



iQmetrix

# Designing Next-Gen Retail Places

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# Part 1: Designing Next-Gen Retail Places

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“I think we are most interested in the idea of shopping as a new kind of public space. How can we enrich these experiences? Can we bring new content, information, ideas and visual experiences to shopping in a thoughtful and dynamic way?”

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The above quote, from New York City-based design studio [2x4 Inc.](#), defines the direction in which new types of physical retail locations must go.

The entire retail industry has already experienced a tectonic shift due to e-commerce, mobile apps and social networking. Brick-and-mortar retailers, cognizant of the increased competition from virtual retail, must undergo a similar transformation, but of a different nature.

More and more customers come to stores, check out a product, and then place the order. Unfortunately, the order is often placed via smartphone, with a different online retailer than the store the customer visited, at a lower price (see [Amazon Price Check App](#)). How can retailers compete with that? What else can a retailer offer to a customer, that is different from a massive warehouse or an e-commerce site?

**The answer is in redefining the purpose and philosophy of a store.** At the most recent iQmetrix Wireless Summit, [Doug Stephens offered his view of the 21st Century retail location](#), whose role shifts from being the end of the marketing/distribution channel to becoming the start of the channel.

The days when the physical store was the sole transactional point-of-sale are behind us. Today, the focus is on customer experience: creating excitement and inspiration, invoking social engagement, offering a relaxing experience through the use of design elements in the space, and providing interactive tools, personal communication devices and friendly staff. These spaces not only build a loyal customer base, but loyal and motivated employees as well.

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“For most stores, moving from a transaction mind-set — “how do we sell more stuff?” — to a value-creation mind-set will require a complete overhaul.

Ron Johnson, J.C. Penney CEO and former senior VP of retail at Apple

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High-tech device manufacturers are indicative of the customer experience trend — they have increased their physical store presence in spite of having the necessary distribution channels for their products. The Apple Store, ranked #1 in customer service since it opened, leads the way. Microsoft has followed suit (see photo below), and other hardware manufacturers have too, but so have purely online retailers like eBay or Amazon.

Google recently opened its first Chrome Zone store in London and another big Androidland store in Sydney (with carrier Telstra). Online retailers are starting to realize that meeting customers face-to-face — and offering a unique experience and relationship in addition to effective shopping — is crucial to developing brand awareness.

The next four articles of this series will examine the underlying principles of creating a successful retail place. This is not referring to aesthetic design, but rather to conceptual, functional and organizational aspects. These articles will focus on physical locations, the in-store part of the retail process. Of course, in-store cannot be analyzed without out-of-store and online parts, so the latter two will be dealt with in the context of a specific topic.

First, we'll take a look at the qualities that turn a physical space into a public place. Next, we'll examine the guiding principles to creating a place, and what are the specifics of a retail place. Last but not least, we will analyze the tools and summarize the checkpoints that can help retailers to create the next generation of retail places.

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“Once retailers are brave enough to let go of the idea that their stores are solely places of transaction, they can focus on giving customers a rewarding experience.

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# Part 2: Qualities of Successful Public Places

How to turn a physical space into a public place that people would love to come back to on regular basis — a concept also known as the “Third Place”?

What is needed, first and foremost, is a definition of a big idea. A big picture. Sometimes it is a story of a brand; sometimes a clear function of that space; sometimes even just a simple overarching idea.

In the retail world, a big retailer with hundreds of stores might have well developed brand with all the stories and elements defined, where on the other hand a small retailer with 1-2 doors can have a very intimate, friendly story. Both of these scenarios are fine, as long as there's a clarity of function and the consistency in demonstrating that unique character. That is what the branding is really all about: clarity, consistency and character.

The big idea will define the retail space's purpose, target group, look and feel, customer activities, etc.

**Here are four basic qualities of a successful public space.** These relate to bigger public spaces, but retailers should learn from them since they relate to a basic human behavior.

