

# Strategies for Frontline Retail Success

How digital technologies reimagine customer and employee experiences

Get Started



## Challenges facing the retail industry

Retail businesses are adapting to major changes in consumer behaviors and employee expectations—trends that impact customer loyalty, frontline employee retention and business agility.

Widespread use of the internet and mobile applications around the globe have, in a sense, put IT into the hands of the public. Customers and employees have come to expect efficient digital interactions with the company as well as customer-first treatment.

Retail businesses have already been on a digital transformation path for their back office to reduce operational expenses and address security concerns. Now they are also faced with transforming how they interact with their customers and frontline employees.

Through our work with 19 of the top 20 retailers in the world as well as retailers of all sizes, VMware is seeing the industry's challenges firsthand.

- 1. Consumer behaviors have changed.** How people buy and what they expect from the purchase experience has changed, and retailers are scrambling to meet current and future needs. Retailers must find ways to remove friction in all stages of the buying process and deliver exceptional omni-channel experiences that interweave digital and physical channels.
- 2. Employee expectations have risen.** The “great resignation” trend has made employee retention more important than ever. The exodus has shed light on what frontline employees now expect from retail employers. As a result, retailers must reset their approach to talent attraction and employee experience.
- 3. IT must enhance the digital experience.** Whether for customers or employees, IT must provide device choice or flexibility, personalized digital experiences and modern app experiences. This would require proactive support and integrated device management that simplifies and smooths the user's digital experience. Inside the IT organization, automated management and data-driven decisions are necessary for a business-focused and positive IT work experience.



## Frontline retail digital transformation

Consumer and employee expectations are already changing, so it is essential for frontline retail organizations to address them with haste. Digital technologies provide the tools to deliver excellent experiences quickly and effectively. Transforming the business through digital technologies helps companies not only overcome their immediate needs and streamline processes, but also to maintain a competitive edge and ensure long-term resilience.

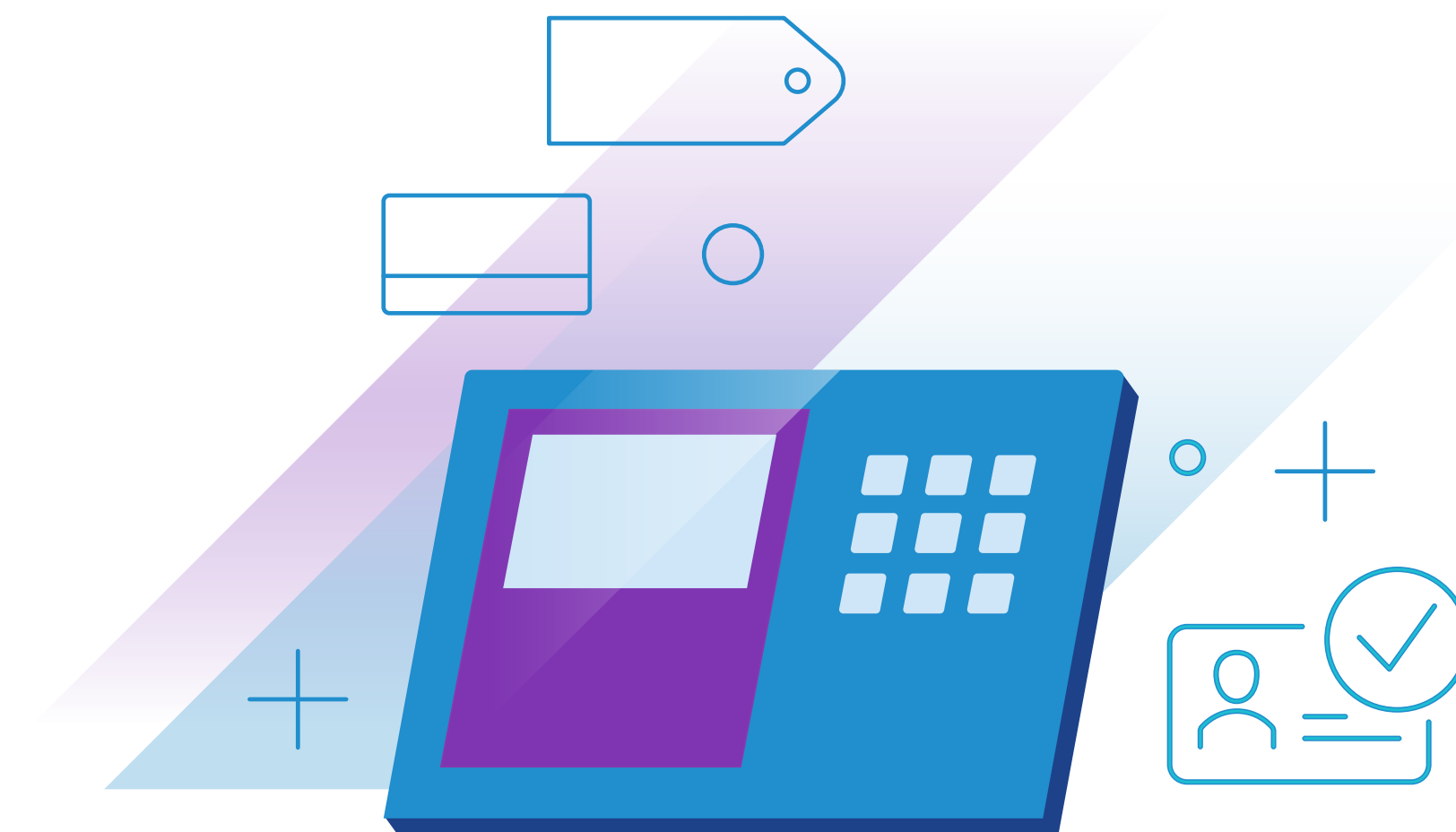
**To improve the employee experience—and therefore retention—organizations are using digital technologies to**

