BEYOND THE BARCODE: THREE WAYS MOBILE COMPUTING IS RESHAPING RETAIL PERFORMANCE AND PROFIT

Discover how mobile technology empowers your teams, streamlines your operations, and creates seamless shopping experiences from stockroom to checkout.



Honeywell

THE RETAIL SQUEEZE AND A PATH AHEAD

Retail finds itself in a period of turbulence and transformation.

Mobile computing can help ease the pressure.



Retail has never been easy. And right now, it's harder than it's been in a while. Tariffs, increased uncertainty, labor shortages, supply chain turmoil, shifting customer expectations, rising shrinkage, the mounting complexity of technology, and growing pressure to meet sustainability goals and regulations are all colliding at once. The result? A perfect storm squeezing margins, slowing growth, and stretching operations.

The decline in retail:

-41%
APPAREL, TEXTILES AND LUXURY GOODS

-26%
LEISURE PRODUCTS

-22%
PERSONAL CARE

-20%
HOUSEHOLD DURABLES

The numbers tell the story. After seven straight quarters of double-digit growth, retail earnings in the US, for example, have slipped to single digits, just 7.5% in Q1 2025, according to the LSEG Retail/Restaurant Index. And the outlook gets worse: Projections for Q3 and Q4 sink to 1.9% and 1.5%. Retail subsectors are weighing heavily on the index, with steep declines across apparel, textiles and luxury goods (-41%), leisure products (-26%), personal care (-22%), and household durables (-20%), according to LSEG's Q2 report.

> In the UK, shrinkage from customer theft has reached record levels, costing retailers over £2 billion a year.[1]

[1]Crime Survey Report, BRC, 2025

Across key European markets, meanwhile, the Retail Barometer 2025 finds that 55% of retailers cite recruiting and retaining skilled employees as their biggest challenge. And, according to the US-based Retail CFO Outlook Survey 2025, 58% of retail CFOs report moderate or extreme inventory shortages.



Technology, especially in the form of mobile computing, is one of the levers retailers can pull to fight back. It can boost productivity in order to protect thinning margins. Additionally, mobile computing delivers real-time visibility, strengthening supply chain decisions and enabling automation.

By empowering fewer workers to accomplish more, it effectively closes labor gaps while simultaneously improving job satisfaction and retention. Plus, it fuels omnichannel strategies like curbside pickup, BOPIS (Buy Online, Pickup In Store), and now BOFIS (Buy Online, Fulfillment In Store) that not only generate revenue but also raise customer experience and loyalty.

Handheld mobile computing devices such as the Honeywell CT70 are a prime example of this in action. The CT70 device is built on the Mobility Edge™ platform, which streamlines the process of enrollment, management, and decommissioning of devices, while providing enhanced security. Additionally, when paired with Honeywell Operational Intelligence, which monitors device health to ensure maximum uptime and performance, the CT70 can dramatically improve key retail metrics.

In this eBook, we will explore three key outcomes retailers can achieve by adopting the CT70 mobile computing solution:

1 **IMPROVE WORKFORCE OPERATIONS: AN ALL-IN-ONE SOLUTION**

2 **BETTER OUTCOMES, BETTER MARGINS**

3 **RAISE SHOPPING EXPERIENCE**

TAKE WORKFORCE OPERATIONS TO THE NEXT LEVEL: AN ALL-IN-ONE SOLUTION

1

Labor shortages and rising wages are coupled with high staff turnover, disrupting retail operations. With fewer retail workers on the floor, restocking shelves can take longer, inventory may be recorded incorrectly, and customers could struggle to find assistance. At the same time, fragmented systems make it hard for supervisors to gain the real-time visibility that keeps teams aligned. Retail workers and associates are forced to switch between devices that aren't integrated, slowing execution, increasing errors, and raising pressure and frustration.

