

home + housewares inspiration

ISSUE

18.1



innovation

Retail's New
Best Friend

design

gia Product
Design Awards

trends

Stories to Sell:
Global Trends
in Retail

inspiration

How to Create a
Successful Concept
Retail Store

Letter from the Editors

Home and housewares retailing is changing rapidly – and in some unpredictable ways. This is highlighted in many of the expert interviews and articles in this issue of *Home + Housewares Inspiration* – together with the underlying message that these changes and developments shouldn't be feared – rather thought of as great opportunities for retailers and for the home and housewares industry as a whole. The key is to understand these changes, embrace them and adapt your business to meet them.

Consumer behavior and expectations are changing and new trends are emerging, driving new product innovations and generating demand from new customer groups. New technologies are enabling different ways of communicating and retailing. Great opportunities, for sure. But how do you keep up with all this – when providing customers with aspirational moments and authentic customer service still is and should be the key priority?

The mission of the International Housewares Association is to support (and inspire!) the home and housewares industry, and we are here to help you navigate these evolving challenges. As you peruse the key issues and ideas brought up in the various

articles of this magazine, keep in mind that all of these topics will be addressed – with up-to-the-moment information and with solutions germane to the home and houseware retailer – at the *2019 International Home + Housewares Show*.

Exhibitors from across all home product categories will be offering problem-solving solutions and new ideas to surprise and delight your customers – alongside displays and presentations that highlight the important and upcoming trends, from key color and material trends to consumer trends, to consumer buying patterns and habits. Industry experts will discuss new technologies and developments, including what's new and noteworthy in the world of Smart Home.

The *gia* Expert Jurors, featured again in this edition of the magazine, provide expertise across a broad spectrum of marketing, technology, store design and

visual merchandising. During the IH+HS, their presentation at the Innovation Theater will provide insights and proven ideas that retailers can bring home and put into action. Not to mention benchmarking opportunities and inspiration from the *gia* award-winning global retailers at the Show and trend-setting Chicago retailers.

The Show is less than four months away and our goal with this edition of the Inspiration Magazine is to get you thinking about the key developments affecting our industry and provide you with new inspiration and ideas you can use in creating experiences that tap into the emotions of your customers. We hope you enjoy it, and we look forward to seeing you in Chicago in March!



Piritta Törrö
International Marketing &
Business Development
International Housewares Association



Leana Salamah
Vice President, Marketing
International Housewares Association



innovation

Martin M. Pegler column on retail4
gia – Honoring Global Retail Excellence7
 Introducing the 2018 *gia* Global Honorees8
gia Expert tips – Increasing Impulse Shopping13
 Retail’s New Best Friend14



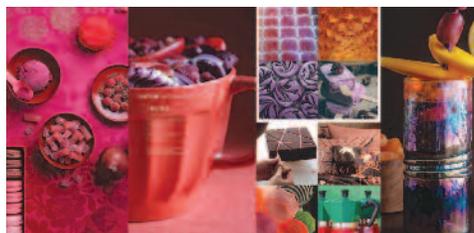
design

Terri Winter column on design18
 Elevated Design: Design Highlights from the
 2018 *gia* Product Design Awards21
 Discovering Design: Dreamfarm23
 Trending Today: Specialty Beverage25



trends

Pantone Style and Substance –
 PANTONEVIEW home + interiors 201928
 Survival and Success in the Retail Renaissance by Tom Mirabile32
 Housewares Industry Trends by Trend Bible34
 Stories to Sell: Global Trends in Retail38



inspiration

Inspiring the Industry – Anna Berry42
 Cultivating Your Concept –
 How to Create a Successful Concept Retail Store45
 Inspiring Retail Concepts: The Container Store48



Contributing Editor

Michelle Hespe is a publisher, editor and writer with over two decades of experience in the media industry, spanning Australia, the US, Europe and Asia. Michelle has a solid grounding in news and journalism, has written a book on industrial design, and has a passion for creating moving content across all media platforms. She is a regular travel presenter on Sky Business Class TV (a travel program for executives) and is working on her first novel while managing a suite of print and digital magazines under her new boutique agency, Publishing ByChelle.

publishingbychelle.com

Adding History to Your Story

by Martin M. Pegler

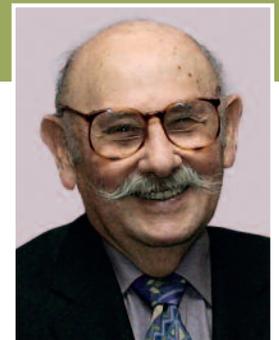
When you do a display—or merchandise presentation—you tell a “story.” It can be about how the products being featured complement a particular lifestyle or enhance an upcoming holiday dinner, or a new look or trend in home or housewares.

Whatever you are trying to promote will benefit if you can illustrate a story in your display, especially if you can

start your story with “Once upon a time...” There is always an expectation that something magical or wonderful will follow those words. We also can anticipate a “lived happily ever after” ending to the tale. Sure, that is old-fashioned and corny, and maybe even trite, but it still seems to work.

I have discovered in my seniority that no matter how old or young you are

Martin M. Pegler is an author, editor, educator and lecturer, and has been a professor at the Fashion Institute of Technology in NY for over 30 years. He has worked with the IHA Global Innovation Awards (*gia*) from the beginning of the *gia* program in 2000, as an Expert Juror, and since 2016 as an honorary member of the *gia* Expert Jury.



there is a feeling of warmth, security and charm wrapped up in the “past.” The past can be a generation or two gone by—several decades ago—or maybe a century or more.

I can still remember seeing black & white movies, in their original presentation in the late 1930s and early 1940s, that set the scene using clichés that we use today to create a desired ambiance.

Imagine you are promoting imported Italian dinnerware. Think of what an Italian café or bistro would look like, all the clichés. Think of those black & white film noir movies—Bogart and Bacall sipping wine from a straw encased bottle resting on a red and white checkered cloth (gray and white in the original film), sitting on bentwood chairs and illuminated by flickering candles. You might add the long bread sticks that served as a centerpiece. Of course, we shouldn’t forget the bare, red (medium gray in



the B&W movies) brick walls, the crisp white napkins and two cigarettes—one stained with bright red (gray) lipstick—smoldering in the large ash tray.

If you are the more literate type—nerdy—given to literature and the books before they became movies, how about being “inspired” by Old Miss Haversham’s moldy and cobweb covered wedding table from Dickens’ “Great Expectations”? It’s a really effective way to promote festive tableware with a twist and a literary turn and a romantic look into the past.

You have added HISTORY to your STORY. You have used images of the past—to romanticize your brand new item. And, whether you are old enough to have seen these movies in their original showings or you checked them out very late one evening on a classic movie TV station, or you read the book in high school or after you saw one of the many filmed variations, it still resonates with you. The past can be part of the future.

You are also being “green”—being aware of the ecosystem and the world around us. You are saving bits of the past for future generations to savor and enjoy while adding texture and interest to a current project. Some architects and designers are sensitive to and respect a style that is now considered “passé” or “old-fashioned,” and thus leave traces of the “original” building or space as part of the new look. They are adding to the design’s history by showing the past to future viewers.



Adding History to Your Story

continued

Among the *gia* honorees, we have had many examples of “making old new again,” old structures newly and freshly restored but still delighting in the past. When I served as an Expert Juror in selecting the top 5 store entries every year I had no favorites, but now that I am retired and can be as prejudiced as I want to be—I do and did have some. One of my all-time favorites is *Loviisan Aitta*, an 1898 barn in a remote area of Finland, that has been revived and beautifully restored leaving much of the original structure on view.

Another is *Kookwinkel Bianca Bonte* in The Netherlands, which has incorporated old paint-splattered work tops in a bright new store design along with “antique” housewares products set into exposed, raw brick walls. The old pieces are displayed on reclaimed ancient timber shelves attached to even older wooden elements. And, the unusual chandelier that hangs up front made on recycled baking tins helps set the theme. Yet, together these various elements blend successfully for the millennial customers for whom this is all NEW!

So, for emphasis, I close with something I said before: By using images or references to the past in your store’s construction or in your displays, you are adding history and romance to what may be an unexciting or not terribly romantic everyday, mundane product. You not only enrich the featured item, you are enriching the shopper’s experience and giving him or her extra value for their purchase. You may even have made them smile. ■



gia[®] global innovation awards

honoring housewares
retail excellence



Every March in Chicago, the IHA Global Innovation Awards (*gia*) are hosted by the International Housewares Association.

The IHA Global Innovation Awards program was created to celebrate excellence and innovation in home and housewares retailing on an international level. Since the launch of *gia* in 2000, there have been over 400 *gia* retail award winners, from 47 countries on six continents.

A jury consisting of retail experts and housewares trade publication editors from around the world decide on the *gia* Global Honorees after looking at all aspects of the participating stores, including visual merchandising, marketing, branding, staff training and other innovative offerings.

We warmly congratulate the *gia* national winners, and take a closer look at the companies that rose to the very top and were bestowed with the *gia* Global Honoree distinction. ■

Visit www.housewares.org/show/gia-retail for more information on the IHA Global Innovation Awards program and to find short introductions and images of all 27 *gia* winners of 2017-2018.

- Watch a quick *gia* video:
www.youtube.com/watch?v=pskZo_Bid3w
- Read the *gia* blog:
<https://blog.housewares.org/category/show/gia-retail-awards>

2017-2018 national *gia* winners:

Argentina	BdQ
Australia	Opus Design
Austria	Tavola – Kochen, Genießen, Schenken
Canada	Pots & Paraphernalia
China	Cuccina
Colombia	Tugó
Denmark	Kalejdoskop
France	Bensimon Concept Store
Germany	Manufactum
Iceland	Kokka
Ireland	The Kitchen Whisk
Italy	Fontana
Japan	Tokyu Hands
Middle East (Saudi Arabia)	Marina Home Interiors
Netherlands	Pollmann sinds 1890
New Zealand	Paper Plane
Poland	Szkianydom
Portugal	Habitare
Russia	Dom Farfora
South-East Asia (Singapore)	Maissone
Spain	Casa Viva
Sweden	RoyalDesign Helsingborg
Turkey	TAÇ
UK	Harrods
Uruguay	Deco Hogar
USA	The Chopping Block
USA - Internet/ Catalogue	DaSalla's

Introducing: the 2018 *gia* Global Honorees

by Michelle Hespe

At the 2018 *gia*, the five exceptional stores that were chosen *gia* Global Honorees are: *Tugó* from Colombia, *Manufactum* from Germany, *Pollmann sinds 1890* from the Netherlands, *Harrods* from the United Kingdom and *The Chopping Block* from the USA.

