

Reinvent Your Stores

First hand accounts from leading retailers on how they have adapted their businesses in the wake of Covid 19, and 26x quick solutions that can help you reopen your stores safely and successfully



Validify's Rapid Response Report #2

The purpose of these reports

Validify’s Rapid Response strategy and series of reports are designed to help retailers adapt quickly to the unprecedented disruption caused by the Covid-19 pandemic.

Stores are finally beginning to reopen. However, the restrictions imposed by the pandemic make it incredibly challenging to do so safely and successfully. Retailers need to do everything they can to ensure the safety of their customers and staff, while also doing what they can to deliver the best customer experience possible under the circumstances. As commercial businesses they need to try and achieve both profitability, while also preparing their business for the potential of a second wave, which could result in further lockdowns. This report is designed to help reinvent your stores by showcasing innovative solutions to overcoming the many challenges you face and delivering on new customer expectations.

We also asked leading retailers to share their accounts of how they are adapting their businesses in the wake of Covid-19, along with industry experts for their best practice recommendations.

About Validify

Validify is a vendor management platform that gives consumer brands the tools to source, evaluate and manage the procurement of technology solutions into their business.

We reduce the cost, time and risk of technology selection, so you can focus on growth.

Acknowledgements

We would like to thank all of those who contributed to our report on such short notice, with special thanks to our sponsors.

Media
sponsor



Report
Platinum
sponsor



Report
sponsors



Retailer Insights

Special thanks to our retail experts who have shared their first hand experiences during the pandemic, how it has impacted them and how they have used innovation to adapt.



Guy Mason - Guy has 20+ years experience working across Digital and Technology, having held Board and senior positions across **Sainsbury's, Clarks shoes, Bourne Leisure and Boots** as well as extensive experience advising retailers, brands and private equity businesses.



Dimas Gimeno - Founder and Chairman of Skintelligence Investments; a retail & tech business platform built to help the retail industry harness disruptive innovation, adapt and grow in a rapidly changing economic and social landscape. From 2014 to 2018 Dimas served as **President and CEO of El Corte Ingles**, a leading department store group headquartered in Spain.



Matthew Gratze has extensive experience in Ecommerce, Digital and Retail having held senior positions at Best Buy, Home Retail Group, Ann Summers, Mothercare and Halfords. He is currently the **Director of Digital for Signet Jewellery**.



Stuart Eames has over 20 years retail experience with a deep understanding of store digitisation and operational innovation. With experience across Grocery, Hospitality and Compliance with specialist expertise in the areas of store operations and payments, both from a strategic and technological perspective. He has worked for leading brands, most recently as Retail Innovation Lead at **Waitrose**.



Gabrielle Hase has broad experience in all aspects of eCommerce, direct marketing and strategic brand management and has worked with leading consumer brands such as **McArthurGlen Group, Hobbs, LK Bennett, Sweaty Betty, Moonpig, The White Company, Knomo**, and retailers **Fenwick's, TK Maxx** and **Browns Fashion**. Gabrielle is a Non-Executive Director for **LS Retail, Ampliance** and **Tate Enterprises**, the commercial arm of **Tate Galleries**.



Ross Bailey is the CEO & Founder of **Appear Here**, the leading online marketplace for short-term retail space. Based on the concept that renting retail space should be as easy as booking a hotel room, Appear Here's mission is to create a world where anyone with an idea can find space to make it happen. Appear Here lists over 10,000 spaces across the UK, US and France, with over 250,000 brands in its community, working with everyone from **Google, Chanel** and **Apple** to start-ups including **Daily Pap** and **Away**.

Rapid Response Report - Solutions and Insights

The three months since the beginning of March have been seismic for the retail sector in the UK. In many cases retailers had to furlough 80-90% of their employees in a matter of days, close their entire store estate and try and restructure business and online operations on Zoom! We are all still processing what has happened, but it's a testament to the resilience of the UK retail sector how quickly and well most have adapted.

At Validify we have spoken to dozens of senior retailers in the last few weeks, who have shared their firsthand accounts of the impact of the pandemic on their businesses. We have been buoyed by the resilience of many and how they have used innovative IT solutions to adapt quickly. Most of the retailers we spoke to had experienced online sales equivalent to peak trading every week since the lockdown, which has brought its own challenges.

It is also clear from our conversation with senior retailers that those further along the digital transformation path have fared better than others, and all retailers are urgently looking to reassess the role of their stores in order to future proof their businesses. In this report, launched the week non-essential stores are allowed to reopen, we look at the IT innovation helping Validify's retail community reinvent and repurpose their stores, covering five key areas:-

Re-opening safely and successfully

Re-inventing the in-store experience

Connected stores - bridging online and stores

Optimise store ops and communications

Unified commerce, future proofing your business

We have also shared several first hand accounts from retailers on their experiences and how they are adapting with the help of innovation, along with industry experts for their best practice recommendations.

All the vendors featured are fully profiled on the Validify platform. You can access this information free of charge and connect with the vendors via the links in the report.



Foreword

The UK has one of the most vibrant and dynamic retail industries in the world. One that contributes £98.4bn to the UK economy and employs 3m people.

In recent years, we have been talking about the 'unprecedented' change taking place across the industry - driven by changing customer needs and expectations and the rapid rise in digitisation and automation. Some retailers had been struggling to adapt and, exacerbated by rising rents and wage costs, retail administrations were on the rise with a record c.1300 new retail insolvencies in 2019 alone.

The pace and nature of change was unprecedented. Until COVID-19.

Following the outbreak of the pandemic and the national lockdown announced on 23 March, we have seen a record decline in retail sales. Around 33% of the retail workforce - just over 900k employees - have been furloughed.

We do not yet have clear data for the number of stores that will simply not make it out the other side, but many more retailers are now at risk of insolvency. We have already heard several announcements on administration, additional store closures and structural changes in response to the crisis.

COVID-19 has exacerbated the challenges already facing retail. And it has accelerated long-term changes in consumer trends. Last month we witnessed the highest number of online sales ever recorded. While this historical spike in online transactions may recede when stores begin to re-open, the mass switch to online shopping is likely a 'new normal' that is here to stay.

Retailers will be anxious to see whether demand returns to our highstreets when non-essential shops reopen from 15 June. Weak consumer confidence and social distancing rules are likely to hold back sales in the short-term. Economic predictions do not support hopes for a quick recovery in the medium-term.

However, retail has built up a strong reputation during the crisis and retailers have demonstrated adaptability, innovation and altruism.

The retail industry has always been able to innovate and overcome and a compelling case can be made for retail in the future.

Those that were quick to invest, find new ways of reaching out to and serving customers during the crisis are well placed to meet the longer-term challenges. Many others will be able to take the learning - accelerating their online and omni-channel presence and innovating to ensure the in-store experience continues to appeal to and meet customer needs.

Embedding and building on these innovations will be crucial for retailers not just to survive, but to thrive in a new era. COVID has created challenges for all, opportunities for others; a critical moment for everyone.



