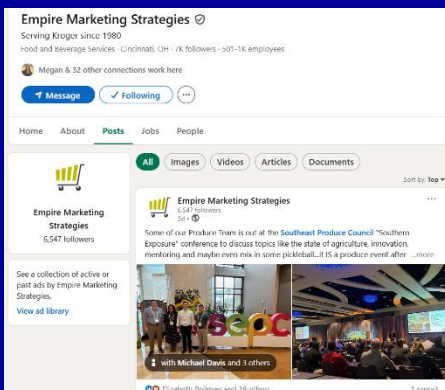


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Kroger Sees Grocery Becoming a Managed Service In AI Future

The Shelby Report
Shelby Team

Sep 23, 2026

Grocery shopping could become an outcome-based experience rather than a series of individual transactions, with AI agents handling planning, shopping and fulfillment, [The Kroger Co.'s](#) top digital executive said at [Groceryshop 2026](#) in Las Vegas.

Outlining the retailer's artificial intelligence strategy, Yael Cosset, EVP and chief digital officer, described a future in which customers, instead of building a weekly shopping list, could choose to share their goals and preferences and let AI agents assist with planning and completing their shopping. Kroger's advantage in that future, Cosset argued, is the same as today: deep knowledge of customer shopping patterns and visibility into product availability and fulfillment.

That vision sits atop a strategy built on decades of customer insights, operational data and a portfolio of proprietary models, supported by privacy, security and responsible AI governance processes designed to ensure appropriate data use and human oversight.

"This isn't new for Kroger," Cosset said. "We've long been using data science and artificial intelligence to serve our customers by precisely forecasting demand, connecting customers with the most relevant savings opportunities and helping them find and get the products they need. Our latest investments in AI allow us to connect relevant business and operational signals to make decisions and take action faster."

Assisted, augmented, autonomous

Kroger's data foundation draws on its longstanding loyalty program and years of customer and operational insights, with proprietary models spanning demand forecasting, operational optimization, personalization and generative AI. The company pairs those with third-party frontier models and shared infrastructure, including data, services, agentic capabilities and governance guardrails.

Cosset described the retailer's AI journey in three stages: assisted, augmented and autonomous. "The goal is not autonomy everywhere," he said. "The goal is using the right level of AI based on risk, repeatability and the need for human judgement. Different cases will sit at different stages, and strong governance remains at the center."

Customer tools and associate training

Kroger's AI Shopping Assistant, which rolled out to all banners this summer, helps customers plan meals, find recipes and build carts around budgets, dietary needs and preferences, while conversational search helps shoppers discover relevant products.

[Read the full article here.](#)

Kroger Testing New Store Hours

The Street
Patricia Battle

Sep 28, 2026

Kroger is testing the return to 24-hour store operations, a format it abandoned during the COVID-19 pandemic.

According to a [recent report from the Cincinnati Enquirer](#), Kroger is testing 24-hour service in one store in Cincinnati, OH, and five other locations in Indiana.

“We are always looking for more ways to provide our customers with fast and convenient ways to shop – both in stores and online,” said Kroger in a statement to the Cincinnati Enquirer. “The small pilot program revisiting stores open 24 hours a day is one more example of the ways we are working to better serve our customers”

Most of Kroger’s stores open at 6 a.m. and close at either 10 p.m. or 11 p.m. (depending on the location).

Several of its locations used to run 24 hours; however, Kroger pulled the plug on this model in March 2020 to give its workers more time and space to clean and restock stores amid the coronavirus outbreak.

Other large retailers, such as Walmart, CVS, and 7-Eleven, have also either scaled back or eliminated 24-hour operations during the pandemic.

Many retailers have opted not to return to this store model due to the rising costs of labor, food supplies and rent, according to a report from Marketplace in 2024.

However, some grocery chains have recently been extending their store hours to win over customers.

For instance, last year, Costco elongated store hours by allowing executive members to start shopping at 9 a.m. daily, an hour earlier than before. It also began closing its stores at 7 p.m. on Saturdays, an hour later than its previous closing time.

BJ’s Wholesale followed in Costco’s footsteps in April when it added one extra hour to its club and gas station operations. Walmart is also reportedly running a pilot program where select stores remain open until 1 a.m.

Re-Grand Opening at Michigan Store 757



Store and Leadership Updates

**Ralphs Store #277
Re-Grand**

Ish Patel
011 Atlanta

Store 632 Flowery Branch, GA
Re-Grand Opening 10/9

014 Cincinnati

Store 938 Englewood, OH
Re-Grand Opening 10/2

016 Columbus

Store 800 Mt. Gilead, OH
Re-Grand Opening 9/17

Store 851 Canal Winchester, OH
Re-Grand Opening 9/19

Store 510 Findlay, OH
Re-Grand Opening 9/25

Store 971 Columbus, OH
Re-Grand Opening 10/10

024 Louisville

Store 780 Louisville, KY
Re-Grand Opening 9/24

703 Ralphs

Store 277 Inglewood, CA
Re-Grand Opening 9/25

018 Michigan

Store 757 Sterling Heights, MI
Re-Grand Opening 10/2

029 Mid Atlantic

Store 523 Richmond, VA
Re-Grand Opening 10/2

035 Dallas

Store 535 Dallas, TX
Re-Grand Opening 9/18

620 King Soopers

Store 83 Denver, CO
Re-Grand Opening 9/17

Store 130 Colorado Springs, CO
Re-Grand Opening 10/8

660 Fry's

Store 667 Phoenix, AZ
Re-Grand Opening 10/10

701 Fred Meyer

Store 127 Gresham, OR
Re-Grand Opening 9/19

703 Ralphs

Store 758 Santa Clarita, CA
Grand Opening 10/2

Ish Patel announced to lead Kroger Capability Center

Kroger named Ish Patel as group vice president of the Kroger Capability Center beginning October 1. In his role, reporting to Yael Cosset, Ish will focus on accelerating our efforts to set up the capability center, engage global providers and establish our operations in Bangalore.

