



RETAIL
TECHNOLOGY
SHOW



TOP 30
RETAIL DISRUPTORS
& INNOVATORS
2023

RETAIL DISRUPTORS & INNOVATORS REPORT



A RETAIL INSIDER PRODUCTION IN ASSOCIATION WITH RETAIL TECHNOLOGY SHOW



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Welcome

Welcome to the maiden **'Disruptors & Innovators in Retail Top 30'** report from Retail Insider in partnership with Retail Technology Show.

The objective of this new annual publication is to seek out those individuals who are setting the pace within the constantly changing retail landscape. There has certainly been great change and turmoil of late as a result of the pandemic and the cost of living crisis but against this backdrop some rising stars have emerged

We have canvassed opinion from across the retail industry and the sector's broader eco-system to find the most progressive individuals. They might not have the biggest influence or be working in the largest organisations but we want to highlight them for the disruptive models they are creating or for the innovations they are driving in the industry.

Their activities might well be below the radar, which makes it all the more exciting that we are shining a spotlight on these individuals and applauding their work. This inaugural Top 30 includes a broad mix of people – from the likes of traditional retailers, start-ups, online marketplaces, direct-to-consumer brands, and circular economy operators.

The Top 10 within the report very much highlights this diversity with individuals from companies such as Huel, Depop, ME+EM, Ocado and Marks & Spencer represented. These 10 high achievers are the first inductees into the 'Disruptors & Innovators Hall of Fame'.

To help Retail Insider create the Top 30 it has relied on the skills of an experienced Advisory Panel who have been integral to ensuring the report covers as much of the industry as possible and to also ensure the rigorous methodology we have put in place is upheld. I would like to thank each of the Panel members for their important contribution.

A very big thank-you also to our partners in producing this report, Retail Technology Show, who will no doubt agree with me that we have succeeded in highlighting some real stars of the retail sector who are really disrupting and innovating.

Glynn Davis
Retailinsider.com
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Methodology

Experts from across different disciplines within the retail industry were consulted to help draw up an initial long list of **potential constituents of the Top 30.**

These individuals included consultants, technology vendors, service providers, recruitment specialists and advisors whose expertise encompassed all aspects of the retail sector. In addition, a key input came from the carefully selected Advisory Panel, who were chosen on the basis of their combined knowledge and expertise covering every part of the retail industry – with a bias towards digital experience.

They also helped to reduce this long list down to a Top 30 names and from within this grouping they selected a Top 10 'Hall of Fame' grouping. These Top 10 names were then given to each of the Panel members to score privately on a number of important criteria – overall achievement to date, level of disruption/innovation, and potential for future achievement. By collating these scores a ranked Top 10 list was created.

The Advisory Panel did not score any individual from their own organisation.

Advisory Panel



David Walmsley, Chief Digital & Technology Officer - Pandora

David is currently in an interesting role with combined responsibility for digital with technology at the jewellery brand Pandora. This follows his previous position at the company as chief digital & omni-channel officer. He has amassed a serious level of experience from his time with digital responsibility at various retailers including House of Fraser, Marks & Spencer, Dixons Retail and John Lewis. David is also a Fellow at the RSA and a Governor at the Fashion Retail Academy.



Jeremy Pee, Chief Digital And Technology Officer - Marks & Spencer

Jeremy is an integral part of the omni-channel strategy at M&S having been recently given the role of Chief Digital And Technology Officer that gives him the responsibility for bringing together the technology, digital product and data teams into one function. He joined the company in 2018 as chief digital and data officer after six years at Loblaws in Canada as senior VP of its digital operations. Prior experience includes five years in senior roles at Staples and the founding of a beauty distribution company in the US.



Aron Gelbard, Co-Founder & CEO - Bloom & Wild

Aron co-founded Bloom & Wild in 2013, having previously worked as a consultant at OCGC and then Bain & Company, in both London and Silicon Valley. In 10 years he has built Bloom & Wild into Europe's leading online flower and plant company. Aron pioneered the letterbox flowers concept and harnessed technology and data science to reinvent the industry operating across eight European markets. Under Aron's leadership, Bloom & Wild has raised over £100 million in equity funding from investors including General Catalyst and Index Ventures.

