WHITE PAPER

In-Store Digital Technology in a Post-COVID Retail World
THE RETAIL WORLD WAS ALREADY experiencing widespread change prior to the COVID-19 pandemic. With easy access to click-and-buy online and receive products overnight, the physical retail store began serving a very different purpose: delivering enjoyable and memorable experiences to attract the attention of shoppers and win their loyalty.

Now expectations for retail have drastically changed to adapt to shopper insecurity and needs to feel safe. Brick and mortar retailers must deal with short-term changes and also prepare for a post-COVID environment. Adaptability will be essential. Part of that adaptability will be to see what worked, what didn’t, and to make decisions based on the goals and objectives of the brand.

With input from our global members, Shop! Environments Association has pulled together criteria and examples of what to look for as you shape your own retail destiny.

Our goal at Shop! is to provide information and insights to help retailers, brands, designers and suppliers adapt to changes in shopper habits. To this end, we identified six trends impacting the future of retail: Continuous Adaptation, Artificial Intelligence & Big Data, WOW Factor: In-Store Experience, Co-Creation/Personalization, Purpose Driven, and Collaborations & Alliances.

This white paper will show the trends needed to survive in the new world of retail. Inside this paper you will find examples of how creating the right retail environment can help meet the new challenges of providing a safe environment for both shoppers and staff, all the while providing the ultimate shopping experience.

Now more than ever, it’s critical to grab the shopper’s attention and deliver a call to action near the product. Human eyes are drawn to movement; therefore digital displays might more effectively accomplish this goal than a static display or signage. Continue reading to discover ways to put your customers at ease and make the shopping journey an experience worth leaving their home for.

If you have any questions about this or other Shop! white papers, feel free to reach out to us at shop@shopassociation.org.
INTRODUCTION

In 2018, The Shop! Creative Council identified six retail trends expected to shape the retail environment. These remain viable in 2020, with some taking on even greater significance.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Continuous Adaptation</th>
<th>Artificial Intelligence &amp; Big Data</th>
<th>WOW Factor: In-Store Experience</th>
<th>Co-Creation/Personalization</th>
<th>Purpose Driven</th>
<th>Collaborations &amp; Alliances</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The creation of more adaptable, fluid and flexible store environments that will allow for continuous improvement following retailers’ regular test and learn cycles centered on validating and enhancing customer experiences.</td>
<td>The use of AI and Big Data to define retail store assortment and inventory, as well as the acceleration in the pace of change and other enhancements to the customer experience.</td>
<td>In-store trends and experiences that help members proactively provide retailers fresh ideas to meet their customer’s untapped needs through our members’ products and capabilities.</td>
<td>Hyper-personalized marketing and branding, gamification, localized product and services curation, co-creation of product by consumers, and social connectivity to assist our members in becoming a lead resource to their retail and brand customers.</td>
<td>The intersection of individual beliefs, behaviors, and passions with brand/company vision, practice and purpose are impacting our members’ products and services and retail environments and experiences.</td>
<td>Synergies down the value chain in producing retail environments product and services.</td>
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</table>

With the onset of COVID-19, Continuous Adaptation and Collaborations & Alliances are more important than ever. To survive during and in the post-COVID-19 world, retailers have to reimagine in-store experiences with more hygienic and effective solutions. Brands and retailers as well as their suppliers must be agile and have the foresight to make the changes needed to serve customers in this Next Normal. Adjustments to the in-store environment, along with messaging, will be vital to success. Digital technology and signage will be key components moving forward.

Thankfully, brands and retailers have already begun working with designers and suppliers to incorporate technologies that address these issues and in some cases provide a virtually touchless experience. Now they will need to continue to incorporate the safety element into the shopper experience. Now more than ever, shoppers want to avoid crowds and are looking for safe, frictionless shopping experiences. And in-store technology can help.

Looking beyond COVID-19 shopper accommodation, a store’s design should support other customer experience (CX) factors, such employing color to appeal to emotions, lighting to build drama, and visually appealing displays to delight shoppers and encourage them to explore the store.

