The Top 80
Retail Movers & Shakers
2021 Report

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Welcome to the 2021 edition of Movers & Shakers. At WonderLane, we're both thrilled and proud to be the new sponsors of this report, celebrating the best in retail. It's been a challenging year and the knock-on effects from the Covid-19 pandemic have accelerated the shift towards digital platforms, checkout transformations and customer centricity.

The remit of the Movers & Shakers is to identify those individuals who have been making a difference in retail and this year more than ever, we are seeing those who are not only making a difference but often are doing things differently, trying new ways, being innovative and succeeding.

Over the course of 2020/2021, retailers have gone through exceptionally fast transformations. We have seen well-established brands crumble and fall, while more agile players moved swiftly into their space. There has been a light-speed change in consumer behaviour and in the way that businesses present, sell, and deliver products.

It's also a time where a new generation of disruptive brands are shaking up retail with an explosion of new direct-to-consumer companies transforming how people shop. It is clear - the brands that can build relevant, personalised, and connected experiences that meet the wants and needs of a new generation of shoppers will be the true winners. This ethos is clearly reflected in this edition.

I would like to personally thank Glynn and the Advisory Panel of experts who bring with them a wealth of knowledge and expertise, as well as much debate discussing who would be in the final top 80. The final words of thanks must go to all those named individuals and the businesses that make up the Movers & Shakers report. Thank you to you all, congratulations and keep at it. I am genuinely excited to be part of the journey ahead of us all.

Welcome

Welcome to the latest annual 'Retail Insider Movers & Shakers in Retail' report that comes with some changes in format this year, which undoubtedly reflects the incredible dynamism in the retail landscape over the past 12 months.

Glynn Davis
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Primarily the industry has had to deal with the impact of Covid-19 and the way it has continued to accelerate the digital trends that the sector had been dealing with over recent years. Over this period this annual report has sought to highlight the people making the most impact digitally and this very much remains the key objective this year.

Amid the industry upheaval we are pleased to welcome a new sponsor for the report in Wonderlane and also to some new Advisory Panel members. This combination of factors, along with the desire to pinpoint only the very best individuals in the industry, has led to this year's publication highlighting the Top 80 people in the sector rather than 100 as in the past.

Against this changing and challenging background the top of the list is again filled with a rich concentration of newer, digital-first businesses, while the more traditional players are less well represented. This is probably down to the nature of the criteria of this report and so full credit must be given to the selected individuals from Next, JD Sports, Pets at Home and Sainsbury's who figure in the top 20 of the report.

However, nobody is more representative of the changing retail landscape as Alex Chesterman who tops this year's list for his creation and stewardship of Cazoo. He has disrupted the traditional retail model for selling cars with his DTC approach and pioneering levels of customer service. For this he truly deserves the premier spot. But he is in great company as will be revealed when you read through the report.

As in previous years Retail Insider has relied on the skills of an experienced Advisory Panel to create this report. They have been a vital ingredient to ensuring it covers a sufficiently broad swathe of the industry and to also ensure the rigorous methodology we apply to its production has again been maintained. I would like to thank each of the Panel members for their important contribution.

An incredibly big thank-you also goes to Wonderlane for its much appreciated maiden sponsorship of the Movers & Shakers report. It's great to have a partner who is as enthusiastic as we are in wanting to highlight the best digitally-focused talent in the retail industry.

Methodology

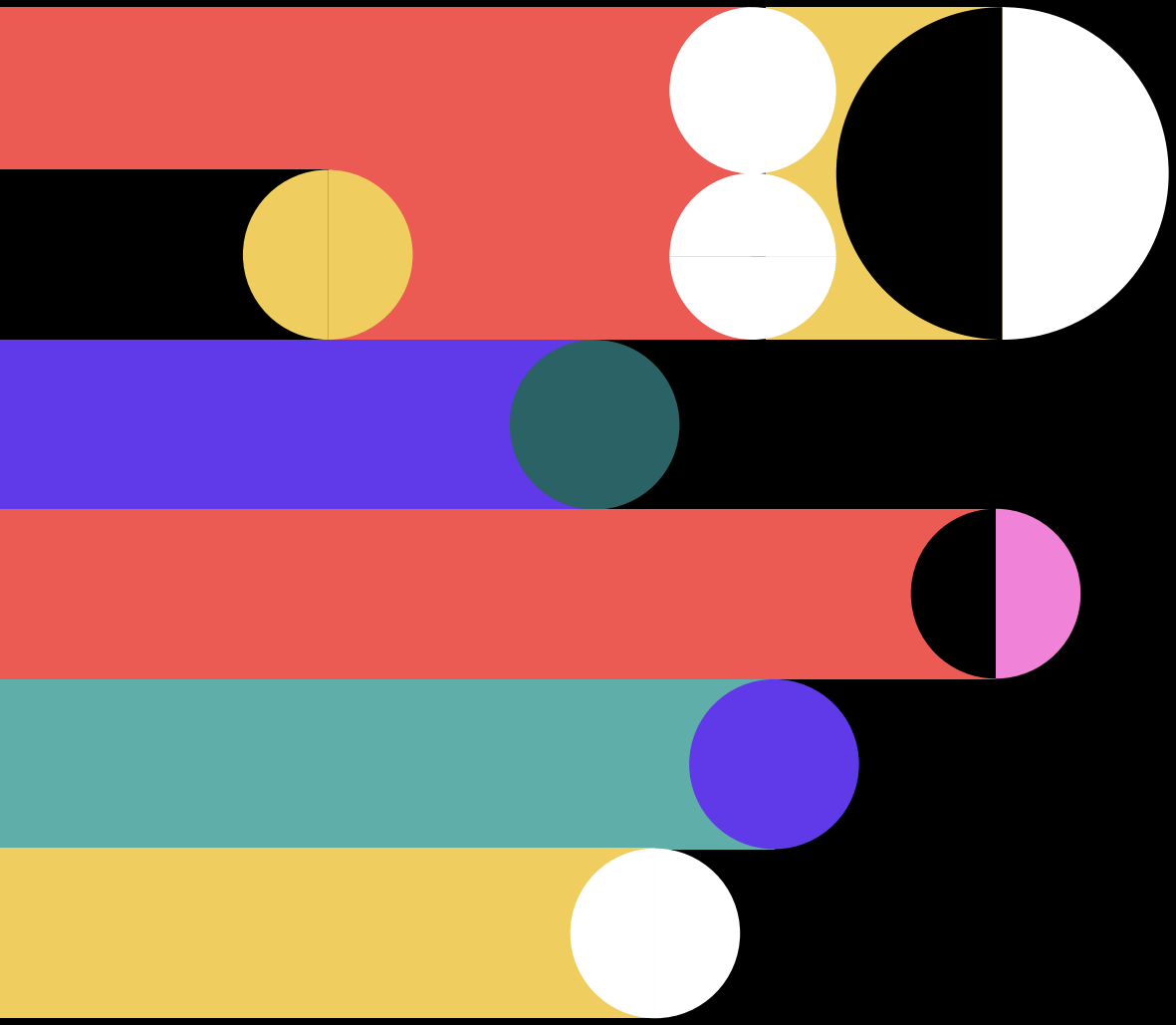
Over the past 12 months a wide range of experts from across different disciplines within the retail industry have been consulted to help draw up an initial long list of potential constituents of the Top 80 for 2021.

These individuals included consultants, technology vendors, service providers, recruitment specialists, senior retail executives, advisors and City analysts whose expertise encompassed all aspects of the sector.

The carefully selected Advisory Panel then helped to reduce this long list down to a Top 80 names and from within this grouping they selected a Top 20. The Panel is chosen on the basis of their combined knowledge and expertise covering every part of the retail industry.

The Top 20 names were then given to each of the Panel members to score privately on a number of important criteria – achievement over the last 12 months, potential future achievement, customer engagement, digital capability, and innovative capability. By collating these scores a ranked Top 20 list was created.

