

## Shopfitting: bricks and mortar brand reinforcement

Brands establishing retail outlets or a presence in a department store, typically issue design briefs and layout plans in line with the overall brand identity, leaving it up to the shopfitter to folk orders and simply get the job done.



Image by 123RF

But few major brands consider the impact a shopfitter's approach to getting the job done can have on the brand reputation.

As a 361-degree media, marketing and communications agency, Media Revolution believes that major spend on ad campaigns can be undermined by neglect of seemingly unimportant components of the overall messaging mix – like shopfitting. Every customer and partner-facing detail, no matter how small, must be aligned to the overall brand messaging for maximum impact, so it is important that shopfitting is considered part of the marketing package.

Shaun Schwartz, who heads Media Revolution's shopfitting projects, supports our group view that the shopfitter, while often an unseen factor in the marketing mix, can contribute to reinforcing the brand message or can in fact harm the brand reputation, depending on the shopfitting team's approach to its work.

"Proper planning and timelines are crucial in ensuring the brand reputation is upheld," Schwartz says. "Missing the installation deadline by a few days is a very big deal if the brand has printed ads and flyers to promote a launch date. A good shopfitter is well aware of this. The project has to be complete on – or ahead of – schedule, and the snag list attended to well ahead of a planned launch, otherwise the client loses money and looks bad in the eyes of the public."

The quality of the shopfittings and finishes is non-negotiable. You have to ensure that high quality fittings are in place to support the brand identity. More than that – the shopfittings need to look good after years of service, particularly now that cost control is top of mind and brands don't necessarily refresh their in-store areas every few years anymore.

A good shopfitter will also collaborate with the marketing team and client to ensure that their design

translates effectively into the reality of the physical store, taking into account available space, light, and traffic. If the on-paper plan will not achieve the client's goal in the physical store, the shopfitter must inform them of this and offer alternatives to help them achieve their marketing goals. If they want maximum flow of people through the area, for example, and the original design obstructs traffic, the shopfitter must work with the client to ensure the goals are achieved.

A professional shopfitter supports the client's brand identity through every aspect of the work – not just through the finished job. It is important to pay attention to small details such as the appearance of the workers on site. If the staff on site don't look the part, the brand suffers subtle damage.

To ensure that the shopfitting project is tightly integrated into the overall marketing mix and delivers on the big picture brand message, the marketing team should work closely with the shopfitting operations team and direct every aspect of the project, serving as a vital link between client and shopfitters on-site.

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