

CONCRETE COMPARISONS

Assessing New York's
newest and most
innovative retail concepts

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PARK

bjss | business
consulting



Keith Lipert

National Retail Federation
Board Member

Foreword

This report from BJSS is a decisive and inspiring read. It takes place against the back drop of the NRF Big Show 2019, where retailers from across the globe gathered to view and hear best practices from the retail industry. This was the year that technology dominated all, from robotics to AI, and big data to predictive weather programs.

As we review these different formats and the successful adoption of technology, it seems appropriate to step back and consider what makes sense for retailers and their ability to make profit.

There is no one fix for all. Having recently visited the UK, I was struck by the very different needs of the city, town and village. It appears that customers expect different levels of technology, both in situ and in format, wellbeing, luxury and food to name a few.

My early retail education took part in London in the 1970's. In the 80's I was in the US supplying store groups. This was still the "Era of the Merchant Princes"- Don Fisher/Gap, Gordon Segal/Crate and Barrel, Les Wexner/The Limited.

The keys to success were to be found in strong merchandising, customer service and maintaining margin. Consolidation in the 90's, the domination of Walmart swung the balance to scale and distribution. As retailers assess where capital should

be directed, we should be careful not to lose sight of the basics - there is no substitute for exciting merchandise and customer experience. We can still look to data analytics and advances in behavioural science to further augment the customer experience and bolster margin.

Retailers have always been at the heart of the community; great stores understand this and work hard to reinforce through multiple channels.

Possibly the most important moment during the show was the presentation by Michael Evans, Alibaba USA President. It gave a sense of the fork in the road that lays ahead. He outlined their model of unifying retail as a market place, building bridges, rather than moats. He contrasted this with the Amazon model. Alibaba, he argued, was working to enable retailers to use their technology, and enable merchants to discover new resources through their platforms, thereby helping to improve margin and create healthier business models. It was perhaps the only presentation to make the case for profit and the merchant!

What is undoubtably evident though, is at least for the meantime, stores will continue to play an integral role in retailers' success, with over 80% of all retail sales still taking place in stores. BJSS' analysis is essential to understand who appears to have the correct strategy in-place to set themselves up for physical retail success.

NRF®





About Keith

Born in London 1957, Keith was a student at Westminster School and Lancaster University before making the move across the Atlantic in 1981. He comes from a family of retailers, his grandfather founded his retail furniture group in 1921, which went public in 1935 and then merged in the 60's. Keith's father was also a Finance Director for a group of 80 furniture stores which merged in 1982.

Keith founded his business in 1983, supplying British and European giftware to retailers, department stores, jewellers and gift stores in the US. He opened his own store in Washington DC in 1994 and has been a National Retail Federation (NRF) Board Member since 2004.

With over 35 years of retail industry experience, we are delighted that Keith has agreed to collaborate with BJSS and write his personal foreword to our report.

About Keith Lipert Corporate Gifts

Since its inception more than 30 years ago, Keith Lipert has enhanced corporate and diplomatic relationships through artful, customised gifting. Heads of State, industry leaders, and royalty have all relied on Keith and his team for erudite, carefully crafted gifts.

About NRF

NRF is the world's largest retail trade association, representing discount and department stores, home goods and specialty stores, Main Street merchants, grocers, wholesalers, chain restaurants and Internet retailers from the United States and more than 45 countries. Retail is the nation's largest private sector employer, supporting one in four U.S. jobs – 42 million working Americans. Contributing \$2.5 trillion to annual GDP, retail is a daily barometer for the nation's economy.

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**There is no substitute for
exciting merchandise and
customer experience.**

”



David Gore

BJSS Business Consulting
Head of Retail

What's apparent from our extensive store analysis is that consumers, particularly younger consumers, are developing an insatiable appetite for what's new and next. And brands are struggling to keep up. Because of this, it's possible that leases will shorten, new retail brands will emerge, older ones will die sooner, and pop-ups will spring up in the space.

But the one true certainty for retail is that the change will be continual.

This has never been more apparent than in today's contracting market, with there now being increasingly little room for sameness. Those ten, nondescript and average retailers across the high street selling similar but oh so slightly different variations will now soon become five newer retailers who absolutely nail it via unique branding, remarkable experiences and complementary technology.

Average is now forgettable, and it simply won't pay the business rates anymore.

So, what to do?

Our report has sought to highlight and share our thoughts on the East Coast innovators, community builders, visionaries and market

leaders. We found brands, such as The Phluid Project and B8ta, who are excelling by bringing something new, fascinating and truly groundbreaking to the markets, as well as recognisable brands, such as Converse and Gucci, that are seeking to adapt, refine and enhance their propositions to remain both relevant and competitive.

We have seen it done brilliantly and not so brilliantly. But the one common theme throughout is that those stores who we believe are positioned for growth, are those that are truly focused on both their customer and proposition, and execute their offering with confidence and conviction.

And the really interesting thing?

These stores have achieved this by delivering the absolute basics of retail because they know what they need to focus on and deliver. And they will continue to improve via highly selected, evolutionary and appropriate strategies. It's the very pervasiveness of change in retail which is actually driving these exemplary stores to rise above mediocrity. And that's hugely exciting.

