The era of Intelligent Management.

Quorso's Annual Retail Trends Report 2025

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The explosion of data and systems is costing retailers over $100bn a year

Today

50x
increase in data since 2010

86%
of managers say overwhelmed

15x
increase in apps and systems

With Intelligent Management

20%
improvement in profitability

15%
productivity gain

40%
reduction in system footprint

Introduction

> **We need to embrace the era of Intelligent Management.**

When I founded Quorso 10-years ago, data optimism was at its peak. Eric Schmidt had just claimed humans were creating more data every 2 days than we had throughout history. The Economist had stated that "data is the world's most valuable resource". The promise of a new data-fueled age of productivity was everywhere.

Now, 10 years later, companies are capturing 50x more data[1], largely thanks to a 15x[2] increase in the number of applications and systems they run. But productivity in many sectors has slowed. To misquote the Nobel laureate, Bob Solow: "the data age can be seen everywhere but in the productivity statistics".

Instead of powering managers, data and apps are now overwhelming them. Dashboards, reports, tools and systems are clogging up the gears of corporate America.

As this report will explain, the explosion in data and applications can powerfully drive productivity, but we need a new approach.

Julian Mills
Co-Founder & CEO, Quorso

[1] IDC; Statista Research Department
[2] Bettercloud; Salesforce

Business has changed, management hasn't (yet)

Speak to any manager running an operational business and you will likely hear three complaints:

Data and App overload

Low manager productivity

Stagnating business performance

Data and app overload:

In the retail sector, the average manager receives over 54,000 data points a week from 20+ tools and 50+ reports. In fact, one large grocer has 80 'core KPIs', 30 applications and 24,000 reports available for store leaders. No wonder 86%[3] of managers claim they are so overloaded by data they can't make good decisions.

Low manager productivity:

Reviewing, analyzing and complying with all these reports and apps is hugely time-consuming. 10-15% of a store and field manager's week that is not spent driving performance, coaching associates, or delighting customers. This unproductive time is an increasing hidden cost for businesses.

Stagnating business performance:

Because managers are either (i) stuck in the back office doing analysis, or (ii) giving up and managing solely by gut, business performance is suffering. Great managers who use data effectively are 7x better at focusing on the highest priority issues and typically drive a 20% bottom-line improvement. But very few are able to perform at this level.

The root cause of these problems is that business has changed but management hasn't kept up. Today, companies aspire to be data-guided and engage thousands of colleagues to resolve issues in real-time. But companies are using tools - reports, dashboards, point solutions - that were designed for a much slower, less data-rich business context.

In short, we are moving from the financial and operational eras of management to the era of Intelligent Management:

Financial management era:

Several decades ago, the monthly P&L report was all-powerful. Finance business partners analyzed budget variances on monthly cost and revenue lines, and sat down with executives to review results and agree on a few big corrective initiatives. Excel reports were the main management tool.

Operational management era:

Then, over the last 20 years, KPI dashboards became the norm. These tracked operational metrics and processes, and were pushed down the organization to middle management. These managers would review results and collectively choose several interventions to improve KPIs. Tracking and measuring the success of these interventions was very hard.

Intelligent Management era:

Today, in many industries, data is being pushed right down into the organization - to first line supervisors, or even frontline associates. And businesses expect these individuals to take actions in near real-time to improve company performance.

In short, businesses want (and need Intelligent Management's speed and colleague engagement to drive performance. But they are still using the tools - reports, dashboards, etc. - which were developed for analytically-trained Finance business partners and middle managers.

This needs to change if businesses are to:

a. Simplify work

b. Make managers more productive

c. Drive performance.

