

Winning with Answers & Insights in the Store

The Key to Better Selling and Ditching Associate Overwhelm



There's a growing mismatch between what shoppers expect from store visits and what retailers are prepared to deliver. In the past, shoppers may have tolerated average service in the store in exchange for more convenience or better pricing. But those days are over.

Today's consumers expect store associates to serve as trusted advisors — product experts who can provide guidance, recommendations, and a deeper understanding of the merchandise. Unfortunately, our research shows retailers are struggling to live up to this expectation.

35% of retailers admit that one of their top operational challenges is meeting this higher level of service expectation.

Another 21% cite customer dissatisfaction with the lack of seamlessness between online and in-store experiences as a top concern.

This is a big problem, because in today's uber-connected world, shoppers have unprecedented access to information — from product specifications and user reviews to price comparisons and many sourcing options. With a smartphone in hand, shoppers often enter stores knowing exactly the product they want, how much it costs elsewhere, and what other customers think about it.

This new dynamic has created a **knowledge gap** between shoppers and store associates. This disconnect erodes consumer trust and diminishes the value of human interaction — a critical differentiator of the in-store experience.

Shoppers Are Often More Informed Than Associates

Our research reveals **36% of retailers say meeting the demands of hyper-informed customers represents one of the top threats to their business.** Shoppers are arriving at stores armed with online research, but all too often, store associates aren't equipped to match or exceed that knowledge. It's not that retailers don't recognize the problem.



In fact, **99% of retailers say it's important that store associates can provide product knowledge that surpasses the customer's own research.** But recognizing this issue and resolving it are two very different things.

The Personalization Problem

Shoppers expect seamless transitions between online browsing and in-store purchasing. They want store associates to know what they've viewed online, what's in their wish list, and what they've purchased in the past. But most retailers admit they're falling short in this area due to a lack of data integration across channels.

57% of retailers say they're only "OK" at connecting store associates with consumers' online shopping data, noting that they have "some but not all" information integrated across channels. This leads to generic service interactions that feel disconnected from the personalized experiences customers are accustomed to having when they shop online.



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Lack of customer insight across transactions and channels can be especially frustrating for shoppers when they have a problem needing resolution. **Less than one-third (32%) of consumers say their favorite retailer provides easy access to customer service when they have a problem.** When expectations for convenience and personalized engagement aren't met, shoppers may walk out the door — and into the arms of a competitor.



Ops Overload: Associates Are Stretched Thin

Data isn't only critical when it comes to serving customers, it's also important to safeguard store employees' time and focus. Store associates are increasingly bogged down by tasks that prevent them from prioritizing customer engagement. According to the research:

45%

of retailers say store employees spend too much time trying to find answers to customer service questions.

42%

say associates spend too much time on technology support and maintenance.

38%

cite administrative tasks as a major time drain.

These challenges rob associates of bandwidth they could be allocating to what matters most: building meaningful connections with customers.

Meanwhile, **critical retail functions such as shipping products from stores (26%), inventory management (24%), and shelf restocking (18%) aren't getting enough time and attention.**

The Service Expectation Gap

If shoppers can get faster answers and more detailed product information from their phones, why engage with an associate at all?

The associate's role can no longer be transactional — it must be transformational. Associates need the tools, training, and data access to:

- Provide deeper product insights
- Recommend complementary items based on the customer's profile and history
- Solve problems in real-time, without passing the customer off to another department
- Personalize the experience in a way that makes shoppers feel appreciated and valued

When associates are empowered in these ways, they become an extension of the brand promise.



Forging the Path Forward

Retailers need to ensure better answers and insights to support both shoppers and associates within the four walls of the store. This requires a combination of technology, training, and operational focus.

1. Invest in Associate-Facing Technology

Associates need mobile tools that give them immediate access to product specs, availability, customer history, and recommendations. This turns them into consultative sellers rather than clerks.