## 1. Accessibility

Retailers often say there are three rules for a good store: location, location and location. That captures the quality and the importance of it.

Indeed, location has always been crucial in the retail industry (it still is). But nowadays, retailers must ask themselves: Does the place act as a physical extension of our virtual presence (i.e. a web site, mobile app, social media), where a user can continue down to a great in-person experience? In essence, the virtual location can drive traffic to the physical one.

Maybe a customer was intrigued by the experience in the place and now is at a point where he/she is deciding where to buy: Should I buy from an online retailer at a lower price? Or should I pay a bit more from a neighborhood retailer offering more than just the product, such as an experience, advice, and a relationship?

The goal is to make the place a destination, not just a utilitarian space. If that goal is reached, a less than perfect physical location is still acceptable. People won't mind a minor inconvenience, as long as the benefits outweigh the costs.

## 2. Comfort and Image

A place needs to be clean and well designed in terms of form and function. It should provide a comfortable stay for a defined demographic. In a recent psychological study from Columbia University, *Relaxation Increases Monetary Valuations*, it was found that when relaxed, people tend to value things higher than usual. A recent Wall Street Journal article analyzes how offering a relaxing experience can directly benefit retailers.



Another indicator of this trend comes from McDonald's, a symbol of "get in and out fast," is putting billions of dollars into redesigning its restaurants (in U.S. and Europe). The new design includes comfortable chairs, sofas, fireplaces and free Wi-Fi. The fast-food icon hopes that by offering an extended, pleasant and comfortable stay, customers will come back often — spending more.

Starbucks paved the way for these experiences a long time ago and has firmly establish itself as the quintessential Third Place.

Recent examples from the wireless retail industry that reflect the same philosophy are [O2 stores in the U.K.](#) that offer a comfortable area for browsing the newest apps and for business clients, private workstations with free Wi-Fi.

At the recent [iQmetrix Wireless Summit](#), during a discussion about the new generation of retail spaces, a retailer asked whether they should provide chairs in their stores. Absolutely.

In many shapes and forms, depending on the location within the store, a stool, chair, armchair or sofa would work. Provide a sip of coffee, a snack, and free Wi-Fi — anything that signals, “Come in and relax. No reason to be uncomfortable.”

### 3. Activities

This is a big one the retailer point of view. Successful places offer a quantity, variety and quality of activities. Of course, activities must be related to the purpose of the place.

What does that mean for a wireless retailer? If your store is empty most of the time, customers are there to make a quick transaction, to get advice or request service or device repairs. Even during their stay, do you provide additional activities that relate to your business, something to reinforce your branding, your industry or your products? Do you offer a sense of community?





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” Having something to do gives people a reason to come to a place – and return. When there is nothing to do, a space will be empty and that generally means that something is wrong.

Project for Public Spaces

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Activities in the space must address customer needs. Customers need to be entertained; they need to be inspired; they need to be educated; they need to stay informed. If they are offered all four (within the context of the retail space) they will not turn to other sources (news, social media, online reviews) or worse, leave the store.

Retailer should establish and nurture that relationship with the customer, as it will not only last for the duration of their stay, but much longer — out of store, online and in all subsequent visits.





Disney stores recently went through a redesign to combine entertainment, education and additional information. Even Disney, famous for creating successful public places like theme parks, resorts and various other attractions, failed with this point in their older stores. Disney describes its new stores as “The best 20 minutes of your child’s day,” featuring a variety of activities for kids: interactive theater (picture above), magic mirrors, car building stations and more. Even if you are not shopping, Disney still wants your kids to come in and play, each and every day.

#### 4. Sociability

This is the hardest quality to achieve and is a sum (or product) of the previous three. If people feel good about a place — it’s easy to get to, comfortable, clean, safe, and offers appropriate activities — they will enjoy the place, bring their friends and family, and come back on regular basis. Think about a successful cafe, sports venue, local park or a big theme park. Or a city. Or a store. Or your store?



