![TRG logo](The Difference is Us)

Organizing Omnichannel: Plan Your Playbook

TRG | trgsolutions.com

Contents

What Going Omnichannel Means

Every retailer knows the necessity of adopting omnichannel initiatives into its everyday operations. But what does that mean? It's time to spell it out.

It's no secret that the retail industry is in a constant state of evolution. Recent years have thrown that into even sharper focus. Consumers were already embracing digital shopping options and eCommerce in general, then pandemic conditions pushed that adoption to warp speed levels.

Customer expectations have never been higher when it comes to retail. They want to be able to do it all — talk to an associate in a store, review products online, pick up goods in person (or at the curb), or have products shipped to them. They want convenience, delightful interactions and transparency. They want a seamless shopping experience, no matter how they choose to shop. These expectations have forced retail into a host of changes to meet those challenges **and those adjustments are here to stay**.

While trying to meet those expectations, retailers are also dealing with changing economic conditions and continued pressure from the labor market, where retention and finding enough quality personnel remains difficult. It's left many juggling to meet new demands with fewer resources. Finding ways to survive, let alone thrive, is and will continue to be an ongoing obstacle.

Enter omnichannel retail.

Omni- or Multi-, Where Do You Stand?

Whether browsing through the racks of your physical location, or swiping through different products on your custom app, customers want a frictionless and easy experience. They're prioritizing seamlessness — it shouldn't feel any different to them whether they interact with your retail organization online or in-person. Flexible technology now allows them to engage retailers when, where, and how they want.

Omnichannel retail efforts are designed to enhance and improve the customer experience. But while many retailers have tried to create the agility needed to meet customers where they are — through new hardware, software, platforms and technology — they also fall short in implementing a true omnichannel strategy. It's not enough to reach out to customers through more channels if they're not synchronized with a complete strategy.

Half-measures won't be enough for retail organizations in the current environment. Partial steps, such as multichannel solutions versus omnichannel ones, won't deliver the desired results. So, what's the difference here?

Multichannel Retail

The emphasis here is on selling, marketing or listing products on more than one channel — digital, physical or both. This allows businesses to reach more customers via different avenues with the same product catalog. It's key to remember this approach is about maximizing exposure for your products and where to get them. The customer's experience on any individual channel is relatively isolated from other channels.

Omnichannel Retail

Here, the focus is on the customer and synchronizing that customer's data or experience across multiple channels and optimizing how they interact with each other and the customer. The ultimate goal is to maximize convenience for the customer so that **every interaction with a brand across different channels feels like it's part of one seamless experience**.

While omnichannel must be multichannel by design — not all multichannel retail is omnichannel.

Omnichannel focuses on using integration and a holistic approach to focus on serving the customer, integrate data from different channels and create consistently excellent customer experience.

Now that we know what omnichannel retail is, it's time to run through the playbook of how to set up a strategic approach to make it work for you.

First: Set a Technology Foundation

Omnichannel is about reaching out to customers where they're shopping and providing a seamless experience — consistently. Whether they're engaging with your brand online, in the store, through their phone, or a combination of channels customers want convenience and control to shop their way. Integrating the data and interactions consumers create with your organization requires deploying the tools and technology available today to gain greater visibility.

Previously, physical and digital commerce worked alongside each other. But to fulfill omnichannel strategy completely, they need to complement each other.

When plotting out your omnichannel strategy, figuring out the technology profile you need is a critical first step

Technology is essential to bridge that gap and give consumers the convenience they crave. By integrating both in-store touch points and digital interactions as part of the same buyer's journey, retailers have introduced new customer-centric features and services — like the rise in curbside pickup — and improved the overall customer experience.

When plotting out your omnichannel strategy, figuring out the technology profile you need is a critical first step. Which devices, platforms and innovations do you need to centralize your data, improve clarity in operations and deliver excellent customer service?

Ready for RFID?

Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) technology uses radio waves to identify objects. There is a device that reads information contained in a wireless device or "tag" from a distance without making any physical contact or requiring a line of sight. RFID is a part of everyday life and can be found in car keys, security access cards, employee identification markers and of course throughout retail.

