

RETAIL WAYFINDING BEST PRACTICES



Project Methodology

The Retail Wayfinding Best Practices report provides an overview of what creates successful wayfinding for consumers. Retailers can use this guide to develop successful wayfinding projects in a variety of settings. The report was developed using the following approach:

Survey

An initial survey group guided the process, offering an overview of wayfinding best practices and insight into leaders in the field. This group was selected to ensure representation across a spectrum of disciplines.

Overview

The key elements of retail wayfinding were developed and reviewed by the project team.

Bibliography

A bibliography of leading publications was developed and structured around each section of the report.

Identification of Best Practice Case Studies

A series of case studies was developed around several retail sectors, based on recommendations from the survey group. The case studies also were selected to reflect the key wayfinding elements outlined in the report. The lessons learned from each of these categories is defined below:

Strategy and Store Design

Supermarkets

Successful supermarkets employ a combination of traditional and innovative planning approaches

Mixed Use Centers

Large malls today are usually integrated into complexes containing residential and office development. Mixed use centers use planning strategies from high-traffic facilities like train stations and airports.

Effective Retail Signs

Restaurants

Fast food and fast casual restaurants develop sophisticated identification and informational sign practices to support self-service.

Pharmacies

Pharmacies sell thousands of diverse products in a small space requiring a complex hierarchy of signs.

Banks

Banks borrow innovative sign practices from other industries that rely on self-service, such as fast food restaurants and convenience stores.

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Retail Disciplines and Wayfinding Signs

Case Studies - Retail Disciplines and Wayfinding Signs

Bibliography

Retail Disciplines and Wayfinding Signs

Apparel

The apparel industry uses visual merchandising, display, promotions and signs to support customer wayfinding.

Technology

Media and telecommunications companies use a combination of passive and interactive digital technologies to communicate a complex mixture of products and services.

Case Study Analysis

Case studies were analyzed by reviewing the overall strategy of retailers as well as how the environment employed leading wayfinding practices.

What is Retail Wayfinding?

The term "wayfinding" has come a long way since Kevin Lynch first put it in an architectural context in his 1960 book *The Image of the City*. Lynch defined the term as the consistent organization of sensory cues in the external environment. Later Romedi Passini's 1984 book *Wayfinding in Architecture* expanded the definition to encompass a combination of sensory elements including visual graphics, tactile surfaces and audible communications.

Wayfinding through visual communication, and particularly through signs, has grown as a field dramatically over the last three decades. There is considerable wayfinding expertise for airports, hospitals, college campuses and offices. The idea of a professional environmental graphic designer with skills in wayfinding design has been validated by multiple books, seminars and educational programs.

Retail wayfinding though has defied being channeled into a specific discipline. Instead the field has been treated as component of multiple retail disciplines including long-practiced fields like visual merchandising, newer disciplines like experience design, and technology-driven adaptations like digital and mobile innovations. These disciplines and practice areas are well entrenched with their own associations, academic institutions and publications. To understand best practices in wayfinding for signs it is important to understand how each of these disciplines considers the role of wayfinding and how signs support that role.

Retail wayfinding is heavily driven by analysis and best practices, which sets it apart from other wayfinding initiatives. Profitable stores tend to be meticulous record takers and are constantly experimenting with approaches that will attract customers. At the same time, there is an adherence to long-established practices that note the complex interplay between merchandising, distribution, promotion and customer experience. The best managed retailers often have a firm hand on both traditional practices and new innovations like digital technology and new production processes.

Retail Methodologies that Impact Wayfinding

Strategy and Store Design

The Psychology of Shopping
Store Layout and Signs
Experience Design

Effective Retail Signs

Legibility
Dimensionality
Modularity

Retail Disciplines and Wayfinding Signs

Visual Merchandising and Signs
Display and Signs
Marketing, Promotion and Signs
Branded Environments: Signs, Branding and Architecture
Digital Wayfinding and Signs



Strategy and Store Design

Wayfinding starts with the development of a strategy for managing the customer's experience in the store around the following methodologies:

The Psychology of Shopping

In his books *Why We Buy* and *Call of the Mall*, Paco Underhill introduced the idea that shopping is a cognitive science and that buyer outcomes can be improved by successfully manipulating the physical environment through the planning of stores, placement of displays and use of signs. This field has advanced into a more sophisticated understanding of how people behave in retail settings compared to internet-based environments. David Kepron's book *Retail (r)Evolution* expanded on measuring the customer experience to analyzing retail stores as social environments where the customer seeks entertainment in addition to buying products.

