



**Case Study:** Retail & Consumer Goods

# Cognitive Operations and Automation Gives Retail Staff More Agile and Productive Workplace

A major retailer wanted to improve the efficiency of its IT support. In the last decade, we delivered improvements worth \$24 million.

Today's retailers must be able to respond rapidly. Customers want immediate service and will leave if faced with delays. Retail staff rely on efficient IT systems to keep queues down and customer satisfaction up. If the IT doesn't work, staff and customer satisfaction will be affected. This was something that one of North America's biggest retail groups was well aware of a decade ago. The company had leading positions in retail segments ranging from groceries to pharmacies, but its operations were being hindered by IT support challenges.

In particular, its outsourced IT service desks relied on manual processes that were slow and inefficient. Issues were taking a long time to be solved, and even contacting the service desk was an arduous process; waiting times of up to 40 or 50

## At a glance

A major North American retail group was struggling to create a digital workplace with primitive IT support. We introduced a unified experience desk and platform-based service delivery. Extensive automation is now cutting mean time to repair, improving efficiency, enhancing end-user experience and saving money.

## Outcomes

- Saved more than \$24 million in eight years.
- Achieved 45% event resolution through infrastructure automation.
- Reduced major incidents by 50% and other incidents by 30%.

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minutes were not uncommon. As the company looked forward from 2010, it was clear it needed a new approach to IT support. That's when Cognizant was taken on, initially with a limited brief to support the system and database administration functions.

Over the years, that involvement has grown to cover areas ranging from IT infrastructure operations support to major cross-functional incident management. The retail group has given us new responsibilities after recognizing the value we bring to IT service desk operations. Early on in our engagement, we identified two ways to improve the company's digital workplace support.

The first was through a platform-based approach to service delivery, pulling together intelligence from IT operations and using it to automate standard processes and requests. We prioritized the automation of tasks that would have the greatest impact on human time and effort, looking at past trouble tickets and analyzing metrics such as first-call resolution and mean time to repair.

This gave us a view of what issues were causing the most trouble—and might be easiest to automate. We then custom built an automation platform using industry-standard tools such as Ayehu eyeShare and UiPath robotic process automation. These underpinned an IT self-service portal that we introduced to help staff order consumables and dispatch tickets directly to the hardware vendor. We routed calls for these issues straight to the self-service portal and were thus able to deal with around 11% of problems more cost-effectively, with no human intervention.

Our second big measure was to introduce a unified experience desk that could act as a single point of contact for all IT-related issues. This provided standardized response and resolution times and was reachable via multiple channels, including

- Allowed 65% of service requests to be solved automatically.
- Cut average service desk call handling time by 30%.
- Brought down mean time to repair by 40%.
- Increased first-call resolution level to 59%.
- Improved customer satisfaction scores by 90 basis points, from 3.8 to 4.7.
- Enhanced the end-user experience for around 200,000 service desk users.
- Covered 100% of critical applications with disaster recovery measures.

phone, chat, web and mobile. Built on the unified experience desk, we drew on machine learning and natural language processing to develop an intelligent virtual assistant to help with repeatable tasks such as resetting passwords and dealing with system access requests.

This minimized human intervention and helped users to sort out basic issues quickly and efficiently, without the need to wait for a technical expert. Currently, more than 9,000 service requests are being handled automatically every month across the company, with 45% of event-generated incidents being resolved through automation. The mean time to repair faults has dropped by 40%.

We eliminated 30% of trouble tickets by enabling correlation and optimization of monitoring. Staff spend less time dealing with IT systems and more time dealing with customers, which alone is worth between \$500,000 and \$750,000 to the business every year.

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## About Cognizant Retail and Consumer Goods

Cognizant's Retail and Consumer Goods business unit partners with retail supermarkets, department stores, specialty premium retailers, and large mass merchandise discounters and consumer goods companies in the grocery, general merchandise, apparel, home and office, and consumer electronics segments to help both embrace the future of shopping, transform the customer experience in-store and online, and build the capabilities needed to win in the digital world. We work with leading retailers and consumer goods companies around the world including nine of the top 30 global retailers, and six of the top 10 consumer goods companies, and are consistently ranked as a top provider in Consumer Goods Technology's annual Readers' Choice Awards. We leverage our deep domain and consulting expertise to provide supply chain, merchandising, store, e-commerce, trade promotions, sales effectiveness, marketing services and analytics solutions across the retail and consumer goods spectrum. Our experience includes social, mobile, analytics and cloud and making meaning from Code Halos – the information that surrounds people, organizations, processes and products – to create unprecedented levels of value for retailers and consumer goods companies. Visit us at [www.cognizant.com/retail-technology-solutions](http://www.cognizant.com/retail-technology-solutions) and [www.cognizant.com/consumer-goods-technology-solutions](http://www.cognizant.com/consumer-goods-technology-solutions).

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## About Cognizant Digital Systems & Technology

Cognizant Digital Systems & Technology works with clients to simplify, modernize and secure IT infrastructure and applications, unlocking the power trapped in their technology environments. We help clients create and evolve systems that meet the needs of the modern enterprise by delivering industry-leading standards of performance, cost savings and flexibility. To learn more, contact us at [simplify@cognizant.com](mailto:simplify@cognizant.com) or visit [www.cognizant.com/cognizant-digital-systems-technology](http://www.cognizant.com/cognizant-digital-systems-technology).

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## About Cognizant

Cognizant (Nasdaq-100: CTSH) is one of the world's leading professional services companies, transforming clients' business, operating and technology models for the digital era. Our unique industry-based, consultative approach helps clients envision, build and run more innovative and efficient businesses. Headquartered in the U.S., Cognizant is ranked 193 on the Fortune 500 and is consistently listed among the most admired companies in the world. Learn how Cognizant helps clients lead with digital at [www.cognizant.com](http://www.cognizant.com) or follow us [@Cognizant](https://twitter.com/Cognizant).

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