

Rapidly Boost Your Online Performance

Expert advice and 29x quick-win solutions to help you rapidly enhance your online performance and customer experience

Validify's Rapid Response Report #1

Validify
DISCOVER . PROCURE . MANAGE



The purpose of these reports

Validify's rapid response strategy and series of reports are designed to help retailers adapt quickly to the unprecedented disruption caused by the Covid-19 pandemic.

There is a massive surge in ecommerce right now as shopping behaviour is forced online.. It is imperative retailers make a positive first impression as new and existing customers engage with their brands online for the first time. This report is focused on helping you to rapidly enhance your online performance and customer experience within the space of a few weeks, using some of the latest SaaS innovation available. We profile 29x solutions from the Validify vendor management platform, covering the entire customer journey from acquisition through to last mile.

We also asked leading retail experts to provide helpful advice and tips, covering key strategic areas.

About Validify

Validify is a vendor management platform that gives consumer brands the tools to source, evaluate and manage the procurement of technology solutions into their business.

We reduce the cost, time, stress and risk of technology selection, so you can focus on growth.

Acknowledgements

We would like to thank all of those who contributed to our report on such short notice, with special thanks to our sponsors.

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Thanks to our knowledge experts

Special thanks to all our knowledge experts who have shared valuable insights and suggestions to help you navigate through this crisis.



Guy Mason - Guy has 20+ years experience working across Digital and Technology, having held Board and senior positions across **Sainsbury's, Clarks shoes, Bourne Leisure and Boots** as well as extensive experience advising retailers, brands and private equity businesses.



Dan Barker - Dan has 15 years ecommerce, digital marketing experience across B2B, B2C and D2C brands, delivering strategic and tactical lead projects. Having worked with over 100 brands, clients have included **Orange, Superdry, Richer Sounds, BP and Microsoft**.



Andy McWilliams - An experienced digital retailer with a proven track record in leading large scale strategic change and new business launches for multichannel Retailers. Previous roles include **Evans cycle, Home Retail Group, Wickes, Joules and Ann Summers**.



James Doyle - James has deep expertise in global supply chain, strategy and transformation, with over 20 years experience working across Retail (**M&S**), Airlines (**Emirates SkyCargo**) and Transportation (**UK Mail & TNT**).



Dimas Gimeno - Founder and Chairman of Skintelligence Investments; a retail & tech business platform built to help the retail industry harness disruptive innovation, adapt and grow in a rapidly changing economic and social landscape. From 2014 to 2018 Dimas served as **President and CEO of El Corte Ingles**, a leading department store group headquartered in Spain.



Frank Nesci - Frank has over 25 years' experience in business leadership and development positions within a diverse range of industries in both domestic and international markets. Over the past 11 years, Frank has worked with diverse B2C and B2B ecommerce merchants to drive business efficiencies across different product categories and industries.



Darko Atijas - Darko has spent close to the last decade investing in, building and exiting SaaS businesses. As director at www.truealtitude.co.uk, he is focused on corporate development of disruptive supply chain technology businesses like **Anyvan, Easypost, Narvar**.



Lynne Murray - JOver the last decade, Lynne has developed a unique global perspective on the intersection of retail and technology in her role as Co-Founder of Holition, building Augmented experiences for global Retail clients including **Louis Vuitton, De Beers, Vans, Uniqlo, Swatch Group**. **Currently Director of the Digital Anthropology Lab**, London College of Fashion, building a unique research lab exploring tech, human and design futures.



Martin Newman - Martin Consumer Champion and founder of Customer Service Action, was previously the founder of leading digital consultancy Practicology and ex head of online and multichannel for **Harrods, Burberry, Pentland Brands and Ted Baker**. His bestselling book *100 Practical Ways to Improve Customer Experience*, is seen as definitive within the sector. He is also a board advisor to Clearpay, Yext and is a Trustee of In Kind Direct and a member of the prestigious KPMG IPSOS Retail Think Tank.



Vinny O'Brien - Vinny has 15 years ecommerce, marketing and marketplaces experience across all retail vertices. He has worked with in excess of 100 brands across Europe including **PepsiCo, Superdry, Littlewoods and Arnotts**. He is a Director of ecommerce in a D2C brand Crua Outdoors.

Foreword

We want to send our very best wishes to everyone in the Validify retail community and beyond. At Validify we have spent our entire working lives in the retail industry and it's incredibly sad to see what is happening to the industry we love. We share your pain and sense of loss, and no doubt there will be more falling victims:

We know that right now is all about survival. We know now too, that our futures are increasingly less predictable and will be fraught with challenges. We must think positively, and rally as an industry to find a way forward. The future may be a slightly different world to the one we know so well, but it's clearly one that we must adapt to.

We are mobilising! Community, strength in numbers and friendship have always been our core values and we will put them to use. To help our retail community navigate through this crisis, we have assembled a combination of knowledge experts, and rapid innovation solution providers to support you.

An important positive for the retail sector is that it is forward-thinking. Virtually all retailers have embarked on the digital transformation journey some time ago. However, the vast majority - over 80% - of retail sales are still generated through brick-and-mortar business. It's becoming increasingly clear that our ability to shop in-store will be severely restricted for months...possibly until early 2021. During this time the gradual shift of consumer behaviour to shopping online will accelerate exponentially. It is imperative that retailers recognise this and immediately make plans to become digital-first brands as fast as possible. There is no longer time for procrastination. Key business decisions that may have taken months in the past will need to be made in a matter of weeks and with limited information. We can help remove large portions of this risk.

This will change the retail landscape fundamentally. However, those who are willing to take the opportunity to embrace this challenge wholeheartedly can not only navigate through this crisis, but thrive once we begin returning to a 'new normality'.

We hope the quick-win solutions and expert advice in this report will prove to be a valuable asset as you tackle your businesses unique challenges and we wish you the very best!



Fergal O'Mullane | CEO & Co-founder

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Rapid Response Report - Solutions and expertise

"In times of difficulty those that win are those that adapt, move at pace and create new solutions for new problems. Innovation and technology are closely linked – businesses with innovation in their DNA tend to be those that manage to exploit emerging technology and see difficult times as an opportunity to drive change and invest in technology, not to fear it and sit and wait."