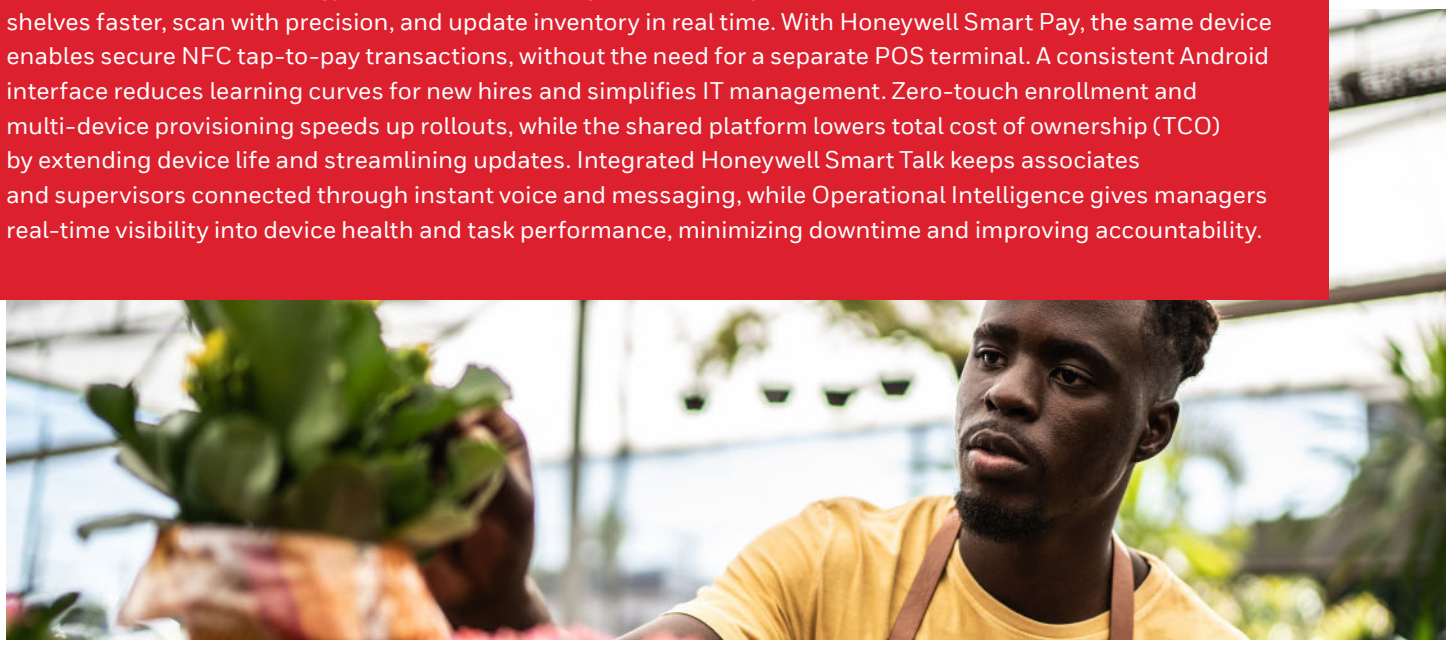
These issues are likely why 44% of frontline retail employees said they were considering leaving their jobs in the next three to six months, making them 1.2 times more likely than the average US employee to change roles.

The impact of these challenges on employee experience and, in turn, the retail business is immediate and far-reaching. Constant inefficiencies drain staff morale, leading to high attrition. Reduced manpower slows down customer service. Empty shelves, delayed orders, and inaccurate inventory erode sales and result in lost revenue.

> 44%[2] of frontline retail employees are considering leaving their jobs in the next three to six months.
>
> [2] McKinsey & Co, 2024

HOW AN INTEGRATED MOBILE COMPUTING SOLUTION HELPS:

Built on the Mobility Edge™ platform, the CT70 unifies communication, data capture, payment, analytics, and includes RFID technology for enhanced tracking and efficiency. The CT70 can help associates to restock shelves faster, scan with precision, and update inventory in real time. With Honeywell Smart Pay, the same device enables secure NFC tap-to-pay transactions, without the need for a separate POS terminal. A consistent Android interface reduces learning curves for new hires and simplifies IT management. Zero-touch enrollment and multi-device provisioning speeds up rollouts, while the shared platform lowers total cost of ownership (TCO) by extending device life and streamlining updates. Integrated Honeywell Smart Talk keeps associates and supervisors connected through instant voice and messaging, while Operational Intelligence gives managers real-time visibility into device health and task performance, minimizing downtime and improving accountability.