Today, the above paragraph better describes the time people spend on social networks than in physical spaces. The Holy Grail of the new retail experience will be to bring online social networks to physical spaces and merge the two in a single, seamless experience. That blend would benefit both retailers and customers.

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Brick-and-mortar retail can win over online shoppers and turn the burden of real estate into a huge competitive advantage by creating social, family experience. Online (shopping) is solitary, so brick-and-mortar stores have an opportunity now to carve out a clear and differentiated shopping experience.

Brian Backus, Kidlandia

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Think of a place you like to go to and check off the four points described above. You will quickly realize places that are doing well are the ones with strong “big idea” and a careful nurturing of these qualities.

# Part 3: Guiding Principles for Place Design

In this article, we'll examine a few recurring principles of (invented) place design that can easily be applied to the design process of almost any space, including retail ones. After all, if Disney Imagineers use them, why shouldn't we?

These are more techniques than a magic recipe for creating a successful place. Still, a "magic recipe" is required — it comes from the brand and character of the store, and it needs to be clearly defined beforehand.

The key design principles for successful places are:

- Theme and Structure
- Sequential Experience
- Visual Communication
- Participation

## 1. Theme and Structure

This principle refers to organization of ideas and people flow inside a space.

Once **the big idea a place is defined**, it needs to be broken down into smaller pieces. Unless a visitor is subatomic particle, he/she can not be in various locations at the same time. Therefore, different locations must be designed for different tasks and different experiences.

Mimicking the online shopping experience — a user firmly sits in a chair, with all the options and shortcuts at his/her fingertips — is not a good way to utilize the physical space. And that is often the biggest mistake found in in-store retail today. The ubiquity of online retail is certainly a part of retail place design, but the place needs to offer much more.

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**” A store has got to be much more than a place to acquire merchandise. It's got to help people enrich their lives. If the store just fulfils a specific product need, it's not creating new types of value for the consumer. It's transacting. Any website can do that.**

Ron Johnson, J.C. Penney CEO and former senior VP of retail at Apple

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So in a retail space, how would the big idea (the brand) manifest itself in the entrance area, in the shopping area, or in the checkout area? The retailer has to answer these questions, based on its brand and character.

**In terms of layout, smaller stories or components are organized so that customer circulation is logical and uninterrupted.** Recognizable patterns are often used to make the place designs as intuitive as possible. It could mean a circular path for people flow, clear grouping of elements, signage or products, proximity to related items and related tools, etc. All of these elements help the visitor feel more comfortable, safe and efficient within the space.

## 2. Sequential Experience

Every successful place have a carefully planned chronological path that allows for the best experience. Even the simplest experiences contain a few substeps: awareness or attraction to the experience, the main experience itself, and post-experience events.

If you go to Starbucks, you might be pulled in by a pleasant interior, by a teaser sampler in front of the store, or by the lure of beverages you have already tasted. Your main experience of consuming your coffee in a comfortable armchair, surfing the web on free Wi-Fi, chatting with friends can easily be followed-up by other other activities: entering a draw, downloading a free song from iTunes, or getting a Starbucks gift card for your friend's birthday.



On a larger scale, a theme park attraction can have similar elements: the facade and the queue (where the theme is introduced and serves as awareness/attraction factor); the pre-show (which introduces the story or stories; the main show (rides, theatrical or live action performances that are mostly linear pulse experiences); and eventually the post-show (“exit through the gift shop” allows for further freeflow activities under the impression of the main show).

**In the retail environment, a very similar flow can be applied, regardless of store size.**

Customers must be attracted to the store (by promotions, new arrivals, live events, etc.); they need to explore potential products (using the most convenient and effective tools); and they need to finish the purchase (efficiency service and point-of-sale process).

**The most memorable parts of the customer experience are the peak of the experience and the end of the experience.** With that in mind, planning the sequential experience when designing layout can help to not only deliver the best shopping experience, but to optimize resources as well.

