

Organised by



In Collaboration:



FACING UP TO THE CHALLENGES OF TOMORROW

MRA RETAIL CONFERENCE 2026

JUNE 24TH & 25TH , 2026 M WORLD HOTEL, BANDAR UTAMA, PETALING JAYA, MALAYSIA

MEET THE VOICES OF THE INDUSTRY



Mark Cox
CEO, Channel Islands Co-op



Richard Palme
MD, AgileRetail, UK & EU



Holger Wagner
CEO, Wagner & Partners



Prof. Christopher Marquis
University of Cambridge



Michael Wader, President
Leadership Excellence Intl



Prof Dr Ong Kian Ming
Former Deputy Minister,
MTI, Malaysia



Professor J Reynolds
Oxford University, UK



Professor Kirthi Kalyanam
Santa Clara University



Professor Paul Freathy
University of Stirling, UK



Shane Trewin, Senior
Retail Consultant, Relex



Gaurang Kotak
Milieu Insight Singapore

MRA has consistently remained at the forefront of the evolving retail landscape—delivering valuable insights while serving as a central hub for industry professionals. ♦ Anchored on the theme “Facing Up to the Challenges of Tomorrow,” the MRA 2026 National Retail Conference will convene senior executives from across key functions, including strategy, marketing, consumer insights, technology, merchandising, omnichannel and e-commerce, category management, business development, and market research.

Over two days, attendees will gain valuable insights and forward-looking perspectives from distinguished speakers and industry experts. Key discussions will spotlight innovation, AI-driven solutions, and ESG practices—equipping participants to navigate an increasingly complex and competitive retail environment.

More than just a conference, this is a dynamic platform for forging meaningful connections and unlocking new business opportunities. Whether you aim to learn from industry leaders, exchange ideas with peers, stay ahead of emerging trends, or discover transformative technologies, this conference is designed with your priorities in mind.

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Day One : 24th June 2026 (Wednesday)

0800 - 0900	Registration and Coffee Reception	
0900 - 0905	Welcome Address by Datuk (Dr) Andrew Lim, President MRA	
0905 - 0940	Opening Keynote Speaker The Power of Regenerative Business Prof. Christopher Marquis, University of Cambridge Judge Business School, UK	
0940 - 1010	Keynote Speaker Key Emerging Retail Trends and Innovations Professor Jonathan Reynolds, University of Oxford, UK	
1010 - 1030	Official Opening by KPDN Kementerian Perdagangan Dalam Negeri dan Kos Sara Hidup.	
1030 - 1045	Morning Networking Break	
1045 - 1115	Building Resilience Through Strategic Transformation Mark Cox, Chief Executive Officer, Channel Islands Co-operative, UK	
1115 - 1200	Creating the Store of the Future: Innovation through Design Richard Palmer, Managing Director, Agile Retail, UK	
1200 - 1300	Panel Discussion : Key Challenges Involved in Successful Retail Transformation Moderator Panelist	
	    	
	Prof Paul Freathy Prof J.Reynolds Mark Coxy Richard Palmer Holger Wagner	
1300 - 1400	Networking Lunch	
1400 - 1445	The State of AI in Retailing Today Holger Wagner, Founder/CEO Wagner & Partners, Germany	
1445 - 1530	Using AI for Customer Service Prof Kirthi Kalyanam, Retail Management Institute, Santa Clara University, US	
1530 - 1545	Afternoon Networking Break	
1545 - 1615	Price Wars, Promotions & Profitability in the Age of AI Shane Trewin, Senior Retail Supply Chain Planning Consult APAC, Australia	
1615 - 1700	Closing Special Speaker The US-Israel-Iran War Possible Impact & Implications for Asian Businesses and Retailing in Asia Prof. Dr. Ong Kian Ming	
1700	End of Conference Day 1	

Day Two : 25th June 2026 (Thursday)

0800 - 0900 Welcome Coffee Reception

0905 - 0945 Opening Keynote Speaker
The Upside-Down Leader
Michael Wader, President & Founder,
Leadership Excellence International, LLC, US



0945 - 1030 Creating Value in a Competitive Retail Environment:
The Importance of Store Operations
Mark Cox, Chief Executive Officer, Channel Islands Co-operative, UK



1030-1045 Morning Networking Break

1045-1130 The Future APAC Consumer
Gaurang Kotak, CEO, Milieu Insight Singapore,



1130-1215 Consumer Behaviour after Cost-of-Living Pressures:
Value vs Premium Segments
Prof Jonathan Reynolds, University of Oxford, UK



1215-1300 Panel Discussion :
Retail Reinvented: Sustainability for a Competitive Tomorrow



Moderator
Molly Fong
MRA Chairperson of
ESG committee



Tengku Adrinna
AEON CO. (M) BHD.