I hope you enjoy our analysis and I'd love to hear your thoughts, you'll find my contact details on the final page.





METHODOLOGY

We visited and examined 30 of the latest and most innovative stores in New York to analyse the latest trends in in-store design, customer experience and innovation.

We rated every single store against the same 3 criteria which were used to rank the stores to form the top 20 you'll find detailed in this report

The stores were rated against three different categories:

Brand – The ability to surprise and delight customers, offering a differentiated experience which creates a genuine and authentic relationship with customers, based on trust and integrity

Digital – Delivering relevant and individual interactions across all touchpoints, subtly introducing technology to reduce friction and be in a position to respond quicker to customer needs

Experience – Becoming a seamless, customer-centric organisation which reacts and adapts to the individual customer's needs, combining customer service, convenience, comfort and personalisation

OUR SCORING

Marks of 1 to 4 were given for each category:

Score 1 – Lagging

Where corrective action is required, the distance between these retailers and the pack will slowly widen unless action is taken. Followers are faced with the strategic choice between investing in capabilities to achieve parity with the industry or investing significantly in transformational initiatives.

Score 2 – Industry Average

On par with the industry, these retailers risk missing the bus. Retailers in this stage need to overcome focus on outmanoeuvring competition by identifying and investing in strategic foundational capabilities to increase the opportunity for growth.

Score 3 – Best in Class

Ahead of the industry pack and leading their formats, they have a strong focus/ understanding of their target market and offering and deliver upon it.

Score 4 – Industry Leader

Significantly ahead of the industry, they are raising the bar for across the retail industry. Industry leaders may not necessarily excel across all areas but do so at those which matter the most for their business.

For our league table, an average was taken across the three categories to form our top 20. There are also three notable mentions for stores that didn't make our top 20 but stood out to us for a particular reason, which you'll read about in our report.

CUSTOMISATION

Whether it's in-store tailoring or hyper-personal customer service, the focus for these retailers is offering personalised and memorable experiences in their stores. Some have accomplished this, others haven't...

NIKE

Just didn't do it

Nike's House of Innovation flagship can only be described as a multi-level, sensory overloaded tsunami. With a huge assortment of products and technology on show, every floor offers newer and more innovative concepts. But increasingly manic, bewildering and in-your-face marketing. Whilst the tech is smooth, convenient and fast, with the store really coming alive once you've accessed the app (QR codes used extensively to scan and equip the customer with info and Nike with your info), the whole experience actually detracts from the core purpose of retail; flogging gear.

Not once did we actually shop, or even feel the desire to shop, any product. We were just overloaded. Nike want to drive experiences for walk-ins and their NikePlus diehards. One issue with this. From the moment you enter, it is loud, it's distracting (why do we need wind blown into our faces when inside, during a freezing January?), navigation is tougher than it ought to be, and stuff is happening in every corner. There's no doubt the tech is beautifully and seamlessly intertwined, but brand and experience are diluted at best, totally lost at worse.



650 5th Avenue, 10019

Brand ●●●○
Digital ●●●●
Experience ●●○○

SUITSUPPLY

Your local bespoke tailor

This is the home of high-quality designs at accessible price points, delivered in a personal and effective manner. Walk in, and you're welcomed by an assistant who asks if you're collecting an alteration or here to shop. Nice, personal touch. Though, cynically, it indicates a possible pain point regarding the store design and navigation. Once upstairs, the design and feel of the store exudes class and style: there are endless product options covering all conceivable patterns and cuts, styles and colours. Fancy a drink? Make your choice and it will be brought to you.

The store services demand, making it easy for customers to escape a hectic day and relax, whilst choosing their threads. The tailoring kiosk, at the heart of the store, is ready to make alterations at a moment's notice or create your new suit from its made-to-measure programme. The design is deliberate, allowing customers to see the craftsmanship that goes into each product and to create an elevated experience that your high-street suit store just can't match. A store that knows its target customer and responds directly with the design and experience on offer.



635 Madison Avenue, 10022

Brand ●●●○
Digital ●●●○
Experience ●●○○

LEVI'S

A disappointment in denim

At just under 17,000^{ft}2, Levi's largest flagship was host to an array of A-list celebrities when opened last year. Our experience was closer to C-list. Yes, the design is modern and highly visual, giving the store an on-trend urban and dynamic feel. Yes, there's the world's largest tailor shop that offers customisation and t-shirt printings. But that's all.

We tried the tablets designed to complement the tailoring service only to find very basic functionality, a short guided journey of inspiration before a request to contact a tailor to continue our journey. Is that real, value-led innovation? What about remembering our exact style preferences so we can easily re-order as a personalised service? Or, similar to the automotive industry, building a pair of jeans unique to us. Size, cut, material, customisation, colour. So many possibilities, so many opportunities to turn us into a brand ambassadors. All missed. The changing room assistance button didn't work and we were met with an unhelpful sales associate. We found ourselves walking out onto the floor, with no shoes on to get another size... A poor customer experience.