- Increase communication, engagement and collaboration
- Improve training
- Proactively minimize device and application onboarding complexity
- Reduce network and application downtime
- Provide better IT support

To boost worker productivity, improve customer experiences and enhance the employee's relationship with the customer, organizations are moving beyond traditional corporate-owned device deployments to include new options such as Bring-Your-Own (BYO) and Corporate-Owned, Personally Enabled (COPE) devices. Interactive kiosks and digital signage bring important information to customers and virtual reality headsets create realistic training scenarios.

**Digital technologies are also addressing top IT challenges, such as providing**

- Analytics and insights for proactive IT management
- Role-based technology dashboards and data access
- Unified platforms for integrated device management
- Automation for operational efficiency and optimization
- Sophisticated tools, such as artificial intelligence (AI), to reduce security threats
- Cloud-based infrastructure that scales as the business and digital traffic grow





## STRATEGY FOR SUCCESS: Deliver omni-channel experiences

### The situation

Customers have high expectations of retail companies. They desire a consistent, unified and accurate engagement across their many contact points with the company, whether physical or digital. Customers feel so strongly about being treated well and efficiently that they will readily switch to a competitor if their expectations are not being met.



### How retailers are innovating

Retail organizations are using digital technologies to deliver seamless, insight-driven omni-channel customer experiences across multiple points of interaction. These solutions make it easy for customers to find what they are looking for and to rapidly complete the sale.

Stimulated by COVID shut-downs, stores have taken on new roles as mini distribution centers. Customers can conveniently order online and pick up their purchases curbside or have them delivered locally, all orchestrated by efficient backend systems.

In store, modernized POS terminals enable self-checkout and gather customer feedback. Returns are simplified by having purchase and customer data readily available. Interactive kiosks have moved well beyond being maps of the mall. They assist and enhance the buying experience by providing product recommendations and product inquiries on location, inventory and price. At some retailers, customers can even use kiosks with augmented reality (AR) applications to see how a product looks on them.

Employees are being empowered with handheld devices so they can be the company's face to the customer anywhere in the store, helping shoppers locate products, check inventory and answer questions.

Digital signage and large monitors are being used throughout retail stores to communicate spontaneous sales, product information and marketing messaging.

## Implications on technologies

Omni-channel technologies enable seamless and simple end-user experiences.

