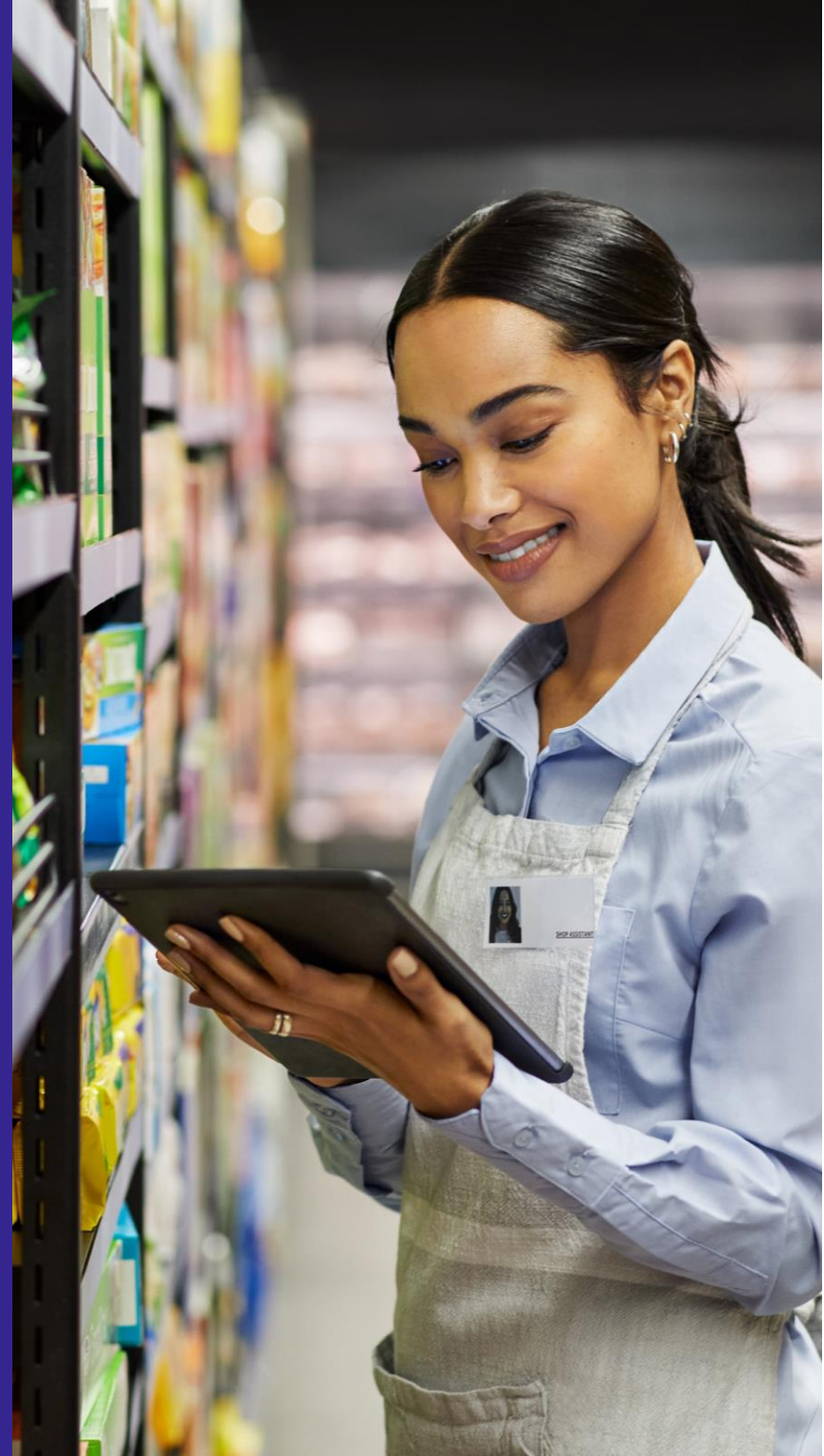


Empowering the retail frontline worker

Save time and resources by
reinvesting in your frontline
workers



Challenges in retail are widespread and frontline workers are feeling the strain

Retail businesses and their workers have continued to face a complicated landscape in the aftereffects of COVID-19. Ongoing supply chain issues, rising costs, and an uncertain economy have placed incredible pressure on retailers and after several extremely difficult years keeping businesses afloat, frontline workers are feeling the pain.

