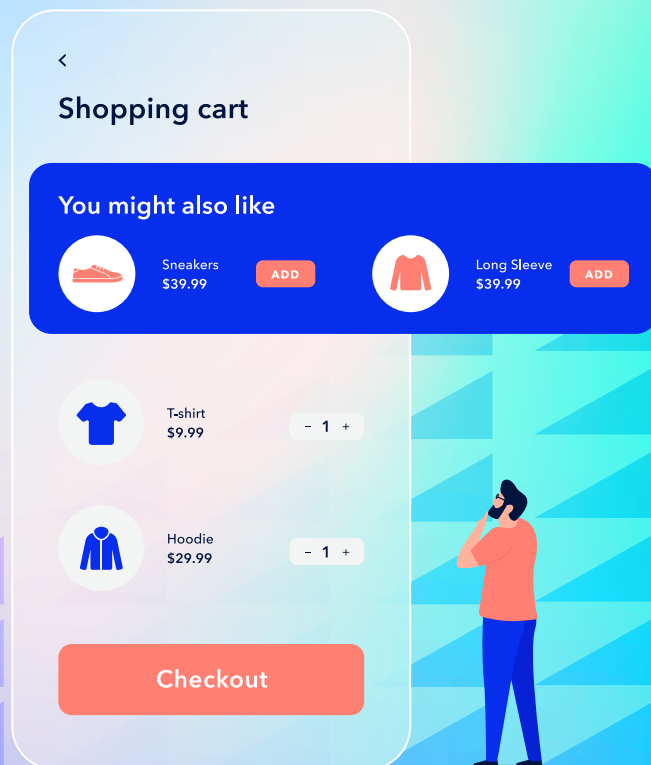


# Future Customer Journeys

in Retail and eCommerce



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# A Foreword from Our Producer

As we continue to define 'digital transformation' in retail, understanding, improving, and optimizing the customer journey is paramount for retailers' future success. This report, based on our Q4 2024 survey of retail leaders, offers a comprehensive look at the current state and future trajectory of the digital experiences retailers provide.

Our findings reveal both progress and challenges in creating seamless omnichannel journeys; leveraging AI for personalization and other use cases; and balancing security with exceptional customer experiences. While many retailers are embracing advanced technologies, there's still significant room for improvement in areas like data utilization and post-purchase experiences.

At eTail, we're committed to empowering you to step up, level up, and keep up with these evolving trends. This report serves as an inside look for retailer leaders—helping them to build stronger customer connections, drive engagement, and boost revenue in an increasingly competitive landscape.

Let's continue to shape the future of retail together, fostering innovation and excellence in our industry.



*Kristin Schoenstein*

Chief of Staff  
**eTail**

# Executive Summary

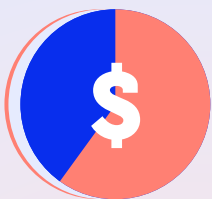
This report explores how effectively retail and eCommerce organizations are enhancing the customer journey to drive growth and customer loyalty. Drawing insights from a survey of industry leaders and presenting direct quotes from discussions at eTail Boston 2024, the report highlights key trends driving the future of the retail and eCommerce customer experience.

Some of the most prominent trends explored in the report include personalization through AI and data analytics, seamless integration of physical and digital experiences, and the importance of storytelling throughout the customer journey.

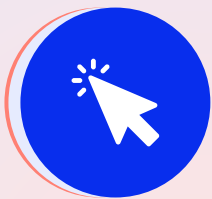
The report also includes a notable case study outlining Garnet Hill’s use of storytelling and AI-powered personalization to drive meaningful customer shopping experiences. It ends with an analysis of what retail and eCommerce brands plan to do in the next 12 months to enhance customer journeys moving forward.

# About the Respondents

The eTail Insights research team surveyed 100 retail and eCommerce leaders to generate the results featured in this report.



Most of the companies represented in the report (60%) have \$500 million to \$10 billion or more in annual revenue.



All the companies represented in the report sell to consumers online.

The respondents are senior leaders in:



20%  
Marketing



18%  
Customer Experience



16%  
Customer Analytics



16%  
D2C



15%  
eCommerce



15%  
IT

# Key Insights

Among the respondents:

**55%**

are somewhat effective in creating positive omnichannel pre-purchase customer journeys.

**51%**

rate their digital customer journey as "good" or ahead of peers.

**64%**

say their teams are somewhat active in improving the digital customer journey.

**65%**

are somewhat effective in creating positive omnichannel post-purchase customer journeys.

**71%**

are somewhat satisfied with ability to leverage customer data.

**76%**

offer returns to owned storefronts.

**49%**

offer drop-off kiosks or lockers.

**76%**

use AI for personalized product recommendations across channels.





# Personalization: The Key to Profitable Post-purchase Experiences

Retailers need to offer friendly, convenient post-purchase experiences in order to convert new customers and foster loyal relationships.

Unfortunately, bad actors are taking advantage of these lenient offerings to commit fraud, causing immense financial pain for brands. And, fraud frequency is only increasing. In fact, 52% of shoppers admit to engaging in fraudulent returns at least once, up from 36% just last year.

How do brands offer an exceptional experience without increasing their risk of fraud? **Personalization.**

With **Narvar's Intelligent Retail Insights Service (IRIS)**, today's brands can now personalize the journey for every customer, providing best-in-class experiences for high-trust customers and limiting the fraud risk from bad actors.

## KEY BENEFITS OF IRIS INCLUDE:

- **Hyper-personalization:** Boosts customer loyalty and lifetime value through tailored experiences.
- **Dynamic fraud detection:** Identifies high-risk behaviors in real time, adapting to emerging patterns.
- **Operational efficiency:** Predictive insights optimize operations for scalable profitability.