This white paper will discuss the change in store shopper behavior due to COVID-19, the number of touch points along the shopper journey where the retailer has a chance to not only get their messaging across, but to also show the shopper they care about their safety. This paper will also focus on the importance and usage of signage, particularly digital signage, as all retail begins to reopen. Finally, the paper will show examples of how in-store technology is being used around the world to help enhance the in-store environment and create the ultimate customer experience.
CUSTOMERS WANT A SAFE EXPERIENCE (SAFEEX)

IN A SURVEY CONDUCTED BY Shop designer member Big Red Rooster, 93% of customers said that retailers/brands should make some or significant changes to the retail environment. While customers are still social creatures, they have the need to:
- avoid big crowds
- show more compassion for others
- adjust to the ever-changing world
- improve personal and environment hygiene and protection
- invest in self-care
- shorten their attention span, and
- make their home their hub.

While 2020 saw a rise in buying online and picking up due to the pandemic, this trend was already firmly in place prior to COVID. A June 2020 IBM report on understanding the customers who drive change confirmed that due to changes in shopping preferences over the past five years, consumers want more flexibility in when, where, and how they make purchases across product categories. The chart below shows how BOPIS has grown over 4 four times in the past five years.

The study also found that 82 percent of shoppers say they purchase additional items when they come into the store to pick up an online purchase. Thus, it is in retailers’ best interests to make the BOPIS experience as friction-free as possible. Even as there has been explosive growth in ecommerce over the past five years, the store remains a very important channel for shopping and purchasing.

“Protecting personal space has become top-of-mind for consumers – and insights show that this behavior will continue to dominate, even in a post COVID-19 world.” — Big Red Rooster
ENHANCING THE SHOPPER JOURNEY

THE RETAIL ENVIRONMENT IS the setting for the customer experience (CX) that a store delivers to its shoppers. First and foremost, store design needs to ensure the safety of customers and staff. Each element in the retail environment, from the lighting to the flooring—and everything in between—helps shape the CX. The CX is an in-store shopper journey designed to engage, delight, and wow the customer, emotionally bonding him/her to the store or brand.

Over the past few decades, retail has evolved into today’s CX-based model. Online shopping already offers convenience; therefore, instead of trying to compete with online retailers to deliver convenience, many brick-and-mortar stores are instead focusing on delivering enjoyable and memorable experiences to attract the attention of shoppers and win their loyalty. Some CX trends that have emerged include the wow factor (impressing, delighting, and surprising customers), personalization (satisfying the customer’s individualized needs and wants), and localization (supporting and reflecting the local community).

The store’s design should support the CX, employing color to appeal to emotions, lighting to build drama, and visually appealing displays to delight shoppers and encourage them to explore the store. An environment that encourages shoppers to engage with things (merchandise, marketing materials) and people (store staff, other shoppers) fosters positive emotions, in turn, generating positive memories. The store’s CX should eliminate the pain points from the shopper journey and address operational and structural constraints to provide better service. The design should also facilitate interaction between the retail staff and shopper; employee interaction leads to increased loyalty, sales, and ultimately return on investment.

TOUCHPOINTS

The store design is an opportunity to deliver a “wow” factor even before shoppers engage with the merchandise and marketing materials. The design sets the foundation for the customer experience and critical touchpoints within the shopper journey. Knowledge of the basic best practices of store design helps retail teams create and maintain stores that customers will enjoy visiting and helps suppliers more effectively anticipate their clients’ needs. There are at least 20 times where the customer will engage with a product or engage with a service. This creates an opportunity to seize signage or digital applications, or other technologies explored in this white paper.

PRODUCTS NEED TO BE EASY TO FIND

Store fixtures help form the store layout and the path to purchase, inviting customers to see, touch, and discover products along the shopper journey. They display, organize, and store merchandise, making shopping quick, easy, and enjoyable for customers. An effective, fully stocked merchandising display drives sales for the retailer as well.

While store fixtures have always been used to define traffic routes within a store, in mid-2020 retailers used them to minimize interaction with other people. In addition, free-standing and directional floor signage took on greater significance. Shields were added to cash wraps to ensure the safety of their employees in an era when staff is responsible for maintaining the safety of customers and staff alike. An example of this can be seen on the next page, Retailer Spotlight: Keeping Shoppers Safe in the Netherlands.