To provide a consistent experience, multiple devices and channels need access to accurate, single-source-of-truth data that is updated in real time. For example, inventory is managed and tracked holistically across POS scanners, new shipments and curbside pickups. Similar orchestration is used for customer purchase shipments, deliveries and pickups.

Many devices are in use, ranging from frontline mobile devices to scanners to interactive kiosks. They all need to be managed efficiently, no matter what operating system or platform they run on.

All those devices are continuously generating customer and product data that provide powerful insights on aggregated customer behavior and preferences, inventory and more. The data from all devices must be combined and analyzed, with integrated results presented on a single pane of glass to enable rapid business decision-making.

In this environment, security becomes an important factor, with 79 percent of companies citing it as their major challenge.<sup>1</sup> Each device must be configured appropriately to enable user access to what the company wants the customer to see while locking out access to specific applications, such as Facebook, from a kiosk.

Multiple siloed IT solutions can't support omni-channel experiences. Instead, what is needed is a single system that manages all the devices (independent of operating system or platform), gathers and analyzes data and generates reports. Aggregated visibility by a single system makes it easy for IT to configure and lock down devices based on the user type.

As business models continue to change and evolve, it's important to deploy IT solutions that provide the agility needed for retailers to adapt to market trends.

## Solution spotlight

VMware Workspace ONE enables a consistent and accurate customer experience through its integrated, reliable, secure and high-performance management of retail hardware such as inventory, kiosks, handhelds and smart phones. The solution replaces costly, time-consuming, manual processes with complete lifecycle automation, management and governance both on-premises and across clouds. Secure, high-performance, multi-tenant access is provided for SaaS apps, voice systems and infrastructure. Speeding infrastructure and application delivery also improves fulfillment and fleet workflows—and the customer experience.

Through Workspace ONE's unified endpoint management, an organization can manage any endpoint with a single platform that provides maximum visibility and security, consolidates existing management silos and reduces costs. Easy app management provides consistent and positive self-service customer and user experiences.

Devices of any type, operating system or platform can be easily enrolled and uploaded into the Workspace ONE platform. IT benefits from consolidated visibility to all the enrolled devices and can push software updates, configure, and lock down individual or groups of devices. Securing access to applications without storing data on POS or mPOS systems streamlines compliance to PCI audits.

1. VMware, Inc. "IT Insights from Today's Frontline Organizations." August 2022.  
(Based on a survey conducted by Foundry and commissioned by VMware.)



## STRATEGY FOR SUCCESS: Reimagine the employee experience

### The situation

Frontline employee turnover is higher than ever—with retail facing a turnover rate as high as 60 percent.<sup>2</sup> Such a churn in employees has a major impact on all areas of retail businesses. High turnovers result in ballooning training costs for new hires and cause understaffing that puts pressure on the remaining team who must cover for them. A poor workplace culture and inefficient digital experiences do not encourage the remaining workers to stay engaged or loyal.

#### Many of the top frontline worker frustrations are related to technology, such as

- Device or application downtime and connectivity issues
- Inconsistent experiences across devices and apps
- Challenge of serving customers in an omni-channel environment
- Insufficient IT support
- Lack of communication and collaboration
- Inadequate training
- Inefficient shift scheduling processes

### How retailers are innovating

Retail organizations are creating positive work environments that provide a satisfying frontline employee experience. Successful companies engage with and listen to their workers. They support a culture that is sensitive to their employees' desire to help customers and to have a flexible and responsive work environment. They readily solicit employee feedback and ideas.

A positive employee experience begins with Day 1. Leading retailers are providing engaging company training on the company's culture, HR and IT processes and crisis management. They are doing this with videos and using virtual reality (VR) headsets that provide immersive experiences and coaching on how to handle difficult customer or safety situations that might be encountered.

Some retail enterprises are moving away from shared devices that frontline employees pick up from a docking station when they begin their shift and return when they leave, instead supporting BYO and COPE deployments.

