

The Richmond

Retail & eCommerce Directors' Forum



The Power of Inclusion,
Sarah Welsh, CEO of Retail at N Brown Group discusses the importance of inclusion and the power of women in retail.



An audience with Nigel Oddy
With over four decades of retail experience under his belt, Nigel is no stranger to the twists and turns of the industry.

The Retail & eCommerce Directors' Forum 2024

Highlights

TRANSFORMING INSIGHTS INTO ACTION. FAST.



Jeremy Schwartz, former CEO Pandora, and MD for L'Oreal UK and Sainsburys together with Natalie Berg, Retail analyst, opened The Richmond Retail & eCommerce Directors' Forum with a deep dive into the exciting transformations reshaping the retail sector. They talked about everything from the fusion of technologies, innovation, and purpose-driven strategies to navigating leadership challenges and paving the way for a new era of commerce. Capturing their discussions was tantamount to designing a roadmap for retailers to thrive now and in the future.

Tech-Powered Retail:
Technology is revolutionizing retail operations, from streamlining efficiency to enhancing

customer experiences, making shopping more seamless and enticing.

E-commerce Evolution
With the rise of AI, social commerce, and immersive experiences, e-commerce is becoming more engaging and multi-dimensional, catering to evolving consumer preferences.

"Happy employees are essential for happy customers. Retailers should focus on rewarding and providing autonomy and flexibility to their staff."
says Jeremy

Purposeful Branding:
Understanding brand purpose and customer needs is essential for retailers to remain relevant



Jeremy Schwartz & Natalie Berg (inset)





and resonate with their audience, as exemplified by Sainsbury's and Pandora's successful turnarounds. There were some emerging themes coming across from Jeremy including:

Culture of Innovation

Embracing a culture of innovation is crucial for retailers to adapt to changing consumer demands and drive continuous improvement, inspiring leaders to foster creativity and agility within their teams.

Employee Satisfaction

Happy employees translate to happy customers, underscoring the importance of rewarding and empowering staff, as demonstrated by companies prioritizing autonomy and flexibility.

Agile Leadership

Leaders face challenges in decision-making and workload management, emphasizing the need for agile leadership to navigate complexities and drive performance.

Transforming Insights into Action

Rapidly converting data insights into actionable strategies is paramount for retailers to stay competitive and meet evolving consumer demands, exemplified by dynamic pricing models and personalized customer engagement strategies.

Embracing sustainable practices and models is vital in meeting consumer demands and driving long-term success, urging retailers to prioritize environmental responsibility alongside profitability.

70%

of delegates said that there is an increase in their company's turnover as a result of attending the forum

Key facts

Dynamic pricing faces challenges in retail sectors like food and drink due to continuous supply, making it less effective compared to sectors with limited supply.

Consumers demand more convenience and get bored with new things faster, necessitating continual innovation in retail.

Successful turnarounds, like those of Sainsbury's and Pandora, were driven by deep insights into customer preferences and behaviors.

E-commerce is expected to continue growing, driven by convenience, choice, and new sales channels like social media.

Action Points

Embrace a culture of perpetual innovation to stay competitive in the dynamic retail environment.

Focus on rewarding and providing autonomy and flexibility to employees to ensure their satisfaction, leading to better customer experiences.

Quickly transform business insights into actionable strategies to adapt to changing market dynamics.

Implement dynamic pricing strategies tailored to specific industry needs and consumer preferences.

Invest in understanding customer preferences and behaviors to drive successful turnarounds and continuous innovation.

Empower teams by removing obstacles and facilitating collaborative decision-making to enhance efficiency.

Innovate in sustainable practices and business models despite challenges, such as high costs and investment requirements.

Utilize AI and data-driven insights to enhance operational efficiency and offer personalized customer experiences.

Navigate corporate politics and persist with good ideas to drive innovation within large corporations.



100%

of suppliers rated the overall organisation of the day as excellent or good



IMMERSIVE DIGITAL EXPERIENCES

Jordan Bourse, Client Partner, TikTok. Shannon Edwards, former Director of Marketing, Charlotte Tilbury, and Daniel Rowles, Programme Director, UCL. Moderated by Natalie Berg, conference chair.

Delegates welcomed a far reaching look into the evolving landscape of online retail, focusing on the integration of social platforms.

