

TRENDS REPORT

2026 NRF New York Innovators Showcase: Retail Tech Companies To Watch

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Summary

The 2026 National Retail Federation (NRF) New York Innovators Showcase features 50 vendors from around the world that are applying new technology tools to transform how retailers and brands sell and how consumers shop. The Showcase is curated by the NRF Innovation Advisory Committee (IAC), of which Forrester is a member. This report reveals how these technology vendors harness technologies like AI and robotics to enhance retail operations, improve supply chain efficiency, and transform consumers' shopping experiences. This is a companion document to showcase companies also featured during the NRF 2025: Retail's Big Show, NRF APAC, and NRF Europe events.

Retail Is Brutally Competitive; Retailers Need Technology To Thrive

The global retail industry is enormous: [Forrester forecasts](#) that it will reach \$28.7 trillion by 2028, 24% of which will be e-commerce sales. In the US market specifically, total retail sales in 2029 are expected to reach [\\$6.0 trillion](#), with overall online retail penetration growing to 29%.

The retail industry has continually embraced innovation, whether in new technologies, products, services, or evolving channels. Retail remains competitive and operationally complex, thanks to its low barriers to entry and heavy reliance on human creativity. Large and small retailers regularly announce both store closures and bankruptcies — but also store openings, expansion, and innovation. This balancing act forces retailers to fight two battles at once: efficient retail operations and effective customer acquisition and retention strategies. The 2026 NRF New York Innovators Showcase identifies solutions that help retailers remain competitive by tackling their pressing challenges and addressing the entire retail ecosystem, from product development to supply chain to store operations. This report provides a comprehensive analysis of the technology vendors selected for the 2026 Showcase.

The NRF Innovators Tackle Significant Pain Points For Retailers

This report analyzes the technology vendors selected for the 2026 NRF New York Innovators Showcase. Collectively, these companies represent the shift from “predictive” retail — which forecasts what might happen — to “agentic” retail — which autonomously executes actions to shape outcomes. An exhaustive review of the participating companies in the 2026 Showcase reveals a landscape where static dashboards are being replaced by autonomous agents, physical environments are being digitized with e-commerce fidelity, and the linear supply chain is bending into a circular, data-driven ecosystem.

The NRF Innovation Advisory Committee (IAC) — which comprises individuals from venture capital, incubators, retail innovation groups, and research (including Forrester) — selects the finalists based on four criteria:

- **Problem relevance.** Does the technology solve a critical problem for retailers?
- **The significance of the problem.** How significant and widespread is the problem that the technology addresses?

- **Product-market fit.** Has the solution demonstrated viability and adoption in real-world retail settings?
- **Scalability.** Is the company ready to scale and deliver solutions across the broader retail industry?

Three Themes Dominate The 2026 Innovators Showcase

The retail industry approaches 2026 at a critical juncture defined by the convergence of maturing AI technologies and intensifying economic imperatives. The era of digital experimentation has given way to a mandate for operational excellence, where technology is no longer a peripheral differentiator but the central nervous system of the retail enterprise.

The 2026 NRF New York Innovators Showcase presents a definitive cross-section of the technologies driving this transformation. The three key trends are as follows: vendors engaging agents and agentic commerce; solutions that improve physical locations including stores; and tools that drive efficiency and reduce waste in supply chains. The following sections provide detailed profiles of the companies driving these trends, categorized by their primary area of impact.

Retail Embraces The Agentic Commerce Revolution

The most profound shift evident in the 2026 cohort is the rise of agentic AI. While generative AI (genAI) dominated the discourse in previous years with its ability to create text and images, agentic AI represents the functional evolution of these models.

Retailers are moving beyond chat interfaces to deploy autonomous agents capable of reasoning, planning, and executing complex workflows across the value chain.

Forrester's early 2025 data shows that 73% of director+ retail decision-makers said their organization is adopting AI agents. In procurement, we hear about agents negotiating with suppliers. In merchandising, AI agents harmonize fragmented product data to make it intelligible for large language models (LLMs). In customer acquisition, they dynamically restructure web experiences in real time based on user intent. This transition addresses the "action gap" in retail: the disparity between the volume of data collected and the organization's capacity to act on it (see Figure 1).

- **Backstroke.** Email campaign creation continues to be largely manual, and there are still many opportunities for optimization. Backstroke's L5 Agentic Engine addresses this production bottleneck by transforming creative briefs and

performance signals into fully generated email and SMS campaigns. By leveraging a proprietary retail dataset drawn from over 12,000 brands, the platform predicts high-performing content to deliver outputs in minutes, handling copy, layout, and segmentation autonomously. Clients include Cozy Earth and Thirdlove.