As per recent years the only separate grouping within the overall Top 80 list is for 'Investors / Non-executive Directors / Advisors', which we believe continues to be an increasingly important and valued part of the retail industry.



Advisory Panel

Carefully selected group comprising a broad range of experts from across different disciplines within the retail industry.

Advisory Panel

Ajay Kavan

Senior Advisor in Europe – KKR

Ajay joined KKR as a senior advisor in early 2021 and is focused on the consumer internet sector in e-commerce and direct-to-consumer offers, as well as companies undergoing major digital transformation programmes. Ajay was previously CEO of Matches Fashion and prior to that he spent nine years in senior roles at Amazon including VP International Special Projects, VP Amazon Fresh International and VP UK Consumables. Earlier roles included senior positions at Home Retail Group and Kingfisher.

Susan Aubrey-Cound

Director of Digital Transformation and AI for sustainable business

Susan presently works with various businesses assisting them with their digital transformations and adoption of AI technology. This portfolio working dynamic follows a three-year stint as director of business development at Syte and a brief spell at Daily Mail Group as CEO of e-commerce. Prior to that Susan spent a decade at Marks & Spencer where she latterly held the role of director for omni-channel development. Earlier positions included spells at Moss Bros and BAA.

Aaron Chatterley

Founder – Feelunique

Aaron was a pioneer in bringing the health & beauty category online when he founded Feelunique in 2005, which represented a challenge as there has been an ongoing reluctance by some brands to move beyond bricks and mortar retailing. Since stepping back from running Feelunique Aaron has become involved in various organisations as an advisor and investor including Curlsmith, Monpure, Urban, Flaze and TheFoodMarket.com.

Anthony Fletcher

Founder – Believe in Science

Anthony moved on from his role as CEO of Graze mid-2020 and is today involved in a variety of organisations including Blume Equity and Believe in Science. He also recently launched a low fat doughnut concept Urban Legend. His Graze career began in December 2009 and involved him serving as CEO, UK managing director, and chief marketing officer at the healthy snacks company. He used his skills from earlier roles at Innocent Drinks to take Graze products into retail stores and into the US market. Anthony successfully led the business's sale to Unilever.

Advisory Panel continued

Nick Thomas

Chief Digital Officer – Missguided

Nick joined Missguided in late-2021 with accountabiliy for e-commerce, trading and marketing. Prior to this he held the post of chief digital officer at Holland & Barrett where he was an integral member of the senior management driving major change at the retailer. His previous roles are steeped in digital transformation and include founding Built/ while at Travis Perkins, e-commerce & multi-channel director at The Works Stores, and founder of family business Cloggs.co.uk.

Melissa Reed

Partner of the retail & consumer practice – H.I. Executive Consulting

Melissa is a partner at H.I. Executive Consulting where she works with UK and global retailers building teams at board level with a focus on transformational leaders with digital and technology an increasingly important attribute. Much of her work involves helping clients steer businesses through disruptive digital change to help them achieve their strategic objectives. She was previously part of the global consumer markets practice at Korn Ferry and before that at CTPartners.

Simon Calver

Chairman – Fenwick

Simon is currently chairman of Fenwick along with other advisory roles including chairing Musclefood, non-executive director of Doctor Care Anywhere, and chairing the UK Business Angels Association. Until July 2020 he had been head of Investments for ventures and early stage at BGF Ventures that he helped found in 2015 as it launched a new £200 million fund. Prior to this he was CEO of Mothercare and LoveFilm, which he joined after spending his earlier career at the likes of Dell and Unilever.

Hannah Joyce

Partner – Calibre One

Hannah is a partner at digital & technology-focused executive search firm Calibre One and brings over a decade of experience focusing on digital, marketing, commercial leadership and digital transformation searches. She previously led the Internet and Digital practice for Odgers Berndtson and more recently she was part of the Global Technology & Consumer practice at Heidrick & Struggles.

Advisory Panel continued

Sarah McVittie

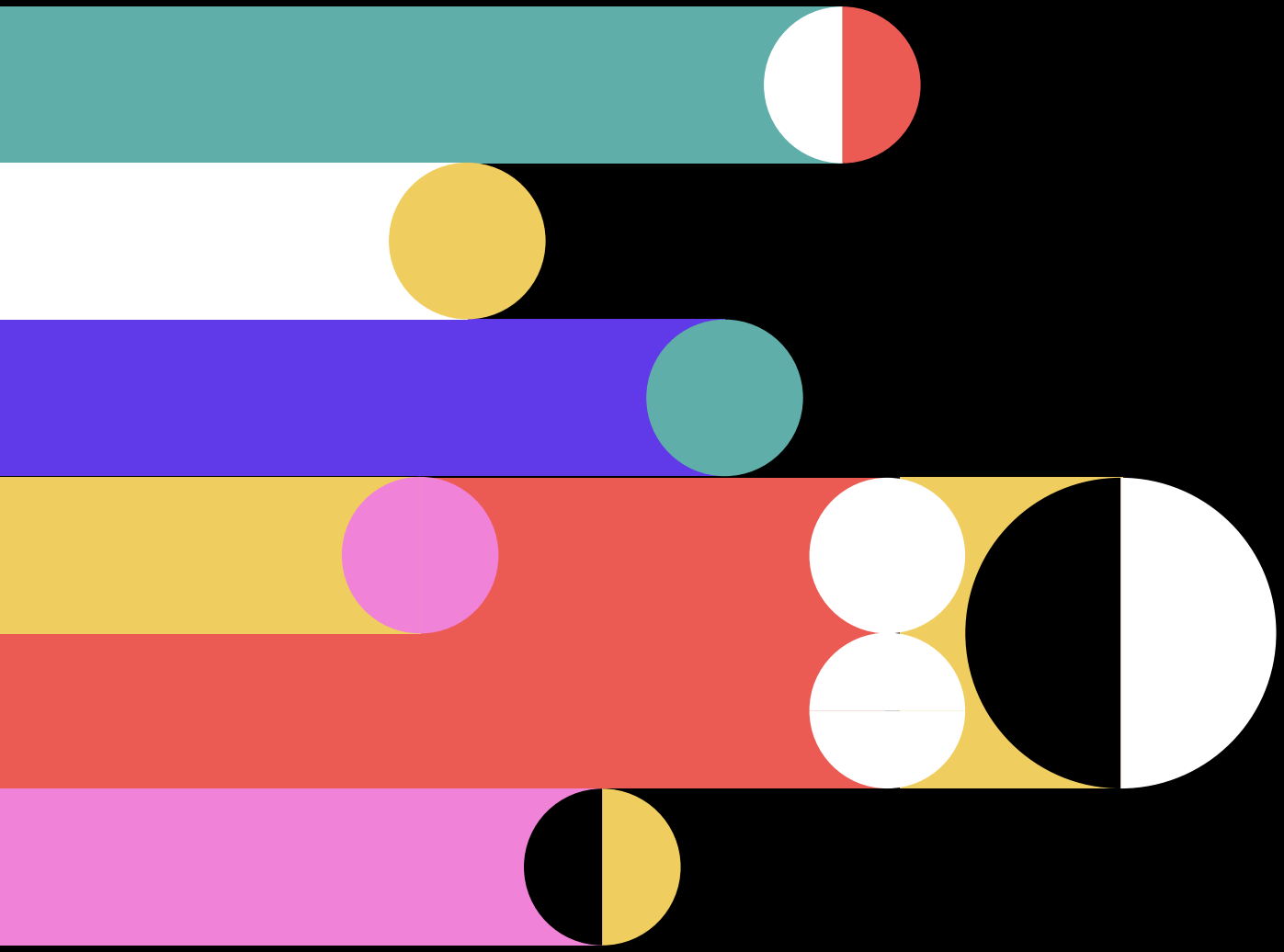
Co-founder – Dressipi

Sarah is co-founder of fashion prediction platform Dressipi that has built up a roster of leading retail clients. She has been a leading force in the tech industry for over 15 years, which began with her building her first award-winning business SMS Q&A service Texperts. This was inspired by her first job working as an analyst at investment bank UBS. Texperts was sold in 2008 in a multi-million-pound deal.

