

The background of the cover is a photograph of a storefront. It features large glass windows and a central entrance with dark wood paneling. Inside the store, various items like books, plants, and home decor are visible. The text is overlaid on this image.

The 10 No-B.S. Rules *for* Successful Storefront Design

How To Attract More and Better Customers
By Creating Your Own Unforgettable Storefront

Jaime J. Izurieta

The Ten No-B.S. Rules For Successful Storefront Design

**How to attract more and better customers by
creating your own unforgettable storefront**

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INTRODUCTION

Why we are here

I went to school to become an architect. Through all these years, I have been a witness (and sometimes an accomplice) on how complicated rules, regulations and theories have added unnecessary layers, time and cost to the process of creating beautiful buildings and cities.

Architects are not essential. My entire career has been built betting on the ingenuity of homeowners, builders and business owners. Your knowledge about your own needs and desires makes your input priceless for the design process. It crafts a better project.

Architects can be expensive. Professional and consultant fees can make the price of commercial storefronts skyrocket.

Most of the useful and interesting things to be learned from designing commercial spaces, buildings and cities, usually come more from exchanging ideas with clients and users than from a classroom.

All of that been said, let me re-introduce myself: I am a recovering architect. I believe in the power of architecture and I know the best examples are found far from professional circles.

So here we are. You want to open a business and have no desire or budget to call a professional designer. On the other hand, design is important: It can create

playful experiences in ordinary businesses. You just need to learn how to tighten the right nuts and bolts to transform it into a money making machine.

This book will teach you a few useful skills that will enable you to make the right design decisions by yourself.

The Ten No-B.S. Rules For Successful Storefront Design has been created to give you an overview of everything you need to know to create your own epic, unforgettable store experience.

The design process can be stressful and straining. This manual will take you through the basics, focusing on the most visible part of your store: its design.

Learn from past successes in industries that rely on their storefronts to attract customers. It is as simple as that. Trade is thousands of years old. It is in our nature.

Think of storefronts that you love. They offer an experience and people come to purchase that. While they get a haircut, have a sandwich or buy a pair of shoes.

This manual will help you match your vision and the design of your store to create an experience that adds value to your product or service and attracts more and better customers.



People will effortlessly notice your intention and recognize a familiar atmosphere. A good product in a nice and friendly place, paired with an incredible service will make satisfied customers promote your store for you.

Your storefront is the best asset to attract more customers. Make it tell a good story the way good writers do: frankly, directly and efficiently.

Remember: This manual is not meant as expert advice on how to solve your particular storefront design. You have that knowledge within you. Think of it as guidance that will help you organize your ideas and ask the right questions.

Let's create something epic.

Why you are here

Making the decision to open a business is a brave move, especially during hard times.

Be ready to deal with uncertainty, and rest assured you will learn a lot about patience but also about rewards.

Let's work together to create an epic, unforgettable experience.

The first thing you need to do is care about your street and your neighborhood and more important, about your community.

Even the slightest change in policy at the Federal level can trigger positive or negative effects in the economy of every town or city in America, and small businesses are among the first to notice.

Consumer trends change rapidly. Online shopping has gained a massive share of

the market since the government-enforced lockdowns during the pandemic.

Large retail stores are closing and online shopping keeps growing faster than conventional brick and mortar businesses can keep up.

Have you noticed how over time, compliance to codes becomes more and more difficult and expensive? And how freight becomes ever more complex and its costs rise permanently? Or how the price of goods and services keeps rising?

The new retail environment that has emerged as we navigate our way out of the pandemic will melt the current way of doing business.

Regardless if this apocalypse is real or just a perception, the style, size and scale of retail stores are changing to adapt to new trends.

The shift from the Mall and Department Store model towards smaller, independent, locally sourced businesses focused in offering experiences rather than just products is one part.

The other, perhaps more critical part, is those businesses finding a unique niche, a creative way of doing business, and crafting a solid relationship with their neighborhood and community.

Local businesses used to be about quality, trust and community. Finding a niche and being the best at it will allow you to offer those values once more and make a good living out of it.

Stores with a mission, vision and staged as theaters of the shopping experience are succeeding because they offer more than just products.



Now, this is very important, even if the sale of those products is still their main source of income.

The entrepreneurial spirit of the decade swears by the ideas of collaboration, community, and offering experiences rather than just selling goods.

The market shift towards local, small stores brings a new type of experience that is, in fact, more sustainable, creates many more jobs per square foot than stores with large footprints and generates more revenue per

acre for business owners and cities.

The Millennial generation is embracing a different kind of retail culture. Store owners don't just sit behind a counter but are critical parts of the supply chain.

It is now common to know your suppliers on a first name basis and take genuine interest in their trades and in their families.

Owners like you make a point of working with suppliers to improve the quality, packaging, consistency and other aspects of their products. You tend to your own business and chances are you know and love every aspect of it.

In consequence, the design of stores that operate with that kind of ethics tends to be very generous with the city and its immediate context.

A plant, a bench or an awning are familiar fixtures that contribute to build civic values and strive to transform storefronts into community hubs.

Cities are, in turn, generous with those businesses and they grow together.

Business owners like you who bet on the strength of their communities and build strong relationships with their surroundings are whom I call "Storefront Placemakers".

Placemaking is a philosophy for the collective creation of great public spaces by sourcing ideas and creativity from the people who know the space and use it.

Business owners who forge quality bonds between their livelihood and the block, neighborhood and city that nurture them are creating great public spaces even without purposely doing so.

As a Storefront Placemaker you can transform streets into hubs of civic life and add value to them in a way no large-scale governmental plan or standardized corporate retail chain store ever could. That is your superpower.

The full potential of the massive changes that small actions can bring is being discovered every day by those who try to cultivate a strong relationship between business, network and neighborhood.

CHAPTER 1.

Spread the love - Everybody wins with good public spaces

This guide will walk you through the necessary elements to create an unforgettable storefront for your business.

First, I got some food for your thought that will explain why it is important that your store and the sidewalk outside of it engage in constant conversation. Investing in creating an environment that will foster that conversation will become one of the smartest financial moves you'll ever do.

This is when you can stop reading and skip to the “Ten Rules” section if you just want the list. But be aware that knowledge is power and in here is some serious knowledge about the context of what you are about to get yourself into.

For thousands of years, cities have relied on their commercial spaces to build a community and satisfy their citizens' needs for goods and services.

Think about all of those commercial squares in Europe, or the Main Streets in every single town in America: the local economy thrives within safe, cozy and comfortable public spaces.

Cars changed the game for city design and consumer patterns.

Their capacity to cover longer distances and the overwhelming pace at which



suburbs developed, provided the perfect nesting conditions for shopping malls.

It all started with budding little strip malls with a supermarket anchor in the 1920s. Then came Southdale, the first enclosed mall in 1956 and on to the 90s when the Mall of the Americas, the largest in the Nation open for business. Today it is all about “Lifestyle Centers” or “Urban Villages”. Almost a full circle has been traced, back to the small town commercial areas.

Have you noticed what all those examples have in common? They all copy our



friendly neighborhood Main Street: People walk along hallways through a line of narrow storefronts.

It turns out that shopping malls are encapsulated Main Streets!

If you look closely, that has been the model for almost every shopping center ever designed.

The typical commercial street has a successive small display of windows that catch the eye every 8 to 10 seconds and entrances located at close intervals with distinctive landmarks at the end of each business.

It doesn't matter how far away it is and how long people have to travel to reach the shopping center. Its success relies on

the quality of the shopper's experience, it requires a particular type of storefront layout and a good mix of stores which, together, create an experience.

Jan Gehl -an urban designer who transformed iconic places like Times Square in New York City- and Leon Krier -an accomplished urban designer with worldwide experience- popularized the concept of the "Human Scale".

The proportions of shopping center walkways, the height of their ceilings, the rhythm of stores and the succession of display windows brings back childhood memories and reminds of happy times. Their scale nurtures and contains.

It is the scale of our Main Streets. It is the scale of our traditional neighborhoods and of old buildings we love. That is the Human Scale.

Globalization brought an urge for efficiency: Stores scaled up. Local, Mom-and-Pop diners, pharmacies and grocery stores became McDonald's, Walgreens and Kroger.

Governments, corporations and organizations grew too big. Its officials and owners are no longer within reach.

Millions of items are now distributed from warehouses to homes that look suspiciously similar, no matter where they are. Homogeneity became the new normal.

Thanks to scale, low prices became a marketing tool. Chain retail stores started to become ubiquitous and cheap goods made big box stores irresistible to the public.

Those 100,000 square foot structures

in-the-middle-of-nowhere structures, with one entrance and surrounded by a sea of parking rely on large volumes of regional traffic, which is why they are located in isolated places, where land is cheap enough to devote it to build large parking lots.

The business model yielded expected financial returns to its investors. The trend of sacrificing experience for efficiency has dealt a terrible blow to traditional businesses in Main Streets all over America.

But customers are not only seeking low prices anymore: They are thirsty for experiences, something a cookie-cutter mall cannot offer anymore. And the physical form of cities is changing along this shift in demand.

Why this book is here

I present you this manual, where you'll have a first look at the findings from architects, designers, psychologists and economists while studying how and why people buy.

During the course of this book you will learn to harness the power of design to attract customers and build a storefront that is a marketing strategy in and of itself.

Drawing from psychology, architecture, evolutionary biology, economics and neuroscience, these experts have identified and isolated the elements that make storefronts successful, what elements enhance an experience and how to strategically use them.

All these lessons help us to anticipate the outcome of different designs with a great degree of certainty. This manual will walk

you through to the specifics, to give your design the best possible information to start with the right foot.

Informed decisions will improve the quality of your design and your business' chances for success. Believe me, one can predict with great accuracy if a shop will thrive or go bust, just by looking at its design, the way it tells its story and the type of experience it is selling.

We will learn about re-creating from scratch the essential elements, crafting experiences and telling stories to increase our chances for success.

Getting the design of your storefront right is easy if you pay attention to small details that make things work around you. First, I will introduce you to some businesses



from around the world that have done a great job of attracting more customers by creating unforgettable storefronts.

Then, we will go over the particular traits that make good storefronts and how sticking to *The Ten No-B.S. Rules For Successful Storefront Design* will turn your storefront around.

A business owner knows about sacrifice when it comes to opening a store: permits, taxes, certifications, training and accounting are a burden. So are labor costs, rent and other expenses. We would all like to have a magic wand to turn our offer into instant sales to become instantly profitable.

The right design can work miracles for your store: It can help you tell a story and sell emotion, attachment and an experience that your customers will want to buy. A good storefront design is the first step to success.

My promise: I can help you match your vision and your storefront design to create an unforgettable storefront.

Want to make your business more visible, profitable and sustainable? Follow the “Ten Rules” to be a Storefront Placemaker.

Focusing on your customer’s experience can create a new kind of relationship with your customer base. Get smart by matching your passion and your story to the design of your storefront.

Let’s get started by looking at some examples from around the world: Storefronts that have transformed their sidewalks into public spaces and attracted many clients with simple actions.

CHAPTER 2.

Storefronts from around the world - How to tell a butcher from a cobbler



Coffee shop. Seattle, WA

Small elements make this storefront great. One lonely chair without a table, a blackboard with announcements, a subtle awning for the rain, so common in the Pacific Northwest.

A place to leave bikes and unique seating complement the facade design. However, what makes this little coffee shop an integral part of its neighborhood is the express walk-through service.

Anyone who lives or works around can stop by to get coffee on their way to home or work. That tactic makes this coffee shop a familiar, everyday place for many people.

The line also helps. Ever noticed how places with a line forming outside suddenly seem more attractive?



Dim Sum shop, Taipei, Taiwan

Branding is not just about making a great graphic image and a logo. This place in the Taipei 101 skyscraper has certainly done that. They complement their graphics with the mention of a Michelin star, which is a great distinction for any restaurant.

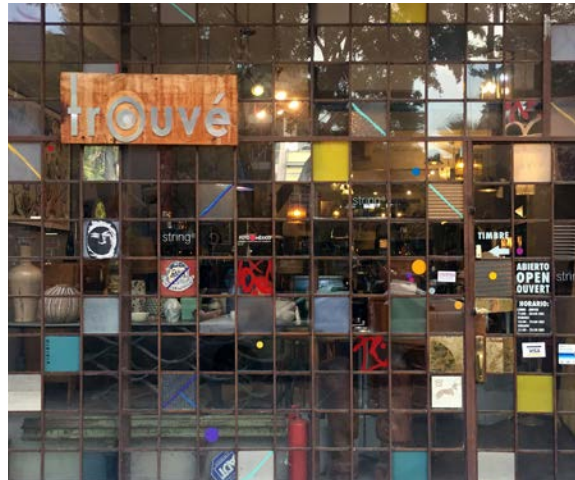
But what really scores is how they decorate the place with bamboo plates where Dim Sum is served. Their brand becomes the decoration and in turn the decoration sends a message. Clever, isn't it?



Antique store, Montclair, NJ

Keeping some of your store alive after closing time is an intelligent move. Having a great looking dynamic display window where things happen during the day and which you can leave on at night, inviting people to come back and engage is a winning tactic.

Also, the light and the sense of 24-hour activity contribute to the perception of the street as a safe place to walk.



Home furnishings shop, Mexico City, Mexico

This store specializes in second hand home furnishings. Their storefront is a collage of glass that actually looks like a second hand facade.

The scale of each division in the all-glass facade allows to play with transparency and color and even to incorporate the sign.

Materializing your concept in a way similar to how Trouvé has done it will make it easier to tell your story and set up the experience for your customers even before they see what is for sale inside.



Bakery, Montclair, NJ

A narrow storefront, where the experience of the inside is clearly summarized in the design of the display window.

By picking up icons of the culture and displaying them with subtlety and good taste, a first try of the experience is given out to the sidewalk with generosity. Establishing the terms on which the experience will immerse the customer is a winning strategy for this small café bakery and pastry shop.



Cultural Creative Park, Taipei, Taiwan

This storefront is living proof that large budgets are not needed to achieve a first-rate design that engages the sidewalk and invites the pause.

It follows many of the rules that are discussed in the manual and executes them with subtlety and elegance. It stays in scale and invites to sit and stay. It beautifies the neighborhood with lights and plants and has an express service window.