- **Birdzi.** Retailers often struggle with fragmented systems: for example, different loyalty platforms, POS devices, and digital marketing solutions. Birdzi is a unified retail intelligence platform for grocers that connects transaction, loyalty, and digital engagement signals into one ecosystem. Its core engine, VISPER, predicts shopper intent to deliver personalized savings that reward and grow shopper engagement and lifetime value without adding operational burden. Clients include Coborn's and Wakefern.
- **Brandback.** Retailers face dual challenges: product invisibility in AI-driven discovery channels and the difficulty of capturing resale revenue. That's significant for brands: [Forrester's data](#) shows that in October 2025, one-third of US online adults said they had used an AI agent to find and compare products over the previous three months. Brandback addresses these via two solutions: Glara, which analyzes product appearance across AI platforms to identify visibility gaps, and Brandback Resale, which embeds circular commerce into D2C stores. Clients include Polaroid, Replay Jeans, and Sandqvist.
- **Brij.** A significant portion of CPG and durable goods purchases occur in third-party retail channels where brands receive no direct customer insights. Consumer brands therefore must [optimize their digital presence](#) across partner touchpoints. Brij bridges this gap by transforming pre- and post-purchase moments into high-conversion data capture experiences, such as digital rebates, sweepstakes, product registrations, and warranty management. The platform automatically passes first-party enriched event-level data into a brand's existing tech stack to power segmentation. Brij clients include Chobani, Heineken, and Quip.
- **Cimulate.** Two out of five US online adults have found products or services through genAI tools, per [Forrester's July 2025 Consumer Pulse Survey](#). As more shoppers use answer engines, Cimulate addresses the shift with CommerceGPT, a system that simulates millions of shopping journeys to power context-aware search and conversational commerce across onsite and answer engine channels. Using synthetic data, the solution aims to eliminate thousands of manually managed search rules. Cimulate clients include Pacsun, Tillys, and West Marine.
- **DaVinci Commerce (formerly Jivox).** Expanding into retail media networks (RMNs), a [growing element of digital marketing](#), presents exponential complexity for creative generation and compliance. Among US B2C marketing executives,

45% are prioritizing workflow and process automation as a use case for agentic AI. The DaVinci Agentic Commerce Marketing platform automates these workflows, allowing brands to select from preapproved templates or use an agentic template generator to create new, compliant assets. Each creative piece passes through an agentic compliance checker before launch, a process that the company asserts is designed to reduce creative costs by up to 76% and improve return on ad spend. It also connects data on shopper engagement with creative to sales. Clients include Diageo, Giant Eagle, and Nordstrom.

- **Envive.** As shoppers increasingly expect effortless, AI-driven experiences, static merchandising rules struggle to keep pace with real-time intent. [Over half](#) of US online adults say it's important for retailer or brand websites to offer product recommendations based on their past shopping/browsing history (52%) and/or product recommendations based on items related to the product they are looking at (54%). Envive turns a brand's first-party data into live, adaptive experiences using proprietary models trained specifically for retail behavior patterns. The platform automatically adjusts product recommendations and onsite content based on real-time signals, aiming to increase conversion and lifetime value. Envive AI clients include Spanx and Supergoop.
- **Fanfare.** Brands often run scarcity-driven product drops "blind," lacking the infrastructure to capitalize on high-intent audiences. Fanfare transforms product launches into data-rich events by providing tools to manage virtual queues and bot protection while tracking attribution. The platform ensures that launch marketing generates clean operations and actionable insights. Fanfare clients include Concepts and Levi's.
- **Harmonya.** Retailers and CPG brands face growing pressure to prepare for agentic commerce. Harmonya is an agentic solution that understands what attributes drive a product's success. This platform connects product data to consumer behavior using agents and generative AI to leverage insights from sources such as product reviews to generate product attributes. Harmonya's platform analyzes thousands of listings to surface the attributes that shoppers mention most. In turn, this insight helps decision-making across merchandising and innovation teams. Harmonya clients include Coca-Cola and Unilever.
- **Marpipe.** The strength of ad creative is often the biggest lever for ad success, yet it is frequently the least optimized. [Two out of five](#) USB2C marketing executives are prioritizing visual creative development as a use case for agentic AI. Marpipe enables brands to turn every SKU into dynamic product ads that allow them to push out more inventory. Marpipe's clients include Kate Spade, Mejuri, and Reformation.

