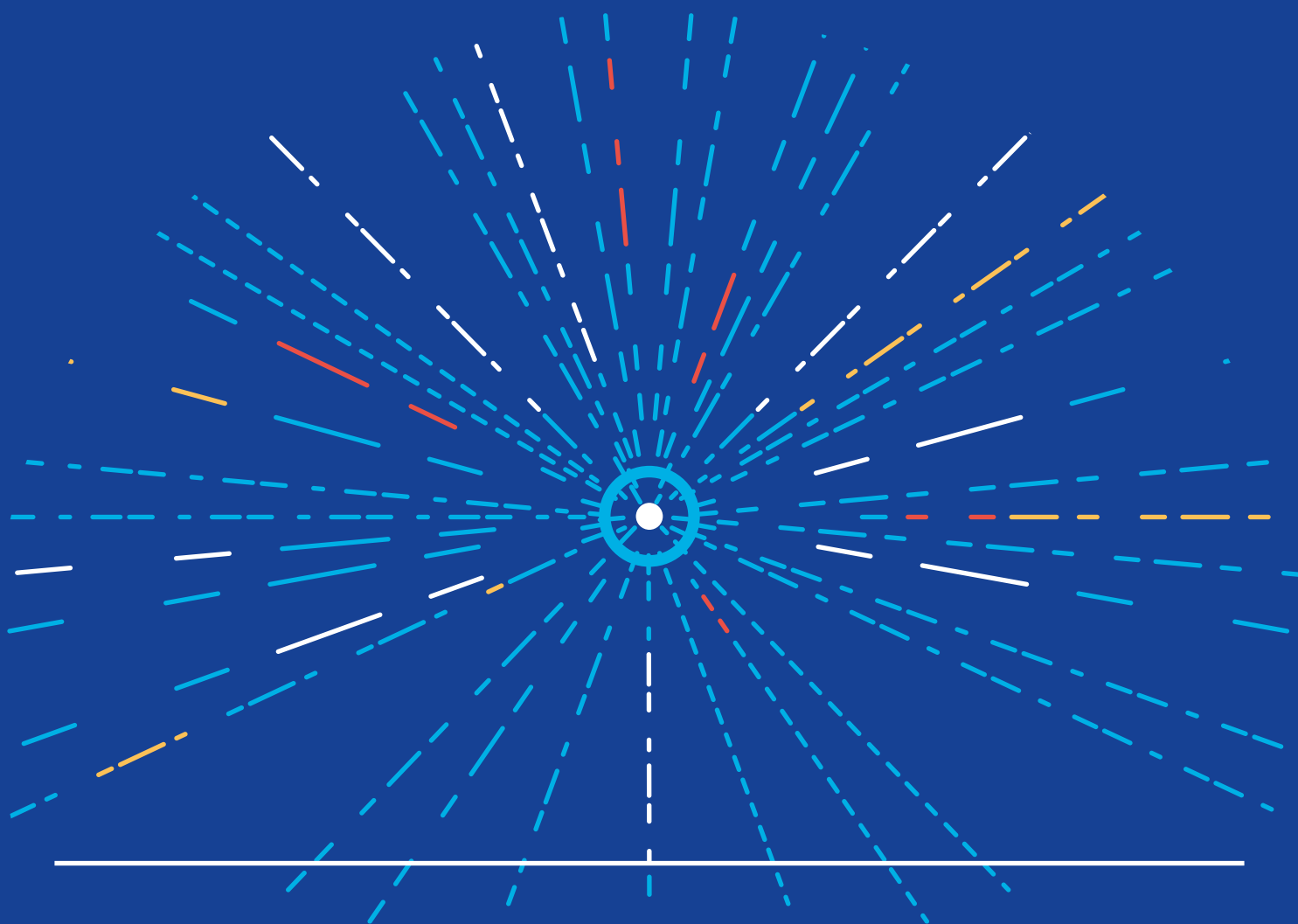


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Brands that get it right in the new age of retail



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Introduction

The new age of retail is no longer a conversation of online versus offline – rather it is a seamless merger of the two.

As online retailers look to expand into the offline world, traditional retailers are in a race to up their game and provide a holistic customer experience in order to capture sales and market share.

Successful businesses are trying to take the best elements of each sales channel, and combine them to ensure they offer customers consistency at each brand touchpoint. There are a combination of factors causing this phenomenon.