The rise of TikTok as not just a social platform but also a burgeoning commerce hub. TikTok's introduction of TikTok shop has enabled brands to host their own stores on the platform, leveraging the power of influencers and affiliates to drive traffic and sales. Additionally, innovative ad formats like video shopping ads have facilitated seamless transitions from content to commerce, capitalizing on TikTok's engaging user experience.

“Live streaming is used as a sales channel within TikTok Shop, popular in Asian markets and among luxury brands.”

Challenges remain, especially regarding attribution modelling. The panel emphasized the need for more sophisticated analytics to accurately measure the impact of marketing efforts across multiple channels. Traditional last-click attribution models often overlook platforms like TikTok, which prioritize video content and engagement over direct clicks. Embracing emerging technologies like AI and augmented reality (AR) to enhance the online shopping experience. AI-driven personalization and AR-powered

Key facts

TikTok Shop allows brands to have their own store on their TikTok profile, utilizing creators and ads to drive sales.

AI is seen as a tool for efficiency and personalization in business, with potential applications in automating tasks and enhancing customer experiences.

Amazon is missing out on opportunities due to the absence of a content engagement piece in its strategy.

Retailers are focusing on acquiring first-party data from their websites to better understand and serve their customers.

virtual trials offer immersive experiences that bridge the gap between digital and physical retail environments.

The panel stressed the significance of authenticity and creativity in brand communication on platforms like TikTok. Brands that embrace a test-and-learn mindset and engage authentically with their audience stand to succeed in the ever-evolving digital landscape.

As the industry continues to evolve, embracing innovation and fostering authentic connections with consumers will be key to driving success in digital commerce.

‘Brands that embrace a test-and-learn mindset and engage authentically with their audience stand to succeed in the ever-evolving digital landscape.’



**Daniel Rowles
Shannon Edwards
Jordan Bourse
Natalie Berg**

Action Points

Embrace TikTok Shop and live streaming features to enhance sales and engagement.

Utilize AI and augmented reality for personalized customer experiences, especially in beauty and fashion.

Adopt a test and learn mindset on platforms like TikTok, focusing on authenticity and creativity in content creation.

Invest in first-party data acquisition to understand and serve customers better, enhancing marketing strategies.

Explore opportunities for content engagement, especially in the upper funnel of the marketing process.

Collaborate with content creators to authentically promote brands to their audience on platforms like TikTok.



WHAT THE ECONOMY MEANS FOR RETAILERS

Our resident economist, Simon French, Managing Director and Chief Economist for Panmure Gordon gave delegates an economic overview which offered some welcome positivity.

Good news! The big headwinds to retail margins seem to have eased with shipping rates and gas prices having eased and inflation (hopefully) falling to less than 2% in the summer.

Global inflation and UK inflation have throttled back (CPI) however services and goods inflation are at very different levels. Food prices are murmuring but still in deflation meaning food price index has to come down. Which all means UK real incomes are growing again, as consumer staples are moderating.

The labour market has adjusted (post Covid) but it's not all good:

- Labour demand has normalised to pre-pandemic levels.
- There has been a 40% increase (v pre-pandemic) of people not seeking long term employment. This equates to 9.4m people of a working age not in employment.

The UK property market is a £9 trillion asset in the UK, however average property prices have not kept up with average price levels in the UK over recent years.

The UK savings and debt levels have evened out in recent years. This is a huge difference to the US where debt to savings ratio is much higher, with the US having a much greater appetite for credit.

Retailers are a key focus for an incoming Labour government and they have highlighted a 5 point plan for them:

- 1 Tackle anti-social behaviour
- 2 Revamp empty spaces
- 3 Reduce late payments
- 4 Increase banking hubs
- 5 Replace business rates

Simon French



9.4m

There has been a 40% increase (v pre-pandemic) of people not seeking long term employment. This equates to **9.4m people of a working age not in employment.**



AN AUDIENCE WITH NIGEL ODDY FROM RUNWAYS TO FAIRWAYS

CEO, American Golf

“Just like a well-executed swing, a successful retail strategy requires precision, focus, and a whole lot of practice,”

With over four decades of retail experience under his belt, Nigel is no stranger to the twists and turns of the industry. From his days as a CEO to his adventures on the international stage, Nigel has seen it all.



