MERCAUX

The Ultimate Guide for Retailers:

# How to Launch a Connected Store

# What is a Connected Store?



The pandemic has resulted in a digital wake-up for retailers, with many rethinking the role of their physical stores and how these stores are fitting in with today's unified commerce agenda.

"The Connected Store" is not just the next store format, it is a new way of conducting business that allows you to connect physical and digital experiences that your customers are demanding, realise much higher profits, but most importantly – stay relevant in the ever-changing retail world.

In this guide we share how your connected stores might look, the first steps your team needs to take and what technologies you should consider integrating into your unified commerce strategies.

**Olga Kotsur, Co-Founder & CEO - Mercaux**

# The Retail Technology Ecosystem

With a retailer's technology stack growing exponentially over years of operating, pressures from internal stakeholders to deploy new technologies and functions quickly is often at the detriment of spending additional time to carefully integrate these with the existing technologies already in situ. To this point, a movement that is increasing in popularity is Unified Commerce. Gartner describes this as:

*"The practice of providing flexibility, continuity and consistency across digital and physical channels to deliver a superior customer experience."*



**Single Channel**

**Multi Channel**

**Omnichannel**

**Unified Commerce**
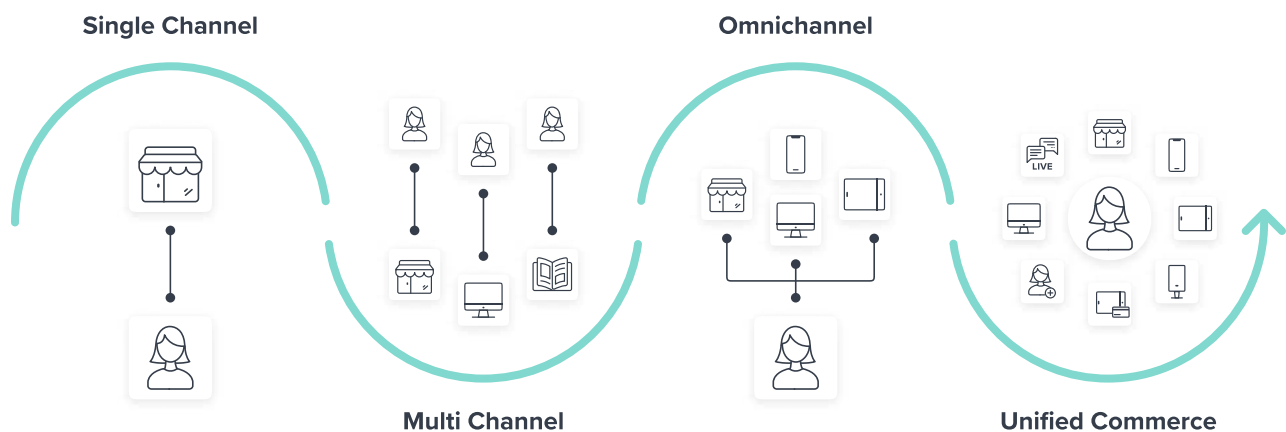
The pandemic has served to increase the popularity of this movement as the reliance on ecommerce has set a precedent for higher service levels in-store, from accessing product information and availability, through to personalised recommendations and multiple fulfilment options.

So, this is why the Connected Store — bringing the best that ecommerce has to offer into brick-and-mortar stores — has become one of the top priorities for retailers looking to exceed the expectations of returning customers. The big challenge that retailers still face is how to bring all the incumbent technologies together so that customers benefit from receiving a personalised and bespoke service, regardless of the channel they use to interact with your brand. For staff — be they in-store, online or sat in head office — the connected store brings benefits company-wide, examples of which we share in a few pages time.