The *gia* Digital Commerce Award for Excellence in Online Retailing was awarded to *Paper Plane* from New Zealand, and *Harrods* received the highly revered Martin M. Pegler Award for Excellence in Visual Merchandising. ■

Here we introduce the five Global Honorees:

Colombia

tugo
DISEÑO PARA TODOS

The Tugó stores have an abundance of wow factor — the company thoughtfully merges contemporary, creative store design with an enormous offering of product over warehouse spaces between 1,000 and 2,300

square meters. This sense of grandness, combined with the core ethos “good design is for everyone” and a promise that products are readily available to buy on the spot, make the 12 Tugó stores an enjoyable and easy experience for shoppers.

“We are redefining the retail experience in South America,” the president, Rodrigo Quintero Laverde says. The *gia* expert judges commented that Tugó embraces beautiful store design with cohesive fixtures and fun displays, which results in the shopper having an exciting, interactive retail experience. The availability of iPads in aisles and in-store TV channels

to show off products and targeted offers gives customers access to an online store within the store, and this helps to create a familiarity with the store’s digital offerings.

However, the textures and live plants also mean that the real world is very much in unison with technology



at Tugó. “Due to the fact that we sell dreams, and products can tug at people’s emotions, the store design is based on the idea that we have to offer our customers an experience that manages to connect them with the feelings and emotions around those products,” explains Rodrigo. Thus, Tugó’s products are showcased in real household environments in the main categories — living and dining, studio, home office and the bedroom.

To learn more about Tugó, visit www.tugo.co, or see the *Tugó gia* blog.

Germany

MANUFACTUM.

Earthy, academic and old-worldly, yet sleek, accessible and modern, Manufactum is whole-heartedly against “throwawayism.” The brand champions the notion that in a world where too often products are simply bought when a trend emerges and then tossed aside when a new one supersedes it, consumers should place more focus on functional, reliable and repairable products that become a useful, if not integral, part of our lives. Responsible, sustainable and socially equitable manufacturing is the focus of this store, and traditional materials and processes are all a part of the grounding philosophy.

The leading brand has nine stores, with the most recent store opening in Bremen in 2016. There are 8,000 articles on display in the 750 square meter store space, and to add another element to a memorable shopping experience, there’s a cozy bistro with delicious food. The latest store occupies a former bank that was built around the turn of the century in Renaissance Revival style, perfectly blending the old and new and capturing the essence of Manufactum. This remarkable building has a stunning entrance complete with stained glass ceiling overhead, monumental columns and marble and wooden floors. The modern lighting solutions and the deep, warming hues of the woodwork give the store a museum-like feel, which only adds to the feeling that this store sells quality products to be treasured. And to add another “real” touch, shoppers can meet the manufacturers and ask questions about their products. ■

To learn more about Manufactum, visit www.manufactum.de, or see the [Manufactum gia blog](#).



Netherlands



POLLMANN
SINDS 1890

A haven for food lovers, Pollmann was founded in 1890 and has been in the family ever since. Through its products, services and long-lived approach, Pollmann encourages people to create good home-cooked meals, and therefore healthier, happier lives.

The store has the largest collection of tableware and cutlery in the Netherlands, but really, the emphasis at Pollmann is placed upon advice, service and sampling. The store inspires people to use all of their senses and to touch, taste, smell — to get really involved in the offerings. Customers can chat to staff online and order from their own homes, with everything being delivered to their door with some friendly advice thrown into the mix.

Pollmann might be over 120 years old, but that doesn't mean they don't move with the times. The *gia* judges and expert jury were impressed with the combination of an outstanding brick and mortar store that is "edgy and bohemian with an industrial feel," combined with a great online presence that makes the most of new technologies and social media, such as ongoing collaborations with vloggers and bloggers to communicate in-store events and exciting new products. ■

To learn more about Pollmann sinds 1890, visit www.servies.nl, or see the Pollmann *gia* blog.



United Kingdom

Harrods

Harrods needs no introduction. Since being established by Charles Henry Harrod in 1849, it's been considered by many to be the number one department store in the world for luxury branding merchandise.

Harrods has always offered an unparalleled shopping experience, with superior service, stunning visual merchandising, an astounding array of premium product offerings and superb store design, but it now also has a plethora of wonderful offerings online. Today there's also a spa, a concierge, personal shopping and a penthouse for those who require privacy, a Harrod's bank, award-winning restaurants and The Studio — an exclusive interior design service.

Within Harrods, there are many different areas, and it was the Cook Shop that scooped up the 2018 *gia* award. In this store-within-a-store, there's product testing, iPads in the aisles, cooking demonstrations by celebrity chefs, author meet-and-greets and so much more.

However, what has always been at the core of Harrod's success is still the thing that brings people back time and again — the staff. From the exceptional selling staff and expert buyers to the skilled chefs and famous "Green Men" (men in green suits to welcome customers) these unique individuals make up an inspirational team of people who go above and beyond to impress customers. ■

*To learn more about Harrods, visit www.harrods.com, or see the Harrods *gia* blog.*



United States

The
**Chopping
Block**



The Chopping Block's mission is simple yet inspiring — the store exists to “get this country cooking.” Its vision statement is as equally streamlined: The Chopping Block builds communities where people can learn and celebrate through the simple pleasure of cooking, eating and drinking. And true to its word, the store is making a difference to the lives of many, one cooking session at a time.

Owner and chef Shelley Young established the business 20 years ago, and today it is one of the busiest recreational cooking schools in the U.S., with over 250 cooking classes, private cooking parties every month and an active student database of 40,000 people.

The *gia* judges loved the fact that The Chopping Block brings the classroom into a retail store, and that this cooking school approach is expertly incorporated in all marketing and promotions. They agreed that Shelley and her ever-expanding team take a very inspiring approach to teaching and cooking, using fun, highly interactive ways to educate and motivate people. The judges also commented that both store locations have a great identity and original visual merchandising. This was recently acknowledged when The Chopping Block secured first place in the 2017 Design Excellence Award for Retail, which is run by the American Society of Interior Designers. ■

*To learn more about The Chopping Block, visit www.thechoppingblock.com, or see the The Chopping Block *gia* blog.*



Increasing Impulse Shopping

by Martin M. Pegler

If visual merchandising or display is vital anywhere in the retail space, it must be where impulse items are being offered. The whole concept of "impulse shopping" is based on attracting the shopper to a product that she did not come into the store to buy. It means, "waving a flag" in front of her—making her stop, take notice of, maybe try or touch, and then buy.

To accomplish this, stores that are saturated or overloaded with visual images, signs and heavy presentations of stock need to be opened up, simplified and the product needs to be presented in more focused and more targeted attention-getting displays.

It means appealing as much as possible and as often as possible to all of the shopper's senses. SIGHT is foremost; that takes light and color. Without targeted highlights and contrasts of color what is being offered may be overlooked. It also takes contrasts of textures—clear and easily understood signage and whenever possible, lifestyle displays that set the mood and place for the product.

SMELL, where and if possible, is another impulse awakener. Women respond to the aromas of flowers; men respond to the odors of the out-of-doors, to leather and fresh scents. All people respond to the aroma of fresh baked breads, brewing coffee, etc.

By contrasting textures you can appeal to the shopper's sense of TOUCH. Once someone feels or touches a product and they begin to react to it, the feeling of having and holding it isn't far off.



The SOUND of music, if properly selected for the particular targeted market, can soothe and relax the shopper and cause her to let her emotions take over. Once she is guided by her feelings, her desires and her wants, not her needs, the impulse shopping takes over.

If you can get the shopper to try on the garment—and she sees herself in the right light, against a soft, neutral background and with flattering light on her face—she is sold! The impulse becomes a sale!!

If the aroma of freshly brewed coffee and a few sips of the brew was not enough to draw the shopper to the array of coffee pots beautifully presented, accessorized with a color coordinated table cloth and cups and saucers—maybe even an array of cookies (real ones, preferably home baked)—an



amusing milk or cream container, then the high lighting will do it. A display that offers a sampling almost always gets the desired attention, especially when it is bathed in bright light.

Impulse shopping needs to be stimulated and encouraged and that can only be achieved by appealing to the shopper's lifestyle and all of her senses. ■

Retail's New Best Friend

by Anne Kong

As the heart and soul of retailing further evolves, stores and the essence of shopping will continue to morph in unimaginable ways. However, amidst the storm of change, there is one aspect of shopping that remains pure, constant and motivational – the aspirational moment.

For some, an aspirational moment is walking through the ABC Carpet Emporium in New York City, where the floor plan winds like an enchanting street of quaint shops with exotic finds; even the scent is reminiscent of faraway bazaar. Here, the shopper is entwined in a web of curated inspiration, resembling something of a retail treasure hunt, enticed by the romantic notion to leave with a souvenir.

For other shoppers, the classic grandeur of Harrods can cause the heart to miss a beat. The luxurious store interior, varying from vaulted gold ceilings to intricate dark wood molding and polished marble, transports the shopper to a new destination on every

floor. The experience catapults one back in time, to the feeling of a luxury cruise ship on a faraway voyage.

Whether it's a bustling market in San Miguel, Mexico, or a tiny family-owned shop off the beaten path, these shopping experiences have one thing in common: they thrust our emotions into overdrive. Shoppers in this day and age wanderlust for some form of tangible satisfaction they don't get from shopping online. They are yearning for more than the banal chore of just "shopping" – they are looking to be transported and to experience the feelings of discovery. Consumers crave distinctive products that can't be found everywhere; they value the story behind the brand and



merchandise. They look for Instagram-worthy displays or a retail store that is not just a place to purchase goods, but a playground, rich with technology. In short, they are searching for an aspirational moment.

The popularity of sharing these aspirational moments with hundreds of followers via Instagram has spawned another popular marketplace. The creative imagery of people living adventurous lives on Instagram can taunt our aspirational senses, as we find ourselves in the never-ending search of that perfect moment to share. Much like the editorial pages of a magazine, Instagram provides viewers with a steady stream of curated images where grammars can

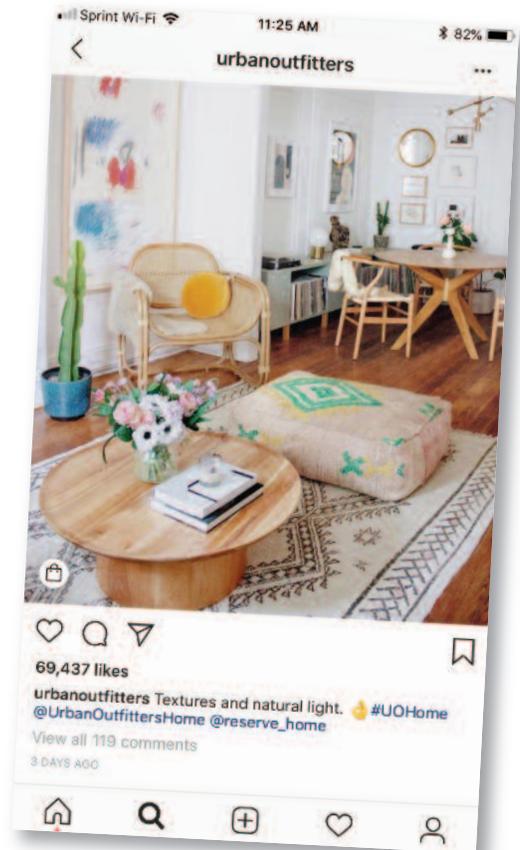
share their travels, food, projects, shopping finds or latest experience. Incredibly, this social media platform has now become host to one of the most successful shopping networks showcasing millions of products, window displays and merchandising stories. With the help of filters, geotags, hashtags and shopping tags, Instagram makes capturing a moment

Anne is an educator and designer specializing in Visual Merchandising, Exhibition Design and Special Events. She is an Associate Professor and Program Coordinator for the Visual Presentation and Exhibition Design Program at Fashion Institute of Technology in New York City. Anne has been a member of the *gia* expert jury since 2017.



not only enchanting but searchable for shoppers. It has become the new form of “display” for retail stores, with a single post racking upwards of 68K likes and hundreds of comments.