- **With BYO, employees can access company benefits** and shift scheduling applications at any time, day or night.
- **COPE provides an incentive to new hires** by giving them a device for personal as well as work use. This approach not only opens the market to people who don't have smartphones or can't afford a plan, but also bootstraps them into the digital age. Off the clock, they can use the device for personal calls, texts and the web, as well as accessing corporate resources, such as shift scheduling and benefits. On the clock, the device is restricted to their job functions.

Extending connectivity to COPE and BYO devices strengthens engagement between the worker and the company. Some 97 percent of frontline organizations say offering BYO or COPE has helped them attract and retain skilled workers.<sup>3</sup> This strategy not only generates loyalty, but boosts productivity and reduces training and procurement costs.

Enabling and encouraging communication between frontline workers and the company strengthens employee loyalty and reduces turnover.

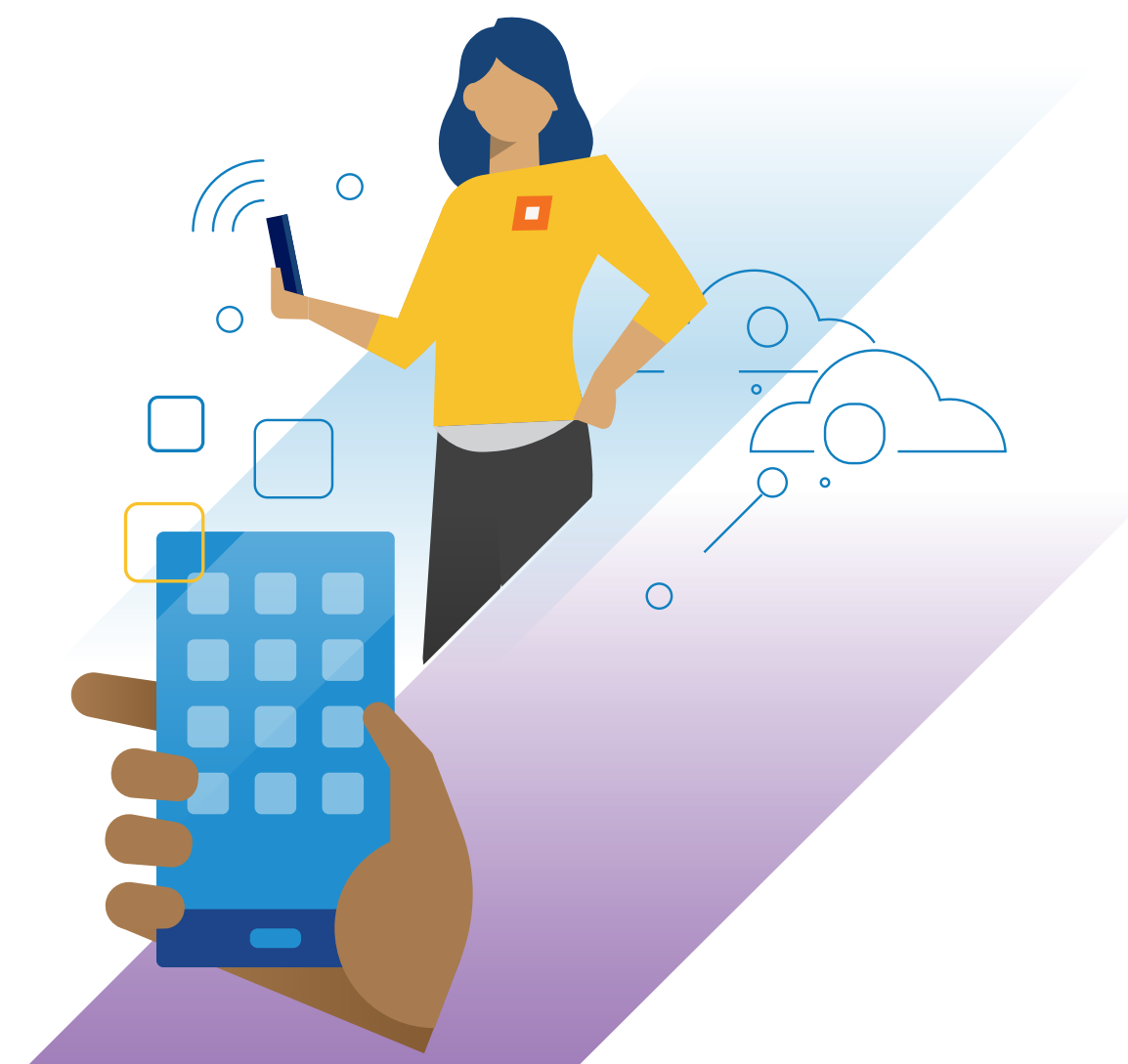
2. Workday, "Frontline Workplaces: Experiencing High Turnover? The Cause May Be Your Manager." January 2023.  
3. VMware, Inc. "IT Insights from Today's Frontline Organizations." August 2022.  
(Based on a survey conducted by Foundry and commissioned by VMware.)