Truly a gem and a great humble, successful storefront.



Tea Store, Taipei, Taiwan

This is a great example of many things. The door is set back into the store. It attracts and the warm lights inside make it interesting. It has a focal point set all the way back that is actually a tasting room for their tea.

They have chosen warm tones throughout, from the wood to the recessed lighting to the paint of the focal point in the back. A good tactic is to frame the warmth inside with darker colors to make the inside feel even more inviting.



Wine store, Montclair, NJ

A textbook example of how to take advantage of outdoor sitting even if your line of business does not have table service.

This wine store has set up the most colorful outdoor living room in a very active street that is full of restaurants and is closed for live entertainment on summers. But it has no table service.

Standing out even in a crowded environment and even if having an outdoor terrace is not part of your business can be extremely beneficial. And proof that letting people sit is a good strategy, bested only by letting people sit in style and drink wine at their leisure.



Apparel store, Miami Beach, FL

One of the stores in busy Lincoln Road Mall that always manages to catch my eye. The warm lights just scream of good things happening inside. It is an apparel store so they have the aid of the textile textures to complement the warmth of their interior lighting.

They do a decent job on the Entrance Funnel, too, with the recessed door and bulletin board that changes almost daily.

Notice the many levels of lighting that are visible from outside. There are string lights on the display window, accent lights with “museum” lamps shining directly on top of the display; two rows of industrial lamps with ambient light and some other accents that are barely visible but look important by the amount of light shining on them.



Restaurant, Taipei, Taiwan

A strong, ordered, very serious and elegant way of meeting the sidewalk and blurring the line between public and private is what we find in this bakery and restaurant. Notice how there are layers of elements cleverly interacting with the customer and bringing their gaze inside.

First the row of plants at knee level on top of the black frame. A blackboard and a taller plant in turn frame a desk on the other side of the window. Behind the desk and the display that's on top is a large hanging poster with text.

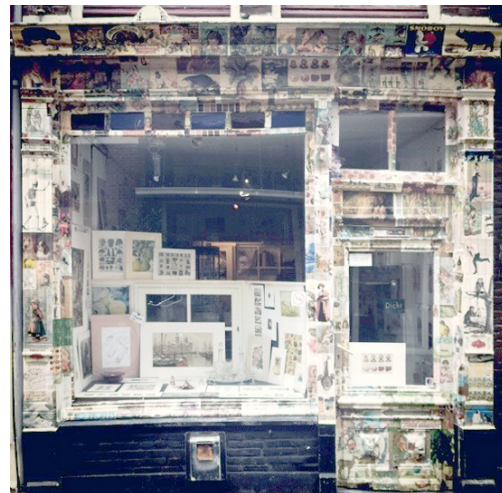
Notice how tightly set into place everything looks. Notice the repetition of plants, drawers, products, each group going one step farther inside. See the focal point far back, not as clearly visible but hinted.



Apparel store, Miami Beach, FL

Transparency, a well lit display window with clever use of ground level space, some props and you can have a great commercial facade.

Throw in some stats or a call to action and you have the greatest media possible. People who align with your brand's values will see this as a wake-up call and appreciate the commitment, customers who like your products will relate to what you have to say and designers can seamlessly incorporate your story to your storefront.



Stationery shop, Haarlem, Netherlands

Some businesses go a long way to integrate their craft into the design of their storefronts. They show in their facades the passion that they feel for what they do.

Those businesses win.

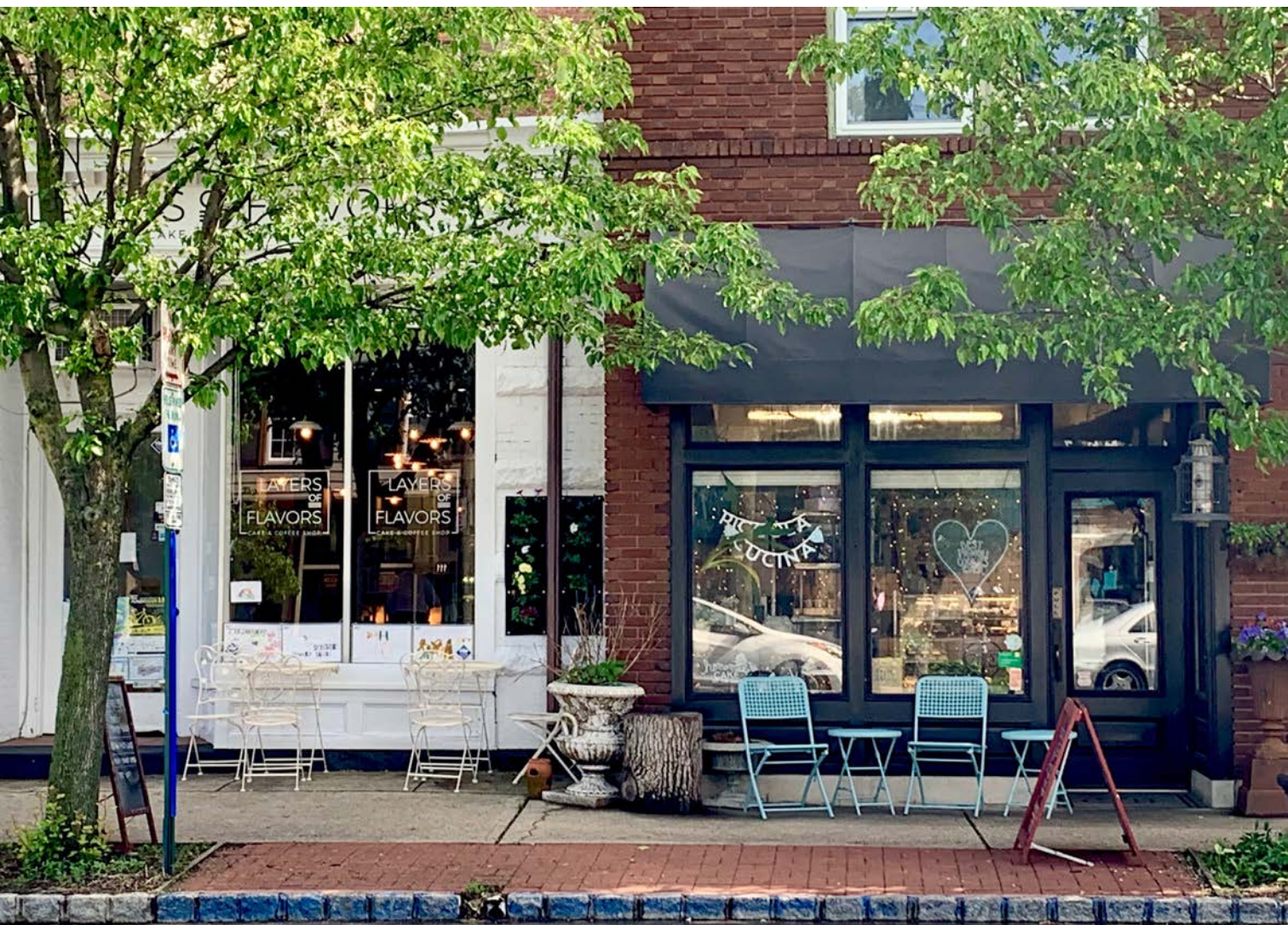
This stationery and art print store has incorporated a technique of collage covered with resin to the historical details of its facade.

Of particular importance if you are operating in a historic context and will have to deal with compliance to guidelines, reading the local codes and learning from what has been done locally and abroad are good starting steps.

Master the nuances of caring for and respecting our historic heritage while putting up the greatest show with your storefront.

CHAPTER 3.

The 10 No-B.S. Rules For Successful Storefront Design



SECTION 1.

THE TEN RULES

1. Create a vision

You are a small business owner. You have worked hard to get to where you are and now you wonder what's next.

Go out to see what others are doing. Look for businesses that have had to close and try to connect dots. Is there a pattern to why they had to close down? Look at the vacant storefronts and try to find some clues there.

Especially after the pandemic, when online shopping has grown exponentially, businesses that sell products or services, as we have done for decades are struggling. People today want to buy experiences.

Nike didn't build an empire by selling shoes. Nike sells fitness, it sells courage to keep going through pain and conquering your goals. That feeling is what a customer buys when they purchase a pair of Nike shoes.

What will people take when they leave your store? What emotions will they experience when they come in contact with your brand? What part of your expertise is teachable? What will your customers learn after shopping from you?

Answer those simple questions and you will have outlined your vision.

A vision is a goal to work towards, that will guide your actions while designing, managing and marketing your brand.

Become an idea. Ideas are unstoppable. Focus on the strongest one you got and align each and every design, service and outreach strategy towards achieving that goal.

Be grateful and generous. The sure way to success is to find support in your peers and surround yourself by a strong community.



© Riccardo Annandale

Trusted brands become good friends. Think of Apple, Nike or Toyota. Customers are proud of using their products. Make your customers proud of patronizing your store.

Be the neighborhood. Aim to become the hub for folks to meet and gather. Engage the sidewalk, the block and the neighborhood around you. This point is more practical, you might say. But once you make it part of your vision, it all fits in naturally.

Grab some paper and a pen. Write down your ideas. Specify your goals and put them down in writing. Tell yourself what you have accomplished five or ten years in the future, as if it were happening now. Feel it to be true. Those goals and those accomplishments are your mission and your vision.

2. Tell Your Story

People fall in love with a good story. If they can put a face to it, the impact will be much more massive.

Create the story that will guide your design, your service ethics, the mood and the experience of your store. It seems hard. You might have never written a plan down. This is your chance.

You have started with your vision. Now give that vision a face, a personality, needs and desires. Tell people about it with the same passion that has made you work hard to get up and open your store.

To find a well told, honest story that people can connect to, look at your process.

If you manufacture something think of people who make the parts and how they relate to your finished product. If you sell products research where they come from and sell the importance of their origin; highlight the human stories of your supply chain and give those stories a face.

Write up your own personal story. Focus on what you will offer and how each customer will live a unique, customized experience. They will like that.

Add drama. People crave it. How it spices up your story is up to you. In this manual you will find the tools you need to translate it into design. We all like a good movie not so much because of what is shown but because of how it made us feel.

People buy on emotion and not logic, a wise man once told me. Connect with your customers and potential customers using emotions. Attach human faces and their stories to everything you sell.



© Andrew Seaman

Pro tip (from the same wise man): Fear of loss is more powerful than pleasure of gain.

Now for the hard part: make your story fit in a napkin. Keep it short, simple and straight to the point.

Keep the pen and paper out. Write. Fail. Throw the paper away. Write again. Repeat. Your story should be credible, have a background of how you came in contact with what you do and how you found your passion for it. Be honest, and the words will follow.

3. Stage It Well

Customers these days don't buy products but experiences. Provide an unforgettable one. If you are a restaurant do not focus on selling food but rather on how people feel when they eat at your place.

If you sell clothing do not focus on pants and shirts but on an ideal lifestyle to which they can access by wearing them.

Sell moments that people will want to remember. The goal is to make people have a personal relationship with your brand.

If you align your vision, your story and your service with the type of experience that you offer, the design will flow naturally.

You've come up with an idea and wrote a story around it. Colors, materials and textures will help you stage the story to engage your customers.

Will you pull it off if you use plastic or aluminum chairs? Or do they have to be wooden? Will white walls do the trick or do they need to be a medium-dark gray?

In this manual you will find many aspects of the design where you will have to think of this. Read on.

To create an experience you have to stimulate all five senses. Create a mood by imagining a happy place that your store will remind everyone of.

Use colors and texture, and also sound or music. Make the store smell a certain way and use lights to top it off.

Good design determines the level of engagement. It guides the customer. Think of how they will stand in line at the register or what they face when they sit down.



Make a note of how little tweaks make people react differently.

The good news is you control the space around tables, along alleys and in workspaces.

The design of your store, restaurant or cafe will drive traffic and motivate potential customers, but only fun and thoughtful activation to make it feel like a theater play will ensure it's memorable.

Plan events, participate in fairs or temporary markets, have providers do special activities in your spot, bring interesting pop-ups to share your space.

Small tweaks in the design can have a tremendous impact over the interactions between customers and with your brand. Learn how to create a Mood Board where you predetermine the small details that will guide your design. Look for the Mood Board section at the end of this book.

4. Get yourself in character

Your whole store needs to speak the same language so that everyone understands your message.

When you prepare your design, refer to your vision and ask yourself the question: *Will this decision be in line with my vision?*

Tricky question, but here is a checklist of some things you might want to consider so that your hard work doesn't get wasted on a great looking store where no one goes.

Your store has three main parts. First is the storefront, which is made up of the facade, the entrance and the sidewalk.

Bear in mind that as important as the sidewalk is for your business, your control over it can be limited. Always refer to your local code.

An appropriately designed storefront will make people stop walking, it will interest them to look in and engage them long enough to motivate the decision to step inside. It is arguably the most important part of your store's design.

Second is the display window. Technically this is a separate design entity but is actually part of the storefront. It is the set where you show your products or your craft or present your work process as a tool for engagement.

Finally, the interior, which is equally as important. It must be consistent with the storefront and be aligned with your business' work and service ethics.

Tell the same story outside and inside. Motivate the same feelings. Cohesion and correspondence will take your customers through their experience seamlessly.

Your concept is strong. It guides the design of the whole store. It is the center of the story, of how you tell the story and you need a good design to support it.



Design is very important. Jumping from an idea to actual objects in a space will be hard.

As an exercise, write down the ten words that you would use to describe your business and your brand, then associate each with a color, a material, a song and a smell. Do it yourself and have a few people do it as well. This is an invaluable source of information that will help you match the vision and the finished storefront.

5. Meet the sidewalk

Experts like to say that you can tell good architecture from the quality of the joints. Joints are where different materials or planes meet. For example there is a joint where the floor meets the wall, and there are joints also between the floorboards.

The art of attaching a roof to a wall or a window to a sill will distinguish a good architect from a poor one. It goes the same for your store.

How it meets the sidewalk and transforms the frontage into a semi public space where people feel compelled to stop will make a good design stand out. This manual is a guide for you to master all the steps to create a great design.

Set up an outdoor living room. This is where people will hang out and be engaged. Many will become your customers. Imagine a small park in front of your door where people can sit and become friends with your brand.