- **Puller AI.** Data accessibility challenges frequently delay business decisions. Challenges that US B2C marketing executives cite for their organization when executing consumer personalization programs include lack of access to data within the organization (43%) and data silos within the organization (32%), per [Forrester's Q1 2025 CMO Pulse Survey](#). Puller AI deploys “AI data experts” powered by a self-maintaining semantic engine that clones the capabilities of data analysts. The platform automatically builds and validates queries to produce accurate results, aiming to reduce the burden on technical teams. Clients include Cotopaxi and Herschel Supply.
- **Reactiv.** Mobile conversion continues to lag desktop conversion — though only slightly. [Forrester's 2025 data](#) shows that 56% of US online adults who use a smartphone use it regularly to research products and services to purchase, compared with 59% who use a computer. Reactiv aims to activate more mobile shoppers by creating “App Clips” — personalized app experiences that launch instantly from an ad click or QR scan without requiring a download. This technology unlocks push notifications without an opt-in, allowing brands to recover abandoned sessions and re-engage users based on behavior. Reactiv clients include Cozy Earth and Indigo.
- **ReFiBuy.** Product data built for legacy e-commerce often does not translate cleanly into AI-driven discovery engines, leading to misclassification and lost visibility. ReFiBuy focuses on agentic commerce optimization (ACO) by automating the analysis of every SKU to flag data gaps and enrich attributes using proprietary AI models. The platform's Enrichment Queue enables high-volume updates, allowing teams to move from manual edits to scalable automated AI readiness. This capability helps brands across all of their e-commerce touchpoints, including wholesale commerce clients and marketplaces. ReFiBuy clients include beauty, pet, and electronics retailers.
- **Ruby.** Disconnected tools and rule-based systems often result in marketing inefficiencies and missed opportunities to understand cross-site behavior. In fact, [Forrester's 2025 data](#) shows that 49% of B2C marketing decision-makers say they don't have right set of customer and marketing analytics tools to produce and execute insights. Ruby offers an AI-native alternative that acts as an intelligence layer, capturing full-funnel customer journeys to understand shopping behavior across over 50,000 retailers. These insights power a reinforcement-learning engine that autonomously generates and executes marketing messages across email, SMS, and onsite modals. The solution positions itself as a way for retailers to reduce operational costs and gain actionable intelligence, eliminating manual setup for immediate ROI. Ruby clients include Arvin Goods and Impact Dog Crates.

- **Slip.** Anonymous in-store transactions often cut off the customer journey the moment that the customer completes their payment, leaving retailers with a blind spot. In fact, 56% of B2C marketing decision-makers lament that a lack of an enterprise view of master customer data is a problem. Slip transforms retail receipts into a data-rich channel by integrating with POS systems to deliver fully branded digital receipts via email, SMS, or WhatsApp or to retailer apps. This technology captures customer identity and consent at the moment of delivery, thereby enriching profiles with SKU-level data for real-time marketing activation. Clients include ALDO and JD Group.
- **SpangleAI.** Marketers often spend money on hyper-targeted ads but send shoppers to generic landing pages. SpangleAI uses agentic AI to address this disconnect by transforming static e-commerce landing pages into high-converting shopping journeys. The solution uses its proprietary ProductGPT to turn raw product data into semantic intelligence, while the Seller Agent replaces manual rules with human-like reasoning to interpret real-time user signals. The company's solutions aim to deliver adaptive one-to-one journeys that replicate a skilled salesperson's intuition. Clients include Alexander Wang and REVOLVE.
- **Spur.** Bugs in digital storefronts can lead to lost revenue, yet manual testing is often too slow to catch them. Among retail business and tech pros whose organization prioritizes improving the experience of its end customers, 45% said that adding or improving digital experiences was a key action for them. Spur ensures digital quality using agentic, vision-first browser agents that behave like real shoppers to test user flows. The platform autogenerates and runs tests across checkout and search without scripts. Clients include ALO, HelloFresh, and Living Spaces.
- **Vody.** Fragmented and inconsistent product data severely limits the effectiveness of modern search engines and AI-first experiences. To address this gap, Vody employs agentic and genAI models to transform messy catalogs into well-structured, machine-readable data layers. The company's "Search Optimized Data" offering aligns product descriptions with the language that buyers actually use. Plus, its Generative Engine Optimization (GEO) offering prepares retailers for LLM-driven discovery, ensuring AI agents can reliably retrieve, reference, and recommend products. Vody clients include Academy Sports + Outdoors and Grubhub.
- **Wholesale.** Many sellers lack the infrastructure or budget to broadly syndicate their product reviews. This situation leads to gaps in review coverage that reduce shopper confidence. Wholesale addresses this gap through an open syndication

platform and a suite of tools to collect authentic first-party reviews at scale. By increasing the reach of a brand's reviews, the platform helps retailers and suppliers improve sales performance. Clients include Blackstone Products, Lifetime Brands, and Serta Simmons.

