

Are temporary pop-up shops good for retail design?

Illustration Bill Bragg



PHILIP HANDFORD

Creative director
Campaign Design

Pop-up adds a new expression to the vocabulary of retail design that is here to stay. Pop-up combines exhibition, advertising and retail design. It invites creative freedom and lends itself to pushing retail design to its limits which is why Campaign Design pioneered it.

We created a pop-up for Dr Martens in London's Spitalfields. The project lifted the base elements of the brand image and we created a space around the company's utilitarian roots and no frills style. The shop has never shut its doors.

This is testament to the idea that the pop-up is versatile as a space and as a design concept. But increasingly I see this versatility as a platform. It can create huge impact as a momentary event but is gaining momentum as a model that holds the potential to evolve and push a brand's focus into a stronger future retail design template and roll-out.

Pop-up relates to a wide spectrum of retailers. For high-end luxury clients, the pop-up is increasingly relevant as department stores challenge the traditions of shop-in-shop characteristics and luxury brands seeks fresh and engaging ways to create presence.

TOM IRONSIDE

Director of business and regulation
British Retail Consortium

Let's be clear, permanent is preferable to pop-up. Keeping shop premises productively occupied by retail businesses providing long-term jobs and services has to be the prime policy objective.

The briefly flowering pop-up can sometimes be a poor alternative, but are they producing any sort of style legacy? Perhaps.

Retailers put an enormous amount of effort into creating a shopping environment to attract and retain customers. The "no expense has been spent" look of some of the instant Christmas shops I've seen may suit these austere times, but for most major retailers that kind of bargain-basement image isn't right.

Sophisticated pop-ups, using a café or art to create a spontaneous, non-establishment feel, are more interesting. Retailers looking to attract the same young, urban consumers will be taking note. Some high-end retailers have opened versions in trendier spots so elements of the look and feel of the pop-up could be a design influence.

But, no matter how much footfall or buzz is generated when open, benefits to other traders are limited if the shop is empty for most of the year.

JOHN LEES

Chairman
Lees Associates

We all flourish on variety and entertainment in life, yet retail can be such a depressingly sameish experience. Design should enhance the buying experience, not hinder it.

Pop-ups are a refreshing reinvention of an ancient approach to shopping that enables us to remove the barriers of flat shop fronts and standardised branding to create more immediacy with the product.

This flexibility creates an opportunity for theatre — to entertain and inform, and attract substantially greater footfall and interest. Why hang clothes on hangers when they look better on people? And why should the people remain static when they look better in motion? I like the idea of a brand that literally walks among its target rather than waiting patiently on a shelf.

Why do people enjoy cheese-buying more in Borough Market than in a supermarket? It is the immediacy with the product — it isn't distanced behind a glass screen.

Pop-ups have the incredible potential to deliver immediacy. And it is design that is the distinction between success or failure.