Retail distribution channels are under pressure from expanding ecommerce sales, a drop in brand loyalty, and an increase in the influence of social networks on purchase decisions. Consumer buying patterns have changed as Millennials gain buying power. With more access to more information on products and services, shoppers can compare products, services, and prices before making a purchase decision.

The volatile fashion sector, under pressure from dropping store traffic and the rise of subscription services like RentTheRunway and Stitch Fix, is turning to technology to reclaim market share. Global analyst firm McKinsey, pointing to the many challenges faced by retailers, reports “20 percent of fashion players created 100 percent of economic profit over the past decade, while the bottom 20 percent of companies went backward.” The differentiator for the top 20 percent? Quality of customer experience, mediated by technology.

There’s good news concealed in the McKinsey report: retailers are collecting more data than ever. Each stage of the digital customer journey, every supply chain interaction; each improvement of in-store point-of-sale (POS) systems; each modernization of inventory-tracking systems, and other IT investments not only give retailers greater control over operations, but also generate data at each point of the customer journey.

Industry analyst Forrester identifies driving relevant customer experiences as the top 2018 investment priority for retail CIOs and IT operations teams. Customer experience has many aspects – personalization, loyalty program management, security, and supply chain management – all driven by data and analytics.

For retailers, access to data – both real-time data driven by customer interactions, web traffic, social media, search data and more - and historical data, which provides insight into trends, behaviors and shifts in buying channels – is critical to creating a seamless customer experience.

**Managing data from many sources and systems, at scale**

Managing data from disparate sources and systems presents challenges for the industry as retailers scale their digital businesses:

- The volume of data, both streaming and historical, overwhelms retailers’ analytical capabilities and infrastructure.
- The inability to integrate different kinds of data from many sources slows access to analytical insights.
- Making data available to the entire enterprise in a uniform and easy-to-use way is difficult.
Data initiatives for retailers

CIOs in retail are as budget and talent-constrained as their peers in other industries, so focusing on IT investments that yield ROI quickly, while providing competitive advantage, is key. Additional areas of IT investment retailers should consider include:

- Advanced data and analytics
- Personalization
- Digital store tech
- Inventory management and optimization
- Data security
- Supply chain optimization.

The Devo Data Operations Platform helps retailers manage the data flows necessary to ensuring a superior customer experience. A cost-effective platform for ingesting, storing and analyzing petabytes of operational and streaming data, Devo enables retailers to use data – both streaming and historical – to adapt to consumer expectations.

The Devo Data Operations Platform allows the retail CIOs to monitor customer experience, store and warehouse variables, and customer consumption habits – in real time.

Realize new value from your data

Every asset in a retailer’s environment generates data, but is the data accessible? Are you able to use it more effectively today than you did yesterday?

With Devo, retail CIOs and IT teams never have to worry about growing volumes of data exceeding their ability to access, analyze and act on that data. Armed with insights into consumer behavior and usage patterns, CIOs in retail can extend the life of existing assets, make more informed decisions about new technology acquisitions, and create new revenue streams.

Schedule a demo of the Devo Data Operations Platform today to find out how you can distinguish your company from the competition.