Store Layout

Store planning is an area deeply rooted in tradition. Supermarkets and department stores have used similar planning formulas for decades. Signs also have closely conformed to practices honed over years of experience. The racetrack and grid plans developed by retailers 1950s and the sign practices used to support them are still in use with small modifications. Some companies have grown famous at breaking traditional store layout models and redefining the role of signs to support them, but tradition and experience still plays an important role in how we buy.

One area where signs have grown to play an important role, even in traditional plan designs, has been with using specific product brand displays as visual cues in key areas of the store to attract attention. While this approach dates back to the World's Fairs of the 19th Century, in recent years companies have realized the importance of making these displays central to the customer experience.



In the first major World's Fair at the Crystal Palace in 1851, signs were used to differentiate major pavilions while maintaining a strong architectural identity and planning logic. A number of retailers, including Harrods of London, have tried to replicate that experience on a smaller level in their department stores, using branded displays and completely branded store areas that fit inside a distinct interior environment.



Early in its history, IKEA® broke store planning traditions with a format that combined practices from showrooms, supermarkets and warehouses. The signs employed are also revolutionary, taking graphic approaches and typography from transportation facilities like airports and train stations and applying them to a retail environment.

Another major innovation has been the utilization of a powerful hierarchy of signs and displays that visually break the store into components from large departments to specific product brands. While this started in smaller stores with vertical space like convenience stores and pharmacies, it is now becoming a key strategy in new apparel and houseware stores.



Topshop is a retailer that has employed a large toolkit of visual elements to support wayfinding including a hierarchy of illuminated elements like neon icon signs, directories and product displays.

A final trend in store planning is the store-in-a-store strategy. This approach has leading brands creating mini pavilions and entire sections of the store with their own branding, fixtures and displays. While this approach has been utilized in department stores for some time, it is now being seen in a variety of retail and non-retail environments from banks to restaurants to airports.



Martha Stewart was an early pioneer of the store-in-a-store strategy first with Kmart and then with JCPenney.

Experience Design

One new discipline that plays a dominant role in store planning and wayfinding is experience design. The term was first used in the book *The Experience Economy* in 1999 to explain the transformation of companies from creating products and services to packaging experiences. Today there are dozens of business and design consultancies that specialize in experience design and their methods have transformed retail environments and store planning.

One specific area where experience design has had an enormous impact is reinforcing consistency between the wayfinding hierarchy of physical stores and web sites, marketing materials, and signs. Reinforcing a consistent brand nomenclature and terminology across mediums is a core strategy for retailers looking to improve their overall image with customers.



Walmart went through a complete renovation five years ago based on an experience analysis by Lippincott that analyzed and improved Walmart's brand across mediums ranging from the design of interior sales signs to formatting of the web site and ensured all these elements worked closely together to create an immersive shopping experience. These improvements resulted in a 7% increase in store traffic among higher income customers.

Wegmans, Clifton Market

Wegmans

Design Strategy

Wegmans has developed a reputation for being among the most beloved supermarket chains through combining a lively and varied market experience that mimics traditional European markets with an aggressive approach to marketing, promotion, and private label development that is consistent with major supermarkets today. The store design exemplifies this approach combining exciting food pavilions, displays and demonstrations with aggressive promotions through signs, packaging, and display. Wegmans internal design department works closely with architecture and design firms like Bergmann Associates to develop stores.

Effective Wayfinding Strategies

Planning

Traditional supermarket organization is combined with themed food areas and specialty pavilions. The pavilions utilize a consistent ceiling grid allowing for flexible placement along a central "street" that sits alongside the main traditional supermarket area.

