

WHITE PAPER
ZEBRA ASSOCIATE PERFORMANCE



Ready Your Retail Store Operations to Empower a Next-Gen Workforce

Four Best Practices to Optimise
Staff and Satisfy Shoppers



Today's Challenges

Running in-store operations has become increasingly difficult and complex. Competition for talent is fierce among the shrinking labour pool, leaving many stores understaffed and overburdened by changes in consumer behaviour. This has made employee morale and engagement a more common challenge across retail stores, an issue that leads to more erratic staff attendance and increased turnover. All of this has a ripple effect on other areas of retailers' store operations, such as lower task completion rates, items out of stock on shelves, and other execution issues that come from lower employee performance.

As a result, many retailers are vulnerable to unexpected shutdowns, subpar service, and lost sales.

What's the solution?

Retailers are turning to intelligent technology to empower a next-gen workforce: streamlining task execution, connecting teams and making work easier and faster. They're also tackling staffing challenges by optimising labour forecasting and scheduling processes, creating better labour schedules that are more aligned with customer traffic, employee preferences, and other key variables.

With smarter tools, retailers are not only more attractive to the new generation of workers, but also more resilient to disruption. In this white paper, see how retailers are solving their labour challenges, uplifting associates, and in turn, creating a thriving business that satisfies both their front line and bottom line.

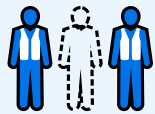


What's Impacting Your Workforce and Store Operations?

Labour Shortages Are Straining Workers

As of January 2022, 158,000 retail jobs remained unfilled¹. To top it off, turnover rates have soared from 45% in 2019 to 57.3% in 2020². With staffing numbers at a bare minimum, worker callouts can throw store hours into jeopardy. Unless store managers can instantly pool resources from other locations and communicate with regional staff, they may struggle to adequately staff stores.

Even if the store remains open, staff, service and execution still suffer. Associates complain about longer hours and lengthier to-do lists, and shoppers experience emptier shelves, slower curbside pickups and spottier service. It's little wonder then that labour shortages are contributing to chronic burnout and higher walkouts.



158,000
Retail Jobs Unfilled



57.3% Turnover
Rate



DISCOVER WAYS TO SOLVE



What's Impacting Your Workforce and Store Operations?

Workers' Expectations Are Evolving

In the last two years, workers have proven just how essential they truly are. But data reveals that **61% of global frontline employees don't feel valued**³. Dissatisfied, they cite many reasons for seeking new jobs, with work-life balance at the top of the list. Many of them are students and young parents looking for flexible work schedules. When surveyed, **73% of retail workers** stated that they want to manage their own schedules via a mobile app,⁴ so they can easily control their changing availability and obligations.

Having a voice and being heard are equally important. Associates want clearer, more transparent communication with management, as well as an easier way to collaborate and connect with their peers. Doing their daily tasks is often a source of frustration, due to a lack of training and tools and the deluge of competing priorities. They don't know which of the directives from headquarters, regional offices and in-store management to tackle and in what order.



73% of Workers
Want to Manage their Schedules
Via a Mobile App



**61% of Global
Frontline Employees**
Don't Feel Valued



DISCOVER WAYS TO SOLVE



What's Impacting Your Workforce and Store Operations?

Consumer Demands Are Reshaping Work

Almost 70% of customers prefer a mix of online and in-store shopping⁵, and e-commerce has sped up two to five times since the start of the pandemic⁶. Such a shift in consumer behaviour has upended the role of brick-and-mortar stores and their workforce. Now, store associates must juggle in-store demands, as well as picking and packing goods, handling returns, and fulfilling BOPIS and curbside orders. Given the scarcity of workers, efficiency is critical. Yet, it's deterred by poor training, gaps in communication, and slow processes. More than a third of retailers haven't equipped workers with the digital tools needed to accelerate performance⁷. The results are delays and customer dissatisfaction.



