How GenAI Can Support Your Retail Operations & Facilities Management

10 easy ways to use generative AI to optimize operations, create scalable processes, and elevate the customer experience.

ServiceChannel

Introduction

> **Establishing a positive, consistent experience across retail locations is a big job. If you're in charge of facilities and maintenance, it's up to you to make sure it gets done — and done well. But when you have a small team or no team at all, having a little extra help can go a long way. When you need that extra boost, generative artificial intelligence (GenAI) tools like ChatGPT or Gemini offer a powerful way to find quick support and guidance.**

Whether you use it to lighten the load of administrative tasks, as a partner to iterate ideas with, or for analysis, GenAI can be a valuable resource to help boost efficiency and facilities management for retail.

Discover 10 easy ways you can incorporate GenAI into your retail operations and facilities workflows to streamline your day-to-day.

1 Develop scopes of work for asset maintenance.

Every time you add a new asset to your fleet, it's important to understand how to both proactively maintain it and service it when something breaks. Instead of searching through lengthy manuals and developing a comprehensive scope of work yourself, use GenAI to create one for you. It will save you time while helping you optimize the performance of your asset from the get-go.

> When you get a new asset, like a POS system or HVAC, share its make and model with GenAI and prompt it to create a scope of work for a maintenance program. It will take the guesswork out of maintenance, highlighting the parts of the assets a technician should be servicing and how frequently.

Discover how you can achieve preventive maintenance at scale across your asset fleet with **ServiceChannel's facilities management software platform**.

2 Fill out work orders with GenAI.

You're juggling a lot. And depending on how many assets and locations you're responsible for, you're likely managing multiple work orders at any given time. That's where GenAI comes in — use it to take some of the load off of your shoulders and complete the brunt of administrative work on the paperwork that's slowing you down.

> Share the blank work order with GenAI and prompt it to fill out the form for you. Have it ask you specific questions it can't answer itself — like asset model number or store address — to fill it out accurately.
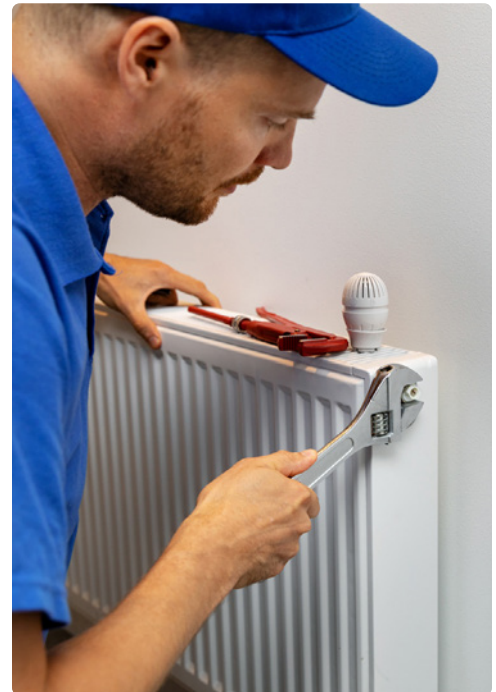
3   Clean up and analyze performance data.

When you are responsible for facilities management at scale, it can be hard to keep track of performance for each asset, especially if you are running different types of locations like a storefront and corporate office. Standardize and analyze performance data for any asset at any location with the help of GenAI. You could also take a broad view of all your locations or all your assets, depending on the data you have available.

Do you have spreadsheets with disorganized data? Upload the data to GenAI and ask it to organize and create data visualizations of asset performance. You can ask GenAI to filter by location, asset type, or any other parameter that is helpful to you. It can give you insight into which locations to focus your resources on and which should be emulated.

4   Understand how to best maintain the same assets in different locations.

The locations of your assets have an enormous impact on how they should be maintained. A storefront in a city will have different service needs than one in a residential area — especially if there are varying climates. The number of visitors to a location, along with the weather, affects how often an asset needs maintenance, as the wear and tear will vary greatly. To optimize performance, it's not enough to simply respond when an asset is down; you need to take preventive care of each asset, and GenAI can help.

Have GenAI analyze environmental conditions like weather patterns and long-term climate trends, along with other factors like location population, that might affect the wear and tear of your assets. Then have it come up with the appropriate maintenance schedule for each asset.

Ready to embrace a preventive maintenance approach without all the heavy lifting? Try partnering with a **facilities outsourcing partner** that will help you maintain your assets' peak performance.

5 **Ensure locations are compliant with local regulations.**

Staying on top of compliance is challenging enough at one location, let alone spanning geographies with different regulations. And, that's not to mention the varying regulations between a distribution center and a storefront or corporate office. Remaining compliant is essential to providing safe environments for both customers and employees, so get extra support from GenAI to streamline processes and maintenance schedules.

Try having GenAI itemize compliance obligations, create checklists for **compliance tasks and deadlines**, and consolidate compliance data across all your locations for more streamlined processes.

When you work with an outsourcing **facilities management partner like ServiceChannel**, regulatory requirements are met automatically. Your partner records and takes the necessary steps to remain compliant, while creating a single source of truth for all of your compliance documents.

6 Get your facilities tasks prioritized for you.

One of the biggest strengths of GenAI is its ability to make objective decisions — that can be a huge advantage when you have competing priorities that all need to be addressed. Take some of the pressure off by getting unbiased insight into how to tackle your busy workload, optimized for efficiency and urgency.

