

Innovation investment and increased collaboration prove key take-aways for retailers attending RetailEXPO Virtual Conference

05 May 2020– Richmond, London, UK – [RetailEXPO](#), Europe’s largest retail trade show, delivered two days of insight, inspiration and innovation from the UK’s most progressive retailers and tech leaders, via online sessions.

The RetailEXPO Virtual Conference, powered by Essential Retail, welcomed thousands of retail professionals to its digital sessions, which saw former MD of Waitrose and Deputy Chairman of John Lewis & Partners, Baron Mark Price CVO, chair the keynote on Day 1.

Baron Price outlined, in the light of covid-19, the long-term challenges and opportunities facing retailers, including tax rate rises, a downward pressure on margins in economic uncertainty accelerated by the discounters, the importance of investment in tech, a return to local retail and independent retailing on the High Street and protectionist policies.

He concluded that retail will emerge stronger, and that global evolution will be driven by the innovation of British businesses. “Retailers need to find a new way through, embrace the change and create a new era of retail, much like the era of old retail, which will be imagined and born in the UK and spread around the world,” he said.

Day two of RetailEXPO Virtual Conference saw a keynote from leading mathematician and broadcaster, Dr Hannah Fry, focusing on the science behind data analytics and how retail businesses can leverage this to drive performance. Her outtake was that good data, good modelling and good mathematical processes would be key in driving value from data for retail businesses in the future.

As Facebook announced users of its apps topped 3 billion globally for the first time, Beth Horn, its UK Head of Industry for Retail, emphasised the need for brands to share authentic, timely content. She described the post covid-19 consumer as ‘curious’ consumers and increasingly open to shopping with new brands based on how they communicate to people without the need to ‘polish’ content as an honest reflection of the pivot all retailers have had to make as part of the ‘new normal’. “People are hacking things together which is good and showing that authentic connections to consumers is a really powerful tool,” said Horn.

Speaking as part of a panel discussing maintaining engagement with consumers in lockdown Nicola Thompson, COO, Made.com, said covid-19 had made many retailers question their marketing and channel mix as they weighed up the most effective way to spend across their business in a recession. “We may see brands start to produce less polished content that lives for a shorter period of time in channels like social media which can be super flexible and have a conversation in a moment of time and take some of the investment and move it across their P&L to build really strong, credible customer experiences.”

Other retailers joining **RetailEXPO** virtual sessions included Robin Phillips, CEO at Watchshop, Susan Azari, Mobile Lead at The Very Group; Tristan Burns, Analytics Lead at Pizza Hut Digital Ventures; as well as speakers from Tesco, Hirestreet, Vivobarefoot and River Island.

Matt Bradley, Event Director at **RetailEXPO**, commented: “We’re really energised by the levels of engagement and positive comments we’ve received from the retail community in response to the **RetailEXPO** Virtual Conference. We took the move to go virtual as we felt, at a time of great uncertainty for many retail businesses, there remained a platform for sharing advice and best practice. And while many immediate challenges brought about or accelerated by covid-19 were discussed, there was many takeaways around the evolution of retail and the opportunities to come once retail reimagines itself for the post-pandemic future.”

To catch-up on-demand on all the sessions from the **RetailEXPO** Virtual Conference sessions, visit: <https://www.retailexpo.com/virtualconference>

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For further information about **RetailEXPO**, Reed’s leading European retail trade show, please contact the Fieldworks PR team:

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Notes to Editors:

About RetailEXPO

RetailEXPO is Europe's leading event for retail solutions, designed for retail, brand and hospitality professionals looking to enhance great customer experiences, increase operational effectiveness and drive better outcomes for their business through retail technology and digital innovation.

Bringing together leaders of the retail industry, the event features an interactive exhibition floor with hundreds of cutting-edge suppliers, accompanied by a market-leading conference programme, and a host of networking opportunities - all helping to provide the right insight, inspiration and solutions to today's retail issues.

www.retailexpo.com

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