Signs

High quality traditional supermarket sign hardware marking sections of the supermarket aisles coupled with playful dimensional signs marking pavilions, specialty themes and promotional areas.

Integrated Displays

Wegmans invests heavily in high quality fixtures, displays and finishes which serve as visual cues for key landmarks. In addition Wegmans promotional strategy extends to marketing displays that use colorful and high contrast materials.



Wegmans combines traditional supermarket organization with a central "street" market.

Clifton Market

Design Strategy

Clifton Market in Cincinnati is a small local cooperative independent market looking to use digital interactive technology to compete in a competitive urban market that favors both value and quality with their new store. With services including on-line ordering and delivery combined with interactive educational kiosks the market is looking to expand customer knowledge while seeking food bargains.

Effective Wayfinding Strategies

Planning

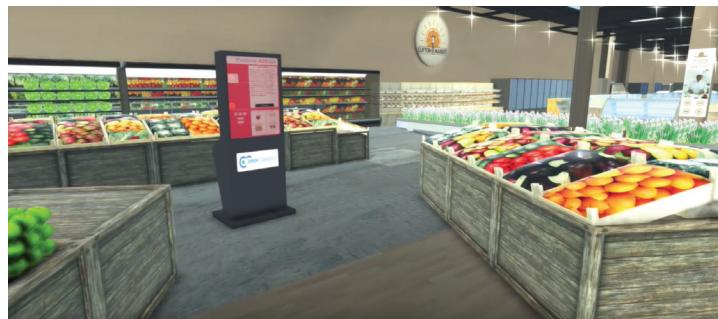
The store is on a very tight footprint. The front of the store is dominated by fresh produce displays, followed by a deli and packaged food section that transitions into a meat, beer and wine section. The store is streamlined with minimal sign and promotional clutter.

Signs

Clifton Market has the most advanced supermarket digital signs in the country. Built around a mobile app that highlights specific promotions while the customer is walking the store, the store also use digital screens in select locations to announce promotions and highlight new products. In addition there are interactive kiosks to education customers on specialty items and services. Non-digital signs have a minimal presence in the space.

Integrated Displays

With a store plan focused on reducing clutter and focusing on digital content, the displays are minimal and high quality with natural accents that highlight the products and minimizes fixed signs.



Clifton Market is looking to cut down store clutter with digital signage and clear displays

City Creek Center

Design Strategy

City Creek Center in downtown Salt Lake City is the retail section of one of the largest downtown mixed use redevelopment projects. Developed by Taubman properties and designed by a consortium of architects including Callison, ZGF and Hobbs + Black, the property combines a natural and urban environment by using a creek as a central path to connect major department store and office anchors on the property. Large parking garages on the city streets around the exterior combine with older buildings and retail stores. The interior space is multi-level with a retractable roof. Selbert Perkins developed all the signage, public art and streetscape elements, effectively branding the entire environment while supporting overall wayfinding and placemaking.

Key Statistic

Largest Downtown Redevelopment Mixed Use Development in America in the Last Five Years (Retail Space)

Hudson Yards	750,000 square feet
City Creek Center	700,000 square feet
Avalon at Alpharetta	570,000 square feet
Brickell Center, Miami	530,000 square feet
City Centre Houston	400,000 square feet
Buckhead Atlanta	300,000 square feet



A landscaped creek ties all the buildings in the complex together.



The graphic palette is integrated into most of the streetscape and wayfinding elements

Effective Wayfinding Strategies

Planning

Central path of the complex combines building fronts, gateways, secondary paths and public space to connect the key elements of the complex. A two-level approach combines a streetscape approach that accents ground floor retail with a second level skybridge that links office and residential space with stores.

Signs

Wayfinding signs contrast elaborate gateway elements with very simple and highly legible signs directing to parking and key amenities. Nearly all signs are illuminated and dimensional and supported by heavy metal frames that fit into the overall architectural palette of the complex.

