Those of us that have spent years working in the retail industry are always looking for the next technology to increase productivity. If you attended NRF looking for new technologies, I'm sure you were not disappointed. We saw everything from real-time inventory control enabled by RFID, to smart fittings rooms and the latest generation of 3D printers.

I was fascinated with the leap all these technologies have taken in the past five years, and overwhelmed by the infinite applications in the retail industry. However, I felt many of them failed to take into account that without a holistic transformational approach, all these technologies will fail to deliver the results that they promise. For example, 3D printers will definitely reduce the cycle-time to produce a prototype, but without a clearly defined line assortment management strategy to control over and under development, this technology will deliver only a partial improvement to the product development process.

We need to use a different lens to look to all these new technologies. We should treat them as ENABLERS rather than SOLUTIONS. Process, discipline and people should continue to be seen as the true means to transform the retail industry.

What's Your View? What did you see at NRF this year that might change the way you run your business?
About the Author

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Sergio has dedicated his consulting career helping clients to redesign their product development and sourcing processes. He has lived and worked in 12 countries managing high-performing, multi-cultural teams.