Helen Dickinson OBE | CEO of the British Retail Consortium

Contents

The purpose of these reports	2		
Retailer insights	3		
Rapid Response Report Solutions & Insights	4		
Foreword	5		
Solutions & Insights	6		
Re-opening Safely and Successfully	7	Optimising store ops and communication	18
Appointtedd	8	Interlocate	19
Localistico	9	StorIQ	19
ServiceDock	9	Yapster	19
Aura Vision	9	Skarp	20
Colateral	10	Yoobic	20
Re-inventing the In-store experience	11	Rackspace	21
Red Ant	12	United Commerce	22
Pygmalios	13	Proximity Insight	23
Virtual Store Trials	13	Emerchantpay	24
Mishipay	13	Storecast	24
Intouch	14	Proximis	24
PiCo Labs	14	Comestri	25
Connected Stores - Bridging online and stores	15	Mirakl	25
Go Instore	16		
Dressipi	17		
Synerise	17		
Bringg	17		
The Impact of Covid on Retail Real Estate	26		
Additional Support	27		

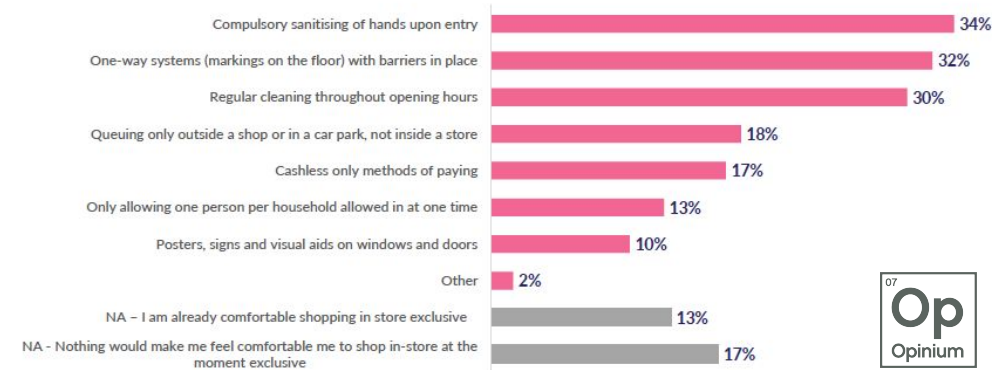
Rapid Response Report - Solutions and Insights

Reopening Safely and Successfully



A third of shoppers would feel more comfortable about entering a shop if there is compulsory sanitising of hands upon entry. One way systems and regular cleaning are also measures which would contribute positively to consumer comfort.

Which of the following store safety measures would make you feel most comfortable when visiting physical retail stores?



Source: data collected before Non-essential stores opened on June 15th

For those of us venturing back into stores, we will be faced with a fundamentally different experience to anything before. Retailer priorities will be focused, first and foremost, on the safety of their customers and employees, followed by whether opening stores is financially viable with reduced footfall and social distancing requirements. The government continues to provide guidelines to help store operators. But what does this mean in reality?

Reports have varied, but there is suggestion that one in 5 stores will never reopen again (The Telegraph, April 2020). Across the board there has been a mixed reaction by retailers to stores opening - some opening just a few key stores including those in major mall outlets, while others are choosing to focus on only providing collection services for the immediate future. Retailers we have spoken with suggested they will take a phased test-and-learn approach to reopening. Retailers looking to re-evaluate their store estate will need to consider what the 'right mix' of stores is to maximise coverage.

Stores reopening will be required to limit the number of customers at any one time, with the government urging people to shop alone. Where possible, we are likely to see different forms of queue management. Technology will be used to enable customers to book time slots to go to a store or - if they are already queuing - be given a timeslot to go away and come back when it's their turn. This can create a much better customer experience and avoids the friction of long lines and impatient customers outside stores. In many ways 'booking appointments' has always been prevalent in the luxury sector and it is a mainstay of hospitality dining operators. So, it will be interesting to watch more mainstream retail adopt similar practices.

In addition, there will be further restrictions on whether and how we can touch products, including limiting the ability to actually try on clothes, etc. Store staff will be required to wear protective coverings and carry out extensive sanitisation of products after every touch (some claiming up to 48 hours before being put back on the shop floor). This means a potentially high percentage of stock will be unavailable to buy at any given time, despite actually being present in the store. From providing localised store information to order management, technology will play a vital role in engendering the health and safety measures, as well as maximum on-shelf availability for stores to open.

Sponsor profile



Validate says
“Smart solution for retailers to minimise queues and re-generate footfall ”



Product Overview Transforming the challenges of C19 into business benefits, Appointedd’s scheduling software is driving engagement, conversion and basket size for retailers. All while enabling them to flex as social distancing legislation changes.

Mamas & Papas, Moss Bros, SpaceNK and Furniture Village are just a few retailers using a personalised hybrid of Appointedd’s Shop Safely features to facilitate their unique customer journey:

- Covid Secure Capacity Management: flexible capacity management
- Retail by Appointment: queue-less shopping
- Zero Touch Personal Shop: safe personal shopping experiences
- Up Close & Virtual: virtual shopping experiences
- Click & Collect Plus: guaranteed pick up slots
- Buffer Up: buffers for social distancing and sanitisation

Rapid Response Solution 76% of shoppers said they would rather book a specific time for store entry than wait in a queue, virtual or otherwise.

Appointedd delivers flexibility with QR scanners for queue-less entry, or by offering bookable appointment times in advance. Powering services such as book-to-browse, zero touch personal shop, bookable fitting rooms and click & collect, it has everything a retailer needs to engage in the new normal.

With Appointedd [capacity management calculator](#), calculating your store’s capacity is easy. The software will then cap your stores’ capacity in line with current government guidelines, and can flex instantly as regulation changes.

Deployment Time You can self-serve Appointedd’s tools to be up and running immediately. If you prefer to use our enterprise account managed service, your customisable online booking tools can be rolled out across your entire portfolio very quickly.

Special Offer Save 20% off forever when you book a consultation call - enter the code VALIDIFY

[FOR MORE INFORMATION CLICK HERE](#)

Testimonial



We ended up being the first in our industry to reopen. We initially put online booking in six stores but the success of that trial meant we rolled out to our full estate a week later.

Appointments are converting to sales at between 50 and 80%... I think the headline for us was Bank Holiday weekend. Across three days we took 1,046 appointments, from not having a booking system in place two weeks before. We were just blown away with it.”

One of the reasons we went with Appointedd was the quick response. We challenged them to get us up and running in a couple of days. The response was, yes, of course we can. We just love Appointedd!”

Charlie Harrison,
 Commercial Director -
 Furniture Village

Retailer story from the front line



Guy Mason

Guy has 20+ years experience working across digital and technology, having held Board and senior positions across **Sainsbury’s, Clarks shoes, Bourne Leisure and Boots.**



“Reopening safely and successfully requires us to re-index on the two things that have always characterised a great retailer: customer trust and customer confidence in the Brand.

“The disruptive impact of recent events will reverberate across all the retail dimensions. The consumer’s perception of shopping may have initially been challenged around health and safety, but it is now driving customers to question everything we and they previously assumed – across loyalty, quality, pricing, fulfilment and customer service.

“It is therefore not enough just to implement health and safety measures, we need to re-emphasise the values for which we wish to be known and deliver the experiences that retain customers in the face of a growing willingness to switch brands.

“The changes need to be visible, innovative and personalised in order to build trust at an individual, personal level.

“Paradoxically therefore, new times and new challenges can be overcome by reinforcing those things that have always built trust – flawless execution, focus on the customer and staying true to the brand values, building a sense of ‘me’ not ‘us’.”

Vendor profile



Validate says

“Localistico make sure your customers have the latest local store information”



Product Overview

Localistico is the leading digital marketing & analytics platform for physical locations. We enable you to increase footfall to your stores from high intent local customers, help you capture actionable analytics about their journey and use site-specific insights to activate localised advertising campaigns.