Guy Mason - Digital Decision

Validify has compiled a unique list of 'best of breed' solutions covering all of the key areas you need to be thinking about in order to adapt to the crisis and transform your online performance in a matter of weeks. The categories covered are:

Market Awareness

Site Performance

Onsite Conversion

Augmented Experiences

Customer Service

Last Mile

We have also begun looking at solutions that can help you re-invent your stores as they start to reopen. This will be the focus of our next report.

In addition, we have included expert advice and contributions from leading industry experts designed to help you navigate the crisis.

All the vendors featured are fully profiled on the Validify platform. You can access the information free of charge and connect with the vendors via the links in the report.



Rapid Response Report - Solutions and Expertise

Market Awareness



More than ever, now is the time to refocus how you market your brand online to create awareness with your existing customer base but also as an opportunity to gain new business as customers flock online.

“Keep connected with the customer - not promotionally but emotionally connected - your voice and values build community - you will need to invest in your social media voice and have digital content that has meaning...you will be remembered for what you said and did now.” (Andy McWilliams)

As you look for ways to increase brand awareness, at a time where budgets may be under increasing pressure, the ability to maximise ROAS will play a vital role. Right now every penny of marketing spend counts.

Knowledge Expert



Dan Barker



Dan has 15 years ecommerce, digital marketing experience across B2B, B2C and D2C brands, delivering strategic and tactical lead projects. Having worked with over 100 brands, clients have included Orange, Superdry, Richer Sounds, BP and Microsoft.

- If you're in a vertical that's 'hot' right now (e.g, home exercise) take advantage of lower advertising costs created by all those advertisers who have pulled out of the market to maximise today's opportunity,. But do plan out whether it's likely your vertical will drop as we move further along the lockdown period.
- If you're in a vertical that's 'down' right now, minimise cost where you can, focus on the marketing channels that are most effective right now (for example, postcards to reacquire customers may be a more effective way to spend money than generic PPC targeted at totally new customers), and try to maintain cash needed to get through to the point where you forecast sales will pick up again. Plan out stock for that point too: It's likely in some verticals there may be huge oversupply from all of the orders that have 'vanished' in March and April.
- Plan out your 'lockdown end strategy' as much as possible, with simple scenarios for when things will begin to tick up (or tick down) for you, and of course map out your competitors' likely paths too.

Vendor profile



Validify says

“Amazing way to boost your organic SEO”



Product Overview

Supercharge your SEO strategy with video via our Google-approved AI ranking platform that enables you to quickly rank on Page One of Google and YouTube. We deliver the immediacy of PPC with the long-term trust of SEO, visually with your own video assets to drive meaningful traffic to your website.

Rapid Response Solution

Have your Covid-19 response heard by the masses by being found where customers are searching. VideoRankMe places you in Google's video carousel (directly below GoogleAds) and organic results for long-tail and short-tail keywords on Google, and at the top of YouTube results too. Boost your SEO strategy and win Google's visual video carousel.

Deployment Time

24-48hrs to allow subdomain propagation for the platform to sit on your domain.

Special Offer

£1000 per month for the next 3-months for unlimited campaigns – ability to win unlimited keywords in unlimited geo-locations with full account support to assist in content creation and campaign management

More Info

<https://access.validify.co.uk/public/vendor/VideoRankMe/Solution>

Vendor profile



Validate says

“You still need to market online to be seen, Dream Agility makes sure you are maximising your ROAS”



Product Overview	Our tech delivered customers like you average YoY sales increase of 38% and return on ads spend increase of 49%. The multi lingual, machine learning solution will continually cuts costs to increase sales and improve ROAS on Google Ads.
Rapid Response Solution	Our self audit tool will show you the size of the opportunity pre-contract. The biggest one-off savings are usually the first month with years of unidentifiable costs being stripped out giving an instant increase in return on ad spend and sales. Thereafter it delivers continuous improvement in sales and ROAS.
Deployment Time	Integration is a couple of clicks with Google and the service can commence immediately, with no disruption to continuity of business.
Special Offer	We will offer you an account managed for the first 3 months to guide you through optimal use of the tool. Usually £2kpm per territory, we're offering the tool for £2k per retailer for 12 months, and a special minimum 6 month duration
More Info	https://access.validate.co.uk/public/vendor/Dream_Agility/Solution

Vendor profile



Validate says

“Smart solution for converting new customers to your site”



Product Overview	<p>Social is a SaaS platform which helps e-shops:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create onsite campaigns with a few clicks without coding Collect rich customer data Decrease cart abandonment Personalise promo recommendations <p>Social is the only popup tool that combines social media data with behaviour, easy-to-build popups and onsite campaigns.</p>
Rapid Response Solution	<p>Targeting customers during lockdown with onsite campaigns covering top Coronavirus-related concerns, such as delivery time, immediate product needs, etc.</p> <p>Also, as eshop traffic is increased from “virtual window shoppers”, Social can help you collect more rich data from visitors and create targeted audiences for interest-driven and long term engagement.</p>
Deployment Time	<p>Immediate installation through Google Tag Manager (Social script is pre-installed there).</p> <p>You can be live within 1 hour. Additional functionalities like Facebook call-to-actions need 4-5 days for FB process.</p>
Special Offer	Free usage for 45 days. Users can sign up for free here and email support@social.com with the subject “Validate Offer”.
More Info	https://access.validate.co.uk/public/vendor/Social/Solution

Rapid Response Report - Solutions and Expertise

Site Performance



With more consumers going online, many retailers are experiencing a surge in web traffic. For many retailers and brands the average load times still stands at more than 8 seconds. It is safe to say that consumers' attention span is low, with over 90% of consumers having left a site because it is too slow.

Top ranking websites on Google load in under 3 second, with c.66% of consumers leaving an ecommerce site if it takes longer to load. Every additional second of loading time is estimated to impact conversion by up to 7% - significantly impacting sales opportunities, at a time when retailers need it most.

Retailers also need to consider whether their IT infrastructure is optimised to effectively deal with the additional traffic and ensure they have sufficient redundancy.

