

Central Food Retail Group Debuts Generative AI-Powered ‘Tops Chef Bot’ with Central Retail Digital and Google Cloud

An agentic shopping companion and culinary assistant, powered by a Google-quality search engine and grounded on enterprise data to deliver accurate, contextually-relevant responses

Plans to expand Tops Chef Bot nationwide, after its launch at Tops Food Hall, Central Chidlom

Bangkok, Thailand, Dec. 2, 2024 – [Central Food Retail Company Limited](#) under [Central Retail](#), the operator of leading retail brands like Tops, Tops Food Hall, Tops daily, Tops Online, and Matsukiyo, today announced it has joined forces with [Central Retail Digital](#) and [Google Cloud](#) to develop and launch ‘Tops Chef Bot,’ an innovative shopping assistant powered by generative AI (gen AI) that creates a more customized and convenient shopping experience.

Tops Chef Bot, a first-of-its-kind in Thai supermarkets, integrates Google Cloud’s best-in-class [data analytics](#), [gen AI](#), and [enterprise search engine](#) capabilities with Central Food Retail’s Personal Shopper service. It is designed to provide customers with a seamless, effortless shopping experience, transforming everyday meal planning into a streamlined and enjoyable process. Tops Chef Bot will debut as a pilot program at Tops Food Hall, Central Chidlom, with plans to expand this service to all Tops branches nationwide in the near future. Customers can engage with Tops Chef Bot through the [LINE application](#), starting today.

Stephane Coum, Chief Executive Officer, Central Food Retail Group, said: “Since the successful launch of the Personal Shopper service in 2021, Tops has continued to innovate and develop cutting-edge retail solutions. We continue to prioritize the integration of digital technology and AI to refine our operations and elevate the customer experience, adapting to the trends and demands of the digital era. This year, we are revolutionizing Thailand’s retail landscape once again through a strategic collaboration with Central Retail Digital and Google Cloud. Tops Chef Bot reinforces our vision of being a ‘Truly World-Class Omnichannel Lifestyle Food Retailer’ as we aim to set new benchmarks for the Thai retail industry.”

A conversational AI agent built on Google-quality search, grounded in enterprise data

With Google Cloud’s [BigQuery](#) platform, Central Food Retail Group brought together its enterprise data, in different formats across various sources, into a universal metastore with fine-grained access controls, enabling the secure delivery of real-time analytics that reduce the time between signal, insight, and action.

This allowed Tops Chef Bot to be developed based on insights from Tops customers, who primarily reside in urban areas, lead fast-paced lifestyles, and often lack the time to visit physical stores or prepare meals themselves.

By leveraging Google Cloud’s [Vertex AI Search](#) to ground Google’s Gemini 1.5 Flash model in data from its metastore, Central Food Retail Group was able to embed a Google-quality [semantic search](#) engine and customized agentic AI workflow into Tops Chef Bot, empowering it to produce accurate, contextually-relevant responses.

Tops Chef Bot is therefore able to address customer needs by providing real-time assistance, mimicking the experience of walking the aisles in person, through four key features:

- **Shopping Companion:** Tops Chef Bot acts as a trusted shopping partner, recommending standout products, such as imported goods, new arrivals, and exclusive items tailored to the customer’s lifestyle. It also includes personalized features such as creating shopping baskets based on purchase history and providing a summary of selected items.
- **Culinary Assistant:** Making meal preparation easier than ever, Tops Chef Bot calculates the quantity of ingredients required for each dish based on the number of servings. It also accommodates individual needs, such as dietary restrictions, religious requirements, and food allergies.
- **Savings Guru:** Tops Chef Bot compiles discounts, loyalty point promotions, and seasonal offers. This ensures customers can shop smart and save more.
- **Human Connection:** For those who prefer interacting with a real person, Tops Chef Bot seamlessly integrates with the Personal Shopper service, enabling customers to connect directly with staff for additional assistance.

Annop Siritikul, Country Director, Thailand, Google Cloud, said: "Central Retail has taken full advantage of our [Vertex AI](#) and BigQuery platforms to connect powerful AI models like Gemini 1.5 Flash to its diverse data sources, including inventory, product catalogs, curated recipes, and customer insights. This [platform-first approach](#) has allowed them to develop and launch Tops Chef Bot, a gen AI agent underpinned by a Google-quality search engine. Tops Chef Bot serves as a compelling example of how gen AI can enhance product discovery and elevate the retail experience. We look forward to our continued collaboration with Central Retail to bring more enterprise-grade data- and AI-driven innovations to shoppers in Thailand."

Tops Chef Bot also incorporates an advanced inventory management system as part of its agentic AI workflow. This system optimizes operational efficiency by reducing the need for manual stock checks. Additionally, it drives sales growth through a cross-selling strategy, which focuses on recommending complementary products or services that add value to items customers have previously purchased.

David Llamas, Group Chief Digital Officer, Central Retail Corporation, said: "The mission of Central Retail Digital is to drive the organization's complete digital transformation. This includes integrating BigQuery and Vertex AI, Google Cloud's industry-leading platforms for data analytics and AI development, with our business processes to create a next-generation omnichannel platform in line with Central Retail's [CRC OMNI-Intelligence vision](#). The launch of Tops Chef Bot marks a significant milestone in advancing Thailand's retail industry and serves as inspiration for designing more groundbreaking innovations."

The introduction of Tops Chef Bot is a significant step forward in fostering sustainable business growth, fully aligned with the Central Food Retail Group's roadmap for long-term development and innovation.

About Central Retail

Central Retail Corporation Public Company Limited, or Central Retail, is the leading multi-format, multi-category retailing platform in Thailand. It is also growing internationally, securing leadership status in Italy and becoming one of the leaders in Vietnam. It has a network of 3,759 sales counters (as of 30 September 2024), such as department stores, specialty stores, supermarkets, hypermarkets, wholesale stores, and retail plazas. Central Retail's business is organized into five operating segments based on business units; (1) Food, which focuses on groceries and items typically found in convenience stores, supermarket, and food wholesale stores under a portfolio of retail and wholesale banners, for example, Tops, Tops Food Hall, Tops Fine Food, Tops Daily, GO wholesale, Big C / GO! and Tops market in Vietnam, go! in Vietnam, and Lan Chi Mart Vietnam; (2) Hardline, which focuses on electronics, home improvement, stationery, office equipment, books, and e-Books under a portfolio of retail banners, for example, Thai Watsadu, BNB home, Power Buy, OfficeMate, B2S, MEB, and Nguyen Kim; (3) Fashion, which focuses on apparel and accessories under a portfolio of retail banners, for example, Central Department Store, Robinson Department Store, Rinascente Department Store, Supersports, and Central Marketing Group; (4) Property, which focuses on leasing retail property to third-parties and to its own stores at retail plazas, for example, Robinson Lifestyle, Tops Plaza, and Big C / GO! Vietnam; and (5) Health and Wellness, which focuses on health products and services for both people and pets, for example, Tops Care, Tops Vita, and PET 'N ME. As of 30 September 2024, Central Retail has a presence in three countries: comprising 62 provinces in Thailand, 42 provinces in Vietnam, and major cities across Italy.

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