Rapid Response Solution

Communication with customers as we emerge from the crisis is key, keeping your location data up to date across all your stores and across multiple platforms is a logistical nightmare. Localistico takes away this headache and helps drive customers back into stores

Deployment Time

Usually deployed in 3-4 weeks from first onboarding meeting.

Special Offer

For members of Validate joining from here until September 2020 we offer 10% Discount and waiving on-boarding and setup fees, Quote VALIDIFY to avail of the discount.

[FOR MORE INFORMATION CLICK HERE](#)

Vendor profile



Validate says

“ServiceDock connects your customers to your store staff on a local level ”



Product Overview

We make it easy for store staff to engage with local consumers via popular messaging channels like WhatsApp, Google my Business Messages, Facebook and webchat. Store staff answer queries received via any channel and start selling remotely by sending messages, audio and video files to customers from our mobile app.

Rapid Response Solution

Boost footfall by engaging local consumers showing intent to buy directly from Google search results, your website and even shop window displays. Reassure customers planning to visit that you have the product they're looking for and improve queue management by taking real-time click-and-collect requests via messaging.

Deployment Time

Once legals are in place, we can activate most of our solutions within 48 hours.

Special Offer

We are offering a 60-day free trial in up to 5 stores per retailer.

[FOR MORE INFORMATION CLICK HERE](#)

Vendor profile



Validate says

“Aura Vision has adapted their technology to take the pressure off of in store staff when dealing with customer social-distancing”



Product Overview

Aura Vision provides retailers with cutting-edge in-store analytics to drive sales, marketing, and operational efficiency. Installing in under 15 minutes, Aura Vision works with existing security cameras to provide cost-effective, full-store analysis across thousands of locations.

Rapid Response Solution

Aura Vision can be used to help retailers implement social distancing measures in-store, with solutions ranging from cost-effective live occupancy reporting to using heat maps and dwell time analysis to direct cleaning efforts where it is most needed.

Deployment Time

1 week

Special Offer

We are offering retailers to opportunity to trial our COVID-19 solutions for free for limited time period.

[FOR MORE INFORMATION CLICK HERE](#)

Vendor profile



Validate says

“Colateral take the pain out of safety signage distribution across all your stores ”



Product Overview	Colateral - Plan, Deliver, Track Your In Store Comms, Goods Not For Resale and Team Operations. Cut Costs, Save Time, 100% Compliance, 100% Certainty.
Rapid Response Solution	Use Colateral to Deliver and Maintain ALL of your Re-Opening and New Normal Safety Measures, with fully tracked and auditable proof of installation and compliance. Manage your trade marketing and promos through the same channels.
Deployment Time	As quick as the same day. We do the hard work for you.
Special Offer	Colateral is offering Free Use of it's Audit and Compliance Application for Retailers to assist with managing Colleague and Customer Safety. Visit https://colateral.io/retail-marketing-manager/ for details.

FOR MORE INFORMATION CLICK HERE

Rapid Response Report - Solutions and Insights

Reinventing the In-store Experience



Although non-essential stores may be open from the 15th June, a third claim they will avoid shops if they can and half only visiting if necessary. Customers biggest concern is the lack of social distancing when entering retail stores.

When non-essential stores open from the 15th of June, do you intend to...



Source: data collected before Non-essential stores opened on June 15th

Pre-Covid, the average UK store conversion rate stood at c.22% (InternetRetailing, 2019). Flipped on its head, that means nearly 80% of customers entering stores did not purchase. Store models relied on heavy footfall to produce enough sales to justify the costs associated with running them. With the introduction of social distancing, combined with increasing reluctance of shoppers to return to stores with a pandemic still at large, this looks to undermine the very existence of the store economic model.

Speaking to many retailers in the Validify community who have already opened stores in other countries or in the Isle of Wight, they have told us that footfall is down and casual browsing is out for now, but that they have seen significant increases in average spend. People venturing to stores have a clearer purpose and higher purchasing intent.

Therefore, stores must reinvent their entire experience to not only encourage shoppers back to their doors but to increase conversion upon entering them. So how can stores develop their store experiences & create 'instore theatre'.

Contactless Retail - We started to see this when Amazon launched Amazon Go - the idea that you could simply browse, grab the items you want, and leave without any contact with tills or staff. As you left payment was directly taken from your account that was linked to your Amazon app. This concept has moved on via different technologies utilising barcodes and QR codes to ensure that retailers can track products that are removed - vital to maintaining current hygiene measures.

Personalised experiences - With fewer shoppers physically allowed in stores at any one time, combined with customers booking specific time slots, it raises an opportunity to create greater levels of engagement between store staff and customers. Utilising clienteling tools can help customers understand more about products, locate stock within the store network and develop a more personalised conversation between a retailer's staff and their customers.

Store Optimisation - Utilising in-store analytics and tracking technologies to drive optimisation, e.g. maintain the right stock mix based on real-time store footfall, or track how people shop your store to update range and layout accordingly.

As retailers down-size their real estates, we will likely see the rise of 'Experience hubs,' where remaining stores become places for customers to engage their brand through enriched experiences and services.

Sponsor profile



Validify says
“The operating system for digitising your stores .”



Product Overview

RetailOS delivers smarter, safer stores for retailers, colleagues and customers by unifying the tools, content and insights needed to provide the best customer experiences, in-store or at home. It connects your existing technology with innovative solutions designed to energise retail, drive exceptional customer service, maximise sales and improve operational performance, with built-in features for virtual consultations. Solutions include:

- Clienteling – offer VIP experiences, in-store or at home
- Assisted sales – full in-store access to product and customer details
- Click & collect/BOPAK – streamline the end-to-end experience for colleagues and customers
- Employee engagement – take care of your colleagues and turn them into ambassadors

Rapid Response Solution

From virtual clienteling and contactless concierge services to flexible fulfilment and employee engagement, RetailOS gives you the tools you need to reopen confidently and continue to operate safely without compromising on customer service:

- Connect with your customers at home via virtual clienteling and contactless concierge services
- Offer access to an endless aisle of products for a socially distanced yet personalised shopping experience
- Speed up fulfilment and efficiently run 'dark' stores while keeping social distance, using click & collect/BOPAK and runner tools
- Take care of your colleagues with integrated communications and polls to stay engaged and track their wellbeing

Deployment Time

Out of the box functionality takes as little as one week. Integration with existing systems takes 2-4 weeks.

Special Offer

Co-investment of all pilot costs for a 3 month period

Testimonial

OFFICE



“We want our customers to have the best possible in-store experience, and our work with Red Ant will effectively eliminate what can be a frustrating waiting game to see if the shoes they want are in stock and the right size. It will also free up our sales colleagues to do what they do best – advise and assist customers.”

CFO, OFFICE Shoes

[FOR MORE INFORMATION CLICK HERE](#)

Retailer story from the front line



Retail Expert -
 Dimas Gimeno


Dimas Gimeno - Founder and Chairman of Skintelligence, Dimas served as **President and CEO of El Corte Ingles**, a leading department store group headquartered in Spain.

“In the next few months we are going to experience changes in the retail industry; some of them already anticipated during the last years, when we talked about our predictions for the next decade. It is easy: the future has arrived earlier. This Coronavirus has opened eyes and surprised those who still feared online payment systems, those who rejected ordering food or groceries through an app, those who spoke nonsense of buying clothes or garments without getting to touch it beforehand. Covid-19 has forced us to accept that, using online tools, it is absolutely possible to exercise, learn, talk, be entertained, flirt...and even work!

