



## What's on Retailers' minds in 2025?

By Jon Beck, CEO, Columbus Consulting

### Data, Tariffs, Assortment, Business Integration

#### Data Data Data

There is increasing pressure across the industry to implement smarter solutions leveraging AI, ML, etc. throughout all business and technology functions. Many companies are struggling to achieve this due to bad underlying data and inconsistent information being shared throughout their organization. 2024 was a big turning point for the industry to really dig into establishing strong, well governed data foundations. We expect this to explode in 2025.

#### Tariffs.

Proposed new tariffs are poised to reshape the landscape of international trade, with implications for U.S. retailers and brands. We see retailers addressing the risks now and understanding the potential impact by category. The best practice is to look for continuous improvement in the supply chain and regularly evaluate sourcing and production partners. In a world that is constantly changing, we must be ready to adapt.

#### Assortment

Assortment optimization continues to improve and accelerate as data, systems, organization and process allows. Maintaining tight, tailored assortments is the key to sustaining a healthy inventory position. Customer satisfaction directly correlates with improved customer choices, prices and promotions, availability and fulfillment. We are seeing more work in the assortment area than in the recent past as other priorities were addressed.

#### Business Integration

Duplication of duties creates significant waste, confusion and cultural challenges. With growth and the promise of increased productivity, retailers are relooking at organization and calendar to drive scalability, efficiency and greater job satisfaction. Improved business coordination enables better, more consistent application of AI and ML to automate and improve on day to day operations.

Companies that successfully achieve progress in these areas will find themselves poised to scale, operate more efficiently and have the right foundations for good data and corporate culture.



2024 was a big turning point for the industry to dig into establishing strong, well-governed data foundations, setting the stage for a data explosion in 2025.



### ABOUT COLUMBUS CONSULTING

Columbus Consulting delivers solutions that drive true value and have been transforming the retail, grocery and CPG industries for over two decades. We are a retail consulting company of industry experts.

Our approach is simple, if you do it, we do it. We are more than consultants; we are experienced practitioners who actually sat in our clients' seats. We understand the challenges, know what questions to ask and deliver the right solutions. Columbus offers a unique, consumer-centric approach with an end-to-end perspective that bridges functional & organization silos from strategy to execution. Our specialties include: unified commerce, merchandising & category management, planning & inventory management, sourcing & supply chain, data & analytics, accounting, finance & operations, people & organization and information technology. Let us know how we can help you. [Click here to learn more.](#)