



Gartner Predicts At Least Two Top Global Retailers Will Establish Robot Resource Organisations to Manage Nonhuman Workers By 2025

The Customer Experience Is Fast Becoming the New Currency

Gartner, Inc. predicts that by 2025, at least two of the top 10 global retailers will establish robot resource organizations to manage nonhuman workers. “The retail industry continues to transform through a period of unprecedented change, with customer experience as the new currency,” said Kelsie Marian, senior research director at Gartner. “The adoption of new digital technologies and the ever-changing expectations of customers continues to challenge traditional retailers, forcing them to investigate new-human hybrid operational models, including artificial intelligence (AI), automation and robotics.” Gartner research shows that 77% of retailers plan to deploy AI by 2021, with the deployment of robotics for warehouse picking as the No. 1 use case. Warehouse picking involves smart robots working independently or alongside humans. In the future, retailers will establish units within the organization for procuring, maintaining, training, taxing, decommissioning and proper disposal of robot resources. In addition, they will create the governance required to ensure that people and robots can effectively collaborate. Many retail workers want to use AI specifically as an on-demand or predictive assistant, meaning the robot will need to work alongside humans. “This means the robot will have to “mesh” with the human team — essentially meaning that both sides will need to learn how to “collaborate” to operate effectively together,” said Ms. Marian. An example is an autonomous robotic kitchen assistant that learns an operator’s specific recipes and prepares them according to the wishes of the operator. The robot can work in harmony with the operators who, in turn, are having to adapt to changing consumer tastes. Choosing the right candidate — human and machine — for the job is critical for success. A combined effort from HR, IT and the line-of-business hiring managers will be required to identify the skills needed to ensure the pair work together effectively. “Retail CIOs must provide ongoing maintenance and monitoring performance for effectiveness. If not, the team may be counterproductive and lead to a bad customer experience,” said Ms. Marian. The introduction of AI and robotics will likely cause fear and anxiety among the workforce — particularly among part-time workers. It will be vital for retail CIOs to work with HR and business leaders to address and manage employees’ skills and concerns; and change their mindset around the development of robot resource units. Gartner clients can learn more in the report “Predicts 2020: Consumers Determine Retail Success Well Before the Sale.” Learn more about Gartner’s 2020 Predictions in the Special Report “Predicts 2020: Barriers Fall as Technology Adoption Grows.” Gartner Customer Experience & Technologies Summits Customer experience trends will be further discussed at the Gartner Customer Experience & Technologies Summits 2020 taking place February 13-14 in Tokyo, June 8-9 in London and June 16-17 in Sydney. Follow news and updates from the conferences on Twitter at #GartnerCX. About Gartner Gartner, Inc. (NYSE: IT) is the world’s leading research and advisory company and a member of the S&P 500. We equip business leaders with indispensable insights, advice and tools to achieve their mission-critical priorities today and build the successful organizations of tomorrow. Our unmatched combination of expert-led, practitioner-sourced and data-driven research steers clients toward the right decisions on the issues that matter most. We are a trusted advisor and an objective resource for more than 15,000 organizations in more than 100 countries — across all major functions, in every industry and enterprise size. To learn more about how we help decision makers fuel the future of business, visit gartner.com.

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