



# 5 Innovations Shaping the Future of Retail Execution



# Is your team prepared for a new era of retail execution?

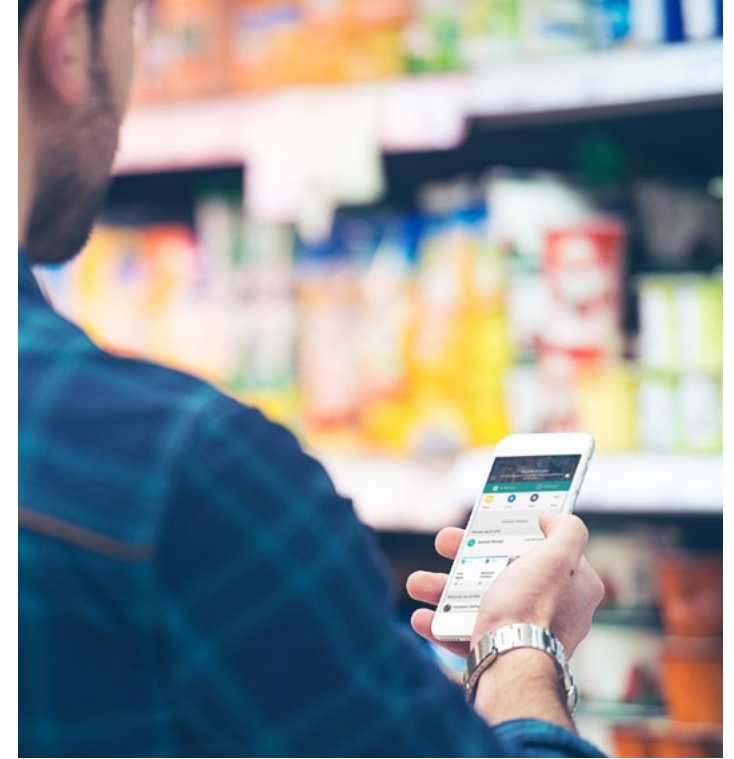
*A new era of retail execution is on the horizon, but only proactive brands will be ready for it.*

The 2010s brought a new age of technology to the forefront of retail. Manufacturers started collecting data about their execution at the point of sale, and retailers started using sales data to build relationships with their vendors. In 2020 and beyond, new innovations will push the retail execution landscape even further, giving high performing manufacturers better visibility and control over how they're sold at the shelf.

So what exactly can be expected over the course of the next ten years? Innovative retail execution technology will empower teams to collect and share information from the field

faster than ever before, allowing them to address execution gaps or opportunities to influence sales in-flight rather than after the fact. In the 2020s, the field sales teams that have invested in this next generation of retail execution software will be able to start every day with a clear picture of what is happening in all of their accounts — based on real-time conditions reported from the field.

In this eBook, we've broken down four main ways that tech innovations will help teams get to this advanced state of data-powered retail execution.



**Rapidly changing store conditions will demand faster data insights from the field.**

# 1. Point-of-Sale Data Will Quantify Field Teams' Impact on Sales

*Only 28.5% of CPG companies have the tools they need to make appropriate decisions at the store level despite access to POS data.*

In the past decade, the emphasis on collecting, reporting, and analyzing data has come front and center for CPG manufacturers. For brands selling at retail, the increased availability of point of sale data (from retailers or syndicated sources) has provided teams with a snapshot of when and where their products are scanned for purchase. Armed with this data, brands have a heightened ability to identify retail trends, competitive threats, and opportunities for growth.

While the use of POS data to improve visibility into retail has become commonplace, many brands still have a long way to go. As much as 92% of brand manufacturers believe they can do more with the POS data they collect from their retail partners<sup>1</sup>. That's up 15%

from just two years prior, suggesting more brands than ever are ready to use their POS data smarter — they're just not sure where to start. Currently, only 28.5% of CPG companies<sup>2</sup> believe that they have the tools they need to make appropriate decisions at the store level, despite the availability of POS data. In the 2020s, advancements in retail execution software will allow brand manufacturers to link POS data to data collected in the field, so they can identify the exact store conditions and sales activities that lead to growth. From there, field sales and merchandising teams can target the stores where they can have the biggest impact on sales.