Or perhaps a dynamic display window where you show how you make grandma's ravioli or display your finished crafts for people to interact with as they walk by are great examples.

To design the storefront you can use any or all of the design elements detailed in this manual. People are visual and want to feel comfortable.

A good way to meet the sidewalk is to make people slow down from their normal walking speed. Be bold, but do not scream. Subtlety will win more gazes.

Once they have stopped and they look in, design has done its job. Now it is yours to

entice them to step in. In the next chapter I will explain the details of the “entrance funnel” that is a strategy with clear steps to design your entrance and every one of its components as a magnet.



As an experiment, go out your door and take a picture of your facade. Now get two or three plants and arrange them outside the door. Take another picture. Compare. See the power of interacting with the sidewalk and the potential that the interaction has for making your storefront more visible and the sidewalk more comfortable to everyone.

6. Let people sit

Not much explanation for this rule. People attract more people. Let people sit even though they do not patronize the store.

Becoming a neighborhood hub, getting attention and receiving free word of mouth promotion requires to become a public space. Do it gracefully and use it for your advantage. Here are a few pro tips.

Build community. Offer your space for meetings, put out extra chairs for holidays or parades. Bring out a water cooler during the summer or offer free coffee in the winter. Be known for your generosity.

Doesn't matter the type of seats. They could be formal or casual, fixed, heavy, concrete seats or even beach chairs. The goal is to get people sitting outside.

Any type of seat will do but not any arrangement. Seats must be arranged around a center. Make people look in each other's eyes when they are sitting down.

Building community is also about connecting the community and facing seats are a great way to do that. Bonus: when you do this, you increase your chances of becoming the neighborhood hangout. Use it for your advantage. The more people crowd your store, the more interesting it looks.

Or you can play the exclusivity game. Put out one single table and two chairs. Sitting at the only table you provide should feel like a privilege, a glitch on your offer that someone can snatch, an exclusive event.

Whatever tactic you choose, make sure seating outside of your storefront at any hour feels like an event, an artistic performance, even.



If you do this, you will slowly start to build up your community around your store. It will become a hub. Kids will want to hang their notices and fliers. Give them a bulletin board.

Keep the stream of people happy with gifts, like the coffee or cold water we talked about before. Keep them entertained with information that you put out and educated with bits of interesting material. Build goodwill and the community will give you a crowd.

Take a walk outside on a commercial area. Look for how different places have treated the terraces outside their storefronts. Study them and the design process that is behind the takeover of the sidewalk. Look at the most interesting ones, Most likely they will combine other activities with the seating to create a more round experience.

7. Be transparent



Some storefronts are blessed with lots of facade windows. Using that transparency to your advantage is easy. Make things happen just on the other side. Things that will interest people who walk by. You're putting on a show. Make it unforgettable.

For some ideas on how to make the most out of your front windows, refer to the Dynamic Display Window that I have discussed earlier and will go in extensively later in this book.

You should aim to reach a balance between the outdoor living room, the display window and an interior "focal point", which is an important element of your design.

Surrounding people with the whole experience will have a better chance of turning them into customers by catching their attention, making them look inside and motivating their stepping in and patronizing your business.

But transparency is not all about windows or how far inside can people look. It's about being honest about your business and letting people see how important it is and how much passion you are putting into it.

Transparency makes use of design to open up your trade, tell your story, introduce those who toast and grind the coffee, process the linen sheets or make the hats that you sell.

Be transparent in your work ethic and it will be easy to design the store. Each important point in what you do, each important part of your process can be translated to an important corner of your store, what we call "focal points".

The number of important corners or focal points will determine how many times people's gaze stops while visually scanning the inside of your store.

Each focal point should be strong, unique, easy to find and lead on to the next, going as far back into the store as possible.

Design each focal point as a "station" that highlights important items and goods before arriving to the main focal point.

Determine the number of pauses but make sure folks arrive to the last one. A memorable, unforgettable last stop should leave people talking about your business.

Transparency is not only equal to windows and an open store but with honesty. Make a point of knowing your products and where they come from. Choose your stock from sources that you care about and display them with pride. That should give you enough elements to tell your story and enough passion to sell it.

8. Control The Path

Everyone who enters your store follows a path from the sidewalk to when they leave. You have the opportunity to entertain, educate and nurture your community.

By controlling the path inside the store you decide what they will see, how they will feel and what they will experience. This is a powerful tool that according to my client and friend Edna from Metuchen NJ, has made everyone who enters to comment on the way the store is experienced.

Establish a clear, visible, attractive path from the sidewalk to your cash register, that is easy to understand and fun to follow.

Define stations, highlights and hierarchies:

1. Stations are the specific places where people will pause, where you will create micro experiences that highlight specific offers or promotions.
2. Highlights are specific objects you want people to see. It can be actual sale objects but also information about them, or ancillary objects you may want to sell as a bundle.
3. Hierarchy is determined by the amount of importance you give to specific parts of the path and the ways in which you highlight them. Options like special lighting or a raised platform are unlimited.

Every step of your design, from the layout to the displays, cash register location and service should be part of your story.

Thinking about your message should remind you of some of the things we have reviewed previously: the vision, the storytelling and the transparency.



© Benziad

Graphics are a great support tool for controlling the path. They make your message literal and help you broadcast it. The design of graphics should be crafted as carefully as the design of the store.

The key to controlling the path inside a store is to design the pauses you want the customers to make to look at important items or information. Take a drawing of the floorplan and draw a color line along the desired path. Mark the pauses and determine what you want people to look at when they pause. Control the background, mid ground and foreground. Be sure to locate things on all three spaces so they talk to each other and collectively become more attractive.

9. The Golden Rule

Mind the proportions, height, scale and rhythm of your doors, windows, moldings and other elements so they support your message and create a psychological bond with your customers.

Every detail in your store will be measured against all others. For example, if your furniture is too big it will take your customers' attention away from your product shelves, which is where you want them to look.

Remember that coherence in the relative size of each element, from the ceiling height to the size of lamps, tables and chairs, to the width of moldings and even to the plants will help your customers feel comfortable and navigate your store easily.

Getting that wrong will affect the circulation inside the store and detract from the overall experience.

Customers will have a hard time saying why but they will feel uncomfortable in a store that has no proportions.

It is extremely difficult for a person who is not familiar with the design process to be able to pinpoint what is it that prevents them from shopping in a particular store, but the feeling of discomfort is primal, real and bad for sales.

It is an unconscious feeling that responds to a lack of correspondence in the design of a store. Even the most experienced architects and designers often get those wrong so don't feel bad.

The good news is that you can take control of your design and work with your intuition to build a proportioned store.

Consider what you are working with and cannot change: height, width and length of the store, and measure everything considering that reality.



First step: measure every major element of your space and calculate every other detail in relation to those measurements. Measure shelves, furniture and any other object and check that they fit in your space and won't affect the circulation inside the store.

Signs can easily be overestimated and so can furniture, ceiling, awning and lamp heights, the size of light fixtures or the width of walkways.



Draw everything. Learn how to do section and plan drawings using Francis D.K. Ching's "Architectural Graphics" or follow a free YouTube tutorial.

Learn how to draw in SketchUp, which is a free 3D modeling software from Google.

You will see proportions as you draw and your spatial perception will be heightened. Long? Yes, but you will thank me later.

If you have a say about how your facade looks the best advice is just go out and look how other commercial facades work and ask yourself Why?

Walk on as many Main Streets as you can and record what strikes you as good, useful and successful.

Write down the significant mistakes that you can find. Sample seats and check awning heights, look inside and note the types of lights. Come back with an idea of what you want. Then check Pinterest and Instagram. In this day and age, the best source of excellent storefronts for people like you who are designing their own is social media. Embrace it.

Buy a professional grade tape measure. Take it with you in walks along a notebook and pencil. Practice your skills and measure things before you draw them so that you have a clear idea of their size. Look for items that will serve as reference when you are drawing up the plans for your store. And, by all means, ask for help. There are countless freelancing services where you can find someone to translate your amateur conceptual graphics into working drawings.

10. Brand it

Creating a strong business requires understanding the concept of branding.

Making your message heard and your purpose known takes more than just your store's design, its identity or choosing a visible sign to hang outside.

A brand is a graphic system, centered around a symbol, that identifies a person, product or corporation. It represents the value that customers give to a business.

The actual symbol is called a “logotype” or logo for short. It carries all the weight of the value that a business has created for its customers over time.

It also represents the perception that the general public, customers or not, have of that business.

There are various types of graphic brand designs. The design will depend on many factors such as the target group of the product, the longevity of the company and the industry where it operates.

Choosing the right design will help your product or business by making a direct association between the symbol and your values and mission.

Most successful companies nowadays are those that have a clear purpose. Whether it is helping reduce food waste or advocating for local producers, they market themselves by linking their success stories and the advancement of their causes.

It is important to choose a graphic image that represents the values that your business is created upon. It is also important to integrate the graphic image into the design of the store.



© Heather Schwartz

Branding is another, different thing.

It literally means get everything in your store to support your brand. Look at rule No. 4. Get Yourself In Character. The store design is the most important element to support your brand.

A good branding strategy should make your customers feel a personal connection with your business' values. Make every object count as part of your design and a critical element of the experience.

Remember, it is all about creating an immersive, 360° experience for your customers. That includes every aspect of your product, place and service.

That includes some elements beyond the colors and materials. The music you play, the clothes attendants wear, the language they use are as critical as any other parts of the in-store experience.

Your branding is supported by every object and process in the store. Be careful when printing your logo over objects in the store. You don't want to overexpose people to your logo.

A good branding strategy is getting the whole business into character to support your mission and message.

Design a graphic image that supports your story. You will need a good name, a good logo and a good font.

The end goal is for every object and process in your store to align with your concept.

The design of your storefront and interior is the most visual part of your branding because people can look away from a sign, but once they are inside a space they will experience it and have an opinion of its being good or bad.

Integrate every aspect, from materials and colors to graphics and service. Choose the right type of sign, graphics and fonts. What do you want to say? How does the store's name and logo support that?

Look at how different parts of your graphic system help or harm the type of business they represent. Can you read the letters? Do most businesses in an industry have similar letters? Is there a standard for naming, writing and supporting storefronts?

Just like movie stars read about their character and learn every detail of their

lives to play them, your store needs to live and breathe your vision.

From workers uniforms to their handling of difficult situations, make sure they honor your vision as your design, graphics and business model does.

To choose the ideal font start by making a list of letter types and decide on the ideal one by writing a one-page summary of your business and printing it in at least five different letter types. Hang them up on your wall to compare. Select the one that you feel represents your business in the best possible way.



SECTION 2.

DESIGN GUIDELINES FOR GROUP ELEMENTS

1. Set up an outdoor living room

Invite people to hang out, relax, even when not patronizing the store.

This is the core of the Storefront Mastery approach: gather people around your storefront to attract even more people.

An outdoor living room where patrons and pedestrians can sit, lounge, pass time and feel good will create goodwill and help your business become a neighborhood hub.

Below I discuss how to create the outdoor room as a whole. Later we will focus on the design of each element that makes up the outdoor room. But for now let's focus on the big picture.

People like to see and be seen. And they also like to personalize their space. Countless studies of how people use public spaces confirm that enclosure and personalization can go a long way.

This is an opportunity to gather people around your store and get them acquainted with your brand. Your outdoor room gives an opportunity to sit that people perceive as comfortable, convenient or even quaint.

Allow them to move furniture around freely. Personalization is key. Think of the type of furniture you will install and how its shape, material, colors and texture relate to your brand and your message. Think of how light and color might change, enhance or deter your intentions.

You want pedestrians to make a pause and stop at your store. The key to transform a pause into a full stop and a walk-in is to make people feel like they have reached a destination.

You will see this word, “destination” repeated many times in this book. That is what you are building: a place that people invariably flock to and enjoy to be in.



There are easy tools to achieve this and there are some easier ones, too. The outdoor living room will take people out of the linear path of following the sidewalk and into an enclosure.

Come In! regardless of the context. You can also provide some climate control, if the weather in your city is too extreme.

The last step, but in this day and age the most important one: become instafriendly.



Color and sound can finish the job. But not any color and not all sounds will work the same. A warm color such as red or orange might make someone not feel so cold during a winter walk past your storefront.

Soothing music and blue hues might stop a thirsty walker in his tracks while they pass before your storefront in a hot day.

Color and sound can change with the season and adapt to deliver your message:

Build a storefront that people find irresistible and want to snap and upload to their social networks. Word of mouth is a great way to market your store.

Thousands of people broadcasting from your outdoor living room will definitely put you on the map. There is more about this community building tool at the strategies section of this manual.

2. Entrance Funnel



You want people to come into your store and make purchases. Every aspect of your design should be focused on channeling foot traffic and getting people through the door.

Your facade, the sidewalk in front of it and everything around it should work together as a funnel to get people in through the door.

Facade, door, sidewalk, design, music, smell, etc. are the elements that will define whether foot traffic that passes through decides to go in. Bear in mind that some stores can be in great places with high foot traffic and still not get enough paying customers inside the store.

The “Entrance Funnel” is a design approach that places elements both outside and inside the store in such a way that it sparks interest and brings people in through the door.

The elements that take part in this approach are varied. You can play around with it until it suits the type of storefront, the interior layout, the local codes and your preferences.

While walking down the street, typically there are two planes that limit where the pedestrian goes: the sidewalk and the commercial facades.

Normally they will be displayed in a general forward direction. The main idea is to create a sudden break from those forward guiding lines and change the direction of the eye using lines and color.

Lines are present in tiles, joints in the sidewalk, the cracks between floorboards or the corner where the wall meets the ceiling.

Color breaks are easier, since most sidewalks are the color of raw concrete. Check your city's code for the possibilities of changing the design, color or materials on the sidewalk.



Adding more planes to enhance the feeling of enclosure can also be useful. No actual walls are needed but the same effect can be achieved with planters, a *parklet* or a bench facing the main door of the store.

Cafes and restaurants can benefit from a *Walk-thru Window* that stops people for express sales.

Signage and text written to top off the experience at the sidewalk side can also help. Now, most times you will be unable to change the actual facade. If you do, hire a professional designer but be firm about these pointers.