Advisory Panel



Steve Robinson, Founder & CEO - Omnicommerce

Steve founded Omnicommerce in 2011 to help retailers with their strategies across channels and he works with many organisations. He brings a wealth of experience to his clients as he has held a variety of senior retail roles that have given him extensive digital skills including CEO of Achica, Customer Director at B&Q, CEO at M and M Direct, CEO of Tesco Direct, and Finance Director at Argos.



Paul Hornby, Digital Customer Experience Director - The Very Group

Paul has nearly 20 years of experience in the e-commerce sector, during which time he has been responsible for many areas including digital strategy, performance marketing, product management, UX, engineering, insight and analytics at both large and medium-sized online businesses. He is a member of the MACH Alliance and has sat on Liverpool City Region's Digital & Creative Board for over four years.



Simon Leesley, Chief Operating Officer - Too Good To Go

Simon joined the rapidly growing business Too Good to Go in mid-May as COO as it continues to expand its reach globally. He brings a digital skill-set gained from almost nine years at Stitch Fix where he progressed from director of strategy to managing director of its international operations. Prior to this he had a stint at The Boston Consulting group and a six year spell at Neiman Marcus in the US working on strategic planning.

Advisory Panel



Melissa Reed, Managing Partner, H.I. Executive Consulting (H.i.e.c)

Melissa has over 20 years' experience in consumer, retail and digital executive search and is currently a Managing Partner at H.I.E.C, leading the firm's Global Consumer Practice. She has worked with many leading international listed, private, and investor-backed clients on key positions including chief executive, non-executive director and chair as well as a wide range of general management, functional and regional leadership roles. Melissa also advises on CEO succession planning and leadership assessment.



David Kohn, E-Commerce Investor & Advisor

David has been working as an independent e-commerce advisor since 2021 when he left his role as customer & e-commerce director at furniture and homewares retailer Heal's where he spent six years implementing a raft of digital innovations. This followed a stint as multi-channel director at Snow+Rock and head of e-commerce at Waterstones, along with periods at Borders and Blacks Leisure Group. He has also worked in buying and planning at WH Smith and Woolworths earlier in his career.



Orlando Martins, Founder & CEO - Oresa

Orlando founded ORESA in 2008 to help retail, consumer and technology boards design and achieve growth. He is a board advisor, organisational strategist and head-hunter. With a mission to inspire and accelerate good growth, ORESA is on the B-Corp journey. In 2022 he founded growthindex.com to celebrate fast track companies and showcase growth which is sustainable, diverse and increases opportunities for everyone.

Additional thanks to:

Matt Truman and Paul Coker of True Start & True Capital

THE TOP 10 HALL OF FAME



No 1.



TOP 30 RETAIL DISRUPTORS & INNOVATORS REPORT 2023

James McMaster, CEO – Huel

Nutritional food brand Huel was founded by McMaster in late 2017 and has had a significant impact on the food sector with the highly visible brand now representing a variety of products beginning with powdered foods and expanding into ready-made drinks, energy bars and more recently a range of hot meals. McMaster has successfully built on his initial objectives of creating nutritionally complete, convenient, affordable food with minimal impact on animals and the environment. His earlier roles equipped him well for this mission, with time spent at Life Health Foods EU, Ella's Kitchen and Gü Puds.

No 2.



Ianina Lucca, Chief Growth Officer – Depop

Lucca has a wealth of experience driving growth at online businesses that she is currently utilising within her role of chief growth officer at Depop. The performance of the company has remained buoyant since it was bought by Etsy and Lucca is regarded as strong talent within the organisation. She joined Depop after stints at Skyscanner, Just Eat and Hotels.com where she undertook a variety of roles that have equipped her with an expansive toolkit involving marketing, search, data management and content.

No 3.