The good news for retailers is that Instagram provides more mileage for existing store displays, opening a new chapter for retailers to convey stories



Retail's New Best Friend

continued

about their products in a bespoke and memorable style. Windows and store displays are not just for the person walking down the street; visual merchandising has embraced the social media's format to be grammable.

"Grammable" visual merchandising can mean either creating specialty displays for the sole purpose of consumer Instagramming, or retail displays designed specifically for the brand's Instagram feed. Today, designing displays for Instagram incorporates a strong degree of storytelling and theatrics; posts must be visually stimulating through the use of composition and color, and translate well for the scale of a smartphone. Here traditional display skills resound. It's goes beyond designing a beautiful still-life; the product presentation must perform like work of art or moment in time. Using advanced display techniques that incorporate color, symmetry, visual contrast, repetition, humor, nostalgia or shock value can



prove extremely effective. Great displays must tantalize the senses, even from the lit screen of a small smart phone. Featured here are several good examples posted by Le Creuset of how products can thematically tell a compelling story.

Inside a brick and mortar store, Instagram opportunities can engage and entertain consumers using a number of methods. Perhaps it is a photo-op that allows friends to hop into a scene and become a part of the store's Instagram feed - be it a graphic or illustration. Posing with a life-size celebrity or standing near a motivational "quote of the day" on the wall is more than a mere snapshot. Seasonal displays can create opportunities for shoppers to play and experiment. For example, the retail store Story created a Halloween skull made from Converse sneakers that materialized from the camera's view.

Brands can stream live stories to give consumers insight into a product or

promotion, to share events, or spread excitement about a product launch or demonstration. The beauty is, all of these tactics can be searchable by a simple hashtag, enabling the post to gain even more traction.

According to Instagram's data, 60 percent of IG users discover products through the platform and 50 percent of users follow at least one business account. Instagram's ability to reach millions of shoppers in minutes makes it a powerful tool - one that retailers must use actively in order to successfully connect their brands and products with consumers. The ability to create and share aspirational moments, within a branded context, has caused a seismic shift in shopping culture and outreach.

Instagram also provides endless amounts of inspiration and market intel to retailers and visual merchandisers themselves. No longer is it necessary to trek from store to store to comp shop in order to understand our competitors





and the current trends – all of this information is now available through the eyes of friends, influencers, brands and celebrities. Additionally, users can sort and save a library of posts for inspiration under Instagram’s collections feature in the user profile. Saving posts to collections by name is a useful tool for future reference and backtracking. By tapping the bookmark icon underneath a post you can direct it to one of your saved collections, eliminating the need to screenshot it.

In short, Instagram has changed the landscape of many industries, and visual merchandising and display is not exempt. It’s up to retailers and visual merchandisers to continue finding ways to integrate the Instagram experience into their brick and mortar stores and maximize its potential. Don’t underestimate the connection between Instagram and shopping a brick and mortar store, both immerse the consumer into a flurry of aspiration. Happy Gramming! ■





MAKE A **Smart** MOVE

The International Home + Housewares Show in Chicago is a fantastic opportunity to get a truly holistic grasp of the latest trends and innovations from not only US brands but also global suppliers. We loved the focus on creativity and were particularly impressed with the large number of brilliant startups and emerging brands demonstrating unique products. The IHA team's meticulous attention to detail resonates through every organizational level of the event.

Matt Ryan, Partner Success Manager
citiesocial
Taiwan

2 – 5 March
Chicago, USA

Show information and free online
pre-registration: www.housewares.org

international
**home +
housewares
show** | 2019

IHA
INTERNATIONAL HOUSEWARES ASSOCIATION[®]
the home authority

international
**home +
housewares
show** | 2019
march 2 - 5 • chicago, usa



INTERNATIONAL HOUSEWARES ASSOCIATION®
the home authority
www.housewares.org

high design and intelligent innovation

- the best international products and brands, design and quality from around the world
- the entire product lines of North America's leading home & housewares manufacturers, product suppliers and designers
- innovative new brands, products and product lines not available in Europe or Asia

world class ideas and partnerships

- first-class learning and networking opportunities for both specialty retailers and corporate buyers
- the finest U.S. home & housewares retailers to visit – *Williams Sonoma, Crate and Barrel, Sur La Table, The Container Store* and more – featuring unique ideas and innovative merchandising techniques
- expert information from the leading global authority on color and material trends for 2019/2020 at the *Pantone ColorWatch* display and seminars



gia® global
innovation
awards
honoring housewares
retail excellence

Concept. In the words of a successful concept retailer

by Terri Winter

Your customers no longer come to your store just to shop. They go shopping to touch and feel the products and to EXPERIENCE the product and the environment.

I would argue that technology has enabled many new ways to interact with the customers, but the fundamentals of "Retail" remain the same.

Good old customer service

Creating an experience should not be at the detriment to customers finding what they want easily. The basics of retail are more important than ever; customers still want good customer service - in an authentic, genuinely friendly way. Once the basics of customer service are covered, they also want an inspiring shopping experience.

Be memorable

Not only do you need to get customer service right and your inventory right, you need to be memorable. One thing that is VERY different from the "good old days" is your customer has so many alternatives to your store that you can be easily forgotten - even if you do a good job.

Creating YOUR concept

You don't need to start turning your business into a juice-bar in the morning or have a DJ in-store to create an experience (although if that naturally fits then Amaaaaazing!). What you need to have is a concept. Your



the top3 |
shopping bags

OWN concept. It is not a matter of "adding on" an experience because everyone is talking about it; it needs to feel that it belongs to you. Unexpected is fantastic - but a mismatch leaves your customer confused.

Ultimately, if you want a new pair of jeans and you walk into a store and they have a live DJ, you will think that is pretty cool - but it gets much less amazing when they don't have what you came in for and they can't help you. Experience is great if it adds to your credibility - it is detrimental if it erodes it.

Ask yourself some questions - what is it that is uniquely YOU - why should people seek you out and come into your store? It is unlikely to be one thing - it is likely to be a series of qualities combined that make you a destination. Work them out and then enhance them. Make them truly yours. These days you CAN be niche. Figure out whom you are talking to and make sure your concept is just for them. You will never please everyone.



We asked Terri Winter, co-owner and founder of the world-recognized concept retail store top3 by design in Australia, to share her thoughts on “experiential shopping” and concepts – what she sees is important in retail today and what has made top3 by design so successful.

To illustrate, here is my story...

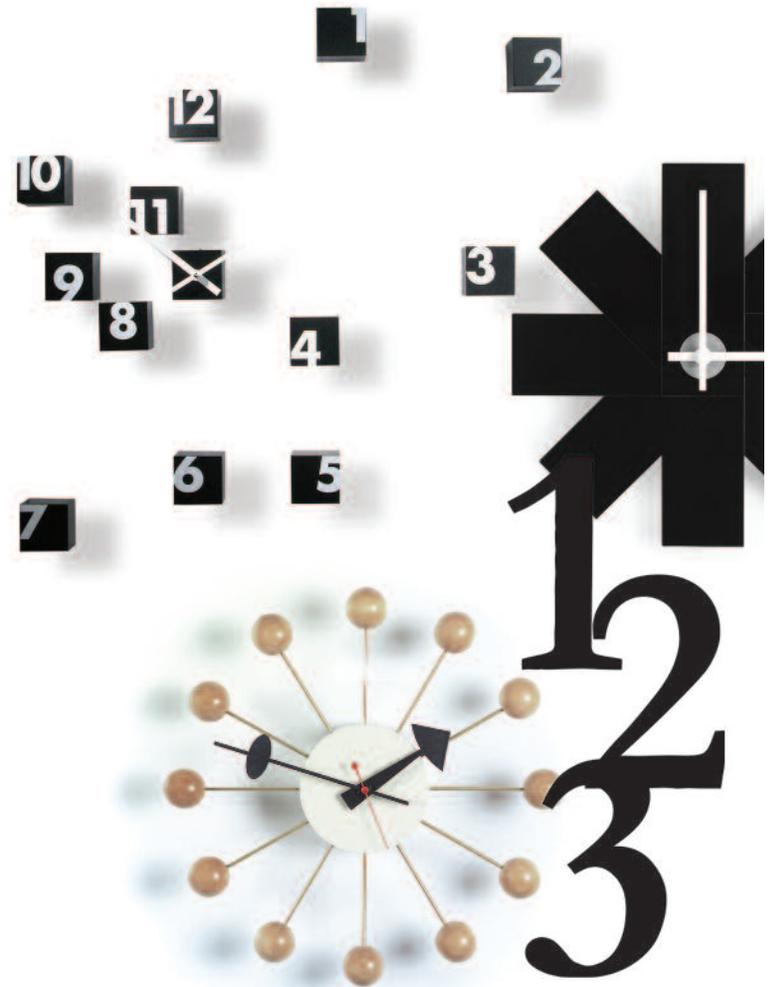
Nearly 18 years ago (in 2001) top3 by design was born. The concept: Up to 3 products per category. The best in the world by merit of design. An edited selection of the best product from around the globe. Authentic. Innovative. 100 percent original.

At the time of top3 by design’s inception, Google was not what it is today. Research was difficult. Consumers defaulted to brands because they provided safety and trust in what they knew. For consumers who did not know much about design, there was safety in brand names. Emerging designers struggled to get traction because they were unknown.

It is a little like when you go to a restaurant and look at the wine list but know very little about wine. You can recognize regions, or styles you like, but after that you are guessing. If you are out with a client you want to impress, you might go towards the top end of the list; if you are with close friends on a midweek meal, then you might grab something cheap and cheerful towards the bottom.

I began to notice that when people were buying product it wasn’t that different. After the style and look of the product was decided, then people selected by price: “if it is more expensive it must be better” or “somewhere in the middle is safe, it should be ok.” More expensive does not necessarily make it better, and less expensive is not always worse.

Top3 by design was born to research the product, to provide a store where customers could trust that all the product was original, that the quality was good, and therefore feel more



comfortable in choosing what sparked joy, rather than worrying about quality issues. It also gave a platform for young or emerging designers to sit shoulder to shoulder with well-known international greats.

