

RE-OPENING RETAIL

PART 1/3



STORE HOURS
MON-FRI 10-7
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As we prepare for what the future of retail holds, there's only one thing that's certain: the in-store shopping experience has changed irrevocably. As stores start to open back up, it's important that retailers are mindful of how consumer behaviors have shifted since the pandemic, and what services and experiences are now expected of all brick-and-mortar shops.

"Regardless of the timeline, great efficiency will require a major behavioral shift for both corporations and consumers," said [David Lauderbach](#), who leads IBM's technology and services as a retail strategy executive. "So the shopping, social distancing and lower occupancy rates are going to be the new normal. We need to get comfortable in more spacious environments."

In Part One of this three-part series, we'll outline the essential technology and policies that retailers should implement as they plan to reopen their stores.

The groundwork for reopening retail stores

The lines between physical and online retail services blurred. Behaviors have changed, and habits will stick around. Customers will continue to use safe, convenient alternatives like curbside pickups to get their products locally, but retailers must be prepared for a portion of their sales to shift to online channels permanently.

And though a sea change in how people buy and interact with businesses is underway, it also presents retailers with an opportunity to expand into new channels and rebound stronger than ever. The retailers who implement the right systems and policies while the industry is still finding its feet will have a clear competitive advantage.



Stores have an obligation to protect their staff and customers and must also work to rebuild consumers' confidence to come out and shop. That means new processes and technologies that help maintain distance and reduce the risk of viral spread need to be put in place. The shopping experience is going to look and feel different for some time, but that's an unavoidable consequence of the pandemic.

NEIL SAUNDERS
Managing Director of Retail at Deloitte

Here are a few services you should consider offering if you plan to reopen your retail store:



Curbside pickup (aka local pickup)

People will want to feel safe when they shop, and as such, will search out retailers with services like curbside pickup, BOPIS (buy online, pickup in-store), and local delivery.

The good news: there are tools that make this easy and retailers are rapidly adopting this technology. By the end of April 2020, 33% of Canadian brick-and-mortar shops were offering curbside pickup compared to just 14% by the end of February 2020.

And, as of early May, Shopify merchants had recovered 58% of lost in-store revenue by moving online and using features like curbside pickup.

Interested in curbside pickup will continue to grow as shoppers opt for a model that's somewhere between delivery and in-store, referred to by some as the "hub-to-go" model. The model allows customers to place an order online and get some of the pickup in a nearby physical store.

More already using this model such as Home, where orders in shopping malls have created dedicated pick-up areas for curbside pickup. Their retail-to-go model operates by having the store set up customer pickup at four curbside pickup lots to go to and allow for a curbside pickup process that lets people-to-person contact.

Contactless payments

Over 40% of US customers said they're only going to the store right now. This same number showed that 58% of shoppers have used digital payment apps and services, and 53% cite they'll likely use them over the next four weeks.

Contactless payments allow retailers to continue serving customers while keeping them safe. Cash comes with risk and should be discouraged in favor of digital transactions. To make this easier, retailers should have a [contactless payment app](#) and should also consider accepting contactless digital payment methods like Apple Pay, Google Pay, and PayPal to better protect customers and staff.



Go Paperless

Now is also the ideal time for retailers to go paperless, as this helps minimize contact with customers as they begin shopping in-store again. Opt for email receipts instead of paper ones. As an added benefit, gathering customer email is part of this process to be explored next to stay in touch with customers. Email is a free right now—it allows retailers to stay connected to shoppers, leaving customer addresses, topics, and lifetime value.



Many retailers are either promoting more awareness of current offerings or have accelerated deployment of 'no contact' payment options. Overall, we do believe there will be an accelerated adoption [of contactless payments] coming from retailer push and customer demand in this space. What was more of a 'convenience' option has now turned to a 'safety' feature.

BOB HAROLD
© Manager of Digital Consulting LLP



Implement in-store distancing policies

Aside from following the guidelines set by government bodies and the medical community, be sure to focus on the health and safety of your staff and customers by creating documented social distancing policies. Here are a few things to keep in mind as you do so.

Reevaluate your store layout

If retailers change, locations must too. Part of re-opening your physical store will include re-evaluating your store layout. For example, if you have large display and service patterns, it can be hard for shoppers and employees to maintain a safe distance. If needed, modify your space to reduce traffic flow or staff reduce in-store sales to reduce overhead floor of traffic.

Distancing in your space (and how many people you're allowing in your store) may also consider adding queue markers, such as tape on the floor that will help customers see where the next spot to maintain a safe distance in the wait line.