Integrated Displays

A wide of simple public art and streetscape interventions work together to build a sense of place and provide visual cues. These include floor engraving, waste receptacles, lights, pillars, rails and banners. In addition color coordinated murals support wayfinding in the interior parking garages.



Illumination plays a key role in defining wayfinding and identity elements.

Effective Retail Signs

Signs were for many years considered to be the most disposable part of retail stores, utilizing inexpensive materials that could be changed frequently with minimal thought on scale, clutter or impact beyond the immediate needs to increase sales around items or identify areas of the store. With the overall effort to consider customer experience, signs are now seen as an important investment that must be looked at with the same care as other fixtures. This has led to strategies around the following areas:

Legibility

Stores today have a much better understanding on the importance of legible signs in the environment, often utilizing modeling software to analyze viewing corridors. Effective stores also focus on more legible type, scale and contrast when developing signs.



Modularity and Material Quality

Modular sign systems have always been an integral part of store signs, but successful store systems are growing more closely linked to store merchandise fixtures themselves, often becoming part of the same system. This approach also has succeeded in raising the quality of store signs, by matching them to the same material standards as fixtures.



Dimensionality

Stores are beginning to see the opportunities in utilizing sign innovations developed in exterior architectural signs on in-store wayfinding programs. This includes the use of channel letters, projecting signs and awnings. The strategies employed by "store in a store" programs often include dimensional sign elements making store interiors appear like urban streets or street fairs.



Illumination

With new LED technologies stores are beginning to take exterior illumination approaches to the inside of stores, utilizing both internal and external lighting approaches. A leading trend has been the use of cove and soffit lighting to illuminate signs, while also highlighting entire departments.



Shake Shack

Design Strategy

Shake Shack began as a temporary food stand in Madison Square in 2000 by the Union Square Hospitality Group, which grew in popularity and finally became a fully designed and branded permanent restaurant in 2004. The restaurant was lauded for its high standards in food quality and customer service, but grew slowly in the first five years. Growing to 70 restaurants changed the organization to focusing on an expansive international growth strategy. Since the restaurant grew out of a single iconic restaurant in Madison Square most of the branding and customer service practices are developed to reflect the core of the customer experience that started there including generating excitement on the exterior through activities and events. The organization has also stuck with its original design team from its first store including SITE (James Wines) and Pentagram (Paula Scher).

Shake Shack took five years to develop the overall brand from a single store to a multi-store model. The Pentagram brand design team worked closely with the architect to design type, color and logo elements that could integrate into a variety of exterior and interior architectural approaches. The management team maintains strong control over the design of the overall customer experience at all the store locations while experimenting with a variety of materials and illumination techniques.

Key Statistic

The Growth Plan for Shake Shack

2004	1st Shake Shack
2010	7 Shake Shacks
2014	68 Shake Shacks
2024	1000 Projected Shake Shacks



Type and icons define both the exterior identity and the interior wayfinding, informational signs, and packaging.



Shake Shack menu boards are a well thought out combination of color, symbol and type hierarchies.

Effective Wayfinding Strategies

Planning

Stores are true to the original snack bar model with the interior and exterior architecture closely complementing each other in style and materiality. A prominent menu board and central serving bar maintains this approach is consistent among the widely varying restaurants.

Signs

Shake Shack developed its iconic design image early in its history and many of the approaches are focused on keeping the design quality of the signs consistent with the overall experience while maintaining a unique approach for each location. Signs are central to their exterior and interior design strategy.

Shake Shack utilizes a typeface (Neutraface) and a logo approach that is developed for both graphic and environmental use, utilizing thin lines and very open counters. This is combined with clear strategies for external and internal illumination utilizing a variety of approaches including projected, neon profiles, open faced channel letters, edge lighting and projected lighting. Interior menu boards and signs maintain the materiality and consistency of the exterior with signs having an architectural heft through high quality materials and lighting.

Integrated Displays

Signs are well integrated into the material architecture both outside and inside with varying materials providing visual cues for the separation between service and dining areas. The graphic palette on the signs closely extends to print menus and packaging which in turn plays a prominent display role in the space.