RFID is a cornerstone technology for any omnichannel retail strategy. Incorporating RFID is critical for complete inventory visibility, tying your team together, and eliminating friction points for consumers. Its application for retail inventory and the clarity it provides there helps RFID addresses three key points:

1	2	3
Inventory Management	**Customer Transparency**	**Accurate Availability**
Accurate visibility on your entire inventory — preferably in real-time — helps associates find the wanted product wherever it is, and enable them to give customers accurate information on how to get it.	With many customers researching a product's availability online before venturing into a store, RFID gives them insight into whether an item is in stock and if its size, color, style, etc. are what they're looking for before they make the trip or purchase.	A customer wants to order a specific item to be picked up at the store. The store's inventory shows only two such items available, but have they been sold already? RFID and the real-time visibility it provides answers these kinds of questions.

There's More Where That Came From

Incorporating RFID is just the beginning of omnichannel integration powered by technology. You don't need to use every technology available, but should discover which solutions can help you engage with customers and drive your efforts. Here are seven more tech investments that should be on your short list of options:

1	**Wireless Infrastructure**	Strong network health and performance is critical for enabling both customers and associates on site, monitoring inventory and keeping information flowing
2	**Ecommerce Site & Mobile App**	A user-friendly site and online home is an absolute necessity. This allows customers to interact with your brand onsite, find reviews and scan your entire catalog.
3	**Mobile Devices**	Be it a tablet, a phone, or a rugged device, mobile technology allows employees to do more and serve customers better. Multiple-use devices should now be standard.
4	**Alternative Payment Methods**	Customers want multiple ways to shop, and pay. Virtual accounts, quickly accessed loyalty programs, and automated options (think Apple® Pay) give customers more control.
5	**Self-Checkout & Kiosks**	These cut down on the dreaded wait times for customers and give retailers flexibility in addressing peak hours without disrupting other aspects of the facility.
6	**Middleware Software**	From managing devices to tracking inventory, distribution and sales, retailers now have access to middleware platforms that enable the integration of multiple systems efficiently.
7	**Automation & Robotics**	24/7 service options like text/SMS service and online chatbots are rising in popularity. Robots can be used to check for on-shelf stock. All of which help customers get their answers sooner.

Second: Manage and Maximize Your Investment

As a retailer, you've thought about structuring a true omnichannel approach. You've learned about the new technologies needed to make it happen, and deployed a host of solutions to begin full implementation.

How do you make the most of that investment? Unified endpoint management (UEM) attacks the issue on two fronts: 1) It helps limit or mitigate the cost of an omnichannel program and 2) ensures you optimize the technology used to pull it together.

We All Need a Little Support

UEM provides the tools and support needed to streamline the control of all your devices and technology. With omnichannel retail becoming the new normal, customers won't wait for you to figure it out on your own. Agility and flexibility remain important as you flesh out your omnichannel efforts, and **the right third-party UEM solutions** are a vital component to mining every benefit (and managing costs) for the endeavor.

With most economic analysts viewing a recession as inevitable in the near future, it's essential to back up your investments with the support required to keep them performing and reliable. Whether it's a new fleet of tablets, hardware to improve your network health, or new operating systems and software to organize the entire effort, it's wise to make sure the resources you dedicate now remain viable for their entire lifespan.

The Benefits of the Right UEM Provider

Cost Effective

Finding the resources needed to cover your entire footprint is unfeasible. With an UEM provider, you'll keep your fixed costs lower and save substantially by working with one partner instead of tapping into multiple different vendors on your own.

More Secure

With third-party managed UEM solutions, you work with certified experts who have detailed insight into the challenges of mobility security, and also monitor it 24/7/365. From the ground up, your security profile will be enhanced and tailored for the mobility space.

Better Strategic Bandwidth

With a UEM provider, your team is able to focus on high-level objectives for technology investment without being burdened by mobility incidents, adding or terminating access, acquiring and disposing of devices, and monitoring for security and compliance.

Third: Empower Your People

So far, we've addressed the technology you need for omnichannel retail and the management tools necessary to get the most out of it. But enterprise mobility and omnichannel isn't only about making retail easier for the customer. With ongoing labor shortages, retailers should not overlook the omnichannel employee experience when creating their strategy.

Retaining skilled labor, a must for excellent customer experiences, was more difficult than ever for retailers in 2022. That challenge is expected to continue and is nothing new for the industry. The retail industry has averaged a **58% turnover rate** for employees and associates over the last five years after all.

How can retailers improve associate retention and streamline employee onboarding? First, take stock of your organization using enterprise mobility technology:

- ☑ Is your team actually equipped to support omnichannel? Do you have the framework, strategy and technology in place to enhance and needlessly encumber employees?

