Creating the retail Store of Tomorrow

Truis

Truis is building a first-of-a-kind retail store concept to enhance customer and employee experiences and drive sales, powered by AI and real-time analytics running on Lenovo ThinkEdge SE360 servers delivered by Lenovo TruScale Infrastructure as a Service.

Lenovo

Lenovo
TruScale

Who is Truis?

Since 1979, Truis has been helping some of the largest corporations in Australia to achieve positive business outcomes using innovative technologies. Headquartered in Brisbane, the company provides end-to-end IT solutions, including compute, networking, data center, cloud, AI and data analytics, and cybersecurity, to clients across Australia and the Pacific Islands.

Lachlan Jefferies, Retail Team Lead at Truis, explains: "In recent years, we have looked to transform our sales strategy. We realized that simply pushing products wasn't delivering results, and that clients were increasingly keen to adopt outcome-based solutions tailored to their industry vertical. We set out to develop new offerings for our core target markets, starting with retail."

Truis

As a first step, Truis interviewed hundreds of retail executives, IT leaders, and store employees to identify their key pain points. The company discovered that retailers felt there was a lack of solutions available to enhance the customer and employee experience and drive sales within stores.

Lachlan Jefferies adds: "The in-store experience is so important to help retailers increase basket size and boost competitive advantage. In Australia, around 80% of purchases are made in brick-and-mortar stores, and studies show that a strong physical presence builds trust with consumers. Even when people find a product that they want online, they typically head to a store to make the transaction."

Inspired by the conversations with retailers, Truis created a vision for a "Store of Tomorrow." The goal was to use AI and other emerging technologies to support use cases including personalized advertising, in-store security, inventory control, car park management, and much more.

"Finding ways to improve employee safety was one priority," continues Lachlan Jefferies. "Every year in Australia, seven out of ten store workers suffer verbal abuse, and one in ten suffers physical abuse. Using wearable technology that can live-stream to emergency services has proven to help protect frontline workers."

"We decided to create a **proof-of-concept** [POC] hub for the **Store of Tomorrow** at our Brisbane headquarters. On one level, this would serve as a showcase to potential clients. But more than this, the hub would allow us to **build our expertise and educate our sales teams**, ultimately helping them to have better, more informed conversations with retailers."

Lachlan Jefferies

Retail Team Lead, Truis

3 The solution

Deploying a powerful edge server

To develop the hub, Truis would have to bring together multiple partners and integrate many software and hardware components. A crucial step was to find a server with the performance and reliability to run demanding AI and real-time analytics workloads within stores.

The company knew that edge computing was ideally suited to perform the role, and decided to use a Lenovo ThinkEdge SE360 server.

Services
Lenovo TruScale
Infrastructure as a Service

Hardware
Lenovo ThinkEdge SE360

3 The solution

Lachlan Jefferies explains: "The ThinkEdge server is very flexible and scalable. We can use Intel processors to run our initial AI workloads, then deploy more powerful GPUs as we add use cases. The system is also quiet, which is ideal for retail environments, and easy to manage. A client could have servers in stores thousands of kilometers apart and still manage them through a single interface."

Forging a successful partnership

To implement the ThinkEdge server and configure the initial AI workloads, Truis collaborated closely with Lenovo. "We held multiple workshops with Lenovo, where they talked us through how they have helped other global clients to harness edge solutions and AI in the retail space. They really helped us to understand how we could realize our vision," continues Lachlan Jefferies.

When the time comes to bring the Store of Tomorrow to market, Truis plans to use Lenovo TruScale Infrastructure as a Service (IaaS) to create a compelling commercial proposition. "Retailers much prefer to use OpEx models to help optimize cashflow and retain funds for inventory," explains Lachlan Jefferies. "With TruScale IaaS, we can offer them that financial flexibility."

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"The Lenovo team has been brilliant to work with throughout the POC process. The AI and edge computing team leaders traveled to Brisbane, and we've visited them in Sydney multiple times to discuss the project. They have such **a talented, knowledgeable team, who are passionate about making a positive impact**."

Lachlan Jefferies

Retail Team Lead, Truis

4 The results

Working with Lenovo, Truis has successfully launched the Store of Tomorrow POC hub at its Brisbane headquarters. So far, the company has implemented several AI applications to support people tracking, facial recognition, staff safety, and vehicle counting. Currently, Truis is adding programmatic advertising systems to the mix to provide personalized product recommendations to consumers.

✓ Enables launch of cutting-edge retail hub

✓ Supports powerful AI and real-time analytics

✓ Streamlines customer and employee experiences

✓ Offers flexible, consumption-based pricing

"What is important is that we now have the infrastructure in place that enables us to experiment, iterate, make mistakes, and keep learning and optimizing the concept," elaborates Lachlan Jefferies. "We have heard from one leading industry advisory board that our Store of Tomorrow hub is the first integrated retail research and development space anywhere in the southern hemisphere."

Boosting sales, reducing shrinkage

As work on the hub continues, Truis feels confident that the Store of Tomorrow will ultimately help retailers to increase sales, attract more footfall, reduce shrinkage, and enhance store security. "The Lenovo ThinkEdge SE360 server delivers the performance to process and analyze data in real time, ensuing retailers can respond fast to prevent theft or adapt their pitch to passing consumers," explains Lachlan Jefferies.

Truis has invited several retailers to view the hub, and the feedback has been highly positive. Lachlan Jefferies notes: "Retailers are especially pleased that a tech provider finally understands what they are trying to achieve in-store. That's a huge milestone for us."

Beyond the commercial value of the Store of Tomorrow, Truis believes the focus on enhancing the safety of store workers will deliver wider social value. "Retail is one of the largest industries in Australia, and almost everyone knows somebody working in a store or supermarket. They deserve to feel safe at work," adds Lachlan Jefferies.

Connecting with innovative, ambitious retailers

Next, Truis plans to work with a small group of retailers to trial the concept in their stores. Lachlan Jefferies explains: "We're aiming to reach the point where we are comfortable and confident about deploying at scale with retailers that are keen to innovate and get a step ahead of their competition."

Within Truis, the project has also demonstrated the value of a more customer-centric, outcomes-based sales model. "We have shown that verticalization works well and really resonates with clients," confirms Lachlan Jefferies. "We are now talking to Lenovo about how we can build specific solutions for other industry sectors, including government and education, where there is scope to make a positive social impact."

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"It has been a **great journey**, involving many tech partners and stakeholders across the retail landscape. With Lenovo, we're **improving the in-store experience for consumers and employees**, creating **smarter, safer spaces** that help to **maximize sales, lift profitability**, and **generate repeat business**."

Lachlan Jefferies

Retail Team Lead, Truis

Why Lenovo?

At the start of the project, Truis completed extensive market research and evaluated solutions from the five leading providers of edge servers, before selecting Lenovo. That decision came down to the power and compact dimensions of the ThinkEdge system, the deep knowledge of the Lenovo team, and the flexibility and cost-effectiveness of Lenovo TruScale IaaS.

Lachlan Jefferies explains: "No other vendor packs so much compute power into such a small edge server as Lenovo. That is so important if we work with convenience stores with limited space. Also, Lenovo leads the AI edge space in terms of the extensive ecosystem of ISV partners whose software integrates seamlessly with the platform. The expertise of the Lenovo team was outstanding, too."

How can retailers improve the in-store experience?

Truis built an AI retail store concept that helps to drive sales, powered by Lenovo ThinkEdge servers delivered via TruScale IaaS.

Explore Lenovo TruScale IaaS