As outside pressures continue to mount, customer expectations have not subsided. In a Work Trend Index (WTI) special report, 36% of retail workers say having the right technology would help them to automate repetitive tasks and help relieve their heavy workloads.¹ Yet, many continue to operate without solutions to make work easier and more efficient—contributing to wasted time and effort.

Across teams, departments, and stores, retail workers are also looking for solutions to help them communicate and collaborate with colleagues quickly and efficiently. However more than a third of workers report they don't have the tools

needed to do their jobs effectively,¹ leading to poor communication, increased errors, and an inability to address problems in real time.

And as evidenced through trends like “The Great Resignation,” “The Great Reshuffle,” and “Quiet Quitting,” current worker sentiment across retail is low, with more than half of retail workers in non-management positions reporting that they do not feel valued as an employee,¹ according to WTI. The continued result of which can be seen through higher turnover and employee burnout—increasing costs for businesses to recruit, hire, and train new employees.

Collectively, these problems undermine the workers who shape the customer relationships and experiences retailers rely on each day. And as businesses work to balance uncertainty and resource constraints, a concerted effort to invest in the frontline workforce will be essential for retailers to continue to be able to **do more with less**.

1. Work Trend Index Special Report, “[Technology Can Help Unlock a New Future for Frontline Workers](#)”



Now, more than ever, it's important to invest in your retail workers

From cashiers to the people who stock the shelves, work in receiving, deliver orders, or answer phones in a call center, frontline workers in retail each share a common purpose, to help the customer. By investing in your frontline, you are directly investing in one of your most important assets. At Microsoft, we believe providing frontline workers with the right technology is the best way to accomplish this. Equipping frontline workers to perform at their very best will help your business to achieve more, while also directly benefiting your employees and your customers.

What steps do retailers need to take in order to empower the frontline? First, retail workers need technology that frees them up from manual, repetitive tasks to be able to focus on better serving customers. Workers also need solutions that connect them and allow for communication and collaboration so that they can communicate clearly in their fast-paced, customer-facing roles. The frontline needs tools that help to ensure they feel valued, recognized, and prepared to do their best work. And as many retailers rely on shared devices across team members, security must be a foundational priority to protect employee and customer data.

How Microsoft can help you do more with less:



Equip retail teams with tools to optimize tasks and workflows



Connect workers with modern communication and collaboration tools



Give your people tools to improve onboarding, engagement and development



Help safeguard your frontline with tools to improve security and compliance

Let's take a closer look at how Microsoft empowers frontline workers in these areas.





Equip retail teams with tools to optimize tasks and workflows

Many retail teams today still rely on analog tools and manual processes. These outdated ways of working take away precious time that could be spent on customer engagement, introduce more opportunities for errors, and reduce employee morale. Many frontline workers—well accustomed to technology in every part of their lives—are ready to take advantage of new technology solutions to simplify and streamline their workday.

By equipping store associates with tools that optimize and automate repetitive tasks and workflows, you can free up employees to spend more time engaging with shoppers in new ways, focus on high value tasks and projects, make less errors, and enhance daily productivity.

Here are a few ways that Microsoft’s solutions to optimize tasks and workflows help you do more with less:

Digitize manual tasks and streamline repetitive processes



Provide digital assistance with intelligent conversational bots



Augment business-to-customer engagements with virtual appointments



Enable mobile shift management



Streamline task management



Monitor store task progression



Obtain critical insights from the frontline



Keep the frontline in the flow of work



Integrate essential data into a frontline platform



101 hours

of time saved each year per frontline worker using Microsoft 365*

*Source: Estimates based on calculations from a Forrester Total Economic Impact™ study commissioned by Microsoft Corporation, May 2020 – Maximizing The Impact Of Firstline Workers With Microsoft 365

Value key:



Enhance productivity



Improve customer / employee experience



Save time



Reduce errors



Connect workers with modern communication and collaboration tools

In fast-paced, customer-facing roles, nothing is more important than clear communication. From serving customers at the storefront counter, to retrieving inventory from the back storeroom, workers having the right information at the right time can mean the difference between a happy recurring customer and a costly customer service complaint.