As online shopping growth explodes, many retailers are designing the in-store CX and the online shopping experience to complement rather than compete with each other. The goal of omnichannel retail is to deliver an integrated and consistent experience for shoppers regardless of how they make their purchases (in person, online, or via a smartphone app). Examples of this can be found later in the paper on page 17, Merging of In-Store and Online Shopping.
Retailer: JUMBO
Segment: Supermarket

JUMBO, THE SECOND LARGEST supermarket chain in the Netherlands, was quick to react to shoppers’ need for safety as the pandemic wore on. The retailer instituted a strict protocol whose design fits with their identity. Signage in the form of stand along and floor graphics explained social distancing and new shopper routes in-store. Store fixtures, displays, special shields and the mandate for extra cleaning of carts, were also put into place with each store of the chain.
In-Store Digital Technology in a Post-COVID Retail World

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Strategies for Successful Signage at Retail

Retail Signage serves three primary functions: wayfinding, promotional messaging, and branding. In the time of COVID, retailers use signage for distancing, shopper flow, and mask warnings. One of the easiest ways to help inform and guide shoppers through the purchase process faster is through signage. It helps customers find categories and products. Information about products and promotions helps shoppers make decisions. Retailers and brands use signage to communicate the brand story and convince shoppers to buy.

Six Layers of Messaging

From the retailer’s perspective, there are six layers of messaging each serving a specific function.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Layer</th>
<th>Function</th>
<th>Final Message</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Signalization</td>
<td>Build brand/product recognition</td>
<td>Macy’s, Starbucks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inspiration</td>
<td>Create ideas</td>
<td>Lifestyle Imagery, New Green Tea</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information</td>
<td>Increase knowledge</td>
<td>Open 24-7, Only 97 Calories</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Navigation</td>
<td>Show wayfinding</td>
<td>Men’s Department, Checkout</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activation</td>
<td>Persuade action</td>
<td>Act Now!, Buy One, Get One</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relation</td>
<td>Cultivate relationship with the brand</td>
<td>Brand Promise, Product Giveaways</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Guidelines for Retail Signage

Signage should be colorful and exciting enough to stand out from the background and competition, yet it must remain simple enough to be understood quickly and easily. The marketing team must work closely with the graphic designer to ensure that a sign’s design will enhance the message rather than detract from it. The following guidelines can help retail marketing teams develop signage that attracts attention and communicates effectively to shoppers.

Retail Rule of 3, 4, 5™

James Fraser, president, Fraser Retail Strategies, created his Retail Rule of 3, 4, 5™ which offers a formula for maximizing the shopper’s ability to interpret signage, based on timing, distance, and written content.

- The shopper must understand the message in less than 3 seconds™
- The message must be easily read from at least 4 paces™
- The marketer must say the message in less than 5 words™

Grab, Hold, Sold

Sheri Pearson, VP, Client Services, Mosaic North America, developed the Grab, Hold, Sold rule to explain how shoppers interpret signage from various distances, and present a strategy for engaging shoppers as they approach.

Grab: From 30 feet away the shopper sees mainly color. Does the shopper notice the sign?

Hold: From 10 feet away, product icons are identifiable. Does the sign’s imagery hold the shopper’s attention?

Sold: From 5 feet away, the message is discernable. Is the message clear enough to help the shopper easily make a decision?

Shop! Best Practices for Signage Design and Placement

The 2017 Shop! ROI Standards: In-Store Marketing Materials offers guidelines for effective signage:

- Use bold, vivid color. Be selective in color choice so that the proper vibe is communicated. For example, warm colors (red, orange, yellow) trigger impulse, while cool colors (blue, green, violet) trigger a healthy feeling and are easily recognized by the brain.

- Create stopping power. Use unique shapes and sizes to stand out on the shelf and in the aisles. Curves are proven to generate more sales lift, especially in the beauty category.

- Have a clear message hierarchy. Keep messages simple with just a few solid points with a key headline that best describes the reason customers need this product. Use bold, easy to read type.

- Aim for the “strike zone.” In the aisle, the typical shopper gaze hovers between the shoulders to the knees (three and a half to four and a half feet). Consider how much of the message is visible when a shopper engages a communication piece; a line of copy one inch off the floor is ineffective.

- Be easy on the eyes by keeping the space uncluttered, and include white space. Give shoppers a link between the visual and the message (“show me, don’t tell me”).

- Tell your brand story and be sure your logo is well placed.