1535 Broadway, 10036

Brand ●●○○
Digital ●●○○
Experience ●●○○



Top

MAKE
SOME
THING

Hi.
Welcome to Blank Canvas
and Workshop. You can choose
and print from a lot of designs
onto our canvas Converse sneakers.
Or you can craft a more unique pair
in the Workshop from premium
fabrics and finishes.
You're welcome.
Ok.





Five

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The customisation workshop is the real show-stopper and a must for any retail geek.
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CONVERSE

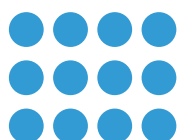
A customised and personalised masterpiece

The first of our top 5 stores is a great mix of vibrant store design, large screens marketing classic heritage and latest releases, loud music and a confident use of space which positions the brand brilliantly. But... the customisation workshop downstairs is the real show-stopper and a must for any retail geek. Head down to the lower floor, and you enter a fully customisable wonderland, where you're able to design your own unique sneaker which takes 6 weeks to produce and costs around \$250. Not cheap, but you'll be fixed up and looking sharp.

Converse have gone to great lengths to make you feel part of the team to create a product. It inspires, it motivates, it gets you involved and it's yours.

Also, the customer service was AWESOME. Capitals being well deserved. Gen Y and Gen Z still want to go into stores for a level of service and engagement that online can't offer. For us, Converse absolutely nailed this. Three employees approached us in the first five minutes, asking how we were and introducing themselves, in a very non-intrusive but friendly way and best of all encouraging us to interact with the store: "touch everything, feel everything, knock stuff over". Brilliant.

Customer service is not something we often talk about with innovation frequently stealing the headlines, but a retailer must continue to offer best-in-class service in order to be successful. A massive positive and Converse got this spot on.



CURATED DESIGN

The look and feel of your store is just as important as the technology on offer. These retailers have tried to attract and retain customers with modern and cutting-edge designs. Let's see who got it right...

SAKS 5TH AVENUE

That's what I call a department store!

Saks' beauty floor is a 32,000ft², showstopper. It houses 120+ cosmetic and wellness brands in a highly-stylised and excellently curated environment. It's a clear departure from anything you'll see within the UK market and a daring approach to the future of beauty. The drawback is that this isn't either cheap or a quick win, as significant investment, effort and thought has been put in. Luxury and privilege pervade, possibly alienating some, but maintains the instantly recognisable, high-end brands.

However, it's the mix of these brands, the interior design and features, and nice value-adds such as beauty stations and a florist that really delight and add interest, novelty and freshness to this often tired format. The navigation is smooth, stealing NYC's grid system so that even we didn't get lost, creating broad sightlines across the floor.

Others definitely need to take note; Saks have redefined the beauty offer via a much more creative use of pop-ups, brilliantly executing the mix of accessible and luxury whilst providing a memorable experience.



611 5th Avenue, 10022

ROWING BLAZERS

Henley Regatta comes to New York

Rowing Blazers refers to its pop-up store as a clubhouse, and with sporting and Ivy League memorabilia dominant on its cluttered walls, a preppy feel and inviting layout, you'd struggle to argue with that. Oddly, being in NYC, it struck us as quintessentially British, with an array of long-sleeved rugby shirts, polo shirts and spicy blazers all haphazardly merchandised. Think Jack Will's, but for the New York elite.

It has the deliberate look and feel of a Henley Regatta or Wimbledon Finals' day, but with a twist: incense burning and The Smiths as the soundtrack (bonus points for that!) you feel like this is somewhere where you could lose a bit of time. Especially when you hit the middle of the store; a social environment with a table-tennis table and soft, comfy sofas. Purchasing something isn't the number one priority and for us that is exactly the experience a pop-up should be aiming for. What the long-term demand in New York will be for preppy fashion, only time will tell, but we were delighted to see a pop-up confidently nailing the look and feel without needlessly throwing tech into the mix as well.



161 Grand St, 10013

GALLERIA MELISSA

A surprising gem of a store

Wow. What a find. We have to admit that Galleria Melissa was not on our original hitlist, but walking down Broadway, the hugely impressive, bold LCD screens caught our attention. This Brazilian brand produces ethical, sustainable and waterproof shoes, all bubble-gum scented too. Wild. From the jaw dropping shop-front, you walk over a small bridge, through the screens, with music playing around you.

The store brilliantly built the excitement and anticipation, it didn't disappoint. The look and feel of the format was refined, polished and massively appealing. Clean, well thought through, with good old-fashioned merchandising and great design. Each room had a different colour, material and texture, with strong digital integration too. Tablets allowed you to scroll the product inventory and link social media accounts to share your in-store experiences and receive a discount on your next purchase. Bonus points here for the delightful member of staff who asked if we knew about the brand already and explained it to us with passion. We could go on, but just make sure you visit. It's well worth it.



500 Broadway, 10012

Brand ●●●○
Digital ●●●○
Experience ●●●○

Brand ●●●●
Digital ●○○○
Experience ●●●○

Brand ●●●○
Digital ●●●○
Experience ●●●○



FaceGym pop-up, Saks Beauty Floor

Top



Five

men

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It is incredibly impressive to see a company take the initiative to try and re-brand a potentially controversial market.

