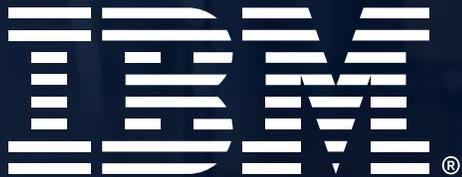


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# Agentic AI is Transforming Retail. Are You Ready?

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Introductions

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INTRODUCTION:

# Agentic AI is Disrupting Retail

## Speakers:



**Raju Kattady**  
Vice President, IBM Technology Sales,  
Retail & Consumer Products



**Veronica Moyer**  
AI Productivity Leader,  
IBM WatsonX Americas



**Lavina Suthenthiran**  
Moderator, Head of Marketing,  
RetailWire

Retail is experiencing a fundamental shift driven by **agentic AI**, a highly capable network of AI agents that goes far beyond traditional chatbots to completely rethink how operations and customer engagement happen. This shift is driving real productivity gains, strengthening brand trust, and creating highly personalized experiences at scale. The impact? It's felt across the entire ecosystem, from retailers and their employees to supply chain partners and, ultimately, customers.

### Key takeaways:

1

Agentic AI coordinates hundreds to thousands of AI-driven agents to streamline retail functions.

2

It transforms workforce productivity by automating complex, multi-step processes.

3

It enables retailers to consistently deliver on brand promises alongside improved customer experience

4

The technology introduces new governance challenges critical to maintaining trust and compliance.

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RECAP:

# Industry Voices: Insights from IBM Leaders



These insights come from a live webinar hosted by RetailWire, one featuring IBM experts who lead AI innovation for retail transformation.

Click to watch

## Highlights:

1. AI agents improve operational output by simplifying complex workflows.
2. Retailers can deliver faster, personalized customer service with less friction.
3. Agentic AI adoption is linked to a projected tripling of operating profit impact by 2026.
4. Effective AI governance rapidly speeds up innovation rather than hinder it.

“We are envisioning an environment where you’ll have hundreds, maybe thousands of agents, in an enterprise. Now, somebody has to orchestrate this to make sure it’s not chaos, right? So that’s the agentic framework which actually manages, governs, controls and ensures these agents are delivering the outcome that we all want, all our retailers want, all our consumer product companies want.” – Raju Kattady

**Further reading:** [IBM 2025 Buyer’s Guide for AI agents and AI assistants](#)

## Summary of expert advice:

**1** Agentic AI represents an integrated and autonomous AI ecosystem beyond chatbots and assistants.

**2** Walmart’s deployment of 1,000 AI super agents is an example of scale and domain-specific coordination in practice.

**3** AI-driven workforce enablement improves training, staffing, and task automation, driving significant productivity gains.

**4** Governance frameworks for AI agents are essential to prevent risks like bias, privacy breaches, and brand erosion.

**5** Starting small with measurable use cases accelerates adoption and maximizes ROI.

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## KEY THEME 1:

# Evolution of AI in Retail

## Why it matters:

Retailers have used scripted chatbots and assistants for a long time, but these tools fall short in providing the context, learning ability, and integration necessary for handling complex workflows. Agentic AI is a breakthrough innovation that autonomously coordinates multiple intelligent agents to overcome these limitations.

## Solution:

1. Agentic AI frameworks manage interconnected agents to execute domain-specific tasks while supervising outcomes.
2. This leads to scalable automation across departments without confusing agent sprawl.

## Benefits:

1. Reduced manual handoffs.
2. Increased operational coherence.
3. Improved productivity and customer satisfaction.

“So the best way to think about agents is think of it like a self-driving car, right? You ingest a destination, right? You tell your Tesla or whatever you drive and say, I want to go to XYZ place. So that it ingests the destination and it figures out how to maneuver within the environment based on all the sensors deployed in the car. So, an agent inside an enterprise, think of it like that. It knows what outcome it has to deliver. It navigates through what’s going on. In my mind is the matrix.” – **Raju Kattady**

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## KEY THEME 2:

# Workforce and Operations Enablement

## Why it matters:

Retail workforce productivity and customer satisfaction are tightly linked to how efficiently tasks like staffing, training, and order fulfillment are managed. Traditional automation cannot handle and deliver when it comes to complexity and adaptability.