Walgreens

Design Strategy

Walgreens is one of the largest pharmacy chains in the country. In the last two years the company has been pursuing a strategy to develop flagship stores in major American cities. These stores are double the size of a typical store with the goal of creating a luxury shopping experience with self-serve dining and clinic services. The flagship store approach is part of a larger strategy of identifying more than 600 stores to upgrade to "well experience" models, which includes fresh food offerings, enhanced beauty departments and upgraded pharmacies. The approach envisions a future where pharmacies are a center for healthcare services for an expanded population with access to prevention oriented healthcare insurance.

Flagships are in historic or unique, new buildings. The design approach combines the Walgreens standards with elements that share the character of the city and buildings. Each store also has a layout with services based on the specific demographic for the area.

Strategy

Key Statistic

600 of 8,217 Walgreens stores are part of the "Well Experience" model

Average flagship store size: 22,000 square feet.

Average new Walgreens store: 14,500 square feet.

The average Walgreens store is only 6 years old.



Unique pavilion elements provide much greater contrast when combined with a clear hierarchy of signs.



Consistent vertical separation of signs reduces clutter

Effective Wayfinding Strategies

Planning

The store is developed as a series of pavilions that stand off from the background architecture allowing for a respectful separation between the shop floor and architecture. Design elements in flagships are allowed to deviate from standard Walgreens guidelines to better integrate with the more unique buildings. The stores also use the considerable vertical space to profile key areas.

Signs

Most signs marking key areas of the store are dimensional to stand apart from their environment. Digitally printed wall surfaces are also selected to match the unique characteristics of the areas as well as contrast with the signage.

Walgreens focuses on vertical separation to make signs more visible in flagship stores. There is a clear separation between floor fixtures and signs highlighting each area, as well as a rigorous consistency of sign heights. Signs mounted on wall surfaces are also designed to contrast with a variety of materials and printed surfaces that Walgreens employs in the stores.

Walgreens focuses heavily on using illumination for legibility. Most major interior signs are double illuminated using both projection and internal illumination to create a sense of place around each sign. Walgreens also takes advantage of window transparency by using interior signs as an exterior icon mounting just behind window glass to better control lighting and make the signs easier to maintain.

Integrated Displays

Walgreens pioneered the concept of integrating the sign into the central tower entrance of the store which has been effective with the new buildings that the company usually develops. With flagship stores this approach is maintained but made unique for each location. This approach also minimizes code issues by moving signs normally on the exterior of the store to the interior.

TD Bank

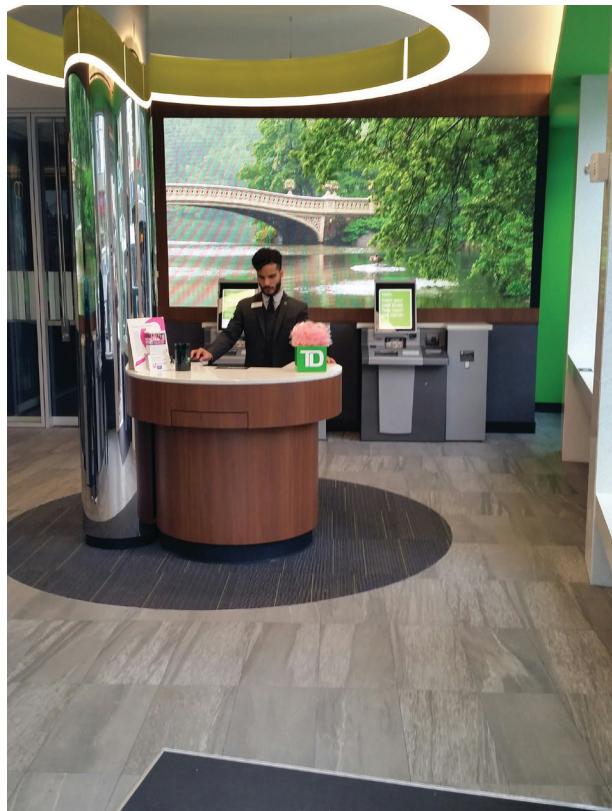
Design Strategy

In 2008, TD Bank went through a long process to convert the acquired Commerce Bank to the TD Brand while maintaining and improving many of the leading approaches to customer experience. Utilizing a brand consulting firm, Shikatani Lacroix, the company took best practices from experience and focus group testing and translated it into a design language. This included taking advantage of the transparent building design to better develop a brand merchandising approach using print and digital signs. The design also focused on developing specific touchpoints which had the biggest impact on customer experience.