Knowledge Expert



Andy McWilliams



Andy McWilliams - An experienced digital retailer with a proven track record in leading large scale strategic change and new business launches for multichannel Retailers. Previous roles include Evans cycle, Home Retail Group, Wickes, Joules and Ann Summers.

- Establish your Response Team and your new ways of working - deal with the now (cost controls) - maintain service and be honest with the customer e.g. response times/lead times etc.
- This is not business as usual, so what are you doing to innovate and differentiate - in what other ways can you provide value to the customer.
- Keep connected with the customer - not in terms of promotions but emotionally connected - your voice and values and build community. - You will need to invest in your social media voice and have digital content that has meaning...you will be remembered for what you said and did now.
- Data is King - what is your CRM strategy for re-connecting and informing when we are allowed to open in the new world?
- Prepare for the future - what is your vision? Have you got a Talent Team working on new world scenarios - and are there partners (technology) you can collaborate with?

Sponsor profile



Validify says

“Great way to rapidly expand and improve your online product catalogue”



Product Overview

Content Llama's Digital Content Gateway sits between brands and retailers to source, organise and transform product content for the retailer. Providing a single source of fast, accurate, and comprehensive brand content to feed internal systems (PIM, DAM, CMS) across 100% of the retailer's catalogue. A new vision for online merchandising.

Rapid Response Solution

By automating product content sourcing and formatting, retailers can quickly and easily add new brands, categories, and products to their online store, ensuring a rapid response to changing consumer demands. By providing this single source of high quality, accurate product content, we provide the foundation for online merchandising success.

Deployment Time

Deployment timeframe 2- 4 weeks working with inhouse eCommerce team. No development required by retailer.

Special Offer

3 month introductory pricing- solution customised to retailer requirements.

More Info

https://access.validify.co.uk/public/vendor/Content_Llama_Ltd/Solution

Vendor profile



Validify says
“Improve page speed by 1.5x and more”



Product Overview	People are staying at home. The increasing traffic is overwhelming the networks. As a consequence, page load times are increasing. Speed Kit is an add-on for ecommerce sites that improves page speed by 1.5x and more.
Rapid Response Solution	Speed Kit offers an immediate performance improvement, and is ready within two days even for complex online shops. As people are frustrated and networks are congested, it is essential for retailers to offer a great user experience. Fast performance and stability of loading times are key to converting anxious customers.
Deployment Time	Speed Kit is fully functional within 2-4 days. It only requires a JavaScript snippet and a minimal configuration.
Special Offer	All implementation and onboarding fees are waived. Use Speed Kit for special terms during the crisis. Free consulting for affected retailers and manufacturers.
More Info	https://access.validify.co.uk/public/vendor/Baqend_GmbH/Solution

Vendor profile



Validify says
“Improve site performance in a matter of hours”



Product Overview	RAPID CTRL is an easy-to-install ecommerce site acceleration technology that enables online brands to optimally view, manage, and sequence the loading of all elements on their websites to improve site performance and create a consistent shopper experience.
Rapid Response Solution	RAPID CTRL enables retailers to prepare and optimise their sites to handle the dramatic increase in digital traffic caused by brick and mortar store closures across the country. With RAPID CTRL, shoppers are met with a fast, seamless experience, resulting in better shopper engagement and increased conversions.
Deployment Time	By adding a JavaScript directly into an ecommerce site's code, retailers can deploy RAPID CTRL in a matter of hours.
Special Offer	Beginning immediately, Yottaa is offering RAPID CTRL for free to Travel companies and Retail brands (with up to 2 million page views per month), through at least June 30th. Sign up for a free personalised site evaluation and get a \$25 Grubhub gift card as well as entry into a monthly raffle for Apple AirPods.
More Info	https://access.validify.co.uk/public/vendor/Yottaa/Solution

Knowledge Expert



Vinny O'Brien



Vinny has 15 years ecommerce, marketing and marketplaces experience across all retail vertices. He has worked with in excess of 100 brands across Europe including PepsiCo, Superdry, Littlewoods and Arnotts. He is a Director of eCommerce in a D2C brand Crua Outdoors.

- Customer Experience is everything right now. With the reset upon us, we have a unique opportunity to figure out our purposes. Direct brands and service providers alike. Brands that cultivate meaningful, emotional connections with customers are known as intimate brands and their benefits are impressive - many of them outperform many S&P & Fortune500 companies across revenue and profit. Brands that get this right will thrive.
- The biggest barrier to adoption of a customer-first approach can be culture. Culture is why we do things the way we do. If we take our customer's needs as our guiding principle, we will not be far off the mark. We can do this by listening, surveying and taking action.

Rapid Response Report - Solutions and Expertise

Onsite Conversion



Delivering the best online customer experience has never been so important. New customers may be encountering your brand for the first time, therefore first impressions are everything.

There are a number of 'quick wins' to be had by simply improving on the basics. With constrained budgets and stores out of action, there is an urgency to find additional and immediate sales opportunities by optimising each stage of the online journey. Most retailers would benefit from improved personalisation, better up-selling options, advanced search and recommendations through to more flexible customer payment facilities.

There are an array of solutions out there that can be adopted immediately, in a cost-effective way to help enhance your website. Any changes you make will help now and set you up for the future.

Knowledge Expert



Guy Mason



Guy has 20+ years experience working across Digital and Technology having held Board positions across Home Retail Group, Clarkes and Boots as well as extensive experience advising retailers, brands and private equity businesses.

- Be customer first - Expectation of flexibility, responsiveness and service levels will increase and are likely to be permanently reset.
- Manage Cash - All industries are impacted, but some more than others. The willingness of suppliers to be flexible on payment terms and licence constraints is huge – they need customers
- Who will survive to drive demand when the good times return. Don't be timid – there are real cash and service opportunities to be had. Deferred spend, discounted services extended licence periods and "free" professional services are being made freely available.
- Recognise the permanency of the change - Make changes with an understanding that the world will be permanently changed. For customers and wider relationships recognising that the online/physical channel mix will be permanently changed, and that customers are willing to swap a narrower choice for improved service and certainty.