We’ll take a closer look at more ideas in the next two articles of this series. But keep in mind: The least attractive scenario is a store with a single counter, where all of the sequential experiences are merged into one... salesperson assisted.

### 3. Visual Communication

The visual communication principle describes the need for legible visual elements and clearly defined media that provide in-depth, timely information in manageable way. Visual communication helps with people’s flow, enables clarity of actions, and prevents confusing or overwhelming the user. It is essential that — from both a functional and a branding perspective — these elements are incorporated into the overall store design elements. They belong to same family and are compatible and cohesive in function.

Signage must be readable and strategically placed to provide key information. That itself, of course, needs to be within branding guidelines. Signage that stands out does not complement the primary content within the space.

Physical space is a format where digital and interactive media are consumed in a limited time span — as opposed to home and personal formats. Cutting down the learning curve, using recognizable patterns and familiar user interfaces, and repeating UI elements whenever possible allows visitors to be comfortably and safely engaged.

It might sound trivial, but staff is part of this principle as well. A distinctive outfit clearly identifies who staff are and what their role is within the space.



**Nowadays, the virtual extension of the space is more important than ever.** A website, an app, the social network or the in-store digital media must be treated as a clear extension of the space. It should offer, not just the same amount of information, but also complementary experiences that, because of the nature of the space, cannot be included in the space itself.

All of these elements should be intuitive and user-friendly. Any confusion or frustration is a barrier to creating a comfortable and safe environment where a visitor can be fully immersed in the primary activities: shopping and buying.

## 4. Participation

**Participation is a direct result of visual communication.** If our clearly defined place has a clearly defined audience, it will provide means of participation that will engage the audience in a number of ways:

- Providing a comfortable environment where a visitor can have some “alone time.” Or time with his friends. Or, if he likes, time with staff.
- Offering a variety of contextual activities within the space, using different media and levels of interaction. In the case of wireless retail, for example, the customer shouldn’t be presented only with product info (for mobile phones), but also other information: exciting news from the world of mobile communication and technology, community news related to the retailer itself, mobile apps available to connect him with the local sports team, etc. Extend your reach beyond the products on the shelves.
- Having friendly and knowledgeable staff available to advise, educate and build a relationship with the customer — not to push sales for a commission. In-store tools can help establish that relationship — honesty and transparency of information are keys to building trust with customers.

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” So it’s not (department) stores’ size or location or physical capabilities that are their problem. It’s their lack of imagination — about the products they carry, their store environments, the way they engage customers, and how they embrace the digital future.

Ron Johnson, J.C. Penney CEO and former senior VP of retail at Apple

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Whether it’s 5 minutes passing by or a full-scale immersion, places designed along these lines will help provide a great experience and a reason to come back.

# Part 4: The Basic Areas of the Retail Environment

In this article, we will take a look at the main in-store retail areas where the place qualities and the design principles can be applied.

We already mentioned earlier that, besides in-store, the out-of-store and online experiences are inseparable parts of retail process. Even though we won't discuss the other two in great detail, we have mentioned them in various contexts.

Depending on their specific industry, retailers would offer a variety of different in-store areas, but the following are common across all verticals:

- Entrance
- Main circulation
- Pace
- Sale

## 1. Entrance

Store window displays, followed by the entrance area are the starting points for physical in-store exploration. If your store would be a magazine, what would be the front page?

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**” All the devices of the facade are preludes to the entrance itself... There should be some sense of transition from the public world outside to the special world of the retailer inside.**

Rodney Fitch, retail designer

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The business world is competitive and this area is vital for establishing brand awareness and the overall experience.

“What attracts people most, it would appear, is other people,” said American urbanist William Whyte. All retailers obviously want to associate their products with the popularity of use, so the combination of quality store content and the organic buzz visitors create is the best recipe for this area. Consider an

Apple store entrance, where the great gadgets are being perused by an energetic crowd, or Microsoft store displays within a simulated living room with big-screen TV + Kinect, as visitors play **right in the window display**.