If the only thing you have to work with is the existing facade, think of it as the skinny

tube in the funnel. Your entire traffic will have to go through there to reach your store. The door might swing both sides or open just to one.

Tip: most Fire Codes require that doors in places open to the public swing towards the outside. You can keep it open or make patrons open it as part of the experience.

If your brand should be perceived as strong and durable then your door must feel very heavy but easy to operate. Sell the opening and going through the door as a right of passage and BOOM! you are using design to enhance the experience.

Don't lose sight of the actual design of the door: the materials, color, texture, weight, hinges or pivot system matter. Every detail of the Entrance Funnel boosts or blocks the experience you are trying to create, and the entrance is one of your most important tools.

Think about the depth of your entrance. Does building a foyer enhance the experience? Do you play music or use sound to switch patrons from street noise to the sound of your experience?

Like I said, the little details that do the hard work of wrapping your customer the second after they open the door are critical to their interaction with your store.

3. Design the storefront

Your frontage works as a sign. What people see makes them decide if they will walk in or not. The toolbox is full of useful ideas like the outdoor living rooms, active display windows and goodwill tables.

Helping you design the storefront so foot traffic translate into more sales is the whole point of this book.

You are taking control of your design. You have read through countless books and swiped through hundreds of pages in apps such as Pinterest or Tumblr. You have stalked your competition and taken thousands of pictures of how you would like your store to look like.

Well, this is the moment of truth. Designing your storefront requires many tools and most of those, including small details like the type of light that comes from your light bulbs is important.

Each nook and cranny of your storefront makes or breaks the experience. Every little detail helps to tell your story or diverts from it. You have an immense opportunity to get it right and this little book is here to help.

Review your concept. Check your message. Know that every detail counts and make it count in your advantage. What is the color of your door? How heavy is it? Does it open with hinges or a pivot? How tall is it? Is it set deep on a recessed part of your facade? Do patrons need to walk past a display window to enter? What color is the floor? What is it made of?

These questions matter while crafting an experience. How you display your wares and how you position lights around them can be the difference between having

customers and having believers of your brand. And you want believers.

Materials, textures and colors speak a language. Make sure all three plus your concept speak the same one.



Each different texture, weight and color, on the floors, walls or ceiling gives a message.

Do not read about design alone. Learn about materials, techniques and their features and how they have been used by people before you. Master their characteristics and choose those that best fit your brand.

Read about the psychology of color, get a color wheel and experiment on how it integrates with your brand, with the materials of the building and with what you are selling. Ideally, all these elements will support your story.

Color and texture set the mood. They prime customers to understand the

message. Invest in good quality materials to support it.

Whether you have an aluminum clad storefront, wooden siding, all glass, brick or a cast iron facade, matching the colors and textures with your brand is imperative.

Think outside the box: draw on your facade with a pencil, paint a mural, hang some flower on the facade. No limits, really. Just be unforgettable.

Pro tip: stay away from laminate floors. Pick materials that sustain damage and weather well. If you drop something heavy over a wooden floor and it leaves a dent, your boards will tell a story. If you do it over laminate floor, constant traffic over the wound will make your floor look cheap and neglected.

Looking inside interesting storefronts is a favorite pastime of mine. And I assure you, I am not alone. Give people a reason to pause, to look, to get interested, to crave and to go in. But do not shout.

Showing your craft through the display window fosters the perception of something well built, well enough to show its process live in front of a window that the public can look at.

You have limited amount of frontage and in the best case a few windows to spare. Use them like a set for a performance. Stage your process with flare and show its highlights every day.

Activate the sidewalk and create a small public space where people will want to pause. Think of your storefront as a stage and what you show there as a play. Be

the wardrobe, backdrop, lighting and set designer. Nothing will enhance the experience of patronizing your business like making your customers feel like they are part of a live performance.

Get some plants. The humble planter can make a world of difference. Just take one plant to the edge of your door and see how it lights the whole block. The power of a public frontage is enormous. Give it a try.

Choose plants that grow lush and care for them with pride. Designing your storefront does not mean spending big bucks.

You are reading this manual because you have chosen to believe in your own skills to present your space to your customers. Start humble and see the change. You will be surprised.

Some things you just can't control. The design of the front facade is usually one of them. Price tags, local codes and other factors can prevent you from making significant modifications. While doing your research, focus on storefronts that have limitations just like yours.

Work with what you have and stay in scale.

Be mindful of your sign. It summarizes your brand in one object. Think of all the details about design, materials, colors, light, structural system and more, as specified in this manual.

Finally, take control of your customers' comfort by offering shelter outside your storefront. Benches or chairs are good, and an awning would be even better. Think about how high, how far out and what materials you will use and how those elements play with your concept.

4. Circulation Design

After your storefront design successfully brings people in, the main objective is to keep their attention for as long as possible and to have them walk along a predetermined path where they will see what you want them to and pay attention to what you tell them to.

A successful circulation requires subtle nudges so people don't realize the path has been decided for them. Psychology plays an important role here. This is perhaps the key part of your interior design. Let's look at it in depth:

The typical journey inside a store starts with the "decompression zone", where customers make the transition from public to commercial space. You may have noticed in some shops that there is a table with very attractive, cool products as soon as you come in. That display will force a decision as to which direction to take. Most will take the right side.

The first right that the customer makes is known as the "soft right". They are not ready to start shopping yet but they can be "primed" to your shop's concept. Typically, a place where they can sit or browse relevant books or find an instagrammable spot are the best uses for the "soft right".

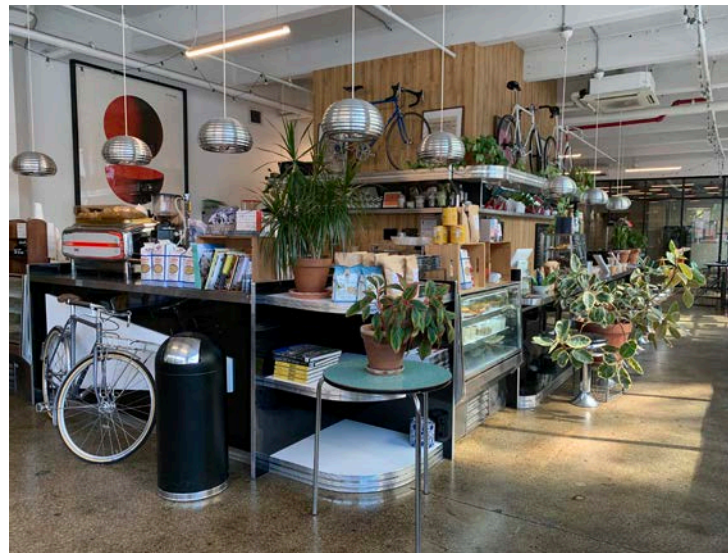
"Priming" is a Psychological term that describes the use of cues to influence a behavior. In this case, visual cues would put customers in a desired mood to have a better understanding of your business' mission and concept.

The table at the entrance and the space on the "soft right" are the first two stations that should be created along the path.

Each one of these are like "bases" where the visual cues will guide your customers. Things should happen while they move from one station to the next, as if they were the main characters in a performance.

At each station, you control where people stand, what is highlighted, what is seen next and even how far should they look.

The journey between each should also have good product displays and each object, piece of furniture, sign and light fixture should nudge and determine the direction of the walk.



Use different levels, types and intensities of lighting to achieve that, as well as taking advantage of the geometry of every object along the way.

Colors, shine, lighting and enclosure will determine the hierarchy and importance of each item along the path and in each station.

As they progress through the store, customers should walk at the speed you desire, stop where you want them to and

see what you want to display. Make sure the more important pieces are displayed in each station and place impulse buy goods along the circulation.

Accentuate the corners where the walls meet the ceiling and the floor or use geometric effects to blur them. Use the spaces between floorboards or tiles as sight lines or purposefully install them in such a way that they stop the gaze.

Stations should be comfortable, cozy, maybe invite folks to sit and seats should point to a desired place in the shop, near or far. Having some stations with coffee or tea can be extra inviting. Make sure folks feel like they are in a familiar, friendly space.

Give stations a theme. Decorate each with books, plants, lamps and framed pictures curated to support the theme. Include something soft and something shiny.

Stage a scene and invite the customer to be a part of it. Introduce different smells that can be associated with each station and choose a color as accent to make them memorable. Introduce staff recommendations to pair products with coffee, tea or wine, and put out postcards with your brand, social media and story that people can take home.

Color theory has been extensively written about. There are several online courses and even talks that you can watch online that tell you the characteristics and qualities of each color and combination of colors. It is easy to make an informed decision.

Next, walk along the path and determine which areas are “dark”. There will be some places that are easier to miss. Use them to stage sales and for pop-ups that require deliberate attention.

Place the cash register on a spot that is easily seen from the start, that attracts people and is ample enough to support shelving for impulse buys and last minute offers. Use it as the second to last station, and give it enough hierarchy to stand out.



The final station should ideally connect, at least visually, with the welcome table. In some cases it can be the same table with a good differentiation between the front-facing welcome part and the back-facing last station.

Think of it as a gentle send-off with one last reminder of your brand and your shop. What customers will see as they leave should remain in their memory and place your brand in their Top of Mind. Make it unforgettable.

5. Frontage Nanopark

Gardens make people happy, they have been around for millennia and you can make one with a couple of hanging plants and a few square feet of vertical shrubs.

When people see the opportunity to be happy they will stop if only to enjoy the moment and that is when you lure them in using the rest of your store's charms: the outdoor living room, the soothing sounds and music, the dynamic display window and the lights inside.

Happy customers make purchases. I believe it was Paco Underhill who said that. If you are in the mood to read, look for his book "Why We Shop" in which he describes the process of decision making and the interaction of brands and shoppers, to recommend better ways of selling retail. But back to your little pocket park.

You can use your outdoor living room as a setting for the park. Make it as lush as possible, get native plants that will stand the weather and look awesome even if you are not constantly fixing them. Trim and water as much as your brand requires.

Small spaces are no excuse. The name "nano-park" should give you a hint. It is not the square footage but the feelings that your garden provokes and that make people stay and build a relationship with your brand.

Garden walls are the least space consuming. They may be harder to maintain although technology has advanced and now even watering can be done technically and in larger intervals. They look great and give out a sense of freshness to interiors and exteriors alike.

Combine vegetation with proper lighting and you could be creating a conversation starter that will become an icon.

Choose the type of plant according to your brand's requirements. Think of it in the same terms as you would think of your graphic design: each plant sends out a message. There is one that tunes in and sends a message similar to your brand's.



If you plan to have sitting or to integrate the nanopark with the outdoor living room, plan ahead for how people will sit and the enclosure, lines of sight, interaction between patrons and plants and any other aspect where plants can not only not help but effectively degrade the quality of the experience.

6. Brand design

We tend to think that putting together a design by drawing a logo and choosing a font for the sign will do the trick.

It doesn't. Even when the attempt is successful in creating a recognizable brand.

We discussed how the identity of your brand rests on the symbol or "logo". All the value you have added and that your customers recognize is represented by one graphic piece.

A good graphic design will let you tell the complete story about your brand and will support your mission and message.

Design is a very sensitive part of your overall design process but there's no need to spend thousands of dollars. A young, savvy freelancer can design a great brand.

The symbol that will represent your brand is made up of your business' name and an additional element.

The symbol will appear on your sign, on labels and tags attached to your products, on merchandising, as an email header and even in your invoices, letterhead, business cards, magazine or newspaper ads, and stationery.

Symbols

Let's explore a bit about how to create your brand and how to design a great logo.

A brand quickly becomes the perception that its users have of it. If no one knows your brand, or if there is a negative association with it, the design of the logo will not solve those issues.

Choosing a great design will create a strong association with your business, but always put in the effort to keep up its reputation.

It is usual to find logos grouped in families according to industry:

A brand is made up of two components:

Banking



Food



Apparel



Automotive



a symbol, which is the graphic part and a logotype, which is the written name, and uses a common or specially designed font. Each will tell your story differently.

Some brands like Coca-Cola or Sony work as only logotypes:



Some others like Nike or Lacoste use the symbol alone



Others like Burger King or UPS use a symbol and logo as a unit



The most popular combination is the logo with symbol. In this case, the logo has both elements with enough recognition so that they can identify the brand together or separate.

This is the case of Mercedes Benz, Chase or Nestle:



Or you can just write your business' name and use a small accessory that will make up the brand but not be associated to the brand if seen alone.

This happens in the logos of Levi's Jeans, Ford Motor Co. and Marvel Comics:



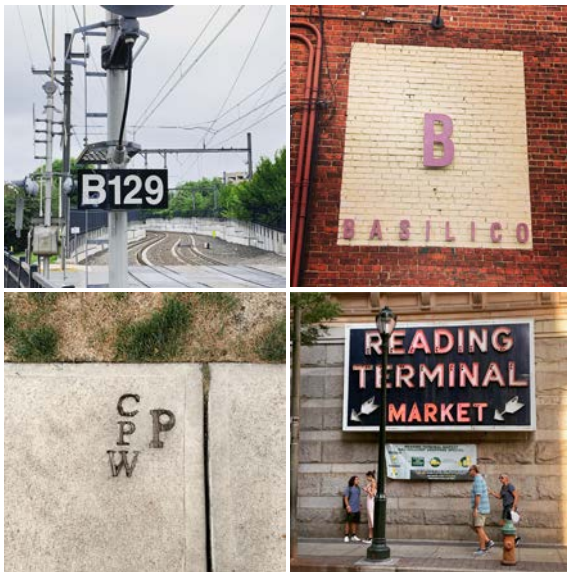
Fonts

A “font” is the name of a letter type. There are Classic fonts similar to the letters that newspapers are written in and Modern fonts, that are less ornate. You can find these in airline names, for example.

Within these families, there are several options. Always look for those that are easier to read and that have a character compatible with your brand’s.

From a distance, and in passing, the human eye distinguishes about four or five words on a sign.

Make those words count and use fonts that help to give as much information about your business as possible.



Aa

Sans Serif

Sans Serif typefaces make headlines and infrastructure signs easier to read. Sans Serif fonts are preferred in places where understanding what is written is critical and the size of the letter will be large, such as railroad tracks and stations, airports or highways.