## Implications on technologies

Technologies play an important role in employee attraction and retention.

Providing employees with quick and easy onboarding of their phone and access to company applications is essential. Employees need access to the same digital information as their customers to provide excellent service. Tools are needed to train new frontline hires so they are prepared to put their best foot forward with customers. Technologies can simplify employee communication and encourage feedback, which foster a supportive workplace culture.

Shared or personal employee-facing devices should be managed and configured via a single platform. Single sign-on to corporate applications is essential. While enabling workers to use BYO and COPE devices provides a bevy of benefits, it also brings IT complexities. Some 60 percent of frontline companies<sup>4</sup> struggle to efficiently support those devices because they require management features, like shift-based access control that enables IT to selectively restrict and enable access to sensitive corporate content by user and time of day. Also, users need to be able to automatically register their device for configuration, monitoring and management.



## Solution spotlight

VMware Workspace ONE makes it easy for employees to support their customers across all channels, by providing real-time analytics and digital access to systems such as inventories and shipping.

Workspace ONE XR Hub is the first solution specifically designed to streamline XR device management. It's an end-to-end enterprise solution that includes device, application, access and employee experience management. With Workspace ONE XR Hub, retailers can securely deploy XR devices at scale and deliver an exceptional employee experience with customization options and identity and access controls. Regardless of what VR devices or apps the organization relies on, Workspace ONE XR Hub ensures delivery of a consistent enterprise experience that's easy for both employees or customers to use.

4. VMware, Inc. "IT Insights from Today's Frontline Organizations." August 2022.  
(Based on a survey conducted by Foundry and commissioned by VMware.)