Again, the character of the retailer, defined in the brand, dictates the content of window displays and the entrance area, but a few logistical items are worth mentioning.

The entrance area needs to be spacious — to prevent bottlenecks, open — so it allows a complete overview of the store. It should also be engaging, providing some introductory activities: check out new products, promotions, or even better — promotional events.

The last has to be laid out with caution though, as placing any important piece of information or merchandise very close to the entrance (or at the entrance itself) can make it unnoticeable by customers, as carefully observed and documented by Envirosell, a company that studies customer behavior.

It has also been empirically proven that majority of customers indeed tend to walk to the right, a principle known as “Invariant Right.” Having that in mind, the prime location within the store is to the right of the front entrance and 5 to 15 steps in, because that’s where the maximum number of people will see it.

The entrance area is also a good location for staff to greet the shopper, but not much more than that. It is certainly not a place for pushy selling tactics. Further contact can come after a minute or two of a shopper’s self-directed product discovery.

## 2. Main Circulation

Main Circulation is a controlled path customers follow around the retail space. Defining this path might seem more appropriate for big spaces, but even small spaces can benefit from careful considerations of how to lead visitors through the space. Targeting different needs at different moments makes much more sense than overwhelming a visitor with an abundance of choices and products.



Circulation at IKEA (which also address clear [sequential experience](#)) starts with showrooms, inspiring customers with scenarios for their homes. After the initial inspiration, customers are sent on a guided journey through different sections. Experienced customers can use shortcuts (that are not clearly labeled). That is a guided path.

Another intuitive model is “hub and spoke,” where there is a hub — a clear anchor point in the store, like branded cash tills or a central hub of activities — and spokes, braching out to various sections of the store. This model assumes a clear overview of space, which is surely a bonus for the customer. A nice example of that model are the Vodafone stores in Qatar, designed by FITCH (see photo below).

There are, of course, many circulation patterns (horizontal, vertical, circular, figure 8, etc.) and the right one depends on a retailer’s space, branding and the nature of its retail goods. At its core, a circulation pattern should make the customer feel safe, relaxed and engaged — not lost, overwhelmed or frustrated. The more comfortable shoppers are, the longer they’ll stay in the store.

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” The amount of time a shopper spends in a store (assuming he is shopping, not waiting in line) is an important factor in determining how much he will buy. Over and over again, our studies have shown a direct relationship between those numbers.

Paco Underhill, Envirosell

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### 3. Pace

Pace defines the speed at which someone moves around the space.

Recently, I visited a coffee shop next to the Vancouver Courthouse whose designers had clearly considered the need for various paces within a single space. The main entrance from the street was positioned in the middle of the store where, at a fast pace, customer can easily run in, grab a coffee-to-go and leave, or stay for few minutes seated at a window stool. The medium-pace area was placed on the left, where customers could stay little longer, with seating at cafe tables and chairs near a secondary entrance. The slow-paced area was located on the right-hand side, where armchairs and much more comfortable seating were provided, with a fireplace and TV screens. Finally, as an interesting add-on, was an area on the far right (in proximity to the Courthouse) that addressed “a special slow pace”: private meeting rooms.

This example clearly explains the problem of pace. Fast-paced scenarios demonstrate the retailer’s efficiency. On the other hand, the slower the pace in the store, the longer the customer can be exposed to the brand and products. However, slowing the pace should result from the customer’s volition — not from the retail space’s limitations. Only then will it lead to a positive customer experience.

In the case of wireless retail, one of the biggest pain points is plan activation, which lasts too long for both customers and retailers. But by incorporating various interactive tools and multimedia, the invariably slow pace of activation can be turned into a much better experience.

In the coffee shop example described above, the pace is indicated by the choice of seating: from bar stools to armchairs, from fast to slow. In wireless retail, offering a seating and info station where customers can learn more about the products (by themselves or with a help of staff) will visibly slow down the pace.