For examples of in-store signage, please visit the Shop! Awards Galleries at www.shopawards.org

For more information on in-store signage, please see Chapter 4.4: Signage at Retail in the Shop! MaRC Exam Prep, 2019 Edition.
DIGITAL SIGNAGE

DIGITAL SIGNAGE IS AN EFFECTIVE WAY to help shoppers get in and out of the stores faster. It is critical to grab the audience’s attention and deliver a call to action near the product. Human eyes are drawn to movement; therefore digital displays might more effectively accomplish this goal than a static display or signage.

If one picture is worth a thousand words, imagine the stories that brands, and retailers can tell with digital signs. These bright screens can deliver dynamic images, animations, and video that enhance the customer experience as they deliver targeted marketing messages. Whether a digital signage system consists of one screen in a single store or thousands of screens in stores across a region, successful performance requires a well-crafted strategy and carefully selected technology.

Retailers and brands use digital technology in a number of ways in-store. Technology can be functional and/or experiential. It can also be static and/ or Interactive. The ideal retail environment uses a marriage between traditional POP and digital communication to make for a frictionless shopping experience.

For more information on digital signage, please see Chapter 4.5: Digital Signage & In-Store Networks in the Shop! MaRC Exam Prep, 2019 Edition.

TOP 5 BENEFITS OF DIGITAL SIGNAGE IN RETAIL STORES

1. Stores can advertise their social media channels to increase followers.
2. Content can be easily changed across multiple stores in an instant.
3. Interactive displays allow businesses to collect useful data about shoppers.
4. Individuals can better recall products seen in digital signage as they shop. Strategically placed advertising can help increase impulse purchases.
5. Stores can advertise their social media channels to increase followers.

1. CONTENT IS KING!
Digital signage content must be lively and appealing.

2. MAKE YOUR CONTENT LIVELY
If your content looks like TV, people will tune it out.

3. LOCAL “BUY-IN” IS CRITICAL
With a system that is able to perform national, regional, and local ad insertion (a term borrowed from cable TV), the content can now contribute to the customer experience on a store-by-store level.

4. YOU NEED A HOOK! LOCATION, LOCATION, LOCATION!
This sounds simple enough, but you need to give shoppers a reason to look at the screen.

5. IS IT EASY TO PERFORM SMALL UPDATES? AND CAN YOU TRACK THE SYSTEM’S ACTIVITIES?
Your system should have the capability to document when and where ads were displayed.

6. DON’T BE AFRAID TO WORK WITH THE IT TEAM
When talking with the IT department, consider your network alternatives. Suggest a multi-cast network. If you have a large number of videos that you need to send out to a large number of stores, a multi-cast network can do that very easily.

7. USE YOUR SYSTEM FOR MORE THAN JUST ADVERTISING
If you are deploying a signage network for your customers, why not consider using the same infrastructure for employee information or training?

8. SELL SIGNAGE LIKE END CAPS
Retailers often get a significant amount of revenue from their vendors in terms of co-op, MDF (market development funds), spiffs and other incentives to the channel.

9. DON’T FIGHT INDUSTRY STANDARDS
Respect industry standard technology.

10. ANYONE CAN DO A PILOT–BUT WILL IT “SCALE”? 
See examples of digital signage around the world on page 10 of this paper, Digital Windows.

SOURCE: SHARPSOURCE: 2020 SHOP! DESIGN AWARDS
SOURCE: SHARPSOURCE: 2020 SHOP! DESIGN AWARDS
THE KEY TO MEASURING the success of an in-store initiative is to have clearly defined goals. And signage, particularly digital signage is not different. Goals must be openly established and agreed upon at the beginning of each project.

In assessing the success of a given retail store, traditional metrics such as sales per square foot and customer satisfaction have their place but are increasingly less meaningful in an omnichannel world. The store can be valuable as a showroom, service center, idea/market research lab or an engaging brand experience, but those roles are not necessarily intended to generate in-store sales.

With e-commerce the new reality, retailers are realizing that the historical differentiators of price and location are not enough. In fact, for brick-and-mortar retailers who compete primarily on price, designing for CX is even more imperative. Big-box stores, for example, have seen a secular decline as customers turn to the web for lower prices and greater selection. Retailers who have focused on CX, however, have not only survived, but are thriving.

