MKTG 8604

New Frontiers in Retailing: Magic and Logic

AGENTIC AI IS COMING: HOW CAN RETAILERS BE PREPARED TO IMPROVE THE SHOPPING EXPERIENCE?

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Executive Summary

Customers' shopping experiences today are fragmented, effortful and overwhelming, leading to high cart abandonment, returns, and low customer lifetime value (CLV).

Enter **agentic AI**, a step beyond generative AI, designed to make autonomous, goal-driven decisions and open a new frontier for retailers to enhance the customer shopping experience.

Thesis I: To improve the shopping experience, retailers should use agentic AI for three use cases: personalized shopping assistants, omnichannel continuity and issue resolution.
Retailers should prioritize these use cases first, as they offer the greatest impact, boosting CLV by 30–50%, increasing retention by 56 percentage points, and improving NPS by 15–25 points.

Thesis II: When deciding how to adopt agentic AI, retailers should make a strategic decision on whether to build, buy or partner.
Big retailers like Amazon should build in-house, while smaller ones can buy solutions. All retailers should partner with AI platforms (Daydream, ChatGPT) to boost traffic and engagement.

Thesis III: Internally, retailers need to invest in their tech and talent and need to consider customer sentiment and risk to prepare for agentic AI adoption.
Retailers should invest 3%+ of revenue to build AI capabilities like cloud-based, modular tech stacks and high-quality data. Strong ethical data practices are essential to build consumer trust.

Introduction and Problem Statement

In today's saturated retail landscape, consumers are faced with an abundance of choice, yet the shopping experience is broken and hard to enjoy.

Consumers struggle to know or find what they're shopping for, requiring multiple open tabs, filters, endless scrolling, and manual product comparisons. Their experience across channels is fragmented, since store visits are disconnected from their online shopping experience. According to McKinsey, 74% of consumers abandon their shopping journeys due to choice fatigue, and 80% of customers say dissatisfaction with search is a barrier to purchase[1]. Even when customers find what they're looking for, they're exhausted and often need to work with customer service to handle shipping delays, errors or returns. With retailers' e-com returns averaging 17%, it's clear that the customer shopping experience needs to be improved[2].

Many retailers recognize that a better shopping experience can help reduce card abandonment, decrease returns and improve CLV, but don't know what technology to leverage. With the rise of agentic AI, retailers will have access to powerful technology that can improve the shopping experience. The key question is: how can retailers prepare to take advantage of this shift?

Agentic AI describes AI systems that can make autonomous, goal-driven decisions with limited supervision or human intervention. While agentic AI builds on traditional LLMs and generative AI models, it takes them a step further by applying generative outputs towards specific goals[3].

Exhibit 1: Agentic AI Diagram[4]
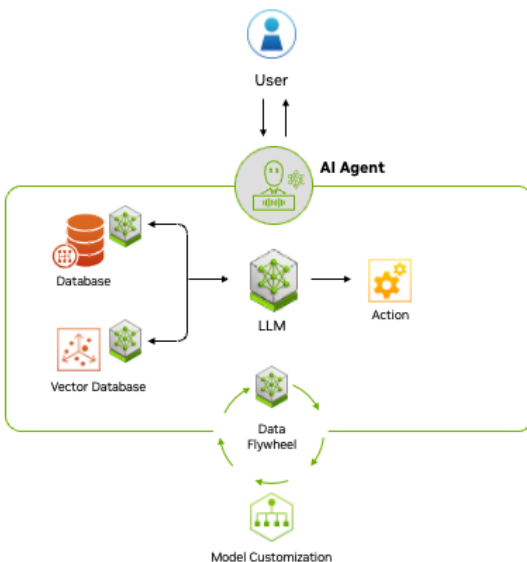
Despite widespread recognition of the rapidly evolving AI landscape, few retailers are prepared to transition from basic generative AI to deploying advanced agentic AI systems. While generative AI is reactive, operates within its boundaries and requires prompts, agentic AI is proactive, adaptive, capable of setting its objectives, executing multi-step tasks and learning from outcomes to improve future performance[5]. Agentic AI uses four steps: perceive (gather data from various sources), reason (using LLMs), act (execute tasks by integrating with external tools) and learn (improve through feedback)[4]. For example, while gen AI can respond to a shopper and filter for products, agentic AI can learn preferences, proactively make recommendations and check out for shoppers.

Gartner predicts that by 2028, 33% of enterprises will use agentic AI, up from less than 1% today[8]. Retailers need to adopt agentic AI now to smoothen the shopping journey and avoid falling behind.

Methodology

Our research employed a multi-faceted approach, combining secondary research, expert interviews, and practitioner insights to analyze the emerging role of agentic AI in retail.

- **Secondary Research:** We conducted a thorough review of current literature, industry reports, and academic studies to understand agentic AI applications in retail. This included whitepapers, market analyses, and case studies from leading consultancies, technology providers, and academic sources, enabling us to benchmark industry trends and best practices. Note, key source files are documented under References.

- **Expert Interviews:** We supplemented our findings with interviews from senior executives in the retail space across beauty and apparel, including the CEOs of Dermalogica and Poshmark, as well as equity research analysts and academic researchers specializing in retail innovation. These discussions offered direct perspectives on the adoption, challenges, and opportunities of agentic AI across different retail segments.

- **Practitioner Insights:** Drawing on our team's collective experience in merchandising, planning, strategy, and product management at major retailers (e.g., Gap, Coach, Abercrombie & Fitch, Reebok) and tech companies (Uber, Daydream, 1stDibs), we evaluated the practical feasibility and impact of agentic AI use cases from an operator's standpoint.

Given the breadth of use cases for agentic AI along the value chain (see Appendix), we focused specifically on use cases that optimize the customer experience, more directly solving for the pain points we identified. We synthesized our insights into the most impactful use cases from our learnings, strategic implementation choices (build, buy, or partner), and internal readiness (data, talent, risk).

Given the evolving nature of agentic AI, some findings are based on early pilots and expert opinions rather than long-term deployments.

Thesis I: To improve the shopping experience, retailers should use agentic AI for three use cases: personalized shopping assistants, omnichannel continuity and issue resolution.

Personalized shopping assistants: Agentic AI to improve search, discovery and check-out
Agentic AI can create personalized shopping journeys that adapt in real-time to individual preferences and 50% of fashion executives think search and discovery is the AI use case with the most potential in 2025[1].