**Narvar Assist**, for example, is the world's first delivery claims fraud prevention software, built on IRIS. Assist enables retailers to process claims and automatically fight fraud related to: missing items, items not delivered, wrong item delivered, delivery damage, and more.

## ASSIST HAS HELPED RETAILERS ACHIEVE:

- **Fewer high-risk fraud payouts**—**up to 25%** reduction in appeasement payouts.
- **Fewer support conversations**—**up to 80%** reduction of claim-related inquiries.
- **Automated and streamlined delivery claim management**—deflecting **more than 30%** of ineligible claims.



Want to learn more? Visit [www.narvar.com](https://www.narvar.com) for more details.



## INTELLIGENT RETAIL INSIGHTS SERVICE (IRIS)

Narvar's IRIS (Intelligent Retail Insights Service) is the industry's first and only retail intelligence solution, transforming more than 42 billion consumer interactions annually into insights.

By leveraging predictive intelligence with unmatched precision and agility, IRIS enables retailers to anticipate consumer behavior, optimize operations, and create hyper-personalized experiences that drive loyalty and sustainable revenue growth.

With IRIS, Narvar is redefining the boundaries of post-purchase while paving the way for the future of intelligent retail and omni-experiences.

# Creating a Positive Customer Journey Today

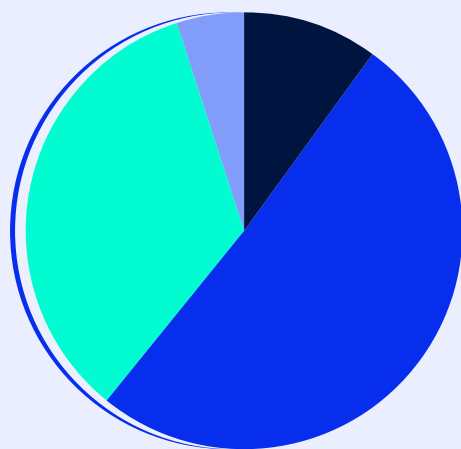
The digital customer journey includes everything a customer experiences with a brand online—from when they first learn about it, to making a purchase, and every touchpoint after, including marketing emails, ads, returns, tracking order statuses, and more. The digital customer journey has become a critical aspect of retail and eCommerce success in today's highly competitive market. As companies strive to create seamless, personalized experiences across all touchpoints, understanding the current state of digital customer journeys is essential for identifying areas of improvement and future opportunities.

Most retailers (51%) rate their digital customer journey as "good," positioning themselves somewhat ahead of their peers.

This suggests that many companies are making progress in enhancing their online customer experiences, from initial brand discovery to post-purchase interactions. However, a significant portion of retailers (34%) consider their digital customer journey to be merely at parity with their peers, while 5% acknowledge being somewhat behind.

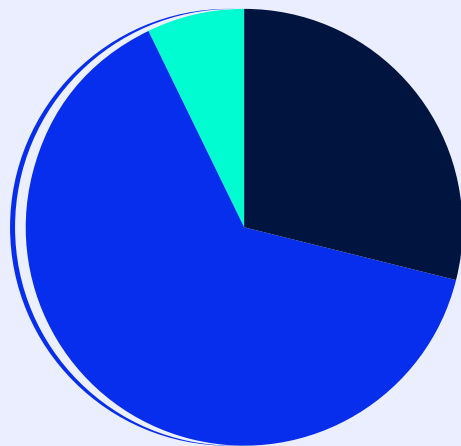
This distribution indicates that there is still considerable room for improvement across the industry.

How would you rate the quality of the digital customer journey you provide?



- **10%** Excellent—greatly ahead of our peers.
- **51%** Good—somewhat ahead of our peers.
- **34%** Neutral—at parity with our peers.
- **5%** Needs improvement—somewhat behind our peers.

How active is your team in improving the digital customer journey you provide?

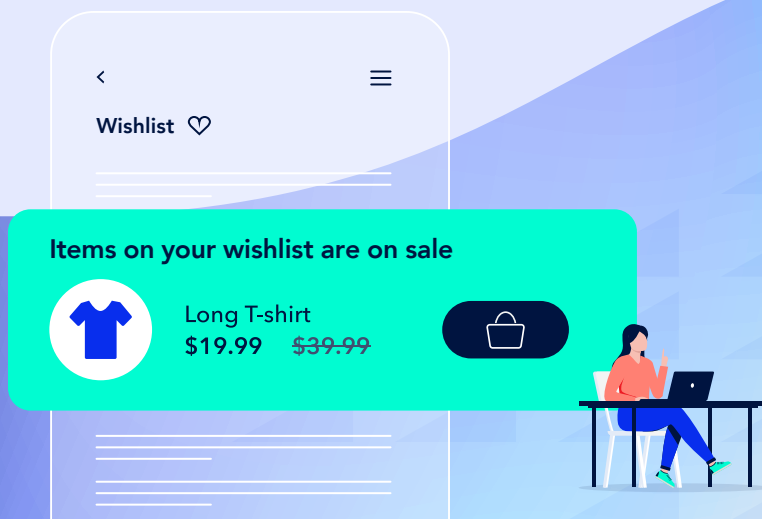


- **29%** We are highly active in improving it.
- **64%** We are somewhat active in improving it.
- **7%** We are not active in improving it at this time.

While retailers recognize the importance of the digital customer journey, only 29% claim their teams are highly active in improving it.