Nigel Oddy

As he puts it... **“Retail is like a round of golf – you never know what challenges the course might throw your way, but with the right strategy and a bit of determination, you can conquer anything.”**

Drawing from his vast experience, Nigel emphasizes the importance of clear vision and effective leadership in navigating the ever-changing retail landscape.

“Just like a well-executed swing, a successful retail strategy requires precision, focus, and a whole lot of practice,” he says.

At the core of Nigel’s retail philosophy is a simple yet powerful idea: the customer always comes first.

“In golf, every shot counts, and the same is true in retail,” he says.

“By putting our customers at the centre of everything we do, we can create meaningful experiences that keep them coming back for more.”

From personalized service to unique in-store experiences, Nigel believes that building strong relationships with customers is the key to success in the digital age.

“In the end, it’s not just about selling products – it’s about creating moments that matter,” he adds.

Action Points

- Develop a clear vision and strategy that is easily understood by everyone in the organization.
- Offer unique in-store experiences to differentiate from online competitors and attract foot traffic.
- Treat every customer as a VIP to enhance customer satisfaction and loyalty.
- Focus on customer service excellence, bringing it in-house if necessary to improve the overall experience.
- Embrace and drive change, adapting to evolving market trends and consumer behaviours.
- Learn from mistakes and past successes to guide business transformation and redirection.
- Invest in digital technologies to personalize and tailor the customer experience, especially in response to the pandemic.



“Offering unique in-store experiences that cannot be replicated online is crucial for department stores.”

“Treating every customer as a VIP is a key strategy for New Look’s turnaround.”

Nigel Oddy



THE POWER OF INCLUSION

Sarah Welsh, CEO, N Brown Group, Parves Khan, top woman in data and tech, moderated by Natalie Berg

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"Over two thirds of CEOs in the retail industry are male"

Retail leaders gathered to discuss how important the power of inclusion is within the retail industry and led a thought provoking panel to highlight the disparities that are still prevalent within the workplace.

"Diversity of thought is crucial for representing the diverse customer base in the retail industry, yet current leadership structures do not reflect this diversity."

"Women in leadership positions often face unique challenges, including underrepresentation and the struggle to balance professional and personal life."

Despite women's pivotal roles in the industry, a staggering lack of diversity persists at the top echelons.

While women form the backbone of the retail workforce and consumer base, leadership remains predominantly male-dominated, with a glaring absence of diversity.



Key Statistics

"**81% of companies** in the retail industry have no non-executive directors from ethnic minority backgrounds."

"**The gender gap** in large companies has widened in recent years."

"**Over two-thirds** of CEOs in the retail industry are male."

"**Individuals have opted out** of cultures in male-dominated industries due to a lack of progression and inclusivity."



91%

of suppliers rated the seniority of delegates as excellent or good



Manuela Pifani
CX Specialist and Former Customer Experience Director, Asda, spoke about Customer Loyalty

Action Points

Address Gender Inequality:

Take concrete steps to address gender disparities in leadership roles by implementing equitable policies and practices.

Combat Toxic Masculinity:

Challenge outdated notions of masculinity and promote a culture where all gender expressions are accepted and valued.

Support Work-Life Balance:

Implement policies such as flexible work arrangements, accessible childcare, and paternity

leave to support employees in achieving a healthy work-life balance.

Ensure Equitable Implementation of Diversity Initiatives:

Ensure that diversity initiatives are implemented in a way that genuinely benefits the organization and its members, rather than being reduced to mere compliance measures.

Provide Mentorship and Support:

Offer mentorship and support to future female

leaders, helping them build confidence, recognize their qualifications, and navigate challenges such as imposter syndrome.

Redefine Leadership and Success:

Move beyond traditional metrics of leadership and success, incorporating qualities such as emotional intelligence and authenticity into the definition.

Outdated norms of masculinity continue to permeate workplaces, perpetuating double standards where assertiveness is celebrated in men but criticized in women, hindering progress towards equality.

Women in leadership face a tightrope walk between competency and likability, grappling with societal expectations and systemic biases that undermine their authority.

A lack of inclusion breeds a culture where individuals, especially women, question their worth, stifling personal and professional growth, and perpetuating cycles of inequality.

“Highlights the double standards faced by women in leadership roles, where assertiveness is praised in men but criticized in women.”