Customers can prompt the agent, "I'm looking for a short black dress under $200 matching the jacket I bought last month", and would receive recommendations based on their brand, fit and price preferences, observed via previous browsing history or purchases. Beyond being prompted, the agent could follow up by suggesting matching shoes, proactively offering discounts and ultimately making purchases on the shopper's behalf. If consumers consent, the retailer's agent can integrate with their calendar and suggest outfits for upcoming events. The key to this use case is that there is no human intervention and rather than following fixed algorithmic rules, the AI agent reprioritizes and learns based on consumer's individual needs[5]. While aspects of this use case like agentic check out or calendar integrations may seem far away, retailers need to prepare now to adapt these technologies. The impact for leveraging personalized shopping is significant: conversion rates increase by 20-35% and customer lifetime value improves by 30-50%[1].
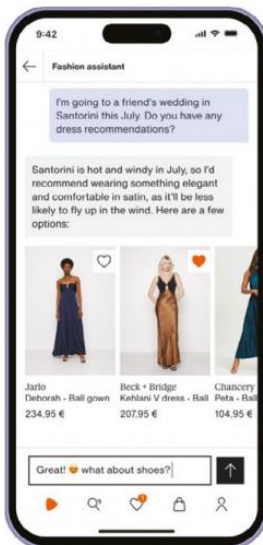
Exhibit 2: Zalando Fashion Assistant (left)[1]

To personalize shopping, the agentic AI is built on an LLM like ChatGPT but uses company and customer-specific data (inventory, purchases etc.) to take an action (customer communication or check-out). Data from this interaction will be stored in memory and the AI learns from feedback when making the next recommendation[5].

German retailer Zalando has adopted gen AI features like a ChatGPT-powered shopping assistant and personalized product recommendations and credits an 18% yoy profitability increase in Q2 of 2024 in part to this roll-out[1]. While this shopping assistant lacks advanced agentic features like automatic check-out, it does offer personalized search and discovery and will continue to evolve.

Omnichannel continuity: Agentic AI for a seamless customer experience online and offline
Over 50% of fashion executives agree that digital tools to facilitate omnichannel sales is a key priority next year[1]. As consumers move between digital and physical environments, agentic AI ensures consistency and unified customer profiles across touchpoints[6]. The AI agent acts as an autonomous orchestrator as shoppers transition between online browsing, mobile engagement, and in-store visits. This creates a cohesive brand experience by seamlessly transferring shopping carts between channels, remembering fitting preferences, and alerting store associates about online browsing history to provide more informed assistance[5].

Some retailers like Kering have already adopted rudimentary CRM-enabled technologies to give store associates real-time information about their customers. Kering's app Luce helps staff make

personalized product recommendations and promotions for customers and has increased AOV by 15-20%[1]. Agentic AI can take this to the next level by syncing product recommendations and carts across channels, automatically sending customers outreach and providing store associates with context-aware recommendations on what to say.

Omnichannel shoppers have a 30% higher CLV than single channel shoppers and companies with strong omnichannel strategies retain 89% vs 33% of customers[7]. Therefore, agentic AI can improve customers' omnichannel experiences, leading to higher CLV and customer retention.

Customer Issue Resolution: Agentic AI proactively and autonomously resolve issues
Another valuable application of AI agents is to anticipate and resolve problems in the shopping journey before they impact customer satisfaction. By monitoring the customer journey for potential pain points, from delivery delays to returns, AI agents proactively intervene with solutions.

While generative AI excels at generating responses to customer inquiries, it lacks the ability to act autonomously and execute tasks across systems. In contrast, agentic AI not only understands customer needs through continuous data collection but also carries out actions in real-time to resolve issues. For instance, when a customer's order is delayed, agentic AI can notify them, suggest substitutes, and even initiate processes like rerouting the order or offering a similar item. Similarly, when a customer requests a return or exchange, agentic AI can automatically generate return labels, schedule pick-ups, and recommend alternatives based on the customer's preferences and browsing history. This seamless integration with the company's backend systems allows agentic AI to perform end-to-end customer service tasks without human intervention. Walmart's AI powered customer service, for example, is becoming more agentic by recognizing customers, finding orders and managing returns, although it doesn't act autonomously E2E yet[20].

This preventative approach transforms customer service from reactive problem-solving to proactive experience optimization, improving NPS scores by 15-25 points while resolving up to 80% of issues without human intervention[8].
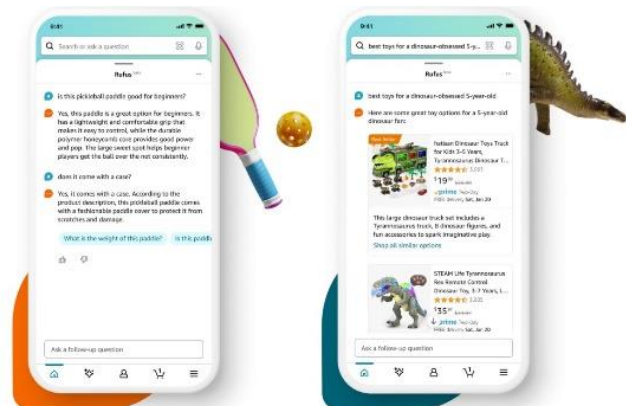
Thesis II: When deciding how to adopt agentic AI, retailers should make a strategic decision on whether to build, buy or partner.

**Build: Large, tech-forward retailers with strong in-house data and engineers**
Building an LLM in-house only makes sense for very few, tech-forward, large retailers given the high cost, effort and commoditization of LLMs. In fact, 65% of organizations partner with others to build or use their LLMs[17]. Even without an in-house LLM, retailers can develop custom AI agents using the company's data via retrieval-augmented generation (RAG). For example, for the agentic customer service use case, a company could feed an existing LLM customer data, call center transcripts and company specific policies to develop a custom AI agent[22].

Amazon is an example of a large retailer that is building its own LLM and agentic AI. Rufus, for example, provides conversational, context-aware assistance to personalize product discovery. Previously, searches on Amazon had limited nuance, making it difficult for customers to navigate its 300+ million product catalog[9]. Agentic AI bridges this gap by interpreting natural language questions, synthesizing information from Amazon's listings, preferences and external web data, and constantly improving through reinforcement learning[10]. For Amazon, this will improve customer conversion, return rates and add a revenue stream through integrated ads in Rufus's responses[11]. Amazon's agentic AI reach is extending beyond its own site with the 'Buy for Me' feature, also in beta. If interested, users can tap 'Buy for Me' to view product specs and checkout within the app rather than linking out to the external site. Using agentic AI, Amazon provides their encrypted details to complete the checkout process on the brand's website on their behalf[12].