Century Gothic Pro Regular </>

The quick brown fox jumps over the lazy dog

Century Gothic Pro Italic </>

The quick brown fox jumps over the lazy dog

Century Gothic Pro Bold </>

The quick brown fox jumps over the lazy dog

Aa

Serif

Serif or Roman fonts are Classic letters that were used from early printing press times to print large texts and are easier to read in paragraph form. Serifs are small strokes at the end of each letter that were intended to smooth the edges of letters chiseled in stone.

Adobe Garamond Pro Regular </>

The quick brown fox jumps over the lazy dog

Adobe Garamond Pro Italic </>

The quick brown fox jumps over the lazy dog

Adobe Garamond Pro Semibold </>

The quick brown fox jumps over the lazy dog



Slab Serif fonts make serifs intentional and are often used in posters because of their high readability.

Courier Std Medium </>

The quick brown fox jumps over the lazy dog

Courier Std Medium Oblique </>

The quick brown fox jumps over the lazy dog

Courier Std Bold </>

The quick brown fox jumps over the lazy dog



Script typefaces are based on the continuous stroke of handwritten letters. Use of stock fonts should be cautious, since they intend to reproduce handwriting but don't have the uniqueness of the human touch. Script fonts should be designed by hand for best results. Depending on the chosen font, they could look more formal.

Austin Pen Regular </>

The quick brown fox jumps over the lazy dog

Austin Pen Bold </>

The quick brown fox jumps over the lazy dog

Unique fonts can be produced to create a brand. These fonts generally become symbols themselves. They are specially designed to be used in the brand symbol.



Free script fonts are handwritten fonts that are associated exclusively with a brand. They do not follow any of the regular typeface rules but rather create their own. If you use one of these fonts, make sure your brand name will be easily read and understood.

Coca-Cola

Cyrano

Llanganati
BLEND & COMPANY

After having a neatly designed brand you need to know how to use it in such a way that is effective and builds up your reputation.

The best way to achieve this goal is to design a manual that lists the requirements for each use and details how your brand will behave in different applications, whether it is a giant billboard, napkins, merchandising, product boxes or a website.

7. Shade and shadow



Light Interacting with street trees, awnings, trellises, etc. is a great way to make people stop in front of your door. Canopies serve a much greater purpose than just providing shelter. They foster agglomeration

Many great buildings around the world have distinct elements that provide shelter from the sun and rain.

Think of theaters or hotels with their big marquis projecting out. A big part of the drama that is added to entrances comes from the sun light passing through beautiful canopies and drawing interesting shapes on the floor.

If more stores provided awnings or canopies, walking in the city would be

much more comfortable and fun. Lucky for you, you can be one of the few to create that in front of your store. A well built, attractive awning will make your business stand out. And bring some customers in the process.

Start with a few plants

One of the cheapest and more effective tools for creating a play of shade and shadow are potted plants that you can light from beneath the foliage to project shapes on the storefront.

You can also use tall plants, placed strategically to define the boundaries of your outdoor space. They can be arranged

in clusters as decoration or you can hang them and make use of the gentle shade that their leaves can provide.

Think of a beautiful patio in a Greek or Italian restaurant. Hanging plants are the stars of that show. Potted flowers, vines knitted in trellises or ivy growing stuck to walls, one added benefit is how they freshen up the place and interact with the sun to make ever changing patterns.

Think big and add a canopy

Whether you install a hard canopy, a retractable canvas awning or build a trellis, two of the critical decisions are the height of the ceiling and the length of the projection.

You don't want to go out too far or your facade will look like it's about to tip over nor too tall so it looks like it provides no shelter at all.

The general tip for added cozyness is about 8 feet high, but I have seen some installed much higher that work as well.

A bonus in areas with more benign weather: you can have them installed to block the sun while keeping fresh air circulating underneath.

Be sure to get acquainted with the process of design/build and learn about how these structures are kept standing, or find a qualified professional to design, build and install any of these alternatives.

Trial and error works best. Try a collage in which you take a picture of the storefront and cut a piece of paper in the shape of the awning, and try different heights. Take a picture of each and then compare.

Signs can make shade, too

At this point you have made people stop and look inside, perhaps inspired them to sit down and relax. Now that you have their attention, tell your story, go out and talk about it.

Bring out some signs. Brand it but mix the formal signs with a few temporary ones for good measure. Throw in your mission statement, anything that you feel will interest your patrons, educate and entertain them at the same time.

Some stores install a sidewalk projector, so any graphic can be projected on the sidewalk when it's dark outside. This includes moving graphics so the sidewalk can keep active during closed hours and the storefront keeps acting as an advertisement.

Hard canopies can typically be found over hotels or theaters, also known as "marquees". Retractable awnings are commercially available structures that provide shelter when extended and usually have a colored canvas covering that can be branded. Trellises are groups of parallel joists that support either a translucent roof or a green canopy. They are usually made of wood with a complementary metal structure.

8. Lights and mood

Light is the champion mood-setter. It can have color, what experts call “temperature”, it can vary in intensity and come from different sources, directly and indirectly. Each of those facts can be controlled to enhance the experience.

With so many options, it will take time and a lot of trial and error but it is very likely that you will find a combination that will work best for your business.

There are three main sections of your store that you need to illuminate: the interior, the display window and the frontage.

Inside you create and enhance the mood. On your display window you want to properly highlight what you sell or your concept, which is in many cases the same, and outside you use light to boost your visibility during the evening.

When designing your lighting, there are a few things you should consider. First of all: if your business is not a pharmacy, stay away from bright, white lights.

Go out and sample the mood of several stores similar to yours.



Benchmark their lighting schemes using the information provided in this manual.

Write down how you feel in each one so you can compare notes and know for sure what you need. Consult with a professional if you have any doubts.

Levels of Lighting

Each of the light sources works in a different level and assists in creating the experience.

The most basic are Ambient lights, that come from one or more sources and reach most of the space without creating any major dramatic effects.

These are most used in retail outlets such as pharmacies or supermarkets, where fast turnovers are part of the business model.

Small businesses, on the other hand, rely on people lingering in the store to find special items. Designers rely heavily on special areas of the store such as a bar, a stage, a display or a textured wall, to help highlight these items.

Accent lighting creates dramatic effects of light and shade. These effects are easily observed in the way Luxury hotels and restaurants add elegance to spaces.

When combined with other sources at varying intensities, accents can create a very intimate atmosphere.

The level known as Task Lighting is used to illuminate areas that need high visibility for conducting activities such as cooking or writing, without lighting the entire room.

Tables on restaurants or cafes, checkout counters or corners with mirrors on apparel stores are typical applications of task lighting.

Final in this list, which by no means is definitive, is the Highlight. Used to focus on a centerpiece such as a stage or a bar, it can help small businesses to show special items



or important corners of the store.

Within levels, you can play with the direction of the light source. An indirect light that uses a reflective surface to bounce or enhance a detail; recessed lighting that creates the illusion of a higher ceiling, or a spot light on the underside of foliage to project organic effects on ceilings are a few creative ways to use indirect lighting.

Types of light

There are four main types of light bulbs. Incandescents produce a warm light and are

the least expensive. They are mainly used in ambient lighting.

Incandescents are slowly disappearing from stores and production, replaced by energy-saving but highly toxic fluorescent bulbs that produce a harsh light.

Regular fluorescent tubes also produce a harsh, bright white light, the type you can experience in pharmacies or supermarkets.

Compact fluorescents try to emulate the kind of light that incandescents produce, with limited results.

Halogen lamps burn hotter than incandescents. Their light is warm and bright. Typically used for bright displays, but they can potentially be replaced by LEDs for savings and to prevent overheating.

Last but not least are LED or Light Emitting Diodes. They are small, can produce any color of light, can be dimmed and are



extremely energy-efficient. The diodes are small but larger light bulbs are composed of a number of diodes that can be programmed to behave alone or in combination.

LEDs can produce light of any color, but they don't necessarily produce "warmth" like incandescent bulbs. Check the light in a real-world setting to see if they produce the desired warmth and are not too harsh on your eyes.



© Ramjar

Light Temperature

Light "temperature" is a category that is critical to how you present your storefront and show your products. As you can see in the picture above, there are varying degrees of warmth that come from different types of light sources.

Light bulb manufacturers measure light temperature in Kelvin degrees (K) and associate the color with that of heated steel.

A light that produces 2700K will create a warm orange-yellow glow as in conventional

incandescent bulbs. At 6500K it will be bluish white, like the typical supermarket white fluorescent lights.

Each serves a purpose. Find the perfect ones for your type of business, for your brand and for the types of goods or services you sell.

Warm light makes spaces cozy, laid back and comfortable; cool, harsh light activates stress receptors. People in familiar settings feel more comfortable and may be more inclined to linger, so you will have more time to show them your goods.

Light Intensity

The intensity of light refers to the degree of luminosity. Some lights can be dimmed such as incandescent and halogen, some can be programmed to lower their intensity such as LED bulbs and some cannot, as is the case with fluorescents.

A careful selection of lighting levels, the right mood set by the temperature of your bulbs and a correct modulation of the light's intensity can create an optimal combination. However, a poor choice of fixtures can deter and diminish the effects.

Make sure any fixture you use goes well with your vision and message. Use them to your advantage to enhance the mood.

A special chapter is needed for string lights. Overused and repetitive yet charming, they do wonders to enclose spaces without the need for physical boundaries.

Use them to support your story. You will need to put in some work to combine string lights with other elements in order to stand out from all the other businesses that are already using them.

Lighting each section of the store



Outdoor Living Room:

1. Type: ambient light on the sidewalk or indirect towards the awning and accent lighting on plants from underneath
2. Fixture type and design: outdoor lamps, unless specifically meant to be part of the design, will be merely functional so focus on the one that best works with the chosen type of light, direction of light source,
3. Light bulb type and temperature: if coziness is the goal then indirect halogen lamps would probably work best but do try and sample other types in several similar places
4. Intensity: this should be easily switched so install a dimmer, tint: be careful since some colors could be bothersome to some users. Use when directly beneficial to your brand.

Display Window:

1. Type: unless you are a large department store, chances are you do not have a closed display window and people can see inside. Use the store's ambient lighting as a base and install a few accents. Decorative lighting can also work but if you are on a budget, you can do without it
2. Fixture type and design: space is limited in display windows so choose small fixtures, recessed whenever possible and check their scale relative to what you will have in display



3. Direction of light source: if you display products, try a direct source to brighten the area. If you have coffee grinding or pasta making as a display then install task lighting that is decorative at the same time. Keep in mind the space is limited and light fixtures should not overpower any of the objects in display

4. Light bulb type and temperature: halogen lamps can get too warm and fluorescents will make a fixed display lifeless. Go with incandescents or find an LED that suits your color and coziness needs
5. Intensity: install a dimmer to keep it dynamic as you go.

Interior:



1. Type: interiors require several levels of lighting. Start with the ambient light and then add task lights to areas that need extra working light. Then find the special places that need accent and think about how to brighten them and finally think of the little luxury of decorative lighting
2. Fixture type and design: do not just go and purchase stock lamps. Think of an organized system that corresponds between your lighting types and check that materials, colors and textures of

fixtures and the light they emit work with one another

3. Direction of light source- interiors need much more thought and detail than an outdoor room. For each type, think of different strategies. Accent lights could be direct, indirect or recessed, and have exposed fixtures. Seek what is most appropriate
4. Light bulb type: this will depend on your chosen types of light , how you install it and what is available on the market that fits. Do some shopping, try the sites in the Resources section
5. Temperature, intensity and tint: these will also depend on your strategy.

9. Surround with sound

Sound, music and noise are three similar but very different components of a space's soundscape. They activate parts of the brain and are among the most useful tools to create a mood but also to ruin it.

The simple act of bringing out a speaker to reproduce the same music people are listening to on the inside can be life changing for the entire block and will definitely shape the experience outside your store.

Choose wisely. Not any playlist will work. Music soothes but can also upset. Is the context of your target audience timeless or contemporary? Will they be immersed in your store's experience if you caress them with Classical music or if you blast some Hip-Hop?

Once you have chosen the type of music, be extra careful while curating your playlists. Don't rely on what streaming services can do for you. Create your own lists so you can control the mood.

If you want people in a happy mood then pick happy songs. Are you looking for introspects? Curate your playlist to the exact mood you want people to be in when they see your products. As I said, music coats the experience.

The volume is another often overlooked aspect that requires trial and error before settling on what works best for your business. Do you want people to be able to talk or do you want music to overpower conversation?

These are the type of decisions that will shape the experience and thus need some thought put into them.

If music is not your thing, be aware that you can also control sound in the store with "white noise" or a simple hum that cancels some outside noises and lets people focus on the sound of things happening inside.

Not a thing for most stores but an FYI. There are many ways to do this and you are better off comparing all there is.

Modern restaurants have been studied as a source of stress in patrons because contemporary design uses materials that reflect noise and spaces have become very noisy and unsettling. Think of the levels of noise that your concept and audience tolerate and plan your design accordingly.

If you can, there's room and it fits your business model, maybe having a piano in the store can invite pop-up musical events or special evenings with shows.

Building a community sometimes requires using the space after hours to bring people for social gatherings that transcend the principal purpose of your business.



© Mariana Andrade

10. The Goodwill Stage

You may have noticed how most of the group elements are aligned with each other, supporting your business' purpose and message, and following the 10 No-B.S. Rules Of Successful Storefronts.

The Goodwill Stage supports the Outdoor Living Room, the Entrance Funnel and the Frontage Nanopark.

It consists on a table or any other form of stage that will be a close point of contact between your business and the community. The contents of the table can vary but essentially it would include the following:

- A few printed materials that tell the story of your business and are entertaining and beautiful, so people can take them along. These can be a post card with a beautiful picture on one side and your story on the other, branded blank cards where you write the words by hand or a printed brochure. The possibilities are endless.
- Some free goodies, maybe candy, fruit or a souvenir. Perhaps include a sharing library with books and magazines. Any souvenirs that people take will make them emotionally attached to your business and familiar enough that they will feel like they're patronizing their friends. This is a great community builder!
- It should have a great looking display of special goods for sale, with their origin, journey to the store and back story clearly written and visible. Hopefully with a few pictures of folks from your supply chain.