2. Break Down Data Silos

Integrating online and offline data is no longer optional. Associates must have visibility into customers' online journeys to personalize the in-store experience effectively.

3. Prioritize Associate Training

Technology alone won't solve the problem. Associates need ongoing education to stay current with product knowledge, customer engagement strategies, and the brand's evolving value proposition.

4. Rethink Operational Tasks

Retailers must free up associates from low-value administrative tasks so they can focus on customer interaction. Automation, self-service technologies, and smarter workflow management can help shift priorities back to customer engagement.

Capitalizing on Human Connections

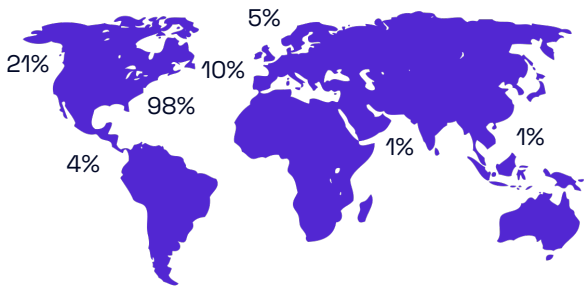
While our world continues to be increasingly technology-driven, the human connection remains a cornerstone of the store. And store associates must be empowered to meet the needs of today's hyper-informed shopper to assist, aid and address customer needs.

Retailers that embrace this challenge will leverage their store fleets for maximum advantage, while those that don't risk becoming irrelevant.

In 2025 and beyond, the message is clear: The store associate must become smarter, faster, and more resourceful.

Survey Methodology

Retail Systems Research conducted an online survey from December 2024 – January 2025 and received answers from 112 qualified retail respondents (retail executives and store managers).

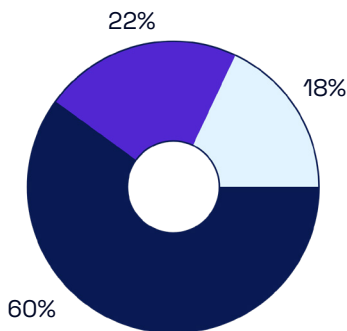
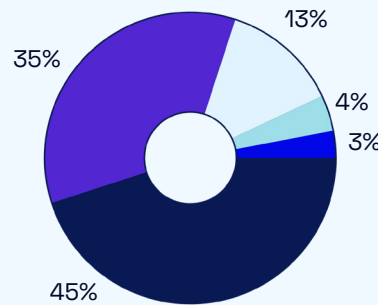


Respondents were from retailers with a geographic presence in:

- United States: **98%**
- Canada: **21%**
- UK: **10%**
- Europe: **5%**
- Latin America: **4%**
- Middle East and Africa: **1%**
- Asia/Pacific: **1%**

Retailers had 2024 revenues (USD equivalent) of:

- \$500 million - \$999 million: **45%**
- \$1-\$5 billion: **35%**
- \$250 million-\$499 million: **13%**
- Over \$5 billion: **4%**
- Under \$250 million: **3%**



Retail sector representation:

- Fashion and Specialty Goods (Apparel, Footwear, Accessories, Luxury, Personal Care/Cosmetics): **60%**
- General Merchandise: **22%**
- Fast Moving Consumer Goods (Convenience, Food & Drug, Health Care Products): **18%**



About Jumpmind

Known for its cloud-native, mobile Point of Sale (POS) platform, Jumpmind offers the most modern and technologically leading POS and unified promotions to support inspired shopping experiences that empower both shoppers and the retail associates who serve them.

While most POS platforms are designed to meet retailers' current needs, Jumpmind builds a system designed for the future. Business requirements can shift, customer expectations can evolve, and hardware preferences change over time. That's why Jumpmind solutions — which are built by retail industry veterans — are technology agnostic, adaptable and future-proof, enabling retailers to stay ahead of the curve through agility, at scale.

For more information, visit www.jumpmind.com