

Advancing Retail Operations: From Facilitating Customer Journeys to Shaping Them

Robert Rooderkerk

Rotterdam School of Management, Erasmus University

The retail sector remains one of the largest and most dynamic industries. Spurred by the COVID-19 pandemic, many retailers have further strengthened the omnichannel nature of their business models. To date, much attention has focused on removing friction from the customer journey. However, companies at the omnichannel frontier have now entered an era of optimization. Rather than merely facilitating customer journeys, they are actively shaping them in ways that balance effectiveness, efficiency, and sustainability. In this talk, I will describe this evolution using diverse examples from practice. I will then zoom in on the role of retail analytics in enabling this new era of omnichannel optimization and outline promising avenues for future research.