

Three retail imperatives for 2022

UK retailers are facing new economic headwinds and are under pressure to adapt to consumer demands.

Customer experience and the back office will play a significant role in navigating a challenging operating environment. Here's how.

1.



Retailers are grappling with staff shortages and rising input costs.

Technology in CX and the back office will unlock efficiencies. But not all brands are making the most of powerful time and cost-saving solutions.

Rising shipping costs are adding to price pressures. The average price of a 40ft shipping container from Asia to Europe is currently £10,688 – 10x higher than 2019¹.



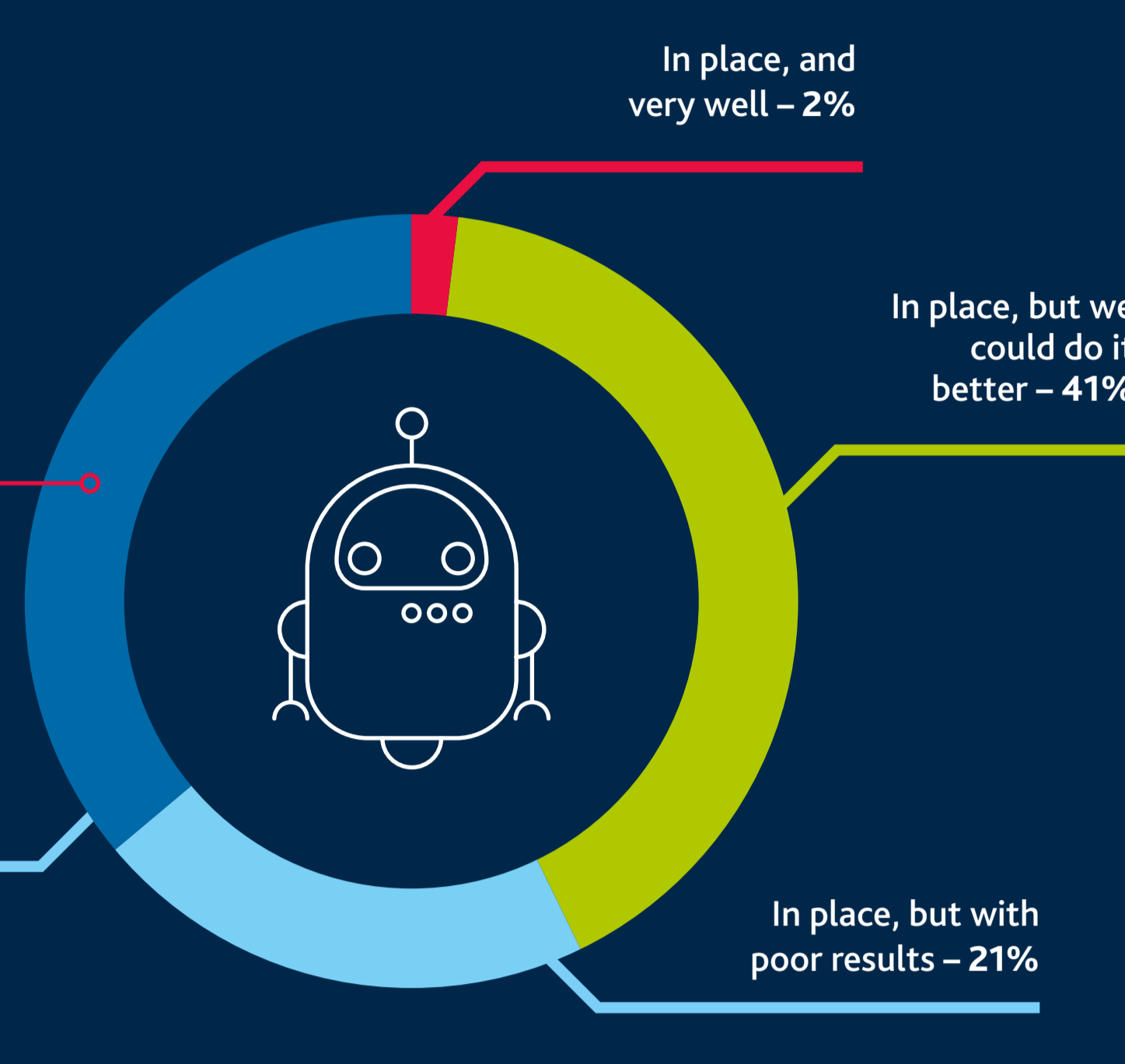
5.5% increase

Labour shortages meant retail pay increased 5.5% in 2021² – more than double the national average – squeezing already stretched bottom lines.

How well have retailers managed to automate the handling of customer contacts?

Automation can manage large volumes of enquiries efficiently and effectively, at low-cost – including customer questions about order (WISMO) and return (WISMR) status, which might be more frequent during periods of supply disruption. But few retailers are confident their current automation solutions are delivering.