“For retailers, the next step has to be integrating these new rules in our daily lives. In Spain, we can see how easily we have accepted huge changes as something ordinary, like having our temperature measured when we enter a shop, hair salons, restaurants, grocery stores... And it is very common to observe in their communications to the clients how staff are disinfecting their stores before and after a client uses it. And, of course, the market for new disinfection services has grown, giving their clients a pompous ‘Covid-19’ FREE stamp for their windows: this is the new ‘TripAdvisor medal’. Modern machines with ultraviolet lighting or ozone cleaning systems are going to be as common as a Roomba Robot in our homes. They offer you masks or hydroalcoholic gel as complimentary items with the same ceremony they offered you months ago a welcome drink. We are softly entering ‘handsfree’ or ‘no touch’ retail.”



Vendor profile




Validify says
“Pygmalios bring the science to in-store customer activity ”




Product Overview	Pygmalios Real-time occupancy management was developed to assist with following the strict hygienic norms required during the COVID-19 epidemic. Thanks to highly accurate people counting sensors our system is able to replace an employee's physical presence and regulate the number of visitors entering the store in an automatic fashion. The tool oversees customer in-flow and notifies the store manager in case the occupancy limit of the store is reached.
Rapid Response Solution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · A stereoscopic sensor is installed at the store's entrance · The sensor anonymously and precisely counts incoming and outgoing visitors · Store's occupancy is calculated in real time · Store's optimal occupancy is calculated based on the size of the area and the number of visitors' requirement · The visual signalization in front of the store signals the visitors whether they are allowed to enter or if the store's occupancy limit has been met · An overview of the current occupancy is available to the management and the store through the live dashboard
Deployment Time	The solution is easy to install. Can be rolled out across whole chains of stores in a matter of several weeks.
Special Offer	We are able to provide free service fee for pilot projects.

[FOR MORE INFORMATION CLICK HERE](#)

Vendor profile




Validify says
“Browsing is out, Virtual Store Trials helps to maximise your ROI on shelf space ”




Product Overview	We show what shoppers will do. With exceptional accuracy using thousands of shoppers in our virtual stores, we provide the at-shelf outcome of any assortment change.
Rapid Response Solution	We're helping brands and retailers identify which categories benefit from SKU reduction, reducing the number of products by 20-50% to help optimise the supply chain. We run virtual tests in front of shoppers to see the impact on sales of these reductions, which vary hugely from category to category.
Deployment Time	We go from brief, to design, to fieldwork, to analysis, to final results in under 5 working days.
Special Offer	We're also offering our Planogram Visualisation tool for free for retailers. They can send us an output of their planogram software and we'll mock these up with live product images and the right dimensions to make communicating about planograms (either with suppliers, supply chain or in-store colleagues) easier than ever. To redeem, please email nick@storetrials.com with the subject "Great Planogram Visuals".

[FOR MORE INFORMATION CLICK HERE](#)

Vendor profile




Validify says
“Bringing in-store frictionless payment to all retailers”




Product Overview	MishiPay is a mobile self-checkout solution that enables shoppers to use their own phone to scan and pay for their shopping in stores.
Rapid Response Solution	Our technology can help keep shoppers and staff safe by enabling customers to use their own device for the entire purchase process - eliminating the need to interact with store hardware. By using MishiPay, shoppers can skip the checkout queues and follow social distancing advice.
Deployment Time	As little as two weeks.
Special Offer	1.Reduced capex on integration fees 2. Reduced monthly fees 3. Additional in store marketing support to create awareness 4. Free store staff training and onboarding

[FOR MORE INFORMATION CLICK HERE](#)

Vendor profile




Validify says
“Market leaders in personalising the customer experience in physical retail”




Product Overview	AI-based product recommendation platform to personalize the in-store experience for shoppers that drives store sales. Our solution detects the customers that are in the store, understands the local context of the store (weather, traffic, social data, time of day etc.) and understands which products are available in the store. Utilising this real-time data we show the right product to the right customer at the right time in the physical store.
Rapid Response Solution	We enable retailers to engage with shoppers in-store and recommend relevant products to shoppers as they enter or walk around the store. We can also make shoppers aware of public service messages in-store to assist with social distancing and offer best practices to help prevent the spread of COVID-19.
Deployment Time	If the store has an existing in-store infrastructure such as digital screens we can deploy within 2 weeks.
Special Offer	We can offer priority deployments to retailers that use the code INTBRCCOV

[FOR MORE INFORMATION CLICK HERE](#)

Vendor profile



Validify says
“Bringing legacy POS into the 21st Century without huge Cap Ex.”



Product Overview	Offer shoppers real-time discounts and digital coupons online or at the register. PiCo turns any PoS system into a live, internet-connected solution that requires NO integration . Simply plug a PiCoHUB into your PoS and start offering and accepting contactless digital coupons in minutes.
Rapid Response Solution	To come out the other side - you'll need to keep old customers engaged and acquire new ones. PiCoCampaign enables you to use your website, email and physical shopfront to connect with shoppers via simple QR code, so you can send updates, deals and digital coupons direct to your customers phone.
Deployment Time	5-10 days
Special Offer	£25 /mth fixed cost. A saving of £275 on a 12-mth contract.

[FOR MORE INFORMATION CLICK HERE](#)

Rapid Response Report - Solutions and Insights

Connected Stores - Bridging online and stores



COVID-19 has acted as an accelerant in the shift towards having less of a physical presence, not least due to the obvious need to radically reduce costs for survival. We're also witnessing historically high levels of sales transacted online –currently over 60% – and while this will ease as more stores open, consumers have formed new habits that will see the online channel continue to be more prominent going forward

Source: BRC-KPMG Retail Sales Monitor
May 2020

By the end of 2019, online as a percentage of UK retail sales had reached 19%, with estimates that this could rise to c. 25% over the next 3-5 years. In April 2020 UK online sales reached an all-time high of 30% (ONS). They say it takes 21 days to form a new habit, well 12 weeks of lockdown have seen people across the board move online, and this is unlikely to reverse back to pre-Covid levels even if a vaccine is found. Nor does this mean the end of stores - in-fact, it puts increasing pressure on retailers to engender better online experiences, as well as give shoppers a reason to return to stores. This should be viewed as a positive by most retailers as it has been shown that omnichannel customers are worth 30% more (CXNetwork, 2019) in terms of lifetime value than single channel consumers.

Over the last decade retailers have been increasingly bridging the gap between online and stores - be it at different speeds. Covid will force all retailers to prioritise how to further blend the online/offline experience. We have witnessed a proliferation of vendor solutions helping to encourage these experiences. This includes technologies enabling online customers to directly interact with store staff to get more information and a closer 'look' at products - particularly useful for higher ticket items. Through the use of video chat, we have also seen how retailers are trying to re-create in-store experiences 'virtually' e.g. online make-up tutorials performed by in-store staff.

With potential restrictions on in-store fitting rooms, retailers can look towards technologies focused on accurately predicting customer sizing and 'virtual fitting rooms'. In addition, if consumers perceive they are taking extra risk by going to stores, they will want to understand in advance that the product stock is available when they arrive.

These technologies should provide some inspiration.

Sponsor profile



Validify says
“Go Instore bring the store experience straight into your home.”



Product Overview Video-powered retail for your customers. Go Instore connects website customers with data driven product-matched instore experts using immersive HD live video.