BETTER OUTCOMES, BETTER MARGINS

2

Retail relies on growth, but across many markets globally margins are under pressure. According to the 2025 Retail CFO Outlook Survey, only 47% of CFOs are expecting profitability gains this year.

It's not hard to see why. A mix of rising wages, mounting shrinkage losses, and growing supply chain costs, especially around returns management, is eroding margins. At the same time, top-line inflows are becoming less certain as buyers moderate how, and how much, they spend. McKinsey's data shows that consumers in Australia, China, India, Japan, and South Korea are changing purchase behaviors in response to economic uncertainty and inflation. For example, 40% of Indian consumers are buying smaller pack sizes, 33% of Australians are delaying purchases, and 38% of Chinese consumers are opting for buy-now-pay-later services.

For many retailers, this crunch translates into hard trade-offs: less funding for staff training and theft-prevention tools, fewer resources for marketing and innovation, and reduced capacity to invest in new growth channels. This creates a cycle of cost-cutting that erodes competitiveness, weakens customer loyalty, and limits long-term growth.

$?

47%[3] of retail CFOs have muted expectations around profitability.

[3] Retail Outlook Survey, BDO, 2025

HOW AN INTEGRATED MOBILE COMPUTING SOLUTION HELPS:

With an all-in-one mobile computing solution like the CT70, retailers can address both cost and revenue pressures. On the cost side, the CT70 reduces the errors and time associated with receiving stock, put-away, and replenishment, thereby shortening dock-to-stock cycles, automating supply chain decision-making, and boosting staff productivity without increasing their workload.

Its built-in RAIN RFID capabilities enhance inventory search and find processes and help curb counterfeit losses, while Operational Intelligence proactively monitors device health to minimize downtime and increase ROI through a lower TCO.

On the revenue side, the CT70 enables omnichannel strategies such as BOPIS, curbside pickup, and endless aisle. Front-of-store associates gain real-time access to inventory and pricing, ensuring more personalized service, which reduces walkouts and increases basket sizes. CT70's mobile payment features also help bust checkout queues, leading to a better in-store experience and repeat visits.



RAISING SHOPPING EXPERIENCE

3

Customer expectations have evolved faster than most retail operations can adapt. Shoppers now expect to find what they're looking for quickly, get accurate information, and receive the service they were promised. Failure to meet shoppers' needs can lead to significant repercussions: 66% of customers say they would reduce buying from a retailer after a dissatisfactory shopping experience.

But retail associates are limited by outdated systems that don't show real-time stock or item locations, leaving shelves mismatched with actual availability. That's why fewer than half of retailers worldwide feel prepared to manage customer expectations or retain shopper loyalty.

