



Theo Fennell in Burlington Arcade by gpstudio

Stand (out) and Deliver!

To compete successfully in today's retail marketplace it is essential that your shop stands out from the crowd and encourages customers to enter. Louise Hoffman speaks to experts in shop fitting and display for tips on how this can be achieved.

As we are all too aware, the retail landscape has changed dramatically over the past six years, and this change has been accelerated primarily by the growth in ecommerce. Online shopping has created many opportunities for the sector, but it has also initiated the demise of the high street, encouraging consumers to seal the fate of a service that is actually still very valuable to them.

For the today's bricks-and-mortar retailer it is now barely viable to exist without a web presence, but that doesn't mean that the internet should be submitted to entirely – physical shops are still needed and provide a shopping experience that is simply impos-

sible to gain from a website. It's no mean feat to keep those doors open, but thankfully there are many ways in which retailers can stand firm against the worldwide web.

Judy Head, who has presented many seminars for the NAG, is just one staunch advocate of good presentation as a key to maintaining footfall, and asserts that "If the retailer does not love or even respect his or her shop, staff and stock, then the consumer won't respect it either!

"Often, the first sight of the store happens long before prospective customers reach the window, and that first impression is crucial to the decision as to where they will spend

their money," she explains. "If the shop looks run-down and in need of a clean or a coat of paint; if the upstairs windows are full of rubbish, boxes and overflowing trays of paperwork; and if litter is blowing into the arcade and the glass is covered in nose-marks, then it looks as if the retailer doesn't care. If the retailer doesn't care for his or her own business, then no-one else will care either."

When asked which jewellers are, in her opinion, flying the flag for superior store design, one particular name springs to mind for Judy: "Harriet Kelsall's new showroom in Halls Green, Hertfordshire, is a converted barn and combines her workshop with a showroom, all designed by Lumsden Design, which also created her shop interior in Cambridge.

That first impression is crucial to the decision as to where they will spend their money...

"The reason this works for me is that they have clearly thought through how the space is to be used and what their customers need from the store. They have a jewellery-themed

garden; an area for children; a coffee shop; a visible workshop and studio for the goldsmiths and designer; and a gallery-style layout with postcards that relate customers' stories as the inspiration behind each bespoke commission. I also like the lighting, which spotlights the displays and work areas but leaves quiet, more subdued sitting and wandering space within the gallery. It has all the appearance of a tranquil and creative space, and is very well suited to the rural environment and the customers they wish to attract."

Where window displays are concerned, Judy selects Catherine Jones of Cambridge as a good example of best practice: "The company clearly believes that the window is a 24/7 selling space and a stage upon which a drama takes place. They change their windows every four to six weeks – at the time of this interview, for example, they have a Halloween display, using props and vinyl images of bats together with hanging golden garlands. The objective of the display is to encourage people to come into the store and explore."

Unfortunately, Judy has also witnessed plenty of ill-considered and unsuccessful windows over the years. "There's a tendency to dress the windows to suit the needs of the store and not those of the consumer, and displays have generally been dedicated to promoting a vast assortment of brands, creating clutter and confusion," she says.



Catherine Jones
autumn window display

Indeed, the role of the brand has also altered hugely in recent years – perhaps especially in the jewellery sector – and as Judy correctly highlights, this has impacted upon store layout and design. Gregor Jackson, managing partner at specialist retail design consultancy gpstudio, believes that jewellery brands are particularly guilty of failing to consider how they'll translate

CASE STUDY Cadenzza Westfield Stratford London

When designing the brand new outlet for Cadenzza – a multi-brand fashion jewellery retail concept that is part of the Swarovski group – it was important to communicate its central message that jewellery is not just for special occasions, but for making every occasion special.

"We wanted to create an atmosphere unlike that seen in traditional jewellery stores, where pieces are locked away in cabinets and seem inaccessible," says Elisabeth Stark, vice president of marketing. "We want our customers to really interact with our brand and so have created an environment that stimulates and inspires. Our displays include backdrops of mood boards, catwalk stills and actual magazine tears to create a fashion editorial look and feel. By grouping products in terms of trends our customers are able to explore their own individual taste, and what relates to them at that particular time.