- ☑ Is your plan missing key elements? Are your mobile devices obsolete? Is your network more of a hindrance than a help?

- ☑ Does your team have the training to get the most out of your technology investment? Checking all the boxes on the tech side won't matter if your team can't put them to use effectively.

Make The Most of What You Got

With the adoption of technology and the training to support it, retailers are better positioned to handle labor shortages when they do occur. We've talked about the stressors afflicting the industry currently, but with 'smart' associates outfitted with a single multiple-purpose device, your staff will be equipped to deliver the customer experience necessary. You may not have as much staff as you want, but each will be able to handle a multitude of responsibilities — from communicating across the location, answering customer questions in real time, providing point-of-sale capabilities, serving as mobile printers and much more.

Learning to leverage the use of mobility solutions to improve the employee experience allows retailers to tackle key issues they face in today's climate:

- Keep associates serving consumers on the sales floor

- Give employees the tools to do more with less manpower on hand

- Provide support to make every interaction feel seamless and effortless

This leads to increased worker retention and smooths out the onboarding of new employees — both of which help mitigate labor shortage issues.

Avoid The Onboarding Loop

It's a struggle too many retailers have become familiar with over the past few years. With turnover high, many have become stuck endlessly training up new employees only to see them leave shortly thereafter. Employees are your most important — and often hardest to keep — asset. An omnichannel approach and the technology to serve that goal while improving your employees' experiences addresses the problem head on. This leads to increased worker retention and smooths out the onboarding of new employees — both of which help mitigate labor shortage issues.

Improve Day-To-Day Experiences
- Multiple-use devices relieve the mental and physical bloat of managing several devices at once.

- With the right OS and apps, employees can find their daily workload simplified and streamlined.

- Training and support ensure the tech is working and associates can maximize their effectiveness.

Easy Onboarding
- Younger people and they tend to have innate knowledge of devices and their capabilities. This reduces the time needed to train or learn to use them.

- Streamlined mobility solutions shorten the onboarding process (1 device vs. several). Intuitive interfaces mean new employees get up to speed quickly.

Fourth: Gain Clear Vision into Inventory

Inventory management is perhaps the most critical component in implementing a successful omnichannel retail strategy. Without clear vision and clarity into what products you have, where they're at and when they'll arrive, your efforts to deliver the premium experience for customers will fall short.

Organizationally speaking, inventory management helps every team to better forecast demand and avoid stockouts — **still a common concern for customers across retail**. However, older or more traditional processes for managing inventory won't cut it or meet the needs of today's customers. Retailers need visibility across their entire footprint; something not achievable with hand counts or location-by-location breakdowns.

If a customer has questions about whether a product they desire is in stock at your location, or can be shipped to them quickly from another, they'll simply go somewhere else.

If a customer has questions about whether a product they desire is in stock at your location, or can be shipped to them quickly from another, they'll simply go somewhere else. Consumers now require an accurate picture of what's available and where they can get it. Now with physical retailers **opening more stores**, and every brick-and-mortar location doubling as a distribution center, visibility is a must-have into each and every location.

Cut Through The Clutter

Managing inventory across your entire footprint — from a handful of locations to hundreds — sounds good in theory and difficult to execute in practice. A number of challenges are present here and prevent full omnichannel realization.

- **Segmented Processes** — Siloed supply chains are the enemy here. Isolated elements can lead to delivery delays or mistakenly advertising out of stock products. Both will hurt your reputation severely with consumers.

- **Lack of Visibility** — Omnichannel inventory management REQUIRES visibility in every aspect of your stock. Bad, or incomplete, data means more potential problems with customer satisfaction.

- **Lack of Technology** — Without the right tools, you won't be able to address the previous two points. Given the size of the data pool for an average retailer, omnichannel inventory management simply can't be pulled off manually. Retailers need automated technology to streamline processes and ensure order fulfillment is synced across channels at the same time. **Other elements like RFID** help keep track of inventory data.

Reap The Rewards

With automated processes, new technology, and **a proven, world-class UEM partner**, retailers can capitalize on the benefits that come with an accurate and clear picture of their inventory:

1 **Integrate the Supply Chain**

Eliminating silos and expanding into elements like accounting and channel management creates a more efficient process and inventory data that serves the entire enterprise.