86%

of delegates rated the one-to-one business meetings with suppliers as excellent or good



ESG IN RETAIL ARE CONSUMERS PROTECTING POCKETS BEFORE PLANET?

Dana Artz, Head of Corporate Social Responsibility, Childrensalon, Angela Gaskell, Group Sourcing, Quality & Fit Director, N Brown and Ben Sillitoe, Founder, Green Retail World

Delving into the critical role of sustainability in retail, exploring consumer attitudes, communication strategies, and collaborative efforts to drive environmental and social impact, Angela, the Sustainability Policy Executive Director at N Brown, emphasized the importance of transparent communication.

She noted that authenticity is key to building consumer trust. Dana, Head of Sustainability at Childrensalon, highlighted the challenges of sustainability in branded goods retailing and stressed the significance of supplier engagement and accountability.



Ben Sillitoe, Dana Artz and Angela Gaskell

Prioritize authentic and transparent communication to build consumer trust.

Throughout the discussion, the panel underscored the power of collaboration over competition, advocating for collective action to advance sustainability practices effectively. They emphasized the value of certifications like ISO for credibility, while cautioning against 'greenwashing' and emphasizing the need for careful wording in

Key Issues

Consumer attitudes

towards sustainability not always aligning with purchasing habits.

Challenges in communicating sustainability efforts effectively.

Scepticism and scrutiny around sustainability claims, leading to potential trust issues.

Complexity and confusion

surrounding sustainability certifications and standards.

Difficulty in balancing transparency with customer-friendly communication.

Risks associated with 'greenwashing' and overstated sustainability claims.

Supplier engagement and accountability in the supply chain.

Social issues such as modern slavery in supply chains requiring a different approach.

Lack of consumer education on sustainability efforts and their importance.



100%

of delegates rated the overall conference quality as excellent or good



Angela Gaskell

Solutions

Prioritize authentic and transparent communication to build consumer trust.

Emphasize the journey towards sustainability rather than claiming absolute perfection.

Invest in certifications like ISO for credibility and quality assurance.

Simplify communication of sustainability efforts throughout the customer journey.

Provide detailed explanations and reduction targets to support sustainability claims.

Collaborate with other businesses and suppliers to drive meaningful change.

Hold suppliers accountable for their sustainability practices and engage in dialogue.

Implement efficiency improvements in business operations for economic and environmental benefits.

Embrace technology innovations to reduce waste and improve sustainability, such as 3D avatars for clothing fitting and sustainable packaging options.

Educate consumers on sustainability efforts and their impact through clear communication and justification.

sustainability claims. Technology emerged as a potent tool, with innovations like 3D avatars for clothing fitting and sustainable packaging options driving efficiency and reducing environmental impact.

As businesses navigate the sustainable retail fairway, the consensus was clear: effective communication, collaboration, and consumer education are vital for building trust and achieving meaningful sustainability outcomes.

With a shared commitment to environmental stewardship and social responsibility, the retail industry is poised to drive positive change and shape a more sustainable future for all.

Educate consumers on sustainability efforts and their impact through clear communication and justification.

86%

of delegates rated the one-to-one business meetings with suppliers as excellent or good



OUR CUSTOMERS' EXPERIENCE OF THE DAY



Really good networking event with the added benefit of speed dating suppliers across the day. We were able to talk about solutions that will help to empower our business moving forward.

Martin Francis
Managing Director
Ram Rugby

The perfect mix of inspiring keynotes, peer connections, interactions with potential suppliers and collaborative conversations, all set in a very relaxing location.

Michel Koch
E-Business Director
Dorina

I really enjoyed my time at the event. We were able to make valuable connections to support the business and look forward to seeing what impact they drive for the future.

Jessica Cope
Head of E-Retail
KIKO

Very valuable day, meeting some great companies with new initiatives. Interesting discussions and working groups with good participation. Great day that added value for me!

Meriel Neighbour
Head of Digital Product,
Delivery and Transformation
Clarks

Brilliant, a great day overall, good to meet new people & build networks

Adam Waudby
Head of Retail Operations
Central Co-op



A fantastic event from start to finish. Impeccably organized with a fun packed agenda. Our first & hopefully not last visit!

Chris Wakefield
H&B Commercial Manager
Peak Pharmacy

I found the forum vibrant and full of energy which was infectious. Managed to meet lots of relevant suppliers and enjoyed the panel discussions too - came away with new ideas and perspectives. Thank you!