To that end, traditional metrics such as customer satisfaction typically focus on a single episode/encounter or point in time, rather than the entirety of the customer’s journey leading to an overall emotional connection to the brand. While they give a good indication of past performance, customer satisfaction levels are relatively poor indicators of future loyalty. In fact, business strategist Fred Reichheld found that 60%-80% of quitting customers had been “satisfied” or “very satisfied” just before switching to competitors.

CX AS THE KEY DRIVE OF VALUE

CX, on the other hand, reaches customers at a cognitive, emotional, and intuitive level, leading to stronger brand affinity.

Marketing professors Maklan and Klaus (2011) found that customer experience had much stronger correlation to loyalty than customer satisfaction (86% vs. 65%). And customer loyalty, more than satisfaction, is the real driver of value to the bottom line. Reichheld and co-author Earl Sasser, in a seminal study published in the Harvard Business Review in 1990, found that even a 5% increase in customer retention could almost double profits.

Over the last 20 years, additional studies have borne out the correlation between loyalty and increased profitability, if not the exact multiple. If loyalty is a key driver for profit growth and customer experience is a key driver to loyalty, then our goal in using design for positive financial outcomes must focus on designing the CX.

Given that studies have found correlations between CX and top-line growth, customer engagement and operational efficiencies, it is not surprising that CX has been heralded as a key source of competitive advantage.

Critical to designing and measuring CX is a holistic approach that looks across the customer’s entire brand journey across time (i.e., cumulative experience). There are a growing number of sophisticated tools that measure dwell time, create heat maps, and even track where people are looking and for how long. However, any individual tool tells only part of the story. Because consumers assign intangible as well as tangible value around their experience and interaction with a company metrics need to capture outcomes along both dimensions.

As the studies show, the level of brand engagement and CX can be highly predictive of loyalty. Therefore, in addition to traditional financial and operational outcomes, qualitative measures around the emotional aspects also need to be captured. Shopper surveys, social media monitoring and deployment of gaming and other interactive programs are some ways to assess engagement. The Net Promotor Score (NPS) tool has risen as a key indicator of revenue growth based on CX and loyalty.

Often, the design process is focused only on the creative and/or execution stages. However, the most critical stages include the before and after on the front end to develop a deep understanding of the user(s), customer journeys, the key project objectives, and metrics for success; and on the back end outcomes are measured against those objectives. A post-opening evaluation (or POE) is a must, to observe shopper interactions in the built environment as well as to assess shopper intentions and behavior resulting from those interactions and other key drivers.

When looking specifically at calculating ROI for digital signage, retailers need to look at a long-term perspective and the total cost of ownership (TCO). Retailers can also incorporate sensors into the signage to monitor foot traffic and engagement. Traditional in-store intercept surveys/ interviews can also be conducted. As shared in Digital Signage Today, “Making the most of your digital signage investment means calculating ROI and gaining deeper understanding of customer or employee behavior, so your signage strategy can be fine-tuned for maximum benefit.”

**RETAIL DIGITAL SOLUTIONS**

**FROM INTERACTIVE** technology to LED displays, it is important to choose the best solution for each application and sometimes a low- or no-tech approach is the best option. But when a situation warrants technology within a window display, it is a great way to increase attraction, enhance the shopping experience, and bridge online with offline. Today, retailers have numerous options (digital signage, AR/VR, etc.) available depending on their goal and strategy for the window. The following are some examples of technology retailers have used. Look for more usage in the coming year.

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**DIGITAL WINDOWS**

**DIGITAL IN ST. PETERSBURG**
The use of digital on the exterior of a store in St. Petersburg, Russia, is a good example of using digital to attract people to their end of the mall and particularly to their store. The large display entices the people walking by to take notice. The combined sign and digital graphics in the compact space are very effective as well.

**DIGITAL IN BARCELONA**
The Inglot store in Barcelona, Spain, takes advantage of the limited space to provide a very streamlined digital sign. This flexible format allows for easy change in messaging all the while providing informative and eye-catching information and graphics.
DIGITAL IN CAPE TOWN

Employing an aspirational strategy, the +Vision store in Cape Town, South Africa, uses their digital display to transport shoppers to a different place and time.

DIGITAL IN UKRAINE

Comfy UA in the Ukraine uses digital both outside and inside the store. Four screens on the outside of the store mimic the four screens inside. The content is synchronized to ensure the screens are conveying the same message. This strategy helps to attract shoppers into the store, promotes products, and relays quick messaging to shoppers.