Consumer expectations have evolved because of the convenience online provides. The physical store is now often a later port of call in the customer journey, but the brand is expected to be able to serve consumers wherever and whenever they choose to interact.

It is also down to changing times and attitudes. Shopping has always been about consumption and community, but there is growing evidence to suggest generations of shoppers are looking for deeper connections with brands and new ways to interact with them.

Standout retailers and top tips

This Retail Gazette-Samsung white paper picks out some of the retailers getting their strategies right in the new age of retail, focusing on compelling case studies where physical retail is truly alive and kicking.

It goes into detail on examples of retailers driving strong results and making waves with their shop design and approach to digital. It also includes insights and observations from key protagonists in today's retail landscape.

These retailers in question more often than not have digital display solutions at the heart of their in-store strategies. With so many possibilities presented to retail by digital display, we round off the white paper with nine tips to get the most from digital display.

Chapter 1

Digital display in retail: 4 of the best



#1 EE showcase stores in the UK

- **Flexible digital display and related content**
- **Six-shop pilot to influence wider store estate**
- **Added theatre to the in-store environment**

Mobile network operator EE runs five stores around the UK which have been influenced by what the company describes as its “Showcase Project” – but the success of the digital initiative means more stores will soon benefit from these features.

The stores – in Westfield Stratford City, Westfield London, London’s Tottenham Court Road, Oxford, and Nottingham’s Victoria Centre – have been refitted with digital displays and interactive experience zones, taking the company in a fresh and exciting direction.

At the front of each of these stores, there are installations using digital screens and other features, enabling visitors to gain a curated tour of product ranges from a brand ambassador or to explore the tech individually. Manufacturers are invited to take the space and fund the space, for example Samsung showcased its smartwatch complete with exercise bicycle, allowing shoppers to test the health monitoring functionality.

John Magill, the former senior digital and design manager for retail at EE, who was part of the team that brought the showcase concept to life, says: “It is all about ‘heroing’ our own products and brands and inviting manufacturers to own that space for a period of time. So far, that space has been filled for nearly two years now without a single break.”

Magill, who is now an independent digital retail consultant, says EE created “a micro ecosystem digitally”, which entailed a floor with power and data, an eight-screen video wall, and a gantry hanging above with power. The space is all connected, allowing manufacturers to hang projectors from the gantry, and add specific lighting and sound.

“It’s like a miniature showcase stage or theatre,” he says, adding that EE is looking at how elements of the showcase concept can be embedded in smaller stores across its portfolio.

Behind each showcase stage is a service area, leading on to a product display space which contains digital touchpoints related to BT’s TV and broadband products. These areas also contain a digital product finder, allowing customers to locate items online that are not in the store.

“We got into a good relationship with Samsung when the showcase initiative was launched and 60-70% of screens that go in are Samsung,” Magill notes.

The concept – which was created in conjunction with design agency Quinine – picked up a silver award in the 2019 Design Business Association Design Effectiveness Awards, and looks set to influence future fit outs at EE.

#2 Made.com Soho, London

- **Screens for marketing, engagement, and sales**
- **Stores crucial for supporting online business**
- **Gamified in-store shopping experience**

Online furniture retailer Made.com revamped its London Soho showroom in 2019, and – in the words of design director Ruth Wassermann – it has set a blueprint for the other showrooms it plans to open around Europe.

The redesign of the space on Charing Cross Road, which was led by chief creative officer Jo Jackson and the brand team, includes the introduction of big digital screens at the front of the store and interactive ones towards the rear.

Made.com uses this showroom and others located across Europe to show off a selection of its products and give shoppers the confidence to buy, but shoppers cannot walk out with items in their hands. Instead, they are encouraged to make a purchase digitally in the store.

Each product in the Soho space has a QR code, which shoppers can scan with their smartphone camera to then gain an opportunity to buy online, while other digital features include a giant tablet which allows customers to browse the full range – and shop the look – from the retailer's Instagram feed.

"When the showroom was built, the brand team were keen to make sure they gave customers what they wanted, so the customer can interact as much or as little as they like," Wassermann describes, adding the screens help increase showroom dwell time.

"The idea is they walk into a store and if they don't want to talk to anybody, they don't have to talk to anybody."