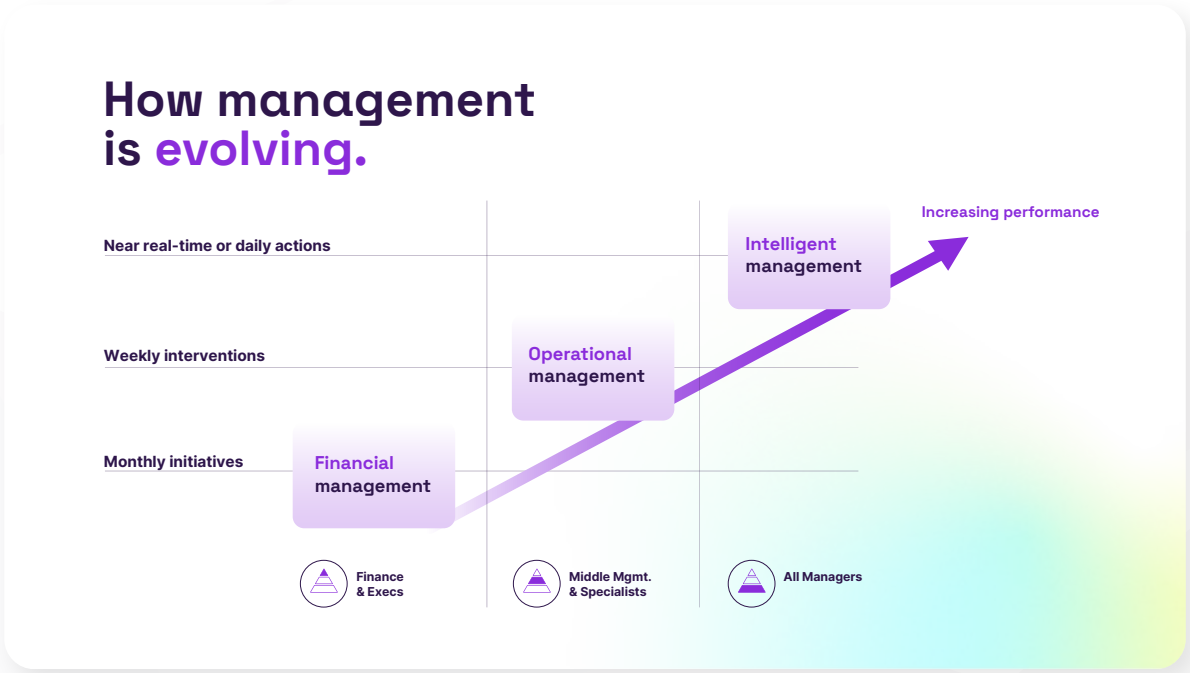
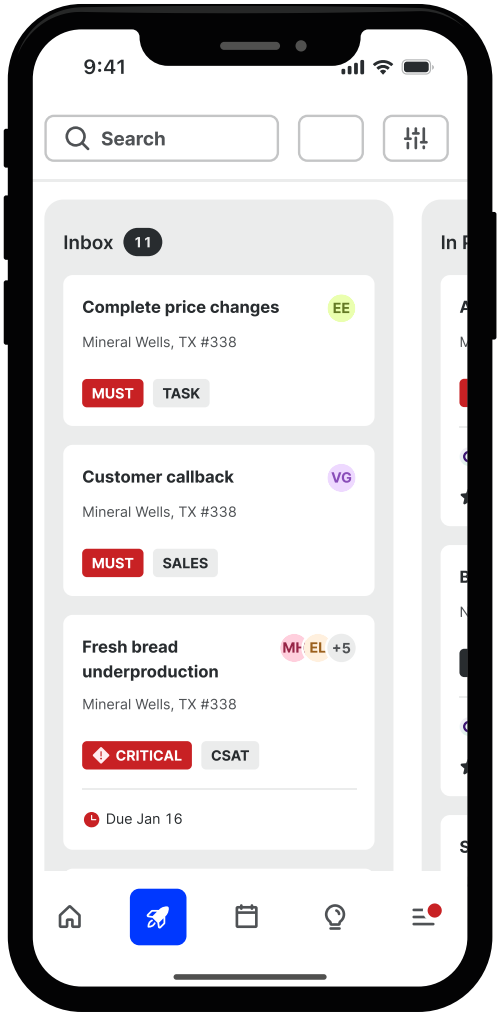


Figure 1. How Management is evolving.