Sponsor profile

SYNERISE

Validify says

“Incredibly powerful customer data and personalisation platform ”



Product Overview

Synerise AI Growth Ecosystem puts complete, detailed customer profiles, updated in real-time, within easy reach of any company. A fast and flexible proprietary database and AI engine powered by advanced algorithms creates an Ecosystem where touchpoints become data points that inform the decisions and strategies to meet business goals.

Rapid Response Solution

The Synerise Rapid Response Solution helps Retailers gain quick wins and increase revenue within a relatively short period of time due to quick and simple implementation of AI-driven recommendations and scenarios placed on key pages to drive business growth when and where it is most needed.

Deployment Time

Deployment time of up to 4 weeks, but AI recommendations and search can be implemented and show business results within 7 days.

Special Offer

An attractive package available with waived fees and short-term contract to increase flexibility and convenience.

More Info

<https://access.validify.co.uk/public/vendor/Synerise/Solution>

Vendor profile



Validate says

“Proven search and merchandising solution that can be deployed rapidly ”



Product Overview

FACT-Finder was named the Best Site Search Solution 2020. In addition to search, FACT-Finder provides tools to control merchandising, product relevance, recommendations and personalised shopping experiences - powered by AI and Machine Learning. Increase your online sales and average order values while providing an optimised customer experience.

Rapid Response Solution

Now more than ever, user experience and a shortened sales funnel are crucial. The number of customers shopping online is increasing exponentially, and their first stop is often your search bar. We have 20 years of experience working with retailers like you to optimise online shops and increase sales.

Deployment Time

FACT-Finder Search can be implemented in as few as 7 days. Additional modules, such as personalisation and merchandising, can be added in 7 to 14 days.

Special Offer

We are offering half-price POC/trials for 4 months after a contract is signed. You can also take advantage of free personalisation and campaign manager modules for any new contracts signed before the end of April, along with a 14-day termination clause for the first 12 months.

More Info

https://access.validate.co.uk/public/vendor/Fact-Finder_UK/Solution

Vendor profile



Validate says

“Great way to rapidly deliver a more personalised online customer experience”



Product Overview

Personify XP platform uses proprietary AI and machine learning to identify key behavioural patterns on your site which correspond to particular shopping goals that your visitors have. Shoppers are matched to the most likely set of shopping goals and then dynamically inserted content and products based on the shoppers active shopping context in real-time.

Rapid Response Solution

Consumer behaviour is changing everyday with Covid-19, Personify XP is able to react to real-time changes in behaviour and adapt your consumers experience, delivering the right content and product to each consumer automatically without any manual intervention. This can also be used to better adapt marketing campaigns and retargeting.

Deployment Time

3-5 days to deploy.

Special Offer

Free for 3 months.

More Info

https://access.validate.co.uk/public/vendor/Personify_XP/Solution

Vendor profile



Validate says

“Immediately identify issues with your online customer journey and fix them”



Product Overview

With a visual and easy-to-use platform, we help retailers make sense of the reasons how and why ,their visitors do what they do online. A SaaS solution that brings to life every click, hover and movement of every visitor, as well as empowers each team member to visualise and improve their KPIs.

Rapid Response Solution

We can help you understand the changing customer journeys and behaviours seen over the past few weeks, ensuring you get the right message to the right people. Empower and upskill your teams whilst they face the challenges of WFH. Benchmark your site performance against the rapidly changing competitive landscape.

Deployment Time

Simple installation in your tag manager usually completed between 1 and 5 days.

Special Offer

Subject to scope

More Info

<https://access.validate.co.uk/public/vendor/ContentSquare/Solution>

Vendor profile



Validify says

“Enables apparel & footwear merchants to offer remote sizing for their customers.”



Product Overview

Sizebay helps online customers find the perfect size in just a few clicks, creating an amazing customizing shopping experience all the way (Virtual Fitting Room)!

Rapid Response Solution

We combine the industry's leading tools to increase sales, decrease product returns and improve ecommerce shopping experience. We also eliminate up to 100% of a brand's effort in managing and displaying the online store's measurement charts and make sure customers always see product-specific and up-to-date information and teach them how to correctly obtain their measurements.

Deployment Time

Simple installation in your tag manager usually completed between 7 and 10 days

Special Offer

Sizebay Start was developed to support new clients: Packages are divided according to ecommerce size and will include, first month free and a 75% discount for a 1 years use.

More Info

<https://access.validify.co.uk/public/vendor/Sizebay/Solution>

Vendor profile



Validify says

“Allow your customers to spread the costs of purchases”



Product Overview

Klarna's flexible payment options allow your customers to buy what they love today. Let shoppers pay in full 30 days later, so they can try before they buy. Or they can pay in 3 equal monthly instalments to split up the cost of their purchase. Either way - there's no interest or fees for them. And the best bit, you (the retailer) get paid upfront and in full.

Rapid Response Solution

With Klarna, shoppers have control, convenience and choice when it comes to spending; which is important, especially in today's uncertain times. With the option to delay or spread costs, shoppers are empowered in their purchase decisions and can budget finances according to needs.

Deployment Time

Integration is quick and simple with plug-ins available for all popular ecommerce platforms. Merchants can go live in a matter of days dependent on size and complexity.

Special Offer

Offering Klarna on your site is easier than ever for merchants. You don't need a credit licence and it's risk-free - Klarna pays the merchant the full amount upfront - and you only pay a transaction fee when shoppers choose Klarna at checkout. For consumers there's no added complexity at payment stage, long forms to fill out or hard credit checks. This makes it ideal for retailers who want to keep operational costs and effort low.

More Info

<https://access.validify.co.uk/public/vendor/Klarna/Solution>

Vendor profile



Validify says

“Product bundling at scale, ensuring customers don't accidentally forget to purchase associated products.”



Product Overview

Increasingly focuses on increasing AOV and revenue per customer. More than ever increasing these metrics is crucial and using Amazon-style bundling drives AOV up +15%.

Rapid Response Solution

Increasingly focuses on increasing AOV and revenue per customer. At a time where demand is switching to online, increasing these metrics is crucial and using Amazon style bundling drives AOV up +15%.