Ideally, the decoration of the table would reflect the values of your business and give out some value to potential customers. Include lights, plants, sound and many

images. This is a pass through table so no chairs are needed but one or two can be added as part of the display.

Find props that can enhance the effect of the message you are giving. Maybe an easel with a painting or a hanging mirror.

Finally, think of the design of the table. Try not to use a generic, plastic one. Wood and other more noble materials will give the display a lot of weight.

Think of introducing some color, maybe a tablecloth, maybe the table itself is painted a specific color that supports your brand or perhaps the gifts you are putting out will provide some color.

As a final detail, have some fabric with a nice texture and something shiny that can serve as a focal point.

Look at every single object that will be displayed at your table. They should all match and enhance the rest.

Have fun with the decoration. Let those who interact see how much fun you've had creating it and it will show!



SECTION 3.

DESIGN GUIDELINES FOR SINGLE ELEMENTS

1. Wait for the sign

There are many types of signs that you can hang outside your store to identify your business and attract patrons.

We are used to neon light and back-lit signs that illuminate the area around them but it was different before. Stores had regular lights over painted signs on their walls or display windows. They could be detachable hanging signs hand painted over wood or metal, or they could be artistic pieces crafted from any material.

Signs can be fixed flush to the wall, they can be objects that project outward and they can also be fixed perpendicular to the wall so that pedestrians see them up front when they walk on the sidewalk.

Some signs, especially in historic districts, were painted directly over the side walls of buildings, taking advantage of height.

The 20th century brought changes. Until then, signs were designed and produced to appeal to people walking or biking. These are done typically at three to eight miles per hour. Reading information in signs or identifying them from details other than a logo or name was easier.

As traffic sped up in wider streets and highways, the information written on signs had to be easier to read at high speed.

Reading them was not an option when going at sixty miles per hour. They grew in simplicity, brightness, size and height. The choice is ultimately yours as the store owner.



The safest bet is to look up all the types of signs that you can find and pick the one that suits you better. Based on my experience, I recommend the more personal signage that appeals to those reading it at an average five miles per hour.

Whether you pick a hand crafted sign or a back lit, 3D-printed sign is up to you and your design concept. But there are a few tricks to make it stand out:

There is no correct type of sign, just the most appropriate for the type of business, the service you sell and the character of your store:

- Check your local code for allowed uses, types and lighting options
- Scale your sign carefully so that it looks proportionate to the size of the street and of your store. Roughly 1/7 the height of the ground floor
- Test blade signs and flat signs to see what's best. Blades are better seen walking flats are best seen from across
- Choose colors and materials in accordance with your brand



Your sign will likely be illuminated at night so be aware of the mood that your sign creates whether it emits light or reflects it.

For a more modern store you can pick a bright, internally-lit, plastic sign with sharp edges where your logo makes a hard contrast. If you sell vintage goods perhaps a hand-painted glass sign with gold letters and a classic font over a black background is the way to go.

Remember to check for design, coherence and scale.

Your store's identity can also be present in smaller, temporary signs or in messages or message boards that are put in place to enhance your customers' experience.

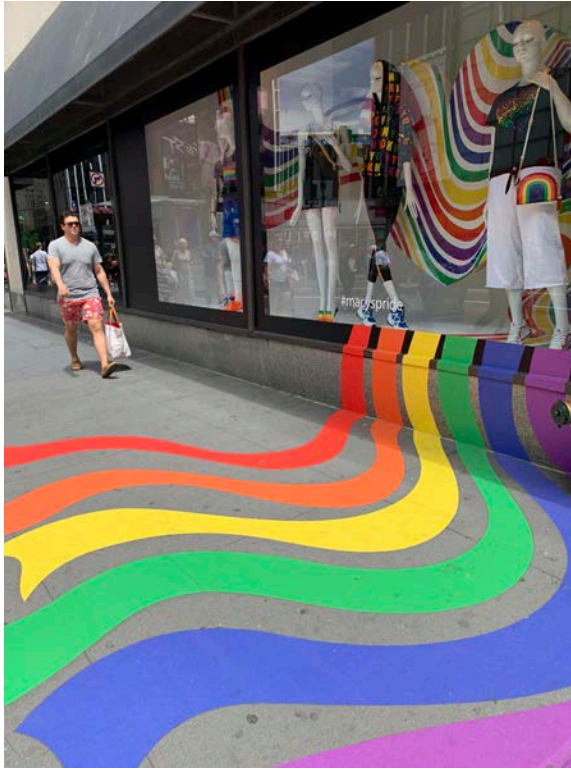


Temporary signs should show a more hand-written, informal mood and those that will remain permanently should be more closer to the main sign. Keep the brand elements and follow the design manual.



Plan to have a few signs scattered around where you repeat the main message of your story and engage people with your mission and vision. The same tips of your main sign apply here but the main tip is: be subtle, do not overdo signage.

2. Dynamic display window



A wise man from Denmark once said that “the single best thing to attract people is other people”.

Just try standing in the middle of the street and staring at a single point in space.

Soon you will be surrounded by others, curious of what you are looking at. Fear of missing out is real. Your in-store experience should be one people will not want to miss.

Display windows were used by large department stores in their heyday as magnets for shoppers. To this day, Legacy department stores in New York, Paris or London use out-of-this-world display windows as a showcase of design, creativity and innovation of their brands.

As discussed in the “*Design The Storefront*” section, your display window is a stage. Produce a play that transforms your customers into performers and pedestrians into the audience. Show what’s happening in your workshop, kitchen or farm.

Entertain passers by with how you build your craft or grind your coffee or create your paintings. Let them peek at the happy customers eating well, getting great service or discovering something new.

Your goal is to get people to stand outside watching an event unfold and wanting in.

Imagine it, plan and produce it like a theater performance in a set.

Remember that your business is not about what you sell but about how your customers feel when they interact with your brand. That is the message that goes up in your display window.

Make it dynamic, whether with live action, with prerecorded video, an interactive display or a “museum graphic”

You can control the mood of your production with lighting, props and colors. Show a video screen with images from your providers and their best practices, make a mural like those in museums that tells your story or stage your barber’s chair right on the window.

Whether it works as a theater with a live performance, a cinema with video or a museum display, what you strive for is to grab your audience’s attention, make them happy to see what they are seeing, entertain and educate them.

Build up expectation before the experience. Or build an actual mini-experience-to-go. An express-sale, walk-through window works for cafes or restaurants. A small showroom could work for a furniture store. An “outdoor walk-in closet” might do the trick for a clothing store.

Taking a bit of your experience to the sidewalk in whatever way you see fit will make the whole block a better place, will get you some looks and will definitely raise your profile.

“FOMO” is a real thing. We have fear of missing out. We follow travelers on Instagram and peek through their blogs. We know their names and the places they have been. We see the beautiful people in sitcoms having the time of their lives and want to visit their houses and go to the cafes they hang in.

Be that place that everyone wants to be in, that everyone posts in their social networks and that people want to return to.

Coziness, as it turns out, is what most people are looking for. The Danes call it “Hygge” and the Dutch call it “Gezellig”. Comfortable, cozy places win and the display window is where you sell it.

Several aspects to setting the stage are discussed here as individual design strategies. But the responsibility to design your store is yours. You must integrate them in one vision that feels right, tells your story and makes people crave your brand.

Easy? Not so much. Achievable? Yes, by being very transparent about how you do business and build your community.

Just like the little booklet you get when you step into a theater, the dynamic display

window can offer information in the form of live action and text. We have talked about the performance, now let’s go over how to present written information.

It doesn’t matter if it is a handwritten temporary sign or a fixed one, a detachable object or simple vinyl letters stamped on the window. The idea is to reinforce the message and the reason why people want in with text.



Design how the text will look. Typographic design is an art. Make it entertaining. Tell just about enough for people to want in and ask so binge on tutorials or hire an expert type designer. Make sure the letter type and the size are proportional and fit with your brand. Small letters and bad contrast might kill the magic.

Trust the brand you are building and make it talk with the voice you have found for it with the help of this book.

3. Walk-thru window



Some stores, especially cafes or restaurants, can benefit from servicing their customers through express service windows.

There are several advantages of having this type of service available to patrons. The main advantage is that it is small enough that it will almost every time have a line forming around it.

As we have discussed, what attracts people to a place is more people. Having a line in front will be a people magnet!

Here are some items you should consider if having a walk-thru window is a viable option for your store and you decide to install one.

Think of your walk-thru window as a secondary display. Keep it always tidy and lit by providing easy access for cleaning and maintaining light fixtures.

Design should amplify the message, and the pause at the walk-through window should feel exactly as it does inside.

Provide shelter whenever possible. Think whether a canvas awning or a structured trellis better suits your concept. A bar-height counter is the main piece. Make it sturdy.



Use a durable countertop material: quartz or Corian. Formica has an enormous catalog of designs and patterns from which to choose but it will be less durable than a stone or composite.

Check for compliance before adding a secondary sign, plants, music and a trash bin. All necessary elements to enhance an experience that usually lasts only a few short minutes, so make it unforgettable.

The more attractive your window, the bigger line might form around it and the more interesting it will look to passers by.

4. Awnings And Canopies

Awnings and canopies help you create an outdoor room by enclosing the immediate space in front of the shop.

Next to the main sign, it is the most visible piece you can have outside your store that attracts customers. It helps you stand out from your neighbors and make your stretch of sidewalk a welcoming one. Especially when warm lighting and plants are part of the setting.



Awnings can be hard or soft. They can be fixed or operable. Typically they will consist of a structure and a canvas cover that bears the colors and name or logo or a store.

Bright colors will make your canopy stand out. For soft, fabric awnings, stripes will give a homey, familiar, fresh summery look. A dark color will seem sophisticated. An operable frame will allow fine tuning of the enclosure and can create a ritual for opening time.

For hard, set canopies, wooden or metal structures will have very different feels. Rustic wood, polished, extruded aluminum or cast iron will look very different and send very different messages about your store. Choose accordingly.

In any case, visibility will be higher and the shelter will attract people.

Size and projection are often regulated by local codes and may require installation permits. Check for compliance before you go on and spend your cash on a bespoke awning that will be hard to return.

Trellises and other fixed structures are sometimes referred to as "Marquee" when the side has a back-lit sign. They usually have a translucent cover and let more light through than fabric awnings, but fabric has the advantage of mood creation.

A canvas awning will endure harsh conditions under the sun, which typically damages the textile and fades colors.

A derelict awning is as visible as a shiny looking one so the disrepair will be easily spotted. It could send customers away if it is in disrepair. Be sure to choose a good quality canvas and check the guarantee that the manufacturer offers for both textile and color.

Most awnings will be fitted according to the height of your door or transom. There will be little room for a custom decision there. In the case there is, a good piece of advice is to build a mockup that can be raised or lowered until you find the optimal height for installation.

The height of the awning ceiling will determine a lot of the experience underneath, as with the finished design.

Does it have a dropped ceiling? Is it a hard surface such as wooden slats or soft as hanging cloth? Does it have lighting? Direct or indirect? What type of bulbs and what color of light will you use? Will it have the same colors or will it be black or untreated?

You must consider these issues and use the canopy type that most accurately portrays your message and will keep your customers as comfortable as possible while supporting their interaction with your brand.

You may choose to use the awning as support for your sign. A smaller sign can be used if an awning will complement it. In that case, the awning will have to follow the directions of your design manual.

Be sure to control the scale of the name or logo so it doesn't take too much space and take special care of unusual colors, since a fading awning can also mean a fading signage system.

The last thing that you should consider, once all others are in place is the dimension of your awning: how far will it project toward the sidewalk. You might feel comfortable by covering the whole width of the sidewalk or only a few feet.

Lessons from the COVID-19 pandemic have been hard and great. One silver lining is that we have found new ways to take advantage of outdoor spaces for meeting.

Cities and towns have relaxed existing rules and created new ones to accommodate the new interest in outdoor service. Retail, food and service establishments have devised great ways to do it. Blankets, heaters, heated seats, fireplaces and other elements have been added to the familiar winter sidewalk setups.

Make sure whatever heating strategies you use are compatible with your frontage elements so they do not get damaged by heat or flying sparks.



© Benjamin Rascoe

Check your local code for compliance and talk to an engineer or a contractor about safety and structure. Remember that visibility is good but scale and proportion are always more important.

5. Floor Geometry

It's usual to accept whatever it is we step on as a given and not question our stores' flooring material. But floors have a lot of power and offer tons of opportunity to get customers through the door.

Colors, textures, the width of gaps and the contrast of grout to tile color can aid in setting a mood or support your brand's story. They can also send the wrong signals.

Here we will look at a few expert tips for choosing a great floor, making the best of the one you get or spicing it up and making it work for your advantage.

Floors come in all colors, textures and materials. You may choose any commercial product that suits your particular needs or create a floor of your own.

Commercially available alternatives are many, and creative, DIY ones can be endless. Be mindful of durability and how a material will look as it ages.

If it is taking abuse it means your store is getting traffic so your floor needs to be virtually indestructible.

Manufacturers will grade their product according to the traffic that they can sustain. Generally, products that are natural such as stone, terracotta clay, solid wood or even concrete will hold out longer.

Solid materials will keep looking good after dings and scratches and be more durable because what you will see under the scratch will be more of the same material. This lets them age more gracefully but also makes them more expensive.

Laminates have a thin veneer of wood or plastic with a very durable protective

coating over a medium- or high-density fiberboard. Their looks depend on the board quality (and will reflect on its price), so as a rule most affordable laminates will not age well.

Check your provider's guarantee and ask to see some aged pieces. Look for stores that have your chosen flooring installed and test how it feels and looks.

Remember to ask your provider for a sample so you will know the grain, texture, see the actual color and know the height of the pieces before installation.

Floors usually have lines at the joints between tiles or wood planks. Those lines can be used to direct the user's sight toward the backdrop of your store. Just like in a theater, once you catch a few seconds of attention, it is easier to bring people in.

This is the power of well placed floor lines. Always picture how the joints will be used for this purpose and talk to your contractor or installer about the possibilities of shifting the direction of those lines so that it suits your needs.

If you are using a concrete floor that has no lines, try to achieve that effect with rugs or furniture.

Your store's floor is a canvas. Treat it like such. Think of all the possibilities for conveying your message with floor decals showing your brand identity or text that broadcasts your message.