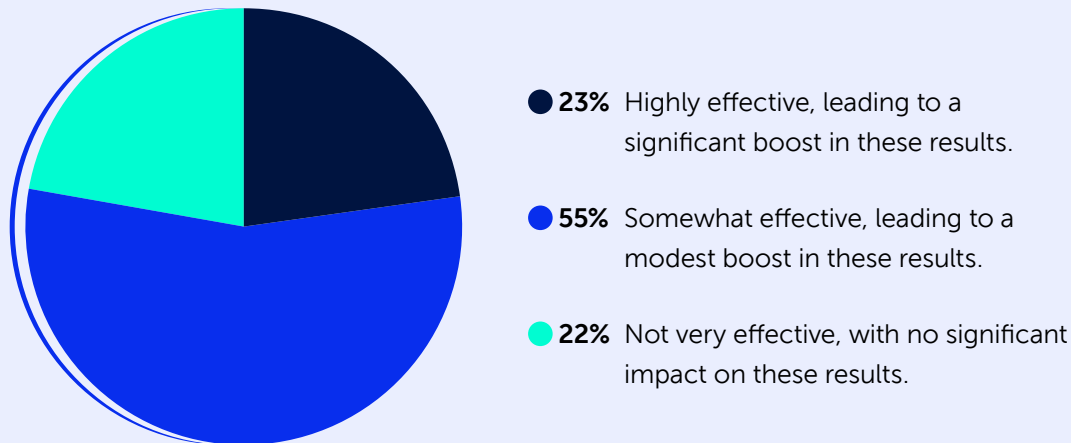
The majority (64%) report being only somewhat active in this area.

This suggests that many retailers may be struggling to allocate resources or prioritize digital journey improvements effectively. It could also indicate a need for more education and training on the potential impact of enhanced digital experiences on customer satisfaction and loyalty, or a realignment of internal resources so that relevant parts of the business can contribute. As noted, all of the respondents to the study occupy roles that are relevant to the creation of digital customer journeys.





How effective is your organization at creating positive omnichannel pre-purchase buying journeys that directly contribute to increased customer spending and repeat purchases? In this context, a positive omnichannel buying journey can be defined as a seamless, consistent, and personalized experience for customers across all touchpoints.



When it comes to creating positive omnichannel pre-purchase buying journeys, most retailers (55%) rate their organization's ability as only somewhat effective, with 22% considering themselves not very effective.

This reveals a significant challenge in providing seamless, consistent, and personalized experiences across all touchpoints. The difficulty in achieving effective omnichannel experiences may stem from technological limitations, data silos, or a lack of cross-departmental collaboration within organizations.

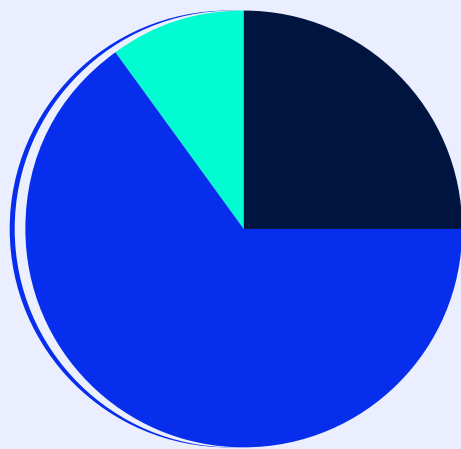
Based on conversations with the respondents who say they are not very effective at creating positive omnichannel pre-purchase buying journeys, one of the most common and noteworthy improvements they plan to make is focusing more on personalization and delivering "consistent experiences across all channels," as one respondent puts it.

Retailers recognize the importance of their ability to use customer data to improve personalization and ensure that customers receive consistent product information and availability regardless of the platform they are using.

Another significant improvement will be the implementation of features that enhance convenience, such as allowing customers to reserve products online and try them in-store. For example, one respondent says their organization will focus on "making it easier for customers to find products, irrespective of the platform."

Finally, retailers aim to simplify the buying process across channels and provide support throughout the pre-purchase process. They want to ensure that staff are well-prepared to meet the individual needs of customers and that customers have adequate self-service tools.

How effective is your organization at creating omnichannel post-purchase journeys that lead to higher customer retention rates and increased lifetime value? In this context, the post-purchase experience refers to product delivery, tracking, troubleshooting, and returns.



- **25%** Highly effective, leading to a significant boost in these results.
- **65%** Somewhat effective, leading to a modest boost in these results.
- **10%** Not very effective, with no significant impact on these results.

The situation is similar for post-purchase journeys, with 65% of respondents rating their organization's ability as somewhat effective and 10% as not very effective.

This suggests that retailers are struggling to maintain a high-quality customer experience after the sale, which is crucial for increasing customer retention rates and lifetime value.

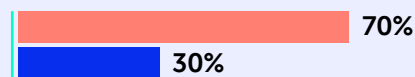
Among those who are not effective at creating positive omnichannel post-purchase experiences, 70% find offering a simple and seamless returns process very challenging.

Managing returns in an omnichannel environment is complex. Customers may have different preferences for how to return products, and they are often wary of fees, long wait times for reimbursements, or up-front costs, such as paying to ship items back or having to drive to a location to drop them off. All these factors have a potential impact on customer satisfaction.

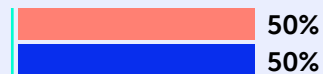
You indicated that your organization is not effective at creating positive omnichannel post-purchase experiences. How significant are the following challenges in terms of their impact on customer retention and repeat purchases?

- This is very challenging.
- This is somewhat challenging.

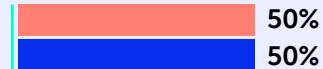
Offering a simple and seamless returns process



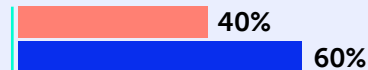
Offering a reliable range of fulfillment options with different delivery speeds



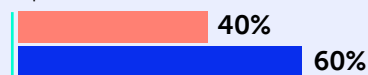
Sending timely, multi-channel messages to customers about order status



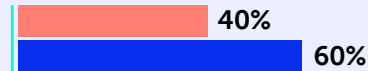
Setting clear delivery expectations (ex., accurate time estimates)



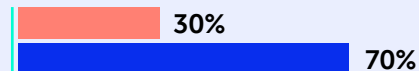
Delivering engaging and intelligent order tracking experiences



Personalizing the post-purchase experience



Offering proactive customer support through multiple channels



Offering customers a choice on how to return the product.



