

News release

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The smart store: how ESII retail solutions are blurring the line between online and offline

AI, omnichannel and data: how retailers are reinventing the in-store customer experience

LAVERUNE, France, September 07, 2026 – As **NRF 2026 Retail's Big Show Europe** takes place in Paris from September 15–17, the trends shaping the future of retail are firmly in the spotlight: agentic AI, personalization, intelligent use of data and the convergence of digital and physical commerce.

For **ESII, a specialist in customer journey and visitor management solutions**, one thing is clear: **physical stores must now deliver the same level of seamlessness, personalization and intelligence as the digital journey.**

The store is becoming omnichannel — right down to the welcome experience

Customers no longer think in terms of channels. They may discover a product online, book an appointment from their smartphone, visit a store, scan a QR code to get a digital ticket, be directed to the right service and then interact with an advisor, either in person or remotely.

The challenge for retailers is therefore to orchestrate all these interactions as one seamless customer journey.

This is precisely where ESII's solutions come in: connecting the different customer touchpoints and enabling retailers to manage visitor flows, appointments, queues and interactions with staff, regardless of the channel used.

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4 trends already transforming the in-store experience

AI becomes a new customer journey assistant

With **ARIA**, ESII's intelligent voice agent, customers can book an appointment with the right service directly by phone. AI understands their request, identifies their needs and offers available time slots.

Digital becomes simpler and more accessible

Digital tickets via a simple QR code scan, app-free journeys and connected devices that enable customers to interact without a smartphone: **digital should adapt to the customer, not the other way around.**

The kiosk becomes a true service touchpoint

Service selection, customer routing, waiting-time information, appointment booking or video connection with an advisor: the kiosk is evolving into a genuine interface between customers, stores and employees.

Waiting becomes strategic data

Single-queue management at checkout, automatic or manual calling, flow management and Business Intelligence enable retailers to monitor traffic, waiting times and the performance of different customer journeys. **Every wait becomes actionable information to improve both customer experience and operational performance.**

“Retail can no longer treat the digital and physical customer experience as two separate worlds. Customers expect a seamless journey across both. Our role is precisely to orchestrate that journey before, during and after the store visit, combining AI, digital technologies, data and human interaction.” Pierre-Marie Assemat, Retail Sector Manager, ESII

Proven retail expertise, in France and internationally

This vision is backed by ESII's experience with major retail brands and a wide range of retail environments, including **Nespresso, Le Bon Marché Rive Gauche, Leroy Merlin, Lapeyre, Carrefour, Auchan, Lidl, Decathlon, Go Sport, Intersport, Fnac and Cultura.**

From premium boutiques and grocery retail to DIY, sports and cultural retail, **ESII helps retailers transform their customer journeys with one common objective: making every interaction more seamless, more personalized and more efficient.**

The future of retail will be seamless

The challenge is no longer simply to digitalize the store, but to **erase the boundary between online and offline.**

From AI to queue management, from kiosks to digital tickets, from appointment booking to video-assisted advice, technology can now create a continuous, intelligent customer experience.

Because customers do not choose between digital and physical retail: they simply choose the easiest experience.

About ESII:

ESII is the French specialist in customer welcome, visitor flow and customer journey management solutions. Its solutions enable organizations to digitalize and optimize customer experience, from appointment booking and queue management to omnichannel journeys, kiosks, AI and Business Intelligence. ESII supports organizations in France and internationally across retail, public services, healthcare, tourism and corporate environments with more than 20,000 sites installed.

Based in Lavérune, near Montpellier, France, ESII has a Paris Office in Créteil and a Western agency in Vitré. ESII has an international presence with subsidiaries in Belgium, Canada and Spain and a worldwide network of distributors.

For more information, visit www.esii.com or send an email to info@esii.com

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