Exhibit 3: Rufus Beta   *Exhibit 4: Buy for Me*
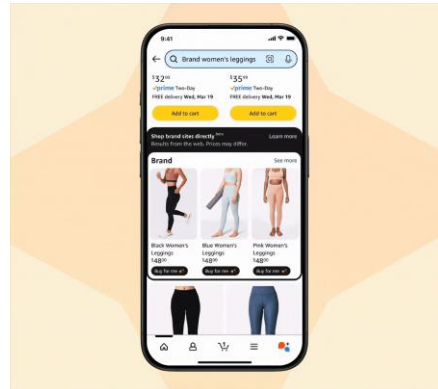
Buy: Mid-to-large retailers seeking faster deployment and moderate customization
Given the investment and technological capacity required to develop agentic AI solutions in-house, a variety of providers, such as Constructor or Intercom, are on the market for smaller retailers. These providers can be integrated with retailers' data and don't require building agents in-house.

Constructor, for example, is a third-party software vendor available to retailers of all sizes offering a personalized shopping assistant. Retailers can use the 'Search & Autosuggest' tool to offer more personalized ecommerce search that learns in real-time, the 'Recommendations' tool to provide personalized recommendations, or the 'AI Shopping Assistant' to find the right products[14].

Exhibit 5: Intercom's Fin Tool (Agentic Customer Service)
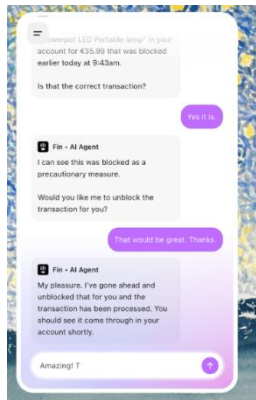
Intercom's Fin tool focuses on post-order assistance with an AI agent for customer service. Once integrated, Fin learns everything about a retailer from data sources, uses natural language processing to understand nuanced customer inquiries and personalizes its service by customer. Moreover, it takes customer action on their behalf to help relieve blockers, such as shipping and billing adjustments. With a 54% resolution rate and just a 0.01% hallucination rate, it can relieve significant customer service workload at a low risk[15].

These are just some agentic AI tools being developed to improve the customer experience without requiring significant in-house resources. While most services are not entirely agentic yet, their ability to personalize discovery, and take actions are indicators of the shift towards agentic AI.

Partner: Brand and retailers that want to benefit from agentic AI without buying or building
There will be a slate of agentic AI tools that retailers can partner with to offer personalized shopping and acquire customers that don't require as much integration and effort as buying or building. Examples include Daydream or ChatGPT Shopping.

Daydream is an AI-powered conversational shopping assistant, currently in beta. Users provide specific prompts like, "I'm looking for a black-tie dress for a Nashville wedding" and receive personalized product recommendations that link out to external sites, where customers can view product specs and check out[16]. Retailers can partner with Daydream to be included in the product recommendations and get high-intent traffic directed to their site. Integration for retailers is simple, and they don't have to build or buy personalized shopping assistants themselves.

Exhibit 6: ChatGPT Shopping
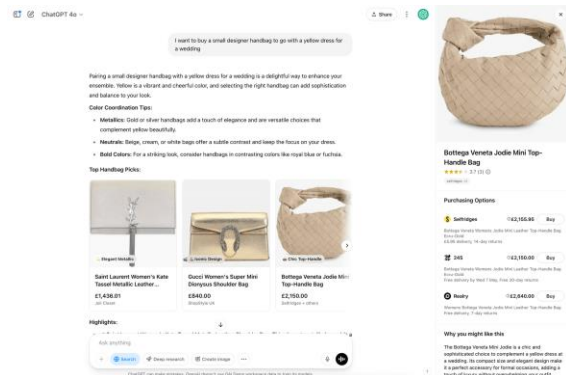
ChatGPT also recently announced that it will offer personalized shopping recommendations, pricing comparisons across retailers and direct links to buy from within the ChatGPT interface using a Shopify integration[17]. Product results will be chosen by the AI rather than ads, giving rise to a new field of AI Agent Optimization (AAO) which will help retailers stand out to AI agents[13]. This means retailers will have to optimize for the sources AI agents will rely on, such as product reviews, and ensure their strengths in quality and features are recognizable by AI systems. ChatGPT is also exploring a simple way for retailers to upload product feeds, making it easy to partner[17].
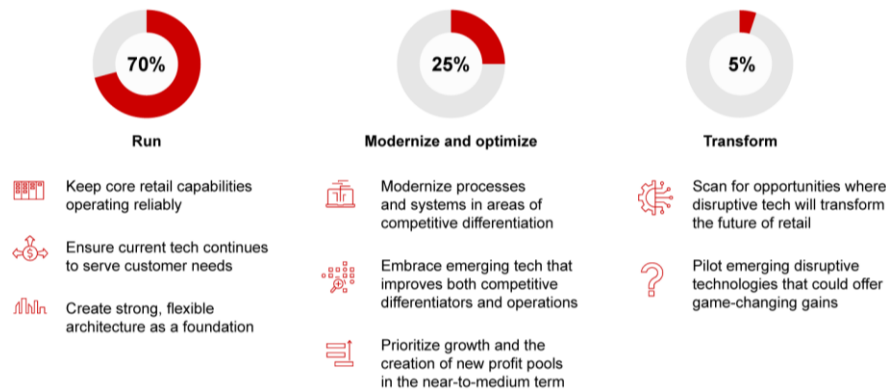
While neither Daydream nor ChatGPT are entirely agentic yet, they're moving in that direction. Partnering is great for retailers to benefit from new technology without complex implementations.

Thesis III: Internally, retailers need to invest in their tech and talent and need to consider customer sentiment and risk to prepare for agentic AI adoption.

Regardless of whether retailers buy, build or partner to adopt agentic AI, they need to have the right tech and talent to do so, but 90% of retail CEOs say their company lacks some of the capabilities needed to pursue their tech strategy[22].