“

“We want to meet customers where they are. Whether they are shopping online or in-store, we value their choice and aim to provide a tailored experience that fulfills their needs. Our ultimate goal is to create an exceptional customer experience that aligns with their preferences and ensures seamless shopping.”

Sandy Gilsenan, Chief Retail and Customer Experience Officer, [Warby Parker](#)

From their Fireside Chat:

“The Evolving Customer Experience: How Brands Can Use an Omnichannel Strategy to Meet Shoppers Where They Are”  
[eTail Boston 2024](#)

Additionally, 80% of these respondents consider offering customers a choice on how to return products somewhat challenging, while 70% face similar difficulties in providing proactive customer support through multiple channels.

These challenges underscore the need for retailers to invest in flexible, integrated systems that can handle diverse return options and support channels seamlessly. Addressing these post-purchase pain points could significantly enhance customer loyalty and encourage repeat purchases.

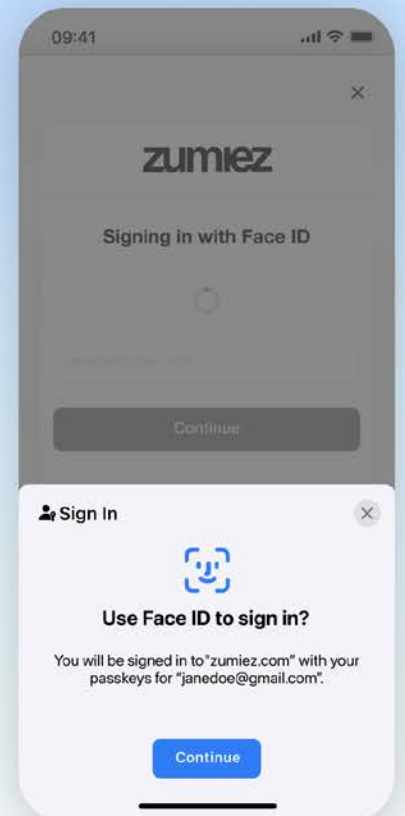
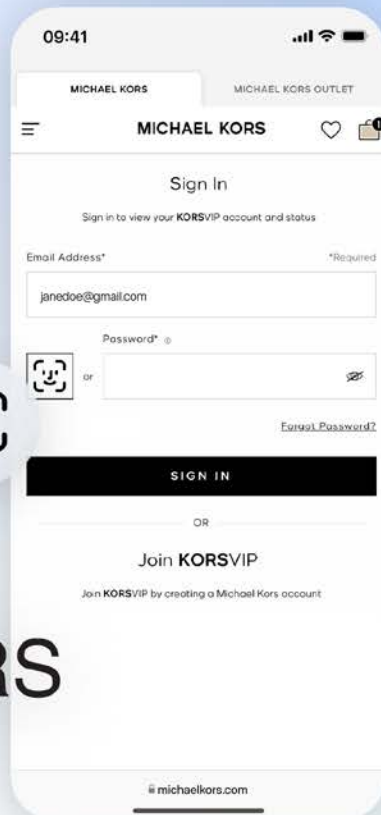


# How MichaelKors.com and Zumiez.com increased customer identification?

By integrating biometrics and passkey authentication and reducing the reliance on passwords, MichaelKors.com and Zumiez.com simplified the sign up, sign in and checkout processes. This seamless, secure solution encourages users to log in earlier, stay logged in, and complete their purchases effortlessly, building trust, loyalty, and driving higher conversion rates, leading to higher conversion rates across mobile web, web, and native app.

VISIT OWNID.COM

**zumiez**  
**MICHAEL KORS**



# Prioritizing Advanced Personalization and Seamless Omnichannel Experiences

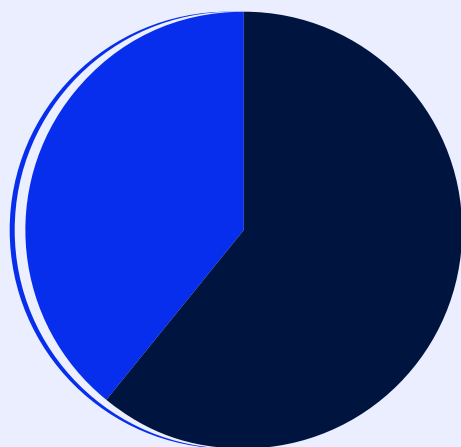
Personalization and engagement have become crucial elements in shaping the digital customer journey for retail and eCommerce companies. As businesses strive to create more tailored experiences, they are leveraging various technologies and strategies to enhance customer interactions and drive sales.

Most respondents (61%) have already implemented personalized messaging in their customer journey, utilizing unique content based on demographics, buying

history, and VIP status. This high adoption rate indicates that retailers recognize the importance of tailoring their communication to individual customers.

By providing personalized content, companies can create more meaningful connections with their audience, potentially increasing engagement and customer loyalty.

Have you implemented personalized messaging in your customer journey (e.g., unique content by demographics, buying history, VIP status, etc.)?



● 61% Yes

● 39% No, but we plan to do so.

Based on your customer feedback and/or analytics, what are the three most effective touchpoints in your digital buying journey, which directly boost conversion rates and average order value?

