Robbie Simpson

Senior Retail Technology Leader

Retail Platforms | Store Systems | POS | Mobile | Infrastructure

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Executive Summary

Senior technology leader with 15+ years' experience owning, transforming and operating large-scale retail and enterprise technology environments. Proven track record delivering resilient store platforms across multi-hundred store estates, modernising POS, mobile and self-checkout solutions and leading high-performing technical teams. Strong people leader with practical expertise across retail systems, infrastructure, identity, cloud and vendor management.

Core Leadership Strengths

- Retail Technology Strategy & Ownership
- Store Platforms (POS, Mobile, Self-Checkout, RFID)
- Technology Operations & Service Reliability
- Team Leadership & Capability Development
- Large-Scale Rollouts & Transformation
- Vendor, Contract & Commercial Management
- Security, Identity & Access Management

Professional Experience

Career Break / Sabbatical

Apr 2025 – Present

Took a planned career break following 10 enjoyable years at River Island.

Used this time to focus on personal development, family and hands-on technical learning, including:

- Training for and completing the UK Three Peaks Challenge in 22h 45m
- Designing, building and deploying web and native applications using AI-assisted development tools, including full CI/CD pipelines into production
- Practical home renovation and project work
- Actively supporting my son's first term at school, including daily drop-offs, pick-ups and school activities

Now ready to return to a senior technology leadership or delivery-focused role.

River Island – Retail Systems Manager

Nov 2018 – Mar 2025

Senior owner of all in-store technology across the River Island estate, responsible for the design, development, testing, deployment and operational support of store platforms at scale.

Responsibilities & Scope

- End-to-end ownership of store technology including infrastructure, POS platforms, mobile devices and self-checkout systems
- Responsibility for technology delivery across store openings, refits and closures
- Line management of two teams (11 total):
    - Retail Support (2nd line)
    - Store Platform (3rd line / engineering & deployment)
- Vendor and third-party management across hardware, networking, POS and in-store support providers

Major Programmes & Achievements

- Rolled out Extreme Networks switches and access points across the store estate, improving coverage, capacity, visibility and security
- Introduced Entra ID (Azure AD) providing centralised digital identity for 6,000+ store staff
- Deployed Microsoft Teams to stores during COVID, modernising communications and improving operational resilience

- Designed and deployed Samsung X Cover 5 as a unified store mobile device, delivering significant cost savings and operational simplification
- Built and deployed modern POS hardware platforms to support Enactor POS in large and flagship stores, reducing transaction times and improving uptime
- Delivered RFID-enabled self-checkout solutions, increasing customer choice, transaction flow and staff efficiency

River Island – Retail Application Support Team Lead

Apr 2015 – Nov 2018

Led 2nd and 3rd line support for retail applications and POS platforms across the store estate.

- Supported and enhanced POS applications and hardware across 280 stores
- Played a key role in the phased rollout of Enactor POS alongside legacy Retail-J during a complex dual-run migration
- Delivered Zebra MC40 Android mobile devices and Zebra EWB radios to all stores, enabling digital store processes for the first time
- Increased team capability and responsibility through improved processes and documentation

International Travel & Cultural Experience

Mar 2014 – Mar 2015

Lived in Montreal, Canada, and travelled extensively across Quebec and Ontario.

Used this period to experience different working cultures, develop adaptability and independence, and gain perspective before returning to the UK and re-entering senior technology roles.

River Island – Project Manager (Office Relocation)

Feb 2014

Managed a 30-person office relocation, coordinating internal teams and third-party suppliers to deliver on time and without disruption

Carlton & United Breweries (via Kinetic IT) – UAM Administrator

Jun 2013 – Jan 2014

- Managed user access across enterprise systems
- Created and updated role documentation and operational processes
- Contributed to the implementation of Forefront Identity Manager (FIM)

CBH Group – IT Service Desk Analyst

Apr 2013 – May 2013

- 1st / 2nd line support for 800+ users
- Cisco IP telephony, Active Directory, Exchange 2010, VPN and mobile device support

International Travel

Oct 2012 – Mar 2013

Undertook extended independent travel across South East Asia.

This period provided valuable experience in planning, self-management and operating effectively outside structured environments before returning to full-time technology roles.

French Connection – IT Operations Manager

Sept 2009 – Sept 2012

Owned IT operations across head office, data centre and global retail estate.

- Led IT Operations and Helpdesk teams
- Delivered major infrastructure and network projects including MPLS rollout to US stores
- Implemented VMware environments, Exchange 2010, AD migrations and backup solutions
- Introduced security improvements including firewalls, AV and two-factor authentication

- Delivered operational and technical changes supporting PCI DSS compliance

French Connection – Senior IT Support Technician

Sept 2008 – Aug 2009

- Managed helpdesk team and supported international offices
- Administered Exchange, AD, DNS, DHCP and Cisco networking
- Delivered global AV rollout and wireless upgrades

French Connection – IT Helpdesk Technician

Jan 2007 – Aug 2008

- 1st / 2nd line support for head office and retail stores
- Windows and Mac OS support, networking and documentation

City University London – IT Support Technician

Sept 2006 – Dec 2006

- 2nd line support within a university technical support team

Personal Development (Career Transition)

Mar 2006 – Aug 2006

Undertook a focused period of self-directed learning to develop foundational IT skills, supporting a planned transition into a technology career.

This period directly led to securing an initial IT support role and the start of a long-term career in technology.

Arriva, London – Bus Driver

Nov 2004 – Feb 2006

Operated scheduled public transport services within London, working in a highly regulated, safety-critical environment.

Developed strong situational awareness, reliability and decision-making skills while working independently under operational pressure.

Angelic Pub, London – Bartender

Nov 2003 – Oct 2004

Worked in a fast-paced hospitality environment, delivering customer service during peak trading periods.

Developed communication skills, resilience and the ability to operate effectively under pressure.

Topshop, Redhill – Store Manager

Aug 2002 – Oct 2003

Managed day-to-day retail operations including staff scheduling, stock management and customer experience.

Gained early leadership experience, accountability for operational performance and exposure to retail environments that later informed a career in retail technology.

Topshop / Topman, Brighton – Sales Assistant / Management Trainee

Sept 1998 – Aug 2002

Progressed from sales assistant into a competitive, structured management trainee programme designed to develop future retail leaders.

Selected via a multi-day assessment process involving group exercises, practical scenarios and individual evaluation, before completing a one-year, full-time management training programme.

Gained early experience in retail operations, people management, stock control and customer experience, forming the foundation for later leadership roles.

Technology & Platforms

Retail & Store Platforms

Enactor POS, Retail-J, Mercaux, Fixed POS, Mobile POS, RFID Self-Checkout, Nedap RFID

Infrastructure & Networking

Cradlepoint 5G Routers, Silver Peak SD-WAN, Cisco APs & Switches, Extreme Networks APs & Switches

Identity, Endpoint & Device Management

Entra ID (Azure AD), Microsoft Intune, SOTI MobiControl, LANDesk, EloView, Samsung Knox Suite

Service Managent, Monitoring & Cloud (AWS)

ServiceNow, LANDesk, Zabbix, Grafana, AWS: EC2, RDS, S3, Lambda, Kinesis, API

Payments

Worldpay, Verifone, Stripe, Flexecash, SVS

Certifications

- ITIL Foundation Certificate in IT Service Management

Education

Varndean VI Form College, Brighton – A Levels (Maths, Electronics, Computing)

Full CV can be found at https://robbiesimpson.digitalduck.cloud

References available on request.