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TECHNOLOGIES**THE ZENSAR**
RETAIL TECHNOLOGY
INITIATIVE OF THE YEAR**Retail**
Week 2016
AWARDS
with **ORACLE****Winner:** Shop Direct with SAS

Shop Direct takes a Very big stride forward



The arrival of the digital commerce era has brought technology to the forefront of retail. Retailers are increasingly conscious of the difference that technology strategy can make both behind the scenes and to the customer experience, and how crucial it is to get right.

With so much at stake, and against stiff competition as retailers across the board up their game, the strides made by retailer Shop Direct impressed the judges.

Working with SAS, the retailer set about transforming the experience for its customers on the Very.co.uk site.

The goal was to provide a truly personalised site tailored to the needs and tastes of each shopper. It was a lofty ambition – chief executive Alex Baldock described it as being “the digital equivalent of Selfridges laying out their Oxford Street store for each shopper”.

But the judges felt that Shop Direct’s willingness to think big had paid off, particularly in the way the new system works under the bonnet.

One judge said: “Shop Direct is pushing the boundaries through IT innovation and development.”

The judges admired the intelligent way the retailer has been able to deliver tailored product gallery pages for a better shopping experience and in turn enhance sales.

The judges were as impressed with the ambitious plans Shop Direct laid out as they were with the way it delivered them.

It was a big push and, as the retailer’s entry explained, involved a concerted effort between various departments within the company.

The group brought together colleagues from its technology, ecommerce, insight and engineering teams to work together on the venture, and teamed up with SAS which

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brought in its Real-Time Decision Manager platform to work on the essential data-crunching and testing of the new Very site.

Many retailers are alert to the potential of personalisation, but Shop Direct has put its money where its mouth is and delivered striking results.

“They’ve got a really good handle on big data,” one judge said. “They have invested so much in IT and it’s paying off. There’s lots of talk about big data but not everybody is managing to do it quite as well.”

“Other people have not done as well with personalisation as Shop Direct. They’ve taken it to another level.”

With 2.1 million different versions of the home page having been generated since the initiative, and an impressive business performance to back up its case, Shop Direct has managed to make the most of technology to benefit the customer and the business.

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★ **The retail industry** is at an inflection point, both from a business model and customer engagement perspective. Retailers around the world now realise that sustainable competitive advantage will be gained only by a deep understanding of consumer demands and comprehensive supply chain planning and execution workflows.

Distribution strategy and value chain dynamics are becoming integrated with existing capabilities to drive business growth. By enabling the most trustworthy, efficient, and effective processes, we help retailers achieve higher service levels while reducing costs, thereby growing customer loyalty and brand strength.

Today six of the top 30 retailers worldwide work with Zensar. These retailers work with us in implementing the right technology across store management, supply chain, merchandise, planning and optimisation along with marketing, HR and finance to enhance their business outcomes. This results in a better connection with today’s hyper-connected customers for achieving the ultimate goal of winning and maintaining customer loyalty. Zensar.com