It is important to continue to assess your concept, ensure that it is still relevant.

Concept. In the words of a successful concept retailer

continued

Fast forward to 2018. Google means you can find just about anything. Customers can research everything they want to. So what does that mean for top3? Although the initial purpose of pre-researching product is not as relevant as it was back in 2001, the principle concept remains just as important today.

In a world where you can buy anything, what do you buy? With so much choice, top3 plays a role in editing the selection down. It is not about limiting choice, but in a world where everyone is busy it is about curating, about getting rid of the clutter that falls outside the parameters of quality and innovation.

Top3 by design's concept is just as relevant today as it was in 2001 – to provide an edited collection of the best product from around the globe, by merit of design. ■

To learn more about top3 by design, visit www.top3.com.au.



Design Stars:

Design Highlights from the *gia* Product Design Awards



Discover Design, the premier design destination at the International Home + Housewares Show, offers a collection of companies showcasing the latest designs found in housewares. Exhibitors are based on recommendations from and approval by the retail and design community.

At the 2018 Show, several exhibitors from Discover Design were selected finalists in the IHA Global Innovation Awards (*gia*) for Product Design Excellence. ■

BEST PRODUCT DESIGN – GLOBAL HONOREES

Bath + Personal Care

Flex – toilet brush



Joseph Joseph
www.josephjoseph.com

Home Décor + Gifts

Globe Watering Can



Eva Solo
www.evasolo.com

Household + Home Electrics

Titan – trash compactor



Joseph Joseph
www.josephjoseph.com

Kitchen Hand Tools + Cutlery

Fledge – flip edge cutting board



Dreamfarm
www.dreamfarm.com

Kitchenware

ThawTHAT! Deluxe



That Inventions
www.thatinventions.com

BEST PRODUCT DESIGN – FINALISTS

Bath + Personal Care

Spindry – toilet brush spins dry



Dreamfarm
www.dreamfarm.com

Home Décor + Gifts

The Articulate Gallery



Articulate Scotland
www.articulategallery.com

Home Décor + Gifts

Florida Vase



Gourmet Kitchenworks
www.gourmetkitchenworks.com

Home Décor + Gifts

magnaframe



THE FOUNDATION
www.thefndtn.com

Home Organization + Storage

All Dock



Alldock USA LLC
www.alldock.com

Household + Home Electrics

Aroma Aureole Cold Air Diffuser-travel set



JIA
www.jia-inc.com

Kitchen Hand Tools + Cutlery

Eparé Manual Coffee Grinder



Eparé
www.epare.com

Kitchen Hand Tools + Cutlery

EggXactPeel



Fusionbrands
www.fusionbrands.com

Tabletop

MyFlavour Oil Carafe



Eva Solo
www.evasolo.com

For more information about Discover Design,
visit www.housewares.org/discover-design.

For more information about the 2018 IHA Global Innovation Awards
for Product Design Excellence, visit www.housewares.org/gia-product

Discovering Design: Dreamfarm

by Vicki Matranga

"Great design must solve problems" believes the crew at Dreamfarm, a problem-solving company that grows ideas for clever, useful kitchen and household products. "The hardest part of our job isn't coming up with a solution," says Alex Gransbury, Dreamfarm's founder, "it's finding a problem so that our products have a reason to exist. Products without a purpose are junk and the customer we design for is remarkably good at spotting junk."

Established 15 years ago, Dreamfarm is a company powered by a group of high-spirited Australian designers, inventors and creatives who dream up original tools for daily living. The company now produces more than two dozen items sold around the world. The crew enjoys tinkering in the workshop as well as playing word puzzles, so the name of each multi-function product describes its uses. The *Spadle* spoon/ladle, *Chopula* chopping spatula, *Clongs* cliplock tongs, and the *Levups*, *Levoons* and *Levoop* line of scrape leveling measuring cups, spoons and scoop, reveal the team's sense of humor and inventiveness.

IHA: What propelled the early success of your business?

AG: Many people. Starting a company is like raising a child – it takes a village. I started with just one product, the Grindenstein, and for years my mum helped me put them together every night of the week. As did my sister, Cate, who still makes magic happen by managing inventory and working in sales and marketing. My dad did our accounts for free for more than a decade, and Phil Howieson, our design manager, has been pushing the envelope with us for just as long. I honestly have a list as long as my arm of all the friends, family, teammates and factories that have bent over backwards from day one to make Dreamfarm a success.

Our first product is still one of our best and most consistent sellers—it just works better than anything else on the market. Would Dreamfarm have died if

Grindenstein failed? Absolutely. Every time we launch a product it feels like a make-or-break pivotal event. And so it should be. Making stuff is hard. Making stuff that matters is even harder.

IHA: What makes Dreamfarm design unique?

AG: The standard we hold ourselves to. For us to create a product it must be new, it must solve a problem that's worth solving and it must work better than anything else on the planet. It's the reason we do all our inventing and design work in-house. We don't work with outside agencies because you can't pay a design agency to create the world's best garlic press, you can only pay for their time and ask them to try. We drive a concept hard, but when something's not happening, we let it simmer and move onto something else. For every award-winning product that makes it into our customer's hands, there are countless prototypes and half-baked ideas that just aren't good enough yet.

IHA: Are there any specific designers, places or eras that influence you?

AG: "If I have seen further it is by standing on the shoulders of giants" is how Sir Isaac Newton described the idea that we discover truth by building on previous discoveries. As inventors, it's our job to connect new dots and create



Discovering Design: Dreamfarm

continued

something new but we can't do that in a vacuum. It's important that we understand the problem we're trying to solve as well as what has come before us. Our job is to build, not copy. And when we are fortunate to come up with a useful new idea, we need to stay humble by remembering that every new idea is built on, or is only possible because of, someone else's idea that was once new too.

IHA: How do you choose which idea to develop and take to market?

The biggest challenge in creating something new and useful is getting people to understand what you've done because they've never seen it before. The reason that's so important is because people can't figure out if they care until they figure out what you've done. Yes, your product needs to be new, but equally, if not more important, is that it needs to be



understandable. While Phil, Tom (product development engineer Tom Schuster) and I are our own harshest critics, there's nothing more deflating than watching someone we know is smart fumble in trying to use one of our prototypes. It's also very refreshing and keeps us honest.

On average we aim to launch between two and four products per year. That means in the next 10 years, of all the prototypes we make, only between 20 and 40 new products will see the light of day. That's not a lot of chances to create something new and so useful that our children's children and their

children will use it. So, we make sure to make them count. We only launch our very best ideas, and we believe if we can keep holding ourselves to the standards that got us this far, the great customers we've found will keep introducing their friends to us.

What will Dreamfarm dream up next? View them in action at www.dreamfarm.com. ■

For more interviews with interesting designers and housewares innovators, visit the Discover Design blog.



Think about Drink: Beverage Trends in Retail

by Michelle Hespe

At the 2019 International Home + Housewares Show in Chicago, the Trending Today Preview features the specialty beverage movement – highlighting the various types of craft beverage trends, including coffee, beer, cocktails and water, along with specialty glassware and accessories, craft beer & cocktail kits and more. We chat with store owners, retail experts, wholesalers and product developers to gain insight into what is going down in the beverage sector.

Today, with the growing war on waste and a focus on taking care of the planet, teamed with people looking for healthier ways of living, our approach to beverages has drastically changed, for the better.

Even if beverages are not the focus of your business, you'd be surprised at how many products cater to a person's drinking needs. Some prevalent examples are DIY beer kits for the home, a plethora of blenders, shakers and accessories for mocktails and cocktails, juicing machines, kombucha kits, trendy water bottles and re-usable coffee cups, juice and tea diffusers, scotch sets and wine glasses, tea sets and ice cube trays... the list goes on and on.

To help you surmount this next wave of change in the world of beverages, we caught up with some retailers, product creators and distributors and retail experts who are all over some trends in this burgeoning sector.

Based in Australia, Top3 by design has a relatively large selection of products in the beverage sector, and Terri Winter has seen some great new trends



emerge over the past year or two that have recently gained even more traction.

"We've seen a massive uptake of fruit infusion beverages – both alcoholic and non-alcoholic," she says. "The Porthole Infuser by American master chef Grant Achatz was originally designed for The Aviary cocktail lounge in Chicago in 2011. Interestingly though, only in this past year have we seen it really gain traction. People are increasingly using it for non-alcoholic infusions as well, rather than just cocktails."

The massive global trend in reusable water bottles is also linked to fruit infusion. "We're seeing people wishing to select water bottles that facilitate fruit infusions and that showcase them – they look pretty. The Eva Solo MyFlavour Carafe has also taken off and I expect it to have its strongest sales to date this Australian summer. Adding teas to the fruit is a new spin on traditional infusions and adds stronger flavors and colors too."



Trending Today Specialty Beverage *continued*



Winter notes that the BYO cup/bottle has had a gigantic effect on people's lives and on the planet. "People are actively avoiding the single use water bottle and they understand that drinking more water is important for health."

Winter mentions one new beverage trend that she believes is a world-first. "Australian coffee guru Craig Hiron has launched a very new concept, which is an innovative pairing of filter coffee, blended with fruit juices and vanilla beans, developed by a team of technical and sensory experts," she says, predicting that the classy looking drink will be very popular.

Over in New Zealand, Liz Oldfield, Director of Milly's has seen a decline on the personal blender (Nutribullet type models) in favor of big super blenders. "Slow juicing has also declined as people are aware of their need for fiber, and so are wanting to blend whole fruit and vegetables rather than simply extract juice," she says. "There is also a growing interest in both craft cocktails and craft beer, and a general decline in soft drink-type beverages, presumably in response to the anti-sugar movement. There has been a definite rise in sales of specialist ice molds, things like large spheres and cubes."

Oldfield also mentions that coffee and tea products are still healthily growing. "Artisan pieces for the home are growing in popularity - such as cold brew kits, specialist presses and plungers for healthy teas," she says. "And metal and glass straw sales are soaring now that people are rejecting plastic straws."

Saskia Thornton, Brand Founder and Business Lead for Mad Millie, an online wholesaler that sells healthy living kits to make things such as cheese, butter and beverages, says that people are much more selective when it comes to what people are drinking these days. "Our customers are looking for things such as low sugar, natural ingredients, botanicals and other interesting natural ingredients," Thornton says. "We're seeing more people opt for non- or low-alcoholic beverages, which has given rise to a vast range of fermented or 'craft soda' drink brands that provide consumers with alternatives to alcoholic products. Fermentation and 'live' products are also bigger than they ever. Fermented drinks like kefir, kombucha and Kvas are giving consumers interesting fermented beverages with the added benefit of having live cultures, which are great for gut health."

Thornton notes that good old water (flavored, sparkling or plain) is a huge sector. "Our customers are wanting to know the provenance of their drinks - who the maker or the supplier is. The war on sugar continues and customers are looking at ways to sweeten or flavor drinks as minimally and as naturally as possible. We've also noticed that non-dairy, for example, coconut, and nut milks are very popular."