Rapid Response Solution Go Instore transforms cultural chaos and uncertainty into happy and safe working environments for staff, whilst providing the in-store experience for customers. Go Instore combines the huge traffic potential of websites with the significantly greater conversion rates associated with visiting a store to deliver a new channel for brands to engage and serve their customers.

Deployment Time Brands and retailers are currently launching Go Instore in just 2 weeks.

Special Offer Please quote Validify during enquiries.

[FOR MORE INFORMATION CLICK HERE](#)

Testimonial



Sofology's omnichannel retail experience is something we are immensely proud of. The future of retail will revolve around online and in-store experiences working together to increase both digital conversion and drive footfall into stores. Partnering with Go Instore has helped to add a visual element to the high level of product expertise already offered by our online webchat and telephone sales teams. This gives customers who don't have the ability or time to visit a store an alternative way to view products and enjoy a specialist consultation so that they make the right choice for their homes every time. This mirrors the service our customers receive in-store, ensuring a seamless transition for those customers who follow up their video call with a visit to their local Sofology store.

“Championing convenience with a one-to-one consultative approach feels very much like the next step in retail. Feedback from customers has been really positive.”

Harvey Ainley, COO Sofology

Retailer story from the front line



Matthew Gratz,
 Digital Director of
 Signet Jewellery



“The immediate impact of Covid-19 was difficult for our colleagues, as there was so much uncertainty and nervousness. Naturally, as we closed our retail stores, we saw a big upside through our web business, as well as a spike in customer contact via our contact centre. In terms of our online business our traffic has increased, but the biggest metric to see an uplift is our onsite conversion, where we are seeing a larger proportion of customers convert online with an intent to buy.

“In response, we have adapted our customer contact strategy in line with the new ways customers are looking to engage with us. As stores have been closed, we wanted to make sure customers were able to connect with our sales colleagues for the inspiration and advice that would usually be received in a face-to-face conversation inside a shop. This is crucial when customers are discussing key purchasing decisions. We have worked with our partners and very quickly launched a new selling channel that connects customers to our sales colleagues remotely. We can now utilise video technology to have that face-to-face discussion, or even showcase our products. This has been a big hit with our customers, and also sales colleagues, as they can have those crucial conversations to help move the customer journey along.”

Vendor profile



Validify says

“Helping shoppers find their perfect products before going instore”



Product Overview

Dressipi is the leading, independently verified profitable revenue driver for fashion retailers. By leveraging fashion-specific algorithms scaled through intelligent AI and ML capabilities, Dressipi empowers retailers to meet shopper expectations and drive profitable growth through personalised product recommendations, access to customer and garment enrichment data and data insight packages.

Rapid Response Solution

Correctly implemented, booked footfall can have a much higher propensity to spend. Dressipi is helping retailers trade safely whilst ensuring every instore customer is revenue-generating. Dressipi’s solution enables shoppers to:

- Browse a personalised edit of their local store online
- Reserve items to pick up or try on
- Complete a transaction in store

Deployment Time

In just 3 weeks, deliver an edit of personalised recommendations that are available in a customer’s local store.

Special Offer

We are offering a 20% discount on Proof of Value.

[FOR MORE INFORMATION CLICK HERE](#)

Vendor profile



Validify says

“AI driven single view of customer”



Product Overview

Synerise provides the power to collect information about customers from multiple sources, analyse that data, and reach conclusions about how to optimise business processes: all in real-time. We offer ready business solutions based on machine learning and an open platform, that can adapt to your needs regardless of the scale.

Rapid Response Solution

In these times, delivering personalised, assisted shopping in physical stores can lack the safety, scale and efficiency that you require. Using personalisation and algorithms, we can help you deliver a similar “shopping assistant” experience in your e-commerce by showing each customer the most relevant and best-fit products for them online.

Deployment Time

In two weeks, we can create and deploy personalised journeys that include, for example, personalised products and optimised search experience.

Special Offer

We are providing a limited special offer when referencing this report of free integration support of up to 5 personalisation scenarios.

[FOR MORE INFORMATION CLICK HERE](#)

Vendor profile



Validify says

“Intelligent post-click solution”



Product Overview

Bringg is a Cloud Delivery Orchestration Platform. Bringg’s platform connects and digitises your entire supply chain to drive down costs related to the last mile, and increase the customer experience through automation.

Rapid Response Solution

Bringg has developed a 100% contactless click and collect/curbside pickup product that can be live in 8 weeks. We have also developed contactless delivery for delivery drivers.

Deployment Time

8 weeks.

Special Offer

Bringg has waived the platform access fee for Retailers offering essential goods to the vulnerable.

[FOR MORE INFORMATION CLICK HERE](#)

Rapid Response Report - Solutions and Insights

Optimising store ops and communication



Traditionally there has still remained a relative silo between stores and the wider business. For stores opening up it will become imperative to fully optimise their operations and increase communication between store staff, customers and the wider business. In the current environment, most retailers are experiencing huge pressures on cashflow, meaning any cost benefits arising from increased operational efficiencies will become critical over the coming months and years.

Using Artificial Intelligence (AI) and predictive analytics to optimise in-store merchandising ensures the best performing stock at a store level is available at all time and will be pivotal to maintaining the best sale throughput.

We see increasing requirements to optimise workforce management in-stores, freeing up management to focus on customer sales and creating a real time dialogue with head office to facilitate real-time decision making.

Finally, putting technology in the hands of store assistants to directly communicate with customers at a more localised level, creating a more personalised customer experience and a customer/ brand feedback loop.



Many non-food retailers hold limited cash reserves and continued Government support in the immediate term will be crucial. All will be assessing their operational costs and means of adapting to changed consumer needs in the medium to longer-term.

Retailer story from the front line



Stuart Eames

Stuart Eames has over 20 years retail experience with a deep understanding of store digitisation and operational innovation. With specialist expertise in the areas of store operations and payments, both from a strategic and technological perspective. He has worked for leading brands, most recently as Retail Innovation Lead at **Waitrose**.



“The landscape within supermarket operations during the pandemic has significantly shifted. The current ‘normal’ requires a different approach to that of previous working and therefore has increased the importance of internal communication tools to adjust priorities and workforce. With a smoothing of trade, through capped numbers within the store to abide by social distancing guidelines, this means there are no ‘peaks and valleys’ in trade, no morning rush, after work or lunchtimes. To add to this, with 50% of checkout lanes closed to maintain the 2-metre distance, the ability to move existing hours within the operation to other times seamlessly is so important.

“Replenishment teams, usually working in squads, have had to distance themselves; it is no longer acceptable for multiple employees working in one area to re-stock. Therefore approaching this task in a different way, utilising out of hours or lone working is essential.

“Add to this that the social element of shopping has been sterilised, lone shoppers moving back into weekly shopping habits, rather than spontaneous purchasing for dinner tonight has seen transaction volumes drop but average items in basket rocket. Supermarkets have become the new restaurant and therefore focus on stock volumes and replenishment has shifted from areas such as food-to-go, where working from home and furloughing has seen the requirement for breakfast or lunch fall, and shift the work content into home baking or BWS (Beers, Wines & Spirits).

“With each change in the government's Covid plan, as restrictions are eased, the fluidity of your workforce and communication will be paramount to success.”

Vendor profile



Validate says
“Deal with issues fast as they occur in your store network,”



Product Overview

IntelocateRETAIL® is the fastest and most intuitive system on the market today to report and manage the resolution of issues, incidents, and queries arising in retail stores.