While some high-performing teams are starting to make those connections today, it will become an essential competitive advantage in the next decade. With access to POS data now an industry standard, those brands that choose to invest in maximizing the versatility of that data will be able to allocate resources more efficiently, strengthen retailer partnerships, and establish a reputation as proactive, data-driven teams in the years to come.

**92% of brand manufacturers believe they can do more with the POS data they collect from their retail partners**

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1, 2 | 92% Of Brands Say They Can Make Better Use Of Retail POS Data - retailtouchpoints.com

## Discover The *Why* Behind Sales Trends in Every Store

*Today, while retail point-of-sale data is widely available, it only tells manufacturers part of the story. It can show the what — such as a certain retailer that is experiencing a spike in sales. What it can't show is the why or how — why did sales spike in one store but not another? How have recent sales campaigns contributed to this lift in sales?*

Retail execution software is already closing that gap. For the first time, brands are getting real-time insight into store conditions and combining it with POS data to get ahead. Retail execution software enables teams to automate reporting of not only the amount of product sold in each store, but the conditions on the shelf, the location in the store, and support from the field sales team during that period.

Dashboards like these will make it easy to measure the sales impact any retail promotion, merchandising change, or sales team has on sales in their territory. Not only will this advancement improve the measurability of past activities, it will also allow man-

agers to hone their team's future activities to maximize impact. By finding the correlations between POS data and retail execution data, managers can dispatch their reps to immediately capitalize on growth opportunities that will benefit both manufacturer and retailer, strengthening those partnerships.

Less resources will be wasted on low-impact routine functions and can be reallocated towards high priority activities in key accounts. Companies that align POS data with retail execution data will be able to identify optimization opportunities that POS-only companies would miss entirely, increasing their influence in the market and ultimately allowing them to dominate their category.

**As much as 25% of sales can be lost due to poor retail execution.<sup>5</sup>**

## 2. Field Teams Will Create Daily Plans Based on Real-Time Store Conditions

*68% of brands lack the necessary technology to optimize their retail activities.*

In 2019, 68% of brands lacked the necessary technology to optimize their retail activities, even though in-flight optimization is key to driving efficiency and ROI<sup>3</sup>. When it comes to dispatching field sales teams to cover their territories, this lack of optimization can cause teams to miss out on valuable opportunities. Teams that lack the ability to optimize their retail execution often operate on a blanket coverage model. Field managers set up routes for their reps, building a predetermined schedule for when they should visit a certain store, how long they spend there, and the activities they focus on while there.

While this approach gives reps an equal shot of uncovering execution opportunities in each account, it's not the most efficient way to use resources. Sales reps are lucky if their visit uncovers an opportunity to move the needle on sales. Given that as much of 25% of sales can be lost due to poor retail exe-

cution<sup>4</sup>, uncovering opportunities to move the needle on sales should be the top priority for every store visit. Luckily, many teams are recognizing this area of improvement and finding ways to address it. As we move into the 2020s, innovations in retail execution technology will empower teams to collect and utilize data that describes actual in-store conditions, down to the day. Using this information, reps will be able to create tailored plans for every day in the field.

Rather than spending the same amount of resources in each account, retail execution tech allows teams to optimize their coverage based on their distribution strategy. Manufacturers that classify stores into a hierarchy of importance will be able to keep top accounts a high priority, but will now have the in-store visibility to recognize sales opportunities in secondary accounts and dispatch their teams accordingly.

3 | The POI 2019 State of the Industry Report - [poinstitute.com](http://poinstitute.com)

4 | The Next Frontier in Retail Activation: Agile Execution - [catman.global](http://catman.global)

5 | A Display is a Terrible Thing to Waste: Examining P.O.P. Compliance Rates and Best Practices - [shopassociation.org](http://shopassociation.org)