Albert Lee
99Speedmart



Jessica Jong
Sunway Mall

1300-1400 Networking Lunch

1400-1430 The Future Role of Physical Stores in Modern Retail:
A New Renaissance?
Richard Palmer, Managing Director, Agile Retail, UK



1430-1500 What Happens when Consumers Shop using Ai Engines?
Prof Kirthi Kalyanam, Retail Management Institute,
Santa Clara University, US



1500 -1515 Afternoon Networking Break

1515 - 1545 The Future: Where AI Will Transform Grocery Next
Holger Wagner, Founder/CEO Wagner & Partners, Germany



1545 - 1615 Panel Discussion : Retailing in the Year 2030



Moderator

Prof Paul Freathy



Holger Wagner



Prof Kirthi Kalyanam



Richard Palmer



Mark Cox

1615 - 1700 Closing Keynote Speaker
What's Next? Building a World Class Retail Workforce
Professor Paul Freathy, University of Stirling, UK



1700 - 1715 Closing Remarks by Raymond Teo, MRA Conference Chairman



Conference Speakers



Prof. Christopher Marquis
University of Cambridge Judge Business School

Chris is the Sinyi Professor at Cambridge Judge Business School and author of *The Profiteers: How Business Privatizes Profits and Socializes Costs*. His previous award-winning books include *Better Business: How the B Corp Movement Is Remaking Capitalism* and *Mao and Markets: The Communist Roots of Chinese Enterprise*, a Financial Times Best Book of 2022.

His work explores how business can address major global challenges such as climate change, inequality, and discrimination. He examines how current economic systems concentrate wealth among the few, and advocates rebalancing the roles of corporations, governments, and civil society to achieve socially and environmentally beneficial outcomes.

Before joining Cambridge, Chris was the Samuel C. Johnson Professor in Sustainable Global Enterprise at Cornell University and previously taught at Harvard Business School and Harvard Kennedy School. He holds a PhD from the University of Michigan and has authored over 20 academic articles and 50 Harvard case studies. He also previously served as a Vice President and Technology Manager at JP Morgan Chase.



Professor Jonathan Reynolds
Academic Director, Oxford Institute of Retail Management,
Deputy Dean and Associate Professor in Retail Marketing, Said Business School.

Dr Reynolds is one of the leading academic experts in the study of the retail sector internationally. He is particularly interested in electronic commerce and multi-channel retailing, innovation and entrepreneurship in retailing, retail productivity and skills, and the role of place in marketing and retail management. He works with both retailers and policymakers, both in the UK and internationally, and much of his research is conducted in association with retailers and industry bodies or draws upon their data and experience. Recent research partners include the British Retail Consortium, EuroCommerce and the Association of Convenience Stores. He is Co-Director of the ESRC's Consumer Data Research Centre. In addition, his advice is also sought by government and industry bodies including HM Treasury, the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills, the European Commission's Expert Group on Retail Innovation, the British Retail Consortium, and the UK Association of Convenience Stores.



Mark Cox
Director & Chief Executive Officer , Channel Islands Co-operatives

Mark was appointed as CEO and Director in July 2020 having successfully led all trading operations across food, non-food, travel and care as chief operating officer for 10 years

He brings a proven track record in strategic development, operational management and financial oversight.

Passionate about driving meaningful impact, he is committed to sustainable growth community engagement and ethical business practices.

Mark is a strong advocate for championing local businesses, charities and community initiatives, providing exceptional value to members and supporting colleagues at every level.

Mark holds an MBA in Retailing from the University of Stirling.



