



## Client Story

# Bringing a Retail as a Service Offering to Market

With an eye on opening new revenue streams and transforming the industry, a large retailer partnered with Insight and Microsoft to bring its Retail as a Service (RaaS) offering to the broader marketplace. Read about how it is leveraging technology to elevate the in-store experience for both employees and customers.

Recent shifts in the consumer landscape have put pressure on retailers to evolve or fall out of favor. Today, traditional brick-and-mortar or hybrid retailers need to focus on differentiated offerings and user experience in order to win market share and secure a competitive edge.

A large retail company had a series of legacy applications that it felt could be commercialized and resold as a service to other retailers. Bringing a Retail as a Service (RaaS) offering to the market would not only open new revenue streams but also enable fellow retailers to elevate their capabilities and IT maturity.

## Realizing the dream

As part of this effort, the company established a business unit focused on retail innovation. The group sought an experienced partner to help it facilitate a platform for the RaaS product and a method for delivery. The company chose Insight due to the relationship our team had built with the retailer over the past 20 years.

In fact, during the project launch, a number of our team members were already working in hybrid capacities from within the client's organization. Together, after extensive stakeholder discussions and a comparative analysis, we decided Microsoft® Azure® would be the best platform for the RaaS offering.

*Bringing a RaaS offering to the market would not only open up new revenue streams for the client but enable fellow retailers to elevate their capabilities and IT maturity.*

A dedicated "black belt" team from Microsoft was pulled onto the project to ensure its success. This three-pronged relationship between Insight, Microsoft and the retail client became the balanced foundation upon which an effective solution could be built.

Industry:  
Retail

## The challenge:

The client had a series of legacy applications that it wanted to commercialize and resell as a service to other retailers.

## The solution:

- RaaS applications built in Microsoft Azure
- Microsoft Cognitive Services for intelligent analytics
- Real-time data processing and storing
- Solution developed in partnership with Microsoft

## Putting the wheels in motion

Within two weeks, Insight and Microsoft got the first product into the client's hands. Previous partners had come nowhere near this level of dexterity and speed. The overall project was two-pronged: readying the platform in Azure and preparing all the RaaS applications to migrate and be hosted in Azure.

### This included:

- Containerization
- Application modernization
- Establishing governance
- Creating a strong security framework
- Active Directory® management

Our team had to consider how various customers would need the RaaS offering to work in unique environments — accounting for diverse hardware, software and deployment requirements.

*Coined an “enablement software built by a retailer for retailers,” the RaaS offering is poised to transform an industry.*

## Flying off the shelves

Coined an “enablement software built by a retailer for retailers,” the RaaS offering is poised to transform an industry. It uses Azure to store and process data generated in brick-and-mortar stores, near smart shelves and within retailer applications. It includes a virtual store manager, sensor network and connectors designed to incorporate point of sale, inventory management and tag-and-merchandising systems.

Upcoming releases of the RaaS offering will use the client's smart shelving system — which includes digital displays to show prices, promotions, and nutritional and dietary information. The system will work seamlessly with other functions within the offering.

## Always looking forward

More than 20 Insight team members and individuals from Microsoft are still hard at work delivering on the promise to have a publicly available RaaS offering in stores by the end of 2019. Initial sales occurred in the second half of the year, with the first implementations planned for November. Insight will likely be assisting with implementations in Australia and 26 other countries in the coming months.

The client sees this as just a starting point. Stakeholders are already looking forward, anticipating new ways to leverage this technology in the future. Together we're exploring how video analytics can provide deeper insights to drive improvements for retailers and customers, and how new data points can help retailers control loss and theft. Future innovations are expected to enable even greater operational efficiency, helping retailers remain viable in the years to come.

## Benefits & outcomes:

Fast  
time to market



New revenue  
opportunities

Scalable,  
commercialized  
RaaS product



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