Figure 1

NRF NYC Innovators 2026: Agentic Solutions For Digital Experiences

Company (headquarters, year founded)	Description	Sample clients
Backstroke (US, 2024)	Marketing email generation and distribution with prompts	Cozy Earth, Thirdlove
Birdzi (US, 2010)	A personalization engine that connects different grocery systems (e.g., loyalty and POS)	Coborn's, Wakefern
Brandback (Germany, 2023)	Embeds resale capabilities onto a retailer's digital experience	Polaroid, Replay Jeans, Sandqvist
Brij (US, 2021)	Pre- and post-purchase marketing engagement for consumer brands	Chobani, Heineken, Quip
Cimulate (US, 2023)	Answer engine built with personalization based on synthetic data for onsite search	Pacsun, Tillys, West Marine
DaVinci Commerce (US, 2023)	Dynamic creative production for retail media ads	Diageo, Giant Eagle, Nordstrom
Envive (US, 2023)	Onsite search and SEO agents for retailers that continuously improve with new interactions	Spanx, Supergoop
Fanfare (US, 2021)	Solution that allows brands to empower fans and avoid bots during drops and other special events	Concepts, Levi's
Harmonya (US, 2021)	Product detail enhancement for the digital shelf, including insights and attribute enrichment	Coca-Cola, Unilever
Marpipe (US, 2019)	Dynamic creative for dynamic product ads	Kate Spade, Mejuri, Reformation
Puller AI (US, 2023)	No-code data analytics tool for use across retail and brand organizations	Cotopaxi, Herschel Supply
Reactiv (Canada, 2023)	An easy mobile app platform that is closely integrated with mobile marketing campaigns	Cozy Earth, Indigo
ReFiBuy (US, 2025)	A tool that constantly monitors and improves a merchant's catalog data as LLM insights change	Beauty, pet, and electronics retailers
Ruby (US, 2020)	Lifecycle marketing platform that also offers a competitive insights dashboard	Arvin Goods, Impact Dog Crates
Slip (UK, 2022)	Smart digital receipts for post-transaction engagement	ALDO, JD Group
SpangleAI (US, 2024)	Landing pages driven by insights and personalization	Alexander Wang, REVOLVE
Spur (US, 2024)	"Agentic QA" that tests websites	ALO, HelloFresh, Living Spaces
Vody (US, 2024)	Tool that fills in messy data and makes a retailer's data "AI friendly"	Academy Sports + Outdoors, Grubhub
Wholesale (Canada, 2021)	Reviews syndication for retailers, marketplaces, and DTC	Blackstone Products, Lifetime Brands, Serta Simmons

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Analytics As A Competitive Advantage In Physical Spaces

While digital channels evolve, the physical store remains the primary venue for commerce. Innovators in this sector are digitizing the physical environment, using sensors, robotics, and voice AI to generate data comparable to e-commerce analytics. This physical intelligence enables retailers to optimize labor, inventory, and network expansion with unprecedented precision (see Figure 2).

- **Bailiwick.** Fifty-three percent of business and technology professionals in retail note that implementing and expanding in-store technology and/or improving/expanding store/employee conditions is one of their most significant areas of investment over the next year. Bailiwick, an ePlus Technology company, provides managed IT integration solutions and serves as the deployment partner for systems ranging from POS to loss prevention to AI implementation. The company combines a vast network of field technicians with a centralized project management and engineering office to handle everything from site surveys and cabling to equipment configuration. Large-scale retailers rely on this “Total Site Management” approach to modernize their physical footprint with speed and consistency.
- **Duggal Visual Solutions.** Traditional digital signage can sometimes create visual clutter rather than engagement. Duggal’s Transparent OLED technology blends dynamic digital content with physical products to create “storytelling glass.” This approach creates a hybrid retail environment where transparency and vibrant digital content merge to grab the customer’s attention. Clients include LVMH and Macy’s.
- **Ethosphere.** Retailers have historically lacked visibility into the quality of sales floor interactions. Ethosphere uses privacy-safe voice AI to analyze conversations between store associates and customers, simultaneously delivering personalized coaching and performance insights for the associate and store management. The platform captures interactions to identify selling behaviors and service gaps and provides automated feedback tailored to each associate rather than relying on mystery shoppers. Ethosphere says that retail brands use it to create a continuous loop for associate development and to improve topline sales.
- **Locantium.AI.** Retail site selection often relies on limited datasets, leading to expensive misalignments where new sites may underperform. Physical stores continue to matter greatly: 62% of US online adults say they regularly purchase products and services in retailer physical stores. Locantium.AI uses advanced

geospatial data and machine learning to optimize these planning decisions by combining global alternative data assets with proprietary predictive models. The platform identifies optimal locations and forecasts sales to support decision cycles from white-space identification to portfolio optimization. Clients include Costa Coffee and Wendy's.

