

Brooks Brothers Institutes Artificial Intelligence System

The platform was created by ORS Group.

By [Jean E. Palmieri](#) on November 29, 2018



The Brooks Brothers Madison Avenue flagship.
George Chinsee/WWD

NEW YORK — **Brooks Brothers** has gone high-tech.

The company revealed Thursday that it has partnered with software company, ORS Group, on what it is touting as the first end-to-end artificial intelligence-powered platform in the retail and apparel industry.

ORS' Reta.i.l Platform allows **Brooks Brothers** to use data analytics and proprietary technology to improve decision-making within its stores and subsequently cut down on markdowns and dead stock.

In a comprehensive two-hour press conference at its Madison Avenue flagship that included professors from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Brooks Brothers' chief executive officer Claudio Del Vecchio said the implementation of this technology is just another example of the company's quest for innovation over the past 200 years. Brooks, which was founded in 1818, is credited with creating the first ready-made suit, button-down shirt and other products.

But Del Vecchio said the buying habits of today's customer have changed dramatically and product innovations are no longer enough. Technology is now needed to ensure Brooks Brothers is offering what the customer truly wants.

Gianluca Tanzi, chief operating officer, said with the company navigating to design, produce and distribute millions of items to its fleet of stores in the U.S. and overseas, mistakes can be made without the proper information on customer demand. This system is intended to address that problem.

This platform helps the company enhance its assortment planning and stock balancing and allows for what he called "buy anything, get it anywhere." That means that if a particular sweater is selling in Boston but not in Chicago, the stock can be shifted to the Boston store. Or the product can be sent directly from a distribution center to a customer rather than having to be shipped to a store.

Since implementing the system, Tanzi revealed that sell-throughs on some women's wear has actually increased from 50 percent to 75 percent.

Both Brooks Brothers executives stressed that the system can actually enhance creativity instead of making it all about numbers. Tanzi said designers often work on gut and speculation, but by using data from this system, it allows them to filter that through actual data. For example, if the system tells them red is selling or cotton modal is popular, that can inform their future design decisions, he said, adding that the platform is viewed as a "support system" that is not intended to replace creativity.

MIT Sloan School of Management professor Irving Wladawsky-Berger called it "major disruptive technology," while his colleague MIT Media Lab professor Sandy Pentland referred to it as "human AI" that allows companies to control data and its distribution securely to their partners — such as vendors — to increase sales for all.