Pete Butler, Co-Founder & CEO – Dishpatch

Dishpatch is a true winner from Covid-19 having been co-founded by Butler in 2022 to help restaurants create and deliver meal kits to their customers during the various lockdown periods. By cleverly focusing on recognised chefs and exclusive meals it has carved out a successful position in the market and built up an impressive roster of chefs and restaurants it works with including Michel Roux Jr., Nuno Mendes, Tom Kerridge and St. John. Before Dishpatch Butler spent 12 years as a consultant and three years cutting his entrepreneurial chops with two restaurant technology firms he started but which ultimately flourished.

TOP 30 RETAIL DISRUPTORS & INNOVATORS REPORT 2023

No 4.



Clare Hornby, Founder & CEO – Me+Em

Following a career in advertising Hornby founded a clothing business in 2007 that became Me+EM selling designer-quality basics at mid-range prices. She has successfully navigated the business through financial meltdowns and the pandemic during which time it has been built into a successful multi-channel operation with online complementing a number of physical stores. In a competitive market Hornby has carved out a place for the brand and this has attracted a client base across various countries. The objective of selling clothing for multiple wears clearly chimes with today's environmental imperatives.

No 5.



Laura Harricks, Chief Customer Officer – Ocado Retail

Harricks has a strong pedigree in the digital space, which she is bringing to bear in her role at Ocado Retail that involves a partnership with Marks & Spencer. The role certainly cuts right across retail and technology like few others and her experience will be essential to navigating the challenges ahead. Prior to joining Ocado she had a brief spell at Monsoon Accessorize as digital director that followed eight years at Dixons Carphone where Harricks had a variety of digital and trading roles.

No 6.



Charlotte Morley, Founder & CEO – The Little Loop

Believing there must be a better value way to buy children's clothes combined with a desire to consume more sustainably led Morley to found children's wear rental marketplace The Little Loop in 2019. She successfully raised money on Dragon's Den and has used this for marketing, which has helped bring on new customers and clothing brands including John Lewis. She has proven the model can generate greater returns for brands than a single sale. Prior roles including head of product at NotOnTheHighStreet, a 10-year spell at the UK Ministry of Defence, and teaching Geography have given Morley a broad range of experience.

No 7.



TOP 30 RETAIL DISRUPTORS & INNOVATORS REPORT 2023

Sophie Trueman, MD for UK & Ireland - Too Good to Go

Since joining Too Good To Go in early 2019 Trueman has helped bring some major brands on-board the fast-growing food waste platform including Starbucks and Pret A Manger. Her early successes has helped her progress to running the UK & Ireland marketplace involving overseeing the full P&L. Her stewardship has helped these markets outperform Too Good To Go in other major territories. Her previous roles included five years looking after major customer accounts and brands at L'Oréal and a brief spell at Amadeus IT Group in Spain.

No 8.



Charlotte Langley, Chief Customer Officer - Bloom & Wild

Promotion to chief customer officer in late-2022 has further broadened the remit of Langley who also has responsibility for the Netherlands-based Bloomon business that Bloom & Wild acquired in 2021. She joined the company in 2020 as brand & communications director from make-up brand Nude by Nature where she held a marketing role. Prior to this she spent seven years in various roles at L'Oréal looking after different brands. With her growing experience and skill-sets there is undoubtedly much more to be seen from Langley at the rapidly growing Bloom & Wild.

No 9.



John Douglas, Cto - Gymshark

While Gymshark founder Ben Francis receives all the media attention his achievements are only possible because of the quality of the team around him including Douglas who took on the crucial role of CTO in May 2021. With Gymshark a predominantly online operation Douglas has a major role to play and he brings a wealth of tech experience from senior roles at a variety of major brands. These include CTO positions at both Tory Burch and Burberry, where he spent nine years, as well as various roles at Allied Domecq, Diageo, and Guinness that saw him hands-on with various systems.

No 10.