- **One Door.** Disconnected processes often make it difficult to translate planograms into consistent in-store execution, leading to lost sales. Strong visual merchandising inspires customers and can lift sales: 59% of US online adults say they're likely to buy items that were not on their shopping list when they shop in-store. One Door centralizes visual merchandising through a platform that combines AI, mobile, and VR technology to streamline localized planning and real-time communication. The solution uses AI-powered compliance to help retailers ensure consistent execution across large store networks. Clients include Best Buy and Comcast.
- **PaperWeight AI.** Out-of-stocks, misplaced items, and planogram noncompliance are chronic issues for large retailers — and risk disappointing customers who expect shelves to be well stocked. PaperWeight AI digitizes the physical shelf by retrofitting it with recyclable paper-based sensors that create a “smart skin” for existing infrastructure. This pixel grid senses product presence and movement, feeding an AI engine that triggers autonomous actions like restocking alerts or theft notifications. Clients are using the solution to improve on-shelf availability and reduce shrink without biometric data capture. Clients include Sonae.
- **Pinpoynt.ai.** Accessing timely physical-world intelligence is often hindered by the need for retailers to install hardware — which can be costly, particularly across large store networks. Among data and analytics decision-makers in retail, 14% selected customer location or spatial analytics among their highest priorities for their organization. Pinpoynt.ai offers a software-only location intelligence platform that provides real-time movement and behavior data across the globe. By fusing multiple global data signals through proprietary AI models, the platform transforms raw signals into live intelligence dashboards visualizing footfall and engagement. Pinpoynt.ai was developed within the John Lewis-Waitrose accelerator, and clients include Burger King and CHAGEE.
- **Propheus.** Planning growth requires more than backward-looking reports; it demands a real-time understanding of physical dynamics. Among business and tech pros in retail, 45% say their organizations are working to improve real-time IT insights and operational efficiency to better respond to external changes and shifting market dynamics. Propheus constructs a “Digital Atlas” by fusing signals — such as mobility, demographics, weather, and local events — with a retailer's own

data. Using context-aware AI agents, the platform scores locations and simulates scenarios to guide decisions on openings and assortment. A leading coffee chain reportedly used the platform to identify white space and reduce cannibalization, resulting in a 15% revenue uplift in focus areas.

- **SYNQ Technology.** Fragmented communication tools in retail environments often slow response times and reduce accountability. SYNQ unifies legacy radio systems and digital workflows into a single platform where voice agents run directly over existing devices. The solution connects customers and store systems through intelligent voice workflows, turning calls into actionable digital tasks and IoT triggers as well as improving labor efficiency and sales. Clients include Canadian Tire and Walmart Canada.
- **UniStop Tech.** Rising labor costs and workforce shortages are driving the need for automated retail formats. Among business and tech pros in retail whose organizations are prioritizing reducing costs, 33% expect to reduce costs in staffing or workforce specifically. UniStop Tech integrates robotics into a retail operating platform to enable 24/7 unmanned operations. The solution delivers compact robotic machines that require minimal space and near-zero staffing, combining robotic picking and intelligent inventory management. One client, Stellar Lifestyle (the commercial arm of SMRT Singapore), uses the technology to deploy high-performance micro-stores and purports to reduce space requirements by 70%.
- **Voicebox.** Traditional surveys often suffer from low response rates and a lack of situational context. Across all sectors, 25% of postsale customer engagement pros say that a top challenge their team faces when interacting with customers is an inability to capture customer feedback and voice-of-the-customer (VoC) insights. Retailers must choose from a [plethora of solutions](#) that capture and analyze customer feedback. Voicebox serves as a first-party data channel that allows customers to send voice notes from any device, thereby capturing sentiment in seconds. The platform acts as an inbox for customer voice, aiming to provide higher response rates than surveys and more complete context compared to chat. Clients include Glamhive, Numeros Motors, and Sheru Classic.