Alex Murray

Founder – Thistle Digital

Alex founded Thistle Digital to help business leaders navigate digital and help them invest in the channel. He brings over 20 years of digital and e-commerce experience having held many roles including digital director at Lidl GB, various positions over his seven years at Waitrose, online business manager at Game Group, and e-commerce manager at Berry Bros. & Rudd. Alex is currently also an advisor to RetailX and a principal consultant at Good Growth.



Top 20 Retailers

The Final top 20 have been selected and ranked by the Advisory Panel based on innovation, performance over the last 12 months, potential future performance, customer engagement, future business leader potential, and multi-channel strategy.

Top 20 Retailers

01

Alex Chesterman

Founder & CEO – Cazoo

Chesterman timed his entry into the used car business to perfection as the pandemic saw record numbers of people buying a second car. With his proven track record in creating highly profitable companies such as LoveFilm and Zoopla, Chesterman has had no trouble in attracting major investment to the new venture Cazoo, which has made a strong start in disrupting the traditional used car market. His charismatic leadership style has contributed to 2021 revenues expected to approach $1 billion and an impending market listing in the US with a valuation of around $7 billion.

02

Maria Raga

CEO – Depop

Raga, who has been in the CEO role since 2016, has guided the reselling platform through a very busy expansion period (it now has 300 employees in five global offices) culminating in its acquisition by Etsy for $1.6 billion. Revenues and sales have both doubled in 2020 as Gen Z consumers take reselling and recycling to their hearts with Depop as the preferred platform for over 26 million users. Prior to Depop Raga worked at Groupon and Privalia.

03

Jóse Neves

Founder & CEO – Farfetch

Neves holds just about every important position at Farfetch being the CEO, Chairman and founder (in 2008) of the British/Portuguese-based online fashion platform. Now working with more than 700 brands Neves began the brand to combine his twin loves of fashion and technology. In 2020 all his prophesies about online demand came true and the platform recorded revenue growth in the third quarter of 71% at £438 million. Under his stewardship the company recently announced partnerships with Alibaba and Richemont and it is clear that Neves has the Chinese luxury market clearly in his sights.

04

Matthew Moulding

CEO – The Hut Group (THG)

THG, founded in 2004, was the brainchild of Matthew Moulding and he has been at the helm ever since. As revenues at THG, which operates multiple global beauty online brands among others, continue to soar Moulding shows no signs of handing over the reins of CEO. After the biggest IPO last year in the history of the London Stock Exchange the company reported a 42% increase in revenue as Covid-19 helped online sales increase dramatically. Moulding has also been focusing on building THG's end-to-end technology platform Ingenuity.

05

Aron Gelbard & Phill Burton

CEO & COO – Bloom & Wild

Online flower seller Bloom & Wild continues to cement its number one florist status with a hugely successful round of recent funding coming in at £75 million and the acquisition of Dutch rival Bloomon. All of this means that the CEO and COO are about to oversee a large expansion. Gelbard founded the business in 2013 to shake up UK floristry and he has certainly done that. Gelbard and Burton, who joined the company in 2015 and was previously at beauty subscription company Birchbox, now set their sights on the fragmented but huge European market.

06

Ben Francis & Steve Hewitt

CEO & Executive President – Gymshark

It is nearly a decade since a very young Ben Francis decided that the world of sportswear needed a UK brand of its own to compete with Nike and Adidas. In that time he has overseen a company that now sells to 150 countries and earns £400 million in revenues but he has only recently formally taken on the CEO role from Steve Hewitt who was appointed in 2017. Hewitt moves from CEO to executive president with a focus on commercial scaling. Gymshark will require the full skill-sets of both Francis and Hewitt as it starts to expand in the tough US markets. Its first American distribution centre opened in June and two more will follow this year.

07

John Boumphrey

Country Manager UK – Amazon

Boumphrey was elevated to the UK manager of Amazon in the autumn of 2020. When he joined Amazon a decade ago the workforce numbered 2,500. It is now around 40,000 and demand has soared for Amazon's services in the pandemic meaning Boumphrey now controls a very healthy slice of the UK online market. Expect more focus on children with the launch in the UK of new child-friendly Alexa features as Boumphrey focuses on the next generation of Amazon consumers and of course the ongoing push into groceries.

08

Timo Boldt

CEO – Gousto

Founder and CEO of the meal kit delivery company Gousto, Boldt has been in charge since 2012. During the last year Gousto experienced a surge in demand for cook-at-home meals (sales are now at £189 million a year a rise of 129%), which Boldt successfully negotiated in terms of scaling up but he will now be focused on reducing packaging and the potential for food waste within the company. This is something that a plethora of recently hired data scientists and food technologist will be helping with. Boldt started out as an analyst at Rothschild.

09

Nick Beighton

Former CEO – Asos

Beighton was surprisingly removed from his role as CEO of Asos in October having moved up the ranks of the business from CFO to COO and finally reaching CEO in 2015 after six years with the online fashion company. As with most online sellers 2020 was a strong year – with a 329% increase in pre-tax profits. However, when things got tougher in 2021 with various external pressures it led to his shock departure from the company. He cut his retail teeth at Matalan and Luminar.

Simon Wolfson

CEO – Next

Clothing retailer Next did not have the outstanding pandemic performance of some and full price sales for the year were down 15%, however in Wolfson it does have a very proven steady and meticulous hand on the tiller that will undoubtedly stand the company in good stead. His focus on large retail park stores rather than high streets proved astute when town centres were deserted and his ongoing management of the overall store portfolio is being handled with great skill. Wolfson is also successfully building a marketplace platform at Next.

Tania Boler

CEO – Elvie

With just a few products Tania Boler has managed to turn Elvie into a very successful femtech brand aimed at solutions for maternal health. In 2020 she oversaw the launch of two new products – Elvie Curve and Elvie catch – both breastfeeding aids, which proved very popular. Boler founded the company in 2013 and has a strong focus on research and development which gives the company a strong continuous line of product releases.

Philippe Chainieux

CEO – Made

Chainieux has been at the top of the furniture selling disruptor since 2017 during which time sales have risen to £315 million in 2020 and there are now 1.1 million active customers. Under his leadership the company has aggressively expanded in Europe during the last four years and has an impressive multi-channel marketing strategy. He has also overseen the company's successful flotation on the UK market, which means Chainieux now has a new set of people to impress – his investors.

13

John Roberts

CEO – AO.com

Having returned in 2019 to the top job at the company he founded 20 years ago, Roberts has now weathered a pandemic in charge and reaped the benefits of a switch to online shopping. Full-year group revenue was up 62% to £1.6 billion, some of which can certainly be attributed to Roberts' relentless focus on customer service. His longer term ambitions are firmly European-centred and he will also be investing even more in recycling plants.

14

Shira Feuer

CMO – Trinny London

Feuer, who joined Trinny London in 2019, is responsible for both new customer acquisition and long-term retention strategies along with all social media content at the fast growing digital DTC beauty brand. With a strong background in retailtainment (previously she worked at Walt Disney as well as Burberry) she looks set to continue the brand's impressive community growth using the Trinny Tribe and its Match2Me technology to full effect.

15

Peter Cowgill & Dan Finlay

Executive Chairman & Group Multi-channel Director – JD Sports

Cowgill, who has been executive chairman of the sporting apparel group for 17 years, will need all his leadership qualities in the months to come as he seeks to appoint a CEO and head off criticisms about executive pay and furlough repayments. Having said that JD Sports prospered under his chairmanship in the pandemic (it is now valued at more than £6 billion) and expansion in the US continues at a cracking pace. This expansion will be ably supported by Finlay's multi-channel expertise, which allowed sales to remain strong in lockdown and focuses on digital platforms integrated with creative content.