69% of Customers
Prefer Blended Shopping



E-commerce is
2-5X Faster Now



DISCOVER WAYS TO SOLVE



Meeting Today's Retail Labour Challenges

Four Ways to Foster an Engaged Workforce

1



Offer Them Flexible, Visible Schedules

With intelligent workforce management solutions, you can optimise and automate labour forecasting and scheduling, making employee schedules more flexible and readily accessible. Operations run smoother and employees don't have to work around last minute corrections to their labour schedules. And with an employee self-service solution that gives store associates access to their schedules on their mobile devices, they can swap shifts and adjust their availability with the press of a button, giving them greater control over their choice of shifts, store location, and time off. This also makes it easier to connect with store leaders and coworkers, engendering a culture of collaboration. For store managers, it's a panacea to labour shortages. They can automatically tap into resources from nearby stores and generate optimal schedules in just minutes - recouping 30% more time to spend on the sales floor.

2

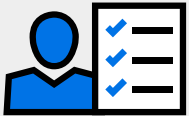


Close Communication Gaps

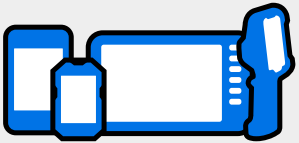
The accelerated pace of retail requires a more immediate response to changes and shifts that happen in real time in stores. With peer-to-peer communication solutions that allow for push-to talk voice messaging, text messaging, and task management, store associates can get answers to critical questions on the spot, find and reach teammates in a flash, and locate inventory and assets in seconds. Add real-time alerts to store associates' mobile devices and they can immediately react to curbside pickup orders, shifting priorities, and other quick changes at stores, helping them complete tasks with greater efficiency. This ultimately improves the customer experience, giving store associates the most up-to-date information they need to assist customers and provide excellent service.



70%
of associates
would prefer to
manage tasks via
a mobile device



72%
of workers prefer
auto-prescribed tasks



96%
of retailers have a five-year
mobile technology
deployment plan

Meeting Today's Retail Labour Challenges

Four Ways to Foster an Engaged Workforce

3 Help Them Pivot Priorities in the Moment

Staying in stride with constantly fluctuating priorities takes agility — the kind achieved only through intelligent technology. Real-time task management solutions prioritise tasks based on real-time factors and equitably distribute them based on employees' workload and expertise. Having such powerful technology also enables retailers to consolidate communication from all sources and direct workers on what to do next. Clearly defined priorities are a welcome change for 72% of workers, who prefer prescribed tasks⁷. And what's good for employees is certainly good for retailers. With automated task management, they're able to push execution rates to 95%, handle store-wide recalls in under two hours and lift sales by 25% per labour hour.

4 Make Their Jobs Easier

When it comes to verifying prices, checking inventory and answering questions without leaving the customer's side, associates agree that mobile technology is a must. Fortunately, 96% of all retailers have five-year, deployment plans for smartphones, handheld scanners, mobile point of sale devices, and mobile computers⁵. Pre-loaded videos can speed up training and a modern, intuitive UI will make low-level tasks go faster, leaving workers time to do what they enjoy best — interacting with customers.



Become a Retail Employer of Choice

Let us show you how

With so much resting upon your workforce, investing in their success paves the way for yours. Look to Zebra for responsive task management, automated scheduling and streamlined communication, along with best-in-class mobile devices. Together, we can energise your team with retail-proven solutions that augment, unify and elevate the value of every action and every team member.

[Learn more](#) about Zebra's software solutions for elevating associates.

Sources:

1. Current Employment Statistics Highlights, U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2022
2. Job Openings and Labor Turnover, U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2021
3. Technology Can Help Unlock a New Future for Frontline Workers, Work Trend Index, Microsoft, Jan. 2022
4. Retail Vision Study, Zebra Technologies, 2022
5. "The Future of Work after COVID-19," McKinsey & Company, February 18, 2021
6. Technology Can Help Unlock a New Future for Frontline Workers, Work Trend Index, Microsoft, Jan. 2022



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