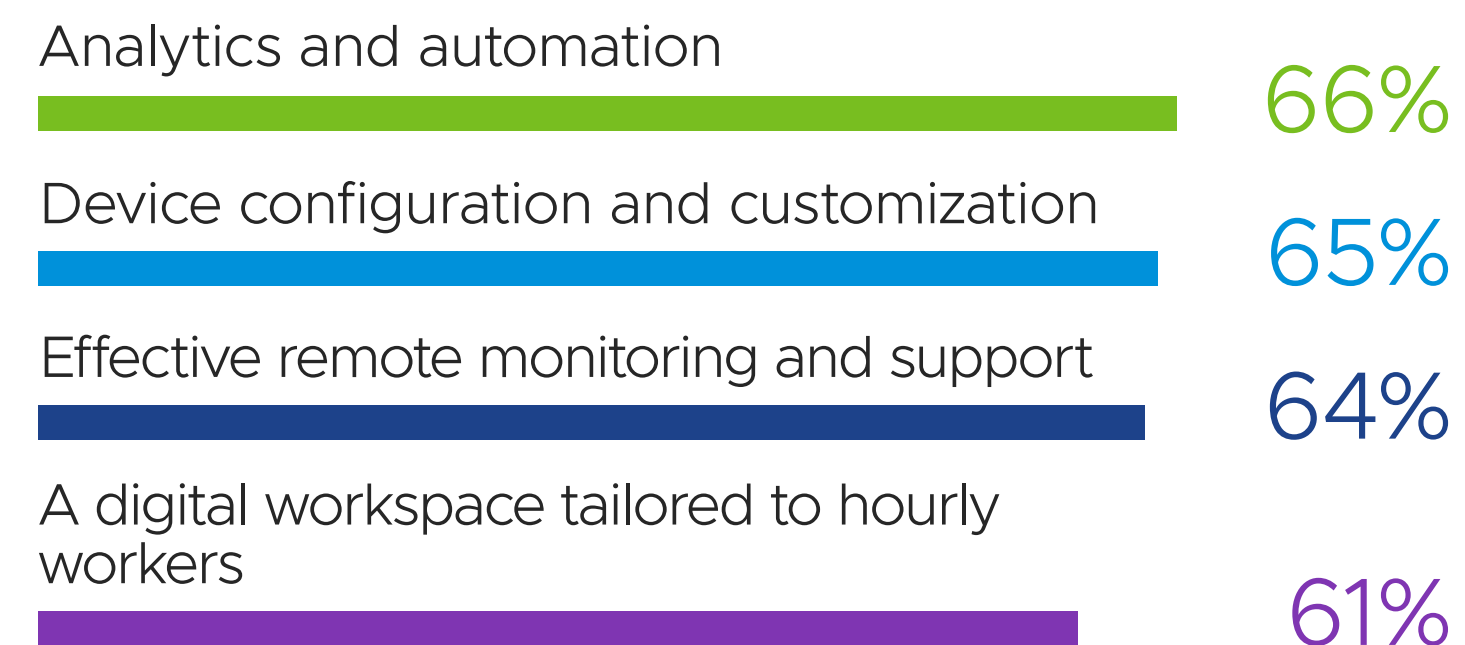


## STRATEGY FOR SUCCESS: Streamline IT

### The situation

Meeting the challenges of providing omni-channel customer and enhanced employee experiences is complicated for IT. Most legacy store systems consist of siloed solutions that can't support the agility and integration required to digitally transform customer-facing systems. Taking small steps to improve them is costly, adds complexity and security risks, and limits retailer flexibility. This piecemeal approach does not meet the evolving expectations of customers and employees.

**A recent survey<sup>5</sup> of frontline organizations indicated these top IT challenges, with about equal weight:**



### How retailers are innovating

Successful retail companies are creating great customer and employee experiences by deploying intelligent, flexible and automated solutions that integrate across devices and provide actionable insights to guide IT actions. The new IT model is “always on” and uses advanced technologies to share information across devices and device types and to provide single-pane-of-glass visibility and insights.

By streamlining and automating IT, retailers are also creating great experiences for their IT employees, who can now be proactive instead of in perpetual “too little, too late” reactive situations.

For retail, inventory automation manages the flow of goods in and out of the company: shipments in, scanner results on items sold, and reorders needed. The inventory data the process depends on must be both accurate and up to date. Intelligence on recent customer preferences can indicate whether a fashion is selling quickly or on the decline. Those data-driven insights are also used to make restocking decisions.

Device diversity has become a powerful tool for employee retention. Retailers are supporting multiple device types by deploying solutions that can enroll any device and then configure what it is authorized to access and when, and what needs to be locked down. IT can also detect when a device is not working properly or requires a software update, and can take action proactively instead of waiting for failure and receipt of a trouble ticket.

**Retailers are making strategic use of the wealth of data that is being generated by creating metrics, for example:**

- Measuring the end user experience
- Knowing how often applications crash
- Researching how customers are using intelligent kiosks

5. VMware, Inc. “IT Insights from Today’s Frontline Organizations.” August 2022.  
(Based on a survey conducted by Foundry and commissioned by VMware.)



## Implications on technologies

Digital technologies can transform how retailers interact with their customers and frontline employees. At the same time, the new technologies can streamline IT, enabling the IT team to be more proactive.

System silos that handle specific functions are being replaced with holistic, integrated solutions that are scalable, robust and flexible and have the agility to support new ideas. These unified solutions provide snapshot visibility to the big picture as well as granular details that enable effective IT management.

Data—and the intelligence it can generate—enables data-driven decisions that are fundamental to frontline IT transformation. The data must be aggregated, even if coming from heterogeneous environments, and then analyzed. Automated decisions can be made immediately, or actionable insights provided for manual evaluation and prioritization.