Rapid Response Solution

IntelocateRETAIL® Issue Resolution Management suite is supplemented with select preloaded COVID-19 related issues. Including cleaning, disinfecting and social distancing, with online store audit forms and checklists to manage compliance with ongoing government health and safety guidelines.

Deployment Time

With no software installation necessary, it's remarkably easy to set-up IntelocateRETAIL® any retailer can be operational within just one week.

Special Offer

Three for Free. We will provide our IntelocateRETAIL solution complimentary for three months.

[FOR MORE INFORMATION CLICK HERE](#)

Vendor profile



Validate says
“Improve efficiency and reduce costs in your retail operations”



Product Overview

StorIQ is a task management and retail operations platform. We bring together store communications, task management, visual merchandising compliance and store visits in one easy to use app.

Rapid Response Solution

It's never been more important for store teams to know exactly what they have to do, and for managers to know it's been done. Our communication and compliance platform is simple to use, and makes it easy to cascade critical information to stores, and to monitor compliance in real time.

Deployment Time

4 weeks

Special Offer

StorIQ is quick to implement and delivers a rapid ROI, streamlining core retail ops processes so you can do more with less. The first month on the platform is free.

[FOR MORE INFORMATION CLICK HERE](#)

Vendor profile



Validate says
“Yapster enable effective communication across your business”



Product Overview

Yapster is a mobile messaging platform used by the instore teams of UK high street brands from Ann Summers, to Next to Wagamama. Fully integrated with upstream HR data, Yapster dynamically updates to add new joiners and remove leavers automatically from instant messaging groups. It's secure (ISO270001 cert), easy to use and allows real time conversation between hard-to-reach colleagues via their personal smartphones.

Rapid Response Solution

Yapster can be licenced and rolled out at scale (up to 30,000 simultaneous users) within 7 days. It is proving particularly useful during the COVID-19 market shut down as operators struggle to maintain connection with furloughed or otherwise inactive colleagues. Brands such as BrewDog, who have been recognised by Government as leading examples of how to handle internal and external communications during the crisis, have publicly attested to Yapster's role in their business continuity efforts:

Deployment Time

We can deploy within 14 days

Special Offer

- Yapster is free to all operators with >100 employees on furlough, for the duration of the Governments COVID-19 Job Protection Scheme + 30 days.

[FOR MORE INFORMATION CLICK HERE](#)

Vendor profile



Validate says

“Skarp can restore your confidence in sales forecasts”



Product Overview	Skarp is the AI-powered demand forecasting service that needs no in-house data science capability and can be deployed within weeks. As well as producing accurate predictions, our algorithms also identify the factors truly driving performance and quantify their impact.
Rapid Response Solution	Coronavirus has thrown everyone's sales predictions out of the window. Skarp can help retailers regain confidence in their demand planning by identifying which pre-coronavirus patterns still exist and where the 'new normal' applies. We do this by using advanced statistical algorithms to analyse hundreds of variables, from both internal and external datasets.
Deployment Time	Within 3 weeks.
Special Offer	We offer a free proof-of-concept to all new customers.

FOR MORE INFORMATION CLICK HERE

Vendor profile



Validate says

“A broad suite of tools to optimise your retail operations”

Product Overview	YOOBIC is an all-in-one platform enabling retailers to empower their frontline teams through digitally optimised communication, training and task management in order to deliver the perfect customer experience across every location. YOOBIC is used by 150+ brands & retailers across the world including Halfords, The Perfume Shop, Lacoste and Selco.
Rapid Response Solution	YOOBIC has built a Safe Retail Package to help retailers adapt to this new environment. The solution enables them to ensure the implementation of health & safety measures, support their frontline teams in their evolving role through mobile learning and efficient communication and manage queue through a virtual queuing solution.
Deployment Time	Our solution has been implemented within 5 days for the customers who needed it during the crisis.
Special Offer	We are offering 3 months of free licences for customers committing for 12 months. More info on our package here: https://yoobic.com/covid-19-safe-retail-solution

FOR MORE INFORMATION CLICK HERE

Gartner estimates that most businesses are overspending on cloud by 70%

Cloud optimisation is a quick way to save money

Validify's official platform sponsor Rackspace has been part of the fabric of the retail industry for many years in the UK and around the world, working with leading brands to transform in-store, online and mobile shopping experiences with leading cloud technologies.

The current pandemic has rapidly transformed the way we live our lives, presenting significant challenges for retailers to maintain performance to meet consumer demands, coupled with a pressing need to reduce operating cost, streamlining what is often significant operational inefficiency.

Rackspace have prepared some valuable basic suggestions to help you reduce the risk of overspending;

1. Assess your current technology delivery and infrastructure to understand how it can be enhanced to scale responsively with changes in demand.
2. Incorporate notifications to alert you to unusual usage spikes and to provide analytics that can be used to adjust your spend.
3. Understand your infrastructure spend. Use cloud management tooling to gain insight into your cloud usage, cost, and performance.
4. Review your instance reservations and/or savings plans to optimise and keep track of unused discounts.



Rackspace are here to help

As part of their commitment to the retail industry Rackspace are offering a complimentary consultation; cloud health check.

They have combined their deep expertise and strong technology partnerships into a Cost Performance Optimisation service, helping you maintain business continuity in a changing economic landscape and better prepare for the future. Rackspace typically sees opportunity for around 20% cloud infrastructure saving as a result of undertaking this consultation.

The consultation includes:

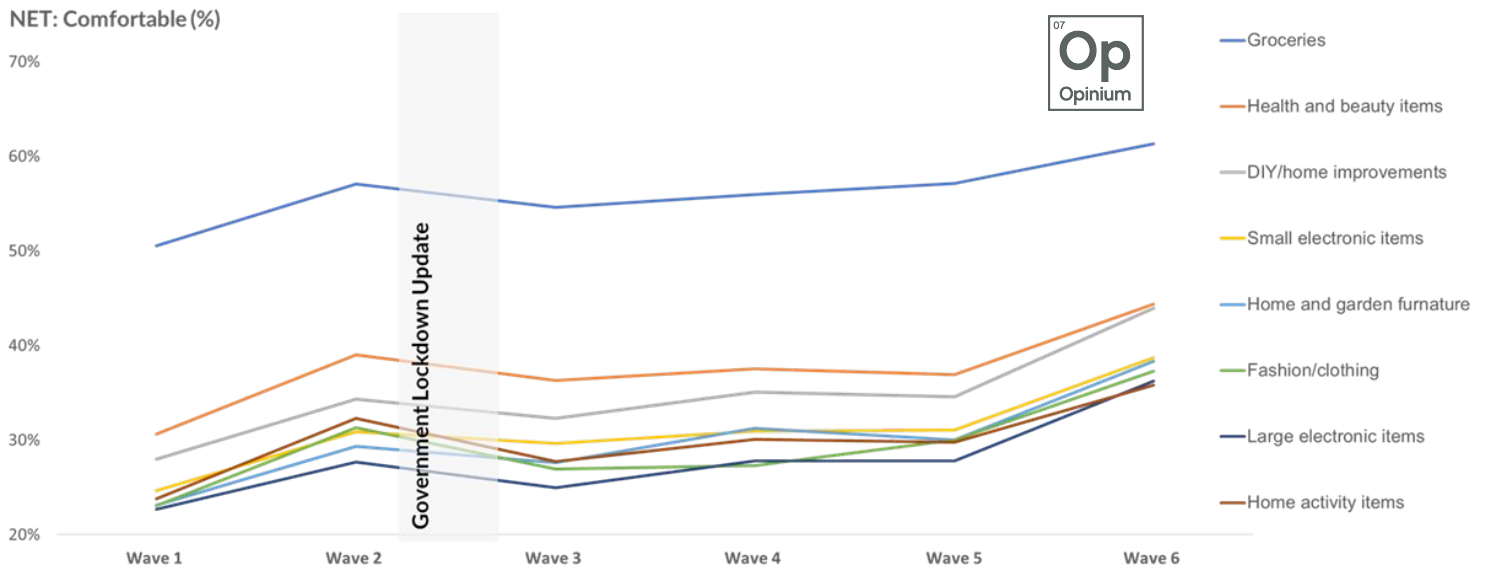
- Deep insights into cloud spend and guidance on cutting costs
- Customisable cloud management services
- Access to the expertise you need to achieve scalable, cost-efficient infrastructure
- Expert recommendations on the best-fit platform for optimal application performance at your chosen price point
- Assessment of your current environment to ensure your infrastructure is designed to scale responsively with changes in demand
- Actionable remediation recommendations