There are similar sentiments in the USA. Specialty manufacturer of kitchen accessories and lifestyle goods, Eparé, was launched by Founder and Director Eugene Khayman in 2012. The business has a focus on entertaining, and making the preparation of any food or drink easier and more enjoyable.

"We're noticing an up-tick in products related to craft cocktails as consumers are now bringing the craft of cocktail creation into their homes while entertaining guests. The simple creation of classic drinks, such as an old-fashioned punch, is becoming more widespread," he says. "Previously, consumers limited their entertaining to offering beer, wine and soft drinks. Now, we're noticing the addition of a signature drink when hosting a party. The host will either have the ingredients ready for specific craft cocktails or prepare premixed batches so that their guests can easily prepare and enjoy on their own."

Eparé also has a Clear Ice System, meaning a customer can successfully create an adequate amount of clear ice cubes at home without consuming half the freezer. "Before our Clear Ice System, all of the options out there either did not work, were too expensive, yielded too few cubes, or consumed a large amount of space in the freezer," explains Eugene. "It redefines ice-making at home."

Pavel Staněk, co-founder of Potten & Pannen – Staněk, a KitchenAid Concept Store & Gourmet Academy in Prague, believes that many of the latest trends in the retail beverage sector today are linked to customers choosing a healthier lifestyle. "People are now seeking higher quality life standards, and part of this is surrounding themselves with quality kitchen tools and products," he says. "That relates to beverages as well because everything that we put into our bodies matters. And so, we are proud to represent modern juicer brands, as green smoothies and fresh juices are more popular now than ever. And modern equipment ensures that important vitamins remain in the fresh juice."

gia Expert Juror Anne Kong agrees that health is a pivotal marker in terms of beverage purchases right now. Anne says that one of the hottest trends on the market right now is Nutraceuticals – ingredients that are healthy and helpful. "Tonics, mixers or additives that guarantee a boost, more focus and stress relief are heavily trending," she says. "There are some other trends swaying people's retail decisions as well – such as low sugar content in products, cannabis as an ingredient, Indian cardamom and turmeric as ingredients, cocktails with low or no alcohol, and single servings of wines and flavored cocktails." Again, most of these trends suggest a movement towards healthier beverage consumption. ■

trending TODAY preview

featuring specialty beverage

- Featuring up to 60 exhibitors with specialty beverage products
- Open exclusively to buyers and news media
- Running concurrently with the New Exhibitor Preview

8:00-10:00 am
Saturday, March 2
Room S100/Grand
Ballroom, South Building



PANTONE®VIEW home + interiors 2019

Focusing on the Future

by Leatrice Eiseman, Executive Director
Pantone Color Institute

Films, fashion and design are hugely influential in color trends, as are food, consumer products and social movements. On other fronts, the healthy eating trend and the subsequent culinary culture that has evolved in recent years has also brought with it a movement in natural, earthy colors being used in packaging and on products. Shimmering materials are in vogue. As for black or white, they're the givens. The hottest new color trends for 2019 can be grouped in eight palettes. ■

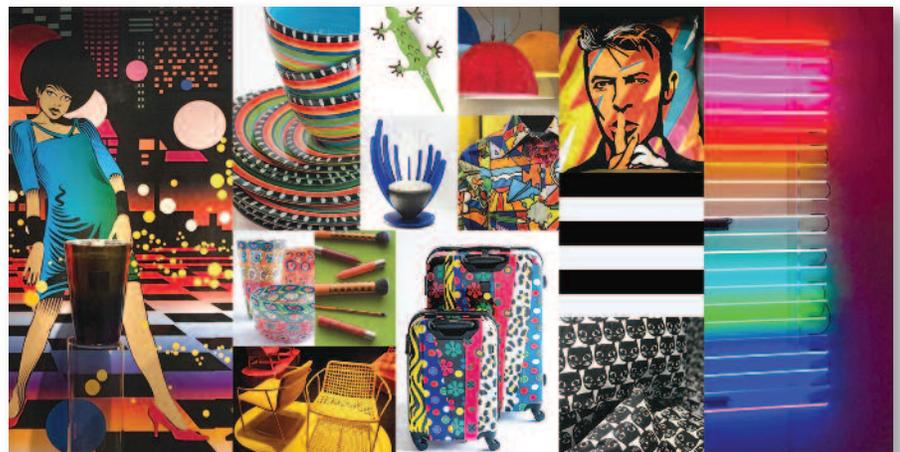


Cravings

Cravings is a palette that tempts the eye as well as the taste buds with spicy reds, flamingo orange and rich purples. Seductive allusions to “fetish foods” deepen the irresistible message of the palette.

Syncopated

A palette pulsing with all the right moves, Syncopated is lit with energy and exhilaration by bright white, glowing yellow and a hot yellow-red.



At the 2019 Show, color and material trends for 2020 will be revealed at the color seminars by Pantone. Visit also the Pantone ColorWatch display to view, first-hand, detailed forecasts and trend identification.



Paradoxical

A synthetic color language that is both luxurious and accessible, the Paradoxical palette proposes style and design created by unconventional couplings, an eclectic mix of high and low and a mix of traditional and modern.

Musings

Musings, a quietly reflective yet vital palette of gentle and hushed shades, conveys a relaxed, healthy lifestyle made even more so by a sense of pleasure and excitement.



Cherish

A grouping of idealized combinations of color, pattern and texture that form a quiet, conflict-free refuge for the senses. Cherish captures memories of comfort, enjoyment, affection and contentment.



Meanderings

Whether traveling in person or in your imagination, to destinations known and unknown, Meanderings implies a winding course done at a leisurely pace that often reveals unexpected treasures and pleasures.

Classico

Just as the name implies, the hues of Classico are fundamental, basic and everlasting, while at the same time, elegant and forever fashionable. This is a palette where a graceful swan white and camel-colored tan co-exist effortlessly with deep teal, chic gray flannel, burgundy red and caviar black.



Proximity

Forming a hybrid of technology and nature that speaks to the complexities of 21st century life, Proximity gathers together sister shades of tropical green-blues and blue-greens that blend fluidly into royal blues and clean crispy greens.

The audio recording of the presentation is available at www.housewares.org/education/presentations-webinars.

Extracted with permission from PANTONE®VIEW home + interiors 2019 trend forecast.

To learn more about Pantone or to purchase the PANTONEVIEW home + interiors 2019 trend forecast, please visit www.pantone.com.



THE INSPIRED HOME[®]

CONSUMER FOCUSED. INDUSTRY DRIVEN. ALWAYS INSPIRED.



The Inspired Home is IHA's consumer-focused platform. Our influencer network, website, magazine and social channels are designed to motivate, educate and inspire consumers.

TheInspiredHome.com | [@theinspiredhome_com](https://www.instagram.com/theinspiredhome_com)

Survival and Success in the Retail Renaissance

by Tom Mirabile

“It’s no secret the marketplace is experiencing unprecedented and rapid changes in how consumers gather information, shop and buy products. But these changes represent tremendous opportunities for the housewares industry,” said Tom Mirabile, consumer trend forecaster for the International Housewares Association and senior vice president of global trend and design for Lifetime Brands, during his annual keynote address at the 2018 International Home + Housewares Show.

According to Mirabile, the key to success lies in embracing – not fearing – change. He quoted author Jim

Kenney from his recent book *Thriving in the Crosscurrent*, “We’re in the middle of a retail renaissance and yet we are often so preoccupied with simply coping that we can’t see the dramatic positive changes that are unfolding around us,” he shared.

To break things down, Mirabile discussed the five main demographics: Gen Z (ages 3-22), Millennials (23-42), Gen X (43-53), Baby Boomers (54-73) and Prime Timers (74+). He shared a wealth of influential factors from home ownership and marriage, to income, careers and interests, but the take-home message was that there are now new ways of engaging different

demographics, and most of them involve social media. “How you position yourself and your business within social media is critical,” he said.

Life patterns and what is important to people has also drastically changed. While the lives of Baby Boomers and Prime Timers often followed a set pattern (i.e. live with parents; get an education; start a career; get married; have children; children leave home), now there are many alternate scenarios. For instance, Millennials might live with friends, then get married later, but then they might get divorced and live with friends or another partner again. They might buy a home, but

they might sell it, live with someone else and then buy another home later. Or they might start a career, but then take a break and travel.

With so many more choices, so much more freedom and individualization, Mirabile said, there are many more opportunities for housewares manufacturers and retailers to engage consumers and address these ever-changing life situations, offering solutions for new stages in consumers’ lives.





Another area that offers new opportunities is the mindful, healthy living movement, which comes hand-in-hand with the massive cooking phenomenon and food focus. These opportunities open layers of potential product-selling from home gardening and cookware, to smart products and objects which offer important intangibles, like time and space savings and reduced environmental impact.

"Millennials want constant reinvention and innovation," Mirabile explained. "Now we talk to 'tribes rather than age generations': the foodie, the coffee snob, the wine and beer lover, etc. Tribes are groups of people who share similar interests and passions. Today's consumers are buying experience, not just objects. They want products that promise intangibles; new knowledge, new skills and shareable experiences."

To further his point about how things have changed, Mirabile referenced Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs - a classic interpretation of the five stages a person goes through in life. At the base of the hierarchy are physiological needs such as air, food, drink, sex and shelter. The next level is safety (security, law, order) followed by love and belongingness (friendship, intimacy, trust). Then comes esteem (dignity, achievement, status) followed by self-actualization (self-fulfillment and ultimately happiness). Mirabile emphasized that today's meaningful

companies and brands are still focusing on addressing these "elemental" needs, and not just on the latest color, material or technology trends.

However, Mirabile pointed out that these days, the way that customers achieve a sense of happiness is completely different to what it was even 10 years ago. It's not just buying a house or a sports car that offers dignity and prestige. Good self-esteem can be gained by meaningful connections one has on sites such as Instagram, Pinterest or Facebook. And today, self-actualization could be reached by a 10-year-old meditating or making an amazing cake and getting 1,000 "likes".

Despite the dramatic and fast-paced changes happening in society, Mirabile reminded the audience of several core ideals that have remained the same and one important constant: People buy things to solve a problem or to enrich their lives in some way. These days, people want to spend less time and energy on everyday life tasks. For example, look at the rise of smart products, Mirabile said. They're all about taking the drudgery out of



mundane everyday jobs and giving people the time to do what they want, when they want. Younger generations want their lives to become easier and easier, and when older generations become less mobile, it's handy to have products that do things for you. "We're going back to basics," he said. "It's still all about finding solutions that help people live their 'best lives'."

Another constant is that people want connection. Being "connected" today often means being connected to a device, but devices bring connections with other people and allow us to easily access information from many others. "Helping consumers connect with others, whether in person or online, must be a consideration for both manufacturers and retailers." ■

A video recording of the presentation can be found on the IHA's website at <https://www.housewares.org/education/video>.