## Solution:

1. AI agents automate staffing predictions using historical and location data, reducing hiring delays.
2. Personalized AI onboarding agents accelerate ramp-up times for temporary workers.
3. Agents optimize in-store pick routes, saving 10-20% in associate time spend and improving customer pick-up speed.

## Benefits:

1. Faster hiring and scheduling.
2. Shortened training cycles.
3. Enhanced front-line service.

## Further reading:

1. [Put AI to work for HR](#)
2. [Reinvent procurement with AI orchestration and agents for a hybrid world](#)
3. [Put AI to work for customer service](#)

“Automate the boring stuff to give more time back to do the value-add work that’s really going to drive that growth.” – **Veronica Moyer**



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## KEY THEME 3:

# Governance and Risk Management

## Why it matters:

As agentic AI grows in scale and autonomy, the risk of errors, bias, or privacy breaches increases, threatening brand trust and exposing legal liability.

## Solution:

1. Robust AI governance frameworks provide real-time monitoring for hallucinations, bias, drift, and compliance.
2. Transparent dashboards keep enterprises aware of agent performance and risks.
3. Governance accelerates innovation by embedding compliance in development processes.

## Benefits:

1. Maintained brand trust.
2. Reduced legal and compliance risks.
3. Faster, safer AI deployment.

“Less than 25% of executives are actually implementing the governance structures that are necessary to manage their AI models. And AI models and AI agents, they could hallucinate, they could facilitate privacy breaches, they could introduce bias.” – Raju Kattady

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## CASE STUDIES:

# Success Stories

	Optimizing Grocery Pickup – Leading Grocer:	Streamlined Retail Onboarding – Major Retail Chain:	IBM Supply Chain Reinvention
<b>Challenge:</b>	Slow order fulfillment and inefficient store associate routes for buy online, then pick-up orders.	Lengthy training time for seasonal workers causing operational bottlenecks.	Disrupted supply chain with reactive processes causing inefficiencies and risk exposure.
<b>Solution:</b>	AI agents dynamically aggregate orders and create optimized picking routes across departments.	Personalized AI agents guide temp workers through store layout and FAQs via mobile devices.	Agentic AI consolidating 20 ERP data sources for proactive risk management and order status insights.
<b>Result:</b>	<b>10-20%</b> increase in associate productivity and <b>15-30 minute reduction</b> in customer wait times, boosting revenue through enhanced customer satisfaction. Agentic AI improved associates' efficiency and elevated the customer experience, according to the client insider.	<b>Training duration reduced from one week to two hours, enabling faster staff readiness and better customer service.</b> This AI-enabled onboarding transformed how quickly our seasonal crews become productive, according to the HR Manager.	<b>\$316 million cost savings</b> in three years, <b>100%</b> order fulfillment during pandemic, and improved resilience.

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# Summary

Agentic AI is driving a retail transformation with smart, autonomous agents that deliver operational efficiency, workforce enablement, and improved customer experiences. As the technology scales, robust governance and ethical frameworks become critical to maintain trust and compliance. Retailers who start small, focus on measurable ROI, and embed governance will unlock growth, efficiency, and customer loyalty.

Agentic AI is not just automation, it's a strategic necessity to reinvent retail and compete in the future.

“AI investment as a percent of it... in 2023 was roughly 8.4% on average. And 2026 is going to be 19.8%, so that's going to double. So you're actually seeing the results in the operating margin which is driving the investments.” – **Raju Kattady**

“I think the customer journey will actually end up being a lot more human with the introduction of this technology. Ironically I think this will come with the involvement of technology like agentic AI.” – **Veronica Moyer**

[Talk to IBM](#)

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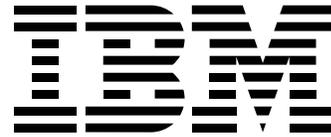
**Author:** Lavina Suthenthiran

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