16

Sandeep Verma

SVP of Commercial – Allbirds (OTW)

Verma joined the US sustainable footwear brand in 2018 and has been responsible for growing the brand in Europe and more recently international. He moved into a new role as SVP of commercial and is still based in London. Allbirds has been at the forefront of trying to make fashion more accountable for its carbon footprint to great effect with consumers globally. In 2021 Allbirds launched its first sustainable clothing line that Verma will be hoping customers take to their hearts. He previously spent six years as CEO of Liz Earle beauty.

17

Freddy Ward

Co-founder – Wild Cosmetics

Wild Cosmetics was co-founded by ex-HelloFresh UK marketing director Ward in 2019 and he is now also CEO. The sustainable cosmetics and bathing products company was another business to benefit from a digital-first strategy during the pandemic and Ward's experience with a subscription-based company in the past will stand him in good stead as he tries to ramp-up that side of Wild's model.

18

Peter Pritchard

CEO – Pets at Home

Pritchard had already done seven years at Pets at Home before being appointed to the top job in 2018. Results for 2020 show omni-channel revenue growth of 71% - testament to Pritchard's sound understanding of the shift in how people shop. His investment in loyalty clubs and subscription schemes also paid dividends for the brand in a year when demand for pet products surged along with customers for the veterinary side of the business. Pritchard's previous retail roles include stints at Asda and Wilko.

19

Clodagh Moriarty

Retail and Digital Director – Sainsbury's

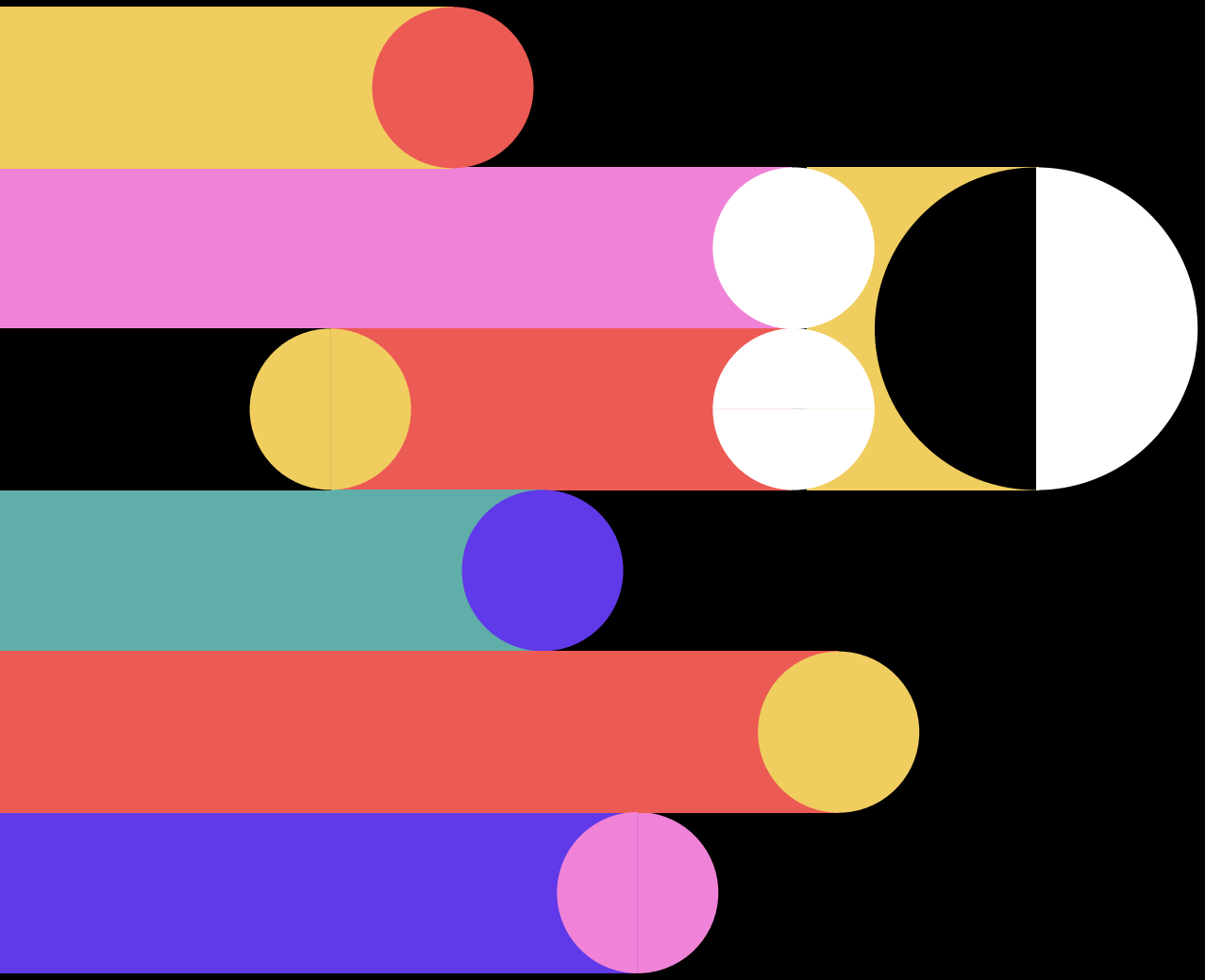
One of the few people on this list who has had a job made especially for her – group digital director at Sainsbury's, which she started in 2018. Moriarty was given another tailor-made job in 2020 - retail and digital director, showing how much CEO Simon Roberts values her oversight of both the in-store and online side of the customer experience. Instrumental in introducing SmartShop and Chop Chop to Sainsbury's customers she will now oversee all the e-commerce channels across Sainsbury's, Argos, banking and Nectar.

20

John Lyttle

CEO – Boohoo.com

Since 2019 Lyttle has been an experienced hand on the wheel of a very young upstart fashion company. It could be an unlikely pairing but his experience will definitely have been required in 2020 when Boohoo and its share price were rocked by allegations over modern day slavery in Leicester. He was quick to steady the ship, investigate, and assure investors things would change. Meanwhile, the online group's revenues shot up by 44% to £1.2 billion. The acquisition of Debenhams shows that Lyttle is focused on the longevity of this brand far beyond its 20-something customers.



Top Retailers 21-73

Chosen from our long list and deservedly included in the Top 80 Movers & Shakers, these individuals have been recognised for innovation, performance over the last 12 months, potential future performance, customer engagement, future business leader potential, and multi-channel strategy.

The following names are listed in alphabetical order by company name

OTW = One To Watch

A-Z of top retailers

Giles Hurley

UK MD - Aldi

Hurley is an Aldi veteran of more than two decades standing who was appointed UK head in 2018. In 2021 Aldi unveiled an ambitious £1.3 billion investment plan in the UK, which came on the heels of pandemic-led sales revenues up by 8.3% to £12.3 billion. Hurley will be hoping the new distribution centres and 100 new stores opening by the end of 2021 will continue this positive growth.

Simon Gregg

VP of e-commerce/online grocery home shopping - Asda

Gregg joined Asda in 2016 and since his arrival e-commerce sales have grown exponentially as his customers shifted online. But he doesn't rest on past laurels and already in 2021 has unveiled a new express one-hour delivery service that encompasses the whole range of 30,000 Asda online products with customers able to track their delivery in real-time. He also launched the first sustainable delivery vans at the supermarket. Gregg's 30-year retail career before Asda was spent at Tesco.

Nicole Vanderbilt

UK MD – Bookshop.org (OTW)

Bookshop.org is a new business, which only arrived in November 2020 in the UK and Vanderbilt is its first UK MD. As a former head of international at Etsy she is well versed in scaling up a platform that helps smaller sellers reach a nationwide audience, in this case independent booksellers. She faces criticism for the way Bookshop.org launched in the UK and will need to win over sceptical book shops who fear the public do not realise it is essentially a fulfilment service but public sentiment is so far with her.