DIGITAL IN LONDON

KIKO in London uses digital screens to maximize limited window space, strategically pushing multiple messages at the same time.

DIGITAL IN CAPE TOWN

This H&M store in Cape Town, South Africa, uses digital signage in the window as part of the seasonal merchandising strategy. The easy-to-change format makes for efficient in-store communication management. An example of continuous adaptation, the digital display is updated every time the store changes out seasonal clothes or promotions. It is easy to update, flexible, and continuously changing.

For more examples of digital in windows see the Shop! white paper, The Art of Window Design on the Shop! website at shopassociation.org/industry-reports/
In-Store Digital Technology in a Post-COVID Retail World

**ENDCAPS IN THE HAGUE**
This endcap in The Hague, Netherlands, shows how L’Oreal combines traditional in-store communications with digital technology. Digital offers a way to show the benefits of the product via a quick, short video.

**FLOORSTANDS IN MOSCOW**
This floor stand in Moscow shows how Coca Cola uses traditional in-store communications alongside digital technology. Messaging can easily be changed to reflect the current promotion.

**SECONDARY DISPLAYS IN MOSCOW**
These secondary displays in Moscow show how the brand uses traditional in-store communications with digital technology. The display can be changed with the current promotion, and the large screens also attract shoppers to the display in a fraction of the time.

**DIGITAL ON SHELF IN THE U.S.**
The most complex level of interactivity involves consumer navigation of a display screen for detailed information. Shopper interaction with these displays typically is triggered by the push of a button or touch screen, and more recently, displays that are navigated with gestures.
In-store Digital Technology in a Post-COVID Retail World

**DIGITAL IN AISLE IN MOSCOW**
This grocery store in Moscow is an example of digital at the shelf and on the wall. Not pictured here are the digital screens above the aisles. Shoppers receive twice the information about price, promotion, and product.

**DIGITAL IN-STORE IN CHICAGO**
The AT&T store in Chicago, U.S., is an example of a digital environment focused on localization. There are no products advertised here. The store environment features Chicago-themed icons to connect visitors to the city and build a positive, proud experience for the local audience.

**DIGITAL IN-STORE IN TOKYO**
In Tokyo, this digital screen shows videos of products being used. The display is a marriage between digital and physical. Screens are in multiple locations in store and mall. The video shows a person modeling the jackets that are on display within the store. Shoppers can easily assess if they are interested in the product and how it would look on somebody.

**DIGITAL IN-STORE IN ST. PETERSBURG**
This store in St. Petersburg, Russia, uses large screens to give the facts about the product. It is big, it is informative, and it is easy for shoppers to learn about the product.

**DIGITAL IN-STORE IN AMSTERDAM**
This store in Amsterdam, Netherlands, uses digital to control inventory and maximize space. The shoppers interact with the screens in the small store and to choose the items to purchase. Once chosen, the items are brought to them by a sales associate. It is a great way to be efficient in store operations and inventory control and provides a unique interaction between the shopper and store employee via technology.
INTERACTIVE DISPLAYS

RETAILERS ARE INCREASINGLY using interactive displays and the Internet of Things (IoT) to engage shoppers and deliver more personalized and convenient shopping experiences. Interactive displays educate shoppers about products; they also enable shoppers to try out products, personalize products, and order product varieties that are not in the store (e.g., a different size, color). Retailers are using smartphone apps to deliver targeted promotional messages and conveniences like frictionless checkout.

Interactive digital kiosks and signs are becoming more common in retail stores. Displays are helping shoppers find products and make purchase decisions. In a department store, an Interactive display might allow customers to search for products by product name, category, brand, or model number.

TOUCH SCREEN TECHNOLOGY

As the need for safety becomes more important, so does the need to get in and out of the store quickly. Touch screens help facilitate this need. Touch screen technology is seen across the globe including Shanghai and Moscow as shown here. Screens in endcaps utilize touchscreen to give product information and inventory information as well.

