# Walmart, Home Bargains and others drive retail innovation with AI and automation



In an era where technological advancements are reshaping consumer interactions with brands, several prominent retailers are pushing the boundaries of innovation to enhance customer experiences and operational efficiencies. At the forefront of this movement is Walmart, which has introduced its Everyday Health Signals platform, an artificial intelligence-driven tool aimed at promoting healthier lifestyle choices among its customers. Initially developed for the health insurance sector, this initiative allows users to seamlessly connect their Walmart accounts for personalised insights based on their shopping history. This feature aims to facilitate better dietary decisions, providing practical tips, nutritional analyses, and tailored shopping lists. Walmart is launching this initiative in collaboration with NationsBenefits, targeting Medicare Advantage members who can receive custom health guidance without cost. The expansion of this platform reflects a growing trend among retailers to leverage AI for improved consumer engagement and public well-being.

Meanwhile, Veho and RIVR are embarking on an innovative journey in logistics, focusing on the delivery experience within the e-commerce sector. Their recent partnership aims to deploy parcel robots in urban areas, starting with a pilot programme in Austin, Texas. These robots are designed not to replace human delivery personnel but to support them, enabling quicker and more efficient parcel deliveries while minimising physical strain on workers. This strategy is particularly beneficial in congested metropolitan areas where parking and traffic pose considerable challenges for traditional delivery methods. As the industry grapples with the demand for faster shipping, such innovations could redefine last-mile logistics and improve customer satisfaction.

Home Bargains, a prominent UK-based discount retailer, has also made significant strides in its operational capabilities with the opening of a state-of-the-art automated distribution centre in St Helens. This facility, which spans approximately one million square feet, is designed to service over 300 stores and will employ around 1,000 people. The development, which cost £400 million, marks a crucial step in Home Bargains' expansion strategy. The automation technology, developed with WITRON, is expected to transform logistics efficiency, as up to 80% of order picking processes will now be automated, significantly enhancing operational capacity. Home Bargains has plans to replicate this success with a second distribution centre in Doncaster, slated to open in 2028. This expansion comes on the back of impressive financial results, with pre-tax profits surging by 35% and sales growing by 11%, illustrating the company's effective response to increasing demand across its chain of 617 outlets.

Such advancements in the retail sector not only signal a shift towards higher efficiency and customer-centric solutions but also reflect broader trends in consumer behaviour and the industry's adaptation to technological challenges. For example, ASOS has recently faced significant operational setbacks, announcing a hefty one-time impairment charge exceeding $200 million due to the closure of its Atlanta distribution centre. This decision is part of a broader strategy to streamline operations amid a challenging market, illustrating the impact of automation and changing consumer preferences on retail logistics.

As retailers like Walmart, Home Bargains, and ASOS navigate this rapidly evolving landscape, the integration of sophisticated technology and data-driven insights will undoubtedly play a pivotal role in shaping future consumer-brand relationships and enhancing operational effectiveness. The embrace of modern solutions by these companies not only highlights the necessity for adaptation in today's competitive environment but also sets a benchmark for other retailers aiming to remain relevant and responsive to changing market dynamics.

## Reference Map:

* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://retailtechinnovationhub.com/home/2025/5/29/a-glimpse-into-future-of-brand-consumer-connections-rtih-flags-up-this-weeks-coolest-retail-technology-plays), [[4]](https://www.logisticsmatters.co.uk/news/home-bargains-breaks-ground-on-doncaster-dc/)
* Paragraph 2 – [[1]](https://retailtechinnovationhub.com/home/2025/5/29/a-glimpse-into-future-of-brand-consumer-connections-rtih-flags-up-this-weeks-coolest-retail-technology-plays), [[2]](https://www.reuters.com/business/retail-consumer/asos-warns-200-million-hit-atlanta-distribution-centre-closure-2025-01-15/), [[5]](https://jobs.home.bargains/about/explore-omega)
* Paragraph 3 – [[3]](https://www.retailgazette.co.uk/blog/2025/03/home-bargains-dc/), [[6]](https://www.logisticsmatters.co.uk/product/home-bargains-implements-robots-for-handling-roll-cages/)

