

November 8, 2017

## 5 BRANDS BETTING ON EXPERIMENTAL RETAIL STORES

THESE 5 BRANDS ARE EXPERIMENTING TO GIVE RETAIL A REBOOT, OPENING NEW LOCATIONS TO REIMAGINE WHAT THE STORE EXPERIENCE CAN OFFER YOUNG CONSUMERS...

According to Ypulse's [Experiencification trend research](#), 56% of 13-33-year-olds (and 72% of 13-17-year-olds) say they would go to stores more if there was more to do there. This sentiment—and [majorly flagging in-store sales for many, many brands](#)—has retailers adjusting by integrating new experiences into stores. Toys R Us is one example: The toy retail giant recently declared bankruptcy, but according to [Kidscreen](#) they have a plan for a “marketing rebrand” to reel in today’s experiencification-loving young consumers. They’re adding “more interactive elements” to about 50 stores across the U.S., including Play Labs where kids and parents can test out toys before buying and “seasonal toy demonstrators.” One analyst says, “It needs to become a place where people want to go to be entertained and also to buy toys.” Even Disney, [still beloved by Millennials](#), is stepping up their brick-and-mortar offerings. The tech makeover [reportedly starts](#) in select stores with a more modern aesthetic, products that are less “child-centric” for all-ages appeal, and LED screens that will livestream fireworks displays and parades from their parks.

But other brands are thinking even bigger—going beyond a few in-store facelifts and instead launching brand new locations to allow them to experiment with complete retail reboots. While the overall trend in retail is a shrinking footprint, these new stores are being opened to act as “labs” for future plans on what the in-person experience can start to offer young consumers.

Here are five brands betting on experimental stores:

### Nordstrom Local

Nordstrom’s new store will serve beer and coffee, but won’t stock clothes. They’re taking [experiencification](#) up a notch in a bid to bring shoppers back to department stores (one of Gen Z & Millennials’ [least favorite places to shop](#)). [Fortune](#) reports that the small-footprint Nordstrom Local Store will offer a personalized shopping experience complete with stylists and alcoholic beverages. Stylists select items for shoppers to try on, and if they decide to purchase, clothing will then be collected by employees from local stores or online. Or you can just get a glass of wine and a manicure. Yes, they’ll also have manicures.

### Sephora Studio

Sephora’s new concept store is all about experiencification and personalization. The first Sephora Studio [is now open](#) in Boston, featuring digital welcome screens, ditching cash registers for checkouts via smartphone, and offering makeovers and facials—all in a space less than half the size of a typical Sephora. They’re also putting a digital spin on makeup shopping for the [Customization Nation](#) with AI assistants to show before-and-after looks and provide digital skin care guides. Three more studios are planned for the east coast, and Sephora sees the potential for 80 to open around the country.

### American Eagle’s Pop-Up Experiment

American Eagle Outfitters is opening an experimental pop-up store in New York to continue to “stay afloat” in [the retail wasteland](#). According to [Glossy](#), the brand president is calling the Union Square locale “a lab for us to see the customer reaction firsthand and learn about our new experience.” The store will be denim-only, and will let local NYU students do their laundry for free. AEO has been successful so far at skirting the “retail apocalypse,” with rising revenue and sales, but they’re still planning on taking learnings to shut down stores as needed—instead investing in “opportunistic in-market opportunities” like this pop-up.

### **Coty’s Retail Future Story**

Coty has created a pop-up store to show beauty brands what the future of retail could look like. Taking place at the Story concept store, the pop-up features CoverGirl, Rimmel, Sally Hansen, and Clairol in a “living lab” that engages shoppers with both products and [experientification](#). The installation includes an augmented reality mirror for trying on products, a DIY nail bar, a vending machine that asks customers to share a selfie, and more. According to [AdAge](#), Coty hopes the data they collect will help sell their ideas to retailers, and get them to “see things in a new way.”

### **Timberland Tree Lab**

Fashion and retail brands are [fighting to stay relevant](#) and rethink the brick-and-mortar experience—and Timberland is trying out constant reinvention to keep shoppers intrigued. According to [RetailDIVE](#), the brand’s new “Tree Lab” store is completely reimaged and redesigned every six-weeks, shifting to focus on new collections to entice those “constantly seeking something new.” The store is a lesson in [experientification](#), serving craft brewed beer and advice on local events to shoppers in a space designed to be “more than just a place to shop.”

**Terms & Conditions:** Use of this content must adhere to the Terms & Conditions, published at <http://www.ypulse.com/about-ypulse/terms>