Matt Birch

Director – Amazon Fresh Stores UK

As part of its bricks and mortar roll-out in the UK Amazon hired Birch from Sainsbury's in 2019 where he had been working as commercial director. His significant experience in property management will be key as the first Amazon Fresh till-less shop opened in London this year and looks likely to be followed by many more as the US-based retailer seeks to cash in on the UK's grocery market.

Marcia Kilgore

Founder – Beauty Pie

Founded in 2018 Beauty Pie is a membership-based, online-only business that aims to sell cosmetics at factory prices to its members and totally disrupt the beauty industry. Kilgore, who has a string of beauty concerns behind her including Soap & Glory, which Boots bought in 2014, uses the 'makeup without the markup' strapline for Beauty Pie. Membership doubled in the first lockdown and under Kilgore the brand is now venturing into nutritional supplements for which she will be preparing a video information series as the trusted head of the brand.

Mark Morris

SVP of Digital – Burberry (OTW)

Burberry has always been at the forefront of new digital ways of selling but Morris has really ramped this up. Tie-ins with Roblox to customise avatars with Burberry items is just one of the many playful and engaging ways Morris is pioneering at the luxury fashion brand. New flagship and technologically advanced 'social retail' stores in China are allowing him to bring the best of what works for the Chinese consumer to a more global audience. Morris has been at the brand for nearly a decade but was promoted to his current role three years ago.

Kevin Glynn & Dave Nolan

Co-founders – Butternut Box

Pets were big news in the pandemic and Butternut Box with its personalised dog food plans and subscription model benefitted hugely from that interest. Founded in 2016 its founders have already attracted £40 million of investment into the business with £20 million in 2020 to be used for their plans to grow and diversity into different channels. Butternut Box's innovative digital platform and strong customer engagement means Glynn and Nolan will be confident of ramping up sales growth even faster. Both founders previously worked at Goldman Sachs.

Tom Broughton

CEO – Cubitts

In 2020 Broughton's company opened its first store outside London, where it already has around 10 shops, in Brighton with a special collection of glasses inspired by the city's architecture. It is a typically imaginative move from Broughton who founded the company in 2012 to bring the best of artisan to a mass market. Under his leadership Cubitts has pioneered the use of technology to allow customers to try on frames virtually but his next step is to customise perfectly fitted spectacles via an in-house tech platform and to work in 3D. Before he founded Cubitts Broughton worked in media consultancy.

Kenny Wilson

CEO – Dr. Martens

Arriving in 2018 Wilson was immediately focused on moving the iconic brand to a digital-first position, which has proved invaluable during the last year and sales have risen to £733 million with 43% of revenues coming from DTC channels and online revenues rising exponentially. His vision is for the 135 global stores to perfectly complement the online experience and be places of retailtainment. In 2021 he also guided the company through an IPO. His other retail experience includes posts at Cath Kidston and Levi Strauss.

Steve Murrells & Matt Atkinson

CEO & Chief Membership Officer – The Co-operative Group

The Co-operative Group saw a massive jump in profits for 2020 and total revenues rose to £11.5 billion and it is possible that this would not have happened if it were not for Murrell's modernisation of the group over the last few years including selling the Co-op Healthcare business. Murrells led the Co-operative food business from 2012 before taking on the top job in 2017. Atkinson has been in his post since 2018 and arrived from Saga. He is putting the Co-operative Group through the same digitalisation that he did at Saga to great effect.

Alex Baldock

CEO– Currys

Currys welcomed Baldock to the CEO role in 2018 and he has overseen the change to one brand - Currys from Dixons Carphone. Another company, which managed to successfully ramp-up its digital offering in the last year, online sales grew by 114% in part to its innovative digital guided sales experience. Baldock's focus on investing in multi-channel was important in this. Before coming to the company he spent six years at Shop Direct Group.

Rob Hattrell

VP of Europe – eBay

Hattrell was the head of eBay in the UK for four years before promotion to the current role in late-2020. eBay is currently undergoing a 'tech led reimagination' and Hattrell will be driving that in Europe. As many as 50,000 users joined eBay in the UK in the first month of last year's lockdown and Hattrell will be seeking to ride the renaissance in interest in the platform as it nears its 25th anniversary. Hattrell previously worked at Tesco in IT and online roles for seven years.

Kresse Wesling

Co-founder – Elvis & Kresse

Wesling and her husband founded Elvis & Kresse in an attempt to stem the flow of waste materials such as retired firehoses and to repurpose them. She has been so successful in this that she is now the head of a luxury brand with devoted followers. In 2021 the company moved premises as demand was too high to fulfil at its original location. She remains a very vocal critic of the fashion industry and its practices and donates 50% of profits to charity. Elvis & Kresse now has sales outlets in multiple countries. Her ambitions are to create a global company, which can recycle waste globally.

Sarah Miles

CEO – Feelunique (OTW)

Miles arrived at the fast-growing beauty platform in late 2019 and has recently overseen its sale to Sephora. She has worked hard to improve user experience through customisation and investment in Feelunique's own ecommerce engine. She is also on a mission to ever widen the number of brands the platform works with (currently over 800) and her experience to date means she is really able to capitalise on the traditional beauty counter decline and the opportunity for virtual beauty consulting which the pandemic has only increased. Miles moved from Diageo to Amazon prior to joining Feelunique.

Sarah Clark

CEO – Frugi (OTW)

Ethical children's wear brand appointed Clark to the CEO post early in 2021. Her experience building the brand at Rapha will be invaluable as Frugi seeks to build on the increased value of DTC brands and consumers championing sustainable clothing. She will also be seeking to cohesively integrate two 2020 acquisitions, which complement the clothing ranges – TotsBots and Bloom & Nora. The big increase in sales during the lockdown is partly testament to her e-commerce knowledge.

Annette Picardo

International Seller Growth – Etsy (OTW)

Picardo joined Etsy in 2015 and has been the director of international seller growth since 2020. In her former role as country manager UK Picardo brought a combination of a creative side with a technical side (she previously worked within engineering at Rolls Royce). The online selling platform has seen tremendous growth in the last year and now has 90 million global users and four million sellers. Picardo will be an important figure in aligning the Depop community with the Etsy community after its recent acquisition.

Ted Bell

CEO - Freddie's Flowers

Seasonal flower box delivery company Freddie's Flowers brought Bell in as CEO in 2016, two years after it launched, and he has proved to be a canny hire taking the company through several layers of expansion. During the pandemic its subscribers rose from 60,000 to more than 100,000 as customers flocked to the subscription model. The innovative 'flower bond' launched in 2020 raised several million pounds to further fund expansion into Europe, which began under Bell's stewardship in Germany. His previous experience was with veg box company Abel & Cole where he was MD.

Gemma Bellman

Director of Europe – Glossier (OTW)

Beauty brand appointed Bellman in early 2019 to grow the US brand across Europe and she oversaw the opening of a pop-up in Covent Garden later that year, which attracted 100,000 customers and was so successful that Glossier kept it open for more than a year. Ambitious plans are underway with plans for a permanent London store for the digital-first brand and another $80 million just raised for expanding both online and offline channels. Bellman's prior experience includes founding Beauty Spotter and working at Get The Gloss.

Matt Hiscock

GM UK – Harry's

The brand debuted in Sainsbury's in 2019 as part of its future brands initiative and its e-commerce led, subscription-based model was again well placed to benefit from lockdown and the surge in DTC services in 2020. Innovations introduced in 2020 include a new category of scalp care and a range of next generation razors. Hiscock's background includes stints at Asos, Boden and M&S.