Social shopping — the scenario where a shopper is accompanied by a spouse, children or friends — is also a factor to consider. On average, the time spent when a woman is shopping with another woman is 8 minutes and 15 seconds; woman with children is 7 minutes and 19 seconds; woman alone is 5 minutes and 2 seconds; woman with a man is 4 minutes and 41 seconds.

These averages are across retail verticals, but they indicate clear trends. To slow down the pace, know who your primary shopper is and offer activities and areas to keep their company entertained — if they are not already involved in the shopping process itself.

## 4. Sale

Obviously, this is the most important area for the retailer.

Where to position this area: front, center or in the back? How about everywhere? No, we are not talking about principles of quantum physics. We're considering the ability of staff or even the customer to complete the transaction.

Remember: This series of articles is based on the premise that the retail space now serves as the beginning of the marketing-distribution channel, not just the transactional endpoint of that channel. Checkout — whether fixed to a POS location, or on handheld devices toted around by staff, or even on a customer self-checkout app — needs fit into the uninterrupted flow of the overall in-store customer experience.

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**” Fab has more interesting products and merchandising and presents them in a more interesting way with much deeper social interaction. At Fab, something like 25 percent of the purchases over Black Friday weekend were a result of Facebook referrals. There's a whole fun element to shopping, a whole entertainment element, and a whole excitement element that the first generation of e-tailers were not very good at.**

Predictions for 2012 (and beyond), Marc Andreessen (co-founder of Silicon Valley venture firm Andreessen Horowitz)

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In this and the previous three articles, we've discussed the qualities of a successful public place, design principles specific to public places (as well as retail places). Our hope is that, after reading one or all of

the articles in this series, a retailer can come away with a better idea of how his/her stores should look and function under a new design.

Retail is human and as such, it is constantly evolving. Very soon, old-style physical stores might have nothing additional to offer customers, that cannot already be found online or in featured locations. Even wireless stores, where customers would still like to try out a device before buying it, may become redundant, as “showrooming” grows in consumer popularity. Some customers might even come to their purchase decisions solely based on the user experience of their previous phone, or based on recommendations read on their social networks.

Very early on, the Disneyland finance team realized that in order to make the park profitable, they would not only have to get revenue from the attractions, but to get a third of total revenue from three sources: attractions, merchandise, and food & beverage.

If, for example, we consider the “main attraction” of wireless retail spaces, it would be the products: phones, plans and accessories. In the next generation of the wireless retail spaces, products almost move to the secondary position of “merchandise.” The “main attraction” has become a great customer experience, an experience that provides inspiration and stirs the imagination about how the merchandise will eventually be used. In this scenario, the inspired customer is steered toward buying merchandise based on main attraction. Not the other way around.

And the food & beverage part? I don’t think the customers would complain. **O2 customers certainly don’t (coffee and tea are provided in-store).**

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**” Editorial design requires new approaches to physical spaces and new ways of thinking about communication and service in-store. Taking this idea further, why can’t the whole of the retail space become a living, dynamic magazine? Shop window displays represent the cover page of a magazine and should draw people inside for the rest of the story. There should be regular, changing in-store “features” or stories that generate newness and interest. If retailers want to remain a major part of the consumer experience, they have to tempt customers away from the Internet by ensuring that their three-dimensional format remains as fresh, vital and easy-to-use as their two-dimensional competitors.**

Tim Greenhalgh, Chief Creative Officer, FITCH

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## Part 5: Checkpoints for Next-Gen Wireless Retail Places

The retail industry is morphing incredibly fast.

Consider for a moment how quickly video rental stores and bookstores have disappeared. A reason that brick-and-mortar wireless retailers have yet to feel the full impact of this tectonic shift is not only because people still like to try smartphones and mobile devices hands-on, but because the market being served is still growing (even if it's growing slower than it used to).

“ By the end of 2012, the number of mobile-connected devices will exceed the number of people on earth, and by 2016 there will be 1.4 mobile devices per capita.