Exhibit 7: Balanced Technology Investment split[22]

70% Run
- Keep core retail capabilities operating reliably
- Ensure current tech continues to serve customer needs
- Create strong, flexible architecture as a foundation

25% Modernize and optimize
- Modernize processes and systems in areas of competitive differentiation
- Embrace emerging tech that improves both competitive differentiators and operations
- Prioritize growth and the creation of new profit pools in the near-to-medium term

5% Transform
- Scan for opportunities where disruptive tech will transform the future of retail
- Pilot emerging disruptive technologies that could offer game-changing gains

First, retailers need to ensure they are spending enough on developing their AI capabilities. IBM says that over 3.32% of retailers' revenues will be dedicated to AI spending next year[18]. Of the tech investments retailers make, 25% should go into modernizing and 5% into transforming systems and processes.

In terms of tech readiness retailers need cloud-based storage systems with modular and flexible architecture, including secure APIs for product catalog, pricing, cart, checkout and customer service data[22]. This enables analytical and AI-powered use cases. Data, especially product data, needs to be structured, standardized, comprehensive and machine-readable to ensure it is optimized for AI search, identifying product features and attributes[1]. Retailers should use product ontologies like Google's product schema to make it easy for AI agents to understand and compare offerings. Few retailers are thinking of how to encourage agentic purchases on their sites and agents are often blocked or can't make sense of product information[21]. To tackle this, retailers can use service providers like Scrunch AI, who are helping retailers optimize AI tools and understand how AI agents behave on a retailer's site[21].

At high performing retailers, 16% of executives and board members had technology experience versus 7% at lower performing retailers[22]. Therefore, with the rise of agentic AI it is crucial that retailers hire talent with tech experience, even in non-engineering roles. Additionally, retailers need to strengthen the internal technology delivery model via adoption of agile, product-oriented teams that follow DevOps principles[22]. Internal talent should be trained and upskilled role-specifically and be trained on responsible use of AI.

Lastly, companies that create trust with customers will derive the most value from AI[20]. Only 24% of consumers are comfortable sharing their data with an AI shopping tool[18] but 60% of customers want to use AI when they shop to research (86%), shop for deals (79%) and get issues resolved (82%)[19]. It's clear there is an imperative to lay the correct groundwork with consumers to establish trust before an onslaught of agentic AI use. Retailers must be transparent around how consumer data will be used, the potential value to the customer and have a robust and ethical data privacy and protection system in place. This is crucial to ensure limited risk to retailers' brand equity.

Key Assumptions

Our above recommendations rely on several foundational assumptions about the technology, the organizations implementing it, and the broader business environments it operates within. These assumptions should be carefully considered to achieve the business impacts outlined.

Responsible and Secure Use of Agentic AI Systems
We assume that retailers adopt agentic AI in a safe, secure, and ethical manner. Agentic AI powers autonomous decision making which, as described, has significant positive impact for the customer and the retailer. However, it needs oversight and retailers are assumed to have strong guard rails in place. This includes rigorous validation and testing of AI models before they are put into production, a continuous monitoring tool and human-in-the-loop interventions for high-impact decisions to prevent excessive agency. Lastly, many AI models are currently prone to hallucinations so retailers would have to ensure a robust framework to prevent or handle hallucinations.

Consumer Trust, Data Privacy and Consent Frameworks
We assume that consumers will increasingly be open to AI-enabled experiences, if retailers proactively build trust. This includes transparent communication about how personal data is used, offering opt-in controls for agentic features (such as autonomous check-out or purchase), and ensuring the customer can easily override or correct agentic decisions. Retailers also need to have a clear plan for data privacy and protection. These steps are critical to overcoming current skepticism and unlocking full adoption.

Evolving Vendor and Regulatory Ecosystems
We assume that third-party AI solution providers and regulatory bodies will continue to evolve in ways that support responsible innovation. That means greater availability of trusted AI partners for retailers that choose to buy rather than build solutions, as well as emerging regulatory frameworks that clarify data use and model accountability requirements.

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Appendix

Figure 1: Agentic AI Use Cases Across the Retail Value Chain

Value Chain Stage	Use Case	Description	Key Value Driver
Supply Chain & Inventory Mgmt.	Demand Forecasting	Predicts inventory needs using historical sales, weather, and social trends to minimize stockouts.	Full-price sell-through (+) Gross Margin (+)
Supply Chain & Inventory Mgmt.	Autonomous Replenishment	Triggers restocking orders when inventory falls below thresholds, factoring in lead times.	Out-of-Stock Rates (-) Topline Sales (+)
Supply Chain & Inventory Mgmt.	Supplier Negotiations	Analyzes vendor performance and market rates to recommend optimal contract terms.	Gross Margin (+)
Supply Chain & Inventory Mgmt.	Waste Reduction	Identifies perishable items nearing expiration and automates discounting or donations.	Markdown Losses (-) Inventory Carry Costs (-)
Store Operations	Planogram Compliance	Monitors shelf layouts, identifies misplaced items, and alerts staff to restock or reorganize.	Topline Sales (+) On-Shelf Availability (+)
Store Operations	Predictive Maintenance	Anticipates equipment failures (e.g., checkout systems, HVAC) to minimize downtime.	Lost Sales (-)
Talent Management	Talent Scheduling	Optimizes staff schedules based on foot traffic forecasts and employee skill sets.	Labor Productivity (+)
Talent Management	Employee Training	Delivers personalized upskilling modules based on performance gaps or new tech rollouts.	Labor Productivity (+) Turnover rate (-)
Sales & Marketing	Dynamic Pricing	Adjusts prices in real time based on competitor activity, demand surges, or inventory levels.	Gross Margin (+) Topline Sales (+)
Sales & Marketing	Promotion Optimization	Automatically tests promotional strategies, reallocates budgets, and measures ROI.	ROAS (+) Topline Sales (+)
Sales & Marketing	Competitive Response	Detects local competitor activity (e.g., new stores) and launches counter-promotions.	Market Share (+) Loyalty (+)
Customer Experience (Pre-Purchase – Post-Purchase)*	Personalized Shopping Assistants	AI agents analyze browsing/purchase history to deliver hyper-relevant product recommendations and curated shopping journeys. Assistants can go beyond pre-purchase discovery, enabling frictionless checkout & payment via biometrics or pre-authorized AI purchasing agents..	Conversion (+) Returns (-) Loyalty (+)
Customer Experience (Purchase)*	Omnichannel Continuity	Maintains unified customer profiles across channels, syncing carts, preferences, and promotions in real time.	Conversion (+) Loyalty (+)
Customer Experience (Post-Purchase)*	Proactive Issue Resolution	Automatically detects and resolves order delays, returns, or inventory issues before customers notice.	Returns (-) Loyalty (+)

* Reflects customer experience use case explored throughout this whitepaper to drive conversion & loyalty and reduce return rates.