Richard Palmer
Managing Director, Agile Retail

Richard is the Managing Director of Agile Retail in the UK and Europe and oversees business operations in these markets, including direct partnership with our UK/EU customers.

Agile Retail is leading the renaissance in physical retail and pioneering new store formats and propositions that capture new growth, operate established retail estates, and activate both.

A strategist by background, for 20 years prior to joining the business, Richard has shaped and led strategic innovation and retail practices for global agencies and consultancies, working with leading brands such as Shell, EY and Capita.

Conference Speakers



Dr Kirthi Kalyanam, Ph.D. L.J. Skaggs
Distinguished Professor Executive Director, Retail Management Institute Santa Clara University

Dr. Kalyanam is the L.J. Skaggs Distinguished Professor and Director of the Retail Management Institute at the Leavey School of Business at Santa Clara University. He is also the founder of CausalX. He has also served as an independent director of Overstock.com, as Faculty Director of the Executive MBA program, a visiting Professor at the Graduate School of Business at Stanford University, a guest faculty in the Stanford Executive MMP program, Senior Vice President and Chief Marketing Officer of SpinCircuit Inc, a provider of supply chain integration services to the electronics industry. He received his Ph.D. in business administration from the Krannert School of Management, Purdue University. Dr. Kalyanam advises and consults early stage and growth oriented companies in Silicon Valley. He has advised or consulted for Google, Motor Image, IBM, Comscore Networks, Propel Corporation, Xambala, Kiwi Networks, Symphoniq Corp, Boorah, CoffeeTable, [24]-7.ai, Pebble Post and SiTime. He has served as a board advisor and consultant to the Commander of AAFES, a \$9B retailer ranking #36 in the Top 100 Retailers. He designed and delivered the first Retail University program at Google.

Dr. Kalyanam is a dynamic speaker. He leads executive seminars on Internet Disruption, the Amazon and Wal-Mart Effect in Retailing and has trained executives from over 10 countries. His clients have included ABN-AMRO, ABP, APG (Netherlands), Acuson, Army and Air force Exchange Service (AAFES), The American Video Duplicators Association, BI (Norway), Barco (Belgium), Blackstone Group Carrefour (France), Cisco Systems (San Jose), CSM (Netherlands), Daehan Oil Corporation (S. Korea), De Lage Landen (Netherlands), Gap, Google, Harvard Business Review Latin America, Hewlett Packard, Infotech (Mexico), IBM, IMD (Switzerland), Monash University (Australia), Overstock.com, Indian School of Business, Siemens, Wipro (India), Tan Chong Group, Thai Management Association, Tias-Nimbas Business School (Netherlands) & Trimble Navigation. He has co-produced the Internet Retailing Bootcamps with Shop.org and has served as an advisor to the State of Retailing Online (SORO) research study and has chaired the Shop.org Thinktank. Dr. Kalyanam's has provided expert testimony in over 20 cases in the domain of marketing practices, Internet Marketing, Retailing and Database Marketing. His work has included evaluating Internet advertising, business models, market research, and damage assessment using transaction databases and testimony on industry best practices. His clients have included the California Attorney General, the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) and some of the most well-known Fortune 500 firms.



Prof Dr. Ong Kian Ming
Former Deputy Minister of MITI, Malaysia

Ong Kian-Ming is currently the Program Director, Philosophy Politics & Economics, at Taylor's University, Malaysia). The PPE program will be the first of its kind in the country. Ong Kian-Ming was the Deputy Minister of International Trade and Industry (MITI), Malaysia from July 2018 to February 2020. He was a two-term Member of Parliament from 2013 to 2022, serving the largest parliamentary constituency in the country. He was a former Fulbright Scholar and holds a PhD in Political Science from Duke University, an MPhil in Economics from the University of Cambridge, and a BSc in Economics from the London School of Economics. Prior to his political life, he was formerly a lecturer at UCSI University, a researcher at the Socio-Economic Development and Research (SEDAR) Institute and the Institute of Strategic Analysis and Policy Studies (INSAP) and a consultant with the Boston Consulting Group (BCG) in the Kuala Lumpur office.