Deployment Time

Deployment takes 2-4 weeks from agreeing and receiving asset (product feed).

Special Offer

Flexibility including deferred implementation fee and paid on performance payment model. No implementation fee for small retailers (£3-£4M retailer revenue in last year).

More Info

<https://access.validify.co.uk/public/vendor/Increasingly/Solution>

Rapid Response Report - Solutions and Expertise

Augmented Experience



It can often take a 'Black Swan' event to drive forward innovation at an unprecedented speed.

“More than half (51%) of global consumers are willing to try AR/VR to assess products and services. With consumers not able to physically visit stores, they will be looking for alternative entertainment and shopping experiences. Companies that can leverage AR/VR may hold the answer to immersive augmented reality experiences that will transform engagement and shopping.” (Nielsen, March 2020)

This is particularly true of AR/VR with adoption of these technologies in retail growing relatively slowly over the last decade despite the original hype. Largely seen as a gimmick or 'nice to have,' these technologies are likely to really come into their own especially with the current lockdown in stores. In a post-Covid world consumers are likely to remain increasing concerned around in-store hygiene and trying on products. Augmented experiences are a way to bring the in-store experience to the home.

Knowledge Expert



Lynne Murray



Over the last decade, Lynne has developed a unique global perspective on the intersection of retail and technology in her role as Co-Founder of Holition, building Augmented experiences for global Retail clients including Louis Vuitton, De Beers, Vans, Uniqlo, Swatch Group etc. Currently Director of the Digital Anthropology Lab, London College of Fashion, building a unique research lab exploring tech, human and design futures.

- Our pre-Covid lives were increasingly lived online. Now as we assemble new ways of working and socialising with immediate effect, we are collectively embracing yet further more embedded ways of augmenting, which will deeply impact how we will 'consume' going forward.
- AR builds capacity to exist in new ways within our current world, viewed through a screen. It will enable retailers to build on existing assets to find a more differentiated way to engage customers
- By contrast, VR consciously requires a greater level of investment, due to hardware requirements, but affords an escape, a new destination, or experience moments. Retailers should look to VR as an opportunity to 're-write' how customers can consume with them as the pandemic will move people increasingly towards a virtual world.

Vendor profile



Validify says

“Connecting customers with expert staff through video.”



Product Overview

Go Instore delivers in store experiences for online customers using their one-to-one live video stream. The technology is used by international Brands and Retailers across consumer electronics, furniture, jewellery, cosmetics and clothing & apparel categories. Under current circumstances, store staff are successfully operating the service from their own homes, delivering exceptional performance KPIs across conversion, AOV and customer satisfaction.

Rapid Response Solution

Having seen a significant surge in demand for the service, in particular delivery of the service by store staff from their own homes, the team have fast tracked implementations and are now able to deliver an end-to-end integration and activation within 10 days. The technology is supporting consumers with their purchases and keeping store staff from furlough and redundancy in some instances.

Deployment Time

7 to 10 days, streamlined activation

Special Offer

Subject to scope

More Info

https://access.validify.co.uk/public/vendor/Go_Instore/Solution

Vendor profile



Validate says

“Bring products to life in your own home through AR/VR”



Product Overview	“NO PLACE LIKE” helps retailers increase their revenue by boosting add to cart rates through augmented reality experiences. We take a retailer’s photos, in turn, turn them into detailed 3D models which we put into customer’s homes using just a button on a website, no app needed.
Rapid Response Solution	We help people shop from home, seeing products in 1:1 scale without needing to visit a store. This solution is perfect for this crisis and helps retailers dramatically boost conversion rates (over 250%).
Deployment Time	1-2 Weeks
Special Offer	We are giving free use of our platform (200-1500/m) and are just asking for help in paying our 3D designers to get the products ready. If a retailer has 3D files already there’s no charge.
More Info	https://access.validate.co.uk/public/vendor/No_Place_Like/Solution

Vendor profile



Validate says

“3D product visualisation that can bring products to life quickly!”



Product Overview	The all-in-one 3D/AR platform, to help your business level up online product display, customer engagement and sales. We make immersive shopping experience tools accessible, affordable and easy-to-build for everyone. Regardless of their level of tech and creative ability, anyone should be able to build and launch high-impact online experiences.
Rapid Response Solution	Quickly and affordably, turnkey your product images into 3D interactive assets that can be viewed, customised and published across any Digital Channel. Users can also view your product in an AR environment with just one click (no need to develop apps). Bridge the gap between physical and online experiences effortlessly.
Deployment Time	3-5 days. (Provide us the product images, we turn them into 3D/AR and integrate them through a one-line tag straight on your eCommerce or across any eRetailer of your preference and across all your Social Media and Newsletters.
Special Offer	You can be up and running with a pilot 3D/AR product viewer for less than £250 (depends on price complexity) and free hosting for 3 months. For bigger scale projects/requirements, we provide additional 10% COVID-19 discounts and favourable monthly payment installments.
More Info	https://access.validate.co.uk/public/vendor/Threedium/Solution

Vendor profile



Validate says

“Enhanced visualisation of products to improve conversion. Great for big box items.”



Product Overview	Our award-winning full-stack platform enables the rapid development of personalised and dynamic product discovery experiences (PWAs) that allow shoppers to find products they want to buy faster. The technology automates data mining, image tagging and powers in-browser decision making, meaning amazingly fast user-experiences can be integrated into existing platforms in weeks.
Rapid Response Solution	Rapidly deploying new product discovery experiences that inspire shoppers and get them to the right products faster will make a significant impact on CVR, AOV and engagement in just a few weeks. Hullabalook developers do the set-up on your behalf so there is very minimal resource required from the retailer.
Deployment Time	2-6 weeks. Requirements: access to an existing product feed and a few lines of code dropped into the website.
Special Offer	Free of charge pilots for Retailers to quickly make a difference to their business without any up-front payment. Following a successful pilot and stats to understand the impact of our technology, we have a number of options for on-going software fees that can be tailored to the retailer.
More Info	https://access.validate.co.uk/public/vendor/Hullabalook/Solution

Rapid Response Report - Solutions and Expertise

Customer Service



Maintaining effective customer service during lockdown is difficult with teams working remotely, often with inadequate infrastructure to support their day-to-day work. This has been coupled with an overall reduction in workforce as teams face high levels of furloughs and layoffs.