Grounded | Spring Summer 2019

by Rebecca Charlton, Trend Researcher
Trend Bible



A longing sense of place and desire to reconnect with the earth unites trends this season, as consumers are drawn to barren desert landscapes and open skies.

As forecast in our Home & Interiors Spring Summer 2019 trend book, Grounded sees the home take on an earthly quality as consumers look to go back to basics. Design takes on a natural and rustic approach where objects have a real focus on craftsmanship and tactility.

Natural, sun bleached materials are rustic, gritty and highly textured and products have the feeling that they have been unearthed from ancient civilizations. The continued focus on craftsmanship sees etching and carving becoming key for designing unique products. For textile design, tufts, fringing, sheers and braids are used to add tactility to this summer trend.





©Tiles on Bradman

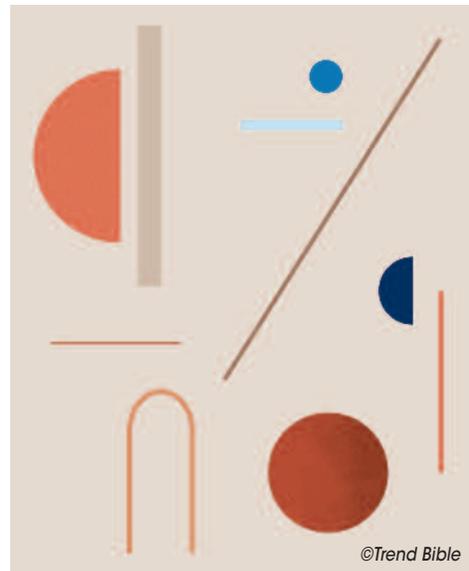
Trend Bible is a home and interiors-dedicated forecasting agency working with leading international brands to help them understand the future of their market. They forecast future trends in the behavior of consumers in a two-to-five year timeframe and analyze how this will impact the home environment.



©Lane Marinho



©Kik Sunshine



©Trend Bible

Color

A delicate balance of neutrals, tonal oranges and blues creates a harmonious palette for this primitive story, which allows us to cool down in this hot landscape. Mocha and smoke grey shades provide pale neutral grounds whilst the deep blue adds a darker edge to this story.

Grounded | Spring Summer 2019

continued

Fringing

This story celebrates the facility you can achieve from fringing and tufted fabrics. Products and accessories are adorned with decorative hanging pieces of fringing, updating simple products with a primitive aesthetic.

@Lea Baert



@CC Tapis

@Ben and Aja Blanc



@Franz West

Short Legs

Simple shapes add a modern feel to the otherwise earthy trend. For furniture design consider using simple features like thin legs and cylindrical bolster cushions. For decorative accessories and ceramics, add feet to give them height.

@Gio Ponti



@Jonas Wagell





Half Moon

Semi circles and half-moons are a key micro trend for print and shape direction. Half-moons are sliced, overlapped and interlocked for decorative accessories and scaled down for simple updates on cushions and ceramics. Copper and metallic oranges are used as a color highlight across decorative products.

Grounded forms one of four trends published in the Trend Bible Spring Summer 2019 Home & Interiors trend book, available to buy now from their online shop at www.trendbible.com/shop.

For more information on how trend forecasting can grow your business, contact enquiries@trendbible.com.

To receive free monthly trend updates by Trend Bible, sign up for free newsletter at www.trendbible.com.

Trend Bible will be presenting some of the key trends for the home that retailers should be responding to for 2020 at the International Home + Housewares Show next March. To learn more, visit www.housewares.org/show/innovation-theater.

Stories to Sell: Global Trends in Retail

by Michelle Hesppe

Henrik Peter Reisby Nielsen

Henrik Peter Reisby Nielsen, an expert at utilizing technology in retail, has noticed a massive trend in retail that is also reflected in everyday life: the pace at which people move and the speed at which they do things, including purchasing products. "Everything is going faster than ever," he says. "We even walk and talk faster than ever before. We get so much input that our brain needs to process and feel that we have little time to do all of our daily tasks. So as a retailer, you need get people's attention by being personal. You need to slow them down and make them notice you."

This leads to the trend of creating environments in which people want to stop and relax. "Beyond making sure that your employees smile when people visit your store, you should invest in sound, light and smell, because neuro-marketing studies clearly suggest that the best way to create retention and loyalty towards your brand is done by making not only your store, but also the products in your store memorable," says Henrik. "If you can make watching, touching and feeling products in your store exciting, the dopamine in your customer's brain will ensure that you create a craving for revisiting your store."

Henrik says that Abercrombie & Fitch is a great example of a retailer utilizing neuro-marketing. "I took this approach in my own store, and sales increased dramatically

after having installed sound zones and LED lights that I could control to set the perfect scene and theme for the seasons throughout the year," Henrik explains.

Another noticeable trend that has developed over the past years is the creation of ambassadors for brands, which creates exciting activity in-store. "Invite vloggers to your store to create videos of them using your product and make sure your events are on Instagram and Facebook," he suggests. "Invite national chefs to show your customers how to cook and give them food and wine in the store. Have photo sessions with Santa. These are all things that past *gia* winners have done, and they've worked well. You want customers to use their smart phones to take photos of your store."

Although Instagram is huge, Henrik also says that targeted marketing through Facebook is still one of the best ways to get a message out to your audience at a fairly low cost. "Find a company that specializes in this, rather than trying to do it on your own, and you will benefit greatly," he says.

Henrik also explains that today, retailers need to take customer reviews seriously, or they risk losing their place in the market. "We know that people trust reviews more than advertising these days, so you need to make sure that everything being written about you is good, or at least make sure that negative posts about your store or products are answered politely and with empathy."

As an example, one *gia* winner opened their door after hours to a customer who needed assistance, and the customer was so pleased that they posted a review about the service,

*We talk to the four *gia* Expert jurors about the new emotionally charged and uber-connected world of retail.*

thanking the owner online. "Positive content posted about your store is priceless," says Henrik, and reminds that retailers need to treat each social media platform differently and to understand each one in relation to their offerings. "It's also important to look at your online store as more than just an ordering machine," Henrik says. "The Chopping Block in Chicago allows customers to navigate through their store with Google Maps, and another previous *gia* winner has tutorials for products created by passionate staff so that customers can clearly see the benefits of using a particular device."





Scott Kohno

Scott Kohno, an expert in retail fit-out and branding, notes that one of the biggest retail trends right now is that of telling stories through branding, environment and spaces, and keeping up with the ever-changing customer. Today the story is arguably more important than the products being sold — with the POS element of retailing following on from the creation of a strong brand and the establishment of consumer loyalty.

Scott uses Disneyland as a solid example of this trend. "It is one of the great storytellers of all time," he says. "And as a company, it focuses on creating stories and happy memories that people go back for time and time again."

Disneyland sells its products off the back of the experiences and memories that people who have been to Disneyland treasure. This method of retailing is not new, but the trend is in the movement toward products being after the environment and the story that has pulled on the heartstrings and triggered emotions in consumers.

Apple is another great example. The retailer once had its stores filled with its products on display for people to use and buy. Now they have park-like environments with trees and chill-out areas, and subtly placed products, so that customers fall in love with being in the space. People start to go there to hang out, and then one day they might buy a laptop or an iPad because they love the sense of place — the environment in which the products sit.

Scott also mentions that things and people are moving faster in today's society, and people's needs and wants are thus changing more quickly than ever.

"There used to be a rule of thumb that a retail store needed to be updated and/or renovated and totally remerchandised every seven to ten years," says Scott. "Today, retailers have to update in a major fashion every year based on the current speed of the changing customer."

Scott notes that there was once a trend in cross merchandising and lifestyle merchandising, where retailers could help sell a bigger



picture/solution to a customer as opposed to selling them individual items. "Today, that concept is even more important as retailers need to focus on solving customers' problems/needs and stay very focused in this time of customers with limited time and multi-tasking every minute," he explains.

"The best retailers have always had a knack for exceeding customer expectations, and that goal is even more important today when customers have so many options to make their purchases," Scott says. "Through an exceptional human interaction, professional one-of-a-kind advice on products, or special 'feel good' gifts and/or bonuses to customers, retailers can wow the customer more than ever and give the customer that experience that they just cannot get online or from other competitors."

Finally, Scott emphasizes that staff was and still truly is the most valuable asset on any retailer's balance sheet. However, today new issues evolve on a continual basis such as equality, sexism and racism, and a company that is able to address these issues on a proactive basis will be successful every day. "The key is that the project of addressing staff morale/culture needs to be budgeted, planned, and executed just like any other project in your business," says Scott. "Keeping the status quo from the HR department with annual reviews and annual holiday parties are now not enough to grow and nurture this valuable asset."

Stories to Sell: Global Trends in Retail *continued*

Wolfgang Gruschwitz

"Yes, robots and automation are increasingly popular everywhere you look," Wolfgang Gruschwitz, an expert in retail store fit-outs and concept retailing, says. "But humans, driven by their emotions, will always need to be taken care of. Unlike robots, they have awareness of everything around them, and they need human encouragement when it comes to purchasing things."

This shift away from relying on computers and robots is a strong trend in retail today — it's almost as though human beings over the last few years have over-dosed on technology and are now craving more human contact. "Retailers need to be aware of this, and take advantage of it," Wolfgang says. "Robots and machines will continue to help, support and offer us convenience, and yes, they will give us information we need. With more AI support we will learn faster, but we will also forget a lot of basic human skills, and will become lazy and spoiled. However, one thing will never change — we will always look for intuitive real emotions, and so retailers need to offer a story filled with emotion, that customers believe in and want to be a part of."

Wolfgang also points out that although retailers are thinking that the new generation of buyers is completely different to that of decades ago, at their core, humans are the same. "They will still be curious, want to hide some things,

sometimes not be truthful, and sometimes they will be schizophrenic in their purchasing decisions. Their individual spirit and their level of education will lead them to strange behavior, and this is what makes human beings different from computers and robots. We, as humans have an endless spectrum of idiosyncrasies, which means we all have different preferences. And we are still very emotional."

In this sense, the new trend that Wolfgang is pointing out is data gathering. Data is king, and through data, you can get to know your customer and thus begin to learn about their idiosyncrasies. If you know how your customers think, what their preferences are, then you have a better chance of sharing the right stories and selling something to them. Most of this data these days comes from social media and people surfing the internet.

The other trend that Wolfgang emphasizes is linked to emotions. Retailers can no longer expect to sell as many products as they once did by arranging them in rows — the environment in which products sit is what sells a product. "As a retailer you have to spoil your clients — give them a cozy feeling during the time you are in contact. Make an adventure out of your contact and do something which surprises and affects your client deeply — if it is positive and sustainable — then they will come back.





Anne Kong

"Retail today is a shifting target and customers are finicky with their loyalty – they're always searching for what's new and what's next," Anne Kong says. "The customer expects great window displays, an exciting journey, theatrical elements, cool materials, engagement, social experiences, great navigation and an inspiring store identity. And, importantly, the next generation want to get personal with you. So say something about yourself. Be personal. Make the shopping experience dimensional. Give it a hashtag."