That is where the technology comes in. The big screen at the front rotates special offers, new ranges, or brand messaging, while "gamified" screens towards the back of the showroom allow shoppers to explore Made.com in more detail.

"We segment our products into different design styles, and we have fun tools on the big screens in the showroom called 'Find your style', where customers can select images they like to help understand their style preferences," notes Wassermann.

“It’s always been really important that people can view the products in a physical environment because online you often don’t really understand the quality or simple things like how a fabric may feel.”

In 2018, Made.com raised funds of around £40 million to help support European growth. Revenue in 2018 grew 37% to £173 million, with the UK arm up 34% to hit £100 million for the first time, underlining the possibilities for retailers combining bricks with clicks.

#3 Superdry Norway

- **Giant storefront video wall**
- **Digital display to maintain fresh feel**
- **Centrally controlled content management system**

“With the big screen, we can always get the best and new images from the UK, and the customers that will come in, they will always see what they can expect and they will always see the latest trends and everything that we have to offer.”

The words of Hans Christian Axel Melbye, CEO of Superdry Norway, following the 2018 opening of the flagship Superdry store in Oslo. For this location, Superdry saw an opportunity to market its expansive in-store collection in a new, innovative way, so it implemented a large direct-view LED video wall in the storefront window.

Meanwhile, indoor display solutions enable marketers to show the full product range, creating an endless aisle of items for visitors wanting to shop the brand. The screens also help Superdry keep products and promotions current, complementing the traditional static in-aisle and point of sale marketing material which appears throughout.

A centrally operated content management system linked up to the displays means Superdry can keep what it showcases fresh, and run the window messaging throughout the night for impactful marketing 24 hours a day.

Superdry worked with Samsung to bring the technology touchpoints to the fore in the store, and since implementing the indoor LED and video wall, the retailer says it has driven footfall, reduced ad costs, and inspired other retailers to explore digital displays.

#4 Lush Tokyo

- **Always-on marketing with digital display**
- **Linking digital and physical in the store window**
- **Signage to reflect the mood of the city**

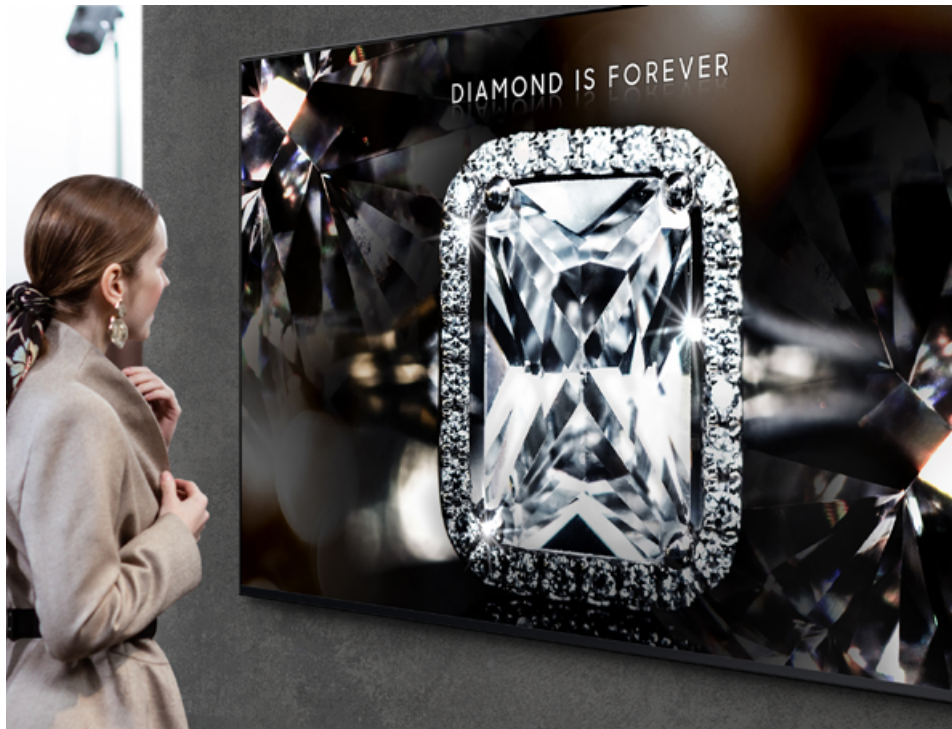
On 1 June 2019, cosmetics brand Lush opened another store in Tokyo, placing retail technology at the heart of the building and the consumer experience it wants to create.

