer Entity Resolution**, **Customer Lifetime Value**, **Customer Segmentation** and **Propensity Scoring**, Databricks provides a comprehensive platform for optimizing customer interactions.

- **Personalized marketing:** Databricks enables retailers to segment customers accurately, tailoring marketing strategies that increase conversion and engagement rates
- **Customer insights:** By unifying customer data from multiple sources, Databricks offers a 360-degree view, empowering retailers to understand behaviors and predict future actions
- **Enhanced customer loyalty:** Using AI-driven insights, retailers can create targeted campaigns that improve customer retention and lifetime value

These capabilities are already driving results for leading brands.

BURBERRY

Databricks supports **Burberry** in delivering personalized, data-driven customer experiences by leveraging real-time clickstream data and AI. Through Databricks and Snowplow, Burberry creates a comprehensive, AI-ready customer 360, enabling client advisors to access customer preferences instantly and tailor in-store recommendations.

“A shopper who browses products on Burberry.com is telling us something about what they really want. Thanks to Databricks and Snowplow, we can build an AI-ready customer 360 so our client advisors have that information from the moment they walk into our store — and can deliver a personalized next-generation customer experience.”

— Benjamin Stephens, Senior Manager, Decision Analytics, Burberry

84.51°

84.51° leverages Databricks to deliver data-driven insights that enhance Kroger’s shopper experience. By using Databricks Notebooks, 84.51° enables their data scientists to develop and deploy customer segmentation models more efficiently, ensuring faster time to market for personalized marketing strategies.

“The data scientists can easily start out in a notebook and then simply share it back and forth for feedback. They can now go from an idea to something in production so much quicker than they could in the past.”

— Michael Carrico, Data Science Learning & Development Director, 84.51°

Stronger collaboration across the value chain

Databricks Marketplace enables retailers to rapidly accelerate their time to insight by seamlessly integrating various data sources to optimize inventory management, promotions and customer experience. With capabilities for secure data sharing and privacy-compliant collaboration using technologies like data clean rooms, retailers can access enriched analytics to drive strategic decision-making and operational efficiency.

Data partners are already delivering benefits for leading brands.

ACCUWEATHER

AccuWeather on Databricks Marketplace supports retail supply chains by integrating weather data to optimize logistics and inventory management. By leveraging over 170 global forecast models, AccuWeather provides retailers with real-time weather insights, helping them predict demand, adjust supply levels and improve transportation efficiency. This data-driven approach ensures that supply chains operate smoothly, reducing disruptions and enhancing customer satisfaction.

CRISP

Crisp on Databricks Marketplace provides a robust open-data platform for the Retail and Consumer Goods sector. It connects retailers, suppliers and distributors to real-time point-of-sale and supply chain data, enabling quick, informed decision-making. By integrating data across various business functions — such as inventory management, marketing and finance — Crisp allows companies to optimize stock levels, streamline operations and enhance collaboration for greater efficiency across their entire supply chain.

HABU

Habu's integration with Databricks enhances supply chain efficiency by securely connecting data from various partners and providers. Through their clean room software, Habu enables seamless, privacy-compliant collaboration, allowing supply chain teams to access and analyze critical data without physical transfers. This facilitates better visibility, improves demand forecasting and optimizes inventory management, ultimately leading to faster, data-driven decision-making while ensuring compliance with data privacy regulations.

About Databricks

Databricks is the data and AI company. More than 10,000 organizations worldwide — including Block, Comcast, Condé Nast, Rivian, Shell and over 60% of the Fortune 500 — rely on the Databricks Data Intelligence Platform to take control of their data and put it to work with AI. Databricks is headquartered in San Francisco, with offices around the globe, and was founded by the original creators of Lakehouse, Apache Spark™, Delta Lake and MLflow. To learn more, follow Databricks on [LinkedIn](#), [X](#) and [Facebook](#).

Get started with a free trial of Databricks and start building data applications today.

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