"From classic and timeless designs, to the extraordinary and ornate power pieces, everything is showcased in a way that reflects what the designer was trying to achieve when he or she was inspired to create the collection."



their brand to a 3D retail environment, often relying on the same formulaic designs and product showcases, without considering how to tell a story about their products.

In Jackson's opinion, the key to successful store layout is creating a true customer journey, in order to guide them through the store and the pieces displayed. "Effective retail design really brings the pieces to life for the customer," he says. "It helps to amplify the brand and product story, educate consumers about the pieces and make the jewellery displayed more desirable as a result. A good example is the boutique store that we designed for Theo Fennell in Burlington Arcade, which is focussed on storytelling and explaining the design process from inspiration to the finished article." When considering a store refurbishment, Jackson isolates two main considerations on which to base decisions: scale and emotion.

"The pieces displayed are often very intricate and small in size, but incredibly valuable. The design needs to be 'hero', otherwise it can get visually lost in the space. Jewellery is also an emotional and personal purchase so the customer really needs to connect with the product and fall in love with it. Good retail design is needed to facilitate this process."

Security is obviously another major consideration, but Jackson advises a cautious and creative approach: "If everything is encased in a glass box it can be a real distraction and stop customers engaging with the pieces – the store can become cold and angular, and the product untouchable. The best jewellery stores make the security features decorative and a part of the design itself; they're in harmony with the pieces and the rest of the store, and orchestrate the customer journey in such a way that the product is not at risk from the opportunist."



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RPS Diamonds in Hatton Garden by Watts Design

Judy Head also offers advice on achieving a punter-pleasing retail environment: "Consider what you are offering your customers – what is the personality of the store and what are your unique selling points? This should govern the colour scheme, the way in which you serve your staff and how you will dress your windows," she says.

"Try small, flexible display areas that your customers can discover, rather than huge cabinets that can only be viewed from the top. Include visual clues such as magazines, images on the wall, or the working drawings of special pieces you have displayed."

If the retailer does not love or even respect his or her shop, staff and stock, then the consumer won't respect it either!

When it comes to windows, Head suggests experimenting with turntable displays so that you can always dress from the front and the visitors to your shop will always see something fresh and new. You can also advertise shop services – repairs, valuations, bespoke commissions, etc – as well as promoting the aforementioned 'personality' or 'brand' of the store.

"After all, people buy from people, so they are looking for professionalism, knowledge, service and services, and I rarely see this apparent in the window display. The choice

of a retailer – whether online or on the street – is very personal and is not all about the lowest price, the largest range or the latest big brand offer," she emphasises.

In terms of display and design trends for the year ahead, Head believes that themes will continue to reflect optimism that the UK is finally on the road to economic recovery, with brilliant colours such as scarlet, amber and aqua set against neutral grey backgrounds; abstract '70s patterns influenced by pop and op art and an extension of the exotic floral themes that have dominated this summer.

She also cites the four trends identified by the Frankfurt Christmas World show as hot tips for 2014: Silent Dignity – elegant organic shapes and soft pastel shades; Geometric Gravity – big blocks of bold colour and geometric patterns or shapes; Shaded Modesty – natural materials and simple dark colours and Dazzling Beauty – intense colours, floral patterns and symbolic motifs.

Gregor Jackson anticipates an abundance of pop-up stores in the year to come, and also emphasis placed on the craftsmanship and process of 'making'. "Jewellery looks so polished it seems almost untouched by human hands, but increasingly customers care deeply about the provenance of their purchases. To meet this need, I think jewellery brands will follow their luxury fashion counterparts and increase the visibility of the people behind the designs: opening up their workshops, showcasing their head designers and talking about the design process from sketch to finished article."

Getting down to business

Undoubtedly the most significant investment for the retailer (both in terms of finance and time), shopfitting should always be carried out by an expert – of which there are many throughout the country.

John and Mike Watts, for example, founded their company Watts Design some 20 years ago. Having honed their skills as craftsmen in the carpentry and cabinet-making arena, they have spent the last 15 years solely carrying out bespoke shopfitting for the jewellery trade.