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MEDMEN

Only a matter of time before this is big business

In our mind, we've little doubt that medical and recreational marijuana retail will become a key player in the future: now legalised in 10 States, a huge 64% of all Americans support full legalisation. This is where MedMen come in. They're capitalising on first mover advantage and securing locations where medical use is legal and to exclude competitors due to current regulations. Sound strategy in our view. They get the bounce of premium sites, whilst being the only local store and picking up the tourist traffic.

Currently, identification is required to be shown on entry and any purchases are limited to those with a medical prescription or licence in the State of New York. But once inside, the store itself is a surprisingly sophisticated, polished and elegant space with very attentive and highly knowledgeable staff. The use of tablets, each enabled with 8 languages, allow customers to browse and discover brands, strains, strengths and prices. All at their own pace. It's a leisurely, relaxed and informed brand and product discovery. We were hugely impressed with the approach: integrated tech with a best in class store design, great sales associates and premium merchandise showcased in a minimal yet impactful way. The whole format worked; moulding brand, digital and experience seamlessly. It's also great to see a company take the initiative and re-brand a potentially controversial market, using knowledge, passion, innovation and accessibility to make this store feel more like an art gallery than a medical marijuana dispensary. Top marks.

TARGET MARKET

Knowing your customer base and who you want to walk through the store doors is essential for physical retail success, so curating your store around that customer is the target for these retailers...

AMAZON 4-STAR

A physical marketplace just won't cut it

So much promise, so little substance. As one of Amazon's first ventures into bricks and mortar retail, their 4-star store has a clean and simple design. It's bright, active, driven by loud music and clear aisles. There were modest, effective tech solutions, wall scanners, QR codes. Everything you'd expect, but nothing wow'ed. However, all this simplicity and useful tech is lost due to inventory being rotated on a weekly basis, as the products change based on popularity and trend analytics. And that's the problem we have with Amazon 4 Star.

We were told that the products were new and trending, but couldn't easily find them. There were the products you'd expect: home, kitchen, school and lots of Amazon branded gear such as the Fire TV, Kindle and Echo. But the merchandising was all over the place. Want an Echo? Sure, why not turn around and purchase that to-die-for tin opener you've always wanted. There's no logic to the product flow and therefore the customers' normal purchasing decisions. All Amazon have done is create a physical marketplace, without the convenience of online.



72 Spring St, 10012

Brand	●	●	○	○
Digital	●	●	●	○
Experience	●	●	○	○

PHLUID PROJECT

A community getting the attention it deserves

The first gender-neutral store and community space of its kind. This is the start of a new retail direction: gender neutral fashion. Helping to break the binary notions of society and encourage individuals to truly connect with themselves, the store is well put together, with an accessible price point which appeals to the masses. With a vast array of lines and styles on offer, products are haphazardly merchandised by theme or brand rather than gender, encouraging you not only to discover the product, but also yourself.

One thing which really grabbed our attention was the feel of community. The Phluid Project is trying to challenge boundaries and traditional social code and this store feels like the heartbeat. What's hugely remarkable is that founder Rob Smith, spends every day at the store. He has achieved the current growth organically, with no paid marketing or search. It's all word of mouth. It's a real first mover and demonstrates that if you know your purpose, have a clear set of guiding values and create a unique space and environment, consumers will follow.



684 Broadway, 10012

Brand	●	●	●	○
Digital	●	○	○	○
Experience	●	●	●	○

FAO SCHWARZ

Walking in a kids' wonderland

Having recently re-opened, this 20,000^{ft}² plus store makes up for FAO Schwarz's three years without a physical New York presence. The location is fantastic, right in the heart of Rockefeller Plaza, and walking up to the doors you feel as excited as a kid at Christmas. There are around 200 own-brand toys on offer, as well as products from 15 other brands like Build-A-Bear, Hasbro, Mattel, and Spin Master. It's well-merchandised, well-stocked, vibrant and extremely immersive but it's the interactive experiences that take the store to the next level.

These young customers can design their remote-control cars with certified mechanics or adopt dolls after going through an extensive adoption paper signing process. Tom Hanks' classic and infamous walk-on piano even makes a return amongst a more than diverse and modern offering. With reports that Hamleys has now signed the lease to a store right in Herald Square, opposite Macy's, only time will tell who will win New York's toy retail battle and take home the plastic gold trophy that must be on a shelf in their stores somewhere!



30 Rockefeller Plaza, 10111

Brand	●	●	○	○
Digital	●	●	○	○
Experience	●	●	○	○

Devices & Electronics

4 Stars & Above | Top Sellers | New & Trending



Amazon 4-Star

Top





Five

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Glossier want you to see the store as your own personal space. It's a dwellers' paradise.

”

GLOSSIER

Unisex, in theory

Glossier has designed a space to alleviate the anxiety that everyone faces surrounding their appearance. Its layout is very simple and attractive, there are large mirrors everywhere you look, designed to provoke participation within the space, with staff waiting to answer any questions you may have.

This is not a store designed for you to just nip in and out during your lunch break, though you could; Glossier want you to see the store as your own personal space. It's a dwellers' paradise. Staff actively encourage you to try any and all products, to browse for 15 to 30 minutes to see how it reacts with your skin, and then make the purchasing decision.