Angus Thirlwell

CEO – Hotel Chocolat

Vertically integrated Hotel Chocolat has had the mercurial Thirlwell at its head for 25 years and his continually innovative spirit was perfect to rise to the challenge of Covid-19 and meet it head on. UK sales grew by 12% as his customers bought through Hotel Chocolat's efficient multi-channel operation and Thirlwell will have the US and Japanese markets in his sights now as digital-only growth and customer acquisition accelerated massively for the brand in those countries last year.

Peter Jelkeby

Country manager UK&I and CSO – IKEA Group (OTW)

Jelkeby has been with the global furniture brand for almost three years in his current UK role although he has a track record of more like 20 years with the brand on and off. During the pandemic online sales at the company increased 21% and Jelkeby's experience helped fast-track the launch of its Click & Collect programme. Discounting products to divert away from landfill and reducing food waste in IKEA restaurants will also be down to Jelkeby with his chief sustainability officer hat on.

Katherine Paterson

Customer Director – Hobbycraft

Paterson is responsible for the Hobbycraft Club, brand and e-commerce at the arts and crafts superstore, which has experienced 200% growth in sales during the lockdown taking revenue to nearly £200 million. A focus on the customer's multi-channel experience was at the heart of its capacity to scale-up when it mattered in the pandemic. She has been at the company for six years and her previous experiences includes B&Q and Asda.

James McMaster

CEO - Huel

McMaster heads up fast-growth food business Huel, which he joined in late-2017 and drives the company mission of making nutritionally complete, convenient, affordable food with minimal impact on animals and the environment. Prior to joining Huel he was CEO of Life Health Foods EU for almost three years and this followed his other food industry positions including co-MD at Ella's Kitchen and operations director at Gu Puds. McMaster is also an advisor to The Fold London.

Claire Pointon

Customer Director – John Lewis (OTW)

Pointon came to John Lewis in the middle of the first lockdown in 2020 and has responsibility for digital product development and omni-channel customer experience, which includes store design. This means she will have a large part to play in the plan to bring Waitrose and John Lewis closer together and will redesign the pricing architecture of the company – something that has already begun with the launch in April of the Anyday own-brand value label encompassing 2,400 products. Her earlier retail career featured stints at Dixons Carphone and Kerry Foods.

Lucas London

CEO – Lick Home

Disruptive home décor brand Lick Home began life right at the beginning of the pandemic with London as a co-founder on a mission to make DIY easier. Features such as membership scheme Lick Pro, stick-on samples, low-odour paints, next-day delivery, online consultants and an eco-range mean he has tapped into the upsurge in home improvement during Covid-19. He has a string of posts at young online companies behind him including Feast, Airtasker and Karma Kitchen.

Charlie Marshall

Founder – Loaf

Marshall founded fast-growing 'laid back' furniture brand Loaf six years ago and last year sales topped £20 million. The vertically integrated business benefited from the emphasis on home decorating during lockdown but he was already planning large retail destinations to be called Loaf Shacks – the first one is planned for London and then the rest of the south east will follow. Marshall has overseen the growth from small to medium company with the accompanying investment in an IT infrastructure and improved warehousing. He previously founded Primal Soup, which he sold in 1998, using funds from that sale to set up Loaf.

Chris Morton

CEO – Lyst

Morton founded fashion aggregation platform Lyst more than a decade ago steadily building it to its current level of 150 million users worldwide. Investors have flocked to Lyst under Morton's direction and a recent $85 million fundraiser and speculation that Lyst is planning an IPO adds to the buzz. If Morton stays, the growth of his company and especially its app users during the pandemic as it seeks to become the Spotify of fashion, will make it a very attractive investment opportunity.

Charlotte Morley

Founder – The Little Loop (OTW)

The Little Loop is the first UK marketplace for renting children's items and allows consumers to rent from three tiers of brand new, nearly new, or well-loved items of eco and sustainable clothing through a subscription model with a share of the rental value given to the brand. Morley's background working for NotOnTheHighStreet as head of product has given her useful experience in online marketplaces and especially in digital marketing. This should stand the company, which ticks so many consumer boxes right now, in good stead.

Debbie Bond

CTO – Lovehoney

Online and DTC sexual wellbeing operation Lovehoney appointed Bond in late 2018 and she has overseen the huge and sustained peak in demand caused by lockdown by transforming every possible space available into a warehouse and increasing headcount massively to cope. The recent acquisition of Amorana in Switzerland means she is now overlooking the marketing, buying and digital trading for businesses in three continents and she takes some of the credit for a second Queens Award for Enterprise Bond awarded this year. Bond previously worked at Moss Bros.

Katie Bickerstaffe & Jeremy Pee

Joint COO and Chief Digital & Data Officer – Marks & Spencer

Marks & Spencer appointed Bickerstaffe in the middle of the lockdown in 2020 as chief strategy and transformation director and moved her up just a year later to the current role of joint chief operating officer where she will oversee the next phase of the retailer's turnaround plan and direct the post-Covid-19 regeneration of the brand. Data, services, clothing, home and international are her areas of responsibility and she is already being eyed as a successor to the current chief executive. Pee has been at the company for nearly three years and will be pleased that group online revenue for last year stood at a healthy £1.3 billion. The relaunched Sparks loyalty scheme (with 10 million members) is among his achievements.

Myles Hopper & Giles Humphries

Co-founders – Mindful Chef

Hopper and Humphries founded their sustainable-led recipe box in 2015 and in March 2020 it was delivering 700,000 meals a month to 80,000 households. Riding the trend of provenance and less food wastage the founders have harnessed technology to predict supplies and keep costs low by sourcing direct from producers. Plans must surely be in line to roll-out abroad and they have expanded the product range to smoothies and frozen meals.

Nickyl Raithatha

CEO of Moonpig (OTW)

The founder of Finery has been CEO of online gifting company Moonpig since 2018. As with most online operations the pandemic gave the company record results (profits up 137%) and Raithatha was able to guide Moonpig to a successful IPO in February 2021. Features such as the Big Night In celebrity collaboration cards proved extremely popular and app downloads tripled. A big investment under his watch in customer service allowed the company to ride the wave of massive demand and manage the ongoing roll-out of e-cards and range expansion to keep the offer fresh.

Tim Steiner

CEO – Ocado Group

Online operator Ocado's success during the 2020 lockdowns is well-documented and it has continued into 2021. Revenues rose significantly and hundreds of thousands of customers were added to the database. Steiner will be delighted with the recent licensing deal with Auchan Retail, which will be lucrative and is a foot in the door of yet another country. Steiner co-founded Ocado in 2000 after a career at Goldman Sachs.

Dave Potts & Andy Atkinson

CEO & Group Commercial Director – Morrison's

Morrison's, with 500 supermarkets in the UK, has recently been acquired by CD&R but CEO Potts's place is probably assured regardless of a recent shareholder revolt over his pay. His emphasis on Morrison's vertical integration is popular and the supermarket is able to say 25% of the food it sells it produces itself. Online sales were up fivefold during lockdown and the company is trialling a dark kitchen in Manchester while food boxes were also introduced last year. Atkinson is an able Morrison's veteran of eight years and is now responsible for the group's trading and manufacturing business.

Claire Davenport

CEO – NotonTheHighStreet

Davenport joined the business in mid-2019 and was plunged quickly into the Covid-19 crisis. But with an emphasis on shopping online and local she was able to lead healthy revenue growth over the year. She has also begun strategic work on developing other sales categories beyond the gifting staple such as garden, food and drink, crafting and hobbies. Under Davenport the business is investing in acquiring and supporting more partners/sellers with the aim of making it even easier to run a business on the NOTHS platform. Her previous experience includes the CEO role at HelloFresh.

Luke Jensen

CEO – Ocado Solutions

Jensen has been with Ocado Solutions since 2017 and his tenure is really beginning to pay dividends as international interest in the proprietary software developed by the research arm of Ocado shows no sign of slowing. However, Jensen is also aware that the CFCs he requires always drain large amounts of cash so the pressure on him to deliver the deals is likely to continue. Before arriving at Ocado Jensen was group development head at Sainsbury's.