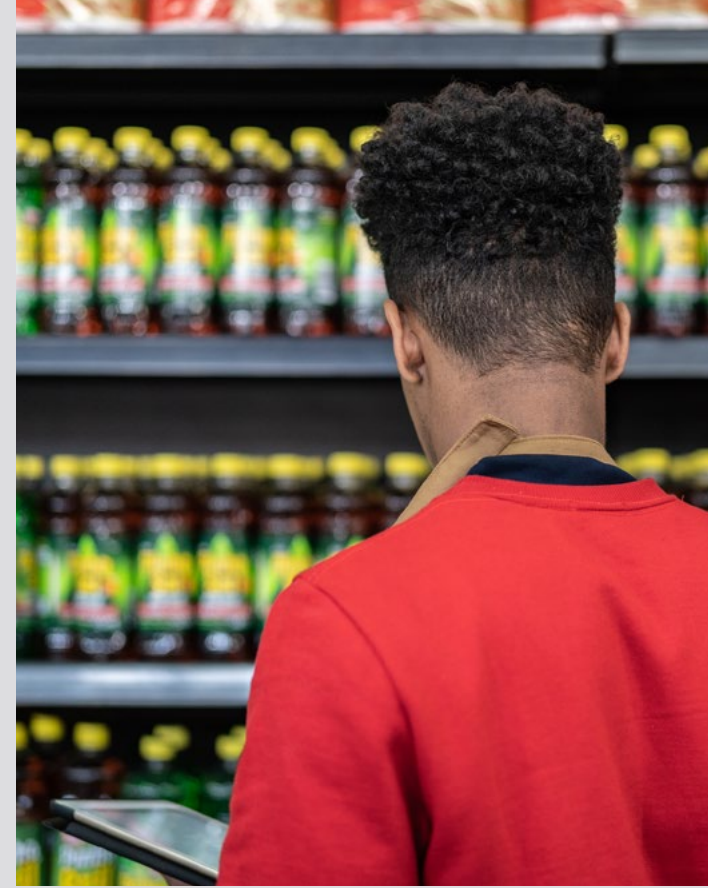
## Targeted Territory Coverage Yields Targeted Results

*By creating daily plans based on accurate in-store data, teams can better prioritize the accounts that matter most.*

As discussed previously, new data collection and reporting methods are starting to give field teams the ability to estimate store conditions and through sales daily, for each store location. Equipped with data from the field as soon as it is reported, reps will be able to start their days with an accurate snapshot of what is happening in each of their accounts and then prioritize locations with execution gaps or opportunities for growth.

Similarly, field team managers will benefit from the ability to see in-store conditions without leaving their desks. They will no longer have to wait until the end of the week to receive reporting on what went on in the field, but will instead be updated in real-time as their reps move through their day. Reps

will be equipped with the ability to instantly share photos and comments from their visits to a live visual feed, making reporting more social and interactive. With this constant flow of qualitative in-store data, managers will then be able to immediately react to rep activity, dispatch reps to high priority accounts when necessary, and better understand how activities in the field are affecting their sales numbers.



### 3. Field Teams and National Accounts Will Perfect Retail Campaigns In-Flight

*CPG companies spend between 11-27% of their revenue on promotion, so catching execution errors early on is critical to achieving strong ROI.*

National accounts are a manufacturer's lifeblood. Whether your specialty is in grocery, convenience, or natural, success with your national retail partners is essential to continuing to build momentum as a leader in your category. And while retail campaigns (TPRs, endcaps, etc.) can have a massive impact, you also take on a significant amount of risk when executing at the national scale.

Shipping gets more complicated, promotions are more expensive, and execution at every level is more difficult to control, confirm, and optimize. But none of that should be a surprise. Today, retail execution for promotions in national accounts are reviewed as often as they can be. But, most promotion campaigns are underway for as long as 12 weeks before teams



are able to analyze performance data <sup>6</sup>. As a result, manufacturers lose valuable weeks and months of potential impact before they're even aware of execution gaps, nevermind before they can correct them.

With CPG companies spending between 11-27% of revenue on promotion, catching execution errors early on is critical to achieving a strong ROI. But there's good news on the horizon. As real-time data collection and reporting from the field becomes a reality in the 2020s, field teams and national account managers will be able to work together to perfect retail campaigns before they're over — maximizing execution and impact every day.

**Most promotion campaigns are underway for as long as 12 weeks before teams are able to analyze performance data**

<sup>6</sup> | Feed In-flight Optimization with Sales Metrics for an Increased Lift - iriworldwide.com

## Build Data-Driven Relationships With National Accounts

*A lack of proper communication with national account managers can result in missed opportunities for optimization.*

As accurate POS and in-store activity data become more readily available, national account managers will have the power to monitor the success of their campaigns in-flight.