Figure 2: Slide Summary

Problem Statement

The **explosion of choice** in today's retail landscape has left consumers overwhelmed and frustrated, with fragmented shopping experiences that lead to **high abandonment rates (74%), frequent returns (17%), and diminished customer** loyalty.

Despite retailers offering millions of products across channels, most lack the technology to deliver seamless, personalized, omnichannel journeys that meet evolving customer expectations.

Executive Summary

Agentic AI, autonomous, goal-driven AI that assists shoppers, represents an opportunity for retailers to **reimagine the customer experience**. Three use cases are **personalized shopping assistants, omnichannel continuity and issue resolution** and retailers can decide whether **to build, buy or partner**. Retailers must invest in and build up agentic AI capabilities now to stay competitive.
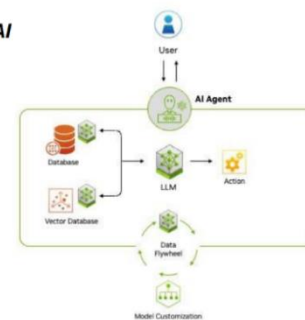
Fragmented Customer Experience

74%

of customers report walking away from online purchases due to the volume of choice[1]

80%

of customers say dissatisfaction with online search is a barrier to purchase[3]

Agentic AI

Key Theses: Agentic AI to Improve the Customer Experience

Thesis	Support
1 To improve the customer shopping experience, retailers should use agentic AI for three use cases: **personalized search + discovery, omnichannel continuity and customer issue resolution**	• **Search + discovery:** Boost CLV by 30-50% by recommending products, personalizing search results and offering agentic check-out • **Omnichannel continuity:** 56% higher customer retention through unified customer profiles across channels and seamless transitions • **Issue resolution:** Improve NPS by 15-25 points by proactively addressing order delays, returns and E2E customer service
2 When deciding how to adopt agentic AI, retailers should make a strategic decision on whether to **build, buy or partner**	• **Build:** Large retailers can build their own LLMs like Amazon with Rufus and agentic 'Buy for me' • **Buy:** Smaller retailers can buy agentic AI solutions like Constructor for search or Intercom for customer service • **Partner:** Retailers can partner with Daydream, Perplexity or OpenAI shopping and get traffic directed to them
3 Internally, retailers need to invest in their **teach and talent** and need to consider **customer sentiment and risk** to prepare for agentic AI adoption	• Retailers need to **invest 3.32% of annual revenue** into building AI capabilities • Without functioning **data systems (e.g., feeds, CRM) and tech stack (real time cloud)**, retailers can't buy, build or partner agentic AI • Retailers must consider **customer privacy and brand risks** when deciding what agentic AI use cases to pursue

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RECKITT   Parsippany, NJ
MBA Marketing Intern on Finish Dish Detergent Team   2024 - 2024
- Developed a comprehensive 360-degree multicultural marketing strategy to increase household penetration of Finish dish detergent within the Hispanic market in the US, driving alignment with consumer insights and brand goals
- Conducted in-depth analysis of Numerator and Nielsen panel data to track demographic trends, segment Hispanic consumers, and identify key behaviors, resulting in actionable insights that guided marketing efforts
- Collaborated with cross-functional teams, including brand management, consumer insights, trade, and ad agencies to develop targeted campaigns across various platforms, such as digital, in-store, and social media
- Led 7 hours of in-depth multicultural interviews with Hispanic audiences through Discuss.io, uncovering key insights into consumer attitudes and behaviors, which directly informed the development of culturally nuanced marketing strategies

CAMILLE LA VIE   Englewood, NJ
Special events retail company with stores nationwide
Marketing Director & Brand Strategist (2021 - 2023)   2019 - 2023
- Led team of 3 overseeing $2M annual marketing budget spanning website, social media, email, and live events
- Identified need to replace outdated and labor-intensive layaway program with an after pay solution; researched providers aligned with brick and mortar capabilities and onboarded Zip/Quadpay, generating $400K+ sales in 12 months
- Spearhead transformation of website from Magento to Shopify to increase operational efficiency 2x, reduce development costs, and enhance customer experience through discounting and increased payment methods (ApplePay, GooglePay, ShopPay)
- Developed customer personalization initiatives, including targeted email journeys through Klaviyo, live product reviews on the website, AI-powered "complete the look" up-selling tools and bestselling item recommendation based on customer behavior
- Executed charity donations of 400+ bridal and prom dresses, gained press coverage on Fox5, Pix11, ABC7, and NBC

Events Coordinator and Assistant Buyer (2019 - 2021)
- Identified trends and developed assortment strategy to translate those trends to customer base, building an annual assortment of 300+ prom styles, 80+ bridal gowns, 100+ other occasion dresses, and bags, shoes and accessories
- Worked with 100+ clients to create personal shopping experiences during prom and wedding season
- Curated lifestyle photoshoots 2X annually and led initiative to migrate to a digital catalog leading to cost savings of $85K+

FOX NEWS CHANNEL   New York, NY
Media Desk Production Assistant   2019 - 2019
- Planned and formatted news coverage for Fox News and Fox Business News programs using social media (Skype, Facebook, etc.) to observe and digest developing stories for live programming
- Communicated with dozens of show producers daily to deliver content in a time-sensitive, fast paced environment
- Monitored large volumes of incoming media and videos via Satellite, FTP and physical hardware ingest for Legal

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Languages: Spanish (advanced), Farsi (conversational)
Volunteer Work: Horace Mann School Alumni Class Agent; Voice of America Persian News Network; Met Apollo Circle

DANA GIORDANO
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EDUCATION

COLUMBIA BUSINESS SCHOOL   New York, NY
MBA, May 2025
Leadership: AVP of Admissions, Columbia Women in Business
Membership: Management Consulting Club, Retail and Luxury Goods Club, Design Innovation Club, Health & Wellness Club

DARTMOUTH COLLEGE   Hanover, NH
BA, Psychology, 2016   2012-2016
Minor: Human-Centered Design
Honors: 8x Ivy League Champion, 4x All-American
Leadership: Varsity Captain, Dartmouth Cross Country