Yet the customer service team has never been more important in the time of Covid, as it is one of the last remaining touchpoints between retailers and customers, with stores being out of action. The expectation for these teams is to provide comfort and trust to your customers, increase brand loyalty and in many cases a funnel to increase sales. Poor customer service during this crisis could quickly result in customers switching to your competitors.

There are a number of solutions out there utilising the power of AI and data to help your customer service team support your customers and business at this critical time.

Knowledge Expert



Martin Newman

Martin Newman - Martin Consumer Champion and founder of Customer Service Action, was previously the founder of leading digital consultancy Practicology and ex head of online and multichannel for Harrods, Burberry, Pentland Brands and Ted Baker. His bestselling book 100 Practical Ways to Improve Customer Experience, is seen as definitive within the sector. He is also a board advisor to Clearpay, Yext and is a Trustee of In Kind Direct and a member of the prestigious KPMG IPSOS Retail Think Tank.

- **Consumer behaviour will change.** There will be those desperate to get back to the way things were (core target group for retailers), those who will take a more cautioned approach (more likely to shop local) and those highly risk averse - customers reluctant to go near a shop. You need to plan now for how you'll effectively meet the needs of these customer segments, e.g. leveraging your store stock to deliver to someone's home to try before they buy.
- **A customer is for life** not just for Christmas: Increasing customer retention rates by 5% leads to an increase in profits of anywhere between 25% and 95%. Yet, here we are in 2020 and when was the last time you received communication from a brand that was truly personalised? There's never been a more important time to communicate effectively with your customers on a more personalised level.

Vendor profile



Validify says

“Leverage AI and your entire team to support customer service”



Product Overview

Chatify is live chat software designed for teams to help you convert more online sales. Unlimited team members can be added to the system for free and our integrated AI functionality provide 24/7 automated answers, Chatify helps you to deliver the best possible customer service, increase engagement and save time.

Rapid Response Solution

In these unprecedented times and with many teams operating remotely, users need to be reassured that their enquiry is being dealt with efficiently and promptly. One of Chatify's core features is the automatic routing of questions to the correct person ensuring a speedy and accurate reply to customer queries.

Deployment Time

Chatify can be deployed and active in 24 hours.

Special Offer

Customers can use Chatify for free on any account plan until the end of July 2020.

More Info

<https://access.validify.co.uk/public/vendor/Chatify/Solution>

Vendor profile



Validify says

“Exciting use of AI and voice to deliver virtual assistance”



Product Overview

AI based virtual assistant allowing automation of communication with customers across different communication channels: voice e.g. for customer phone line; and text e.g. for chat on the website. It delivers real human-machine conversation experience (à la retailer-dedicated SIRI). Based on most advanced Google technology, available in 30 languages.

Rapid Response Solution

Many customer-support centres are temporarily closed - virtual assistant can replace their human operators. Our assistant can: answer FAQ (modifiable daily), direct customers to the closest store, provide delivery status, search products, verify product availability and more. The solution was implemented for the Polish Ministry of Health helpline for Covid-19.

Deployment Time

1-3 weeks depending on the channels (text/voice) and functionalities. Requirements: list of Q&A, store addresses, company graphics

Special Offer

Special offer:
version 1: POC with 20 FAQ; channels: text (webchat) & voice (Google assistant)) - free of charge + £2,000 usage requests;
version 2: 50 FAQ + 1 or 2 functionalities (e.g. store location) channels: text (webchat), Messenger & voice: Google Assistant, phone line - £5,000 fee based on the requests

More Info

<https://access.validify.co.uk/public/vendor/Yosh.ai/Solution>

Vendor profile



Validify says

“Smart, end to end solution for managing customer service”



Product Overview

Freshworks Customer Support solution manages the end to end journey of a customer query. Customers can browse a dynamic FAQ database and interact with a chatbot to self-serve their queries. For queries requiring a human touch, Freshworks streamlines all communication across email, phone, live chat, social media and instant messaging - giving a single customer view across all channels, improving both customer satisfaction and agent efficiency.

Rapid Response Solution

For teams now required to work remotely, our SaaS solution enable customer service agents to access customer queries and calls from home on their browser, tablet or mobile device. Additionally, as retailers are seeing an increase in the amount of customer queries but a decrease in staff, our Chatbot and live chat technology is able to help customers self serve and reduce the amount of queries.

Deployment Time

1-day deployment depending on the business requirement and the number of agents.

Special Offer

We are offering our live chat and phone software for free for 2 months.

More Info

<https://access.validify.co.uk/public/vendor/Freshworks/Solution>

Rapid Response Report - Solutions and Expertise

Last Mile



Many retailers are experiencing challenges with fulfilment and reverse logistics as they experience a surge in online demand. Some of the larger, traditional logistics companies have come under such pressure that even the likes of Amazon had to halt their new shipping offer to focus on their own demand. Yet this part of the customer journey has never been more critical as it is the only physical touch point you will have with your customers in the current environment. Delivering a great experience will help to ensure repeat business.

The proliferation of 'last-mile technologies' can help retailers tap into more localised and extensive supply, ensuring that customer demands are met at this critical time.

Knowledge Expert



Darko Atijas



Darko has spent close to the last decade investing in, building and exiting SaaS businesses. As director at www.truealtitude.co.uk, he is focused on corporate development of disruptive supply chain technology businesses like Anyvan, Easypost, Narvar.

- Ecommerce/Digital directors now need to engage with their Supply Chain colleagues more than ever. 100% of your business is currently online, and couriers may be your only physical touchpoint with the customer in a fully digitised chain.
- Partnering with the right Warehouse management and Carrier management system can make a huge difference in operational viability at this time. Efficient fulfilment processes, and rule based carrier volume allocation will keep your operations moving
- Tracking is more important than ever. Many chains are breaking at the seams during lockdown, and even the large players are re-setting expectations. Branded tracking solutions, keeping customers within your digital environment will ensure consistent customer tracking engagement and updates.
- Retailers should consider packaging innovation. With mountains of brown boxes shifting around a fully digitised retail chain, what can your brand do to stand out in the customers' hands?