"To date we have carried out a variety of shopfits, ranging from simple cabinetry replacement to full shop refurbishment," they say. "Our aim is to work closely with customers, listening to their requirements and utilising our experience to provide them with a beautiful, bespoke end result. All of our cabinetry is manufactured in-house by our small team of craftsmen, which allows us complete quality control, as well as helping to keep things on schedule. We also have a vast network of tradesmen on site, meaning we can take on the larger projects – offering customers new shop fronts, building works and more."

Christmas window display ideas

Still not decided on a Christmas window display concept? Judy Head offers some last minute ideas for those struggling to find inspiration...

- Try a traditional Christmas theme – use small mirrors to look like a frozen lake, with frosted fir cones, fir boughs and berries. You can gather the raw materials and make up the bundles yourself or look at the DZD catalogue – the company's artificial alternatives are available from its website and London showroom.
- Try op art kinetic patterns – covering boxes and blocks with op art gift paper to create risers and using them in conjunction with black and white or silver balls.
- Christmas is associated with food and wine. Purchase some miniature Christmas puddings or artificial fruit – especially small oranges – and use them in conjunction with gigantic images of flaming puddings.

The duo also highlight a key trend in jewellery retail – an interesting consideration: “In recent years we have seen increasing importance placed on customer service – many of our clients now want a more luxurious consultation area, with entertainment units for private buying, promotional and after-hours functions. This seems to be a trend throughout both modern and more traditional shopfits.”

David Griffin is another expert in the design and build of jewellery shops, and has 40 years of experience in this field. His Birmingham-based company, Hallmark Design and Shopfitting, specialises in the jewellery trade and operates throughout the UK, with occasional projects as far afield as Gibraltar.

“In my opinion, a good store design is one that is not very apparent to the customer,” he asserts. “It should firstly stop customers as they pass by, and then almost without them noticing, entice them into a store in which a comfortable environment has been created to allow staff to secure a sale. Shops that look like stage sets rarely achieve these objectives.

“It is also important to remember that a shop design will have a shelf life of about 10 years and so we are not designing just for today, but for the future. Having said that, shopping follows trends and fashions and our shops must reflect these changes, therefore we must design with flexibility, particularly with colours and finishes, so that at very little cost the shop can assume a brand new image. Display areas, too, should be as flexible as possible, as these can be expensive to adapt in the future.

Top tips for using point of sale

Debra Jamieson of UK Point of Sale Group Ltd gives advice for effective in-store promotion. In an increasingly competitive marketplace where every customer and sale is invaluable to a business, it is argued that point of sale (POS) and effective retail marketing are more important than ever. Retailers need to raise their game to encourage fickle consumers into their stores – not only to browse, but to purchase. This entire process can be maximised by utilising effective POS.

Create the right mood

It's vital for jewellers to encourage a desire to buy when the customer walks into the store by creating the right mood, which will set the tone for what could be a very emotional purchase. Whether a customer is looking for the latest watch or something more special like an engagement ring, the atmosphere and décor have to be inviting.

Promote your services

Many jewellers now offer value-added services to attract and retain customers. Information about services such as interest-free credit, cleaning or battery changing can be displayed using acrylic sign holders and leaflet dispensers to increase awareness.

Create window displays

Window displays can be created using stylish cable systems to highlight any new and popular brands available instore. Furthermore, store opening times can be displayed using window poster holders, especially in the run-up to Christmas where opening hours may be longer.

In recent years we have seen more importance placed on customer service... many clients now request a more luxurious consultation area...



Brands and fashions come and go, so avoid free merchandising unitry where possible.

“Brands will often bully you to include their units. Make sure that the design of your store is complemented rather than compromised by someone else's furniture,” David adds. Design company Giddings has a 25-year relationship with Breitling, which has now, says Mark Giddings, successfully evolved into the creation of the brand's ‘shop-in-shops’ to selected retailers in the UK. “These brand boutiques have proved immensely popular with customers and our architectural and project management expertise allows the brand identity to synthesise fully with the store in question,” he explains. “Powerful graphics, LED screens and high quality manufacture, combine





Diamonds are forever, how secure are yours?