To book your complimentary consultation and discovery session -

[Speak with Leon](#) and reference VALIDIFY

Rapid Response Report - Solutions and Expertise

Unified Commerce





Source: data collected before Non-essential stores opened on June 15th

In the wake of the covid-19 crisis it's clear that all retailers must look to future proof their business and mitigate the impact of similar events in the future. The ultimate objective for all retailers should be to deliver a unified commerce experience. This not only delivers a superior customer experience, but maximises your businesses performance.

Establishing a unified commerce approach to your business requires you take a holistic view of your entire operation from your store estate to your online activity, wholesale and supply chain. Every retailer will be looking at their mix of bricks versus clicks in the coming months and we expect almost all brands to make cuts in the number of stores they operate. Inditex, owners of Zara's and other iconic high street brands are grasping the nettle and have already announced they will close up to 1,200 stores in the near future and invest heavily in their online and unified commerce capability.

Almost every brand will need to follow suit, but the smart ones will establish a holistic view of their business first. Simply selecting stores based on store turnover or profitability does not factor in the impact an individual store can have on your businesses overall ability to optimise local fulfilment such as click and collect, ship from store and dark store activity on a national or international level.

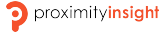
Operationally, retailers can no longer afford to have silo's, establishing a single view of customer, inventory, payments and content will set the foundations for achieving a unified business. Setting out on this journey can seem daunting, especially if your business is sitting on mission critical legacy tech, but there are incredible SaaS solutions available that can help take the pain out of the process.

The disparity between different types of retailers and categories continues, with clear divides between essential and online versus non-essential and physical. Sales of computing equipment, toys and other household goods remained strong- especially online - with home-working and entertainment firmly at the forefront of consumers' minds. Food and drink also performed well... By contrast, many non-essential categories - especially fashion - continued to attract limited demand which will increase the pressure on them in the coming months.

Source: BRC-KPMG Retail Sales Monitor May 2020

Sponsor profile



Validify says
"Exceptional 'real time' clienteling and commerce capability in a single app"



Product Overview

Our 'real time' clienteling and commerce platform delivers a virtual storefront allowing brands to connect with their customers anywhere, anytime. Create 1-1 outreach using email, SMS, Social and live video; offer enhanced experiences such as private appointments, shoppable lookbooks, personalised recommendations and generate compelling 'buy now' moments with seamless virtual payments.

Rapid Response Solution

Whether you are a brand with physical and online presence, online only, a wholesale brand wanting to connect directly with your consumer or a small independent our rapid deployment model and powerful suite of tools will support your customer facing teams to inspire and nurture customers physically, virtually and digitally 24/7.

Deployment Time

Rapid deployment timeline 2-4 weeks

Special Offer

We have reduced the cost and timeline for implementing a three month 'test & learn' pilot. Please reach out to hello@proximityinsight.com and quote VBRC2020

[FOR MORE INFORMATION CLICK HERE](#)

Testimonial



KENNEDY

"The clienteling app from Proximity Insight has revolutionised the way Kennedy engages with our clients. Sales Associates have real-time access to customer data, our team has been able to enhance our client's in-store experience and it allows us to create a truly personalised service when interacting with our clients online. This was a significant change in clienteling for the business. With it's easy to use features, and reporting dashboard, it was easy to see why we selected Proximity Insight. The support and guidance from the PI team made for an effective adoption amongst the retail team."

Sharon Gomez,
 Vice President Operations, Kennedy
 Luxury Group

Retailer story from the front line



Gabrielle Hase

Gabrielle Hase has worked with leading consumer brands such as McArthurGlen Group, Hobbs, LK Bennett, Sweaty Betty, Moonpig, The White Company, Knomo, and retailers Fenwick's, TK Maxx and Browns Fashion. Gabrielle is a Non-Executive Director for LS Retail, Ampliance and Tate Enterprises, the commercial arm of Tate Galleries.



"Now more than ever, retailers need to think about everything they do from the perspective of the customer. With supply chains disrupted, online emerging as the dominant (and during lockdown, only) sales channel, and strong customer communication mission-critical, retailers have been forced to reconsider how they do everything. It's against this background that unified commerce – the ability of retailers to present a holistic customer experience – must become a core competency.

"So what does this mean in practice? We are seeing the dialogue between customers (or visitors) and brands happening long before any transaction takes place. For example, to ensure social distancing measures can be observed, stores like French brand Jacadi, and cultural institutions like the Tate are offering timed visits, and customers and visitors are proving very willing to engage on this basis. All of a sudden, retailers have the opportunity to offer an almost concierge-like service to not only their customers (whom they've already been emailing) but to their prospects, whom they have never really had visibility of before. And far from simply being a selling tool, this dialogue is an opportunity for retailers to demonstrate how they are looking after people's health. It's yet another way to join up the dots."

Sponsor profile



Validate says

“Smart payment solutions improving consumer experience and loyalty across all channels”



Product Overview

emerchantpay is a leading payment solutions company helping retailers deliver a unified commerce experience internationally in-app, online and in-store. A global solution available through simple integration, with features including global acquiring, alternative payment methods, fraud and risk management and performance optimisation. emerchantpay enables businesses everywhere to create a seamless and engaging experience for consumers anywhere

Rapid Response Solution

Free up call centre time and liability concerns by using emerchantpay's Pay by link solution to enable fast, safe and secure payments. Enable drivers to send a payment link in real-time to delivery customers. Quickly increase payment success rates with transaction performance analysis. Deploy ApplePay In-Store and Online

Deployment Time

24 - 48 hours including Acquiring, Terminal deployment, eCommerce and App integration. 24/7 tech support and a streamlined integration process.

Special Offer

Until further notice emerchantpay is waiving set-up fees and providing payment terminals free of charge for the first 6 months for new customers to help them provide the best solution possible during, and in the wake of the COVID-19 crisis

[FOR MORE INFORMATION CLICK HERE](#)

Vendor profile



Validate says

“A powerful tool in right sizing and optimising your store network”



Product Overview

Storecast, is a retail network optimisation platform that leverages location intelligence, detailed digital mapping, predictive models and local market data to advise on retail location decisions. Fully cloud-hosted and dashboard driven, Storecast supports multi-branch retailers in optimising the locations and formats of their retail estate in a rapidly changing omnichannel retail landscape.