2 **Achieve True Visibility**

Don't alienate customers by offering products you don't have. Real visibility into stock levels grants real-time transparency and trust that consumers seek.

3 **Improve the Return Process**

With integration and visibility comes the ability to craft seamless return policies that generate loyalty and enhance the customer experience.

4 **More Effectively Stock Across All Locations**

Supply chains that grow beyond a single hub respond to demand forecasting, but this only happens with omnichannel inventory management that brings all distribution centers under one system.

Fifth: Never Stop Optimizing

Omnichannel retail is focused on delivering seamlessness. If that's not present in how you support your technology and program in general, it quickly becomes apparent to the customers you're trying to serve. Organizing omnichannel efforts means planning for days, months and years following the launch of your new initiative.

If your network is down, or off-line devices impact the ability to serve the customer, all of your planning and effort could go to waste. Proper omnichannel support means consumers are less likely to be frustrated by technical issues, in your store or online, as you cover any gaps and keep all your tech in excellent condition.

Support also includes the use of analytics. A holistic omnichannel strategy allows retailers to centralize data from all sources and channels. This information can then be parsed to recognize the best ways to organically meet customers, give them the best service, and improve overall performance. Using analytics to personalize experiences is a common expectation for customers.

Here are three ways **Support** and **Analytics** can be used to improve your omnichannel strategy.

Support

Preventive/Proactive Maintenance — Tracking expected battery life, using a management partner to handle software updates, and tapping into analytics can head off major problems before they develop.

Repair — Do you have a gameplan to expedite repairs or a partner that makes it easy to ship in replacements? Have you developed a spares pool you can lean on in the meantime?

Troubleshooting — Does your UEM partner have robust self-help or on-call technical support that can alleviate unforeseen problems? Finding solutions for inadequate device performance on site or intermittent network issues could be as simple as conducting an audit.

Analytics

Personalization — Collect data from multiple user touchpoints and get a 360-degree view of customers and their interactions with your brand. Create targeted, individualized experiences that are more likely to convert them into loyal fans.

Device Management — Gain insight into what's working, what isn't and what could be changed for big savings — such as **properly monitoring battery life and performance**.

Onsite Enhancements — Dissect sales associate activity in a brick-and-mortar location. Use this information to optimize floor plans and display placements.

We're Everywhere You Need To Be

We're TRG. We make enterprise mobility and omnichannel easy and accessible. Really. It's what we do.

Hello, we're TRG! We're a global managed solutions provider that covers everything related to enterprise mobility — from the boardroom to the warehouse and deployment to device retirement. Our capabilities to tackle every aspect of mobility make us the perfect partner to manage your omnichannel retail efforts.

With TRG, you're covered:

- We're the largest third-party service provider in the industry

- We've helped more than 5,000 customers in more than 50 countries

- We partner with the biggest and best brands in the industry, like Zebra, Soti, Honeywell, and more

No retailer can afford mis-steps, weak strategy, or subpar device coverage and performance when implementing an omnichannel strategy. With TRG, you won't. Our capabilities address everything you need to meet customers where they are and deliver the experiences they expect.

Evaluate & Plan

- **Mobile Maturity Assessments (MMAs)**
- **Technology Transformation**
- **Wireless Site Surveys**

Procure

- **New or Refurbished Equipment**
- **Mobility as a Service (MaaS)**
- **Software Development**

Deploy

- **Staging, Kitting & Configuration**
- **Onsite Installation & Training**
- **Payment Terminal Key Injection**

Manage

- **Unified Endpoint Management (UEM) Support Services**
- **Technology Lifecycle Management (TLM)**
- **Repairs & Managed Logistics**

Retire & Dispose

- **Equipment Buyback**
- **Asset Disposal**
- **Payment Terminal Key Destruction**

Reach out now to explore everything TRG offers:

Let's Connect

Omnichannel Organization with TRG

Creating seamless shopping experiences isn't easy, but with us you can make it look that way.

At TRG, we define the terms facing retailers today, create and develop plans to meet those challenges, and then execute technology transformations to assist you in embracing an omnichannel strategy.

With holistic solutions, a global reach and an incredible breadth of capabilities, TRG provides you with everything you need to improve customer experiences and maximize ROI. If you're ready for more from omnichannel, we're ready to help.

Connect With Us

Go Beyond Retail and Discover What's Coming in 2023:

Beyond Retail