Retail HQ Teams have long benefited from a variety of data points to help inform the future strategies of the business across various ecommerce, inventory management, POS, marketing systems etc. When you look at the store, often you will find footfall data and POS to reveal conversion. The behaviours of staff, customers and product availability that affect that conversion in the path-to-purchase is not tracked in the same binary way. The missing piece of the unified commerce puzzle is the technologies deployed in-store to measure such touch points — the in-store cloud which facilitates the connected store.
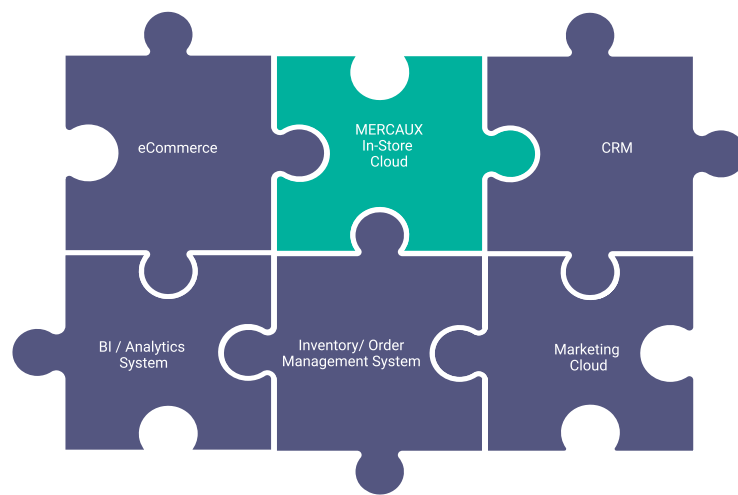


How does unification work in practice? Below is a simple diagram that shows how the Mercaux Cloud pulls information from the existing technology stacks to help deliver a superior customer experience in-store, but also pushes in-store data back out again to ensure the customer has a superior omnichannel experience — be that online, in another store or remotely
through personalised communications:

# 3 Benefits to Connectivity In-Store

**The Connected Store first and foremost delivers a superior customer experience, but the benefits are also felt hugely by Sales Associates and HQ Teams alike. This guide now highlights some of the more popular scenarios that each group benefits when operating a connected store.**



Connected Store Associates

Connected HQ

Connected Customers

# 1. Connected Store Associates

## Assisted Selling & Clienteling

Empower Sales Associates with real-time inventory, product & cross-sell information, along with the ability to deliver a truly personalised experience by accessing a 360-degree view of a customer's previous in-store & online interactions with your brand.

## Omnichannel & mPOS

Save lost sales by viewing availability in other stores or online for products not available in-store, email the customer the products they have viewed in-store for purchase at a later date (or for your online teams to use in remarketing) or complete the transaction by the customer's side with mobile payment integration.

## Floor Runner & Fulfilment Centre

Send product requests to the stock room from the shop floor or digital fitting room and fulfil ship-from-store or buy online pickup in-store (BOPIS) by turning your stores into mini fulfilment centres.

Mercaux's Assisted Selling and Clienteling Solutions

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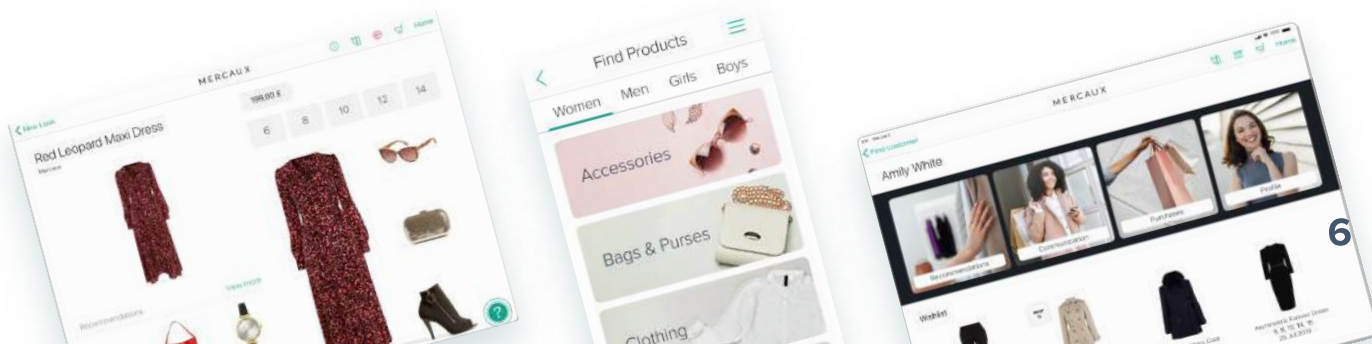
# 2. Connected Customers In-Store



