



CASE STUDY:

Revolutionising the in-store shopping experience with automated purchasing technologies

One of the world's largest e-commerce retailers works with Ricoh to launch a smart store with no tills, automated payment, and no queues.

COMPANY & CHALLENGE

This billion-dollar global e-commerce giant sells a huge range of branded and own-brand consumer goods, and operates an extensive network of distribution centres—as well as handling packing and delivery for third-party sellers. The company employs thousands of people at each of its fulfilment centres, including hundreds of seasonal workers at times of peak demand.

Long queues leave customers feeling frustrated and can reduce footfall during peak sales hours. To make shopping even quicker and convenient, a leading e-commerce retailer aimed to launch a checkout-free store where customers simply pick up the items they want, walk out, and pay automatically. How could it make this revolutionary concept a reality?

"We're always on the lookout for new ways to harness the latest developments in technology to create innovative products and deliver world-class service to consumers. Ricoh plays a key part in helping us to achieve this"

Company Spokesperson



OBJECTIVES

A world-leading e-commerce giant, this organisation has played a significant part in disrupting the retail sector in recent decades by offering a wide range of high-quality products online at competitive prices, and with same-day or next-day delivery.

Keen to build on its success online, the company set its sights on transforming the traditional in-store shopping experience. The objective was to keep the benefits of high-street stores, such as the ability to physically browse products and instantly grab the items you need, and eliminate the drawbacks—the long queues, wait times for self-checkouts, and the delays of employee approval for certain purchases.

The company devised a bold new version of in-store shopping: imagine if you could enter a store, pick up the items that you want, and then simply walk out as the system automatically takes payment. The final design would involve proprietary computer vision, integration with motion and weighted sensors, smart entry gates, and state-of-the-art Artificial Intelligence (AI).

Having tested prototype proof-of-concept stores across the USA, the company looked for an IT partner that could bring the format to high streets across Europe. Success depended on ensuring that the complex technology stack ran round-the-clock without interruption.



SOLUTIONS

To deliver this radically new, ultra-convenient shopping experience, the company engaged The [Ricoh Service Advantage Team](#). Ricoh experts help to configure, continuously monitor and, if required, repair the technologies underpinning the new store.

To get up to speed with the sophisticated mix of cameras, sensors, gates, AI solutions and supporting IT infrastructure, the Ricoh team took part in a comprehensive six-week training programme. Ricoh engineers gained hands-on experience and an in-depth understanding of all of the store technologies. Following this initial orientation, Ricoh worked closely with the company to condense the training programme into one and a half weeks, to enable Ricoh to rapidly scale up its field service support for the company's proprietary solutions.

Ricoh also established a dedicated maintenance hotline through [The Ricoh Service Operations Centre](#), enabling store associates to raise tickets for repairs or new installations. Based in Warsaw, Poland, this dedicated call centre operates 24/7 every day of the year, to ensure issues are resolved as soon as they occur.



After considering a variety of other IT service providers, the company made it clear that they saw Ricoh as a strong partner with the expertise and experience required to support the technologies powering its new store. We made it our mission to prove them right.

*Connor Heywood
Operations Coordinator
Ricoh Europe*





Thanks to our partnership with Ricoh, we've been able to provide a revolutionary shopping experience for our customers.

Company Spokesperson



BENEFITS

With support from Ricoh, the company opened its pioneering new store in under two months. Today, shoppers in London, UK, can enjoy the ultra-convenient experience of 'just walk out' shopping.

A company spokesperson comments: "Thanks to our partnership with Ricoh, we've been able to provide a revolutionary shopping experience for our customers. Knowing that the Ricoh team are always on hand to attend to any technical issues that may occur gives us peace of mind and helps us to deliver on our promise of offering one of the most seamless shopping experiences in the world."

Inspired by the success of its UK store, the company is working with Ricoh on opening additional locations in the UK, and rolling out similar formats in France and Germany.

Connor Heywood says: "To help the company rapidly scale its operations, we're creating fresh training programmes to equip Ricoh engineers with the detailed knowledge needed to install and support some of the most innovative technologies in operation today."

The company spokesperson concludes: "We're always on the lookout for new ways to harness the latest developments in technology to create innovative products and deliver world-class service to consumers. Ricoh plays a key part in helping us to achieve this and we look forward to continue working with them as we shape the future of shopping."

ABOUT RICOH

Ricoh is empowering digital workplaces using innovative technologies and services enabling individuals to work smarter. For more than 85 years, Ricoh has been driving innovation and is a leading provider of document management solutions, IT services, communication services, commercial and industrial printing, digital cameras, and industrial systems.

Headquartered in Tokyo, Ricoh Group operates in approximately 200 countries and regions. In the financial year ended March 2020, Ricoh Group had worldwide sales of 19.06 billion USD.

For further information, please visit www.ricoh-europe.com