Due to social media and platforms such as Pinterest and Instagram, Anne points out that the new shopper is not necessarily rooted to a singular style or market. "Pinterest has heightened their appreciation for a variety of looks and styles," she says. "So think about things such as — does your store project an image, a personality, and is that image authentic? Because the next generation of shoppers is not just buying your product, they are making a statement about themselves when they are shopping in your store."

And as social media experts are now saying, these statements made online are often linked to ratings for that person, and ultimately, their sense of popularity. Our choices today, in the things that we purchase, are more visible than ever before — and they are an indication of who we are as people.



"This generation of shopper wants to take home more than just products," Anne says. "The reward for shopping includes new concepts, ideas, inspirational color stories, in-store and social experiences, and unique product offerings." These inspirations are then shared online, so this creates free marketing for retailers.

Think of your bricks and mortar store's front as the homepage of your website or social media platform(s). Both are just as important as the other. Referring to a physical store, Anne explains that the store exterior is always the first impression. "Long after you've gone home and locked the door, the store exterior will continue to speak to your clients and potential customers," she says. "The store front and glass are a canvas and they translate messages – your brand identity, promotions, sales. The store window sets the stage – if you have windows on the street, they will perform for you, 24/7."

One of the biggest questions in retail today is how do online shopping experiences influence the new generation of shopper? "It has a lot to do with navigation," explains Anne. "The simple action of scrolling has conditioned consumers to visually absorb merchandise in a new way. For example, consumers favor merchandising methods that are easy to navigate, convenient and easy to locate. Intuitive merchandising by color, style and size is important, as are instantly recognizable visible price points. This new shopper needs navigational cues, and signage should be easy to read. Product information should be clear."

Anne points out how more information that retailers offer about products in a store will



result in a reduction of time that the shopper spends on their phone, looking things up as they are accustomed to doing.

Anne is also a big advocate for not overdoing things in the pursuit of cementing store identity – it's all about the experience that shopping offers because products can be bought online from anywhere.

"Instead of space filled with racks and shelves that are loaded down with products, stores today are more like community centers," she says. "They are places where one can meet friends, relax in a Wi-Fi enriched environment on comfortable couches — maybe with a cup of freshly brewed coffee — with casually set up clusters of merchandise artfully arranged for the visitor's perusal. There may be a lecture or musical recital going on somewhere in the space, or a yoga class in session. Walls may be enhanced with changing exhibits of artwork produced by young, local talent interspersed with areas of hung garments. Today's shopper wants more than a store — they want a place to relax, learn and stay for a while."

As anyone in retail or in business knows, someone staying a while is often the trigger to a sale.

Retail: A Mix of Science and Art

by Michelle Hespe

Who doesn't love a beautiful, immaculate department store filled with exciting things to see and do? Lights showcasing shiny new products, guest chefs cooking up a storm and filling the air with delectable scents, demonstrations luring shoppers in, music playing and customers smiling as they explore.

John Lewis & Partners is that kind of place, and the fact that Anna Berry has been with the same company for three decades is testimony to what an inspiring workplace John Lewis really is. It also means that the powers-that-be at this iconic company love what Berry does to inspire her loyal customers, while attracting and embracing new ones to the fold.

During those 30 years, Berry has had the fortune to never be in the same role for more than three years, and so her approach to retail has continually

evolved in tune with the highly innovative company itself.

In 1864 John Lewis opened its doors, and a century later the philosophy remains the same as it always was: to deliver amazing value, assortment, service and honesty to its customers. "We sum up the core of our philosophy as 'a better way of doing business,'" Berry explains.

Over the past few decades, Berry has developed, applied, adapted and stretched her skills in many different, inspiring ways. "This has kept me in the business," she says. "I love the John Lewis way of doing business. It is a worker's cooperative with all of us sharing in the profit. I love that we get to reinvent our products and our propositions every year, and I personally love mentoring and managing my team of buyers — it's a driving force of inspiration. And when I work on a plan with my team to

Anna Berry is Partner and Head of Buying, Gifts, Cook and Dine, at John Lewis & Partners in the UK. After three decades with the company, she continues to inspire the industry by approaching buying as a mix of science and art.



revolutionize a category, hearing them talk about product with such passion makes my heart beat that bit faster."

Today there are 50 John Lewis shops throughout England, Scotland and Wales. Berry has worked across stationery, men's accessories, sporting equipment, and gifts in addition to technology-based projects and in

In 1864 John Lewis opened its doors, and a century later the philosophy remains the same as it always was: to deliver amazing value, assortment, service and honesty to its customers.



commercial management, which included supplier negotiation.

"These varied roles have taught me different skills and made me realize that strategic buying is what I truly love, and what keeps it all exciting," Berry says. Following stints as the jewelry buyer and then the premium beauty buyer, she moved into Home as Head of Buying, Cook and Dine in June 2015. In May 2018, Gifting (including Christmas) was added to her remit.

Berry has loved every new challenge and alongside John Lewis, has adapted to the times, always ensuring that the service and products offered remain relevant and that customers are continually engaged with the brand.

"This is a most challenging time in retail, and agility and pace are key," she says. "The market has been transformed by the pure players which did not exist when I first came into buying. John Lewis has had to transform its ability to move quickly but the principles of

buying remain the same – source brilliant product at the right price in the right quantity at the right time. Know your customers and always be on the lookout for the next big thing."

John Lewis, being so ingrained in English society, has an incredibly loyal following. "The John Lewis 'own-brand', John Lewis & Partners, that was launched in September this year is a powerful branding tool, as there are very few full-line department store 'own-brands' left. This brings to the fore the thing which makes us different — our PARTNERS," says Berry.

Berry acknowledges that John Lewis is not the cheapest store in the market, but rather, it offers the best value for quality, and focuses on differentiating itself from other department stores. "In an omni-channel world we have to differentiate on service in our shops. We are also making those shops more experiential and providing services such as personal styling and eventing," explains Berry. "This is very hard to replicate online. And again, it's the partner who services you that is key."



innovation • design • trends • inspiration

Retail: A Mix of Science and Art *continued*

As is the case with any business, new technology and the rate at which technological advances are happening has had a major impact on John Lewis, and two of the most obvious ramifications that Berry has noticed recently are visibility on prices and the pace of delivery. "Social media is important for us — we are increasingly using it to our benefit as a marketing tool to attract new and younger customers to our business. The shift to online is key for us but we use it to drive people into shops with eventing and blogging," says Berry.

Berry loves the fact that John Lewis is constantly "launching newness." For example, the store has recently increased eventing such as tasting and cookery lessons, celebrity chef appearances and workshops, and in-store gin and Prosecco bars. Berry's categories in particular are ripe for showcasing the company's many innovations and clever eventing.

"Christmas this year in our Oxford Street shop will be amazing!" exclaims Berry. "We'll have incredible tree forests, gin bars, collaborations with confectionery companies. These will all lead to endless Instagram opportunities!"

As a mentor to many of her staff, and someone who truly inspires others in retail, Berry advises others who want to succeed in retail to always be open to new challenges.

"Trust your instincts and focus on the things that you love and are great at — we often spend too much time on the things we want to improve," she advises. "Look around you for influences.

Read widely, do your research — online makes this easy. Build strong relationships with others, as true collaboration always leads to better results. Remember it is in both your supplier's interests and your interests to build your business together — if it is a bad deal for them, eventually it is a bad deal for you. Focus on the big wins and gather a great team around you. Know your customer and know your market."

After three decades in the business, Berry has learned that sometimes, you need to trust your instincts and then manage the risk. "Sometimes you get it wrong — the product may be right, but the price may be wrong, the timing may be out," she says. "But if you are open and honest with your suppliers and can manage the risk together, you will overcome obstacles and succeed. Buying is, and always will be, a mix of science and art," she says. "And that's not only exciting, it's inspiring for us and for our customers when they see the things we can achieve." ■



Cultivating Your Concept

by Michelle Hespe

We chat with Wolfgang Gruschwitz about how to create a successful concept retail store.

“What is your story?” That would be the first question that Wolfgang Gruschwitz would ask if you engaged his team to develop a successful retail store. Wolfgang is a consultant in the field of retail design, as well as juror for the IHA Global Innovation Awards (*gia*), and today he and his team have taken things a step further to help their clients remain relevant — they guide retailers in the creation of successful concept stores.

You might think that any retail store could be considered a concept store, because a retail operation has to be based on some kind of concept? Perhaps there is some truth in this, but in today’s world, where there is such a saturation, such a glut of information

and services at our fingertips, a retail concept must be strong for it to work, survive, and thrive. A concept store must have a true story at its heart in order for it to live on.

The next questions that Wolfgang’s team might ask are: “Who is your customer and which lifestyle does he or she have?” “Why should a customer visit your store and buy something there?”

“It is always the story that makes a concept store unique, and it gives people a reason to visit it,” Wolfgang explains.

As a retailer, you need to become a problem solver for clients. “This means you need to analyze their problems and offer corresponding solutions,” explains Wolfgang. “Instead of offering a wide range of products and services, it is important to delve deep and be clever with complete packages and



cross-selling. A concept store has to address all of a person’s senses (especially taste, smell and touch), so work on creating a great atmosphere with all necessary conveniences that fit the lifestyle and senses of your target audience.”

Convenience is key in today’s retail world. If the customers make the effort to get in their car or walk to your physical store, then you need to make their journey and their time spent in your store worth their while. Shop assistants need to make themselves an instrumental part of the purchasing process.

“If there are no staff present in your store ready to support a customer who has made the time to come to you, then in most cases, it becomes more convenient for customers to shop online,” says Wolfgang. “Shop assistants have to be true partners — advising customers on how to find the perfect product or service that he or she is looking for. They need to give customers another dimension of the experience — something that they can’t get online.”

Convenience also means making your store present and easily found on



Tegernsee Arkaden GmbH

Cultivating Your Concept

continued

social media. If you don't know much about social media and you feel as though it's all too hard, or something that you cannot master, then hire someone else to take care of it for you. Just like any other aspect of business, you will learn from the experts. They can teach you as they learn more. Social media is changing every day, so no one is ever a true master of all facets of it.

"In this digital age, the use of social media in retail is not just important, it's imperative," says Wolfgang. "However, the way you use it depends on your customers and upon your story. Facebook, Pinterest and Instagram each cover a different audience. It is important to find out what fits best to your concept store."

That's a few "do's" from Wolfgang and his team. So what are some "don'ts" when it comes to creating a successful concept retail store?

"Don't treat your store like a warehouse or storage space," says Wolfgang. "Don't destroy the story you would like to tell by presenting too many goods, and don't neglect your visual merchandising — the way in which you arrange your products and services is essential when it comes to remaining attractive for your clients."