Personalized product recommendations increasing cross-sell opportunities



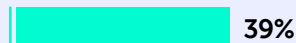
Advanced personalization driving higher engagement and sales



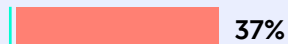
Seamless omnichannel experience enhancing customer loyalty



Efficient product search and intuitive site navigation leading to greater discovery



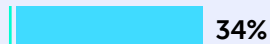
Fast shipping options encouraging immediate purchases



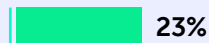
Streamlined authentication process reducing checkout abandonment



Real-time inventory management ensuring product availability



Automated processes creating a frictionless buying experience



Nearly half of the respondents consider personalized product recommendations (47%), advanced personalization (43%), and seamless omnichannel experiences (42%) among their three most effective touchpoints in their digital buying journey. These strategies directly boost conversion rates and average order value, highlighting the significant impact of personalization on business outcomes.

By focusing on these areas, retailers can create more compelling shopping experiences that resonate with customers and drive sales.

How satisfied are you with your ability to leverage customer data to increase engagement, personalization, and ultimately, revenue per customer?

Very satisfied (significantly impacts revenue per customer)



Somewhat satisfied (moderately impacts revenue per customer)



Not very satisfied (minimal impact on revenue per customer)



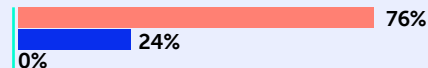
Despite the widespread implementation of personalization strategies, most respondents (71%) are only somewhat satisfied with their ability to leverage customer data to increase engagement, personalization, and revenue per customer.



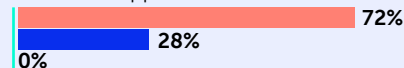
In which of the following ways does your organization currently use artificial intelligence to enhance omnichannel customer engagement and revenue, and in which ways will you use it in the next 12 months?

- We currently use AI for this.
- We don't currently use AI for this but plan to do so in the next 12 months.
- We don't currently use AI for this and have no plans to do so in the next 12 months.

Personalized product recommendations across channels



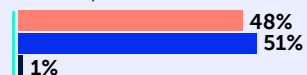
Chatbots and virtual assistants for customer support



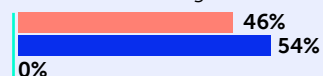
Sentiment analysis of customer feedback



Automated marketing campaign and content personalization



Predictive inventory management and demand forecasting



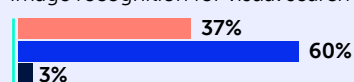
Augmented reality (AR) for virtual try-ons or product visualization



Dynamic pricing optimization



Image recognition for visual search capabilities



“

For us, the key focus was on mapping the entire customer journey, identifying specific touchpoints, and aligning our efforts to deliver value through digital channels. Our goal was to seamlessly bridge the gap between the in-store and digital experiences, ensuring a smooth and hassle-free journey for our customers. By doing so, we aimed to relieve them of any mental burdens and provide them with a truly exceptional experience.”

Jatin Pahuja, Group VP, [Albertsons Companies](#)

From their Fireside Chat:

“Revolutionizing Retail: From Zero Digital Presence to Unleashing Omni-Channel Customer Experiences”  
[eTail Boston 2024](#)

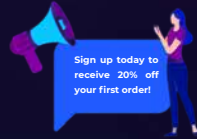
This suggests that while companies recognize the importance of data-driven personalization, they may be struggling to fully utilize the information at their disposal. There is still room for improvement in translating customer data into actionable insights that drive meaningful results.

The majority of respondents report that their companies are currently using artificial intelligence (AI) for personalized product recommendations across channels (76%) and chatbots and virtual assistants for customer support (72%). This widespread adoption of AI technologies demonstrates the retail industry's commitment to leveraging advanced tools to enhance the customer experience.

AI-powered recommendations can help customers discover relevant products more easily, while chatbots and virtual assistants can provide quick and efficient support, improving overall customer satisfaction.

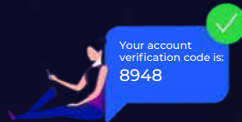
# Digital trust. Delivered globally.

Full customer lifecycle engagement with built-in digital identity verification and fraud protection.



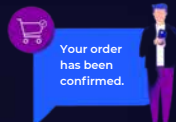
## Awareness

**Campaign management**  
collects user consent  
and delivers personalized  
campaigns and promotions.



## Identity verification

**Mobile identity data**  
confirms user is who they say they are.



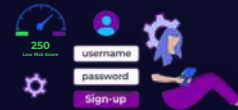
## Point of sale

**Order placement**  
enables browsing and  
purchasing of products  
directly within messaging apps.



## Customer support

**Chatbot and live agents**  
provide real-time 24/7/365  
customer support.



## Sign-up

**Onboarding protection**  
detects potential new account fraud.



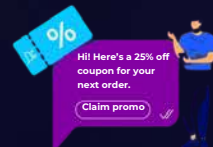
## Onboarding campaign

**Marketing automation platform**  
delivers welcome email to new user.



## Purchase confirmation

**Automated messaging**  
confirms order and delivers alerts,  
reminders & notifications.



## Growth & retention

**Omnichannel orchestration**  
re-engages users to drive  
customer lifetime value.

# Securing Data to Improve the Pre- and Post-Purchase Journeys

Customer identification and security have become critical components in shaping the digital retail landscape, influencing personalization, conversion rates, and the overall customer experience. As retailers strive to balance seamless interactions with robust security measures, early user identification and authentication emerge as key factors in delivering tailored, secure shopping experiences.

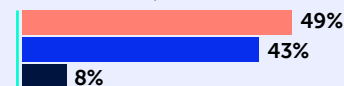
Nearly half of the respondents (49%) report that their ability to identify users early in their digital journey significantly impacts their capacity to personalize experiences. This early identification, occurring upon first arrival or after only one or two actions on the website, proves to be a crucial factor in enabling retailers to execute personalized strategies effectively.

Moreover, 57% of respondents note that early identification moderately impacts their ability to curate appropriate content for customers, highlighting the importance of timely user recognition in delivering relevant, engaging experiences.