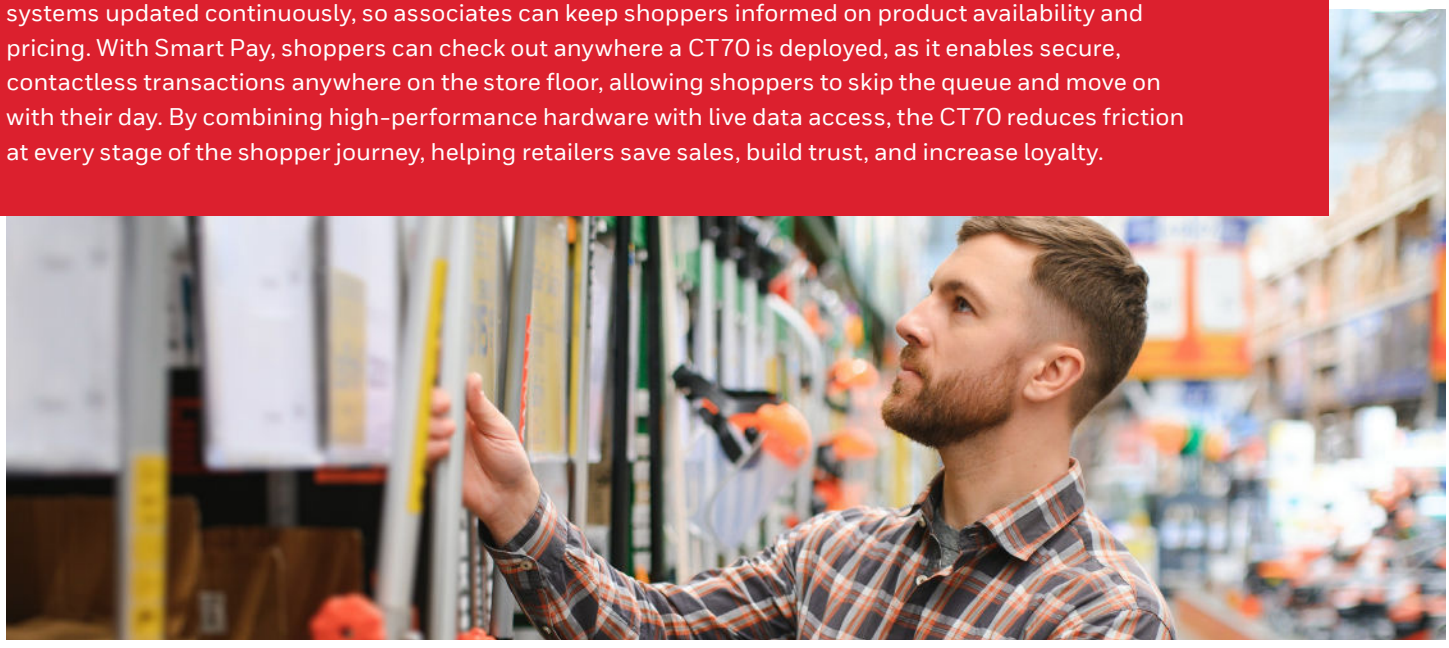
These gaps translate quickly into operational and financial impact. When customers wait too long, conversion rates drop. Inaccurate stock data leads to broken promises and disputes at checkout. Confidence declines, satisfaction scores fall, and loyalty weakens, turning everyday friction into measurable revenue loss.

66%[4] of customers would reduce buying from a retailer after a dissatisfactory shopping experience.

[4] Coresight, 2025

HOW AN INTEGRATED MOBILE COMPUTING SOLUTION HELPS:

CT70 enables associates to provide faster, more reliable service to shoppers through real-time visibility and integrated tools. The advanced scan engine captures barcodes instantly, allowing staff to check stock level accuracy and locate items for their shoppers. Built-in Wi-Fi 7 and 5G connectivity keep systems updated continuously, so associates can keep shoppers informed on product availability and pricing. With Smart Pay, shoppers can check out anywhere a CT70 is deployed, as it enables secure, contactless transactions anywhere on the store floor, allowing shoppers to skip the queue and move on with their day. By combining high-performance hardware with live data access, the CT70 reduces friction at every stage of the shopper journey, helping retailers save sales, build trust, and increase loyalty.



HONEYWELL CT70: REDEFINING RETAIL PERFORMANCE

Retail margins are crucial indicators of competitiveness. And the difference between outperformers and underperformers is stark. Data from Deloitte shows that leaders deliver EBITDA margins of 13.3% vs. 7.9% for laggards, and net margins of 8.6% vs. 2.3%, a 3.7x gap. Mobile computing solutions can be the difference between lagging and leading. But not all solutions are created equal. Here are 10 ways CT70 stands apart:

UNIFIED DEVICE MANAGEMENT

Mobility Edge™ simplifies device management across its lifecycle from deployment to decommissioning, resulting in zero-touch rollouts, less complexity, reduced IT workload, lower management costs, and faster speed-to-value.

ULTRA-RUGGED DESIGN

Built to withstand 6-foot drops, 3,000 tumbles, and extreme temperatures to deliver consistent performance, ensuring higher uptime, fewer repairs and replacements, and lower device-related costs.