Holger Wagner
Chief Executive Officer, Wagners & Partners

Holger Wagner established a successful track record as an international senior executive by championing start-up ventures, building diverse businesses and leading turnarounds in different markets. Cooperation is key to any business' success, which is why he is working together with forward-looking successful Entrepreneurs who share like-minded philosophies about the modern retail space and other strategic areas where expertise is of utmost importance. The strategy consultancy "Wagner and Partners" with its combined deep global market knowledge was established to take advantage of the significant international opportunities in overcoming the various business lifecycle challenges of existing corporations and creating the next generation of successful retail companies.

Conference Speakers



Michael Wader
President & Founder, Leadership Excellence International, LLC

Decorated U.S. Air Force Veteran International leadership trainer and consultant. Author of seven books. For 30 years, Michael has helped leaders across 15 countries flip their perspective – starting with themselves. His approach is direct, leaders must work on their own skills first before they can lead anyone else.



Professor Paul Freathy
University of Stirling, Scotland, UK

Paul Freathy is Professor of Retail Management and Director of Institute for Retail Studies at the University of Stirling. The IRS is a global research institute and identified as a 'Centre of Excellence' for teaching and #39; World Leading for research. Over the past 30 years, Paul has worked across Asia, Europe and established a strong internationally recognised track record in leadership and innovation. Until 2023 Professor Freathy was also Head of the Marketing and Retail Division. During this period, Marketing at the University of Stirling was ranked No.1 in Scotland and No.2 in the UK. Paul undertakes applied research that focuses on the impact of e-commerce upon rural communities. He has authored a number of books and published in leading academic journals. More recently, Professor Freathy received research grant funding from the Royal Society of Edinburgh (RSE). In addition, Paul has worked with numerous businesses in the distributive trades as well as a range of public sector bodies. He provides press commentary on a broad range of subjects relating to retailing and has made a number of TV and radio appearances



Shane Trewin
Senior Retail Consultant APAC, Relex Solutions

Shane Trewin is a Senior Retail consultant, APAC at RELEX Solutions, with over 30 years of experience advising retail executives across the Asia-Pacific region. A trusted authority on unified retail planning, Shane works at the intersection of supply chain strategy, AI-driven decision-making, and large-scale organisational transformation. Specialising in Supply Chain Planning, Merchandise Planning, Space & Assortment, and Price & Promotions, Shane brings a rare combination of deep solution expertise and commercial acumen to every engagement. He has guided some of the region's most complex retailers through end-to-end planning transformations – from initial business case development through to full-scale technology deployment – across grocery, pharmacy, specialty, and fashion verticals.



Gaurang Kotak
CEO of Milieu Insight Singapore

Gaurang Kotak, CEO of Milieu Insight Singapore, is a leading voice on the future of consumer intelligence. He helps global organisations harness AI and data science to decode consumer behaviour and make sharper, faster decisions.

Gaurang has varied experience across the research and media industry, having worked with Yahoo! Middle East Insights teams then moving on to YouGov MENA where he worked on strategic digital and real time research projects. Before joining Nielsen Vietnam, Gaurang served as a leader for the Retail Measurement Services team with Nielsen UAE.

Guarang has previously worked with strategic clients like GSK, General Mills, JTI, Fonterra, Emirates Airlines, Zurich, Google, OMD Group, P&G, Intage, Givaudan etc across North America, Europe, Middle East and Asia

Conference Speakers



Molly Fong
 Executive Director, InNature Berhad

Molly Fong is the Executive Director of InNature Berhad, which operates The Body Shop franchise in Malaysia, Vietnam, and Cambodia. With three decades of experience in building a multinational retail business, Molly is recognized for her industry leadership and commitment to sustainability. During her tenure with InNature as General Manager and then CEO, the company grew to be a formidable market leader, successfully listing on Bursa Malaysia in 2020, and The Group's unwavering commitment to sustainability has been proudly acknowledged with an esteemed 4-STAR rating on the FTSE4Good Bursa Malaysia and FTSE4Good Bursa Malaysia Syariah indexes. Molly holds an MBA from the University of Nottingham and serves on various advisory boards of the Nottingham University Business School.



