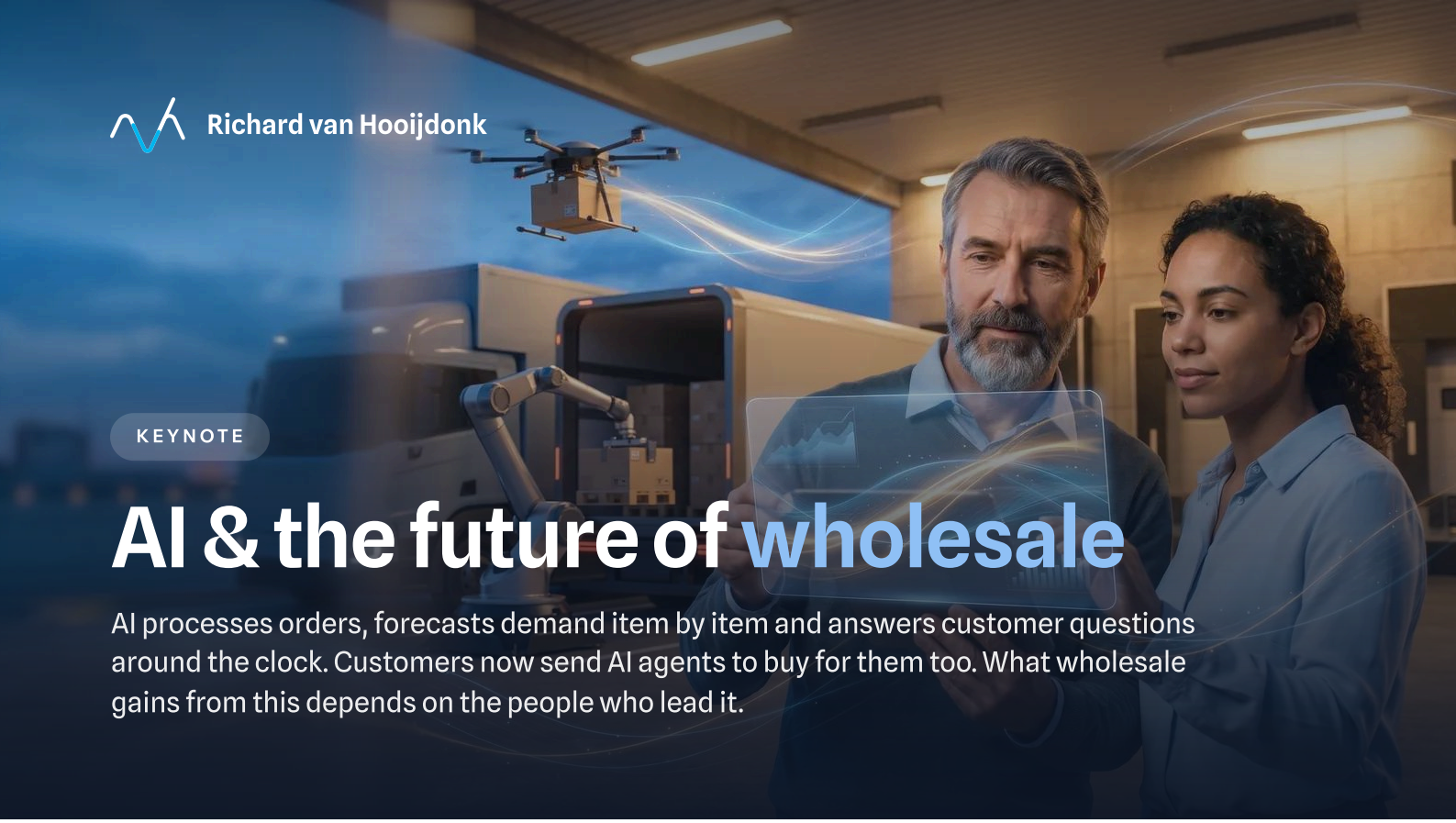


Richard van Hooijdonk

KEYNOTE

AI & the future of wholesale

AI processes orders, forecasts demand item by item and answers customer questions around the clock. Customers now send AI agents to buy for them too. What wholesale gains from this depends on the people who lead it.

Stock and orders are only the beginning. With demand forecasting, smart purchasing and advice, AI and agents give wholesale a new role in the supply chain.

Futurist and trend watcher Richard van Hooijdonk shows how AI and agents are taking over repetitive, predictable tasks in wholesale, and how that lets the organisation work smarter, deliver faster and raise its quality. A wholesaler runs on tens of thousands of items, thousands of customers and thin margins. That is exactly where AI is strong. It forecasts what will be ordered, per item and per branch, processes orders without anyone retyping them and suggests when to buy and from which supplier. Agents answer delivery questions and follow up on quotes. Further ahead lies a different market: procurement agents negotiating with wholesalers' agents, supply cabinets and machines at customer sites that reorder by themselves, branches open day and night, and a small team serving a whole continent with agents. The questions about work come down to people: what inside sales does once the order processes itself, how you keep the customer relationship when the customer buys through an agent, and where the wholesaler will make its money. The keynote shows what works today and sketches scenarios for the next five to fifteen years. What is your wholesale business worth when the customer sends an agent?