Key Statistic

JD Powers 2013 Study on Leading Banks for Customer Satisfaction 5 Star Ratings for Facilities on the East Coast

TD Bank
United Community Bank
Susquehanna Bank
Chase Bank
Bangor Savings Bank
Rocklands Trust Bank



The movement at TD Bank is towards a simple and seamless environment where signs are fully integrated into the architecture.



Tight integration of marketing, signage, and fixture reduces clutter and maintains tight organization.

Effective Wayfinding Strategies

Planning

TD Banks are built similar to many fast food restaurants with a transparent front leading to the main teller counter with few visual or physical obstructions and a dominant drive through. Additional banking services are adjacent and are also open to the outside.

Signs

Financial product marketing is placed in modular systems that closely align with the window frames of the bank. Signs at key customer touchpoints like the service desk, ATM machines, and lobby identity all use high-quality material and illumination. Signs are carefully managed with minimal clutter.

Integrated Displays

A tight graphic palette is maintained both for print and digital product marketing that are carefully integrated into fixtures that support the larger architectural palette. Brochures are also carefully configured into fixtures with strong material qualities. Newer stores also are focused on greater digital content integration into wall surfaces to make digital a great part of the interior finish vocabulary.



Modular illuminated systems are key to the TD Bank approach.

Retail Disciplines and Wayfinding Signs

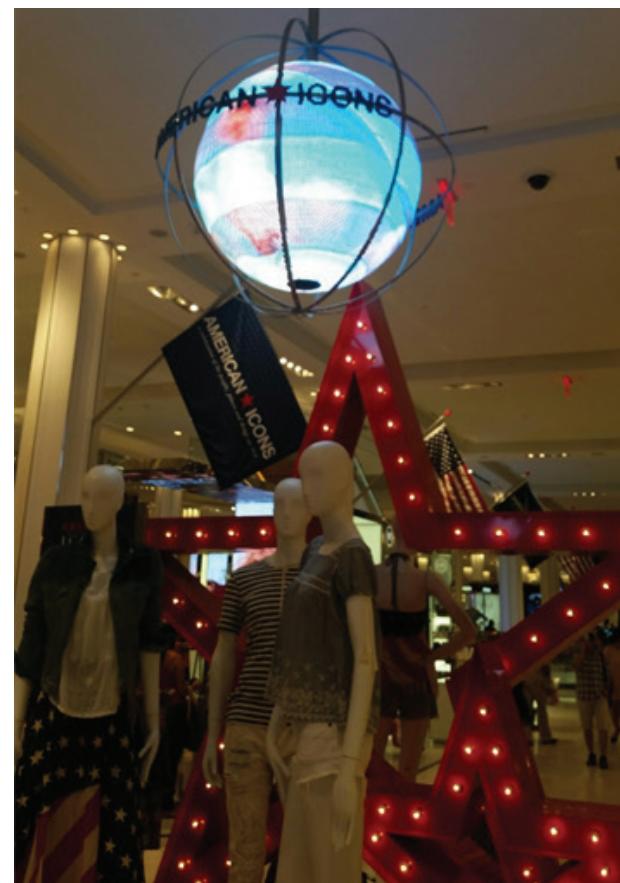
Signs alone do not create effective wayfinding in retail environments. Successful store navigation requires bringing together architecture and display to create a complete environment that both directs and informs.

Window and Visual Displays

Window and visual displays have been a central retail discipline that signs support. In recent years increased transparency of store architecture through removal of enclosed boxed windows has resulted in display being a much greater part of the overall store design and a primary supporter of wayfinding. Display designers use themed displays to entice visitors into stores, serve as landmarks and promote specific sales. They also employ large format printing combined with modular panels and systems to closely align displays with the overall wayfinding and communication demands of the store.