Automation should be used wherever feasible to speed processes, reduce human error and to minimize costs. For example, frontline devices can be tracked automatically to ensure they are up to date. Software updates are pushed to devices as needed. And devices can be reconfigured from a central location and, when problems occur, IT can provide remote support and remediation.

Having the tools to perform their jobs more effectively improves the IT employee experience and attracts top talent. Increased productivity and efficiency are good for the business.



## Solution spotlight

While mobile and wearable devices can improve supply chain processes, these and other IoT technologies also introduce significant IT complexity. Workspace ONE is a unified endpoint management (UEM) solution purpose-built with the technology requirements of frontline supply chain professionals in mind. With Workspace ONE, frontline supply chain team members benefit from low-touch enrollment and options to check-in, check-out or lockdown shared devices. Additionally, Workspace ONE provides comprehensive app analytics and automation, along with real-time control capabilities that allow for remote user support, whether onsite or in the field. Workspace ONE is scalable, allowing IT teams to remain agile and responsive in the face of evolving technology needs.

# How VMware helps

STRATEGY: DELIVER OMNI-CHANNEL EXPERIENCES		
Priorities	Technology Requirements	VMware Solutions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Address customers’ expectation of interacting with retailers across multiple channels with convenience and efficiency at every step of the buying journey</li><li>• Avoid deploying disjointed technologies that amplify data collection and security challenges while fracturing the customer experience</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Single, centralized solution to manage and secure all devices, across all platforms</li><li>• Flexible support for every device type: kiosks, digital signage, COPE, COSU and BYO</li><li>• Easy app management to provide consistent and positive self-service customer and user experiences</li><li>• Automation of routine tasks to simplify and streamline interactions</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• VMware Workspace ONE</li><li>• VMware Workspace ONE Unified Endpoint Management (UEM)</li><li>• VMware Launcher</li><li>• VMware Horizon</li></ul>





