



Checklist

3 steps to a compelling in-store experience

Here's a compelling tidbit:

Last year, brick-and-mortar store sales grew more than e-commerce sales for the first time ever—18.5 percent vs 14.2 percent, respectively.

Consumers' collective return to in-person shopping presents massive opportunity, but crafting the perfect brick-and-mortar experience isn't easy.

As we all know all too well—between labor shortages, supply chain failures, gas prices, and inflation, our current economic environment is presenting unprecedented challenges. So while people are eager to be living IRL, they also need to stretch every dollar further.

With the ways the world, technology, and retail have evolved, what does it take to not just survive but thrive in retail right now?

Driven to help brands answer this question, we've taken everything we've learned in partnership with top retailers over the past few decades and compiled this actionable checklist. In it, you'll find practical yet inspired steps you can take now to curate a dynamic in-store experience that attracts consumers, provides added value, and boosts sales.

What does it take to not just survive but thrive in retail right now?

01 Invest in design

Experiential design catalyzes brand equity by providing value, building trust, and showcasing your company's commitment to your customers' needs and wants.

How can you make getting in the door, finding the desired products, and completing the purchase as easy as possible? At the same time, how can you create moments throughout your store to encourage customers to stop and interact with the products you are promoting?

When it comes to pulling this off, it's part art, part science. Lean on experts knowledgeable in the nuanced ways that décor, signage, substrates, lighting, and layout can dramatically influence a shopper's experience.



These are the (not-so-small) details that make buyers want to not only shop in person, but also linger, enjoy, and revisit.

If your aim is to:

Try this:

My ideas:

Up-level your visual merchandising.

- Modernize your color palette. As one of the most important elements of visual merchandising, color attracts attention, expresses meaning, unites the environment, and dramatically influences buying behavior.

Implement effective, eye-catching signage and promotional displays.

- Seek out an expert to evaluate your storefronts, POP marketing, wayfinding signage, and opportunities for interactive displays.

Create an Instagrammable environment.

- Leverage your physical space as a setting wherein shoppers can use the store as somewhere to snap the perfect content for their feed.

02 Integrate smart technology

There's no question that the past few years have evolved what shoppers expect the in-store experience to look and feel like—and how that should integrate with their online shopping habits.

Buyers want a convenient, customized experience. They want value. Technology has made that more possible now than ever before. At the same time, the pandemic has irrefutably reinforced that we humans are social beings.

Cultivating opportunities for human-to-product and human-to-human interactions acknowledges the reasons why your buyers are there in person in the first place.



If your aim is to:

Try this:

My ideas:

Optimize the customer journey through your store.

- Begin with an in-store marketing audit. This will empower you with the knowledge you need to close the gap between the merchandising you've planned and what's been executed. Smart profiling software will enable real-time tracking, compliance monitoring, and team communication.

Entice engagement while collecting shopper data.

- Make use of intelligent sign and display design with customized QR codes that guide buyers to promotions and loyalty programs.

Create moments for an interactive experience.

- Seek out ways to host events, meetups, educational talks, product demonstrations, or any other community forums that encourage customers to gather together around your brand's products and services.

03 Cultivate a destination



Being able to provide a unique experience to shoppers is one of the many advantages brick-and-mortar stores have over e-commerce.

Whether or not a buyer makes a purchase on that visit, fun and interesting moments in-store contribute to how they feel about your brand, and, in turn, your products and services. This kind of brand engagement builds long-term relationships.

| If your aim is to: | Try this: | My ideas: |
|--|--|-----------|
| Excite and interest buyers in an unexpected way. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Create a store-within-a-store. These unique shopping moments instill intrigue and increase dwell time. | |
| Keep shoppers in the store longer and increase money spent per visit. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Putting food and drink options on your list of in-store offerings adds another layer of convenience to buyers' shopping experience. | |
| Attract shoppers who might ordinarily shop online. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Offer inspired incentives and in-person, event-based promotions. | |
| Optimize the in-store shopping experience. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Train the staff you have on how to excel in customer service. When buyers are confident that they'll have every need met by shopping in-person, it motivates them to show up and spend more. | |
| Create a community hub. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Create regular events relevant to your customers' lifestyle centered around: families, pets, buyers' hobbies, or local interests and happenings. | |



In an economy where buyers are seeking more bang for their buck,

acing a unified omnichannel strategy is key to thriving. Digital and physical touchpoints work together to generate brand awareness, operational efficiencies, and sales.

The reality is that customers want both IRL and online when it comes to making purchases, and they want both done well.

By using these tips to choreograph the information and functionality within your space, you tap into one of the most elemental ways that buyers connect to your brand.

Maybe you know exactly where you need to start, or maybe you're unsure whether or not your in-store experience is on-point and you need more data. Either way, Imagine has the insights and the expertise to craft a magnetic in-store experience rooted in the spirit of your brand.

Ready to see what's possible?

Let's get started →