

Why mainframe migration offers exceptional value for retailers

The magic words in retail—other than “Black Friday”—are “omnichannel experience.” No matter what type of retailer your company is—new, old, online, brick-and-click, or brick-and-mortar—you are under pressure to create experiences for customers and employees that work on multiple platforms and devices. Merging online and offline businesses can result in sales that are five times higher than those with only an online presence.

Fortunately, digital and technical trends that have matured in recent years are making omnichannel experiences a reality for retail. IoT, for example, enables automated mobile checkouts, personalized ads, and connected products. AI provides new insights about buying behavior that can be used to attract, retain, and delight customers. Augmented reality helps shoppers envision themselves using or wearing products. Geolocation and beacons deliver coupons in real-time as shoppers enter a store, and digital wallets are helping improve checkout experiences.

Almost all retailers want to take advantage of these technologies to deliver the experience that will turn customers into loyal shoppers. However, technology and networking challenges are holding them back. If you have been charged with making omnichannel experiences a reality for your retailer, you are likely feeling the pain of a few barriers to success.



What's keeping retailers from delivering omnichannel experiences?

In Enterprise Strategy Group's 2019 Technology Spending Intentions Survey, retailers listed the top 5 barriers to delivering omnichannel experiences as Wi-Fi connectivity, wired/wireless management, information security, network analytics, and flexible infrastructure.¹ In Total Retail's 2019 Retail Technology report, they state that "Integrating new technology solutions with existing, oftentimes legacy systems is the top tech-related challenge for retailers and brands."²

These are major hurdles that need to be addressed if retailers want to serve up omnichannel experiences that also bring them not only new customers but also loyal shoppers. As a result, few retailers today are successfully executing on all their omnichannel initiatives. Compounding the issue is the fact that retail business executives measure the success of new technology investments on increased sales and reduced costs. It can be difficult to make the case for seamlessness and retailer sophistication in that context.

If your retail company has been around for years, or even generations, you've probably invested millions of dollars in your legacy IT systems, so these challenges are all probably familiar to you. What you might not realize is that the mainframe—the home of those core legacy systems—is holding you back from capitalizing on those investments. According to Retail Touchpoints, 58 percent of retail IT budgets are spent on maintenance.³ Most of that spend is on the mainframe.

Basically, fixing, updating, and patching a mainframe can quickly drain resources and slow the progress of implementing new initiatives like those needed for omnichannel experiences. The talent pool with mainframe and COBOL experience is shrinking as retailers hire younger resources to focus on the modern engineering techniques and languages such as mobile app development, R, Python, and more that are needed. At the same time, simply casting your mainframe aside in favor of starting from scratch to facilitate omnichannel is not only wasteful, but it doesn't make sense.



Mainframe migration to the rescue

OpenFrame from TmaxSoft gives you the freedom to migrate your legacy mainframe applications on Linux, Unix, Docker Containers or the public cloud. When you migrate your legacy applications, you not only see significant cost savings, but you also get the greater flexibility needed to drive and deliver instantaneous, highly personalized, omnichannel experiences that delight customers and shoppers. The result of providing these experiences is revenue growth.

Mainframe migration enables you to take your existing mainframe applications and move them to the cloud or on premises quickly and with minimal risk. Your applications work as-is on an open system such as Linux. There are no changes to the underlying business logic or user interface. There is no negative impact on the enterprise, and it requires minimal training. Because the operating systems are open with multiple database and utility options, they integrate with the new technology required to achieve a competitive edge in the retail sector.



What does mainframe migration offer retail?

If you choose to migrate your mainframe, as a retailer, you will benefit from:

- Infrastructure designed for the agility needed to deliver omnichannel experiences
- Freedom from legacy systems that prevent superior customer experiences
- Average deployments of 6 to 12 months – ensuring a very rapid ROI
- Supports COBOL, Assembler, PL/I, Easytrieve and more legacy technologies
- Deploys on AWS, Azure and Google Cloud environments
- Allows for significant reduction in annual run costs for increased investment in innovation
- Enables horizontal and vertical scalability to deliver extremely high performance
- Uses your existing workforce and skillsets
- No change to the end-user experience or application business logic
- Supports both containers and virtualized environments
- Modernizes from a monolithic mainframe to a multi-tiered cloud-ready architecture

USE CASE

SC Data Center, Inc., an affiliate of Colony Brands, migrates mainframe with TmaxSoft OpenFrame

BENEFITS

- 75% annual cost reduction
- Increase in ROI compared to mainframe
- Matched the historic performance delivered with the mainframe technology
- High availability and reliability



What is needed to reduce or eliminate your mainframe footprint?

Partial migration: Reduce or re-platform peak MIPS

If you anticipate keeping your mainframe running for several years, OpenFrame can be a great solution to offload a portion of your batch or online applications to help reduce your peak MIPS and reduce your overall mainframe run costs.

Mainframe Replacement: Move all workloads to a distributed environment

OpenFrame can fully support the move of all your legacy technologies to the public or private cloud. Completely eliminate your z/OS environment and take full advantage of the flexibility and benefits that an open system/cloud environment can deliver.

Want More Reasons for Migration?

For more details on the benefits and drawbacks of upgrading, rewriting and migration, [check out this eBook](#).



- 1 Ryan Hall, "Retail's Top Digital Pain Points and Priorities." Extreme, 4 September 2019. <https://www.extremenetworks.com/extreme-networks-blog/retails-top-digital-pain-points-and-priorities/>
- 2 Melissa Campanelli, "Total Retail's 2019 Retail Technology Report: Omnichannel Technology Spending on the Rise." Total Retail, 31 July 2019.
- 3 "Retailers Spend 58% Of Their IT Budget On Legacy System Maintenance." Retail Touchpoints. <https://retailtouchpoints.com/resources/retailers-spend-58-of-their-it-budget-on-legacy-system-maintenance>