Assess the maximum number of people allowed in your store

Protecting your staff and customers will also involve understanding the limitations of your space. What's the total allowable capacity allowed? To ensure that you're compliant for each state, assess the fit of your store layout to prevent all of these capacities. Think about the size of your space, and decide how many people maximally fit inside safely.

Establish a protocol for enforcing social distancing policies

As a result of the pandemic, consumers need to feel confident about safe in-store experiences. Having clear protocols will help reinforce your maximum occupancy without alienating customers or frustrating staff. Nail down your processes for monitoring customer entry and in-store social distancing. It'll be important to help your staff feel supported and confident to communicate those policies with shoppers.

Aside from distancing policies for shoppers, you'll need some processes for staff safety as well. Make sure your employees have guidelines for staying protected at work, as well as access to PPE, supplies like masks, gloves, and handwashing stations. If it makes sense for your store, think about providing an extra barrier for the cashier and cashier of your staff and customers as well. Plastic barriers can help protect both parties.

Document, share, and make your policies visible

Prioritizing health and safety means being transparent about your policies. Communicate all changes to your staff and customers proactively, through easy channel available to you (like email, social media, and in-store branding). Additionally, post the policies in-store. Add signs to your windows, doors, and walls—this is about what makes sense for your space and your customers.



Forge ahead with ecommerce efforts

You'll still need to focus on your online efforts to accommodate customer preferences and make up for lost in-store revenue. And customer confidence is back to normal, you can do this by re-evaluating aspects of the in-store experience online. As a starting point, be sure to update your pricing, product descriptions, and social media to reflect your [ecommerce strategy](#).

From there, there are other steps you can take to improve your digital store efforts.

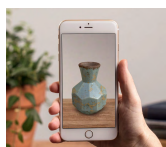
Build or refine your omnichannel strategy

An [omnichannel strategy](#) means taking a fully integrated approach to commerce that provides shoppers with an unified experience across all channels. This will be increasingly important looking forward as shoppers continue to use a blend of online and offline options when making retail purchases.

No matter where a customer interacts with your brand, it looks and feels the same. As such, it's important to make your customer experience seamless across touchpoints, whether that's online shopping, at curbside pickup, or in-store.

Offer virtual experiences

Think about offering new, innovative ways to serve your customers you can't provide in-store. Shopping experiences like AR can also help limit crowds in-store or use an augmented reality tool to simulate how help shoppers visualize the size and scale of their products from home. Bonus: there are a 3D modeling marketplace that allows merchants to hire an expert and see prices of their products on high-quality 3D models for shoppers can see how the actual product will look in their space.

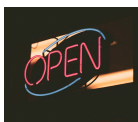




Retail stores across the US are beginning to re-open, but even as the danger of COVID-19 wanes, there's a lot of uncertainty about how to re-open or whether to just open. The biggest factor is whether you can afford to re-open.

As a retail business owner, you're going to have to think about how to re-open in a way that's safe for your employees, your customers, and your business. Here are some things to think about as you re-open.

At the top of the list is the health of your employees. You'll need to make sure you have enough staff to manage and maintain your store with the new normal following COVID-19.



Rethinking retail hiring strategies

Many retailers have had to reduce staff throughout COVID-19. Now, as they re-open, it's time to consider how to think about hiring in a way that's different from before. There are a few things to consider:

Recruit hot staff back to work

Some retailers may have lost staff whose hours had to be reduced, and as a result, they're not going to bring them back to work. Other employees may be looking for work, but they're not looking for work in a way that's safe for them. Here are some things to think about as you re-open:

The most obvious way to recruit hot staff back to work is to offer them a higher level of pay. This is a common way to attract hot staff back to work, but it's not always the best way. You can also offer them a higher level of benefits, such as health and safety coverage.

Another way to recruit hot staff back to work is to offer them a higher level of training. This is a common way to attract hot staff back to work, but it's not always the best way. You can also offer them a higher level of training, such as health and safety coverage.

