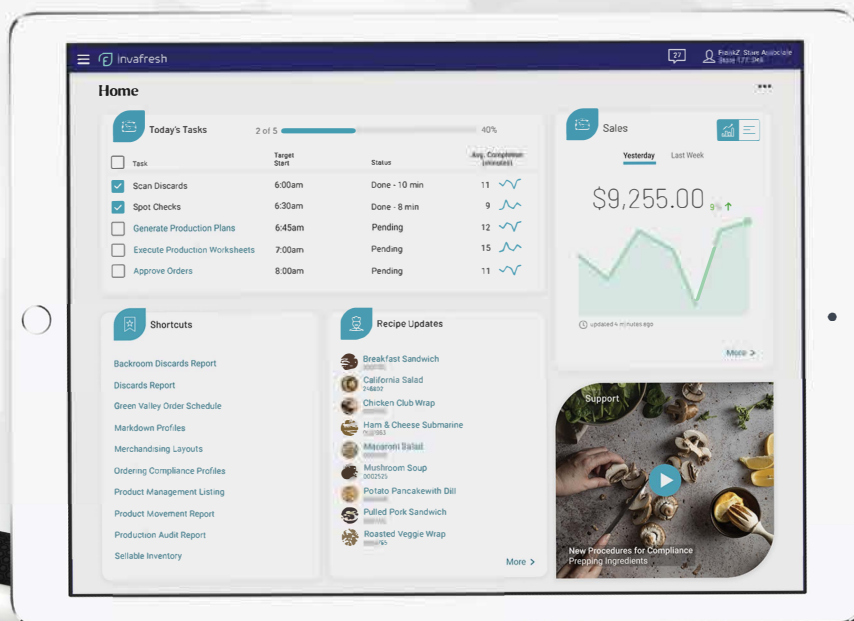




invafresh

# The Industry Standard for Fresh Food Retail Operations



**100+**  
Grocery Retailers

**15%**  
Fresh Sales Growth

**30%**  
Shrink Reduction

Invafresh is the industry standard for fresh food retail operations. Driven by real-time data analytics and enhanced by artificial intelligence and machine learning, our mobile-centric Fresh Retail Platform allows grocery retailers to optimize demand forecasting, merchandising, replenishment, and compliance and sustainability across their entire Fresh operations.

# Solving Today's Fresh Challenges with Technology

**SPEAKING WITH JOE SMIRLIES**, Senior Vice President of Product, Invafresh



Inflation. It's on consumers' minds when they're shopping for groceries, and on retailers' minds as they strive to offer those groceries at the best price possible while also providing superior customer service.

*Progressive Grocer* asked Joe Smirlies — an expert in sustainable Fresh Item Management solutions and the SVP of Product at Invafresh, the industry leading fresh food retail operations platform — to discuss how technology can help grocery retailers tackle today's economic challenges and build a competitive advantage for future success.

**Progressive Grocer:** Let's talk a bit about the macro trends fueling disruption in grocery retail today.

**Joe Smirlies:** Inflation is a big one — and it's putting pressure on consumers and retailers alike. In fact, 58% of respondents in Invafresh's 2022 Grocery Innovation Study<sup>1</sup> identified inflation as the number one threat to their business. And for good reason. Just look at what's happening in fresh food: Prices in that category rose nearly 7% in 2022 alone.

Add to that supply chain disruptions, availability, labor shortages, and changes in consumer buying patterns, and it's easy to see why grocers are struggling to accurately forecast demand and need a technology solution to deal with these challenges. While fresh is admittedly complex, it is something technology can help solve.

**PG:** But hasn't the grocery industry been slow to adopt technology?

**JS:** COVID catalyzed exponential growth in online ordering and grocery delivery, and consequently accelerated the need to embrace technology. As a result, grocery retailers are becoming more adept on that front. It's not that they don't want to implement technology; they just face an uphill battle trying to. According to our survey, 57% of respondents identify budget, 48% identify the disruptive impact of new technology, and 45% identify the lack of on-site technical expertise as constraints they face when it comes to adopting new technology.

The fact is that grocers face an uphill battle to compete with digital-first grocers like Amazon Fresh, who are becoming more prominent in today's increasingly tech-driven marketplace. Adopting new technologies is essential

for future success as our survey shows 64% of retailers consider digital-first groceries at least a reasonable threat to their business.

**PG:** Can a single tech platform really address all of these challenges head-on?

**JS:** Yes. Grocers in our survey identified decreasing costs (43%), improving customer experience (37%), and managing labor shortages (34%) as some of the biggest challenges they face. AI and automation can help them tackle all three.

For example, technology is essential to cutting costs, which is imperative given the significant challenges inflation and supply chain disruptions pose. In addition, AI and automation can be used in a variety of applications to not only optimize processes, but to provide superior customer service, as well.

The bottom line is that the Invafresh Fresh Retail Platform gives grocers the tools to play offense with inflation, address the digital-first threat, alleviate labor shortages, and achieve faster ROI across the industry.

## PERKS OF THE PLATFORM

Overall, grocery retailers who use the Invafresh platform, with its strategic focus on the fresh food experience, are realizing annual benefits of US \$80,000 to US\$100,000 per store; see a 5% to 15% increase in sales growth due to merchandising their full assortment of products, stock availability, and customer affinity; and can achieve up to 20% to 40% less shrink by improving the accuracy of their ordering and having an understanding of their perpetual inventory and known/unknown shrink.<sup>2</sup>

Sunbury, Pennsylvania-based Weis Markets has implemented Invafresh's Fresh Retail Platform to automate ordering, production and inventory management across all fresh departments in its 198 stores. The partnership includes the implementation of demand forecasting, in-store production planning, food traceability, recipe management, and cut test management, enabling the company to meet customers' expectations with the freshest foods while more accurately predicting demand.

<sup>1</sup>2022 Grocery Innovation Study; September 2022 survey of 100+ grocery decision-makers; <sup>2</sup>Invafresh data