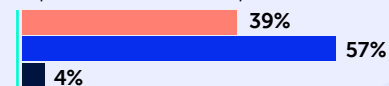
What impact does identifying users early in their digital journey—for example, upon first arriving, or after only one or two actions on your website—have on your ability to do each of the following?

- Significant impact: Early identification is a key factor in enabling us to execute in this area.
- Moderate impact: Early identification is important in this area, but there are other significant factors.
- Minimal impact: Early identification has some influence in this area, but it is not a primary driver.

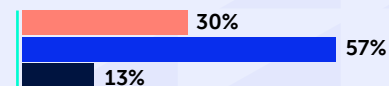
## Personalize experiences



## Improve conversion to purchase



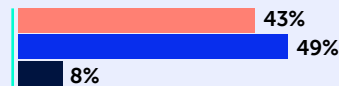
## Curate content



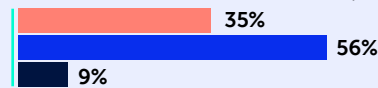
### What impact does customer identification through authentication have on your ability to do each of the following?

- Significant impact: Authentication is a key factor in enabling us to execute in this area.
- Moderate impact: Authentication is important in this area, but there are other significant factors.
- Minimal impact: Authentication has some influence in this area, but it is not a primary driver.

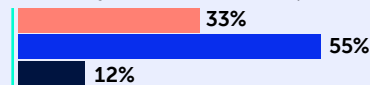
#### Increase conversion to purchase



#### Create a differentiated customer experience



#### Effectively service customers pre- and post-sale



A significant portion of respondents (43%) indicate that customer identification through authentication has a substantial impact on increasing conversion to purchase rates. This finding underscores the role of authentication as a key factor in enabling retailers to execute strategies that drive sales.

Additionally, more than one-third of respondents (35%) report that authentication significantly influences their ability to create differentiated customer experiences, suggesting that verified user identities allow for more tailored and unique interactions throughout the customer journey.

### Which of the following customer-friendly return options do you offer?

#### Returns to your owned storefronts



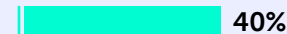
#### Drop-off kiosk or locker at a convenient location (e.g., self service)



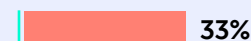
#### Return by mail (e.g., USPS, UPS, FedEx)



#### Drop-off at a convenient, attended location (e.g., Kohl's, Walgreens, etc.)



#### Home pick-up (e.g., DoorDash)



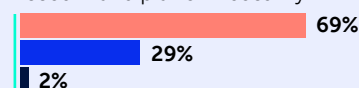
When it comes to returns, most respondents (76%) offer the option to return items to their owned storefronts, demonstrating a commitment to providing customer-friendly return options. Nearly half (49%) also offer drop-off kiosks or lockers at convenient locations via self-service, indicating a trend towards flexible, omnichannel return solutions.

These findings suggest that retailers are recognizing the importance of seamless return processes in enhancing overall customer satisfaction and loyalty. They are also successfully using customer data to identify opportunities to offer flexible return options to specific customers.

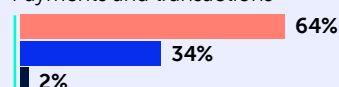
With digital identities becoming more valuable and vulnerable, how well does your company balance providing a seamless customer experience while ensuring their identity is protected at every touchpoint?

- Very well—Account takeovers and fraud are not an issue.
- Well—Account takeovers and fraud are limited.
- Moderately well—Losses from account takeovers and fraud are within tolerable limits.

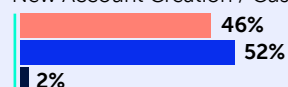
#### Account and platform security



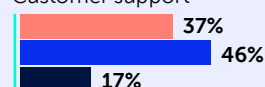
#### Payments and transactions



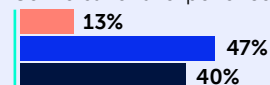
#### New Account Creation / Customer Onboarding



#### Customer support



#### Conversational experiences



Finally, balancing a seamless customer experience with robust security measures is a priority for many retailers. Most respondents claim they balance account and platform security (69%) and payments and transactions (64%) with a seamless customer experience very well, indicating that account security features and payment protocols don't harm the customer experience.

This suggests that many retailers have successfully implemented security measures that protect customer data without creating unnecessary friction during shopping, checkout, and the post-purchase experience. This is a critical achievement in building trust and maintaining customer loyalty in the digital retail space. Nonetheless, fraud is becoming more sophisticated in eCommerce. Companies can expect to face a significant amount of risk as bad actors harness the power of artificial intelligence and other technologies in their schemes.

## Respondents Share Strategies for Protecting Data

To gain a better understanding of how retail and eCommerce companies plan to protect against fraud in the future, researchers asked the respondents what changes their organizations plan to make to safeguard customer data and enhance customer trust.

One common and noteworthy response is the adoption of advanced encryption methods to protect customer information, ensuring that data is securely stored and transmitted. Retailers acknowledge the importance of investing in robust cybersecurity measures, such as implementing multi-factor authentication and regularly updating security protocols, to mitigate the risk of data breaches and unauthorized access.

Another notable response is the increased focus on transparency and communication regarding data usage and privacy policies.

Retailers recognize the significance of providing clear and easily accessible information to customers about how their data is collected, used, and stored. By being transparent about their privacy practices and obtaining explicit consent from customers, retailers aim to build trust and establish themselves as responsible custodians of customer data.

Additionally, they are implementing measures to educate customers about the best practices for protecting their personal information and empowering them to make informed decisions about sharing their data. These proactive measures not only demonstrate their commitment to protecting customer privacy but also serve as a foundation for building long-term relationships with their valued customers.