Security is a major concern for jewellery retailers, with these stores being a traditional target for smash-and-grab raids. It is a tough challenge for jewellers to balance the need to use glass that gives customers a clear view of products, whilst maintaining a high level of security.

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GIVE

with the latest LED lighting to enhance and maximise sales within a relatively small space."

"Clever marketing people know that the look of your interior displays can entice your customers to buy," affirms Nicolette Jones of GIVE, a premium packaging company based in New Zealand but supplying to the UK. She encourages retailers to think outside of the box at a time when competition is increasing on a daily basis – and bricks-and-mortar shops need to set their service apart from online outlets. For example, her own company seeks to introduce a more tactile experience for retailers' customers through its beautiful natural wooden ring tray displays and boxes, which can be personalised with etched branding.

Other companies such as Southern Gem, Noble Gift Packaging, Potters (London) Limited and Pollards International can all provide advice and product suggestions in this area, as can UK Point of Sale, whose acrylic sign holders and cable poster kits are pictured below.

UK Point of Sale



The power of visual merchandising

Eve Reid of independent retail consultancy Metamorphosis Group explains why good visual merchandising is key to retail performance improvement and how it can be achieved.

In today's retail environment, providing good customer service is not enough. In Europe, we tend to not like talking to people – in fact 76 per cent of customers never speak to a sales assistant when shopping – and therefore good visual merchandising (i.e. silent selling) is now critical to a store's success.

Visual merchandising isn't just about making things look pretty; it's about making sure that products sell and, indeed, it can have an amazing impact on sales by:

- converting more of your visitors into customers
- encouraging customers to shop for longer
- increasing the amount that each customer spends

It impacts on the way a store is designed; the way it's laid out; its signage; how the products and services are presented; and even the 'atmospherics'. When used wisely these visual touch points can cleverly define your style – vital if you want to stand out from the crowd.

A few tips for success:

Think 24/7

The pace of life is ever increasing and working hours are breaking from traditional norms. People want to shop 24/7, so retailers need to provide something during and after standard trading hours. Inform or connect with customers when nobody is home. There is a huge range of possibilities – touch screens, QR codes, blippAR and digital signage – but don't underestimate the power of a good window display.

Encourage me to stay for longer

The longer a customer stays with you, the more they spend. Your mission should be to create a layout that naturally guides them around the store, allowing even a first-time visitor to see clearly what you have to offer and ensuring that the whole shop floor is used. Consider your customers' journey – make it stimulating and enjoyable.



Make it easy for me to shop

Designing a store requires a certain skill sets and criteria – an eye for colour; good spacial awareness; balance; points of emphasis; gradation; rhythm and pattern; scale and proportion; harmony and unity. But very often retailers, architects and interior designers forget to think like a customer. Customers move like people – we all walk the same, move the same and turn out heads the same; and in general we have similar behaviour patterns that impact on the way we shop. Spend some time observing how customers move around your store to see if there are any barriers to sales.

Know your 'push and pull' products

There will be products that you are known for – sometimes called 'destination merchandise' or 'pull products' – and these will sell no matter where you place them. However, if located cleverly, they will ensure customers walk through more of the store, and create places within the store that have high levels of footfall passing them. These 'hot spots' can be used to actively 'push' products of your choice.

Think impulsively

I will only buy what I feel I need, unless you show me something I can't live without. What are you doing to tempt customers into spending impulsively? Till and service points are an ideal place to promote additional purchases.

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Lapponia

Many jewellery brands and suppliers also offer their own display and point of sale materials that stockists can make use of. Lapponia, for instance, has recently designed new stands and imagery as the ideal backdrop for its striking Flame Bronze collection.

Integral to any new display and effective visual merchandising is, of course, lighting. "I truly think that lighting is the number one consideration," Gregor Jackson says. "If you get your lighting right, you give the pieces a chance to shine. The environment should be the backdrop that lets the jewellery take centre stage."