Krista Nordlund, Chief Digital Product Officer - Marks & Spencer

Nordlund joined Marks & Spencer in early 2022 and is already having an impact in her role as chief digital product officer as the group forges ahead with its digital strategy that touches all parts of the company. She brings much experience to the role as she previously spent five years at RentPath as chief product officer, and prior to that stints at BookIt.com, USA Today, Expedia and US Airways. Experience across digital and consumer-facing businesses has equipped Nordlund with the tools to deliver a major contribution to M&S.

THE TOP 30 (11-30)



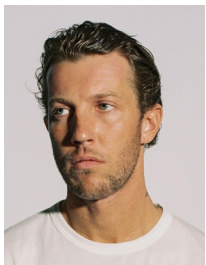
Mark Elliott, Chief Architect & Director – Boohoo

Elliott joined Boohoo in October 2020 in the position of chief architect and has since added director responsibility to his role, which places him at the heart of the company's technology developments. The competitive category within which Boohoo sits has led Elliott to embrace agile ways of working within his technology remit and he is proving an able advocate for pushing the company's capabilities as it faces some tough challenges. He brought plenty of experience to the Boohoo role having worked in software architect positions at The Co-op, QVC, Accenture and the RSA.



Corinne Suchy, Chief Growth & Technology Officer – Charlotte Tilbury

Suchy has an important role to play at the popular beauty brand, which she joined in late-2019 as chief digital officer. The brand has been technologically progressive in its category launching many initiatives. This undoubtedly suits Suchy who joined the business with a wealth of experience having previously worked at Arcadia Group as global digital director for Topshop and Topman. Earlier roles included online exposure at Urban Outfitters, and a lengthy stint in various positions at book retailer Indigo in Canada.



Jonny Wilson, CEO – Cole Buxton

Founding a high-end brand is no easy task but Wilson is proving it is possible in today's tough markets with rapid sales growth being achieved at Cole Buxton that hit £20 million in revenues in 2022. The company was formed five years ago and was progressing well but Brexit and Covid-19 put it under pressure and led Wilson, who took on the CEO role in September 2022, to push through a transformation. This will no doubt stand Wilson in good stead for future challenges at a brand that predominantly sells online – via its own website – but also has a showroom in London's Soho.



Charlie Thurstan, Founder & Md – Different Dog

During a stint as head of food and pricing in 2016 at Pets at Home Thurstan decided to launch his own business, Different Dog. The unique proposition involves producing different recipes each week by hand for dogs based on their meal plans. The retail offer involves delivering the fresh meals in frozen format on a subscription basis. There is no doubt that Thurstan will be benefiting from the ongoing buoyancy – and the post-pandemic exponential rise in ownership – in the pet market and the move by pet owners towards better diets for their dogs.



Moses Rashid, Founder & CEO – The Edit Ldn

Rashid very much leads from the front at The Edit LDN, which he is building into the most premium global online marketplace for limited run sneakers and collectible streetwear. He has successfully raised \$4.8 million recently and pushed the business into a multi-channel model with concessions in Harrods in the UK and Galeries Lafayette overseas. The success of the business will depend on liquidity in the marketplace, which will be determined by his success in attracting sellers with rare inventory and buyers with the resources to pay the premium prices. He has so far shown sufficient capability to suggest he will pull it off.



Christiaan Ashworth & John Parker, Co-Founders – End Clothing

When founding End Clothing while at Newcastle University in 2005 Ashworth and Parker were pioneers in melding together luxury and streetwear. As they built the organisation they combined this with a multi-channel approach operating both online and via high street outlets. Their success with driving the business forward led to sales hitting £200 million in 2021 and private equity firm Carlyle taking a majority stake. Although the co-founders brought in an experienced CEO in 2022 they remain integral to the business.