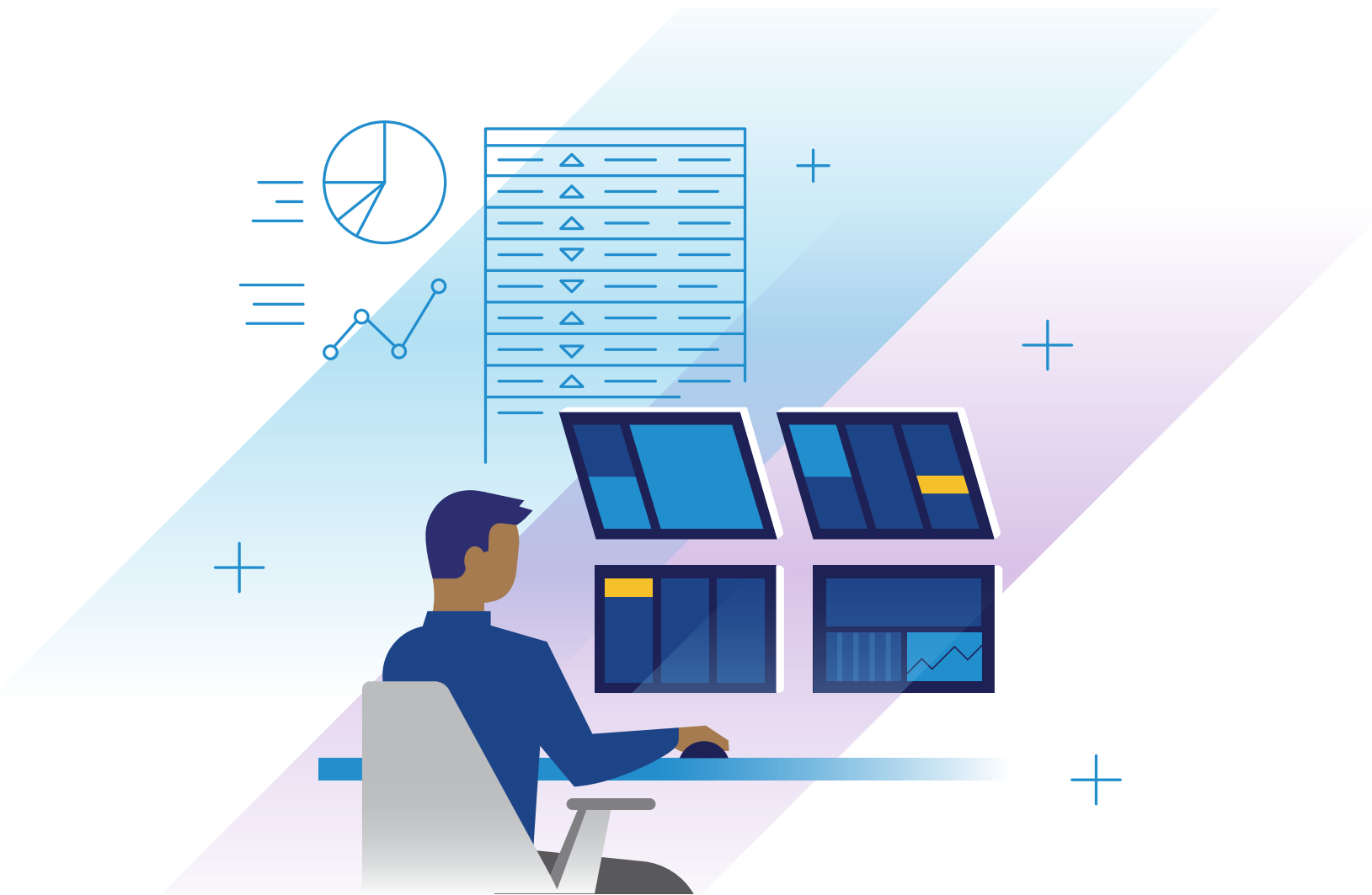
# How VMware helps

STRATEGY: REIMAGINE THE EMPLOYEE EXPERIENCE		
Priorities	Technology Requirements	VMware Solutions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Deliver opportunities for skills growth and higher job satisfaction to attract top talent and build an engaged, high-performing team</li><li>• Curb attrition by using technology to enhance onboarding, solicit feedback, foster a positive workplace culture and deliver relevant training through COPE and BYO devices</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Streamlined BYO device enrollment</li><li>• Managed check-in / check-out and customizable user experiences for COPE devices</li><li>• Centralized dashboard for device monitoring and management</li><li>• Seamless content distribution to BYO and COPE devices</li><li>• Accessible remote support for all frontline team members</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• VMware Workspace ONE</li><li>• VMware Workspace ONE Unified Endpoint Management (UEM)</li><li>• VMware Launcher</li><li>• VMware Horizon</li><li>• VMware Workspace ONE Intelligent Hub</li><li>• VMware Workspace ONE Intelligence</li><li>• VMware Workspace ONE Digital Employee Experience Management (DEEM)</li><li>• VMware Workspace ONE Assist</li></ul>



# How VMware helps

STRATEGY: <b>STREAMLINE IT</b>		
Priorities	Technology Requirements	VMware Solutions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Address the complexity that arises from the move away from outmoded paper and fixed terminal processes to mobiles and wearables</li><li>• Scale out retail infrastructure with cloud and virtualization technologies to meet seasonal demand and accelerate modernization without the need to update hardware</li><li>• Configure and enable shift-based access to restrict access to corporate data when employees aren't on shift</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Unified endpoint management (UEM) to manage and secure all devices and ensure they are always up to date</li><li>• Support for the full spectrum of device types including desktops, laptops, tablets, smartphones, rugged devices, VR headsets, mobile printers and kiosks</li><li>• Robust privacy and zero-trust security for both personally owned devices and shared corporate assets</li><li>• Comprehensive, self-service app catalog to give employees access to all app types, including native, SaaS, web and virtual</li><li>• Real-time visibility into the entire technology environment to drive informed, data-driven decisions</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• VMware Workspace ONE</li><li>• VMware Workspace ONE Unified Endpoint Management (UEM)</li><li>• VMware Workspace ONE Assist</li><li>• VMware Workspace ONE Assist for Horizon</li><li>• VMware Workspace ONE Intelligent Hub</li></ul>







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