

How invisible tech will underpin the retail store of the future

By [Peter Ludi](#)

23 Jun 2023

Building the retail store of the future requires a fundamental shift in perspective: the withdrawal of technology from the front and centre to the background. The key theme for the future retail environment is a pivot away from traditional customer engagement through fixed points of sale, and instead towards things like mobile PoS, small handheld terminals, and other forms of 'invisible' technology.



Peter Ludi, MD Solutions at redPanda Software

The future store will allow customers to transact in an unnoticeable manner – without downloading apps or needing to engage with physical terminals. It is about focusing on the always-on, silent technology that enables frictionless shopping experiences. The early stages of this transition can already be seen through self-checkout systems, autonomous stores, and RFID technology.

Why this dramatic shift? The aim is to free the consumer to fully engage with the brand and its products. Retailers will be able to focus on showcasing their products and fostering the theatre of shopping, allowing technology to quietly facilitate transactions and payments. This approach also brings commercial effectiveness by freeing up valuable floor space traditionally allocated to in-store computers and other terminals.

We have always been committed to the philosophy that technology should serve retail, not the other way around. As retail software development and solutions experts, we recognise that the future of retail is not centred around flashy technology, but rather around the invisible, seamless application of it.



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Load shedding woes

For South African retailers, it is essential to consider factors like load shedding and ensuring data reaches the right place. Think about it as planning for full redundancy. Prioritising conversations with software and solutions providers is crucial for navigating these unique challenges and preparing for the retail store of the future.

We grapple with these issues daily, providing best-in-class solutions that incorporate cloud-first technologies, understanding the local context while ensuring rapid time to value. Our passion lies in invigorating the retail industry through innovative, non-traditional approaches.

Now might be the perfect moment for South African retailers to explore an African-centric approach to these challenges. It is not about expensive infrastructure. Instead, the focus is on using cost-effective technologies like RFID antennas and clever merchandising to drive the autonomous experience.



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Future planning

For retailers facing budget constraints, planning more effectively for the future retail store is key. The art lies in balancing the possibilities of current technology with the envisioned experience of the future store.

We are not tied to promoting specific technology or product agendas. Our approach is about custom-building solutions for your specific retail environment, considering the unique challenges of the South African retail industry. The building blocks are there: numerous purpose-built components, and a wealth of cloud-based solutions. The challenge lies in identifying the right technology, applied in the right format to make sense for your retail environment.

For too long, retailers have been forced to make decisions based on the agendas driven by their service providers. Our priority is integrating what exists and customising solutions to unlock the future potential of retail. The essence of the future retail store is in having as little visible technology as possible.

In challenging times like these, amazing innovations are born. The retail store of the future requires a light-touch approach where technology becomes completely invisible, allowing for a customer-centred, immersive retail experience.

Any investment made should primarily enhance this customer experience rather than the technology itself.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Peter Ludi, MD Solutions at redPanda Software