## Remote Selling & Appointments

Deliver the personal touch to stay-at-home shoppers with 121 remote selling capabilities using SMS, WhatsApp, Video Calling or Email, or offer Appointments for them to visit the store or the fitting room at specified times.

## B2C Web App & Self-Service Kiosks

Provide customers with their own in-store digital shopping assistant by accessing all the benefits of the connected store on their own phones or allow them to access the endless aisle of products and ability to transact through touch-screen kiosks.





## Digital Fitting Room

Connect customers in the fitting room with product descriptions and availability as well as Store Associates on the shop floor. Customers scan a barcode to reveal recommendations for complementary products or alternatives and request these to be brought to the fitting room for them to try on.

Mercaux's B2C Web App Solution
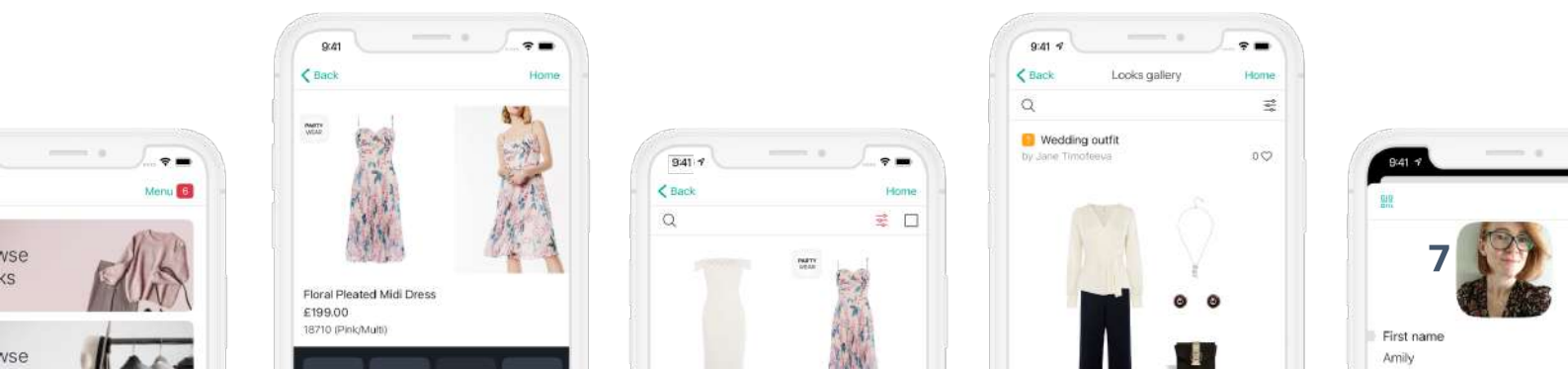
# 3. Connected HQ Teams

## HQ Portal: Advanced Analytics

Analytics, such as those found in Mercaux's HQ Portal, records every interaction with the technology that you've deployed in-store to reveal in-store customer behaviour, staff performance and product interest data to inform future growth strategies by improving the customer's path-to-purchase.

## HQ Portal: Content Management

HQ Teams should be able to configure every element of the Apps remotely to match your branding with fully adjustable UI and UX elements. Teams should also define what products should be displayed as alternatives to recapture lost sales or create recommendations to inspire customers to increase their basket size.