[3] Survey of 14,000 managers in 17 countries by Seth Stephens-Davidowitz

Making Intelligent Management a reality



A different tool is required to power Intelligent Management in an organization - an Intelligent Management platform.

This tool needs to:

- Unify, monitor and analyze a company's data sets and applications.
- Push out smart, personalized next-best-actions and workflows for each manager.
- Measure, learn and optimize what works.

Quorso's Intelligent Management Platform has been built to power this new era, using data and sophisticated technologies to orchestrate work at all levels of operations.

How an Intelligent Management platform works.

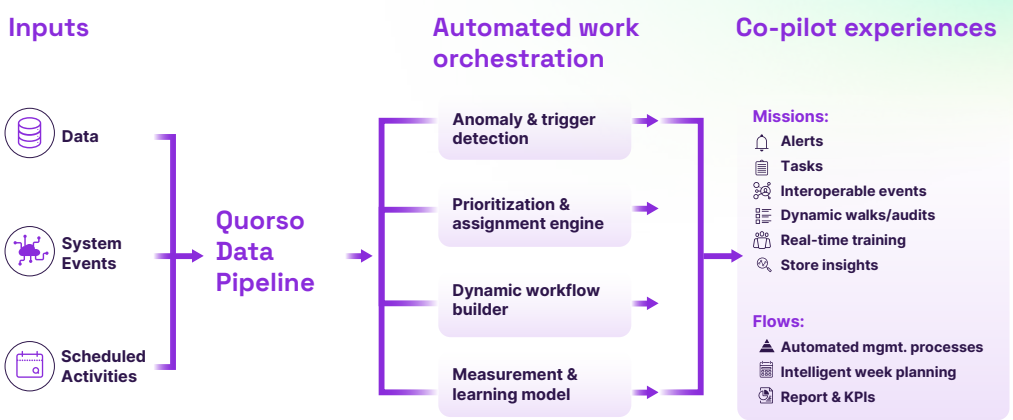


Figure 2. How an Intelligent Management platform works.

The core components of our Intelligent Management platform include:

Inputs and data pipeline

The system can ingest three types of input:

1. **Data:** i.e., the source data which powers reports and dashboards. For retail, it includes sales, inventory, labor, customer satisfaction, etc.
2. **Scheduled activities:** i.e., company scheduled events, such as communications, tasks, new promotions.
3. **System events:** i.e., automated signals from IoT devices or operating systems (e.g., ServiceNow) for maintenance tickets, customer call-backs, etc.

"Quorso enables us to take a more personalized, data-driven approach to operational improvements in every store. It also drastically reduces the overwhelming amount of data that our store teams have to process"

Elizabeth Pierce, COO, EG America

Automated work orchestration

The platform then transforms the various data sources into actionable work. Our engine includes the following components:

- **Anomaly and trigger detection:** the application continually analyzes the various data sets to detect patterns and trigger activities for a manager to execute. Quorso includes a library of triggers and a no-code trigger builder.
- **Prioritization and assignment engine:** it then automatically assigns the triggered 'missions' to the relevant roles and individuals, prioritizing the most valuable and actionable based on both the retailer's priorities and the expected value of completion.
- **Dynamic workflow builder:** it attaches data-driven workflows to coach the manager on how to fix that issue, embedding just-in-time training and capturing feedback where relevant.
- **Measurement and learning:** it measures the ($) improvement from every action taken by a manager, and uses this data to dynamically optimize the entire platform.

The core components of our Intelligent Management platform include:

Co-Pilot experiences

A wide range of data-guided work is then automatically generated and delivered to each manager in a simple, user-friendly user interface.

These include:

1. **Missions:** various types of pushed suggestions to improve performance or standards, combined with workflows that guide to the right action, capture information through form or survey, or input back into another operational system (e.g., ServiceNow).
2. **Flows:** missions can be combined into linked 'flows', where exceptions and tough problems are automatically escalated up through layers of the organization - or to other teams, e.g., Supply Chain. In this way, companies are automating whole management processes and driving significant efficiency and productivity improvements.