EXTENDED ANDROID SUPPORT

Guaranteed OS upgrade path and security patches through to Android 19, which translates to device longevity, fewer refresh cycles, lower IT burden, and higher ROI.

LONG-LASTING BATTERY

Powers long shifts with a 7,692-mAh hot-swappable and Qi-compliant (wireless charging) battery.

RELIABLE CONNECTIVITY

Delivers 5G, Wi-Fi 7, CBRS, and Bluetooth® 6.0 to keep associates connected everywhere, even in dead zones, ensuring more seamless in-store and supply chain operations, and driving up productivity.

PROACTIVE OPERATIONAL INTELLIGENCE

CT70 is compatible with Operational Intelligence, which provides dashboards for device health, location tracking, and proactive maintenance. This ensures fewer disruptions, lower maintenance costs, and shorter downtime windows.

SEAMLESS COMMUNICATION

Combines dual 100-dB speakers, triple noise-cancelling microphones, and Smart Talk to boost team coordination, resulting in faster customer service, and tighter operations.

INTEGRATED NFC

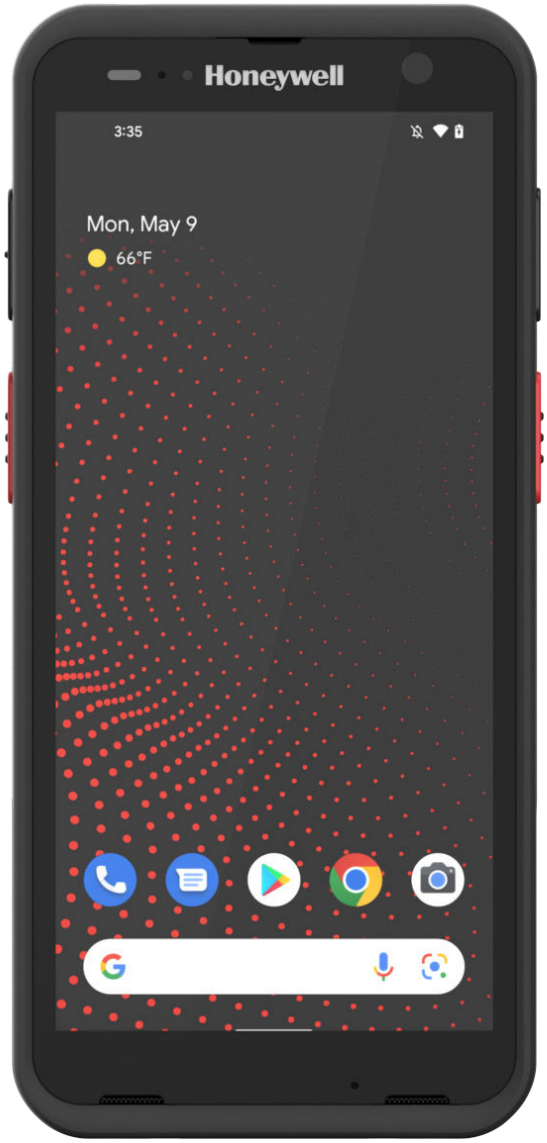
Enables instant tap-to-pair setup with peripherals such as printers and headsets, and supports secure tap-to-pay transactions through Smart Pay for seamless in-aisle checkout.

ADVANCED RAIN RFID

Onboard UHF reader enables bulk, line-of-sight–free item reads, accurate tracking of products, and the ability to locate misplaced stock, resulting in better inventory visibility, more efficient stock management, and reduced shrinkage from counterfeit or lost items.

INTELLIGENT EDGE AI

Leverages an onboard Neural Processing Unit (NPU) to power edge AI solutions that help associates use voice-based queries to find products, and Honeywell SwiftDecoder™ that can read damaged or poorly-lit barcodes, and extract information, such as expiry dates, with OCR.



Discover how to create a retail ecosystem that's connected, intelligent, productive, and profitable.

Get in touch with our experts today.



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