50 percent of retail will be automated by 2020

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Retail experts at Fujitsu Americas today offered projections for the future of retail and the implications for enterprise technology.

These projections include:

- New technologies will significantly expand the role of sales associate;
- The end of [underline]window shopping[/underline];
- An increased demand for integrated, multi-channel and platform technologies
- Greater dependence on advanced analytics and big data.

Enterprise technology will be the primary catalyst to changes in the [underline]shopping experience[/underline], with big data playing an integral role behind the scenes. These advancements will catapult mobile platforms, smart sensors and social media to allow new ways of shopping by 2020. Consumers will be able to use location-based services within stores to support their shopping experience, with customized offers coming to shoppers in real-time. This will require business insights and analytics that enable retailers to easily interact with customers throughout the shopping process. "Retail technology is changing significantly to respond to a more empowered, technologically-savvy shopper, and retailers without a multi-connected, multi-channel strategy will fall behind if they make the cut at all," states Marc Janssens, executive vice president of Retail at Fujitsu America, Inc. "Today's shopper expects a seamless experience whether in-store, online or using an app, and Fujitsu is

dedicated to integrating these platforms to create a synchronized experience for both the retailer and the consumer." Technology to Expand the Role of Sales Associate

A host of new technologies will make it easier than ever before to become a savvy shopper. Using their mobile phones and computers to research prices and cherry-pick promotions, shoppers will stick to shopping lists rather than splurging on unneeded items. Shoppers will constantly be online, utilizing social media to aid in their buying experience, in both digital and physical environments, with smart devices as the main tool for shopper engagement. These devices will offer order management, social interaction and smart services management to perfect communication between the retailer and the consumer. With this advancement, employees' routine tasks will be automated, and the role of sales associate will be transformed, enabling a greater focus on relationship building with customers and driving incremental sales opportunities. Store employees will expand into broader roles and will be expected to deliver across more capabilities than ever before. Retailers today must be able to develop and engage with their employees in order to retain them in the long run. The Death of Window Shopping

According to sales estimates from Shoppertrak, Black Friday brick and mortar sales dropped from $11.6 billion in 2014 to $10.4 billion in 2015, while Thanksgiving sales were down from slightly over $2 billion in 2014 to $1.8 billion in 20151, most likely attributing the shift to a rise in popularity of online shopping. Thus, by 2020, shopping will be on demand. Today's store-based and Internet retailers will mix and match in order to personalize order management, fulfillment and physical location to meet the needs of the connected shopper. Brick-and-mortar stores will still be the dominant channel but its mission will shift toward improved customer experience – with convenience, order fulfillment, showrooms and personalized services at the forefront. Retailers will use consumption, usage and purchase intelligence via smart monitoring

ranging from refrigerators and wardrobes to social groups in an effort to understand shopper needs and drive key decision-making. Point-of-sale and gaze-tracking data will aid retailers in identifying what products their customers are most considering and develop strategies for creating the perfect product cycle, where production, inventory and price are all informed by real consumer insights. Empowering the Future Shopper and Retailer

Today, 75% of store shoppers use their mobile devices while shopping, according to a new report from InReality, a retail marketing and strategy firm2. With this number constantly growing at rapid speeds, new selling platforms will emerge through the integration of point-of-sale services, eCommerce, electronic/biometric payments and customer relationship management systems for a seamless cross-channel shopping experience. The demand for multi-channel and platform technologies means an even bigger demand for advanced analytics and big data in 2020. Operations improvement will include store and order fulfilment, merchandising, space usage, shelf inventory and data that will provide customer traffic flows, delivered via camera and sensor-based analytics. This will be taken a step further through predictive merchandising and inventory management, made possible through advanced monitoring of the weather, fashion trends and consumption and usage patterns of consumers. Structured and unstructured, predictive and artificial data and learning will be essential in order to monitor, map and identify shopper needs and enable targeted offers and information direct to opt-in shoppers' smart devices. Actionable insight will be delivered in real time, in process-based format, direct to consumers, associates and managers – empowering the future shopper and retailer.

Provided by Fujitsu

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