AUGMENTED REALITY

Augmented reality allows shoppers to digitally try on products like clothing or cosmetics. The display’s onboard camera captures the image of the shopper and then an LCD display alters the image in real-time according to selections the customer makes on the display. In the photo above, the shopper aligns her face within the range of the display’s camera. When she touches a lipstick color swatch, the display will apply the color to her lips. In just a few seconds, she can try out as many shades as she likes. The LCD displays alters the colors on the screen and allows the shopper to see how they look on her. This technology alleviates the need for the shopper to actually try on make-up. The sales person can easily clean the screen with a wipe. And there is no worry about sharing make-up samples.

DIGITAL TOUCH SCREENS IN BARCELONA

In Barcelona, Spain, this store uses digital touchscreens to share product information and encourage product selection. The information on the screens change with promotions and product selection. The staff processes sales transactions, and in this time of COVID, keeps the screens clean.
LOW TOUCH RETAIL TECHNOLOGY

THE CURRENT PANDEMIC has increased the need for a “low-touch” period in-store. Although it will be different in each category, the fear of touch is present. Low-touch technology addresses this in a few different ways.

VIDEO WALLS (VIDEO)
Click on the video link above to see how a store in Moscow uses video to demonstrate different ways to decorate a bathroom, while shoppers remain socially distant from the store staff. Via the screen, a shopper can change the room layout, walls, windows, and doors. No need to have a salesperson in the space. Once the shopper has left, the salesperson can wipe down the screen.

LIFT & LEARN TECHNOLOGY (VIDEO)
Lift and learn technology allows shoppers to pick up a product and read about it on the digital screen. This technology eliminates the need for extra human interaction during COVID. Plus, products can be wiped down by staff between shoppers.

SENSE MEDIA
Technology is being used to increase in-store touchpoint experiences using senses like scent, sound, voice, and sight. Studies have shown that scents can awaken memories and stir emotions that are associated with those memories. Therefore, retailers are increasingly using scents to enhance the customer experience and build an emotional connection between the shopper and the brand. Some stores even use scents as a logo. Hershey uses its stores’ heating and air conditioning systems to disperse a chocolate scent to connect with shoppers’ pre-existing pleasant memories of the brand. Other scenting techniques include placing a portable scent machine near merchandise or a display and attaching scent-emitting devices to shelves, displays, and product packaging.

AUDIO
In these displays, a media player commonly delivers audio files to the speakers and video files to the screen. These displays delight approaching shoppers with additional information about a product. This one-step interaction is passively triggered by a motion sensor.
**IBEACONS AND PROXIMITY MARKETING**
Proximity marketing uses the Internet of Things (IoT) to deliver messages that are customized based on a shopper’s location. iBeacon technology can be used to inform customers about relevant new products and promotions. Brands can use iBeacons to disrupt shoppers’ in-store routines. Through IoT or iBeacon technology embedded in the endcap, customers can access videos about the product, lifestyle images, and even special coupons. IoT bridges the “phy-gital” divide between physical and digital assets and also provides the customer with new content that has previously been difficult to access through items such as QR codes.

**QR CODES**
The scanning feature uses a phone’s onboard camera to scan QR codes and UPC symbols on product packages, price tags, displays, and signage. QR codes are often used to direct users to video content (e.g. about the product, the brand’s story), a website, social media, or even a contest.

**PERSONAL ASSISTANT THROUGH VIDEO**
Gucci partnered with a tech partner to recreate its crucial in-store experience. Gucci Live is a video service that lets staff communicate with shoppers on their mobile devices or laptops. Gucci wanted to stay in touch with their clients who were unable to visit the store, but still wanted the personal service associated with the luxury brand. The technology was tested in Europe with a small number of employees. The service was then rolled out to Europe, Middle East, and Africa (EMEA) regions. The brand has dedicated more online client advisors to this feature. The rise of in-home or remote video consultation services represents significant industry macro-trends: the convergence of physical and digital experiences, data-driven personalization, and the rise of the service economy.

**FACIAL RECOGNITION**
Facial recognition software can be integrated with in-store camera systems to determine shoppers’ gender, age range, and mood. This innovation can help stores evaluate shoppers’ emotional reactions to product packaging, displays, and other elements of the retail environment. As sensor and camera technology continue to evolve, we can expect to see these features used more and more in retail displays. Facial recognition can also be used to trigger content delivery.