Kate Bishop
Director of Retail Brand & Strategy
Save The Children





Good event, nice mix of different retailers to speak with.
Hannah Stevens
Business Development Director
Attensi



Well organised and good meetings lined up with relevant prospects looking for solutions we were able to provide.
Dan McIvor
Company Owner
Swanky Agency



The eCommerce Directors Forum has become a consistent source of great fit opportunities for us. It's a well organised Event where both suppliers and delegates feel real benefit.
Chief Revenue Officer, RevLifter

A very well organised and jam-packed day!
Director of Client Success, Proinsight

Great event. well organised and facilitated throughout
Paul Norcross
Head of Retail Support
B&Q

Really interesting day, lots of great conversations and networking opportunities
Adrian Bibb
Head of Operating Model,
Store Operations
Dunelm

Great to meet new people in a social environment.
Mark Coleman, Business Development
Manager, Direct Link Worldwide

Insightful - I love these events, great insight into what is out there in terms of new tech, offerings etc. I love learning about new suppliers and interact with others with the same challenges. I always come back to work feeling refreshed.
Mandy Ubhi
Customer and Market Insight Manager
Poundland

It was a very well organised and curated event with a relevant audience for our solutions.
Simon Clapperton
Sales Director
TPP Retail





THANK YOU

to American Golf for supporting our Golf day.

We had 60 energetic players from a mixture of retail and supplier companies. Playing 'The Brabazon' is one of the trickiest courses so well done to everyone for having a go.

A special thank you also to American Golf's Brand Ambassador, George Blackshaw for providing guidance and some 'trick shots' on the day.



THANK YOU

Thank you to all of our speakers and contributors...

Dana Artz
Head of Corporate
Social Responsibility
[Childresalon](#)

Natalie Berg
Conference Chair
[NBK Retail and Conference Chair](#)

Lizzy Bernthal
Resilience Specialist
and business owner
[Release Your Potential](#)

George Blackshaw
Brand Ambassador
[American Golf](#)

Jordan Bourse
Client Partner
[TikTok](#)

Nick Brackenbury
Co-Founder & CEO
[NearSt](#)

Chris Browne
Former Global Retail
Sales Director
[Ted Baker](#)

Shannon Edwards
Former Director of Marketing,
Beauty and Fragrance
[Charlotte Tilbury](#)

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MD, Chief Economist
& Head of Research
[Panmure Gordon & Co plc](#)

Angela Gaskell
Group Sourcing, Quality
& Fit Director
[N Brown Group](#)

David Gillespie
Corporate Coach & Actor

Parves Khan
Board Director

Michel Koch
eCommerce Director
[Dorina](#)

Tom Lawrance
Career Coach

Nigel Oddy
CEO
[American Golf](#)

Ardal O'Hanlon
Actor & Comedian

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Solutions Director
[Journey Further](#)

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Formerly ASDA Sr Dir
Customer Experience
[CXellence Consulting](#)

Andy Rayner
The Entertainer
[Dev Ops Manager](#)

Daniel Rowles
Programme Director
[Imperial College](#)

Jeremy Schwartz
Chairman, CEO, MD
[Kantar, Pandora, L'Oreal UK, Coca-Cola Europe & Sainsbury's](#)

Ben Sillitoe
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Jemma Tadd
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Emma Watkinson
CEO & Co-Founder
[SilkFred.com](#)

Sarah Welsh
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[N Brown Group](#)

Sarah Wilkinson
Former Senior eCommerce Director
[Jimmy Choo](#)



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A Bell & Co
eCommerce Director

A Bell & Co
Managing Director

Akzo Nobel UK (Dulux)
Marketing Director

Alexander Wang
Retail Director

Angling Direct
Chief Operating Officer

Angling Direct
Head of Retail Operations

Arco Ltd
Regional Development Manager

Arco Ltd
Sales and Operations Manager

Arena Flowers
Head of Customer Experience

ASDA
Head of Merchandising

B&Q
Head of Retail Support

B&Q
Director of eCommerce Operations

Barnardos
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Barnardos
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BESTSELLER
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Bird & Blend
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Bio-Synergy
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Country Manager – UK & Ireland