They will be able to see at a glance which stores their team has visited to kick off a promotion (by delivering posters, setting up displays, etc.). Then, they can monitor the POS data of that account list to see which stores aren't getting the lift they expected -- or where the expected spike in sales is short lived. Chances are, promotions at those retailers are out of compliance.

Equipped with the data to back them up, national account managers will be able to take action faster than ever, pairing field activities and sales data together in clear reports and sending alerts when sales lag behind expectations in targeted accounts.

Rather than waiting until the end of a promotion, national account managers will be identifying areas for improvement in real-time, and will be able to communicate with both their retail buyers and field team managers what actions or accounts should be prioritized in order to course-correct.





## 4. All-in-One Platforms Will Improve Reporting Agility and Data Access

*As data and analytics become increasingly important, brands seeking a competitive advantage won't have time to wait for quarterly or monthly reports.*

Over the past decade, manufacturer IT departments and software vendors set to work to make retail execution teams' lives easier, building point solutions for everything from photo tagging to time and mileage tracking. But as the retail execution tech stack has grown, there's one challenge that's been left far from optimal — bringing all of those systems together for fast, flexible reporting.

As data and analytics take center stage in the 2020s, quarterly or monthly reports aren't going to be enough to give high performing teams the competitive advantage they need. Individual business units will need the flexibility to build reports on the fly, answering questions for tomorrow with data from today.

The teams that will be best equipped to take the leap into the 2020s will be those who have adopted all-in-one retail execution platforms.

Compared to point solutions that were built to function independently, all-in-one platforms take the best parts of these solutions and integrate them into one system.

By bringing capabilities for ordering, execution tracking, scheduling, and more into a single system, all-in-one platforms will be uniquely positioned to give teams instant access to whatever data they need — without any technical work.

**Point solutions simply won't provide brands with the agility they need to take the leap into the 2020s.**

*Why rely on support from IT to create reports when the tech to make them on-the-fly is available now?*

The rise of all-in-one solutions will make data sharing and team collaboration easier than ever before. When it comes to cross-team collaboration, all-in-one solutions will have their own built in reporting capabilities.

National accounts teams will be able to make new data collection requests for their field merchandising team (like an urgent price check), then view the reports that day — all without support from their IT teams. Retail program owners will sim-

## Democratize Data With All-in-One Retail Execution Platforms

ilarly have the power to get a live view of execution on their programs. They'll be able to compare sales results year over year and see the impact their campaigns had on sales in specific accounts. While viewing reports on new campaigns or retailers would require IT support today, 2020's all-in-one platforms will support flexible reporting for every user.



## 5. Field Teams Will Use Image Recognition at the Shelf to Drive Activities Around the Store

*While capturing images of SKUs on a shelf is not a new practice for field reps, it is however a practice that will be vastly improved with advanced technologies.*

Enter image recognition. Once largely considered more future product vision than reality because of the costs, speed, and accuracy associated with it, in the 2020s, some brands and third-party merchandisers have already gravitated to the new technology and have added it to their existing tech stacks.

In 2019, nearly 70 percent of CPG brands reported they still struggle with compliance on retailer-aligned promotions at the store level. And it's not just promotions brands and their field teams are worrying about in the store. Out-of-stocks alone are a \$47.4 billion industry each year.

With so much on the line in the store, brands understand the many benefits image recognition will assist in at the shelf, and – for some brands – the time for adoption is now. Many early adopters have already begun leveraging the technology to fight common, costly shelf errors like out-of-stocks and compliance issues.

With image recognition, field reps can eliminate the need for manual self-reporting methods to measure compliance and track in-store audits.

This advanced solution will cut down on auditing costs and will save field reps up to 60 percent of auditing time, giving them more time to focus on other high-impact activities around the store.