It's an immersive, informed and personable experience. The tech is seamlessly and subtly integrated; select online and complete in-store, purchase and pay via a store assistant with a tablet and wait for the order to be picked in the stock room and delivered to you at the entrance. In less than 5 minutes. That really knocked our M&S socks off. The one, slight grumble is that Glossier is openly marketed as a unisex store. But, with 90% of the fixtures and fittings being pink and there being no clear men's range, space or call-outs, initially we were a little overwhelmed. Probably more us than them. Great concept and design, and a brand leading a solution to a real societal problem.

DIFFERENT & MEMORABLE

Standing out from the crowd and offering something other retailers simply can't, with your in-store design and customer experience: it's a bold and impressive strategy, if executed correctly...

DELVAUX

With a store this good-looking, who needs tech?

Delvaux, a beloved bolter in our list and one of the stores that impressed us most. The oldest luxury leather goods brand in the world (who actually invented the modern handbag) have delivered a store so on brand, we almost bought a bag or two. Almost. When a retailer has such weighty tradition, their stores can sometimes reflect the stuffier aspects of the industry. But Delvaux have ably created a store which oozes modern elegance, delivering an understated but luxurious design that allows for a sense of tranquillity and calm. It relaxes and ensures that emotionally, you're in the right frame of mind to buy.

Signature creations, surrounded by marble floors and velvet seating, stand out like masterpieces in MoMA. Interestingly, and quite rightly in our view, there is little to no technology in use on the store floor. It would disturb the store's atmosphere and distract from the stunning, minimalist merchandising and in-store experience. This really is what a luxury store should look like, the attention to detail is unquestionable and if able, we'd have departed significantly poorer from this beautiful setting.



781 5th Avenue, 10022

Brand
Digital
Experience



ROMAN AND WILLIAMS GUILD

Eat, sleep, shop, repeat!

The brand's 7,000-foot flagship was definitely a unique standout across the stores we visited. Targeting hotels and restaurants, it's predominately a high-end interior design destination. The deep, rich interior combined with good lighting, classic homewares merchandising and a balanced yet luxurious environment made for an inviting and surprisingly sensual space.

The product offering is strong, with a clear personality and uniqueness across the range. All are superbly well curated and merchandised, helping to create a definite Instagrammable air to the layout, with pre-laid white granite tables screaming for you to take a photo. As you can read in the title, there is a restaurant one end, and beds the other. So why mix the two we hear you ask? The designers wanted to make it feel like you were entering through your front door at home, so that you could imagine what it would feel like to have some of those products waiting for you. We're not sure if that's quite the effect we felt, but a well-executed store and a great example of creating an environment through highly effective merchandising.



53 Howard St, 10013

Brand
Digital
Experience



GUCCI

Straight out of Fashion Week

"Wow, that was eclectic," we announced as the doorman waved us out of the Gucci store. If high fashion is your thing, then this store is heaven. Come. Pick. Enjoy. That's the essence of this store according to Gucci's Creative Director and it really exemplifies this. There's a bar to sit at whilst a personal assistant talks you through the extensive range, offering recommendations and inspiration all the while. A huge screen opposite bombards you with images of the products in action; giving you a digital catwalk in the middle of the store. Experience-wise, it makes you feel like you're living and breathing New York fashion week.

Gucci wanted to design a store that gave customers a stronger connection to the brand and a reason to visit; well this store could not encapsulate the brand any better. It's wall-to-wall extravagance and luxury would inspire any willing customer to spend hours in there, browsing products, from the eccentric to the classic. We didn't know where to look first, but once you acclimatised to the sublime and the ridiculous, this was a store to enjoy and behold.



63 Wooster St, 10012

Brand
Digital
Experience





ROMAN AND WILLIAMS
GUILD
NEW YORK



La Mercerie
CAFE AT THE GUILD

ROMAN AND WILLIAMS
GUILD
NEW YORK



La Mercerie
CAFE AT THE GUILD

Roman and Williams Guild

Top



A photograph of an Adidas store interior. In the foreground, a black sneaker sits on top of a tall, narrow display board covered in white chalkboard-style writing and diagrams. The background shows store shelves and a sign with 'NY' on it.

Five

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**Adidas has found the
balance between digital,
brand and experience
perfectly.**
”

ADIDAS

Concrete jungle haven

This stadium-inspired flagship is Adidas' largest in the world. If Rowing Blazers, another store on our list, is the clubhouse, this is definitely the locker room.

Once you enter the store, the industrial, multi-functional feel takes you into Adidas' version of the concrete jungle. The underground aesthetic, the bare bleachers, community break out areas and the retro yet spikey vibe make you feel part of the brand and NYC's fabric. There's a 360° virtual reality experience that allows you to experience the journey your new sneaker has taken, a track and field area for you to test the products and a Run Genie that provides gait analysis and personalised product recommendations.

Oh, and don't forget the personalisation booths for your custom-made products. There are even opportunities to take advantage of additional services. Baggage drop or a guided city tour? Nice touch for a city with millions of visitors each year.