Mercaux's HQ Portal - Analytics
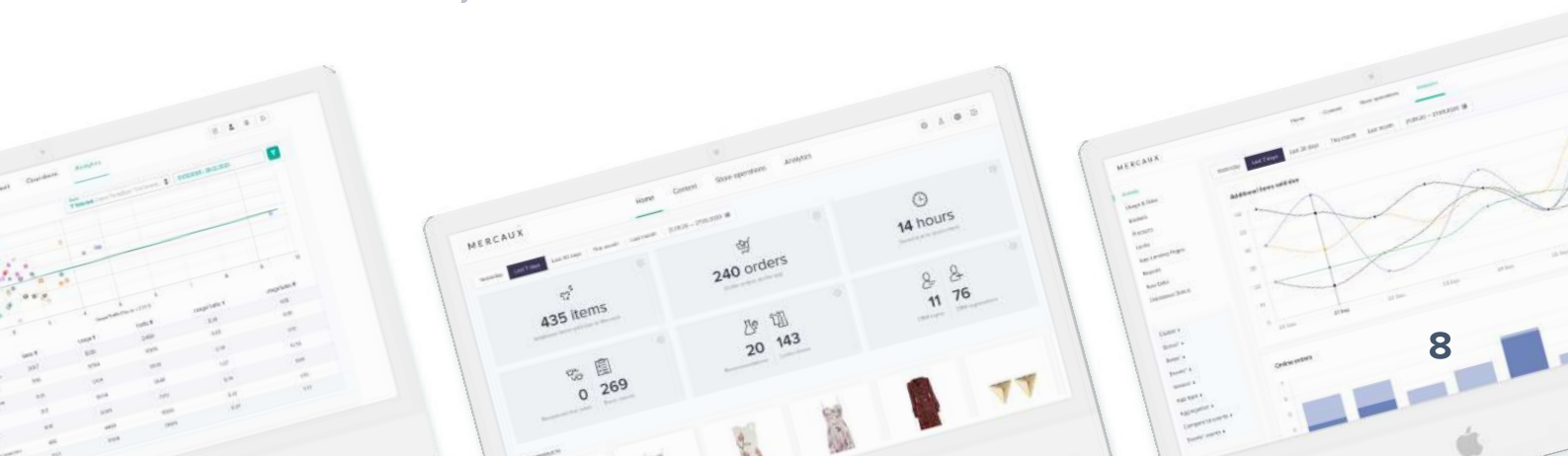
# Are your stores ready to be connected?

It's actually a lot easier to launch a connected store than you might think, using existing technologies that are live in your businesses today. Coupled with this,
is the preconception that big CAPEX, long project & rollout schedules, intense training and adoption programmes for staff (and customers) will be needed – this is simply not true.