Intelligent Management covers over 150 different use cases, including:

- Data driven surveys and walks
- Smart Tasks to improve compliance
- Improving Sales and Availability
- Increasing Upsells and crossells
- Reducing shrink and waste
- Optimizing labor & overtime
- Improving CSAT
- Supporting span of control increases

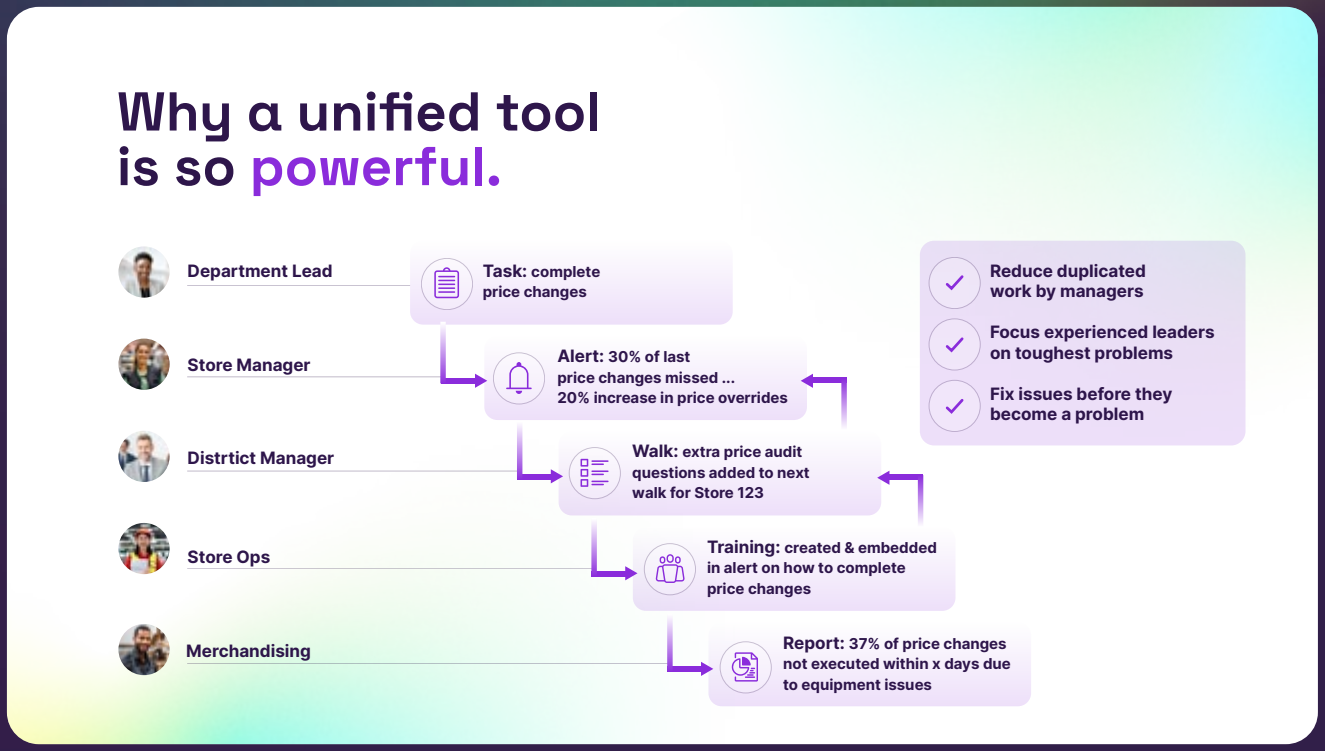


Figure 3. Why a unified tool can transform operations.

The Legacy Approach

Price changes are vital in retail, but poor execution leads to lost sales and fines. Traditionally, associates self-report completed changes, and managers verify through "boot force", manual store walks or aggregated compliance reports. This process is time-consuming and error-prone.