Sponsor profile



Validify says

“Great way for retailers to get quick access to multiple carriers”



Product Overview

Scurri is a powerful API & dashboard built to optimise your online ordering, shipping and delivery. Scurri adds value at multiple stages along the ecommerce journey, supporting getting the purchase over the line, selecting the most effective delivery option, creating accurate labels, tracking packages, and running analytics to deliver insight.

Rapid Response Solution

We can adapt to evolving situations by ensuring you always have a contingency plan in place. We quickly and easily onboard new carriers, our flexible rules engine makes it easy to reroute orders, and our advanced tracking, reporting and dedicated customer success team, means you are always there for your customers.

Deployment Time

Anywhere from 1-4 weeks depending on the complexities of each clients internal systems and technologies

Special Offer

No overt special offers as we will build a solution to meet each client's individual needs.

More Info

<https://access.validify.co.uk/public/vendor/Scurri/Solution>

Vendor profile



Validate says
“Enhances post-purchase communication with customers”



Product Overview	ParcelLab's platform analyses data in real-time to monitor shipments and delays during delivery, to provide consumers with proactive and much-needed reassurance both pre-dispatch and when the parcel is in the carrier network. ParcelLab immediately reduces WISMO by 20-30%; increases immediate re-purchasing by 90%; increases customer satisfaction through reviews by 55%.
Rapid Response Solution	Essential tracking and communications to immediately reduce customer contact regarding order status, and provide proactive delay notifications and constant reassurance. Specific tracking page messaging for immediate change in retailer information broadcast to customers. Implementing workflows to immediately improve conversion of first to second time customers to maximise short-term revenues.
Deployment Time	Implementation currently 1-3 weeks. Project implementation being expedited during this period, to delivery immediate impact!
Special Offer	Pilot phase during current situation with no obligation to continue, providing ultimate flexibility to make immediate impact. Fixed or variable cost to facilitate as many people as possible.
More Info	https://access.validate.co.uk/public/vendor/parcelLab_Ltd/Solution

Vendor profile



Validate says
“Intelligent post click solution”



Product Overview	Bringg's Delivery Orchestration Platform digitises and syncs data across your customers, orders, inventory, stores, warehouses, and fleets. Bringg's Orchestration Engine then optimises and automates your delivery flows, to improve operational efficiency and your customer experience. Offering better delivery experiences, from checkout to support.
Rapid Response Solution	Bringg can help with these 4 rapid solutions: 1. Repurpose your store staff to handle deliveries., 2. Enable features for clean & safe delivery., 3. Increase coverage with integrations to carriers and other delivery services., 4. Tap into the 'Gig Economy'.
Deployment Time	Min - 2 days Max 2 weeks
Special Offer	All SaaS platform fees have been waived. The only cost is per delivery, to cover our own infrastructure costs.
More Info	https://access.validate.co.uk/public/vendor/Bringg/Solution

Vendor profile



Validate says
“Eco-friendly alternative carrier providing customers with an enhanced delivery option”



Product Overview	Paack is a last-mile logistics company fulfilling ecommerce deliveries for Amazon, The Hut Group, Zara and Decathlon etc. All deliveries include time-slots, chosen entirely by the customer.
Rapid Response Solution	We're maintaining our industry-leading SLAs despite the challenging environment, across both Next Day and Same Day service types. We provide full delivery status transparency through branded customer notifications and a live retailer customer service dashboard.
Deployment Time	1 day - 2 weeks dependent on Integration complexities.
Special Offer	Zero setup or integration fees, with no hidden recurring monthly costs. Short term contracts available, with no minimum duration. Rolling 1 month contracts available. Non-exclusivity, ability to work with multiple carriers at once..
More Info	https://access.validate.co.uk/public/vendor/Paack_Logistics/Solution

Vendor profile



Validate says

“Increase and optimise your delivery options simultaneously.”



Product Overview

Gophr enables you to book same-day delivery couriers across multiple vehicle types for all types of services. Currently in possession of the most flexible and advanced transportation management system in the space in the UK, they provide their technology services to Uber, Deliveroo, Hello Fresh and Net A Porter.

Rapid Response Solution

Due to Covid-19, we are finding ourselves providing service to retailers transforming bricks-and-mortar stores into dark stores that provide delivery to customers. We're also doing a huge amount in the pharma-to-home space. In addition, we are providing couriers on shift work to support existing fleets or turning their business into delivery businesses.

Deployment Time

Minimum deployment time is about 2 minutes by booking on our portal. If you need a driver on shift get in touch via live chat. If you operate a Shopify or Wordpress site it can take less than a day. Complex API integrations in a week.

Special Offer

Special offers are on a case-by-case basis - please get in touch.

More Info

<https://access.validate.co.uk/public/vendor/Gophr/Solution>

Vendor profile



Validate says

“Enabling brands to offer returns to be picked up from their doorstep.”



Product Overview

Multi carrier customer return solution with availability of collection from home service. Reduce the distance your customers have to travel to return with multiple carrier drop off locations, 10k in total.

Rapid Response Solution

Build resilience into your return solution with multiple carrier options. Encourage purchases during period of reduced customer movement by offering a collection from home return service.

Deployment Time

3-7 day setup with retailers own carrier contracts or ours

Special Offer

Free setup

More Info

<https://access.validate.co.uk/public/vendor/Clicksit/Solution>

Rapid Response Report - Solutions and Expertise

What About My Stores?



For Brands with stores it has been a particularly difficult challenge. With virtually no warning thousands of stores have been put out of action and valuable inventory is sitting idle. Stores will begin to re-open in the coming weeks and months, but restrictions around social distancing will remain in place for at least a year.

“The majority of physical shops in the UK remain closed under the government’s current lockdown measures, with sales of non-food items down by 70%” (Retail Gazette 2020)”

This requires retailers to completely rethink the role of stores, adapting them to become not only shops, but mini distribution centres.