Partnering with the right vendor will ensure that all the heavy lifting is done on their end and integrations are with your existing technology stack, not a whole new set of technologies that you will need to invest in and deploy. If you'd like to learn more on/about how this is achieved, take a look at our checklist on the next page that links out to some helpful articles.
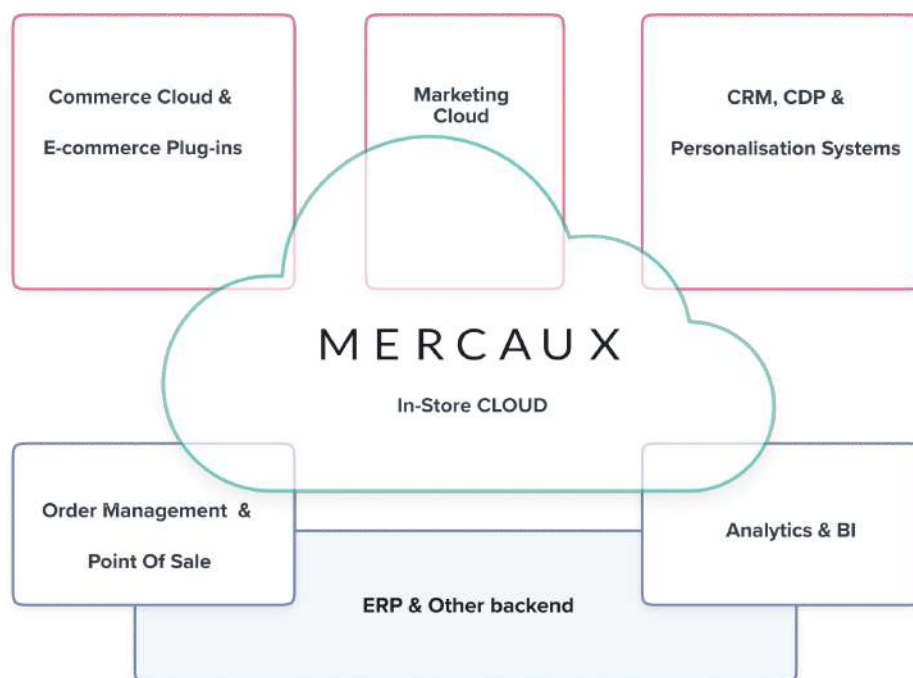


The Mercaux In-Store Cloud integrates with a retailer's exisiting technology stack

# The Connected Store Checklist

**1**    **Produce an audit of your internal systems and the data points.**
(read this best practice article from our own CTO)

**2**    **Understand the success metrics and ensure you can measure them**
(read this article on measuring in-store technology success)

**3**    **Priorotise the scenarios that will be the most beneficial first and create**
**a digital transformation roadmap to add new solutions later**
(visit our digital transformation journey page here)

**4**    **Choose an intuitive technology that will be easily adopted by staff and customers alike (Check out Mercaux's own intuitive solutions here)**

**5**    **Set up a proof of concept phase to test connected stores against similar stores which are not connected**
(See how Holland & Barrett launched their connected store pilot here)

**6**    **Once success has been achieved, roll out to the full estate of stores in a controlled manner to ensure high adoption by staff**
(See how Nike saw a 15% improvement in conversion by connecting)

**7**    **Continually evolve your in-store digital capabilities over time to bring even greater benefit to your customers**
(See how Tryano rolled out their connected stores over time here)

**Finally, click here if you would like to learn more about Unified Commerce.**

# About Mercaux

Mercaux was awarded "Retail Technology Vendor of the Year" in the Retail Technology Innovation Hub Awards – December 2020.

Mercaux powers the Connected Store. We help retailers deliver superior omnichannel customer experiences by bringing the best of digital and physical retail together.

We equip Sales Associates and stores with the digital tools they need to serve and sell smarter, across the entire customer journey. The solutions are operated by Sales Associates using a tablet-based app or self-served by customers using touch screen kiosks or their own phones via a web-based App. All the solutions are managed by a HQ Platform.

Our core solutions Sales Assist, Omnichannel and Clienteling equip staff with instant access to product information, company-wide inventory, digital content, customers' profiles and wish lists, through to mobile checkout capabilities. Additional add-ons such as AI-driven Styling Suggestions, Store and Customer Communications and Advanced Analytics elevate stores towards a fully integrated digital ecosystem.

The use of this technology also opens the black box of in-store data so retailers can understand what actions contribute to a sale (or lost basket) in a customer's path-to-purchase by revealing customer behaviours, staff performance and product funnels.

When clients like Nike, French Connection and Benetton adopt digital tools in their stores, they see an increase in conversion, loyalty and units per transaction (UPT). On average they experience a sales uplift of 8% and 5x ROI.

**RWRC DISCOVERY 50**

We're excited to be listed in Retail Week's Discovery 50 list, which shines a light on the world's top tech companies whose innovative solutions are supporting the retail sector both during the pandemic and in the future.

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