EXPERIENCE

COMCAST VENTURES - SPORTS TECH   New York, NY
MBA Investment Analyst   2024
- Supported investment process for ten sports technology companies, including writing investment memos, calculating TAM, unit economics, and conducting customer calls, resulting in future committed commercial partnership deals with NBC Sports, PGA Tour, NASCAR, and The Premier League. Performed detailed underwriting, evaluated partnership ROI, and exit analysis
- Authored internal investment thesis on the Future of Sports Technology, which resulted in leading sourcing strategy across fan engagement, tech-enabled services, athlete performance analytics, fantasy sports betting, production efficiencies, and event innovation

BIRDIES *Women's Direct -To-Consumer footwear brand*   San Francisco, CA
Marketing Strategy Manager   2022 - 2023
- Owned DTC strategy for three of four primary sales channels (Email, Social, Wholesale), contributing to $40M in annual revenue
- Spearheaded quarterly competitor, pricing analysis, and category research presentations to founders and senior leadership, shaping the 2024 pricing value roadmap through in-depth analysis of DTC and physical retail footwear competition
- Executed weekly A/B testing with marketing and creative teams, optimizing email content for 1.1M customers and generating a 60% increase in sales conversions, particularly in high-growth and new customer segments
- Developed a loyalty program affiliate strategy, achieving a 45% increase in product conversion through a marketing campaign with 300 micro-influencers on Instagram and Pinterest, targeting new Millennials and Gen-Z Birdies customers

BOSTON ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION *Track and Field Team*   Boston, MA
Professional Athlete   2019 - 2021
- Competed as an Adidas-sponsored track athlete: training 30 hours a week, qualifying for eight national meets, including the 2021 Olympic Track Trials (5k, 15:18 Personal Best), and obtaining a top 25 ranking globally (3k, 8:51 Personal Best)
- Founded the "More than Running with Dana" weekly podcast in January 2020, which now has 500k listens and 8,000+ subscribers
- Created live digital content for brands (Nike, Whoop, Adidas, and Team USA Olympic Committee), World Major Marathons (New York, Chicago, Boston), and World Athletics Championship for CITIUS MAG, an emerging track media company
- Negotiated $100k in sponsorships from 15 brands and agency partners, aligning deliverables with proposed statements of work.

REEBOK   Boston, MA
Brand Marketing Manager (2018 - 2019)   2016 - 2019
- Directed a 10+ person cross-functional team of designers, copywriters, photographers, and agency partners to orchestrate marketing campaigns and digital messaging storylines for Reebok's core running footwear business, contributing to 15% YoY sales growth
- Orchestrated and delivered high-impact pitch decks for go-to-market global sales meetings, synthesizing complex market trends and tracking key performance metrics for the footwear segment

Associate Product Manager (2017 - 2018), **Product Coordinator** (2016 - 2017)
- Managed end-to-end lifecycle of award-winning footwear products from consumer research to go-to-market sales presentations
- Directed product team's strategic marketing plan for The Running Event footwear trade conference to promote a new propriety footwear technology (Floatride), resulting in 25 new retail partners and 50+ media features, including Runners World
- Led daily product team communications for McKinsey's Design-To-Value project, which improved footwear margin by 10% per style

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION
Volunteer Work: Boston Children's Hospital volunteer and fundraiser (raised $40k)
Interests: Skiing, gravel biking, trail running, pickleball, ceramics, hosting seasonal dinner parties, fishing

BROOKE HAMMARSKJOLD

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EDUCATION

COLUMBIA BUSINESS SCHOOL   New York, NY
MBA, Strategy and Management, May 2025   2023-2025
Leadership: Management Consulting Association (VP, International)
Member: Retail & Luxury Goods Club, Arts Club, Snow Sports Club, Women in Business
Small Business Consulting: Advising Rove, an online marketplace for short-term rentals, on pricing optimization

PRINCETON UNIVERSITY   Princeton, NJ
BA, History of Art, June 2019   2015-2019
Honors: Grace May Tilton Thesis Prize in Art History and Frederick Barnard White Thesis Prize in American History
Leadership: President, Marketing Club; Chair, REACH Marketing Conference; Conference Team, Business Today

EXPERIENCE

BOSTON CONSULTING GROUP   **2**024-
Summer Consultant (Summer 2024)
- Worked on an IT transformation to drive $50M in cost savings for a large health supplement manufacturer
- Launched survey to identify inefficiencies in IT operating model
- Led optimization of tech and product development project intake process to maximize for ROI

1STDIBS   2019-2023
Online marketplace for vetted, curated design from a global network of professional sellers
Senior Associate, Strategic Finance (2023)   London, UK
Senior Analyst, Strategic Finance (2022-2023)   London, UK
Analyst, Strategic Finance (2021-2022)   New York, NY
- Transferred to Strategic Finance team at request of CEO one-month post-IPO to support expanded finance demands
- Led a pricing restructure to offer tiered pricing options and decrease upfront fees for small sellers, increasing seller volume by 50% and boosting sales take rate by 2%pts; included collaborating with external pricing consultant, conducting competitive research, assessing cost/benefit with sensitivity checks, designing implementation plan, and securing cross-functional buy-in
- Devised KPI targets, formulated a tracking process, and presented weekly progress reports to senior executive team, enabling them to prioritize, evaluate, and compare projects in market
- Built and managed a 10-year revenue forecast to support M&A decisions, inform budgeting, and set public guidance thresholds for future quarters; guidance estimates correctly predicted actual results in all quarters
- Compiled data and talking points to communicate underlying business narratives behind financial trends, used by CEO, CFO, and IR team in 10-K, 10-Q, earnings call script, and investor calls
- Partnered with CMO to allocate and track efficiency of $30M+ marketing budget; mediated between CFO and CMO during budget cutting by identifying, recommending, and building consensus on opportunities to cut costs by ~7% without revenue loss
- Led 9-person cross-functional committee across sales and marketing investment evaluations including ROI analysis and A/B testing; promotional sales increased 41% annually, directly attributable to committee-approved projects

Analyst, Strategy & Operations (2020-2021)   New York, NY
Specialist, Strategy & Operations (2019-2020)   New York, NY
- Spearheaded data analytics training program to provide 35-person account management team with data-driven methods to report sales trends and identify revenue opportunities; included hosting workshops, producing training materials, and 1-1 guidance
- Ran audit to assess prevalence of sellers inflating prices on site against policy, determined that 20% of items were overpriced, presented findings to cross-functional group, and collaborated with marketing and product teams to problem-solve
- Leveraged data analytics tools to automate manual processes (e.g., scanning and auto-flagging adverse seller behavior), allowing account management team to maintain full workload capacity after a 15% reduction in force
- Selected by peers as commercial organization's (~70 people) representative on task force to enhance connectivity during transition to virtual work environment; planned ~5 virtual connectivity events and garnered record attendance