THE TOP 30 (11-30)



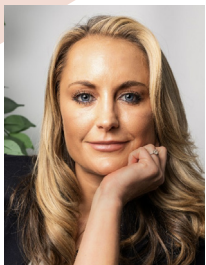
Laura Lambert, Co-Founder & CEO - Fenton & Co

Lambert co-founded Fenton & Co in October 2018 with the objective of creating an ethical luxury business offering personalised jewellery with gems and materials ethically sourced. Its stance has earned it the position as one of the few B Corp certified jewellers in the world. The brand operates online but has a central London showroom for fittings. Lambert gained experience with brands during two years spent at Value Retail, which operates 11 retail villages including Bicester, and as a co-founder of Befittd.



Christopher Cooke, Senior Integrations Manager – Frasers Group

With an incredible amount of activity taking place at Frasers Group Cooke has an important role to play helping knit together the technology. Under the new leadership of Michael Murray, as CEO, the company is building a portfolio of brands that operates across channels. These currently include Evans Cycles, Flannels, Frasers, Game, Sports Direct and Sofa.com and the challenge for Cooke is to deliver on the tough undertaking of the behind the scenes integrations that ensure the smooth running of the group. Prior to joining Frasers in late 2019 he spent eight years at consulting firm North Highland Company.



Melissa Snover, CEO & Founder – Get Nourish3d

Snover is very much ploughing an entrepreneurial path with her founding of vitamin business Get Nourish3d in May 2019. As well as pioneering a new brand of gummy vitamins that are personalised to the individual – based on their lifestyle and goals – they are produced using 3D printing technology. The vitamins are sold direct-to-consumer on a subscription basis. She is also CEO of Rem3dy Health Group and MD of The Magic Candy Factory that 3D prints gummy candy. Her early experimentation in this field was undertaken at Goody Good Stuff, which she founded in 2010.



Isabella West, Founder & CEO - Hirestreet / Zoa Rental

When in her mid-twenties in 2018 West founded Hirestreet as an online platform on which brands could rent their clothing to consumers. It has successfully attracted brands including Marks & Spencer, River Island and Lipsy. She broadened the proposition in 2021 by creating Zoa, which is sold to brands as a white label infrastructure that sits on their websites and behind the scenes handles all their rental activity. This has attracted names including French Connection and Cameron Ross. There is undoubtedly much more to come from West as she plays her part in changing the retail landscape.



Victoria Prew, Founder & CEO – Hurr Collective

Prew founded HURR Collective in 2018 as a fashion marketplace for renting or purchasing pre-owned clothing and has since attracted many brand partners along with individual customers to the platform with a combined total of over 45,000 products listed. The infrastructure involves proprietary software and a cleaning operation (with environmentally-friendly provider Oxwash). As well as operating its own marketplace Prew offers up HURR Collective as a white label solution, with Selfridges a high-profile early partner. Prior to taking the entrepreneurial route she worked as a chartered surveyor at Knight Frank for two years.



Kat Cowan, Head Of Marketing – Matalan (OTW)

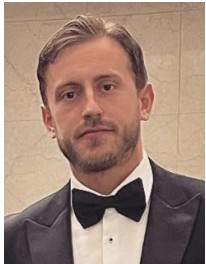
There has certainly been much turbulence at Matalan over recent years as it charts a course through tough markets that require increasing focus on digital channels. Cowan is proving an increasingly instrumental figure in the transformation of the business as she is involved with investment in new market channels. She combines her expertise with brilliant leadership of people. She is a long standing employee at Matalan having worked across various e-commerce and digital marketing roles since she joined the business in 2008.

THE TOP 30 (11-30)



Georgia Carrano, Brand Director – Mr Fothergill's Seeds (OTW)

Carrano has yet to make her mark on online retailer Mr Fothergill's Seeds, having only joined as brand director in November 2022. But she has a wealth of relevant experience to justify her place in this report and to bring to bear in time at a business that is primed for growth following a £100 million management buy-out that has injected capital into the business. Carrano previously spent three years at Lintbells as direct-to-consumer customer director as well as holding various branding roles at Hotpoint, Sodastream, and Tui. She is certainly one to watch in the online retail space.