Boden
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Bonmarche
Merchandise Director

British Heart Foundation
Director of Technology (Commercial & Retail)

British Land
Retail Director

Brompton Bicycle Limited
Head of Retail Customer Experience

Brora Ltd
Managing Director

Buy It Direct Ltd
Customer Operations Director

CardFactory
Chief Digital Officer

Cambridge Satchel
Head of International Ecommerce

Casio
Head of Division

Central Co-op
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Central Co-op
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FKA Brands
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Gill Marine
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Good Sustainable Retail
Managing Director

Halfords
Chief Operating Officer

Harding Retail
Head of Insights & Data

Highgrove Gardense
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Hobbycraft
Trading Director

Home Leisure Direct
Marketing Director

Horwood Homewares
Managing Director

Hotel Chocolat
Head of Customer Marketing

Inchscape
Retail Operations Director



Johnson & Johnson Vision Care eCommerce Lead EMEA	Moonbug Senior Retail Manager	RRG Group Head of Digital Strategy	Suit Direct (Baird Group) Retail Director
Jon Richard Limited Trading Director	Mystery Shirt in a Box Managing Director	Save The Children UK Director of Retail Brand & Strategy	Ted Baker Head of Commercial Analytics
Joseph Ltd eCommerce Director	N Brown CEO	Save The Children UK Head of Strategic Operations	The Chocolate Society Managing Director
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Lapland Ltd Head of Commercial	Paladone Head of E-Commerce	Sofas & Stuff Director	The Royal NAAFI Director of Commercial
Luxury Home Design Group Ltd Managing Director	Peak Pharmacy H&B Commercial Manager	Sofology Head of Stores	The Very Group Head of Buying Fashion & Home Brands
Luxury Home Design Group Ltd HR Manager	Pernod Ricard Global eCommerce Leader	Sophie Allport Finance Director	UKTights.com Managing Director
Materials Market Head of Inventory	Portmeirion Group Global Head of Ecommerce	Sosandar Head of Retail Operations	UKTights.com Technical Director
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Meadowhall Retail Director	Princes Senior Strategic Transformation Manager	Southern Co-op Head of Marketing	Universal Works Head of eCommerce
Mimi Holliday Managing Director	Ram Rugby Managing Director	Stark Group Business Change Director	Virgin Media O2 Head of Stores
Monster Group (UK) Limited Managing Director		Stark Group Senior Finance Change Manager	Virgin Media O2 Head of Stores
			Whittard of Chelsea Head of Retail

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WE WELCOMED 60 RETAIL SERVICE PROVIDERS.

Adobe	Europa Worldwide	Reputation
Akeneo	GFS	RevLifter
Alchemy Network	In-Grid AB	Sales Supply
Attensi	Inurface Media	Scurri
Awin	ILG	Secret View
Bazaarvoice	inriver	Sheer ID
Better Commerce	Journey Further	Signifyd
Bird & Bird	Kin + Carta	Slip
Checkout	Kriya	Stripe Payments
Click Consult	KPS	Swanky Agency
Convert Group	Mainetti UK	TEJAS Software
DHL Supply Chain	Mondu	TPP Retail
Digivante	Near St	True Layer
Direct Link Worldwide	Opentext	Unipart Logistics
DivideBuy	Partoo	uWorx
DotDigital	PFS Commerce	Webloyalty
Dream Agility	Plinc	Williams Commerce
Emarsys UK	ProInsight Research	Wincanton
Entropy Consulting	QueryClick Ltd	Gowling WLG
ESW	Remarkable Commerce	Xpedition

The Richmond

Retail & eCommerce Directors' Forum

30th April 2025



The Retail & eCommerce Directors' Forum by Richmond Events, will take place on 30th April 2025, once again at The Belfry Resort.

This exclusive sell out event is invitation only, with 150 senior retailers and 60 retail service provider places available on a first come first served basis.



Attend as a **Retailer:**

Retailer invitations are complimentary and can be requested, alongside details of the conference programme.

Contact Delegate Manager,
@Ellie Crawford 



Ellie



Attend as a **supplier**

If you would like to find out how you could meet with senior retailers of your choice,


Contact Project Director
@Emma Doniger 



Emma



We organise forums in the UK, Italy, Spain and Switzerland

For more details visit [richmondevents](https://richmondevents.com) 

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