A



B



C



D

Pro tip: if you treat your floor like a canvas and apply decals or other graphics, make sure you use top-notch materials and apply veneers and coatings so that heavy traffic does not damage them.

- A. Continuous pavement, no lines, eye goes in
- B. Good contrast, some lines, eye still goes in
- C. Recessed door, continuous pavement
- D. Difference in textures and colors to draw the eye
- E. Geometry guides the eye past the entrance



E

6. Store sections and activation

Public spaces work better when there is activity happening at all hours. Your space is private. However, the whole point for my writing this book is to inspire business owners to reap the fruits of building good public spaces and fostering communities around their businesses.



© Clay Banks

This section apparently has nothing to do with design but this is where I tell you that design alone will not make customers step in and spend their money. Their personal relationship with your brand will. And to nurture that relationship, you must court your customers by producing a great show.

You can add even more value to your customers' lives by making their interaction

with your brand entertaining, educational and truly unforgettable.

One of the secrets of crafting a great store experience that everyone talks about is to promote meaningful interactions between your customers.

Each one of them will be looking for something different so each solution must be unique. The ability to motivate each customer to engage with the brand and craft a unique story is a learned skill.

Plan and host workshops, art shows, product clinics, media broadcasts, a theater play or a craft fair. Wine, chocolate or tea tastings, poetry readings or community dinners will transform your store into a hub of the neighborhood. That level of engagement will capture a lot of future foot traffic for your benefit.

Adding to the previous discussion in the “Circulation” section above, each section of your store should offer a simple activation that generates engagement, educates and entertains.

Sections should be themed, differentiated and given a unique character so each feels like an episode on a series: attractive as a standalone, yet connected by a thread. Almost think of each as a separate mini-store within your store.

Make sure you integrate necessary spaces like the cash register as just another station. That goes with the idea that you don't sell goods but trust and engagement.

The less your store feels like a boring, conventional store, the easier it can be for you to engage with customers and build community.

7. Shared spaces

Doubling up on the use of your store's space is wise, especially since most businesses do not have the same amount of traffic during every hour of the day.

Art is an easy match for almost any type of business. Try to find others that can perform better in building shared value and engagement.

Installing a pop-up shop by using a small corner of your space or hosting after-hour events and workshops can bring some new customers in who would not know your business otherwise.

There are two types of shared spaces: a fixed one that uses any less-occupied spaces as a long-term partner and a temporary business, that uses up more of your space, has greater interaction with your brand but only lasts for a short period of time.

As with most of the more proactive measures you want to take, first settle on the terms for sharing, dedicate a space or a time and create a list of businesses that are compatible and complementary to your space. Before inviting any potential partners, check for compliance with your local code.

Look at your space critically to find any areas that can become an open or closed room within your main space. Do you have leftover space in your walls or are there any particular areas where your business could share the room with another product?

The most obvious benefit is sharing rent and some expenses like Internet. However, the greatest one is that your customers get to interact with a complement that adds value to your business proposition.

A good partnership will flow smoothly toward the creation of a great experience. This is not a strategy for every kind of business, nor for all businesses. Make a decision on whether you can commit long term to operating on a shared space.



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Once you have figured that out, think of bringing in a curator. Curators are experts who know local talent and small independent business. They can suggest the perfect partners to complement your space and can help you organize mutually beneficial workshops.

Art galleries and bookstores are the obvious first choice. Easy to install, subtle and non intrusive, they can interact more easily with your brand and can fast become part of the decoration.

Not all roommates were created equal, but just like art and books are more often than not great companions, you are bound to find more suitable examples if you look hard enough.

Do not forget your end game. Making your business more visible and creating a



great customer experience are the main objectives. If sharing your space helps you with that goal, then I suggest to evaluate the pros and cons and go for it.

You have a great product and a great store. The idea is not to change your line of business and become something else but to introduce complements to build up your brand by helping to associate it with good memories and good times.

Having that in mind will help you see shared space as a tool or as a design

element, and not as an intrusive side element of your business.

You can start small. Find a local coffee roaster or a wine seller and ask them for stories about their products. Then at each station you design, place a product that has a story you can pair with the display. Design postcards that contain the story and the reason for your offering the pairing, and make your customers imagine a fantastic moment using your product and tasting the coffee, tea or wine.

Taste and smell are very powerful tools to take people back to good memories. You can try these pairings with any product that relies on taste and smell, and that they can take home and recreate the experience. It may be coffee, wine, tea, candy, pastries or anything that is easy to sell in convenient packages and also easy to display as part of your station.

This is a great opportunity to create experiences they can take with them after they leave the store, to keep your brand in their memory, and also to test the compatibility of your product and the pairing, which should make it easier in the future to partner with those businesses and create pop-up spaces in your store.

8. Signage and information

Carefully curate how information about food, offers, partners or events is displayed. Always make it easy to contact your business or buy from it online, and display that in a visible spot, on easy to read signs.

There can be such thing as too much information. Overload can make your store look cluttered and confusing. Decide on a store-wide strategy to display all the information you need to.

Are you going to use any leftover space on your walls to hang cards with educational information? Are you going to hang signs from the ceiling? How big can they be?

Once you have figured that out, let's begin designing how you present your information and your message.

Remember, if you have a customer already inside, you do not need to tell them the same things you told them outside, before they came in. First you get their attention by giving out hints of how the story goes. Once you have it, focus on the experience and match it to your story.

Tell your customers why patronizing you will make the world a better place. Display snippets of that story in your stations. Suggest products, pairings and creative uses for your goods and include relevant books

Think of phrases written on the wall as decoration. The color, texture and mood will come from the words and not from decorative objects or props. However, do mind the media in which those words are written:

- Block Letters
- Plain adhesive vinyl



- Gold leaf and black paint
- A back-lit metal and plastic box.

You have a choice for temporary signs or postings, and it is between printing or writing by hand. Stay away from letter size signs on white paper printed in black ink in your house printer and fixed with tape.

Design a template or a support piece such as a frame. Be tidy. Handwritten messages need not be with a roller-ball pen on blank paper either. Be creative: use chalk on blackboard or wide tip markers.

The secret is to show you care. You'd be surprised to know that most people notice the time and effort that are spent in writing temporary signs. Your vision reaches your customers from every corner of your business. Temporary signs written hastily at the last minute don't work.

Casually displaying information around your business is important. Customers

come in for the design and are attracted to your store but once inside you have their attention for more than a few minutes.



Chalkboards are typical for pubs and are becoming very common in cafes, usually bearing some witty message for patrons. Make it a conversation piece. Crack jokes that may engage foot traffic for their wit, if not for your joke telling abilities.

Chalkboards are easy to customize, have a vintage feel and, above all, show the human hand behind the operation. In a time when chain stores, mass produced goods and standardized service are the norm, a hand written sign with a personalized message can make an enormous difference.

Video screens serve as digital chalkboards -without the vintage feeling, of course- to

write messages, play your promotional videos or even rebroadcast in an infinite loop your intellectual self giving a lecture in front of an audience.

Make each sign count by broadcasting partnerships, promotions and special offers in an easy, educational and entertaining way. Be sure to link your social media accounts and website to make a lasting impression and be in the conversation after your customers leave.

For cafes, restaurants and other prepared food businesses, the menu is a curious piece of paper. It will be handled by almost every one of your patrons and there is a definite opportunity there to put your narrative in the customer's mind. Make it count. Make it durable. Design it carefully. Call a professional if you want it to really stand out.

If you are going paperless by displaying a QR code that patrons can scan and access your menu, think of ways you can add to that experience. You already have them visiting your website, make it count by going above and beyond the same paper menu in a PDF on their phone screen.

The jump to online shopping includes people who sample and try things in stores and then buy them online. By displaying good signage and making it entertaining, you can have customers jumping into your online spaces while they are in the store, and make sure they buy directly from your site and not from a giant marketplace.

Signage can help but only if they feel challenged, see it like a game and have the means to move seamlessly from your brick and mortar space to your online channel.

9. Curb extensions and parklets

The goal of a “parklet” is to replace parking spaces with a tiny park. Hence the name.

Popular wisdom says “No parking, no business” but data shows how people hanging outside a place usually attract more people and, according to studies, how the percentage of people who drive to businesses is much lower than we think.

One parking spot in front occupied by customers during all opening hours might mean a couple of sales each hour. A public space that will attract people and let you build your brand, will translate into more sales per hour.

The breakdown for building such space is here, but mind your city’s regulations first. One parklet project took us over eight months because the city did not have regulations pertaining parklets so we had to create one.

We worked with city officials and the proponent, a small cafe and sandwich shop with one employee, and designed the regulation and helped city officials enact it.

The increase in sales during the measured timeframe was 50% and they had to hire an extra hand during the times the parklet was operational. Their amazing cured ham, Brie and pear sandwiches helped, of course.

A parklet consists of a surface that changes the feel of the pavement, usually raised to the level of the sidewalk and taking care of any gaps between surfaces that could be a potential liability.

Some people use discarded wooden freight pallets but it could be as simple as color paint over the pavement.

Benches or chairs are the main accessories, because the main idea is to attract people to hang out. Benches do not need tables but they are great with chairs, to extend the number of tables if yours is a Food & Beverage business.



One compromise you usually want to make is about it being an open public space that can be used by others, even during your opening hours. Folks gathered outside your business is good for business.

Ideas to make the floor of your parklet a memorable part of the experience can be found anywhere. Look for four characteristics when choosing:

- Color. Does it match your brand? Does it add to the mood that you are trying to create? Will it look well enough after it has been stepped over for a few years?
- Materials. Does the texture feel comfortable to walk on? Is it non-skid? Will it hold the traffic?

- Durability. Duh.
- Modularity. The parklet should be made of sections that can be replaced independently so when one is broken you won't need to replace it all.

Once you have the floor and seating, you have to make people comfortable.

The COVID-19 pandemic motivated folks to make better use of outdoor spaces.

Large tents over open street spaces, removable parasols and other shade elements that went up to help during winter months have stayed year round and make newly usable spaces very comfortable.

As a bonus, a well designed solution could mean that the light of the sun coming through makes your space dynamic and interesting during the day and worthy of decorating with lights in the evenings.

Green is the color of hope, money and nature. Having a few plants scattered in your space will definitely add to the experience and soothe the users.

Large planters can be used as space dividers and add privacy to the sitting area. Especially in places where plants, shrubs and trees are not present in streets, it can add to the experience of the entire block and become a landmark.

People hang out in parklets. They provide the perfect opportunity to share information through a smart use of signage. Don't saturate. Broadcast your message, state your vision or use the space to educate subtly about your mission.

Use billboards, printouts, wooden cutouts or printed surfaces that are not too large and that require a combination of reading

from the seating areas and having to get up close. This is not a requirement, neither of these are, but it is a good opportunity.

Public spaces thrive when active, and activation takes skills. You can read about experiences in public space activation using resources such as the Project for Public Spaces website at [pps\(dot\)org](http://pps(dot)org). Meanwhile, as a primer, here's some things you can do:

- Use your parklet as a stage for theater, poetry or music performers
- Host cook-offs, pocket farmers markets or art fairs
- Invite people with diverse knowledge to teach classes or give lectures

Building community is easier when there are good public spaces and the best ones are those that are convenient for users. A good day's work is when you transform users of your parklet into patrons of your business.



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10. Backdrop

This section is more of a finishing details checklist. By looking into the different hierarchies of elements in the previous sections and following the Ten No-B.S. Rules For Successful Storefront Design, you will have all the necessary tools to create your own epic store design.

The backdrop, as in the background on a stage, is the frame within which everything happens.

The main components of your design are the concept, which is aligned with your mission and follows clear guidelines as to what will be the mood and what colors, materials, sounds and other elements will help you create a space that resonates with your brand.

Then comes the brand design, that will determine the elements and details that will make your business recognizable and unforgettable. This includes the way you communicate with your customers and how you build up your community.

Last but not least, comes the design of the spaces where that community will interact with you and with other members. This includes both the bricks and mortar space and any online channels you use.

Every space has a background, a middle ground and a foreground. These are known as “planes”. Each of these planes plays an important part in the creation of your in-store experience.

The goal is to create a relationship between each plane so that the interaction with your brand feels like a good moment with friends and not like a transaction.

The first plane that your customers will come in contact with is the actual storefront. We will treat it as a background. It serves as a frame for the sidewalk activity, and as a sign to engage customers with the brand.



Normally we think that only restaurants or cafes can benefit from putting a table and some chairs out on the sidewalk. Turns out the perception that your store is providing a free public space as an ancillary service is a big factor in attracting people.

The activity that forms in that public space creates a good context for your storefront, and lights up the entire block, making you stand out.

A local business will have no control over street trees. Even if you do, after planting it will require a good twenty years for it to grow large enough to give you shelter and shade. Consider having a tree in front of your store a privilege. Use it accordingly.

A commercial frontage is the perfect place for string lights. Picture a pedestrian walking down your street and seeing from half a block away a well lit section of the sidewalk, that has a ceiling made of light.

Give people somewhere to seat. Think of how each kind of seat accommodates your concept. Do you benefit from salvaged seats? Is it enough to just buy some cheap chairs? Or does your concept require specially designed benches or other seats?

Restaurants and cafes might want a more express rotation, while bars would probably want longer open tabs, and muffin shops can benefit from providing few seats and having a line forming outside the shop.

Every business has a different need, and even those that do not provide table service or even tables for patrons, can benefit from having a small outdoor living room to help establish their brand, provide some middle ground for the storefront and give context to the scenes that happen before going through the door.

Pro Tip: Let people move chairs around. Nothing screams comfortable and familiar than the chance to make a space your own by customizing it. And even moving a chair a few inches lets people feel they are in control.

Once inside, the need to have a readable relation between the three planes is the same. However, there are more opportunities to have varying, diverse backgrounds that frame different parts of the path.

As discussed in the “Circulation” section, the store should feel like a hero’s journey, with stages, links and rewards. Each station should function as a standalone and also as part of the whole store.

The store walls are the larger background.

Each station’s frame is unique, as is its decoration, or context. Both should follow the store’s mood and theme. Finally, the scene that is played is part of the big performance of the path through the store.