**INTERACTIVE AIR TOUCH TECHNOLOGY (VIDEO)**
A no-touch interactive screen is an ideal solution for hands-free environments. Shoppers just wave their hand in front of the screen and it advances the slides and/or screens. Click on the video link to see it in action.
In-Store Digital Technology in a Post-COVID Retail World

MERGING IN-STORE AND ONLINE SHOPPING

THE STORE AS A MEDIA CHANNEL IN MOSCOW
Using an omni-channel strategy, digital signage at this store in Moscow supports online messaging as well as the in-store messaging. The retailer synchronizes its online and offline digital strategy, along with the brand message in print.

BRAND MESSAGING VIA DIGITAL AND PRINT IN BUENOS AIRES
Digital supports and enhances in-store campaigns and environments to create a better CX. In this photo the screen on the left wall is showing a live soccer game during which advertisements are playing. This gives shoppers the feeling that they are watching or at the game. This is a good example of the marriage between digital and traditional POP.

EXPERIENTIAL
Blue Nile, an online jeweler for 16 years, sought to establish a physical presence to achieve greater visibility for the brand and category, offer confidence to customers, and accelerate repurchase. The solution was a model called a “Webroom”. In the store, shoppers work with a consultant to customize their ring, choosing a setting, a stone type and size, and then viewing a simulation on the digital display. Customers then purchase the ring, which is shipped either to their home or to the store. Customers who build their ring online may also elect to have the ring delivered to the store where they can pick it up. The inventory is minimal, the display case holds just a few sample ring settings. With very little inventory, the store needs only a small footprint to carry out its operations, and its security costs are low. The Webroom has been a success. Engagement ring sales increased on average by $1k per purchase via webroom vs. website.

MERGING IN-STORE AND ONLINE SHOPPING
B8ta is a retailer whose physical stores serve as showrooms. According to the retailer’s website, the purpose of these stores is to enable shoppers to discover, try, and buy the latest tech products. The store displays cutting-edge consumer technology products, with new products featured on a monthly and even weekly basis. Many of the products on display at b8ta have never before been featured in a physical retail space; some have been developed by companies that do not have brick-and-mortar stores. An example of continuous adaptation and flexibility, there is no printed signage in the space. For each product, an interactive tablet delivers product information. The store has no point-of-sale stations. All sales transactions are processed digitally or online, and most products ship directly to customers.
**ATTRACTION–BASED EXPERIENCES**

**BANKING REIMAGINED IN TORONTO**
TD Bank is a traditional bank, however, this branch resembles a cozy bar or a restaurant with the countertop and stools and a glowing green light. The ceiling is made of multilevel digital displays that resemble outdoor nature scenes. This layout removes the old, boring retail transaction and makes it a little livelier and a little more comfortable. A totally different experience than bank patrons expect.

**GIVING THE ATM THE WOW EXPERIENCE**
Brands and retailers are seeking new and innovative ways to tempt shoppers to investigate their products or services. One technique is to “wow” shoppers with irresistible and memorable attractions and experiences. TD Bank already had a presence in Toronto’s Union Station with its automatic teller machine. The machine was an attraction itself due to the use of a digital display to bring photos of outdoor scenes indoors. The rotating images include daytime and nighttime scenes, which are displayed according to the time of day and the time of year. To offer an even more personal interaction with its customers, it decided to add a branch location to the station.

**INTEL AT BEST BUY**
A good example of the Collaboration and Alliances trend, Intel partnered with Best Buy electronics stores to install the Intel Experience shop-in-shop at 50 Best Buy stores across the United States. The goal was to provide customers with the opportunity to touch, interact with, and learn about the latest technology innovations that used Intel technology. The main draw of the shop-in-shop is an interactive table that provides hands-on exploration of Intel technology through a number of exciting activities. These activities include 3D printing, playing a Mars Escape game with augmented reality, and remixing a song by a popular music artist. The entertaining and memorable experience will help build a personal relationship between shoppers and Intel.

For more examples of signage and digital technology in-store, please visit the Shop! Awards Galleries at www.shopawards.org
About Shop!
Shop! Environments Association (shopassociation.org) is the global trade association dedicated to enhancing retail environments and experiences. Shop! represents more than 1,200 member companies and affiliates worldwide from 25 countries. The association brings value to the global retail marketplace through our industry leadership, research programs, industry certification, education and networking events. Shop! produces Retail Environments Online, offering business-focused content to retailers, brands, designers and suppliers throughout the industry.

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