Melanie Smith

CEO of Retail – Ocado

Smith moved over to Ocado as part of the M&S deal in 2019 and was a natural choice for such a customer-centric role. She has been involved with the rolling out of the Ocado fast delivery Zoom project and also with the ramping up of mini-fulfilment centres. However, she had difficult decisions to make during lockdown on whether to allow new customers or prioritise existing ones and the year ended with Ocado Retail having fewer customers. Smith was strategy director at M&S and has also worked at BUPA.

Freddie Blackett

Founder & CEO – Patch Plants (OTW)

Blackett founded the plant delivery service in 2015 to cater to the army of "clueless" urban gardeners who need a more curated experience. He launched innovative offers such as a plant parenting service and a selection of unkillable plants to great effect. Expansion under his leadership followed from London first to Paris and he now has a plan for UK wide services together with a large investment in data analytics to help sort out problems in the supply chain. As gardening was one of the most popular lockdown hobbies expect Blackett to continue growing his business exponentially.

Mark Livingstone

CEO – Pharmacy2U

Livingstone has enjoyed a five-year tenure at the top of online operator Pharmacy2U after he merged it with his own pharmacy business and the pandemic has given the company another year of transformative growth. With revenues up 30% Livingstone has finally managed to break through into mass brand awareness. He is essentially focused on obtaining a far greater share of the vast NHS repeat prescription market and expansion plans include a new dispensing facility to cope with demand.

Emilie Vanpoperinghe

Co-founder & CEO - Oddbox

The food rescue company Oddbox, which takes produce direct from farms that supermarkets cannot sell, was founded by Vanpoperinghe (and her husband) in 2016 to reduce food waste. From very small beginnings the Certified B Corp now delivers to tens of thousands of consumers every month. Vanpoperinghe was at the helm of a successful £3 million investment round in 2020 and plans to use the money to fund further national roll-out as well as introducing new technology into the business.

Kevin Cornils

MD of international – Peloton

Peloton has had a rollercoaster year with record sales followed by a collapsed share price due to a US-based accident on one of its running machines. Cornils, who has been at the fitness group for nearly four years, is responsible for managing its international roll-out that has included launching in Australia. Cornils will no doubt be focused on stemming the tide of consumers returning to gyms and with rolling out a new corporate wellness programme to react to that. Prior to Peloton he worked for a decade at online opticians business MyOptique.

Simon Mottram

Founder and CEO – Rapha Racing

Launched in 2004 as a way to get quality cycling clothing into the hands of enthusiasts Mottram has created a loyal and committed cycling community. He was in charge of the successful £200 million purchase of Rapha by two members of the Walmart family, which has enabled him to invest heavily in the business. For 2021 Mottram has overseen a packed racing calendar of Rapha global events while custom retailing continues to be a unique selling point for the brand. His previous experience was a branding and marketing consultant.

A-Z of top retailers continued

Christos Angelidos

CEO - Reiss

Angelidos joined Reiss in 2017 in a planned succession move to turn the clothing retailer into a global brand – it now sells out of 14 countries globally and he has been instrumental in raising revenues to £227 million in 2020. Following Angelidos's aggressive expansion into the US his old employer Next took a 33% stake (worth around £200 million) earlier this year and Reiss' online and website operations will be contracted to go live on the Next sales platform in February 2022. His customer acquisition model means the brand is set to enjoy further growth in the coming years.

Will Kernan

CEO – River Island (OTW)

River Island looked outside its usual succession channels when it appointed Kernan in 2019 to the private company, which is still family owned. Kernan has already had tough decisions to make on stores and jobs as the pandemic has forced a change in River Island's retail structure but he will hope that this streamlining alongside heavy investment in IT and AI can future-proof the high street brand in a new age of online retail. With a background in finance Kernan has previously held the top jobs at both White Company and Wiggle

Leonie Foster

Customer & digital officer – Selfridges (OTW)

Selfridges has a history of being enterprising and surprising shoppers and Foster looks set to continue this tradition. She joined the luxury department store in 2021 and will be hoping to reprise her success with her former employer Dunelm where she tripled the size of the digital business. Taking the customer with her on Selfridge's Project Earth campaign will no doubt be uppermost in her mind. Prior to Dunelm she headed up customer communications for Tesco.

Andy Smallwood

CEO - Ribble Cycles

Smallwood has been with the heritage cycling company for nearly four years. He has turned the business away from selling third-party brands and refocused it on its own premium bikes as well as harnessing the advantages of being a vertically integrated business. He has also introduced a big investment in R&D, a digital-first emphasis, majored on the personalisation of bikes as a USP for Ribble, and is also opening digitally-rich showrooms. Smallwood is now enjoying the fruits of his labours as results soar into triple digit growth for this year. Before coming to Ribble Smallwood had a career with Boardman Bikes and Halfords.

John Mewett

CEO – Screwfix

Trade arm Screwfix continues to be the crown jewel of the Kingfisher group under Mewett's leadership – since 2018 as CEO and previously as e-commerce director. Mewett spent 20 years at Dixons Carphone before joining Kingfisher. He continues to oversee rapid expansion with another 50 Screwfix stores planned for 2021. He is also very focused on slashing delivery times and will no doubt carry on with the very successful project of using stores as click & collect centres.

Emma Watkinson

CEO & co-founder – SilkFred.com (OTW)

Watkinson founded the online fashion platform that specialises in emerging designers a decade ago very much as a marketplace for digital-first consumers, which accounts for the vast majority of sales. The company she runs now has 800 brand partners and is potentially looking to expand into other countries while developing a mobile app.

A-Z of top retailers continued

Andy Lightfoot

CEO UK & US – Space NK

Lightfoot has been with the beauty retailer for four years, two of them as CEO of the UK and US businesses. A self-described obsessive about increasing footfall, conversion and transaction value of each customer, his collaborative leadership style means he focuses on the people nearest the customer to drive decisions. His bringing together of the online and store teams meant that a rise in multi-channel sales in lockdown offset the fall in store revenues. Before joining Space NK Lightfoot held posts at Amazon, Arcadia and WH Smith.

Chris Poad

MD of online - Tesco

Poad has been at the UK's biggest retailer for nearly two years. He is currently responsible for trialling Whoosh – a new Tesco initiative piloting from May 2021 that promises to deliver groceries in under an hour. Tesco had lagged behind other grocers in introducing the ultra-speedy final mile solution but he will be carefully watching progress. In more general terms UK online sales at Tesco were up 77% last year so Poad will be seeking to build on that great momentum in the coming years. Before joining Tesco he spent a decade working for Amazon.

Henry Birch

CEO – The Very Group (OTW)

Birch has been at the multi-brand online retailer since 2018. He was appointed to continue the operation's rapid transformation through his experience of technology-driven and data-enabled growth in former roles. This he has achieved with revenues last year exceeding £2 billion and sales at Very.co.uk up 10.5% along with the successful opening of a vast fulfilment centre - Skygate. His prior experience includes four years at Rank Group and also William Hill where he launched the mobile business.

James Davidson & Paolo Woods-Wyatt

CEO & COO – Tails.com

Another pet-focused company that hit a sweet spot during lockdown Tails.com provides tailored pet food on a subscription basis. The company has been carefully guided into six more European markets including Austria and the Netherlands. Founder Davidson formerly headed up supply chain operations at Innocent Drinks while Woods-Wyatt arrived in 2019 from Graze.