Figure 2**NRF NYC Innovators 2026: Physical Store Solutions**

Company (headquarters, year founded)	Description	Sample clients
Bailiwick (US, 1995)	IT services provider to manage large-scale retailers and their hardware needs	N/A
Duggal Visual Solutions (US, 1963)	Digital signs that can be displayed on transparent displays (i.e., glass) such as the exterior of stores	LVMH, Macy's
Ethosphere (US, 2024)	Microphones that capture associate interactions to lead to coaching	N/A
Locatiun.AI (Spain, 2021)	Tool that provides insights into location selection for new stores	Costa Coffee, Wendy's
One Door (US, 2000)	User-friendly visual merchandising tool that does not use any CAD software	Best Buy, Comcast
PaperWeight AI (Portugal, 2024)	Lightweight sensors for product and shelf monitoring	Sonae
Pinpoyn.ai (UK, 2024)	A foot traffic measurement tool that eliminates sensors and cameras	Burger King, CHAGEE
Propheus (US, 2024)	Platform that synchronizes varied data sources for location insights	Leading coffee chain (unnamed)
SYNQ Technology (Canada, 2022)	Frontline task management tool with some shopper integration	Canadian Tire, Walmart Canada
UniStop Tech (Singapore, 2020)	Digitized, large-format vending machine that has robotics integrated	Stellar Lifestyle (part of SMRT Singapore)
Voicebox (US, 2024)	Tool that allows shoppers to leave feedback by voice	Glamhive, Numeros Motors, Sheru Classic

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API-First Connections Bring Agility To Supply Chain And Merchandising

Operational efficiency has transitioned from a cost-saving measure to a strategic imperative. The innovators in this section focus on unifying disparate data sources, automating complex back-office workflows, and operationalizing sustainability through circular economy platforms. The clunky connections of yesterday's hardwired integrations are replaced by API-first connections and AI-driven decisioning that brings agility, speed, and responsiveness to the tech ecosystem (see Figure 3).

- **7Learnings.** Outdated rule-based strategies often cannot keep pace with volatile demand and rising acquisition costs. 7Learnings provides a platform that uses machine learning to forecast the business impact of pricing and marketing decisions. That's good news for the 18% of data and analytics decision-makers in retail who cited pricing analytics as a high-priority analytical capability for their organization. The solution automatically determines optimal prices to drive consistent profit uplift, validated through large-scale A/B tests. Clients include Bonprix and Westwing.

- **Afresh Technologies.** Traditional center-store systems are often ill equipped to handle the rapid spoilage and fluctuating demand of fresh food. That's a double blow for grocers, many of which operate on thin margins to begin with: Fully 83% of US online adults typically buy their groceries in a physical store. Afresh builds a unified AI platform specifically for the complexities of perishable merchandise. It uses deep learning to model uncertainty and repair messy data. The solution optimizes replenishment and production planning, extending intelligence to distribution centers with its Fresh Buying solution. Clients include Albertsons and Fresh Thyme.
- **Arvist.** Manual quality checks in logistics are often slow and inconsistent, leading to fines and chargebacks. Arvist automates quality control by turning existing warehouse cameras into an always-on inspection layer that detects damage and labeling errors. The vision AI platform analyzes data instantly to flag exceptions without requiring hardware retrofits. Clients include Nestlé and Smart Warehousing.
- **Athena studio.** Data fragmentation in creative teams often causes a significant percentage of developed samples to never reach the final collection. Athena studio offers an AI-native operating system that keeps collection data in sync across files and platforms. An AI assistant proactively flags risks and manages tasks directly through chat interfaces to replace rigid PLM workflows. Several fashion brands in Europe and the US use the tool to reduce overdevelopment and shorten cycles.
- **Atronous AI.** Fragmented and unstructured data frequently delays product launches and hampers discovery. Atronous AI transforms this data into a verified product knowledge graph using computer vision and semantic enrichment. The platform extracts and validates information to create context-aware intelligence that empowers agentic commerce discovery. Several Fortune 500 retailers use the solution to accelerate product onboarding and improve search performance.
- **BetterBasket.** The volatility of grocery costs often makes manual pricing rules ineffective. BetterBasket uses AI agents to help grocers set smarter prices by monitoring competitor data, elasticity, and store performance. The platform simulates outcomes and can execute updates automatically when integrated with digital shelf labels. Clients include H Mart and Save A Lot.
- **Ekyam.** Fragmented systems and conflicting definitions often undermine AI readiness in retail organizations. Fifteen percent of AI decision-makers in retail tell us that a top barrier to AI adoption in their organization is data infrastructure, among others. Ekyam standardizes data sources through a governed semantic

layer, enforcing consistent structures across ERP, WMS, and POS. Ekyam-GPT enables conversational execution of actions, such as generating purchase orders or adjusting prices, on a unified foundation. Clients include Minted and Payless ShoeSource.