Staff are friendly and ready to help; grab an item and an employee will check the size, availability and options on their tablet. Want to try it on? Brought to you in what felt like seconds. Controversially, this store beats Nike's House of Innovation to our top 5. Shock horror. But, Adidas has found the balance between digital, brand and experience perfectly, without being too in your face, gimmicky or loud. We loved it so much, we want to see the concept in the UK. With some minor tweaks we reckon it'd be a huge success.

IN-STORE TECHNOLOGY

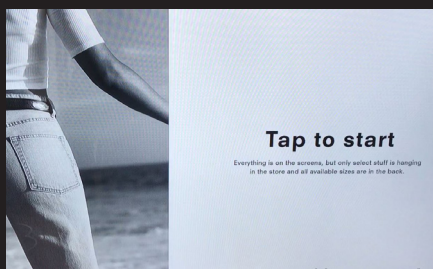
Bringing your store into 2019 and beyond with innovation that complements and augments your proposition and customer service model. But whose tech is more short-sighted than strategic?

REFORMATION

Sustainable shopping, the easy way

This tech concept store is a prime example of a simple, well-designed interior stylishly combined with a restrained use of technology. The design is understated, clean and warm, with the light colour palettes complementing the classic merchandising, setting the ambiance. The customer service is non-intrusive and friendly, guiding us to the easy-to-use and value-adding touch screens which display an endless aisle.

The large screens encourage browsing, with options such as selecting previously designed outfits or that killer individual item that you can add to your dressing room. Once you select 'built', indicating to the back room staff that you're ready to try the product, you add your name and wait for the notification. When your dressing room is ready, plug in your iPhone and listen to your latest tune or adjust the light switch to one of three settings - 'Golden', 'Cool' or "Sexy Time". The store offers a highly-personalised experience with a great combination of tech and personal service layered on top, mixing the physical and digital worlds in a continuous manner.



39 Bond St, 10012

Brand
Digital
Experience

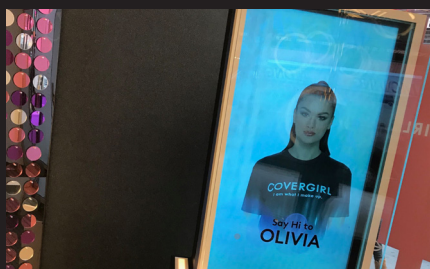


COVERGIRL

The experiential makeup playground

This is CoverGirl's first ever retail store after 60 years of business, further highlighting how physical retail will continue to remain an integral part of a successful retailer's business model. The store has been designed to inspire and showcase, this is evident throughout the experience. It's clean, well-merchandised and has a great product assortment, with clear ranges, categories and planograms, a big tick for retail 101!

The internal marketing is vibrant, punchy and impactful giving it an ultra-modern yet stylish feel. There was a fair amount going on in the store to excite customers: make-up artists demoing products and customisation stations available to personalise makeup bags. There was an element of tech on show, a Google AI greeter named Olivia on hand as we walked in. But this wasn't ideally located, we had walked past her before realising. A nice idea, but needs further thought on how to drive engagement. Overall, a decent debut store that looks far from out of place in Times Square. Take the learning and improve over the next few openings, and they could be real challengers.



719 7th Avenue, 10036

Brand
Digital
Experience

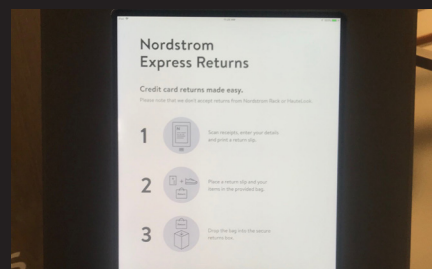


NORDSTROM MEN'S

A mishmash of tech and services

We'd heard all the rave reviews; unusual location, creating a product blend, successfully targeting a younger demographic, embedding tech to drive ease and efficiency, but we were disappointed. The layout is standard for a department store and tech is evident, such as the Express Returns kiosk, but it's so spread out and disjointed that it feels like A/B testing gone wrong.

We certainly agree it is an unusual location. So much so that the ground floor is split into two, meaning you have to go upstairs, across the floor and downstairs to reach the electronics section. Not great for ease and convenience. There's also the attempt to position this as a tech concept store, when actually it is an array of tech and services available in a store environment. Take the bar, apparently it serves great drinks but it was difficult to find from entering the store where we did. Everything appears to be tucked away in corners, hidden by stairs or just simply upstairs. Why not open with these concepts and truly change the dynamic? Lots of potential and the tech is present, but there is still room for serious improvement.