The store is located in Tokyo's Shinjuku station, and has been described by Lush as "an experimental, imaginative retail space showcasing Lush's innovation in technology". A digital signage implementation, comprising a four-storey 1,024cm x 352cm external LED screen, aims to showcase content to "reflect the mood" of Shinjuku – while complementing the already heavily digital look of the neighbourhood.

Lush also said it would like to convey its company values, as well as its marketing campaigns and creativity, using the digital signage supplied by multiple manufacturers.

One novel way to purchase goods at the store is via a shoppable window, where passers-by can scan an on-screen display – available 24 hours a day – to shop curated collections and product drops, which can then be delivered to their homes.

The digitisation of the shop is part of a wider store transformation programme at the business, which consists of relocating to larger units in prime locations around the world.



Flagships and future retail

A host of other retailers are unveiling new concepts and opening flagships with the mentality of making strides in the new retail landscape.

For several years, the Boots UK and Ireland store estate has remained largely unchanged in terms of look, design, and digital features. However, with the opening of its new London Covent Garden flagship in June, the health and beauty retailer has laid down a marker for how its future physical environment will look.

The store in a prime central London location for shopping, business, and tourism features more digital displays than a traditional Boots, with a strong focus on emphasising its specialist beauty proposition. As customers make their way up the escalator to floor one, they are met by an impactful Samsung digital display that aims to underline the company's brand message and key announcements.

Throughout the top floor, digital end-of-aisle displays combine with lower shelving units to create a more open and less cluttered feel than its traditional estate.

Managing director for Boots UK and Ireland, Seb James, says the new store format – brought to life through a combination of work by the Dalziel & Pow and True Story agencies, as well as an in-house team – promises a premium shopping experience.

“The insight is clear – everyone likes shopping in a nice environment and that’s what we’ve tried to create here,” he states.

Other examples of retailers and brands seemingly succeeding or putting the building blocks in place to achieve positive results in this new world, include Radley and Burberry.

Burberry often ringfences exclusive launches to its social media channels and flagship stores – with digital displays in shops heavily promoting the campaigns – while Radley has conducted a store refit programme as part of its omnichannel strategy.

The handbag brand's first move was to put digital screens in stores because it was deemed a key start to a digital journey and the joining up of online and offline.

On the other side of the Atlantic, cult US fashion brand Reformation gains plaudits from analysts for its use of technology in the store to solve traditional customer pain points.

Its New York store allows customers to pick out items as they peruse the aisles, which staff then place in a two-way wardrobe in the fitting area. Shoppers arrive in the changing rooms to find their choices awaiting them, and they can use a touchscreen to request new sizes or styles which are then repopulated in the wardrobe by shop staff.

Lara Marrero, strategy director at the global retail practice of Gensler, a design and consulting agency, says: "It's that kind of thing which takes the pain out of retail, and fitting rooms are where conversions are made and lost."

"It's just so seamless, it puts service at the core, and it uses digital to enable better service. There is also a screen in the store for people who don't want to interact with a human."

Chapter 2

9 tips for getting your retail display strategy right

We've listed, above, some of the retailers and brands making positive strides in the new age of retail, but what are the general rules for being successful in this new digitally-influenced shopping environment?

Samsung advises that digital display should be a core part of today's in-store retail strategy – and many of the successful brands and retailers we've discussed tend to agree. But a digital display strategy is more than just kitting out a shop with big screens.

With so much retailers and brands have to think about, we've got nine essential tips, accompanied by some professional advice from those involved in today's retail world.

[Find out about Samsung's latest digital display solutions](#)

1. Aim for standout

Retailers must bring their brands to life through indoor and outdoor displays with ultra-bright and high-speed refresh rates to deliver reliably smooth video streaming that cannot be ignored.

Francis Rodrigues, head of IT at Radley, says in-store marketing was the first port of call when the business agreed on a strategy to improve its digital experience.

“We partnered with Mood Media to put in digital signage and systems to allow us to publish new material, marketing and content in all our stores – and schedule it all on demand” he explains.

“We did that as part of a store refit programme. We had a concept store and looked to build it out and we pushed it to more stores.”

2. Make it yours

Plug and play displays are customisable, scalable, and come in a range of shapes and sizes to provide a perfect fit across whatever retail environment is trying to be created.