- **Gain.** Sourcing and transactional buying workflows in large retail and CPG companies are often manual processes conducted over email. Gain delivers autonomous “AI Employees” that handle procurement end to end, starting with opportunity identification and supplier negotiation. These agents integrate with ERPs and third-party data (e.g., commodity and trade data) to analyze spend and manage supplier negotiations, aiming to unlock value across the long tail of spend. Retailers using the platform reportedly operate with greater speed than manual teams and achieve meaningful cost reductions.
- **HyperFinity.** Retailers often struggle to turn massive amounts of data into profitable action. HyperFinity acts as an intelligence layer that combines a configurable AI engine with human retail expertise to power marketing automation and ERP tools. The platform identifies the customers and offers that drive value, moving beyond passive dashboards to precise actions. Clients include JD Sports and Morrisons.
- **Lumi AI.** Despite heavy investment in dashboards, teams often face delays in accessing insights buried in ERPs and data warehouses. In fact, 14% of B2C marketing decision-makers at retail and wholesale orgs who do not rate their marketing org’s use of measurement and analytics as optimized noted that having too many unconnected data sources was a top challenge preventing their organization from making use of measurements and analytics. Lumi AI offers a conversational analytics platform that allows users to ask plain-language questions to uncover opportunities such as inventory risks or sales drivers. By combining enterprise-grade security with agentic workflows, the solution aims to accelerate decision-making for midsize to large brands and Fortune 10 retailers, turning raw data into actionable insights. Clients include Chalhoub Group, Growmark, and Kroger.
- **McKinsey.** McKinsey believes that AI solutions can fail to account for the human element of merchandising. Periscope by McKinsey addresses this issue by combining retail expertise with agentic AI to help organizations transition from repetitive tasks to strategic value creation. By applying agents at critical steps in the merchant journey, the solution automates workflows and provides unified data views. The platform aims to free up merchant time and drive better decisions in pricing and inventory, ultimately lifting revenue.

- **MotionMiners.** ERP and WMS systems often fail to capture the nuances of manual labor in retail logistics. [Fifty-three percent](#) of enterprise application software decision-makers at retail and wholesale companies said that functionality that accelerates automation to improve productivity and operational performance targets is important to their organization over the next 12 months. MotionMiners uses mobile sensors and indoor localization to unlock insights into these manual processes, providing objective data on workflows and asset utilization. The technology aims to deliver cost savings through improved workflows without the guesswork of traditional time studies. Retailers use the solution to optimize operations in diverse logistics environments. Clients include logistics service providers DHL and Hermes.
- **New Black.** Disconnected legacy systems often prevent brands from delivering seamless omnichannel experiences. According to [Forrester's 2025 data](#), retail business and tech pros note that the greatest challenges for their organization to deliver on their IT priorities include challenges when integrating new technologies with existing systems (29%) and struggles with legacy system issues and technical debt (23%). New Black offers EVA, a contextual commerce platform that joins POS, inventory, and loyalty into a single cloud-native solution. This “central nervous system” allows store teams to sell from any location via mobile devices and supports ship-from-store capabilities. Clients include Dyson, G-STAR, and Rituals.
- **NXN Labs.** Traditional photo shoots are often costly and logistically complex. Among US B2C marketing executives (across all sectors) who anticipate their AI investment to change in the next year, [62%](#) say they already use AI for content creation. NXN Labs offers a generative AI studio that builds custom, hyper-realistic models trained on a brand’s specific DNA to create an “Atelier” for imagery generation. This technology allows teams to produce high-fidelity campaign assets without physical sets or models. Several fashion retailers use the solution to scale content production while preserving their unique visual identity and accelerating time to market.
- **Pipe17.** Launching new commerce channels often requires months of development due to backend bottlenecks. Pipe17 unifies orders, inventory, and fulfillment via an AI-native platform that combines managed connectivity with orchestration. “Pippen,” the platform’s AI assistant, allows nontechnical operators to configure workflows using natural language, reducing dependence on developers. Customers include Allbirds and Radial.
- **Refabric.** Fashion professionals have historically faced long ideation and production cycles. Refabric integrates brand DNA with AI to redefine the value chain, enabling the rapid creation of 2D renders and realistic photoshoots. The

platform analyzes runway datasets to inform design, while generative tools allow for instant visualization of collections. Brands use the solution to significantly reduce visual production costs and design workflow time. Clients include JD Sports, Defacto, and LVMH.

