

Special Session: Killing Two Birds with One Stone: The Retail Dilemma— Innovate or Die: An Abstract



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Abstract Digitalization has revolutionized retailing and this has spurred retailers to adopt consumer-facing in-store technologies (CFIT), to enhance the shopping experience and for competitive advantage. CFIT are technologies that the consumer experiences directly whilst in-store, such as digital signage and interactive screens, AR and VR, Wi-Fi, virtual fitting rooms, etc. However, issues related to the strategic drivers and processes involved in technological change within a fashion retailing context are still open. This is a very current debate, both in academia and in the industry. The study adopts a qualitative approach to achieve deep understanding of rapidly-evolving managerial mindsets. Data was gathered through semi-structured face-to-face interviews with 67 senior industry informants drawn from fashion retailers, technology providers and strategists with fashion retail clients. Thematic analysis of the data followed an inductive process. Findings suggest core issues revolving around levels of cultural change embracement for innovation, technology assimilation, and processes of technology integration. Results were fed back to the participants, via sharing reports, consulting and running workshops. Industry retail participants operating through more traditional point-of-sale formats in several instances used the comprehensive and up-to-date perspective provided from the research. This helped retail participants make informed decisions and overcome cultural transformational barriers, and map progress concerning issues of technological change with the implications deriving from them. Moreover, results helped technology providers understand the importance of providing a full coaching service to help them embrace change more holistically, where CFIT adoption comes as a consequence of more strategic cultural changes, and not as the adoption of the single piece of technology. Finally, start-ups could gain further details on implications for working with retail clients. This involves how to deal with systems integration and compatibility, and aspects such as successful communication to manage tech-related projects across the parties involved.

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References Available Upon Request