

# How retailers win in the new digital reality with Confluent

Retail is in the throes of massive change. The “Amazon effect” has fundamentally altered consumers’ buying habits, with ripples spreading throughout the entire industry. The evidence is clear. Listen to the news and you’ll hear about the latest retail restructuring or bankruptcy. Less reported are the success stories—not just Amazon, but other innovative companies that are winning in retail’s new digital reality.

What is that new reality? Unsurprisingly, consumers’ fundamental drivers haven’t changed. A [survey](#) by Deloitte found that two-thirds of US consumers listed product, price, and convenience as the top reasons for their buying choices. Retailers are focusing on the segment of one, delivering highly personalized experiences, communications, and targeted offers based on an intimate understanding of each customer’s individual needs and behavior. At the same time, consumers expect a true omni-channel experience. It’s not just about shipping to the door. Convenience means getting what you want, when and how you want it—for example, reserving online and picking up in-store.

What powers this new retail landscape? Data. Personalization just isn’t possible without a real-time and historical 360° view of each customer—what they’ve bought in the past, what they’re looking at right now, previous interactions with customer support, their product reviews, and more. And, data is also essential to meet consumers’ high expectations.

## Retailers struggle to break down data silos

For many retailers, data is a huge challenge. Rather than fueling a premium customer experience, it remains locked away in dozens of siloed systems—supply chain, website, customer support, point of sale, etc. There’s no easy way to extract and combine this data—no easy way to crystallize the business and customer value. And, doing this in real-time is an even bigger challenge. At best, many retailers extract data using slow batch processes, creating huge delays. It’s no use having an inventory that’s a day out of date or reacting to a customer’s needs after the buying moment has passed.

## Apache Kafka® and the power of event streaming

What is event streaming? It’s a data infrastructure technology that breaks down data silos. It connects to each of your systems, detecting data updates as soon as they happen. It allows you to share these updates in real-time, turning them into streams of events that other systems can read. And, event streaming isn’t just an integration platform. You can use event streaming technology to build applications that correlate and analyze your real-time and historical data, delivering the customer and operational insights you need to drive innovation and create a competitive advantage.

Apache Kafka is the world’s leading open-source event streaming technology, and it’s already used by some of the world’s best-known retailers. It’s designed for mission-critical applications, delivering unmatched scalability, flexibility, reliability, and security—so you know it will always be there for you as your retail business continues to evolve.

### nuuly

“We truly think of Confluent Cloud and Kafka as the central nervous system of our business, spanning everything from the customer-facing applications to distribution center operations from a technology perspective.”

Chirag Dadia | Director of Engineering, Nuuly



"Using Kafka and Confluent, Walmart has initiated a digital transformation and modern omnichannel experience that allows customers to interact with Walmart.com seamlessly, order groceries online or in a mobile app, and either pick them up or have them delivered. Walmart's investment in event streaming with Confluent has contributed to business innovation as well as company growth in the public market."

Vice President of Engineering, Walmart

## What can event streaming do for you?

Event streaming allows you to digitally transform your business, driving increased customer satisfaction, reducing operational costs, and enabling new types of product offerings. Here are a few examples.

### Real-time inventory



For retailers, brick and mortar stores are a huge asset. Not only do they allow consumers to experience products before they purchase, but they can also act as local warehouses for online orders. However, using stores as warehouses requires an accurate real-time store inventory. Otherwise, you risk selling products to online customers only to find out you're out of stock. One bad experience like this and a customer is unlikely to come back.

With event streaming, you can create this accurate real-time inventory for each of your stores. By monitoring all of the systems where products enter or exit—shipping, receiving, point of sale, and so on, you now have a complete, up-to-date view of your inventory. And, you can do this quickly. Working with Confluent, you can get real-time sales visibility in just 6 weeks, and real-time inventory in just 12 weeks.



### Personalized recommendations and real-time offers

With event streaming, you can create a 360° view of each customer, combining historical data such as previous purchases and demographic information with real-time behavior data from your website to generate personalized recommendations and real-time offers. For example, if a customer clicks through to a product that they have looked at previously—or a similar product—you can push a discount coupon to their browser in real-time to encourage them to purchase the item. Or, you can instantly recommend other products based on what the customer is viewing right now and what they have viewed in the past. The result? You increase conversions, drive more revenue, and enhance customer satisfaction.

Event streaming also lets you optimize delivery in real-time, enabling drop shipping and accurate delivery tracking. It also allows you to provide seamless omnichannel experiences by tracking customer interactions across channels in real-time. And, it's a key enabler for innovation, letting you modernize your IT environment and accelerate development by moving to a microservice-based hybrid-cloud architecture that still works seamlessly with your existing systems.

## Why Confluent?

Confluent was founded by the original creators of Apache Kafka. Confluent delivers a complete event streaming platform for Apache Kafka, available as both [self-managed software](#) and a [fully managed cloud service](#), and we complement it with Kafka committer-driven expertise in the form of professional services, expert training, and enterprise support. We've extended Kafka to create the truly secure, resilient and compliant event streaming platform that retailers demand.

However, don't take our word for it. We've been selected [Google Cloud Partner of the Year for data and analytics](#), achieved a [top 10 ranking on Forbes Cloud 100](#).

To find out more about what [Confluent](#) can do for you, please visit [confluent.io/retail](https://confluent.io/retail)