Cisco Visual Networking Index: Global Mobile Data Traffic Forecast Update, 2011–2016

But the market itself might soon realize that it doesn't really need small stores to get the gadgets it wants — simple transactions can be made online. The devices can be felt and tried at Apple or Best Buy (see [Showrooming](#))... heck, even [supermarkets now include mobile departments](#).



Consumers still need is the whole experience, an experience provided by the retail ecosystem: inspiration, relationship, advice, education, community... (see [Omnichannel](#)).

At iQmetrix, our goal is to provide the technology that can assist retailers with all the existing tasks required in the new retail ecosystem. If the following checkpoints are created within the store, both retailers and customers will benefit greatly from the next generation of wireless retail places.

#### 1. ONLINE IN-STORE

Bringing online information and cost transparency back to the stores.

#### 2. CHECKOUT ANYWHERE

Allowing transaction part to efficiently take place anywhere in-store or out-of-store.

#### 3. RELATIONSHIP

Recreating staff credibility, with the use of information transparency and contextual activities, which to build solid staff-customer relationships.

#### 4. IN-STORE EDUTAINMENT

Providing entertaining, educational and contextual content in innovative and engaging forms.

#### 5. SOCIAL HUB

Creating various opportunities for social participation and community creation.

Below is an easy-to-follow infographic that summarizes these 5 elements and illustrates potential scenarios.

The reality of this industry is that retailers are very dependent on their respective carrier(s) — their products, branding, store layouts and design specifications. However, there are quite a few steps retailers can make to improve the customer experience within the carrier framework. The goal of this 5-part article series and the suggested reading below is to provide a basic conceptual understanding of how things can be improved and what technical tools, behaviors and layouts can help.

On the other hand, retailers can ask carriers for changes, upgrades, modifications of their stores, if they feel confident the changes will enhance the business and the customer experience.

In an analogy to Maslow's [Hierarchy of Needs Pyramid](#), the next generation of wireless stores must have a reliable retail management platform and digital signage at the base (physiological needs; need for safety), interactive retail and omnichannel technology in the middle (need for belonging, confidence and relationships), and contextual in-store edutainment (problem solving and self-actualization) at the top of the pyramid.