Tengku Adrinna Shahaz
 Head of Sustainability, AEON Berhad

Tengku Adrinna is the Head of Sustainability at AEON CO. (M) BHD, leading the retail company's sustainability strategy and reporting. With two decades of experience, Tengku Adrinna has served in organisations such as Media Prima, Astro, and Ekuinas where she held roles in investor relations, corporate finance, and investment management. She was recognised as Best Investor Relations Officer in Malaysia in Asiamoney's 2011 Corporate Governance Poll.

She is dedicated to advocating for enhanced transparency, emphasising the importance of authenticity in ESG efforts.



Albert Lee
 Head of Sustainability, 99 Speed Mart Retail Holdings Bhd

Albert is the Alternate Director & Head of Sustainability at 99 Speed Mart Retail Holdings Bhd. . In 2022, he graduated with a Bachelor of Science in Philosophy, Politics and Economics from King's College London, England.

He is responsible for optimising the Group's processes and enhancing inter-departmental functions, as well as analysing and implementing sustainability measures into the Group's operations. Albert has been integral in the introduction of Malaysia's first retailer EV transporter fleet in 2025, and the rollout of Energy Efficiency solutions and Solar PV systems across the Group's operations.



Jessica Jong
 Associate Director – Sustainability, Quality, Environment, Safety & Health, Sunway Malls

Jessica Jong is a highly accomplished ESG (Environmental, Social, and Governance) practitioner with over 13 years of experience in the retail industry. As the Head of Sustainability and Quality Assurance at Sunway Malls, she has played a pivotal role in driving ESG initiatives and positioning Sunway Malls as a leader in environmental and social responsibility.

With a proven track record in integrating ESG principles into operational practices, supply chains, stakeholder engagement, and reporting frameworks, Jessica brings a wealth of knowledge and expertise to the table. Her comprehensive understanding of sustainability issues enables her to develop and implement comprehensive sustainability strategies across multiple retail developments. One of Jessica's notable achievements includes the establishment of the Centre of Excellence for Quality Assurance. Under her leadership, Sunway Pyramid achieved ISO9001 certification (Quality Management System) within an impressive nine-month timeframe in 2011. Subsequently, this standard of excellence was implemented across all Sunway Malls and the Sunway Lagoon Theme Park, setting a benchmark for quality in these establishments.

Join us to navigate what's next in retail, connect with industry leaders, and prepare for the next frontier. This conference will feature a range of contemporary and exciting topics, including:

- The Power of Regenerative Business
- Key Emerging Retail Trends & Innovations
- Building Resilience Through Strategic Transformation
- Creating Stores of the Future : Innovation through Design
- Using AI for Customer Service
- Price Wars, Promotions & Profitability in the Age of AI
- The Future Role of Physical Stores in Modern Retail : New Renaissance?
- Creating Value in a Competitive Retail Environment: The Importance of Store Operations
- What Happens When Consumers Shop Using AI Engines?



The Conference is approved and fully claimable by HRD Corp. for your application.
No. Siri Kursus: 10001678067 Tajuk Kursus : MRA Retail Conference 2026

- Please register the Registration Link latest by 19 June 2026. Conference fee will be charged based on registration duly received by us.
- For companies sending more than 1 pax, kindly use excel form link here
- For those who do not intent to apply for HRD Corp grant, you will be invoiced by APRA accordingly, and payment to be made a week after registration.
- Please be informed that we will be applying for CPD hours from the Board of Valuers, Appraisers, Estate Agents and Property Managers (BOVEAP)



Scan QR to Register

Registration Link : <https://forms.gle/K2rsaGUSmLuMy7298>

Conference Programme Fee	EARLY BIRD RATE Register before 30 th May 2026	Normal Rate
MRA Members	RM 2,800 per pax	RM 2,950 per pax
Members of Supporting Associations	RM 2,925 per pax	RM 3,060 per pax
Non-members	RM 3,250 per pax	RM 3,400 per pax

The programme fee includes the following:

- Full participation in the two days conference
- All conference presentation materials
- Welcome refreshments, morning and afternoon refreshments and lunch
- The rate listed above is inclusive of SST

Important Notes:

The organiser reserves the right to cancel the programme, change the date, time and venue if circumstances are beyond its control.
Cancellation Policy: We regret we are unable to accept any cancellation once delegates have been registered. However, if delegates are unable to attend, a replacement may be arranged and notified to us, before 19 June 2026.

Further Information & Registration

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