Not in place, but in consideration – 36%



95%

Intelligent Automation can help shoulder high-volume repetitive, time-intensive administration tasks – saving time and up to 95% in cost-per-process.

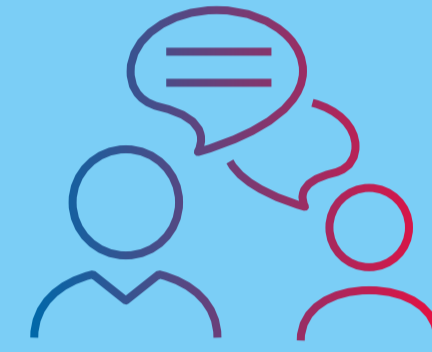
Expert blog: How retailers can use tech to augment human agents

[Read here](#)



Expert blog: Three stages to implementing your automation solution

[Read here](#)



2.

Boost sustainability by tackling the returns tsunami

SHIP TO
The Retail Company
Manchester
United Kingdom



10kg 1 of 1

RETURN TO SENDER
Shipping Company

Tracking # 1A 2BC 3D4 56 7890 1234

Brands are facing strong demand to be more sustainable.

The environmental footprint of a product isn't just the manufacturing process. Improving operational factors like logistics miles and packaging will also be critical to address.

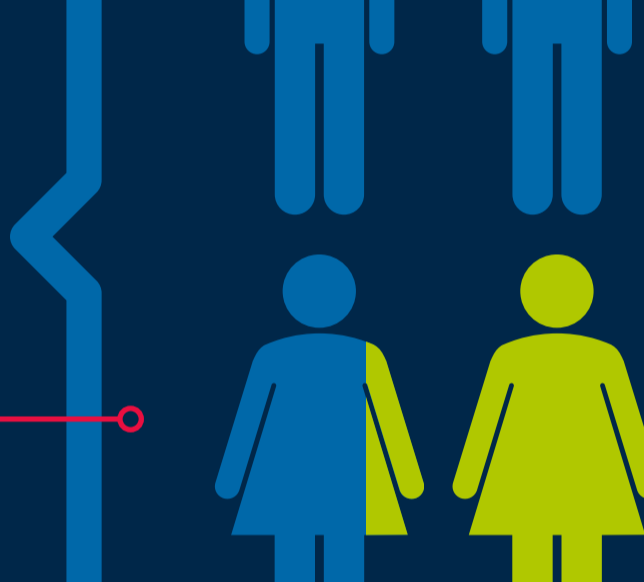
Reducing return volumes is an important part of this process, but retailers need the right tools in place.

49%

Half of UK online shoppers (49%) now prefer to buy sustainable goods³.

70%

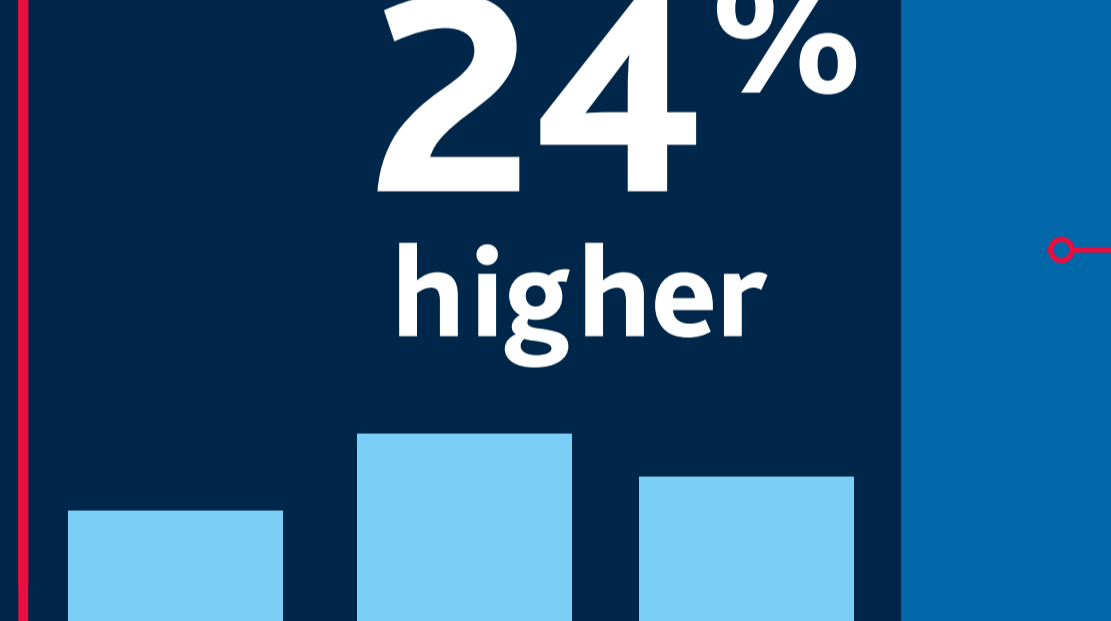
Getting it right won't just be good for the planet. Nearly three in four Brits (70%) will pay a price premium of 5% for sustainable products⁴.