# Designing Next Generation of WIRELESS RETAIL PLACES

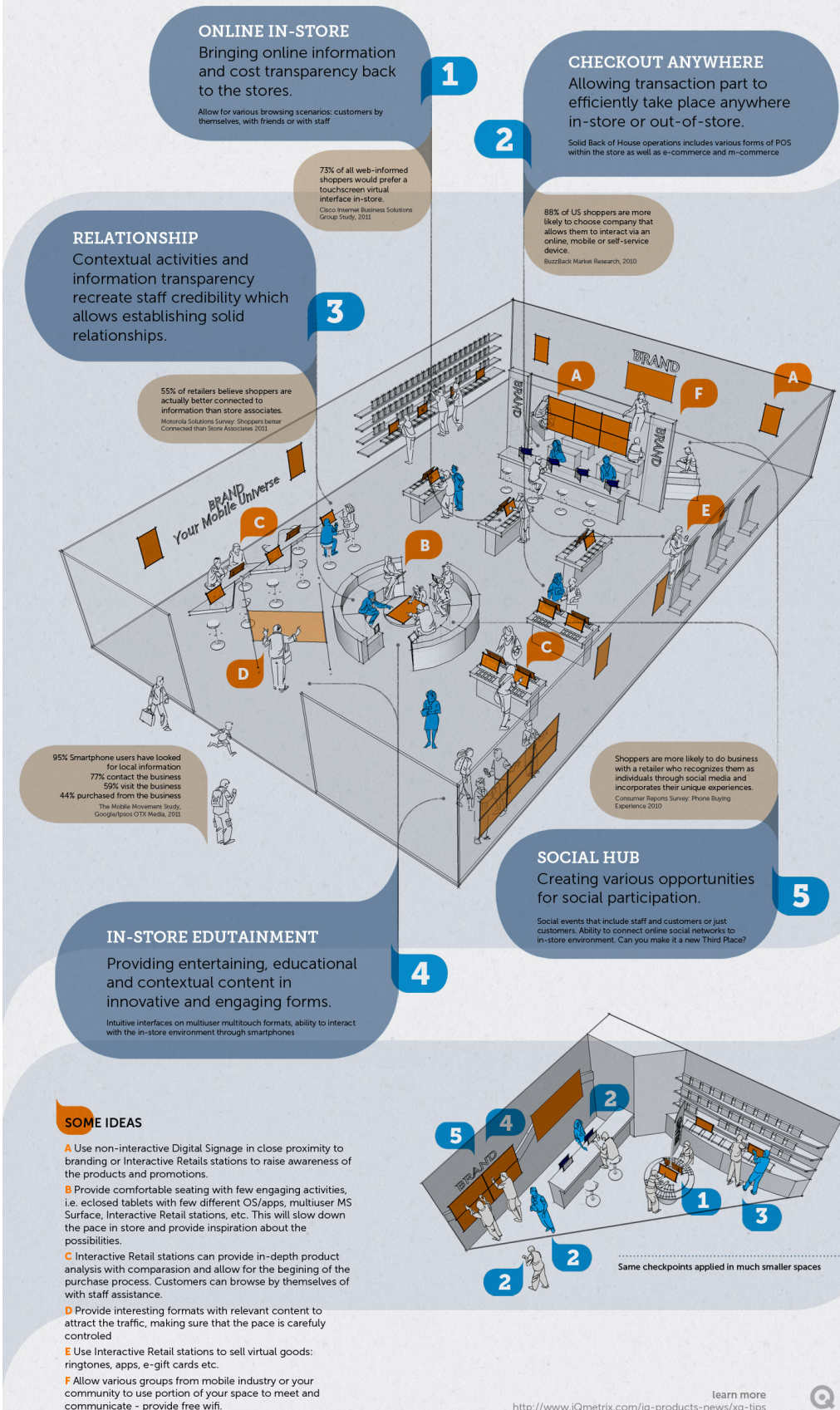
FACTS

CHECKPOINTS

IDEAS

In essence, wireless retail places could and should become places of communication, where customers would not only come when they are in need of a device or a service, but in need of inspiration, activities and a community. Realization of this whole model would ultimately elevate the store to **Third Place** status.

And at that point, the store is no longer just a store. It's a place that people are drawn to — not just to buy, but also — for reasons entirely their own. This is a next-generation retail place.





# About the Author



**Alen Puaca** is creative director at iQmetrix. Over the past 18 years, Alen has worked on media and experience designs for virtual and physical spaces, merging the two in seamless experiences. He was part of design teams that delivered a number of themed attractions and exhibits around the world, including Canadian Pavilion at EXPO 2005, BC Canada House at the Torino Olympics, and Al Khobar, the biggest science center in the Middle East. Prior to joining iQmetrix, Alen worked with DAE-VANOC core design team on the design of the Vancouver 2010 Olympic Ceremonies.

## Want to learn more?

- Doug Stephens, What's in Store
- Ron Johnson: Retail Isn't Broken. Stores Are.
- Store of the Future
- What Makes a Successful Place?
- FITCH: New Customer Journey
- FITCH: Be Generous, Dream More and Play Everyday
- Jan Sircus: Invented Places
- PSFK: Future of Retail
- The Purchasing Power of OM
- Just Relax, Then Buy More and Pay More For It
- T-Mobile Launches New Store Design
- "Our Products and Services in Your World" (example of new wireless store design)
- Online (Retail) Meets Offline
- Making Shopping a Feast for All Five Senses Makes Dollars and Cents for Struggling Retailers
- The Science of Shopping: Malcolm Gladwell talks to Paco Underhill
- 7 Steps For Creating Disruptive New Retail Experiences