Sophie Hill

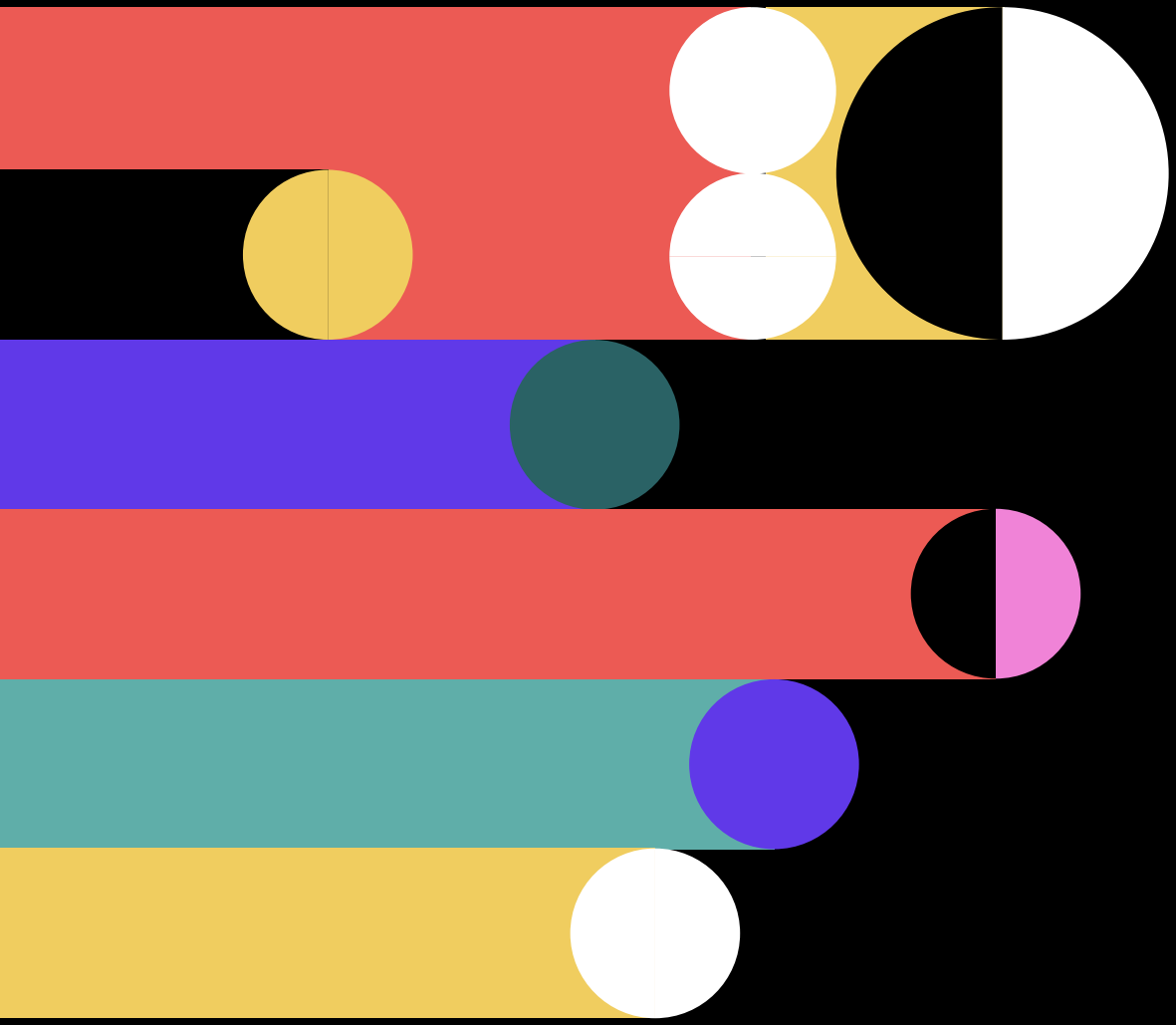
Founder & CEO – Threads Styling (OTW)

Threads Styling is an online-only, chat-based fashion company that has built up an impressive community for luxury fashion worldwide. It provides a unique personal shopping experience effectively closing the offline/online loop. Hill founded Threads Styling in 2009 using Snapchat and Instagram and is completely in tune with her target audience of high-net worth females and their preferred shopping habits. As her clients mature Hill has also launched an interiors business for their houses and expansion into the US market is also on the horizon. Hill started her retail career buying at Arcadia.

Marielle Wyse

Founder – Wyse London (OTW)

Clothing company Wyse (Wear Your Style Everyday) London was set up in 2015 and from the outset Wyse fostered a strong community spirit with weekly Instagram live chats and a free online consultation service led by brand ambassadors. A recent tie-in with Soho House for a customised cashmere collection with associated pop-up shows that her focus on what suits her customers rather than models has paid off. Wyse was formerly a BBC producer.



Investors, Non-executive directors & Advisors

A mix of private investors and specialists at investments firms, along with influential non-exec directors with multiple roles. This list comprises the most prominent figures currently investing in the retail industry and experienced directors who are helping retailers navigate the challenging digital journey.

The following names have been listed alphabetically by surname.

Investors, Non-executive directors & Advisors

Frederic Court

Founder – Felix Capital

Significantly experienced in the technology industry as both entrepreneur and venture capital investor Court set up Felix Capital in 2015 and has funded some impressive players within the retail space including Peloton, All Plants, Deliveroo, Oatly and Goop. He was also the first investor in Farfetch when at his previous employer Advent Ventures where he was general partner in London.

Susanne Given

Non-executive Director

After a successful career in retail, beginning in the mid-90s at House of Fraser, Given has taken on a variety of senior non-executive board roles within numerous retail organisations. These currently include chairman of Made.com, director at Morrison's, chairman at Hush Homewear, and director at Trent. She is also non-executive director at early stage technology VC Forward Partners.

Jon Kamaluddin

Non-executive and advisor

Following a near-decade stint at Asos during its early growth years Kamaluddin has since been involved on the boards of some incredibly successful ventures including Farfetch and Klarna. He stepped down from both boards in late-2020 as both companies achieved IPOs. Kamaluddin is currently chairman of Farmdrop, a board member of The Secret Linen Company, and an advisor to Felix Capital.

Ajay Kavan

Senior Advisor in Europe – KKR (OTW)

Kavan joined KKR as a senior advisor in early 2021 with the remit of supporting the company's pan-European investment activities in technology and digitally-enabled businesses. In particular, he is focused on the consumer internet sector in e-commerce and DTC offers, as well as companies undergoing major digital transformation programmes. Kavan most recently served as CEO of Matches Fashion and prior to that he spent nine years in senior roles at Amazon including VP international special projects, VP Amazon Fresh International and VP UK consumables. Previous roles included senior positions at Home Retail Group and Kingfisher.

Danny Rimer

Partner - Index Ventures

There are fewer better connected people than Rimer in the space where technology merges with retail. He joined Index in 2002 and established the firm's London office where he is still based. His current investments include 1stdibs, Discord, Glossier, Patreon and Scoop. He has previously been a director of myriad companies including Betfair, Dropbox, Etsy, Sky, and Lovefilm.

Andrew Robb

Advisor and investor

Robb has over 20 years' experience in consumer internet businesses and is currently an investor and advisor to multiple online operations including Felix Capital. Until early 2020 he was COO of luxury fashion marketplace Farfetch, a position he had held for 10 years, and from which he helped scale it to a global leader in online luxury fashion. He joined from Cocosa.com, a premium fashion private sale business, which he founded and ran as managing director.

Matt Truman & Paul Cocker

Co-founder - True Capital

True Capital is a retail and consumer specialist investment house headed up by Truman and Cocker who have successfully built an interesting portfolio of investments in both start-ups and more established businesses. The batch of organisations currently within the True Capital sphere include Ribble, Frugi, Hush, Zwift, Brawn, and City Pantry.

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These regular insights are complemented by a range of columnists, regular slots such as Q&As with leading retailers, and the 'Innovative Retailers' series. Retail Insider also produces the annual 'Digital Retail Innovations' report and holds the annual 'Transforming Retail Awards'.

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creativeoates.com

The Top 80

Retail Movers & Shakers 2021 Report

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