24% higher

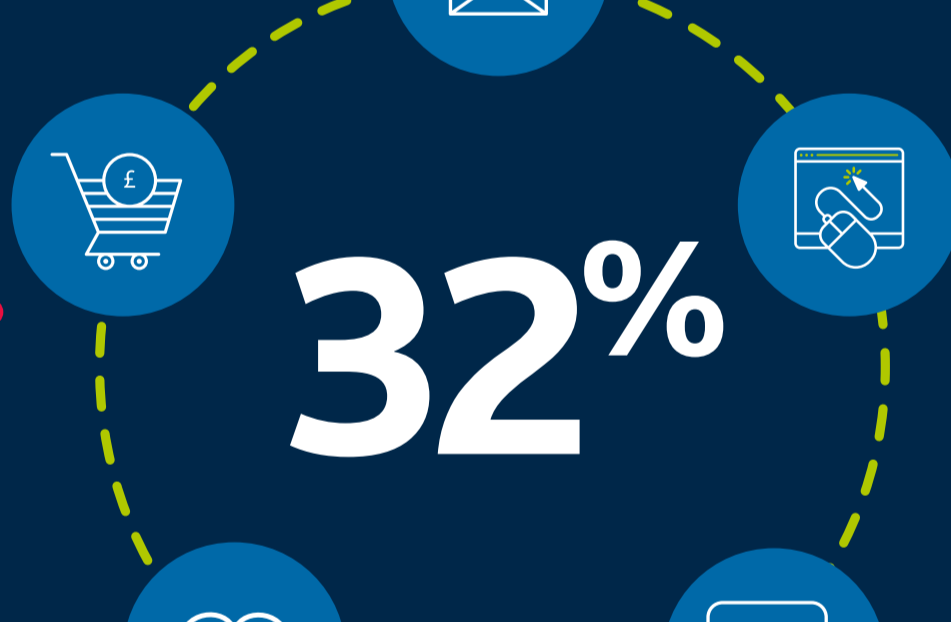
CO₂

Reducing return volume will cut carbon output. But it's on the rise – up nearly a quarter in the UK over Christmas, year-on-year⁵.



Making the customer journey more personalised can help bring return volume down. But just a third of brands have the processes in place to deliver a highly personalised experience to get recommendations right the first time.

32%



Expert blog: How can tech-driven customer service help deliver net-zero retail

[Read here](#)



Download your free 'how-to' guide on how retailers can deliver hyper-personalisation

[Download here](#)



3.

Engage with more customers on more channels

In 2022, consumers are engaging with brands on more channels than ever before – from increasingly browsing on mobile, to making purchases on social.

Retailers must ensure their CX strategy delivers a consistent, seamless quality of service. Here's where it will be critical to focus.

More than half (52%) of retailers say they could do a better job of expanding channels for customers.

52%

17%

Although more than half of all web traffic now comes through mobile devices⁶, just a fifth (17%) of brands are fully confident in their mobile app functionality.

A third of UK consumers are using social media to purchase products⁷. But just over a fifth (22%) of brands say they think they can better manage brand and customer engagement on social channels.

22%

1 in 3

30% of retailers feel they can improve the real-time support they offer to customers during online sales.

Expert blog: The social state of play: what's next for social selling

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Expert blog: How can fashion retailers adapt the customer experience to cut abandonment rates?

[Read here](#)



With 15 years' experience in partnering with leading global retail brands, we can help you assess your entire customer contact operation to identify improvements, develop new solutions and support you in transforming and future proofing your CX strategy.

[Click here to speak to our experts](#)

1 Freighters – <https://www.theguardian.com/business/2022/feb/10/exceptionally-challenging-how-rising-shipping-costs-hit-uk-firms>
 2 British Retail Consortium – <https://brc.org.uk/retail-insight/content/monitors/retail-jobs-report/retail-jobs-report-21/>
 3 Forrester – <https://www.forrester.com/sites/cabtheinsight/2021/12/28/four-trends-that-will-shape-retail-in-2022?h=344a9677519a>
 4 Boston Consulting Group – <https://www.forbes.com/sites/cabtheinsight/2021/12/28/four-trends-that-will-shape-retail-in-2022?h=344a9677519a>
 5 ZigZag – <https://www.theguardian.com/money/2022/jan/08/uk-surge-in-post-christmas-returns-reveals-dark-side-of-online-shopping-boom>
 6 Oberlo – <https://www.oberlo.com.uk/statistics/mobile-internet-traffic>
 7 Bazaarvoice – <https://www.retail-insight-network.com/features/uk-shoppers-turn-to-social-media-to-discover-and-buy-new-products/>

All other figures relate to Arvato data, collected in 2021.