**Out-of-stocks alone  
cost brands and retailers  
\$47.4 billion each year.**

# Track and Maintain Store Compliance and Brand Health

*As previously mentioned, new innovative retail execution technology will empower teams to collect and share information from the field faster than ever before, allowing them to address gaps and opportunities to influence sales in-flight.*

As retail execution teams adopt image recognition technology, they'll be able to improve both the way they understand execution at scale and how they improve execution during individual store visits. Taking photos is standard practice for field teams that are executing shelf enhancement programs, building promotional displays, and auditing planogram compliance in their accounts.

While reviewing individual photos is an easy way to confirm execution in each store, there's an even greater opportunity teams will be able to take advantage of with image recognition technology — using the thousands of photos taken in the field to generate insights and long-term trends on shelf-level execution at scale. In the decade ahead, as brands continue to prioritize capabilities that help field teams be more effective in the store, image recognition may become increasingly ubiquitous for retail execution platforms.

With image recognition technology automatically scanning photos from every store visit and delivering metrics on planogram compliance, competitive presence, share of shelf, and product availability, brands will develop a deeper understanding of how they're being sold in the market — without adding any additional work for their field teams. In fact, in many cases they'll be able to get more meaningful insights from the most basic store visits that involve only the snap of a photo.

Further down the line, field teams may be able to leverage image recognition during store visits to automatically detect and alert reps of SKU-specific errors at the shelf, like distribution voids and planogram errors.

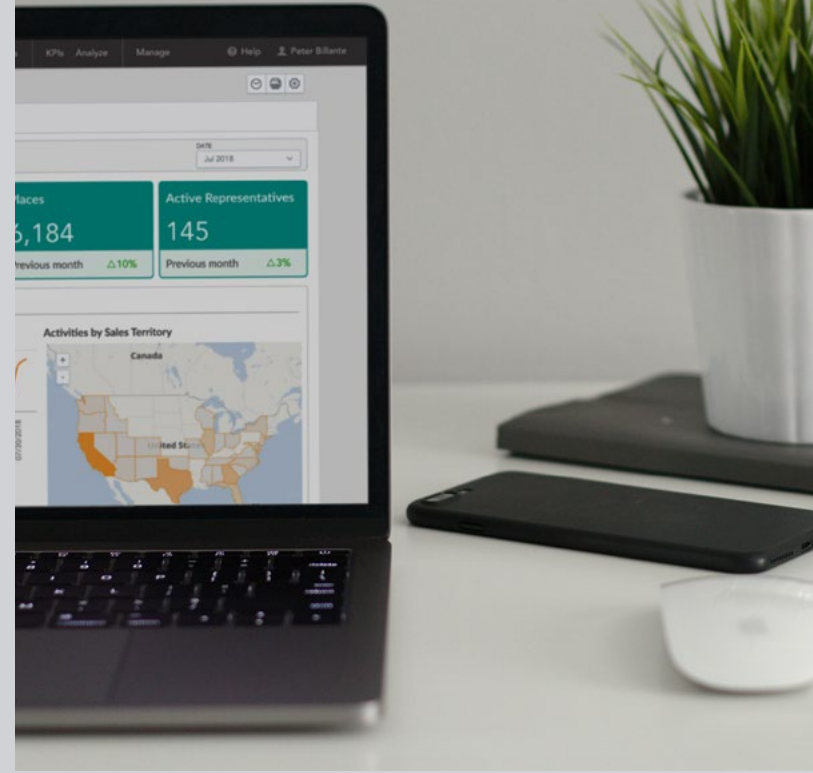
Not only would image recognition technology help reps be more efficient in the store, but it might also help point out errors that would have otherwise gone unnoticed.

# Propel Your Team Into The Future With World-Class Retail Execution Software

*Repsly's retail execution software was built to provide companies with the innovative capabilities they'll need to get a competitive edge in the new decade.*

Unlike other tools, Repsly brings together the strongest functionality of point solutions into one system, providing CPG teams with a smarter way of implementing retail execution technology across their teams.

Our powerful mobile app equips field reps with the store-level data they need to succeed in every account, plus customizable data collection tools to capture insights from the field. In the back office, managers get real-time updates from the field, plus the data and tools they need to monitor in-flight activity and prioritize their team's actions to have the biggest impact on sales.



## Ready to take advantage of the most innovative retail execution tech on the market?

Get started with Repsly for free today and join thousands of high performing field teams.



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