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION
Volunteer Work: Two-time member of Robin Hood NY Marathon team, weekly volunteer for Back on My Feet
Interests: Kitesurfing, long-distance running, hiking, skiing, American landscape paintings, Formula 1
Skills: Alteryx, R programming language, advanced Excel, Looker, Google Analytics

MEREDITH PARENTI
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EDUCATION

COLUMBIA BUSINESS SCHOOL New York, NY
MBA, May 2025 2023 - 2025
Honors & Leadership: Dean's List, Forté Fellow, VP of Retail and Luxury Goods Club, VP of Columbia Entrepreneurs Organization, VP of Snow Sports Club, Columbia Fellowship, LVMH DARE Games selected participant

DUKE UNIVERSITY Durham, NC
B.S., Economics, high-distinction; *Minor:* Psychology; *Certificate:* Markets and Management 2014 - 2018
Honors thesis: "The Effects of Parental Division of Employment on Child Outcomes During Adulthood"
Leadership: TA for Economics 101; two-time National Championship qualifier for Club Ski Team; Style Editor at the *Standard*
Affiliate semesters: University College London (Fall 2016), Fashion Institute of Technology (Summer 2015)

EXPERIENCE

AMAZON Seattle, WA
Senior Vendor Manager MBA Intern Summer 2024
- Authored in-depth analysis leveraging external surveys and multi-platform internal customer data to identify critical consumer pain points; proposed 10 innovative solutions to enhance search functionality, clarify product compatibility, and streamline navigation, projected to improve conversion and return rates, driving $256 million in additional sales
- Managed rapidly growing vendor relationship (+90% YoY) in PC Gaming; resolved critical purchase order and shipment issues, rectified underlying system errors impacting product sourcing, and conducted strategic financial analysis to exceed revenue targets

BOTTEGA VENETA New York, NY
Merchandising and Wholesale MBA Intern Spring 2024
- Optimized store inventory through initiating store to store transfers of over 2,000 SKUs of luxury handbags through sales and stock analysis, resulting in sales growth and enhanced client relationships

COACH New York, NY
Global Merchandise Planner, Men's and Women's Outlet Footwear 2022 - 2023
- Implemented a cohesive financial strategy and assortment architecture to direct the global buying units for NA, Japan, Greater Asia, and Europe for two of Coach's fastest growing departments, achieving 15% growth to last year with 4% growth in AUR
- Spearheaded and executed integration of consumer-level data into the product merchandising and planning processes across the brand through the development of novel user dashboards; trained 100+ peers on dashboard usage
- Developed and delivered a pricing and distribution plan for outlet stores to reallocate 100K+ units of excess retail inventory over six months, supporting full-price retail to recoup over $4M of cost
- Persuaded leadership to update an internal system by demonstrating sizing discrepancies across Coach inventory, providing the company with up to four months of additional flexibility when placing purchase orders
- Engaged team of 23 in over 75 hours of volunteer activities while acting as Corporate Volunteer Ambassador

ABERCROMBIE & FITCH Columbus, OH
Associate Merchandise Planner, Men's T-Shirts (2021 - 2022) 2018 - 2022
- Strategized pre-season buying and in-season item planning for $50M+ Men's T-shirt business
- Directed transportation plans, including making critical air-shipping calls to mitigate supply chain risk prior to holiday sales; worked closely with sourcing partners to monitor cut dates with factories and ensure on-time deliveries
- Mentored and trained an assistant level item planner to foster their growth and skill advancement

Associate Merchandise Planner, Women's Outlets (2020 - 2021)
- Managed strategic global inventory distributions for stores making up 18% of the A&F store fleet, over-indexing to drive over 55% of A&F Women's total brick and mortar sales units in 2020
- Mitigated risk and optimized receipts by managing over 175K units of excess inventory created by store closures due to COVID-19; re-distributed inventory globally to sell in outlet stores

Assistant Inventory Manager (2018 - 2020)
- Managed in-season inventory distributions through forecasts, allocations, and global inventory transfers to maintain appropriate stock levels in over 200 stores globally

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Experience: Make-A-Wish Foundation Wish Granter, Board of Elections Precinct Election Official (NY, OH), Alpine Ski Racing Coach for Vail Resorts
Interests: Women's financial empowerment, fashion development and design, alpine skiing, royal icing cookie decoration

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EDUCATION

COLUMBIA BUSINESS SCHOOL — New York, NY
MBA Candidate, Class of 2025 — 2023 - Present
Clubs: Retail & Luxury Goods Club (VP of Conference), Venture Capital Club (VP of Treks); Consortium Fellow

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, SANTA BARBARA — Santa Barbara, CA
BA, Economics with Accounting; Minor in Professional Writing — 2014 – 2017
Internships: KPMG - Deal Advisory; Ambrose Advisors - Investment Banking; Internet Brands - Finance Intern

EXPERIENCE

XRC VENTURES — New York, NY
Investment Associate (Part-time) — 2024 – 2025

- Led sourcing for accelerator fund, investing in pre-seed/seed stage commerce enablement & retail technologies (e.g., AI solutions, reverse logistics, Supply Chain management, MarTech, etc.), screening >1K inbound deals & creating outbound sourcing network
- Conducted diligence efforts on accelerator fund deal flow, including conducting exploratory calls with founders, consulting with industry experts, and conducting market research to validate investment prospects
- Wrote & published investment thesis on Retail Media Networks and the intersection of AI & Commerce to inform XRC investment strategy and drive inbound sourcing deal flow

TAU MANAGEMENT / LABS — New York, NY
Advisor (Part-time) — 2024 – 2025

- Supported incubation of a size inclusive apparel concept at scale, to improve in-store shopping accessibility & overall customer experience for extended sizes (XXS-5X), leading to securement of angel funding to launch Viva Voce (coming in 2025)
- Advised on end-to-end sustainability strategy across each element of the business model (e.g., sourcing, packaging, org design, marketing, etc.), to embed ESG principles into the construction of the business

GAP INC. — New York, NY
Corporate Strategy Manager / Senior Analyst ('21-22) — 2021 - 2023