The Intelligent Management Way

Intelligent Management starts similarly with a routine taks, but then uses data to monitor and detect non-compliance and escalate unresolved issues. If excessive price overrides occur, the system alerts managers, triggering additional surveys during store visits or direct actions for them to perform.

By analyzing action metadata, central teams can address execution barriers. Workflows can be adapted to e.g. embed real-time guidance (videos or SOPs) or link real time to other systems e.g. ServiceNow, to ensure there is less friction to correcting operational issues.

The Intelligent Management way promises stores and managers receive personalized actions, leading to better execution. As actions are completed, central teams know what issues to resolve to best drive continuous improvement.

Better, cheaper and simpler than stitching together multiple solutions

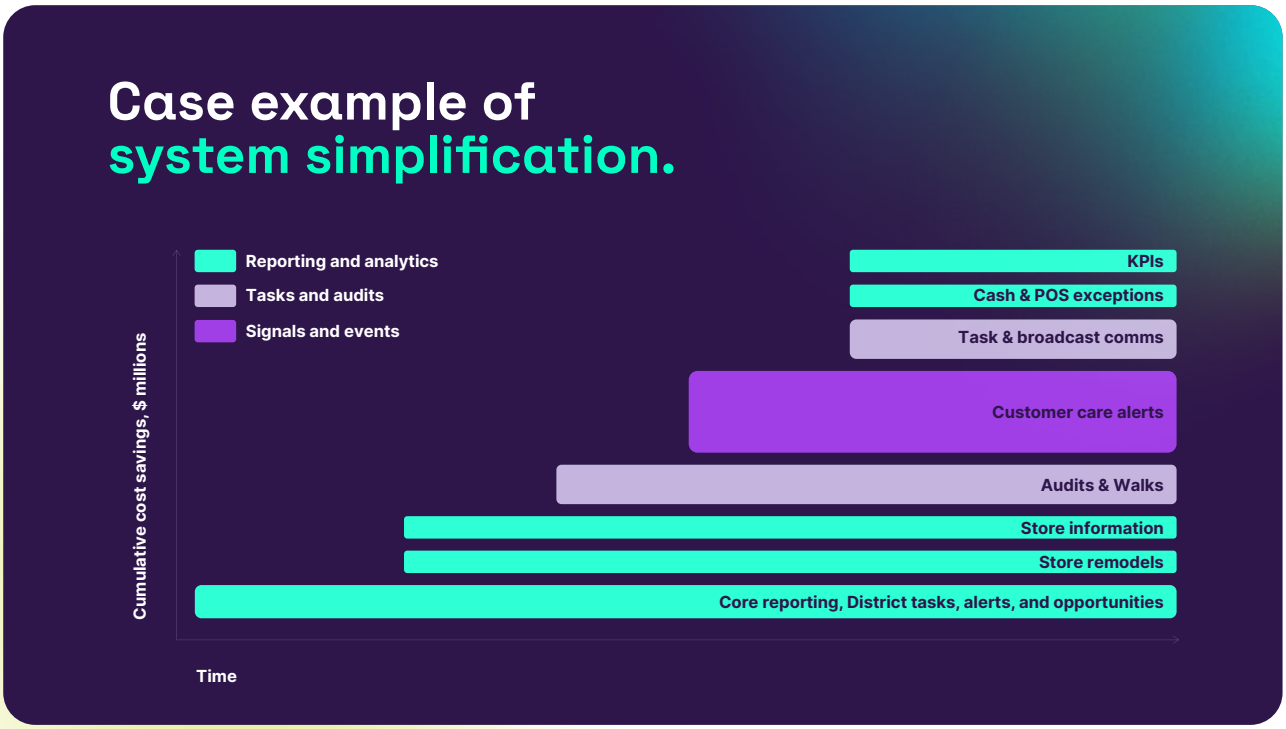


Figure 4 Case example of system simplification.