"There has been a noticeable return to experimenting with some of the new fine fabrics, weaves and textures now available, which in turn has led to the demand for better control of the LED lighting," adds Giddings. "We are at last seeing light outputs that can rival halogen in brilliance, yet with all LED's advantages. However, many

are still confused by the terminology – Kelvin, colour temperature, lumens, watts, flux CRI, etc."

Display Lighting is one company that can help in this area. Supplying specialist lighting to independent and multiple jewellers both in the UK and overseas since 1999, its wide range of lighting products is designed specifically for the jewellery display industry. To date, it has worked with such names as Links of London, Beaverbrooks, Goldsmiths and Jacobs of Reading, and it has recently been appointed as the only approved lighting supplier to the CMJ.

"Our experience in the installation of lighting enables us to assist in the design and installation process," explains company founder Paul Breedon. "We are most often consulted during the design stage and can offer practical solutions to even the most difficult design applications. Our aim is for our clients to achieve the best possible results that the latest in lighting technology can offer."

Jewellery brands are particularly guilty of failing to consider how they'll translate their brand to a 3D retail environment...

Display Lighting
(this image and above)

CASE STUDY John Lewis Oxford St., London

John Lewis recently worked with Kolarz to install specially commissioned feature lights, made from fine Austrian crystals, in all of its fine jewellery departments across the UK. The Oxford Street flagship store's jewellery department features two double-frame designs at varying levels, creating reflections, movement and illusion to attract the eye and make the whole room glow with a glamorous and stylish shimmering effect. "Lights in jewellery shops and departments should be luxurious, beautiful and part of what entices customers," comments Kristina Griffith, managing director of Kolarz UK. "Lighting can make a dramatic difference to a store's interior and can add to the image of the brand."



Display Lighting also has over 20 years' experience in manufacturing spotlights and downlights that are designed to display diamonds at their optimum brilliance. "Our team of product designers has created some of the best luminaires available to ensure that jewellery displays are illuminated at exactly the right colour temperature. Every product is rigorously tested to help clients to achieve the best results and ultimately increase their sales," Breedon adds.



Parify

Technological treats

Flashy technology will never fail to catch customers' attention, add to the 'theatre' of the purchase, and set your window display or service apart from others. One great example of this is Holition's augmented retail innovations, such as the 'Fusion Ring Builder' that it built for Georg Jensen. This allows users to view the collection by selecting a product with a hand gesture – much like the scene in *Minority Report*, where Tom Cruise appears to select and interact with virtual images – and select metal colour, number and size of diamond etc, before stacking their own unique mix of rings.



Transparent display technology, such as that created by Crystal Display, is another option to add the wow factor to a jewellery display. Allowing products to be hidden from view and then suddenly revealed through clever use of light and moving imagery, this technology has to be seen to be fully appreciated – you can see it in action on YouTube at: www.youtube.com/watch?v=iN0tmvFQPiU



90 per cent less electricity than the old halogen and metal halide lamps, but heat runs a close second. UV damage is also a very significant issue for anyone selling high value leather strapped watches, plastic and rubber goods, as metal halide lamps

Jewellery is also an emotional and personal purchase so the customer really needs to connect with the product and fall in love with it...



Parify is a great advocate of LED lighting in jewellery stores. As a spokesman for the company explains: "The most important method of generating business is to attract a potential customer to your window. If your goods are looking as clean, bright and brilliant as possible, with facets shimmering, the customer is likely to enter your store. But if you then sit them down under fluorescent lighting, you may find that the

diamond that was sparkling away in the window suddenly looks flat. Sale lost! So, general lighting and internal merchandising lighting in a retail environment are as important as the windows."

There are also many commercial benefits to be reaped through conversion to LED lighting, says Parify: "The first is obviously the significantly lower running cost, with LEDs typically consuming between 60 and

will bleach everything in sight. Only last week we were called in by a jewellery business that had been forced to reduce the value of a watch display by £4,000 due to UV and heat damage to straps!"

There is no escaping the fact that a shop refit is a huge undertaking, but the experts to help you through the rebirth or evolution of your store are out there, so why not get started straight after the Christmas rush? ■