- Drove $200M+ in incremental revenue via new Gap/Amazon channel, leveraging primary & secondary research of retailers selling on Amazon to tailor assortment, brand marketing, & optimization to drive sales while minimizing cannibalization to main-line site
- Led Go-To-Market strategy & launch of Athleta resale shop in Oct'22 (est. sales $9M Y1) after identifying market size, opportunity, creating business case for entry, and interviewing 3rd party resale providers to select optimal resale partner
- Developed the first Inc.-level business case for RFID technology, to enable supply chain & inventory optimization, working with functional team leads to determine use cases & ROI, enabling an informed decision on $1B Gap Inc. capital allocation for FY23

KPMG LLP — San Francisco, CA
Strategy Consulting Senior Associate / Associate ('18-19) — 2018 - 2021

- Led turnaround strategy for a ~$30B enterprise hardware technology company, developing a new strategic direction focused on hybrid cloud solution services, informed by extensive primary & secondary market research; Led to +4.5% YoY growth (~$60M)
- Generated & ran A/B tests to help a B2B software company optimize its customer experience investments utilizing a predictive churn model to generate actionable insights; Within 3 months of implementation led to $1M (ARR) in saved renewals from SMBs

M&A Advisory Associate — 2017 - 2018

- Conducted buy-side financial due diligence for private equity firms acquiring B2B technology companies, predominantly in the software space, developing quality of earnings, net working capital, and net debt analysis to inform purchase price and TSAs
- Developed an IPO readiness assessment for SEC reporting compliance for the largest ride-hailing app who raised an ~$8B IPO

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Renaissance Youth Center - *Junior Board Member (2021-2024)* – Ran K-12 tutoring & organized annual charity gala
Girls Inc. of Alameda County - *Mentor/Essay Coach (2019-2023)* – Tutored high school students & supported college app process
Certifications: Certified Public Accountant (CPA) - pending CA state board approval, qualifications & exams complete
Interests: Workout class enthusiast; Amateur stylist; How I Built This podcast fan; Passionate about the intersection of food & culture

NATALIE VOLL
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EDUCATION

COLUMBIA BUSINESS SCHOOL   New York, NY
MBA, May 2025 | Dean's List | GMAT: 740   2023-2025
Semester Abroad: National University of Singapore (focus on Technology in Asia) (Spring 2025)
Leadership: VP Alumni of Technology Club | VP Community for Columbia Women in Business | Nonprofit Board Leadership
Fellow at Robin Hood Foundation: Proposed grant strategy to develop workforce for green energy transition and infrastructure jobs

COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY, COLUMBIA COLLEGE   New York, NY
BA, Economics & Psychology, May 2020 | **GPA: 3.95/4.0** | *magna cum laude* | Dean's List   2016-2020
Semester Abroad: Bocconi University in Milan, Italy (focus on Fashion & Luxury) (Spring 2019)
Leadership: Co-President of American Cancer Society: Raised $50K for cancer research and initiated Hope Lodge volunteering
(2016-2020) | Consultant at 180 Degrees Consulting: Created Rwandan sustainable fashion brand's assortment strategy (2017-2019)

EXPERIENCE

DAYDREAM   New York, NY
AI-powered search and discovery for shopping, raised $50M from Index and Forerunner Ventures   2024-2025
MBA Intern Go-to-Market
- Conceptualized and executed beta user product feedback events with 400+ people, analyzed user data, synthesized and presented findings to 30+ employees at company offsite, leading to 50% growth in beta users at no cost and key product changes pre-launch
- Developed and workshopped go-to-market strategy (incl. marketing channels, events) with co-founders; used for launch in 2025

UBER   Berlin, Germany
MBA Intern Strategic Operations   Summer 2024
- Launched mandatory, in-app, local driver onboarding training to improve service quality and safety by establishing partnership with victim support NGO and co-developing content, reaching 5K+ drivers a month and helping to reduce safety incidents by 5%
- Analyzed 1M trips using SQL to determine price increases during local summer events, increasing gross bookings by 50% MoM

BOSTON CONSULTING GROUP (BCG)   Berlin, Germany
Consultant (2023), **Associate** (2021-2023), **Junior Assoc.** (2020-2021), **Visting Assoc.** (Summer 2018)   2020-2023
- Designed target user journeys (UJs) and UI/UX wireframes, mapped business requirements and developed pilot strategy for app used by in-store employees of European grocery chain to optimize real-time price discounts, reducing food waste by 5-7% p.a.
- Oversaw team of three to drive global $2.5B carve-out of US fashion brand by leading change management and PMO to coordinate cross-functional interdependencies (e.g., IT systems, supply chain) among 300+ stakeholders across 25 countries
- Collaborated directly with C-level executives of $23B global fashion conglomerate to determine five-year strategy focused on licensing, optimized sourcing and growth via up-/cross-selling, thereby facilitating successful $500M growth equity fundraise
- Implemented and industrialized data-driven advanced analytics pricing tool for US video commerce retail player in cross-functional scrum team and onboarded 150 key stakeholders in 15 divisions to new process with AA tool, yielding $70M savings
- Ranked in Top 1% of Associates and earned fast-track promotion (6 months earlier) to Consultant for outstanding performance

GLOBAL FOUNDERS CAPITAL (GFC)   Berlin, Germany
Venture Capital Summer Analyst   Summer 2019
- Conducted strategic due diligences by analyzing commercial data for consumer product startups (e.g., furniture, probiotics) directed founder outreach, wrote and presented investment memo leading to successful investment in furniture rental startup
- Created data-driven, optimized deal sourcing approach directly with partners, resulting in global roll-out and 20% more leads

STUDENTS' PHILANTHROPIC FOUNDATION (SPF)
Co-Founder & President   2015-Present
- Founded and direct student-led charity, fundraising $100K to advance women's rights globally via educational projects
- Initiated expansion to 20+ universities with 350+ members who fundraise and volunteer locally, built technical infrastructure to digitize and scale operations (Workspace, Canva, Wix) and trained members to use it, leading to 300% donations growth YoY

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION
Technical Skills: Microsoft Office (PowerPoint, Excel), PMO (Trello, Jira), data analysis (Python, SQL, Alteryx, R, Tableau)
Languages: German (native), Spanish (conversational), Italian (basic)
Interests: Practicing and teaching yoga (Yoga Alliance certified instructor), cooking Ottolenghi recipes, vintage shopping