Today, managers use an unconnected web of reports, Business Intelligence (BI), tasks, surveys, and multiple point systems. This causes waste and cost in three areas:

- **Manager time and attention:** managers have to use dozens of systems. Moving to a single Intelligent Management interface can save 10-15% of their time. Furthermore, user engagement is typically much higher in a single tool than across many.
- **System management:** today, IT and Operations need to allocate time and money to managing each of the systems. With an Intelligent Management platform, there is a single owner from IT and Operations, freeing up talent and cash.
- **System licenses:** the cost of a single Intelligent Management license is often a fraction of the cost of the dozens of legacy systems.

Moving to an Intelligent Management platform is typically a gradual process. Figure 4 shows how, over time, one of the US's largest retailers switched off 52 reports and 9 systems - and integrated into another 5.

The business case

The business case for Intelligent Management is compelling and has three main pillars:

1. Better Performance

- **Improved KPIs (e.g.,sales, shrink, overtime)**
- **Higher standards**

By engaging thousands of colleagues every day to fix issues and drive incremental improvements, Intelligent Management can drive significant improvements in Sales, Shrink, Overtime, Standards and many other metrics. A successful manager can drive a 20% uplift in the profitability of their business unit.

2. Simpler Operations

- **Increased span of control**
- **Reduced onboarding**
- **Freed up labour**

Because Intelligent Management automatically prioritizes each manager's work, removes duplication, and coaches them on how to resolve issues, it drives at least a 10-15% time saving.

This translates into increased spans of control and better work-life balance. It also enables much faster onboarding of new colleagues.

3. Cheaper System Footprint

- **Fewer systems**
- **Internal IT savings**

Intelligent Management enables companies to turn off reports and point solutions. This reduces the total cost of ownership for technology by (a) eliminating system licenses, and (b) reducing the internal resource and cost required to support those systems.

Some examples of Intelligent Management in action

Intelligent Management's holistic approach allows you to manage almost any business process. Here are a few examples:

Improving customer experience and attachment at a large specialty retailer.

In some retail sectors, customer experience makes a huge difference to conversion and average basket value.

This retailer wanted to coach colleagues to improve customer service and drive better upsell attachments.

With Intelligent Management they were able to identify and coach less successful colleagues in real time and drive a material increase in their attachment rate:

- 3.5 percentage point increase in attachment rate.
- (Worth about 100bps of sales).

Reinventing the value of a store walk at a large US grocer.

How do you turn the regular store walk from a standard compliance checklist into an empowering tool for managers to extract the most value from their store?

That was the challenge put to us by a major U.S. grocer.

By analyzing performance in every department, Intelligent Management allowed the store walk to turn into pinpoint missions on what most needed addressing.

For example, while walking the meat department a Quorso mission told the manager $7,000 of chuck steak was about to expire in the cooler. The ordering, replenishment and markdown processes had all slipped. Within minutes, the meat was out on the sales floor, marked down as required.

Some core results:

- 50bps increase in sales.

Some examples of Intelligent Management in action

Intelligent Management's holistic approach allows you to manage almost any business process. Here are a few examples:

Becoming the single pane of glass at a major store network.

Post Covid, a large convenience chain was struggling with District Manager churn. It needed to increase spans of control and onboard DMs quicker. But DMs were struggling with the number of systems, reports and other types of information they needed to use each day.

With an Intelligent Management approach, they
have combined all tasks,reportingand system triggers into a single pane of glass for a DM. This plans their week for them, creates the agenda for store visits, and is driving significant KPI uplift across their store estate.

Some core benefits:

- 4-6 hours labor saving, including reduced friction from system switching.
- 20-30% process execution improvement by connecting process compliance to topline/bottomline impact.
- 40% improvement in promotion execution compliance by detecting sales sell-thru patterns early, leading to 80bps sales uplift.

Simplifying shrink processes at a major convenience chain.

Prior to Intelligent Management, shrink reports distributed by Loss Prevention and Ops Leadership were routinely not being leveraged or actioned on. Loss Prevention teams were expected to spend 60%+ of their time following up on shrink issues with store teams, across 20+ KPIs and 12+ reports.