By providing your workers with modern communication and collaboration tools, you can free up time for workers to focus on better serving your customers, minimize errors due to miscommunication, and enhance productivity by ensuring that important communications from leadership reach the frontline.

Here are a few ways that Microsoft's communication and collaboration solutions help you do more with less:

Unlock a single platform for collaboration



Help workers reach the right people at the right time



Consolidate existing solutions and apps into one simplified location



Ensure important communications reach the frontline



Enable instant push-to-talk communication



Optimize the reach and impact of communications



Provide a tailored home destination for news, tools, and resources



Scale targeted communications across your organization



20%

increase in customers served by connecting workers using Microsoft Teams.*

*Source: Forrester, "Microsoft Teams Empowers Frontline Workers and Drives Business Performance for Retail Organizations"





Give your people tools to improve onboarding, engagement, and development

In today's climate of ever-evolving customer demands, the best way for retailers to deliver exceptional customer experiences is by focusing on retaining top talent. Meanwhile, retail workers have come to expect more out of their roles—better work life balance, opportunities for growth, and to feel included and engaged.

By providing workers with tools for onboarding, engagement, and development, retailers can improve retention of their best employees, support them in developing new skills and expertise, and keep them engaged in their work—all while enabling better customer experiences and a higher level of productivity.

Here are a few ways that Microsoft's tools for onboarding, engagement, and development help you do more with less:

Strengthen connections between employees



Promote continuous upskilling and development



Host forums for organization-wide engagement



Share knowledge and expertise across the organization



Provide employees a platform to reward and recognize colleagues



Facilitate two-way dialogue between leadership and the frontline



Encourage expression and participation



Simplify training and onboarding



Ensure digital tools are accessible for everyone



36%

of retail workers report considering leaving their jobs due to lack of career development*

*Source: McKinsey, "How retailers can attract and retain frontline talent amid the Great Attrition"





Help safeguard your frontline with tools to improve security and compliance

Retail organizations face ever-present concerns about security. As cybersecurity threats and attacks become increasingly frequent and sophisticated, one breach can erode customer trust, impact the organization's reputation, and lead to significant financial loss. With many retail stores relying on a host of shared devices across employees, retailers must ensure that security features are built into the foundation of their technology solutions.

By consolidating and improving security across your value chain, you can simplify the user experience for your employees with built-in security features, help protect employee and customer data by enforcing remote access policies across shared devices, and help mitigate compliance and privacy risks.

Here are a few ways that Microsoft's solutions help safeguard your business and do more with less:

Simplify the user experience for employees



Scale endpoint deployment and management



Identify and act on data risks



Help protect your workforce with a unified solution



Help secure identities and access



Manage and respond to regulatory requirements



Help protect and govern data without hindering collaboration



Easily manage frontline solutions from pilot to scaled deployment



Help defend against breaches across your entire organization



\$551K

avoided security breach costs from using Microsoft Teams over three years*

*Source: Forrester, "Microsoft Teams Empowers Frontline Workers and Drives Business Performance for Retail Organizations"



Reinvesting in your frontline is the best way to secure the future of your business

Empowering your workforce is just one part of a broader transformation taking place across retail. While many organizations are beginning to embrace digital tools and solutions, heightened customer demands and a renewed urgency to transform the shopping experience are driving the need for connectivity, adaptability, and the ability to leverage real-time insights to make informed decisions.

Microsoft Cloud for Retail is our collection of proven tools to connect your customers, your people, and your data to enable your business to achieve more—and your frontline workers are the key connection point for bringing these business insights to life in customer interactions.



Empower your workforce with frontline solutions



Equip your organization with the Microsoft Cloud for Retail



Deliver exceptional customer experiences

Learn more

Here are a few resources to learn more about how Microsoft's modern work solutions can empower your organization:

- [Microsoft Teams for Frontline Workers](#)
- [Microsoft Cloud for Retail](#)
- [Stories from our retail customers](#)