Reflecting on the new Boots Covent Garden store, the retailer’s Melanie Widdowson, head of in-store customer experience development, says the digital signage on both floors fits in with wider business targets.

Its introduction has been thought out to specifically support the Boots brand, hosting brand-centric messaging around its Advantage Card loyalty proposition as well as flash messaging such as a “New Experience” which matches the store’s communication goals.

“We didn’t want to introduce screens for screen’s sake – that’s not the purpose,” Widdowson – who is leading Boots ‘store of the future’ plans – notes.

“We’ve thought about where it will help us reduce cardboard in the future and also how we can build that omnichannel customer journey into the whole process.”

3. Make it interactive

Display solutions allow retailers' customers to introduce, view and share content from their personal devices quickly and efficiently.

Some of the best cases of display solutions in retail stores have recognised they need to interact with the smartphones that are never far from consumers' reach. Making things interactive can have a lasting impact on shopper experience and loyalty – for example H&M's flagship Times Square store in New York.

The fashion retailer's store allows visitors to speak their demands to a screen to get their photograph taken in a magazine cover style. They can scan a QR code which transfers the image to their phones, and they can post on social media to receive discounts.

Gensler's Marrero says retailers need to think about in-store technology in the context of "digital in service" – meaning it must have a useful function. She also encourages retailers to utilise people's smartphones wherever possible.

"The reality is technology needs to be fit for purpose," she asserts.

"A lot of times technology is implemented because they feel they need to keep up with the Joneses – it's a form of one-upmanship. But the most important tool brands have in their arsenal is the phone that's attached to everyone's fingertips."

4. Make no mistake

A crystal-clear picture ensures complete data visibility and detailed representation of a retailer's offering.

In the EE showcase stores, for example, the product finder screens offer comprehensive specifications of the company's full inventory, 3D modelling of those items, and shots of each product in various angles.

"They allow for more information than a standard backing card," explains EE's Magill.

5. Invest for the future

Displays with the right content management platform and capabilities deliver ever-smarter campaigns and richer shopping experiences.

MagicINFO 7 was released in 2019, with expanded features to better serve large enterprise clients and allow them to manage all Samsung Smart Signage – hardware, software and content – remotely from a central location.

The latest version supports more effective organisational management, expanded remote management and even data analytics. Regardless of how many digital displays a company needs to handle, MagicINFO's network-based solution breaks down complexity.

[Find out more](#)

6. Keep it simple

Retailers and brands should use an intuitive content management system, which makes creation, scheduling and deployment simple and efficient.

Made.com's Wassermann says: "The great thing about digital screens is you can change them all the time. "Generally, it's displaying the most relevant newness for us – it's a way to communicate the same kind of things that we communicate through our CRM marketing."

7. The perfect fit

Retailers and brands must ensure their new display solutions integrate seamlessly with their existing hardware and software.

Magill asserts: "In order to create a successful digital strategy in store, retailers must understand what the wider business goals are, know the customer journey, be familiar with the architecture of store design and how everything fits into a store."

He adds: "The key thing is to create a flexible platform that can evolve.

"If you put a piece of technology in, ensure it can evolve going forward, because if it's static it is going to be very difficult and expensive to update it every time."

8. Your brand's best light

Natural or ambient light interference can be challenging in certain retail environments, so retailers and brand must make sure picture quality dynamically adapts, and brightness is ramped up compared to standard signage.

Samsung's The Wall, for example, offers a digital display with optimum peak brightness and extremely accurate grayscale expression for crystal clear image presentation, thanks to LED HDR picture refinement and HDR 10+ support.

[Find out more](#)

9. Minimal but purposeful design

Retailers and brands need to ensure they have clean, organised retail space, allowing for content and firmware updates without the need for messy cables – but they need to be sure what the function of the tech is in the first place.

Marrero says so many retailers design a new look store with fresh features, and then work out how to use it afterwards. "They have got it all backwards," she argues.

"Let's start on what is the strategy for product, service, digital, content, visual merchandising, and the brand?" Marrero explains.

"Look at all the layers and then build the brief around it. This is the operating model for this space. If you don't have the operating system then what's the point of designing everything because it's a waste of money."

[Find out more about the latest Samsung digital display solutions that can support the new in-store operating model retailers need to create...](#)



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