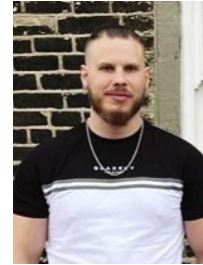
George Taylor, CEO - Lions Prep

Taylor founded Lions Prep in 2016 and has quickly grown it into what the company claims is the UK's leading delivered meal plan service. The fully customisable subscription boxes have garnered the company exceptional Trustpilot reviews under the leadership of Taylor. The company prides itself on the fresh, healthy nature of its meals, which places it in a very competitive part of the food service market and this will undoubtedly lead to challenges for Taylor and require all his navigational skills.



Aalish Yorke-Long, CEO - Neptune

Having only joined homeware retailer Neptune as CEO in late-2022 Yorke-Long has not yet made her presence fully felt but expectations are high as she has played important roles at her previous employers. Most recently, over a six-year period, she helped build the Soho Home business and also parent company Soho House group's Cowshed operation having initially joined the company as digital & operations director in mid-2016. Prior to this Yorke-Long had a material impact at Sweaty Betty where she held the position of head of e-commerce for more than three years.



Alex Adamson, Svp Digital Marketing - Secret Sales (OTW)

Adamson joined the rapidly expanding Secret Sales in May 2022 to boost its digital marketing capabilities as it seeks to introduce more brands onto its off-full-price marketplace. He moved across from The Hut Group where he spent almost five years, latterly as marketing director. His CV is packed with digital marketing experience having held management roles at All Saints and Virgin Holidays. Earlier stints were spent at TalarMade and Reckitt Benckiser. He is definitely one to watch in the industry.



Shira Feuer, CMO – Trinny London

Feuer joined beauty brand Trinny London in 2019 to lead its marketing objectives with a remit that includes hitting the targets on new customer acquisition, long-term retention and particularly importantly for this brand, engagement with the community across social media channels. She has proved adept at this, working with founder Trinny Woodall, which has led to the brand enjoying significant traction from its differentiated position in the marketplace. Prior to her current role Feuer spent a decade as a marketing advisor & consultant as well as doing stints within marketing at major brands including The Walt Disney Company and Burberry.



Muktar Mahama, Interim Head Of Digital Product – The Very Group

Since joining The Very Group in mid-2021 Mahama has made a strong impact and quickly moved into a role as interim head of digital product. This has seen him lead on the development of the retailer's app during which time he has shown innovative thinking. He has also contributed to the development of the latest artificial intelligence initiatives within the group. Mahama's work at Very builds on the experience he gained at Int Technica, where he developed digital products for client Pets at Home, and prior to that he undertook spells at Tesco and Spark Revolutions.

THE TOP 30 (11-30)



Danny Gray, Founder – War Paint For Men

Gray is proving an inspirational figure having founded pioneering men's make-up brand War Paint For Men to specifically address the challenges some men have with their skin. Since the brand hit the market in 2017 the portfolio of products has expanded and it has become a male grooming brand. Distribution has also blossomed. Alongside running the retail business Gray has had a major impact in raising awareness of the subject of men's skin and broader health issues, which led to him creating mental health social platform JAAQ (Just Ask A Question). His previous roles were in car rentals.



Freddy Ward, Co-Founder & CEO – Wild Cosmetics

The objective of Ward setting up Wild Cosmetics was to bring sustainability into the bathroom with natural, sustainable products that are delivered to the customers' doors. He started with a refill range of deodorant and has successfully expanded the offer to include shampoo bars, soaps, and salted caramel popcorn! Prior to founding Wild, Ward worked as a marketing consultant advising direct-to-consumer businesses, and before that he gained crucial experience during six years at Hello Fresh where he was latterly director of marketing in the UK.



Retail Insider is a free-to-subscribe website that aims to adhere to its strap-line of 'Taking a look behind the obvious on the high street, online and in the City'. It offers up a cocktail of opinions and insights on the retail industry along with some leisure sector content. The regular insights are complemented by regular slots such as the 'Sustainable Fashion' column.

The company also produces industry reports and hosts roundtable events for senior retail leaders.

For more information please visit retailinsider.com or follow
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