- **ShopSight.** Market research and new product development can be complicated and expensive. ShopSight transforms real-time shopper feedback into actionable foresight, helping brands validate what wins before products reach the market. ShopSight is a trend-focused community that surfaces emerging demand signals in real time. Brands use this insight to align production with actual consumer desire, hoping to close the gap between trend identification and product launch. Clients include Bikini Flavors, Dalton Union Brewery, and Sinkology.
- **Stylumia.** Relying on supply-driven data often leads to missed trends and inventory misalignment. Stylumia shifts retailers to a demand-driven mindset with Orbix, a platform that analyzes consumer interest signals. Using a proprietary Demand Sensing engine, specialized agents identify rising trends and white-space opportunities. Clients use the platform to detect trends in advance and, the company asserts, to reduce markdowns by up to 42%, which minimizes lost revenue. Clients include Amazon, H&M, and New Balance.
- **SuperCircle.** Managing textile end-of-life is becoming critical due to regulations and growing waste volume. Not surprisingly, 49% of business and tech professionals in retail who indicated that improving environmental sustainability is a priority for their organization are improving water, waste, e-waste, and hazardous materials management as a key action that their organization is taking to accomplish the priority. SuperCircle provides the infrastructure to capture, sort, and route post-consumer textiles and excess inventory to profitable pathways like recycling or resale. The platform uses an AI-powered sortation engine to create digital twins for waste items, powering circularity programs. Clients include J.Crew and Reformation, which use the system to turn waste into a revenue generator and support trade-in programs.
- **Trendier AI.** In the fast-moving beauty market, consumer behavior often shifts at a higher speed than traditional research can track. To keep up, 32% of retail business and tech professionals who noted that accelerating time to market in response to external changes is a priority for their org told us that extending customer and market research capabilities were key actions their organizations were taking to do so. Trendier AI analyzes product signals from over 30 global marketplaces to discover fast-growing categories and benchmark pricing. The platform consolidates data using LLM technology to provide a view of global demand. Clients include Amazon and Boots.

Figure 3

NRF NYC Innovators 2026: Product Creation, Merchandising, Supply Chain, Other Solutions

Company (headquarters, year founded)	Description	Sample clients
7Learnings (Germany, 2019)	Dynamic pricing engine to improve profitability	Bonprix, Westwing
Afresh Technologies (US, 2017)	Merchandise planning system built specifically for perishable inventory	Albertsons, Fresh Thyme
Arvist (US, 2022)	Camera vision inspection stations for warehouses that enable “quality control in a box”	Nestlé, Smart Warehousing
Athena studio (Luxembourg, 2023)	Collaboration tool with proactive alerts for fashion product, design, and merchandising teams	Fashion brands across Europe and the US
Atronous AI (US, 2023)	Data transformation engine that enables various product data sets to be legible to AI answer engines	Fortune 500 retailers and leading brands
BetterBasket (US, 2023)	Grocery pricing engine that takes local competitive data into account	H Mart, Save A Lot
Ekyam (US, 2024)	Middleware that integrates across retail systems to make firms “AI ready”	Minted, Payless ShoeSource
Gain (Israel, 2024)	“AI employees” for procurement functions	Leading international retailers and CPGs
HyperFinity (UK, 2019)	An integrated retail planning, marketing, and retail media solution	JD Sports, Morrisons
Lumi AI (Canada, 2023)	Conversational platform for insights on supply chain, warehouse, and sales operations	Chalhoub Group, Growmark, and Kroger
McKinsey (US, 1926)	Solutions to improve pricing and inventory allocation	N/A
MotionMiners (Germany, 2017)	IoT tools to monitor physical processes for the purpose of reducing inefficiencies	DHL, Hermes
New Black (Netherlands, 2015)	A unified cross-channel and cross-device commerce platform	Dyson, G-STAR, Rituals
NXN Labs (US, Korea, 2023)	Generative AI tools for photo shoots and product imagery	Leading brands in US, Europe, Korea, Japan
Pipe17 (US, 2019)	OMS that enables brands to easily sell through new online channels	Allbirds, Radial
Refabric (US, 2023)	Generative AI tool that enables designers to create new designs without advanced software	JD Sports, Defacto, LVMH
ShopSight (US, 2024)	User-generated product ideas (often in fashion) that can be shared socially and voted upon	Bikini Flavors, Dalton Union Brewery, Sinkology
Stylumia (India, 2015)	Intelligence engine to better predict fashion trends	Amazon, H&M, New Balance
SuperCircle (US, 2022)	Textile trade-in and end-of-life solutions with analytics and reporting	J.Crew, Reformation
Trendier AI (Korea, 2024)	Trend identification tool in the beauty space that tracks product signals from global marketplaces	Amazon, Boots

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