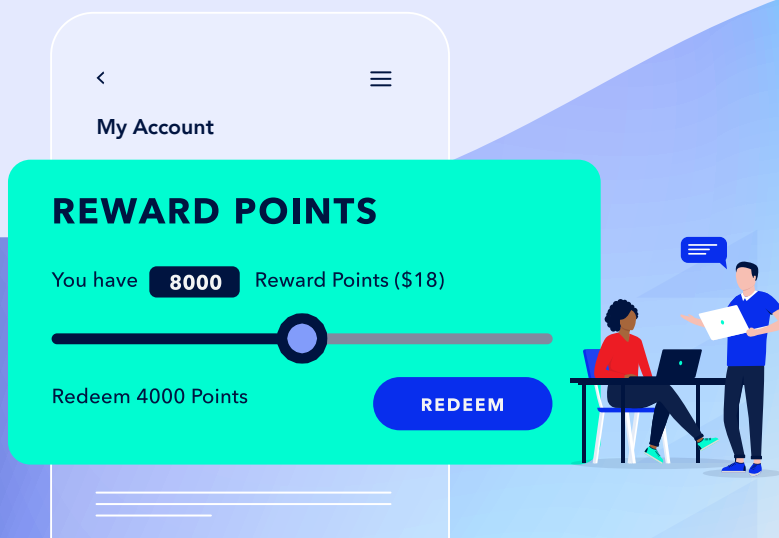
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“What I want to emphasize is that you should shift your focus from personas to profiles. When you return to your office, look at your customer database and examine the columns you have. Do you know when I prefer to shop during the week? Are you aware if I prefer to buy online and pick up in-store? Do you know who my favorite store associate is? These are the data points that can help you create highly relevant and personalized marketing messages on your website, instead of just making assumptions based on gender or generic characteristics.”

Brendan Witcher, VP & Principal Analyst,  
[Forrester Research](#)

[From their Presentation:](#)

“Today’s Retail Imperatives: What’s Hot & What’s Hype For  
The Industry’s Most Talked About Initiatives”  
[eTail Boston 2024](#)





## Case Study:

# Garnet Hill Enhances Conversions Through Storytelling and AI-Powered Personalization

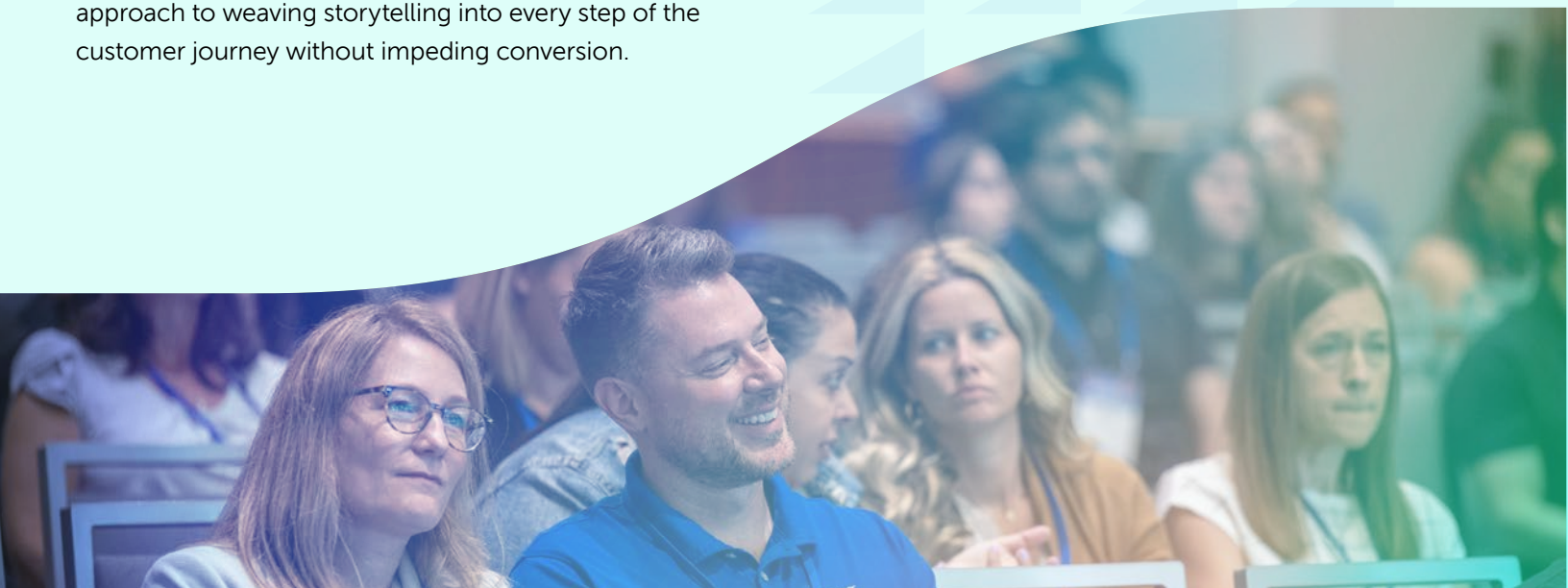
*Note: This case study is paraphrased based on the transcript of a dialogue from the “Designing The New Ideal Digital Experience” panel discussion at eTail Boston 2024.*

Garnet Hill, a home and apparel retailer, presented an interesting case study during a panel discussion called “Designing The New Ideal Digital Experience” at eTail Boston 2024. The discussion explored the company’s work on making the customer journey more meaningful while maintaining a strong focus on conversion during a redesign process.

Mark Murphy, Senior Director of eCommerce and Digital Marketing at Garnet Hill, described the company’s approach to weaving storytelling into every step of the customer journey without impeding conversion.

“We felt like our storefront let customers pick the color and the size of the product, but it was completely disconnected from the artisan that may have produced the product and the country it was sourced from,” said Murphy.

“We recognized that the process behind each product is special and makes people want to learn more. We went into this redesign with the idea of marrying content and commerce.”