235 W 57th St, 10019

Brand
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COYURGHIL

Top





Five

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**Without doubt a brilliant
end-to-end approach,
marrying great experience
with powerful analytics.**

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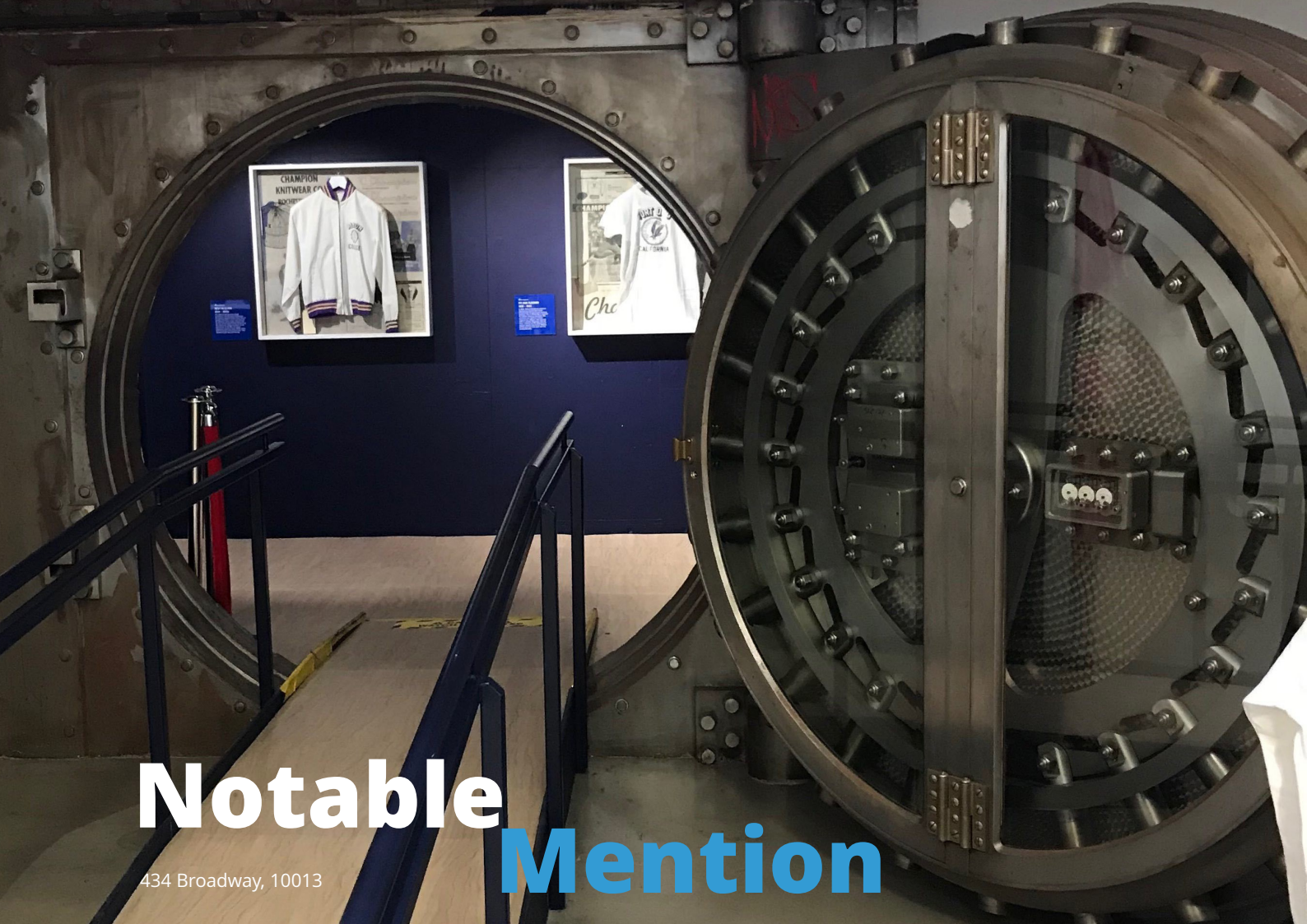
B8TA

The exemplary pop-up store of the future

This Macy's located store is a software-powered retailer that comes with a real punch. With 15 to 20 products on display, every product comes with a small tablet allowing you to browse product and warranty information, reviews and technical specifications. You can even buy via the tablet if you want.

Now, we could be biased as gadget geeks, but the eclectic assortment, ranging from modified BMX's to bone conductor earphones (yep, we bought those beauties), coupled with the fantastic customer experience meant we were sold. Quickly. We were encouraged to interact with and learn about the products, rather than browse and buy. There's a specific music genre you want to road-test on the bone conductors? No problem, M83 and Katie Perry were soon blasting out.

Why a top 5 store? Well, if the above wasn't enough, there's loads going on behind the scenes too. B8ta charges companies monthly subscription fees to merchandise their products, benefitting B8ta, the supplier and most importantly, us. Tablets can be updated remotely at any time, allowing marketing materials and pricing to be adjusted in real-time and reflect consumer behaviour, meaning dynamic management of supply and demand. In-store cameras track user engagement, like how long a product or tablet are in use, with the data reported straight to the supplier. In real-time. Without doubt a brilliant end-to-end approach, marrying great experience with powerful analytics. It's the digitally intelligent way to market, merchandise and price.



Notable Mention

434 Broadway, 10013

CHAMPION

Not taking the gold medal here!

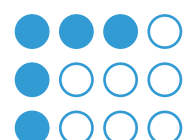
With its 100th anniversary this year, Champion has designed a store that plays on the heritage of their brand whilst offering a modern and engaging twist.

There are the old school classics, but mixed with designer collaborations and more local, regional New York collections in this newly opened store. The stripped-back, industrial environment, with concrete floorings and washed bleachers (similar to others in the top 20 list), plays to the urban jungle reputation of the city that never sleeps.

