

Delivering Smarter Merchandising and Supply Chains with the Retail Integration Framework



Highlights

- **Smarter merchandising systems with improved data quality for better decision making**
- **Sense and respond to customer demand faster, reducing cycle time and inventory**
- **A tighter collaboration with suppliers to tailor product assortments, and support a demand driven replenishment model**
- **Efficient vendor on-boarding, allowing you to rapidly introduce dynamic new products more quickly than your competition**
- **Trade Fund Management solutions to manage profitable promotions**

Optimizing your Business for Dynamic Change

Imagine what your smarter merchandising and supply chain portal might look like. With dash-boarding and mobile phone integration, delivering real-time alerts and information to your category captains, it would provide trusted and timely intelligence in order for them to make better decisions, and allowing you to look forward while driving your business rather than looking in the rear-view mirror. With unprecedented intelligence behind it, it would enable them to not only forecast based on historical sales data, but provide reactive monitoring to enable them to quickly identify exceptions to the trends.

Performance analytics delivered by this dashboard will be able to provide your category captains with the intelligence to optimize their product and assortment choices, create improved shelf layouts based on information received on all relevant categories and not only those that he owns.

Or your portal might include a next generation vendor portal that simplifies the vendor on-boarding processes, providing automating the process of nominating, validating and on-boarding vendors, increasing your options and speed of execution in your supply line and allowing you to rapidly introduce dynamic new products more quickly than your competition.

This smarter portal could provide the intelligence to enable you to provide visibility into, and manage, your trade fund management process, handling the multiple variable contracts and terms that you negotiate with your suppliers. Many retailers lose profits by failing to be reimbursed for vendor trade fund programs and are often unaware of how close they are to program targets or whether they result in missed opportunities. Your smarter portal would enable you to recover lost profits and improve the bottom line by billing vendors immediately, gauge the effectiveness of vendor programs, and monitor the sales response for your promotions.

The Retail Integration Framework

The IBM Retail Integration Framework provides you with the platform to implement solutions like these. Built on IBM's industry leading SOA foundation, it provides a set of retail-specific usage patterns and reference architectures, which are supplemented by selected assets that have been developed during the course of numerous client engagements with winning retailers.

A powerful set of solutions provided by IBM and its rich ecosystem of Business Partners, identify projects that will enable you to incrementally enhance your Merchandising and Supply Chain efficiency.

Product Information and Attribute Management

Replacing an unstructured item creation process with a standardized process with human and systematic workflow will result in faster new item introductions. A Product Information and Attribute Management system built on the Retail Integration Framework reduces the multiple sources of duplicate or even conflicting item data, and the improved data quality and timeliness facilitates better decision making at multiple levels of the organization.

New Product Introduction

The New Product Introduction Process in many retailers is highly manual, requires updates to multiple systems, and requires the involvement of many employees. Implementing this project will provide the means to automate the synchronization of internal and external processes, allowing you to dynamically decrease the cycle time of introducing new products from weeks to days. This translates to an accelerated time to market and a resultant increase in sales, a reduced time to set up a new product for sales, reduced error rates, and lower delivery costs.

Supply Chain Optimization

The ILOG portfolio implemented on the Retail Integration Framework, delivers a powerful Business Rule Management system enabling you to adapt and respond dynamically to situations in the supply chain, automating process based decisions with business rule management. An innovative analysis application produces the best possible action plans and schedules, enhancing your ability to explore alternatives, understand trade-offs, and respond to changes in business operations. The visualization tools will provide you with the means to transform insight into action. In addition, the ILOG portfolio provides a set of tools and solvers for supply chain optimization of distribution networks, product flow, inventory and manufacturing processes.

Vendor On-Boarding

Managing and sustaining relationships with multiple vendors is costly and complex, leading to reduced supply lines and limited options. By automating the process of nominating, validating and on-boarding vendors, this project will enable you to reduce your overhead costs associated with this activity, accelerated your time to market with new merchandise, and rate and compare vendors and adjust your supply lines accordingly.

Trade Fund Management

Like many retailers, you may be losing profits by failing to be reimbursed for vendor trade fund programs. You may be unaware of how close you are to program targets and whether they result in missed opportunities. If you need a solution to track trade fund programs and generate reports, automating deductions, billing vendors immediately, and eliminating the need for third party auditors, the Retail Integration Framework's Trade Fund Management project may be an ideal place to start.

To Learn More

To learn more about how the IBM Retail Integration Framework enables Smarter Merchandising and Supply Chain Solutions for Retail, contact your IBM representative or IBM Business Partner, or visit ibm.com/software/industry/frameworks/retail.html



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