Rapid Response Solution

By quickly allowing retailers to assess their current estate and to assess the impact of closures, reformat or new channels, Storecast reduces the risk associated with costly network changes. Furthermore, it calculates the full revenue impact through all the trading channels including online and C&C. Once KPIs are established, Storecast can be a powerful tool to guide through complex network rationalisation and scenario testing.

Deployment Time

Deployment using standard datasets is eight to ten weeks. If custom data is required it may increase marginally.

Special Offer

For contracts signed in 2020, we are offering 20% off our annual fees for two-year licences.

[FOR MORE INFORMATION CLICK HERE](#)

Vendor profile



Validate says

“A fully-fledged adaptable native unified commerce platform”



Product Overview

A SaaS solution providing a native unified commerce platform consisting of an e-Commerce platform, order management and mobile Point of Sale system. This translates into a unified and flying cart that can travel across channels seamlessly. Proximis is plug-and-play and acts as a middle-layer between legacy systems and selling channels.

Rapid Response Solution

After adapting the standard platform:
 1. PROXIMIS-DRIVE: BOPIS using store stock and process payment online. Add a Pay-and-Collect service on the existing website.
 2. PROXIMIS-PROMISE: Sell all inventory online using an order manager while keeping the existing website.
 3. PROXIMIS-EXPRESS: Migrate your Ecommerce on a Commerce Platform (Ecommerce+OMS+mPOS*)

Deployment Time

1. Proximis Drive: About 30 days
 2. Proximis Promise: As from 60 days
 3. Proximis Express: As from 120 days

Special Offer

YES! Unified Express is available at a fixed annual licence fee starting as from £48 000 per year for a minimum contract period of 3 years: shift to unified commerce with an eCommerce platform, Order Management system and in-store task manager*. In terms of value and TCO, best deal ever.

[FOR MORE INFORMATION CLICK HERE](#)

Vendor profile



Validify says

“Single source of truth for product data is crucial to become a unified commerce business”



Product Overview

Everything you ever wanted from an Order Management System (and more).

Incredibly sophisticated rules to make your fulfilment smarter.

Easily enable click and collect, ship from store, drop shipping, in-store returns, cross border shipping and endless aisle.

Rapid Response Solution

Fulfil orders from any source and keep stock turning over.

Minimise the impact of distressed stock by selling it, no matter where it's located.

Use Comestri's Order Management System to ensure all your available stock is available to purchase from any sales channel.

Deployment Time

Typically we run a phased deployment; to add distributed shipping is typically 6 weeks.

All automation and features is typically 6 months.

Special Offer

No specific special offer available at this time for the Comestri OMS solution.

[FOR MORE INFORMATION CLICK HERE](#)

Vendor profile



Validify says

“A low risk means of selecting and testing new products and territories.”



Product Overview

Mirakl enables businesses to deploy a platform business model, connecting customers to products from 3rd-party sellers. Clients can rapidly increase assortment and range by harnessing the power of 3rd-party sellers, enter new categories and markets safely, without costly overheads, ultimately selling more products with greater profitability and margin.

Rapid Response Solution

Enable small and large enterprises to resolve the issues of shortage, access, and range of products. Benefits include, quick seller onboarding and recruitment, expansion into new categories, fast track curation and integration of 3rd party products onto your eCommerce website to ensure a truly endless aisle, securing the long tail.

Deployment Time

"48 hours to 10 days – see stopCOVID19.fr French government health product site launched in 37 hours"

Special Offer

Please contact us for more information

[FOR MORE INFORMATION CLICK HERE](#)

The Impact of Covid on Retail Real Estate

Right now the focus is on reopening stores safely and successfully, however., medium to long term the impact on high streets and retail real estates will be profound. The role of high streets will need to be completely reimagined in order to keep them relevant and it will require all parties to work together, including retailers, landlords and local government.

Appear Here are at the forefront of retail store transformation, providing the leading marketplace for pop-up spaces since 2012. Their CEO Ross Bailey gives his unique perspective on how Covid will impact the retail real estate market.

“The current crisis accelerates a trend we’ve been witnessing in retail for the last few decades – flexibility is what brands are asking for.” In 1992, leases were more than 20 years on average. Pre-COVID, they dropped to four-and-a-half years. The current uncertainty will only shorten rents further. The old leasing model is over. Traditional landlords will be forced to adapt their model if they want to survive. The old way doesn’t make sense, it can’t sustain flexible demand. It’s a long, drawn out process with multiple intermediaries, who are all offline and have different agents. It takes on average three to 12 months. At Appear Here, we’re obsessed with removing this friction. Brands search for space on our platform and connect directly with landlords, signing legals and completing payments online. The whole process takes just three to six days. We’re already seeing major landlords reaching out to us to help with this transformation.

“With flexibility becoming the new normal, rent needs to be rethought” Rent at a fixed cost and duration is no longer relevant. We should price retail more dynamically, as we price hotels and media. A dynamic model based on seasonality and impressions delivers better value, both for brands and landlords. Dynamic pricing will become the new normal.

“Dynamic pricing will give entrepreneurs more access to the high street.” It will bring more transparency to the retail industry. When digital took off, it made it possible for small brands to advertise their products; something they could have never imagined to do on broadcast media. But now digital channels are saturated and the costs have become prohibitive for most entrepreneurs. Dynamic prices can make physical retail accessible for small brands that could have never afforded it previously. Prices adjust dynamically to demand, allowing brands to book spaces when it works for them.

“More access means more diverse streets.” Diversity in retail benefits everyone. At Appear Here, we already see that 70% of the ideas on our platform come from women. More diverse brands have the advantage to adapt faster to the changing needs of local communities. Streets with independent brands also attract higher footfall. A great example of this is Notting Hill Fish Shop in West London. They are local fishmongers, who opened just before lockdown. They have been flooded with support and have seen their sales increase so much they’ve had to take a second location to meet demand. With more empty spaces after this crisis, there will be more opportunities for a new generation of brands and entrepreneurs to redefine our cities.

“The internet will save the high street.” With the exponential growth of mobile devices, online is everywhere. The idea of being at home with a laptop (other than during lockdown) is a thing of the past. Online will own the transactional side of commerce, but the High Street will still be the place where people find and connect with brands. We’re social creatures and we will want human connection more than ever after these months of self-isolation. If retail wants to remain relevant, it needs to bring a sense of belonging to our streets. It will also need to bring newness. At Appear Here, every year we run ‘Space for Ideas,’ a competition to help emerging creatives, designers and entrepreneurs get their ideas out there by giving them access to the best retail spaces. This year we launched during the pandemic but we still got over 2,500 applications of emerging brands eager to make their ideas happen in real life. This is why I’m optimistic about the future of the High Street.”

Additional Support

I hope that you found the experiences shared by senior retailers and selection of solutions valuable to help you to rapidly reinvent your stores and reopen safely and successfully.

We'd like to support all retailers during this time, so as well as this series of reports we would like to offer you FREE access to the Validify portal where you can discover hundreds of best of breed SaaS solutions:

<https://access.validify.co.uk/auth/register>

I also understand that some people may like to speak with somebody about their unique needs, so I am personally offering to support you, just email me:

fergal@validify.tech

Please look out for our next Rapid Response Report which will be sector focused on fashion and apparel in conjunction with Drapers Online, the B2B publication for the fashion and apparel industry.

Fashion retailers have been particularly heavily impacted by the pandemic, this report will provide insights and solutions specifically for the fashion industry.

Wishing you the best of health.

Fergal

