

13.4: Store Interior Design

Learning Objectives

- Outline the important aspects interior store design

A retailer's store layout isn't the only thing that informs the shopper of the kind of experience he or she is about to have. In fact, everything about the store helps add to the environment of the shopping experience.

The options for interior store design are as limitless as the imagination of the designer. There can be neon signs or natural wood, industrial looking ceilings or LED lighting.

Some retailers go out of their way to provide that experiential moment, and it's not always directly related to shopping. Some interesting elements to add to the shopping experience might include the mall in Dubai that features a 2.6 million gallon fish tank at its center. That might seem odd, but it's already caught on. The Great Lakes Crossing Mall in Auburn Hills, Michigan, also features an aquarium as part of the mall shopping experience. As malls start to fall out of favor, we'll likely see more retailers pushing for interesting solutions that use empty mall space and attract shoppers.

Bass Pro Fishing

Bass Pro Fishing shops put nature on display for their shoppers. Each of their stores is designed to reflect nature in the store's location. And not only do nature lovers come in to enjoy the display, they purchase tents and fishing poles and other items to facilitate enjoying the real thing.

Kids come in school busses to see what is essentially a natural history museum within the store. People have gotten married there. And all of that is probably pretty good for business.

These are drastic store environment examples, and most of the time you won't find anything quite like this. But they're excellent examples of why you have to think about your store environment. You want your shopper to have a reason to come to your store. It's a bonus if you have shoppers that want to get married there.

So where can you start your store environment study? How about under your feet?

Flooring



The flooring in a store makes a statement in the shopping experience. Is there carpet? Tile? Wood? A carpeted store is usually quiet, allowing for the shopper to have a quiet, serene experience with the merchandise. Tile, cement or wood will be a little louder.

Tile allows a retailer to bring in brand colors and demarcate different areas of a store. Perhaps the tile changes when the shopper moves from department to department. A toy store might have pink and blue tile in an area where baby toys are sold, and then the boy's department becomes a bright red and blue as you move from soft plush to Tonka trucks.

Wood flooring sends a "natural" or "outdoorsy" message. A pet store owner once decided to highlight all his natural food offerings in a separate area with a wood floor. When you walked from the tile to the wood, you walked into a higher end dog food area where you could find nutritious offerings without additives or preservatives. Natural. That's what the wood floor was saying to customers.

Painted cement floors are a common find in retail stores today, a nice look for a variety of retailers. The cement can be painted and sealed for easy cleaning (important in states with bad winter weather). It's economical, stylish and versatile.

A combination of these flooring styles can be used to drive traffic as well. Department stores, like Sears, are known for having tile walking aisles and then carpeted browsing areas. The use of different kinds of flooring can help guide traffic flow, especially if the retail location is quite large.

Lighting

Warm light, cool light, natural light, fluorescent light...there's so many kinds of light and so many fixtures to choose from! That said, types of lighting in a retail store can be broken down into four general categories:

- General/ambient lighting
- Task lighting
- Accent lighting
- Decorative lighting

Your general/ambient lighting is the main source of light in your store. If you walk into Wal-mart, you're going to have fluorescent lighting. It's nothing special and, in fact, the message retailers are sending to their customers is exactly that: this is a basic, value-based shopping experience. Grocery stores and big box retailers also use fluorescent light. It's an inexpensive and efficient way to light a large space.

Warm, incandescent light sends customers the message that they're going to have a more intimate, special shopping experience. You'll often see apparel stores using incandescent light because incandescent light shows colors a little more "true" and the shoppers themselves won't look pale and bluish when they're trying on clothes. A clothing retailer wants his shoppers to like how they look in his clothing, and sometimes even if the main shopping area is lit in fluorescent bulbs the fitting areas will be lit with incandescent.

Task lighting is exactly that—a more intense light that helps the store employees get their work done and converse with shoppers efficiently. The checkout or customer service areas may have task lighting.