> **Share your to-do lists with GenAI, along with due dates and any pertinent details like urgency, location, current status, and more. Then ask it to prioritize your tasks for you, giving you the order that you should complete them and even what time you should be finished.**
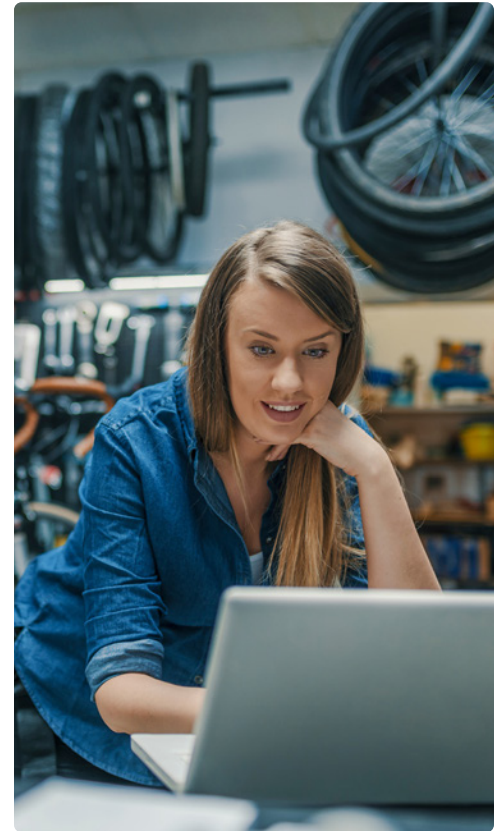
7 Determine ideal service provider criteria.

Sourcing the right service provider for the job can be time-consuming, eating up resources you need to focus on ensuring your locations are running smoothly, especially if you're not sure what to look for. However, if you ask GenAI to share ideal service provider criteria for you to use when you're sourcing, you can speed up the process while substantially narrowing down the pool you're choosing from.

> **Make a list of the assets in your fleet across locations and prompt GenAI to create the ideal service provider criteria for each — depending on the asset, you may need multiple providers for different parts of the equipment. You can even ask it to project a range of fair pricing you should budget for.**

Leave the sourcing to the pros and choose service providers with verified cost and performance data. Explore how with **ServiceChannel's Service Provider Marketplace**.

8   Predict how certain FM activities could impact the bottom line.

The majority of facilities management is behind the scenes, so your hard work may go unappreciated by the leadership team in your company. Use GenAI to help showcase the immense impact of facilities and build buy-in across your organization. At a basic level, it can help you explain how impeccable repair and maintenance programs make it possible to deliver your brand promise to customers by providing safe, clean, and aesthetically pleasing retail environments that are consistent across locations.

Use GenAI to underline the importance of facilities maintenance to customer experience across your various retail environments. First, internally identify your low-performing locations or those that have experienced the most asset downtime. Then, ask GenAI to search for customer reviews of those stores to see if the feedback and ratings correspond with the low performance. If you have them, you could also upload Net Promoter Scores as an alternative to online reviews.

9   Find resources for professional development.

We all have knowledge gaps, and while you don't need to be an expert in all the equipment categories and trades you manage, it can help to be somewhat familiar with them. Look for professional development tools like guides or even courses with the help of GenAI. Simply tell it what area you'd like to focus on, and it can generate a list of resources for you to explore.

Let's say you have an asset that needs more frequent maintenance than others that you want to learn more about. Prompt GenAI to build you a professional development plan around your specific goal.

10 Create standardized templates.

There's a lot of paperwork involved in facilities management — there's no reason to create it from scratch when you have GenAI at your fingertips. From work orders to requests for proposals to job descriptions, get GenAI-created templates to work from. All you have to do is tailor the specifics to the situation, saving you time and brain power.

Try uploading an effective document to GenAI with the instruction to use it as a basis to create a template. If you're extra short on time, give GenAI the specific information needed to fill in the blanks and have it complete the template for you.

Limitations of GenAI

While GenAI tools can boost your operational efficiency and make your day-to-day work easier and more cost-effective, they're not without limitations.

For instance, since GenAI algorithms are trained on historical data (rather than real-time data), the free models don't always offer the most current information. They're also unable to fact-check or think critically about the datasets they use, so they can return biased or inaccurate answers. That's why it's important to double-check the sources and information it generates, even if you're using a paid model that is able to access real-time information.

Plus, since you still have to manually enter prompts and performance metrics to engage with tools like ChatGPT, they're not a reasonable option for managing complex facilities programs at scale.

For some quick tips, **explore best practices** for prompting GenAI.

Amplifying the benefits of GenAI

While GenAI can be an extremely useful tool, nothing can replace human experts who have your back 24/7 — the kind of support you'll find with an innovative facilities management technology partner. The right partner will understand the impact of AI on the facilities challenges of today and tomorrow and have a plan to use emerging technology to optimize your facility locations and assets.

Ready to future-proof your facilities program? Take our **free maturity assessment** to learn how your retail operations stack up and how you can take your facilities to the next level.

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Ready to level up your facilities program?

Take our free maturity assessment to see where your retail operations stand — and what steps you can take next.

→ **Take a maturity assessment**