Transparency has been a central part of current store design. Old Navy is among the larger retailers that have used a combination of sign and display, both to open up storefronts and to focus attention on new products.



Very few companies have closely integrated digital content into their designs, but some, like Cumberland Farms, have been exceptions, experimenting in digital signs as a key component of their marketing strategies.

Another trend has been to make illuminated signs a key component of displays using retro methods like neon and light bulbs combined with dimensional and projected digital displays. Dynamic elements serve to transform displays into lively areas for public engagement.

Visual Merchandising and Signs

The multi-billion dollar visual merchandising industry, comprising the fixture industry, merchandise management, store management, store design, digital point-of-purchase providers and display design is the central operating system for retailers. Their practices are sensitive to customer actions and psychology. Signage in visual merchandising is often seen on two levels: Macro level signs that identify key areas of the store, are relatively fixed and not easily changeable, and point-of-purchase, point-of-sale and promotion signs that are flexible and adaptable to the environment.

Wayfinding sign excellence is often seen in the close correlation between how the macro and micro level of signs are managed. Companies with high level practices have a seamless integration, while declining retailers often have breaks in consistency and quality.



Trader Joe's store signs often have the appearance of being amateurish and locally produced but are in fact part of a clear policy for adapting environments to localized conditions while maintaining a national identity.



The July 2015 Issue of Design Retail magazine profiled the incredible success of display signs and fixtures for increasing sales with certain products like batteries and razor blades.

There has been considerable pressure for visual merchandisers to innovate in order to compete with online shopping. This has meant the use of multi-sensory elements like smell and touch, as well as digital and dynamic displays. These approaches have also been promoted by the fixture industry and their association, POPAI (The Point of Purchase Association International).

Marketing, Promotion and Signs

Marketing departments have an outsized impact on wayfinding signs in the environment. With access to high quality large format printing retailers are working to turn promotion into part of the wayfinding process through large-scale marketing materials integrated into light boxes, fixtures and window design.



H&M is perhaps the most aggressive company in the world at using signs to promote new products and also to define spaces inside of the store.

The growth in large format graphics has also resulted in mergers between industries in an attempt to better control brands in the environment. The packaging and fixture industries have combined to control the display of their products and relieve the efforts of in-store personnel. Trade show fabricators have also found opportunities in retail by developing pop-up stores and pavilions inside of existing stores.



Supermarkets have seen the greatest impact from the merger between signs, fixtures and packaging.



Pop-up stores and branded pavilions are an exciting new trend in retail, reinvigorating traditional mall and department store spaces.

Branded Environments: Signs, Branding and Architecture

Eva Maddox of Eva Maddox Branded Environments (now part of Perkins+Will) first coined the term "brand environments" for practices that integrate brand communications into environmental design. Closely aligned with the discipline of experience design, brand environments treat retail spaces as the main driver of an organization's brand. Brand environments have evolved into an exploration of architecture, materiality, space and landscape that reinforces corporations and institutions.

In retail environments this has resulted in stores that share design attributes from other institutions including airports, offices and residences. Signs and wayfinding programs in this environment often have greater permanence and are closely integrated with their interiors.



Apple was an early pioneer on utilizing their retail spaces to enhance their corporate brand. To this day no store sells more product per square foot than Apple.

Digital Wayfinding and Signs

In the last decade digital retail technology has grown into a multi-billion dollar industry that has touched every aspect of the buying and selling experience. Retailers have worked to produce systems that link web purchasing, the movement of inventory, and in-store purchasing into one seamless system. Interestingly though, extending these systems to visual signs in the environment has been very difficult. Beyond front of store displays and key landmarks, in-store networks have been very difficult to develop due to expensive upfront costs and ongoing management.

One area where digital systems have started to make significant headway is in-store networks, particularly for content intensive retailers like electronics and communications. The next frontier for these systems is interactive content where customer behaviors and purchases impact content. Stores believe that responsive content will allow them to truly realize the value of digital investment.