RICHARD VAN HOOIJDONK

Richard van Hooijdonk is a trend watcher, futurist and international keynote speaker. Many trend watchers and futurists look at the future from a distance. Richard van Hooijdonk lives in it. His team consists of people and AI agents, and he has several chips implanted in his body. He speaks about AI and new technology, the organisation of the future and leadership in the AI era. He takes you into a future you can barely picture today, and shows how you can steer it yourself.

3,000+	650,000+	30+	Bestselling
keynotes	participants	countries	author

What the keynote covers

NOW AI in wholesale

What AI already does today in purchasing, sales, the warehouse and customer contact.



01 Stock that thinks ahead

AI forecasts what customers will order, per item and per branch, and helps buyers decide how much stock they need.



02 The order that processes itself

Orders from email, PDF and photo go into the system without retyping; doubtful cases go to a person. Orders from agents will follow.



03 The AI sales assistant

Inside sales gets an assistant that compares alternatives and proposes a complete order in response to a customer's question.



04 Agents for inside sales

Agents answer delivery questions, draw up standard quotes and chase orders. Staff take over when something is out of the ordinary.



05 Smarter buying from suppliers

AI tracks suppliers' prices, lead times and reliability, and suggests when, where and how much the wholesaler should buy.

COMING NEXT The future of wholesale

Where wholesale could be in five to fifteen years, with AI as the engine.



06 A market of procurement agents

FUTURE SCENARIO

The customer's procurement agent will negotiate with the wholesaler's. Quotes are compared in seconds, day and night.



07 The product that reorders itself

FUTURE SCENARIO

Connected supply cabinets, cold stores and machines at customer sites see what is running low or wearing out, and order before anyone calls.



08 Three futures for the middleman

FUTURE SCENARIO

Logistics provider, platform or solutions provider: three scenarios for wholesale in 2040, each with a different business model.



09 The branch that never closes

FUTURE SCENARIO

By around 2040, robots could hand over orders day and night and self-driving vans restock regular customers, leaving staff more time to advise.



10 Trading in forecasts

FUTURE SCENARIO

Wholesalers see demand patterns across customers and brands. Soon they will sell forecasts to manufacturers, alongside their products.



11 The five-person wholesaler

FUTURE SCENARIO

With agents for purchasing, sales and administration, a small team can serve a niche market across an entire continent.

PEOPLE & ORGANISATION The wholesale organisation of the future

What AI asks of roles, teams, leadership and culture in wholesale.



12 The AI-first organisation

Processing orders, drawing up quotes, forecasting demand: AI does the work people need not do. Inside sales focuses on advice.



13 Account manager with an agent

An agent tracks quotes and ordering patterns and raises flags. The account manager has more time for the conversations that matter.



14 Leading as the middleman changes

Wholesale leaders take the initiative on AI. They motivate their people and give them room to shape tomorrow's wholesale business together.



15 Beyond shifting boxes

A culture of relationships and experience opens up to data and digital sales. Willingness grows through success in small steps.



16 The future academy

A future academy connects practical know-how with AI and new technology. Experienced staff and newcomers practise there together.



17 Into the future as an ecosystem

Partners, governments, start-ups and researchers around the world work together on challenges too big for any one organisation.

THE OTHER SIDE

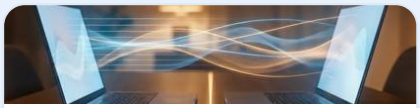
The other side: responsibility and risk

Data, reliability and the criminals who know the trade too.



18 Data as the foundation

A wholesaler working with AI links data from purchasing, sales, warehouse and finance. Separate systems give AI fragmented, sometimes conflicting answers.



19 When agents trade with agents

What a sales or procurement agent may commit to, up to what amount, and who is responsible when two agents strike a bad deal is still open.



20 Purchasing and payment fraud

A cloned voice of the managing director, a flawless phishing email, ransomware in the warehouse: AI helps criminals target orders and payments.

DURATION
30, 45, 60 minutes or longer, with time for questions

LANGUAGE
Dutch or English

FORMAT
On location or online

FEE
On request

PLUS

"Richard succeeded excellently in waking up our leaders and setting them on the path to the future: after the lecture, discussions took place across various parts of the organisation about the topics covered, and initiatives have been set in motion."

Aart van Haren Managing director, PLUS

Deloitte.

"A dazzling journey through new technology. The enthusiasm and energy during his presentation, combined with the visuals, provided a successful kick-off to our event."

Patrick Steemers Partner, Deloitte

Interested in a keynote for your wholesale event?

EMAIL
talks@vanhooijdonk.com

PHONE
+31 85 303 0792

WEB
richardvanhooijdonk.com