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://retailtechinnovationhub.com/home/2025/5/29/a-glimpse-into-future-of-brand-consumer-connections-rtih-flags-up-this-weeks-coolest-retail-technology-plays> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.reuters.com/business/retail-consumer/asos-warns-200-million-hit-atlanta-distribution-centre-closure-2025-01-15/> - ASOS Plc has announced a one-time impairment charge exceeding $200 million for fiscal 2025 due to the closure of its Atlanta distribution centre. This decision is part of ASOS's strategy to navigate a challenging business environment and transform its operations after losing popularity among its target audience and dealing with excess inventory. The closure follows the completion of an extensive warehouse automation project. From mid-2025, ASOS will fulfill U.S. orders from its automated UK centre and a smaller local site. While this shift will result in an accounting hit of approximately £190 million ($231.91 million) in 2025, ASOS anticipates annual savings of £10 million to £20 million from 2026 onwards. The Atlanta site will be marketed, with some of the seven employees offered new roles and opportunities for many third-party logistics workers at nearby locations. Despite these changes, ASOS continues to grow its local U.S. presence, having opened a U.S. office in 2024.
3. <https://www.retailgazette.co.uk/blog/2025/03/home-bargains-dc/> - Home Bargains has begun construction on a new distribution centre that will supply more than 300 stores around the UK. The discount chain said the new warehouse 'marks a significant milestone in the expansion of TJ Morris’ national distribution network'. The one million sq ft Doncaster site, due to complete in October 2026, is designed to 'enhance logistics efficiency, create new job opportunities, and support Home Bargains’ expansion plans'. Built by McLaren Construction, the facility will be highly automated and utilise order picking technology from Witron. Home Bargains said once the warehouse was up and running it would be 'one of the most automated operations in the UK'. The facility will create 1,000 new jobs in the region and supply 300 stores by 2028. The Doncaster DC will feature the same design the retailer’s new one million sq ft warehouse in St Helens, Merseyside, which becomes operational in May this year. The expansion comes as Home Bargains saw its pre-tax profits surge 35% to £454.8m in the year to 30 June, up from £336.5m. Sales jumped 11% to £4.2bn, which it attributed to new shop openings, relocations of existing locations and higher sales across the portfolio. The retailer, which has 617 stores, is set to continue its expansion this year as it targets 800 and 1,000 locations across the UK.
4. <https://www.logisticsmatters.co.uk/news/home-bargains-breaks-ground-on-doncaster-dc/> - The facility will span circa 1 million sq ft and is expected to be operational by mid-2028, with McLaren Construction as the main contractor. Witron will take charge of the warehouse automation implementation. Construction is set for completion in October 2026. Upon completion, the facility will hand over to Witron for installation of automated picking equipment. The site will be highly automated and will service 300+ Home Bargains stores by mid-2028. The Distribution Centre in Doncaster has the same design as the facility in St Helens, which becomes operational in May 2025, with all product groups and logistics areas – from receiving to truck loading – integrated end-to-end into the highly automated overall process. All processes are controlled by Witron software and the material flow includes 470,000 pallet, tray, and tote storage locations, 104 stacker cranes, as well as more than 15 kilometres of conveyors. Witron’s UK sales manager Duncan Pointon says: 'In addition to the benefits for consumers in the stores, a decisive criterion for TJ Morris was also the focus on warehouse employees. They will benefit from state-of-the-art, ergonomic workstations, which is an enormous competitive advantage in times of labour shortages. In addition, the issue of sustainability is addressed in many different ways – for example through significant CO₂ savings due to densely packed load carriers, optimal truck utilisation, and fewer trucks on the roads.'
5. <https://jobs.home.bargains/about/explore-omega> - Home Bargains is expanding rapidly and has announced the opening of a new, state-of-the-art warehouse in 2025. This highly automated facility is designed to support new store openings nationwide and ensure shelves are always stocked with products. The new warehouse will create hundreds of jobs, providing rewarding career opportunities in a fast-paced, innovative environment. The Omega Distribution Centre is a colossal 1 million square feet, equivalent to over 15 football pitches. The site will operate with 65% automation, featuring advanced technology to drive efficiency and support the company's growth strategy.
6. <https://www.logisticsmatters.co.uk/product/home-bargains-implements-robots-for-handling-roll-cages/> - Home Bargains has implemented a large-scale automated marshalling solution from Lowpad at its Amesbury distribution centre. This initiative addresses recruitment challenges and creates a 24/7 operational marshalling solution managed by Lowpad's fleet manager software. The new system processes over 200,000 roll cages weekly using 91 Lowpad AMRs and 36 handover locations, 21 of which are fully automated. Home Bargains' Amesbury distribution centre faced significant recruitment challenges due to its remote location, requiring a large workforce for labour-intensive tasks. To alleviate the recruitment burden and reduce operational costs, Home Bargains implemented the automated marshalling process. The new system processes over 200,000 roll cages weekly using 91 Lowpad AMRs and 36 handover locations, 21 of which are fully automated. Home Bargains general manager Chris Tilly says: 'Lowpad has significantly reduced the number of workers needed, considerably decreasing staff numbers, helping us achieve our cost-saving goals and addressing our recruitment challenges.'
7. <https://www.interiordaily.com/article/9717034/home-bargains-builds-new-distribution-centre-to-bring-jobs-and-investment-to-doncaster/> - Construction has begun on a major distribution centre at the Unity Yorkshire development in Doncaster, a project set to create 1,000 jobs and drive economic growth in the region. Located off Junction 5 of the M18/M180, the site offers strong transport links, supporting supply chain efficiency and nationwide service. Retailer TJ Morris Ltd, trading as Home Bargains, is behind the development, which will feature a fully automated 1 million sq. ft facility at Unity Connect. The centre will include a 43-metre-high bay, low bay areas, and cold storage to support the company's expansion plans. McLaren Construction Midlands and North is leading the project, which is scheduled for completion in October 2026. A ground-breaking ceremony marked the milestone, attended by Doncaster Mayor Ros Jones and representatives from City of Doncaster Council, Business Doncaster, and Waystone Hargreaves Land.