**RETAIL RUMBLINGS**

***News From the CE Sector***

**Facebook to Bring Shops to WhatsApp**

In an online audio session last month, Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg revealed that WhatsApp users will soon be able to buy products and other merchandise from individual retailers on Facebook Shops. Merchants can set up storefronts on the messaging app and talk directly with shoppers. Shops is also coming to Facebook Marketplace, while Instagram will soon launch an AI-powered visual product search.

[**https://about.fb.com/news/2021/06/new-ways-to-shop-for-products-you-love-across-our-apps/**](https://about.fb.com/news/2021/06/new-ways-to-shop-for-products-you-love-across-our-apps/)

**Virtual Shopping Platform Hero Launches Shoppable Video Feature**

Already used by CE brands such as Dyson, Lenovo, and Nokia, virtual video and conversational shopping platform Hero has launched a new feature that lets in-store salespeople and product experts create short-form shoppable videos. The videos can then be implemented on a company’s or retailer’s e-commerce website, and consumers can chat directly with a salesperson or product expert and make a purchase.

<https://www.usehero.com/news/ecommerce-comes-alive-with-stories-by-hero/>

**Amazon Leans on Robots for Worker Safety**

Amazon has been testing out a trio of autonomous robots for potential use in its warehouse facilities. The three candidates for the job include: “Bert,” who carries carts and goods, “Scooter,” who transports carts like a train, and “Kermit,” who hauls tote-boxes similar to a truck. Amazon expects these robotic employees will significantly reduce the number of warehouse-related injuries.

<https://www.aboutamazon.com/news/innovation-at-amazon/new-technologies-to-improve-amazon-employee-safety>

**Rebounding From the Worker Shortage May Mean Raising Your Starting Wage**

Even though the economy remains down by more than 7.5 million jobs compared to pre-COVID numbers, businesses are finding it hard to fill positions. According to *The Washington Post,* among rebounding companies, the one common successful thread for finding workers is raising the minimum hourly wage to $15.

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/business/2021/06/10/worker-shortage-raising-wages/>

**Walmart Gives Its Employees Free Samsung Smartphones**

Walmart is rolling out a new app for its employees to help simplify and organize their daily tasks. The Me@Walmart app can be accessed through new Samsung Galaxy XCover Pro smartphones the company will be distributing to nearly half of its U.S. workforce. “As retail continues to evolve — and quickly — it's more critical than ever to equip our people with the tools and technology they need for success,” Walmart said in a press release.

<https://corporate.walmart.com/newsroom/2021/06/03/walmart-unveils-all-in-one-associate-app-me-walmart-and-gives-740-000-associates-a-new-samsung-smartphone>