Accent lighting is where you get creative drawing attention to your merchandise. You can accent a specific area of your store with different kind of lighting—a customer's attention will always be drawn to the area that's different. Products can also be accented—like framed paintings on a wall, or a lamp carefully placed on a display table of books. High-end grocery stores will sometimes light their meats with a slightly red light in their refrigerated displays, and their fish with a blue light. It makes the product more attractive.



Finally, decorative lighting adds atmosphere to your store. Fixtures that show off sophistication or a little bit of whimsy are going to help inform your shopper on the type of experience he's going to have in your store. Just like the lighting in your house, your decorative lighting should be interesting to look at and in keeping with your store's experiential message.

Walls and Ceiling Colors

Colors influence shoppers' emotions and they can be carefully chosen to influence the shopping experience. Colors also take on certain meanings in different cultures, and, depending on your shopping demographic, the retailer is wise to choose his colors

carefully. Indeed, the colors the retailer chooses for her store aren't as important as how her target market will react to them. Younger people respond better to bold colors, and older people like muted tones.

What kind of messages can a retailer be sending in color choice?

- Blues are calming. If the product is agitating, painting the walls blue can help keep an atmosphere of calm.
- Greens convey freshness and peace. Health stores, grocery stores offering fresh produce, often use greens. Florist shops also can benefit from shades of green in their retail area.
- White can be agitating for shoppers, but it can also convey a sense of cleanliness. Some clothing stores do well with white walls, especially if they are higher end and have fewer products on display. Apple uses white and grays very well in their stores to enhance their brand message.
- Pink is an energetic color, and purple is a creative color. Often, these colors are associated with romance and used in shops targeting women.
- Reds can make shoppers anxious because it's a very powerful color, but oranges tone those feelings down a bit. In fact, orange stimulates appetite, so food stores do well with that color.
- Yellow is a happy color and is often found as the primary color in children's stores.

Other Environmental Elements

Furniture and fixtures also help form the environment and with it, the shopping experience. A retailer can achieve a very industrial look with natural, unfinished shelving and peg board fixtures, or he can go in a different direction with brushed metal and wood to convey elegance.

A wedding dress store might have a curvy, overstuffed couch for moms and sisters to hang out on while the bride tries on and models dress after dress. Similarly, a women's clothing store might have some simple, comfortable chairs outside the dressing room for the spouse that has to wait for his or her better half to try on clothing.

Inside the fitting rooms, a retailer may choose to add a couple of nice pieces of comfortable furniture, or she might just supply a bench to help facilitate clothing changes. There's a message to be sent about the shopping experience in there as well. Even the mirror where she determines if the pair of jeans is a keeper should be well thought through. A long mirror, slightly tilted backward at the top, makes a woman appear taller and thinner. There's hardly a woman that doesn't want to be taller and thinner!

Non-clothing retailers can have a lot to think about, too, when it comes to the message they're sending. The checkout area, for instance, can be very stylized or simple. Even the queue area can make a comment on the shopping experience.

Finally, a retailer can always add an element of the unexpected in a small but significant decorative item, especially when the customer can engage with it. The owner of a small, independent book store in Ann Arbor, Michigan, was featured on NBC News because of a certain piece of décor he'd chosen to add to the lower floor of his store. At the bottom of the stairway, sitting on the path to nearly all of his non-fiction selection, he placed an old manual typewriter, complete with a fresh ribbon and a piece of paper.

Readers often fantasize about being writers, so it was natural for his typical customer to come in and type a few words. For many, it became a reason to visit, not only to type on the typewriter, but to see what had been written before. On it, they could understand how Hemingway created, they could write things they couldn't say aloud, and they could dream on paper.

Use interior design to fill your store with experiences.

A link to an interactive elements can be found at the bottom of this page.

You can view the [transcript for "Michigan Bookstore Collects Meaningful Messages with a Typewriter"](#) (opens in new window).

? Practice Questions

<https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...sessments/9295>

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