Intelligent Management converted this into pinpoint actions, e.g., investigate a $200 cash deposit discrepancy at store 123 on Thursday. It also created a sophisticated flow of escalations which linked stores to field leadership to Loss Prevention. This enabled the retailer to avoid creating a new department.

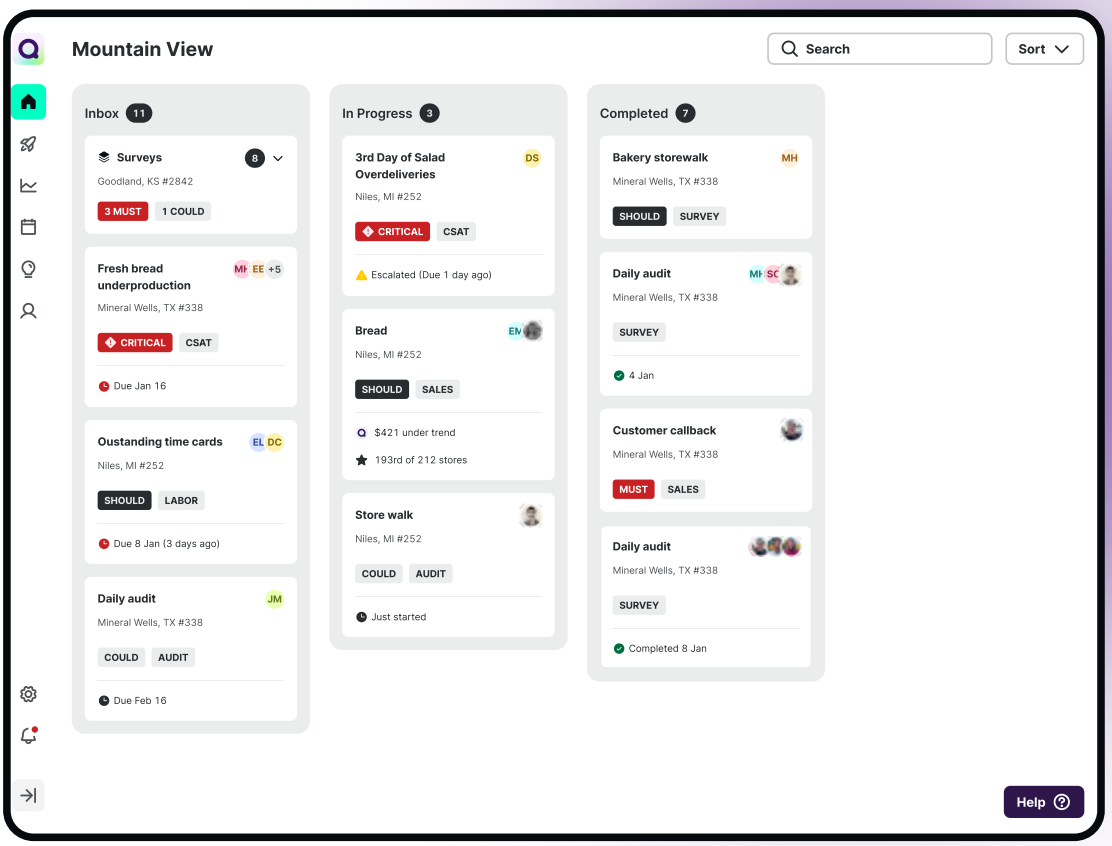
Starting the Intelligent Management journey

Quorso follows an agile and iterative approach to implementing Intelligent Management, with most retailers live on initial use cases within 4 weeks. Once core data feeds are integrated, new use cases can be stood up in minutes or hours. Over time, retailers typically continue to expand features and use cases as they drive the benefits of better performance, simpler operations and a cheaper system footprint.

Our industry consultants have a tried and tested approach which has taken over 50,000 stores on this journey. Starting from diagnostic, to proving value and scaling, we become a true partner to unlocking your performance.

To speak with one of our consultants, book some time through the QR code below.

SCAN ME



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