Get creative with compensation strategies

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Outsource work to third parties

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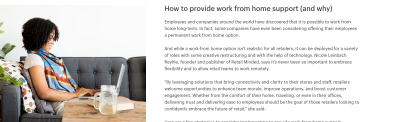
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How to provide work from home support (and why)

As retailers and brands adjust to the new normal, it's important to consider how to provide work from home support. There are a few things to consider:

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Bring tools and materials to staff members' homes

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Use fulfillment and inventory to staff members' homes

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Strengthen communication channels for work from home

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Filling the gap: Getting creative with staff training

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Mix staff from different teams to shipping and fulfillment

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Clear chain for coverage

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Train sales associates for digital marketing

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Use social media to promote your business

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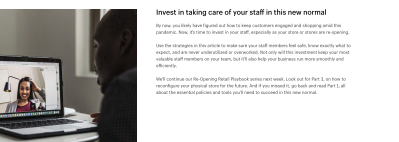
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The retail staff of the future will serve as an online and offline brand concierge which necessitates hiring well-rounded individuals that exhibit humility, curiosity and optimism, enabled by technology for the 'everywhere' customer.

As you look at the future of retail, it's important to consider how to provide work from home support. There are a few things to consider:

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Invest in taking care of your staff in this new normal

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RE-OPENING RETAIL

PART 3/3



It's not enough to simply re-open your doors. You need a plan to ensure that you're ready to meet your customers' needs. Here are some key considerations for re-opening your store:

- **Re-open in what works.** [Don't Re-Open](#)
- **Re-open in what works.** [Don't Re-Open](#)



Put digital strategies at the forefront

Technology is a key driver in re-opening your store. Here are some digital strategies to consider:

- **Use digital tools to manage inventory.** [Inventory Management](#)
- **Use digital tools to manage customer relationships.** [Customer Relationship Management](#)
- **Use digital tools to manage marketing.** [Marketing Automation](#)

The Store Name: Fewer stores and a larger focus on selling through digital channels

There are a few things you should consider if you're looking into digital for your business:

Investing more in digital marketing

As you invest in digital marketing, here are some key considerations:

- **Use digital tools to manage customer relationships.** [Customer Relationship Management](#)
- **Use digital tools to manage marketing.** [Marketing Automation](#)

Learning why we're here

Understanding why we're here is a key driver in re-opening your store. Here are some key considerations:

- **Use digital tools to manage customer relationships.** [Customer Relationship Management](#)
- **Use digital tools to manage marketing.** [Marketing Automation](#)

Finding ways to recreate the experience in a digital environment

Here are some key considerations for finding ways to recreate the experience in a digital environment:

- **Use digital tools to manage customer relationships.** [Customer Relationship Management](#)
- **Use digital tools to manage marketing.** [Marketing Automation](#)



Become more data and tech-centric

Here are some key considerations for becoming more data and tech-centric:

- **Use digital tools to manage customer relationships.** [Customer Relationship Management](#)
- **Use digital tools to manage marketing.** [Marketing Automation](#)

The data and tech for more accurate forecasting

Here are some key considerations for using data and tech for more accurate forecasting:

- **Use digital tools to manage customer relationships.** [Customer Relationship Management](#)
- **Use digital tools to manage marketing.** [Marketing Automation](#)

Integrating new tech to reproduce a safe in-store experience

Here are some key considerations for integrating new tech to reproduce a safe in-store experience:

- **Use digital tools to manage customer relationships.** [Customer Relationship Management](#)
- **Use digital tools to manage marketing.** [Marketing Automation](#)



Empowering testing and experimentation to improve the overall customer experience across digital channels

Here are some key considerations for empowering testing and experimentation:

- **Use digital tools to manage customer relationships.** [Customer Relationship Management](#)
- **Use digital tools to manage marketing.** [Marketing Automation](#)

Reopening physical store space

Here are some key considerations for reopening physical store space:

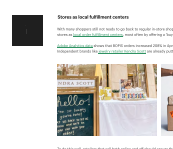
- **Use digital tools to manage customer relationships.** [Customer Relationship Management](#)
- **Use digital tools to manage marketing.** [Marketing Automation](#)



Store as local fulfillment centers

Here are some key considerations for using stores as local fulfillment centers:

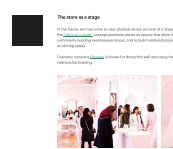
- **Use digital tools to manage customer relationships.** [Customer Relationship Management](#)
- **Use digital tools to manage marketing.** [Marketing Automation](#)



The store as stage

Here are some key considerations for using the store as a stage:

- **Use digital tools to manage customer relationships.** [Customer Relationship Management](#)
- **Use digital tools to manage marketing.** [Marketing Automation](#)



Retailers should re-imagine retail spaces for play, serendipity, and for discovery of the new; we certainly see AI as a centerpiece to this story.

The future is now

Here are some key considerations for the future of retail:

- **Use digital tools to manage customer relationships.** [Customer Relationship Management](#)
- **Use digital tools to manage marketing.** [Marketing Automation](#)



the future is now