Restaurants and convenience stores have made the largest investment in interactive digital content. At the Melt Shop, dynamic content not only changes based on centralized price changes, but the menu hierarchies and promotions also can change based on store demand.

Urban Outfitters Inc. (URBN)

Design Strategy

Urban Outfitters, Inc. is a retail company that offers a variety of merchandise through specific customer niches. The company has established a number of specific retail brands including Urban Outfitters, Anthropologie and Terrain that cut across industry segments from apparel to home furnishings to accessories. All Urban Outfitters stores share the same philosophy including developing unique store environments that offer eclectic merchandise.

Urban Outfitters separates itself from most retailers by making display a central part of the shopping experience, breaking down traditional approaches to signs, fixtures and store planning. Products are oriented around display vignettes and the store plan becomes more organic and open to constant change with the introduction of new product mixes. Signs themselves also become more informal and display oriented, utilizing natural materials, painted signs, and cut out forms.



Urban Outfitters invests heavily in the traditions of window display as both a thematic device and to promote the product mix.



Few organizations invest as much as Urban Outfitters in unique combinations of sign, fixture, and display.

Effective Wayfinding Strategies

Planning

Every store is unique and every store changes frequently with new merchandise mixes. This approach makes every store visit a chance to make new merchandise discoveries. At the same time the stores also focus heavily in display management with a focused look on how distinct products interact with each other and how they relate to purchasing habits. This approach is difficult to be successful at and involves intensive management. The organization looks very closely at how these display approaches also interact with online navigation.

Signs

Sign materiality and location is fluid in stores with a focus on integration into display environments. Signs utilize the same eclectic approach as other elements in the store, often using mismatched letters, chalk drawings and other eclectic approaches.

Eclectic illumination also plays a prominent role in identifying and highlighting key thematic areas in the environment. Channel letters, cut letters, back lighting, spot lighting and Christmas lights are used in varied combinations to accent spaces, define pavilions, focus on merchandise and solidify the brand identity.

Urban Outfitters stores directly relate to their corporate environments, bring materiality and placemaking innovation from the corporate workplace to the store environment.

Integrated Displays

There is a clear connection between all of the designed items in the store from the products themselves to displays, from windows to fixtures to the building design. This results in an experience where every designed item can play a central role in creating a sense of place. It also results in merchandising displays that take on the role of unique art displays.

Time Warner Experience

Design Strategy

Time Warner Cable redeveloped a series of stores into the Time Warner Experience to improve its reputation for customer service (among the lowest in the industry). The store's redevelopment expands the retail storefront from a place for bill payment and basic services to an educational experience on Time Warner services and cable packages. The store was developed to combine interactive digital elements with customer service.

Key Statistics

Internet Service Providers Scores for Customer Satisfaction 2015

Average	63
Verizon	68
Cablevision	61
Time Warner Cable	58
Comcast	56



A combination of large public screens and small tablets bring the social space and the personal space together.



The technology supports human interaction, which is still a key part of the customer experience.

Effective Wayfinding Strategies

Planning

Transparency and openness is the central feature of the planning of the Time Warner Experience. A focal media is the only large scale landmark in the space, surrounded by customer service station, a learning bar and a lounge area. The exterior of the store is a glass façade with minimal signage.

Signs

A combination of large scale public digital signs combined with small interactive tablets. The largest screen is the central visible landmark in the space with multi-screen video and dynamic imagery selected by an individual tablet, but seen throughout the space. Each customer service station also has a smaller version of this approach, with larger screens promoting specific products being highlighted on smaller interactive tablets.

Integrated Displays

The store uses customer service support to assist in customer interaction with the technology at each of the major stations. The stores also use modern and creative architectural detailing to accentuate key focus areas in the facility. Large lighting fixtures and niches define customer service stations and the learning bars are supported by chairs and counters that curve and undulate in contrast with the rectilinear spaces.

Credits

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National Retail Federation
Association for Retail Environments
International Consortium of Shopping Centers
Point of Purchase Advertising Association
Digital Signage Connection



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