Ish brings more than 30 years of retail and enterprise transformation experience to Kroger, including 25 years in C-Suite roles spanning Chief Information Officer, Chief Operating Officer and Chief Transformation Officer. He spent his career building the operational and digital capabilities that allow large, complex retail organizations to serve customers better and run more efficiently.

Most recently, Ish served as EVP and Chief Transformation Officer at Victoria's Secret & Co., where he was a member of the executive leadership team. During his time at the company, he built and scaled a global capacity center. Ish also led the company's digital business from \$1.5B to \$2.5B in sales, increasing eCommerce share of business from 20% to 30%. Earlier in his career, Ish served as group omni-channel director and strategic development director of Aurora Fashions in London. He began his career at Debenhams, Arcadia Group and Rubicon Retail. Ish holds a B.Eng. in CS Engineering from the University of Warwick.

Leadership Updates Continued**Role Changes****Jesse Avelar****Jesse Avelar named Vice President of Operations,
Texas Division**

Jesse Avelar, vice president of operations-Texas South, has been named vice president of Operations, Texas Division, effective immediately. Jesse will continue to report to Rudy DiPietro.

Jesse has more than 20 years of experience in the retail industry, beginning his career with the company as a grocery clerk in 2003. He held several roles in the store before becoming a store leader, serving in several high-volume locations. Jesse was promoted to the role of division field merchandiser for Meat/Seafood in 2019, and the following year, Jesse was promoted to district manager in the Dallas Division. He was promoted to his current role in 2024.

Jesse is a passionate people leader and has been recognized for his leadership with nominations for FMI's Store Leader of the Year and Progressive Grocer's GenNext Awards. He serves as the executive sponsor of the Young Professionals ARG where he mentors future leaders in the division, and in his free time, he supports and volunteers for the youth baseball community and Houston Foodbank.

**Frank Romero named Vice President of Merchandising,
Texas Division**

Frank Romero vice president of Merchandising - Fresh, has been named vice president of merchandising, Texas Division, effective immediately. He will continue to report to Rudy DiPietro.

Frank joined the company in 1987 as a courtesy clerk in the King Soopers/City Market Division. He worked in many store leadership roles, before he moved to Denver to work on a special project to transition Fry's, Dillons and King Soopers/City Market into the Kroger Our Brands programs.

In 2002, Frank moved to General Office to take on the role of Our Brands senior category manager for all beverages and then worked as a Marketing manager. He returned to the King Soopers/City Market Division to serve as an assistant Grocery merchandiser, Grocery merchandiser, district manager and director of the West Region Merchandising. He was promoted to vice president of Merchandising at the King Soopers/City Market Division in 2014 and then returned to General Office as the vice president of Our Promise and Roles & Responsibilities in 2017. He was named vice president of Produce/Floral at General Office in 2018 before being named vice president of Merchandising for the Dallas Division in 2020.

Frank holds a bachelor's degree in management from Fort Lewis College.

**Frank Romero**

Leadership Updates Continued

Michael Clark Promoted to Director, eCommerce Platforms

Michael Clark, currently senior advanced software engineering manager, has been promoted to director, eCommerce Platforms, reporting to Shane King, vice president of Customer Technology.

In this role, Michael will lead the Customer Technology platform portfolio, including eCommerce Platforms, Customer Communications, Design System, Analytics, Asset Management, and Apex. He will set strategy and drive standardization across foundational capabilities that power KTD, enabling faster delivery of digital experiences, improving platform reliability and scalability, and supporting enterprise growth and innovation.

Since joining Kroger in 2012, Michael has helped shape the evolution of the company's digital customer experience through leadership roles spanning mobile, eCommerce, and platform engineering. Since becoming a manager in 2018, he has led organizations across analytics, experimentation, and developer platforms, helping establish many of the shared capabilities that today power KTD's digital experiences.

Michael holds bachelor's and master's degrees in computer science from Northern Kentucky University and an executive MBA from the Quantic School of Business and Technology

Jason Moore Promoted to Director, eCommerce Customer Experience Technologies

Jason Moore, currently senior advanced software engineering manager, has been promoted to director, eCommerce Customer Experience Technologies, reporting to Shane King, vice president of Customer Technology.

In this role, Jason will lead the engineering organization responsible for the company's customer-facing digital commerce experiences across iOS, Android and web platforms. He will drive technology strategy and execution to support eCommerce growth, strengthen customer loyalty and enhance the omnichannel shopping experience. He will deliver innovative capabilities that create seamless customer experiences and support Kroger's digital growth.

Jason has most recently led more than 150 engineers responsible for Kroger's customer-facing eCommerce experiences across web and mobile platforms. Since joining Kroger in 2021, he has played a key role in advancing the company's digital commerce capabilities, helping deliver initiatives including the native eCommerce point-of-sale applications, fuel pay, the app refresh and agentic shopping experiences.

Prior to joining Kroger, Jason spent 17 years with Fifth Third Bank in a variety of engineering leadership roles. His leadership and expertise have helped drive innovation and strengthen the digital experiences that serve our customers every day.

Jason holds bachelor's degrees in computer science from the University of Kentucky and in music from Centre College



Michael Clark



Jason Moore