Knowledge Expert



Frank Nesci



Frank has over 25 years’ experience in business leadership and development positions within a diverse range of industries in both domestic and international markets. Over the past 11 years, Frank has worked with diverse B2C and B2B ecommerce merchants to drive business efficiencies across different product categories and industries.

- Enriched product information, enhanced imagery and keywords are critical elements to help search engines find products and drive onsite search. Focus on the 20% products that generate 80% of revenue.
- Expand range and depth of products for sale online. Automated integration is the recommended approach to synchronise physical store inventory with online websites.
- Many consumers have a preference to shop on marketplaces. List products on marketplaces to get access to a new range of customers.

Sponsor profile



Validify says

“Single source of truth for product data is critical to become a unified commerce business”



Product Overview	Comestri is a complete unified commerce hub for retailers, distributors and manufacturers. The platform provides the ability to centralise and manage: -Enrichment of product data -Pricing, language and inventory data -Rapid launch of sales and marketing channels -Distributed Order Management System supporting multi-warehouse, click and collect and ship from store
Rapid Response Solution	Retailers need to look to expand the range and depth of products for sale online. Automated integration is the recommended approach but requires time and financial investment. Utilise Comestri to quickly centralise your product data and get your products listed on sales channels and marketplaces, but only focus attention short term on the top selling items and utilise our Universal Channel for rapid deployment.
Deployment Time	Product data can be manually loaded and prepared on Comestri in 1-2 weeks per channel configuration and launch can be achieved in 1-2 weeks per channel – full automation of data and order management should be considered in the background.
Special Offer	Comestri looks at each project on a case-by-case basis. But we are able to support up to 15% discount on service and implementation fees, as well as providing a 3-month license subscription free period when subscribing to an annual license agreement.
More Info	https://access.validify.co.uk/public/vendor/Comestri/Solution

Vendor profile



Validate says

“Many retailers are sitting on inventory that they can move. Stocklear provides an effective option”



Product Overview	Marketplace B2B dedicated to overstocks. Sell your overstocks, customer returns very easily. You have control : you set up the offers, you set the prices.
Rapid Response Solution	Place your stock on our marketplace so as to get quick cash recovery. You can sell the goods either from your main warehouse or straight from your shops (so as to avoid unforeseen costs).
Deployment Time	48 hours set-up. To be as efficient as possible, we need an Excel sheet with your concerned overstocks.
Special Offer	Contact for details
More Info	https://access.validate.co.uk/public/vendor/Stocklear/Solution

Vendor profile



Validate says

“Smart way for retailers to offer virtual experiences during COVID-19 and minimise queues when stores re-open”



Product Overview	Appointedd is a customer engagement platform that gives retailers everything they need to engage customers anywhere. With Appointedd, retailers can take bookings, deliver services, and accept payments virtually, maintain mission-critical business functions, and bridge the gap between digital and physical retail.
Rapid Response Solution	Appointedd helps retailers schedule, manage, and deliver virtual services, from online wedding dress consultations to virtual makeup tutorials. Appointedd powers 24/7 online bookings, transform bookings into virtual meetings at the click of a button, and allows retailers to keep customers updated with automated customer communications.
Deployment Time	48 hours - as long as the retailer is ready to plug in and play.
Special Offer	Appointedd is committing to having retailers up and running within 48 hours, offering 24/7 virtual support and dedicated account management, and putting in place a range of measures to help retailers manage the transition from virtual to in-store services
More Info	https://access.validate.co.uk/public/vendor/Appointedd/Solution

Knowledge Expert



James Doyle



James has deep expertise in global supply chain, strategy and transformation with over 20 years experience working across Retail (M&S), Airlines (Emirates SkyCargo) and Transportation (UK Mail & TNT).

- Most UK retailers have 40-50% of cash currently under lock-down in stores. Most of this is not visible digitally as online/offline in many cases have operated separately prior to lockdown - this needs to be a key focus as supply chains dramatically change over the next 3-5 months and beyond.
- Wherever possible, stores need to urgently become mini warehouses for rapid delivery and making use of localised speed to customer delivery networks.
- As we emerge from the global pandemic trade will continue to change as manufacturing becomes more local, resilience is found and costs reduction opportunities are sought.

Final Word

- First and foremost, **embrace digital transformation**, retail is entering a new era and there is no room for dragging one's feet or putting things off. Be nimble to absorb innovation. This is not the end of retail, but the end of retail as we knew it.
- **Rethink the way you interact and communicate** not only with your customers but also with your providers and even your own staff. Make sure your communication networks function properly to manage contracts, purchases and sales, after sale services, promotions and legal matters.
- **Turn your eyes towards the neighborhood.** Without abandoning the global perspective, pay attention to local communities where you operate. With most of us confined at home for weeks, if not months, it is likely consumers would be prioritising locally produced items.
- **Get smart about the way the pandemic will alter consumer patterns.** Some of these trends were already discernible before Covid-19 but they will be accelerated at an exponential rate. Those new patterns will have a direct impact on your stock and the ability of your providers to deliver timely.
- **Think about what people need at home as a business opportunity.** With millions hunkered down at home, businesses related to "home experience" such as tableware, decoration, indoor activities, e-health or cooking will enter a boom period.



Dimas Gimeno Previously President and CEO of **El Corte Ingles** and now Chairman of Skintelligence Investments; a retail & tech business platform built to help the retail industry harness disruptive innovation



Next Steps

I hope that you found our experts' advice and selection of solutions valuable to help you to rapidly boost your online performance and enhance your customer experience.

Clearly those who are focusing on these areas during this time are best placed to survive.

We'd like to support all retailers during this time, so as well as this series of reports we would like to offer you FREE access to the Validify portal where you can access the full list of our selected SaaS solutions here <https://access.validify.co.uk/auth/register>

I also understand that some people would like to speak with somebody about their unique needs, so I am personally personally offering to support you, just email me:

fergal@validify.tech

Also, please look out for our next Rapid Response Report which will focus how to **“ Reinvent Your Stores”**.

How to digitise and repurpose stores as they begin to re-open in a restricted format.

Wishing you the best of health.

Fergal