Today, nearly all products and services are available online 24/7. "For this reason, don't try to offer your clients a



Tegernsee Arkaden GmbH

broad variety of goods, as you won't win them over," warns Wolfgang. "People today seek pre-selected offers, making it easy for them to choose. The challenge is to offer complete packages, combining different products and services that are perfectly matched with the story and the lifestyle that your concept store represents and offers."



Wolfgang often speaks about a store that he thinks sums up the concept store perfectly: The Duck Store. The Duck Store concept was launched in 2015 in Amsterdam, and it is exactly as it sounds: a store that only sells rubber ducks. In the last three years, stores have continued to open around the world and the business is thriving.

"The simpler the core idea of a concept store is, the easier the story is to build, and the better it will be remembered. As the design of a rubber duck can be applied to almost any situation in life, everyone can identify with it," says Wolfgang. "Wrapped in a very positive and funny story, customers

quickly turn into true fans – supporting 'their type' of rubber ducks. Thus, a simple idea is basically what turns a good story into a success story. It is all about showing one authentic face to the customer, whether that's online or offline. Stay true to yourself and your brand and you will win customers over."

Staying true to yourself could mean creating a store around a personal passion. Wolfgang uses two stores that he and his team have worked on as examples of a passion for a subject being transformed into a successful business model. Firstly, there is Die Waffenkammer in Rothenburg Germany. It is a shop for medieval armory, upholding the virtues of noble knighthood. There are weapons and accessories, textiles, games and much more.

"Being in the store feels like a medieval journey," says Wolfgang. "One highlight is the dungeon, where enthusiastic selfie hunters can turn themselves into medieval guardians of hidden treasures. You can also become a knight and



Die Waffenkammer



Die Waffenkammer



Die Waffenkammer

wear chainmail armor true to the original garments.”

There are also several local specialties on offer such as smokeless tobacco, liquors and other beverages served in drinking glasses modeled on goblets that knights once sipped from. “These offerings not only refresh the visitor but give them a taste of the ancient time of King Arthur and his Knights of the Round Table. The store is engaging all

of the senses and creating an experience complete with emotional attachment,” says Wolfgang.

Wolfgang’s team also recently worked for the Bavarian whiskey brand Slyrs, designing the distillery, store and onsite cafe. “All three areas complement one another and tell the story of Slyrs Bavarian Whisky,” explains Wolfgang. Additionally, clients can watch Slyrs products being

manufactured and enjoy some culinary regional treats.

At the core of successful retailing, one fact has never changed: people shop to improve their lives or lives of others. They want to buy things that they like, and that they have an emotional attachment to. Thus, concept retailing makes even more sense, as it helps people to clarify what they want in order to improve their life.



“Today’s world is complicated because there are so many different things available to everyone for everything they want to do,” says Wolfgang. “With all the advantages of 24/7 availability, this complexity also leads to an information overload that can scare people. And so, people long for security and some advice on how to cope with this broad range of products and services. A concept store promises a world of its own, with limited pre-selected offers, bringing back a feeling of safety.” ■

To learn more about Wolfgang Gruschwitz and the projects of Gruschwitz GmbH, visit www.gruschwitz.de.



The Art of Organization

by Michelle Hespe

People love to buy things. To own things. It's what most of us do — gather things to improve our lives or add something special to them. So back in 1978, in an era where art and ornamentation in home decoration was on-trend, the idea of a store dedicated to selling empty boxes was

audacious. This bold move, however, was what made The Container Store stand out, and then go on to become famous — the first 1,600-square foot (150 m²) store leading the way into a new era where organizing your life had merit on both a psychological level and on an operational one.



We speak to Sharon Tindell — President and Chief Merchandising Officer at The Container Store — for an insider's view of how this iconic 40-year-old retailer retains its coveted spot as the leading organizational store in the U.S.

The business idea was grand in its simplicity: buy boxes and other storage objects to sort your life and office out, and thus improve your life. "I am super organized," states Sharon Tindell, President and Chief Merchandising Officer at The Container Store, who is married to the Chairman of The Container Store, Kip Tindell. "I have not always been so though! I believe that everyone can learn to be better organized. It is a discipline that pays you back, giving you more time and less frustration. Eliminating clutter and unnecessary items is key, but there is still a lot to be said about hanging on to sentimental things, as long as they are not in your way of daily living."

Fast forward 40 years and the company has 91 stores, 5,300 employees and generated more than US\$780 million in revenue in 2017, netting more than \$22 million. Year after year it appears on *Fortune's* list of "100 Best Companies to Work For" and in 2017 it sat at number 11 on the list. Although the store is an uber-modern retailer that embraces technology, social media and the entire gamut of the online world, the core of the business remains the same and is still a tightly streamlined offering: it offers real organizational solutions from people who love being organized.

A great example of how the company moves with the times to remain relevant is the recently re-opened,



newly imagined flagship store in Dallas, which incorporates a new approach to selling, including the latest and greatest technology to help customers accomplish their organizational projects.



One of the goals of this new store is to make the shopping experience more personal, and to ensure that customers don't feel overwhelmed by the thought of where to start when it comes to organizing their life. Additional space was added to the massive 24,500-square-foot (almost 2300 m²) storefront, ceilings were lowered to make the store more inviting and homey and rows of shelving were removed to improve sightlines — meaning customers can easily link up one idea/product to another that they may see from a distance.



New flooring and enhanced lighting were installed to create a more approachable environment, and merchandise was organized into specific departments such as kitchen, office, storage and closet to make projects easier to imagine, whether they be big or small. The store also has 18 digital screens to support customers, featuring everything from inspiration and tips to an interactive design tool.

One of the most exciting innovations and a draw card that is becoming increasingly popular in the store is The Organization Studio. The program allows customers to upload a photo or video of their organizational challenge online, describe the problem and arrange an in-store appointment with a store organization expert. There are also interactive screens at the Custom

The Art of Organization

continued

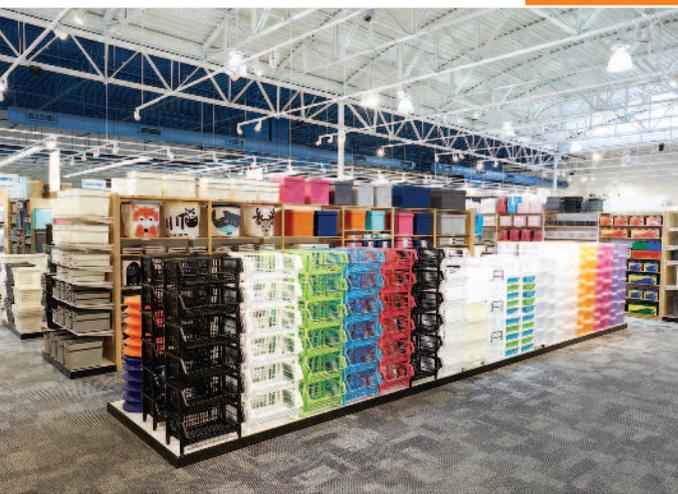
Design Centers, tools for the store team and the customers that showcase myriad examples of “real” closet spaces that might suit their lifestyle.

Sharon believes that the brave new world thrust upon retailers over the past few years brings with it endless new streams of inspiration. “The complexities of running a retail business have changed exponentially in the last few years, and we now have more aggressive competitors coming at us from all angles,” she says. “So we have been looking at our business through a fresh new lens. Our mantra is: ‘It’s a new, new day,’ — and that means that nothing is off the table for discussion. As we continue to assess who our customer is, and how to continue to attract new customers, our marketing and merchandising decisions are even more critical to the success of our brand.”

Innovation has always been at the core of what The Container Store does — after all, they are experts in providing customers with ideas to improve their lives. Like industrial designers, they look for solutions to enhance lifestyles. “As merchants, we have always looked for innovative and clever solutions that are unique to solving storage and organization problems,” explains Sharon. “We listen to our customers and learn from them and the challenges they face. Our proprietary products are reflective of combining their input with elevated materials and design to create solutions that they will love to use every day.”

Sharon feels incredibly fortunate to work in such a creative environment that continually fosters innovative thinking. “If we do not evolve as a





The Container Store principles - in the words of Kip Tindell

1. **One great person is equivalent to three good people.** The store only hires 3 percent of the people that apply as they believe that investing in one great person (who is paid more and given more responsibility) is better than hiring three good people.
2. **Communicating is leadership.** "We don't work on a 'need-to-know' basis, but rather we ask ourselves 'Who will benefit from having this information?' This 360-degree thinking and execution is one of the many key differentiators to business."
3. **Fill the other guy's basket to the brim, as then making money becomes an easy proposition.** "Crafting mutually beneficial relationships with business partners works, and it has been a successful approach for our business since the very beginning."
4. **The best selection, service and price.** To add competitive pricing to that equation is generally unheard of, but The Container Store works hard to achieve all three simultaneously with this philosophy.
5. **Intuition does not come to an unprepared mind, you need to train before it happens.** "We want our employees to use their intuition to anticipate the needs of customers and recommend product solutions. We are the experts and must ensure our customers feel more than taken care of by us."
6. **The "Man in the Desert Selling" is a philosophy about astonishing customers rather than just giving them what they expect.** "Imagine a man lost in the desert. He stumbles across an oasis where he's offered a glass of water, because he must be thirsty. But if you stop to think about what he's experienced and what his needs really are, you know that he needs more than just water. He needs food, a comfortable place to sleep, a phone to call his family, maybe a pair of shoes and a hat to screen the sun's rays." That is the difference in service at The Container Store.
7. **When you are three steps into a store, you can tell whether or not a retail store has 'it'.** "The 'Air of Excitement' is The Container Store's employees' smiling faces and genuine concern for customers' needs. It's the bright, innovative and conversation-provoking products, the clean, well-organized shelves and the pleasant music that speaks to our customers."

company and take risks, we cannot continue to be relevant," she explains. "I continue to be inspired by so many great people who I work with, respect and admire, along with partners in the vendor community who I have known for many years. We are very proud of our culture and legacy that we have built based on common principles." ■

When visiting the International Home + Housewares Show, you can easily visit The Container Store in Chicago at 908 W North Avenue. The Container Store is also one of the stops at the Chicago Retail Tour - for more information visit www.housewares.org/show/retail-tour.

To learn more about The Container Store, visit www.containerstore.com.

Welcome to **Chicago**

To plan your visit to Chicago and for information on Chicago home and housewares retailers, see the Chicago Retail brochure and the Chicago city information available at

www.housewares.org/show/register-plan
and visit www.choosechicago.com.



international
**home +
housewares
show** | 2019

For more Show information and to register for your FREE Show entrance pass, visit www.housewares.org

IT'S SMART

072518A/7000



INTERNATIONAL HOUSEWARES ASSOCIATION®
the home authority

6400 SHAFER COURT, STE. 650
ROSEMONT, IL 60018 USA
TEL: +1 847.292.4200
www.housewares.org

INTERNATIONAL OFFICES & REPS
www.housewares.org/iha/offices-reps

THE
**INSPIRED
HOME**®

TheInspiredHome.com