The dynamism comes from the in-store customisation on offer and the fact that the store can be transformed in a matter of minutes to reflect the latest collection or trend because of the highly mobile fixtures and fittings. The highlight of the store is the cool Champion vault that houses its famous classic pieces and game-changing designs, reminding you of the rich history of the brand. The store loses marks though, as the navigation isn't the clearest, we weren't sure what the flow actually was and whether it was the memorabilia or the latest products that should be catching our eyes.

A solid store but trying to be many things to many customers, rather than nailing their target market

Brand
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Notable Mention

561 Broadway, 10012

MANGO

(Almost) a very smart mirror

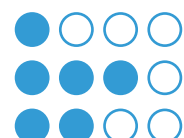
Mango didn't make our top 20 and you may be wondering why we've mentioned it; the interior of the store is clean, neat and fairly standard but the hidden magic is in the Wi-Fi-enabled smart mirror located in the fitting room.

Having tried to sneak a jumper into the fitting room to try the mirror, the store staff were more than happy to give us a demo instead. After the product barcode is scanned, you're able to browse colours, sizing and outfit suggestions before requesting assistance for another item.

Once requested, a notification is sent to the floor staffs' smart watches who will pick that item from the shop floor and bring it to you in the fitting room where you can wait. The drawbacks here are that the tech does not provide a product location so it is still a little analogue and leaves staff searching the shop floor. It is also not fully integrated with a live inventory, so some item requests won't be fulfilled as the item, size or colour is not actually in-stock.

Great to see a smart mirror in action, but it's just missing the fully integrated execution to push Mango into the top 20.

Brand
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Notable Mention

5 W 54th St, 10019

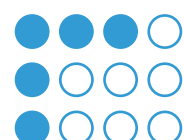
THE CURATED

An aesthetic invasion

The clue is in the name, heavily curated by famous designer Christian Siriano, who last year was named as one of the 100 most influential people in the world by Time magazine. You feel like you're walking into a townhouse before being hit by waves of colour from all angles. The small and compact boutique is a concept store that combines elegant fashion with a modern edge to some fairly classical interior design. There's a spiral staircase, velvet sofas and garden thrown in and you get the feeling it could just use a little more space to squeeze everything together.

In general, the products are beautifully assembled in mostly and unsurprisingly bright colours. There are however some more affordable t-shirts and accessories on offer, but you wonder if The Curated really expects both the high-end and budget spenders to be visiting at the same time? An incredibly detailed and intricately designed store with some dazzling products on display; we just hope it's successful so they can move into a bigger space later this year...

Brand
Digital
Experience



REVIEWS

Overall	Store	Brand	Digital	Experience
1	Converse	●●●●	●●●●	●●●●
2	Medmen	●●●●	●●●●	●●●○
3	Glossier	●●●●	●●●●	●●●○
4	Adidas	●●●●	●●●○	●●●●
5	B8ta	●●●○	●●●●	●●●○
6	Galleria Melissa	●●●○	●●●○	●●●○
7	Reformation	●●●○	●●●○	●●●○
8	Saks	●●●○	●●●○	●●●○
9	Nike	●●●○	●●●●	●●○○
10	Delvaux	●●●●	●●○○	●●●○
11	Covergirl	●●●○	●●●○	●●●○
12	Suitsupply	●●●○	●●●○	●●○○
13	Nordstrom	●●●○	●●●○	●●○○
14	Rowing Blazers	●●●●	●○○○	●●●○
15	Gucci	●●●○	●●○○	●●●○
16	Roman and Williams Guild	●●●●	●○○○	●●●○
17	Amazon 4 star	●●○○	●●●○	●●○○
18	Phluid Project	●●●○	●○○○	●●●○
19	Levi's	●●○○	●●○○	●●○○
20	FAO Schwarz	●●○○	●●○○	●●○○
21	Birkenstock	●●●○	●○○○	●●○○
22	Mango	●○○○	●●●○	●●○○
23	Coach	●●○○	●●○○	●●○○
24	The Curated	●●●○	●○○○	●○○○
25	Champion	●●●○	●○○○	●○○○
26	Longchamp	●●○○	●●○○	●○○○
27	Sunspel	●●○○	●○○○	●●○○
28	Knot Standard	●●○○	●●○○	●○○○
29	J. Press	●●●○	●○○○	●○○○
30	Chanel	●●○○	●○○○	●●○○

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BJSS is the UK's leading privately-owned IT and business consultancy.

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Our retail business consulting team focus on three key areas:

Digital Excellence

We support clients with developing personalised, consistent and memorable retail experiences across different touchpoints. By delivering an integrated omnichannel customer experience, we differentiate brands from their competition. We future-proof their omnichannel strategies and harness digital to transition their customer experience into competitive advantage.

Data Analytics

We make decision-making simpler whilst ensuring retailers are able to offer greater personalisation to their customers. For example, we use a data-driven approach to retail returns to test and understand customer preferences and body shapes. This reduces returns, optimises garment designs, production and range planning while helping identify product gaps, trends and new market opportunities.

Strategy & Innovation

We work closely with our retail clients to develop and implement their strategy.

This ensures that new or improved products and services drive a compelling proposition and competitive advantage.