## Key Initiatives for Enhancing the Customer Journey

Garnet Hill implemented several key initiatives to achieve its goal of “marrying content and commerce”:

- 1 “Griditorials” on Product Listing Pages (PLPs):** Garnet Hill introduced small content blocks with bullet points about specific products or value propositions on their PLPs. This simple execution enriched the shopping experience by providing customers with quick, digestible information about products as they browse.
- 2 Extended Product Detail Pages (PDPs):** The company significantly extended its PDPs, adding content below the buying section and the “add to cart” button. This allowed customers to learn more about product details without potentially sacrificing conversion rates. By placing this additional information below the primary purchasing elements, Garnet Hill ensured that the buying process remained streamlined while still offering in-depth product information for interested customers.
- 3 Cross-channel Storytelling:** Garnet Hill extended its storytelling efforts across paid and earned media channels, with a particular focus on email marketing. This approach ensured a consistent narrative throughout the customer’s entire journey with the brand.
- 4 Personalization Through AI:** In tandem with their redesign, Garnet Hill partnered with Movable Ink to implement their DaVinci product, an AI-powered personalization tool. This partnership allowed them to tailor content for their diverse customer base, which includes both apparel and home goods shoppers. The AI-driven personalization enables Garnet Hill to send targeted emails featuring products most likely to resonate with each customer segment, addressing the challenge of balancing exposure for different product categories.

The significance of Garnet Hill’s approach lies in its holistic view of the customer journey. By integrating storytelling elements throughout the shopping experience, from product discovery to purchase, the brand created a more engaging and informative environment for its customers.

This strategy not only enhances the overall customer experience but also helps to differentiate Garnet Hill in a competitive market.



# Conclusion: Changing the Customer Journey Over the Next 12 Months

Conversations with the retail and eCommerce leaders who responded to the study revealed the various strategies they'll use to improve the customer journey over the next twelve months.

The most prominent themes that emerged from their responses centered around personalization, convenience, and enhanced customer support. Many organizations plan to focus on curating products to match customer preferences, improving website navigation and search functions, implementing AI-powered shopping assistants to guide customers through their purchase journey, and providing customers with personalized content.

For example, one respondent says they are planning on "Helping customers fully benefit from our products by providing them with live support and interactive video tutorials."

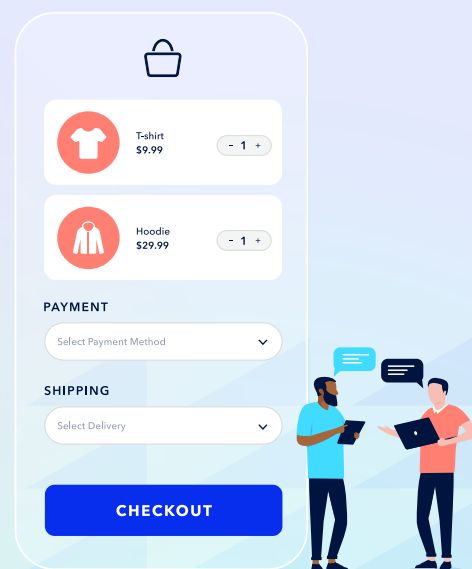
There's also a strong emphasis on streamlining the checkout process. Organizations want to offer flexible delivery options and provide real-time updates on order status and product availability.

Another significant area of focus is the enhancement of post-purchase experiences. Many companies are planning to implement more efficient return and exchange processes, introduce self-service return programs, and establish follow-up systems to address customer issues promptly.

Additionally, companies are moving toward integrating online and offline channels for a seamless omnichannel experience, as well as leveraging customer data to provide personalized recommendations and targeted promotions.

"We will create an experience that encourages repeat purchases from customers by creating a customer portal that provides recommendations, has purchase history, and provides support when needed," says a respondent.

These initiatives collectively demonstrate a commitment to creating a next-generation customer journey that will directly impact revenue and customer loyalty in the coming year.



# Key Suggestions

## **Embrace personalization through AI and data analytics:**

Leverage advanced technologies like AI and real-time data analytics to deliver tailored experiences that meet individual customer needs and preferences across all touchpoints.

## **Integrate physical and digital experiences seamlessly:**

Create an omnichannel strategy that bridges the gap between online and offline channels, ensuring a consistent and cohesive customer journey regardless of how customers choose to interact with your brand.

## **Secure customer data and use it to identify customers at the start of their journey:**

Implementing robust data security measures while leveraging customer data for early identification allows retailers to provide personalized experiences from the moment a customer interacts with the brand, enhancing engagement and building trust throughout the customer journey.

## **Streamline, enhance, and diversify your post-purchase journey:**

Offer simple avenues for customers to return items in the way they prefer. Use digital engagement and self-service solutions to provide customers with the tools they need after a sale.

# About the Author

## eTail Insights

eTail Insights, the industry research and digital publishing arm of eTail, delivers cutting-edge data and analysis on trends, challenges, and opportunities in the retail and eCommerce sectors. Through comprehensive research reports, webinars, and thought leadership initiatives, we empower senior-level retail leaders to make informed strategic decisions and stay ahead in the rapidly evolving

digital landscape. Our deep industry intelligence not only informs retail leaders but also connects innovative solution providers with key decision-makers, fostering a dynamic ecosystem that drives the future of digital retail.

For more information, please visit [wbrinsights.com](http://wbrinsights.com).

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Narvar pioneered how brands engage with customers beyond the “buy” button through branded order tracking, delivery notifications, returns and exchanges. Today, Narvar’s comprehensive post-purchase platform empowers over 1,500 of the world’s most-admired brands, including Sephora, Levi’s, Sonos, Warby Parker and LVMH, to deliver transparency, build trust and grow customer lifetime value. Recognized by Fast Company as one of the most innovative companies, Narvar simplifies the everyday lives of consumers.

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