What this means is that the walls and ceiling have to provide a general atmosphere. Choose your background color wisely, thinking that you will be stuck with it for a while.

If you have any control about floor materials, choose a durable, solid one. If it will have any joint lines after installation, make sure those lines point to key places in the store. Be mindful of deep joints that may make it difficult to install and uncomfortable to walk on floor graphics, should you decide to introduce them.

Stations should each have their own background, middle ground and foreground. Always remember to leave an open line of sight to the others, to motivate the customer to move to the next.

The communication between stations helps to create different planes inside the store and guide the path through it.

Layers are important, They make the store feel more robust, built up and complex.

This type of relationship between business and customer fosters community, and helps build a tribe of advocates that will be loyal to your brand and your business, and will be there when times are tough.

CHAPTER 4.

The Executive Production

1. Check Code compliance. Boring stuff first: verify the rules that apply to your community in your city or town code of ordinances. First, find out if whatever use your store will have is allowed.

Some cities allow restaurants but only if they have table service or they don't allow Drive-thrus. Others allow clothing and apparel sales but do not allow repairs and manufacturing. So be sure that your line of business is allowed and what requirements it must comply with.

Generally, within commercial areas and traditional Main Streets, commercial land use rules are encompassing, but do make sure beforehand.

Permits are needed for most work, so it's best to approach your local code compliance officer and ask for guidelines. Learn beforehand and avoid stop work orders that may delay your opening.

Listed below are some important aspects where you should make sure you are in compliance with local codes, ordinances and land uses:

- Land use
- Sign, decals
- Outdoor lighting
- Outdoor sitting/decorations
- Noise

2. The Triple Bottom Line. The “Bottom Line” refers to your core finances, the last number that shows if your business is financially sustainable or not.

The “Triple” Bottom Line looks at the same last number for three areas: your business, its community and its neighborhood. The project is never just your business, it's the entire neighborhood.

Its ecosystem will make a small business feasible, the support of its community and the attractiveness of its neighborhood. So you have to work on all three.



Promote the neighborhood as a must-go destination and become its centerpiece. Advocate for your neighboring businesses and form a strong support network. Your contribution to your community will plant

a seed for a great block, neighborhood and town. It is a big responsibility but it will bring a tremendous reward.

Walk your streets, get the feel and take some pictures to keep a log and analyze how the neighborhood was when you arrived. See and greet the neighbors. Know them by name.



Engage nearby businesses and find mutually beneficial platforms for action. Collaborate with neighbors and neighboring businesses to create an ecosystem.

It is very important to preserve the scale of the surrounding areas and businesses. Urban life depends on small businesses that are the checks and balances to big box stores. They help us put large corporations in perspective.

Give everyone a chance to come and share their story. Everyone has something worth

sharing and everyone can teach something. Be humble, listen and learn. There is no better way of becoming the neighborhood.

3. Build Community. Boost goodwill among your neighbors and become a destination in the neighborhood and the whole city.

Organize events and workshops that give your brand visibility and position it as interested in continuing education.

Open up the store for other uses while normally closed. Take advantage of local entrepreneurs who can add value to your business and become part of your network.

Bonus: more exposure to your store, big boost to your personal brand and help with expenses.

Join the Chamber of Commerce or your local BID. Spearhead initiatives to revitalize the local economy.

Invite people to sit outside. Shift away from the “No Loitering” sign Greet those who come and make your store a destination by welcoming them into your network and community.

This is a good moment to tell you about building up your personal brand. Many small businesses thrive on the back of their owners’ perception as experts in their fields, wise people willing to teach others and who support the success of others in their ecosystems. A personal brand will give your business exposure beyond the local, as the expertise is shared in the form of lectures, courses, keynotes and other forms of similar engagement.

4. Recycle, repurpose, reuse. Boost your store's sustainability by recycling both refuse and objects. That includes salvaged, second hand furniture or equipment that you may use as is or repurpose for your specific needs.



There are opportunities to have a unique store by searching for recycled or recyclable floor coverings, art, store props like lamps or antique furniture. With equipment you should be more careful.

Look at recycled equipment from a “stool perspective” before making a decision. Salvaged or recycled equipment must look good, serve its purpose, be economical and not have hidden future costs such as repairs or high energy consumption.

The “stool perspective” is life seen from a stool where you are sitting. All four legs of the stool must be balanced for it to stand comfortably and not wiggle. If not, just go and get new stuff.

New for you, I mean. The whole point of this section is for you to think of how using old furniture, light fixtures and other props can add value to your space.

Find hacking and repurposing ideas in sites like Pinterest or YouTube, where tons of people are giving cool old stuff a new life.

Build a network with other businesses to keep up to date of closing sales, flea markets or Estate sales to find good quality pieces that will accentuate your store and make it stand out.

Finally, as a tip for planning ahead, calculate the electricity and other potential costs of repurposed items by studying the requirements of different light bulb types or appliances and the sum of their initial cost and consumption.

The same goes for any other electrical equipment or appliance that may impact your overhead.

Always try to go with repurposed, but mind your finances and look beyond the raw numbers: an energy chugging vintage fridge can be expensive to run but it can become the centerpiece of your design and put you in every instagrammer's post.

Make a budget that includes future costs and revenue for both new and recycled equipment. By recycling you are adding value that is beyond monetary and that will have an impact on your future sales.

I'd call that an investment.

5. Recruit local firepower. Building a business has enormous costs. Design will take a large chunk of your budget if you are not totally careful.

Finding ways to lower building costs do not need to result in lower quality construction or equipment.

Browse Do It Yourself (DIY) websites and magazines, and find local makers who can supply the skills and goods you need to build your store.

There are many solutions online for storefronts that you can implement yourself or with little outside help. These solutions can be unique, and representative of your work ethic and your attention to detail.

Embark only in projects you can manage. If you recruit find local craftsmen and makers that can help you get the project through the finish line. Remember, it must look great for it to inspire others.



6. Become Instafriendly. One of the most powerful marketing tools these days is to be successful by appearing repeatedly in other people's social media.

Unique “selfie corners” are special parts of a store or restaurant that constantly appear in many *influencers*' accounts. They are magnets for sales. Everyone will want to come, snap and post.

Design those corners the same as the stations that we discussed above: as sets for a performance and let the social media be the performer.

Remember to layer, to include relevant books, plants, a hand written note, unique goods and shiny and fuzzy things. Lights and a mirror are also good additions. Be outrageous if needed. Make a statement. Make it coherent.

Bring out props, put on special lighting, subtly display your products, push your branding without spending time and effort. Let your tribe's social media speak for you.

This does not come easy. Talk to people, follow them on their social media, see the places that gather the most likes and that get shared the most and learn what they do well to bring so much attention.

Build a community both online and on site. Be generous and open with your time, knowledge and space.

We have discussed becoming a destination. People love to photograph destinations, so let's get you on that social platform!

7. Be the producer. The easy way to say this is: keep interesting activities happening at all times, so people feel like they never visit the same store.

Immerse clients and onlookers actively as in a fresh new theater play each time they come in.

Engage the public with specific events, performances, workshops or clinics. When activity stops, keep the momentum going with keepsakes and follow up engagement.

Develop a manual for employees tending customers that addresses their body language, all the way to their wardrobe and the words they use to greet customers.

Thematic stores are easy to brand, they readily find their niche and are memorable.

Be memorable.

Keep a tight calendar of interesting events and activations: turn the store into a stage and advertise profusely. Mix your main use with pop-ups within the store.

Don't be afraid to sell out if an activity doesn't seem to be about your core mission.

Make apparently trivial events more meaningful by combining the main activity with lectures, celebrity appearances, exclusive insights or anything that can elevate your event.

Many of these ideas have been discussed throughout the book. Some are not that closely related to design but will complement it in ways that will boost the experience you offer and will bring more customers through the door.

8. Eyes on the street. Security is an issue in many places. Some stores find a last resort and install costly alarm systems, security doors and CCTV cameras but experience shows that prevention is more effective with other tactics. But that looks like a war zone while closed.

Stores that are open and generate foot

traffic are bound to have more people around them. A congregation can be a strong deterrent for violent crime. But businesses are not usually open every hour of the day.

Setting up a “sleep mode” for your store can have a series of advantages. Creating an experience that lasts after closing time will make your 24-hour public space a destination within the neighborhood.



This will create the perception of the area surrounding your store as safe.

Complementing the perception with nighttime lighting, sensor lights that turn on with movement and intermittent blue spotlights that give the illusion of Police presence can help.

9. Keep it clean. This should be a no brainer but I have seen too many cases where beautiful storefronts are marred by poor maintenance.

Get a set of easy to use cleaning tools and grab your cleaning agent of choice. There is work to do.



Be sure to keep that display window glass as transparent as possible through the day, even if it means doing rounds several times. Lift any old decals, clean grouts and refinish if too damaged.

City air may not be the cleanest, and years of soot and other substances can dull the shine of any material. Degrease and deep clean all enameled and metal surfaces.

Look for imperfections. Noble materials like brick and wood can be buffed and will look dignified.

Corrugated, extruded, laminated, plastic and other cheap materials will bring down the quality of the storefront when they wear.

Replace what you can, repaint what you can. Always present your best face to the sidewalk.

Clean up your Air Conditioning act, make sure the anchors, platforms and support

are not sagging, and that there are no leaks visible on the floor or the windows. Move it away from the door, if you can.

Check your awning, sign and wall recesses for dust, water or accumulated debris. Fabric awnings tend to sag and water accumulation, even if for a short time, can leave a mud or pollen stain. Make sure you clean that up.

Fabrics fade in the sun. Make a plan to deal with fading colors so your brand doesn't get soiled along.

Tighten screws, straighten doors and lift sagging parts. Keep it all crisp. Rely on old materials when you have them, they are best at keeping character.

The lower part of any frontage is subject to splashing of water, and can sometimes present damage. Clean up any rust, mud or soot, and paint over if necessary. Don't be afraid to paint over an entire brick wall if it will make it look better.

Metal accessories can often leach rust, which runs down walls. See about fixing the metal parts and lifting the rust stains. Use an anti-rust protective coating if not possible to fix.

Always present a very clean image. It shows your passion for your business, and respect for your customers.

I remember a store in Buenos Aires, in a time when their economy was going down the drain.

The shopkeeper cleaned every glass surface and buffed every metal handle even on the worst days. The store is still there now, years after the crash and the recovery.

Your passion for your business should reflect in the smallest little details like this.

10. Museum cards. If you have visited any museums, you have seen little cards printed or pasted next to every object, telling about its story and characteristics. Same principle, applied to everything in your business.

Find a great format to be consistent with. Blackboards, cardboard, printed card stock with frames, anything that will speak of your brand will do.



Choose how you will write carefully. Hand written is the most personal and feels the most familiar.

It could be printed as well. Just not on a blank sheet and fixed with tape, please.

Museum cards should tell great stories about your goods.

They can be about the craftsman who created an object, or perhaps about the woman who travels to faraway lands to source the goods that you sell.

For foodstuffs it's easier. If you tell the story of the growers or churners or butchers, that will create a very important interaction with your customers.

Put human faces next to the stories. Our brains are hardwired to see, react and engage with human faces, and the stories add an emotional layer to the engagement with your brand.

Have your staff write by hand some recommendations of products, when they have personal experience using them. It shows skin in the game.

Museum cards are especially important to narrate your stations. If you have relevant books for sale in a station, tell the story of why they are relevant.

If you are pairing your goods with coffee or wine or tea, tell the story of the pairing, explain the reasons and recommend to your customers how they can pair it themselves at home.

Make sure the cards help you send your customers off with the drive to stage a similar scene in their homes, using the goods you sell and the pairings you suggest.

HOW TO USE THE DESIGN CHECKLISTS

I wrote **The Ten No-B.S. Rules For Successful Storefront Design**

as a guide to help small businesses take control of the design of their storefronts. It is available online as a separate publication.

Below is a breakdown of the Ten Rules, and checklists that include every design element I have identified in over 15 years of working with small business storefronts, to make sure you are thinking of everything you need to design an unforgettable storefront.

The Ten Rules are the key aspects of the design of a storefront, that will engage people and inspire them to create their own story while interacting with your business.

To implement the Ten Rules, there are ten “Group Elements” and ten “Single Elements” that have been explained in the main text.

The same elements can be found in the following checklists, to help you make sure you are thinking of everything that you need to create your own successful storefront.

Proceed to the following pages to find four checklists:

1. Group element design
2. Single element design
3. Lighting design
4. Executive Production

Follow the Ten Rules to round up your ideas and create your concept, and then add or subtract elements to design your store, focusing on the experience of the users.

The checklists will help you remember all the elements that make up your design. Feel free to combine them as you see fit.

Each element is listed, explained and broken down in its different components. Each of these has a box next to it that you can check if it applies to your storefront or leave blank if it does not.

There is a number in a little box right below the description, which indicates the page in the main text where a detailed explanation of the items on the list can be found.

Group Element Design Checklist

Page number

☐ p. 37

Entrance funnel: Design the door and other entrance elements to channel foot traffic from the sidewalk to the inside of the store



☐ Set mood with color, texture, smell, sound

☐ Geometry, graphics, text or messages on the floor

☐ Lighting, transparency, depth to background

☐ Props and sidewalk elements

☐ Service window (to-go service)

☐ Signage, text, information

Description

Picture

Components and checkboxes

The Executive Production checklist looks different. It doesn't include a picture, but it does have the reference page and the checkbox.

Group elements include the "Entrance Funnel", which is a funnel-like arrangement of all the objects outside your storefront so that everything guides the attention to the door and invites the user to go inside.

Single elements include the awning or the sign, which are standalone and fabricated by external providers, and also elements like a walk-thru window, from which express coffee or pastries can be sold.

Lighting design looks at every aspect of lighting: the type of fixture and light bulb, the light "temperature", with the lowest being the warmest light, as seen in cozy restaurants or Christmas shops. These have Kelvin ratings of less than 3000.

The highest Kelvin rating, over 6000 is the brightest, as seen in drugstores or large chain stores that need high turnovers and very high visibility for fast and impulsive shopping.

Lighting has its own checklist, although it is included in the Group Element Design section in the main text. It's such an important aspect of the design that I decided to keep it separate in the checklist.

The Executive Production refers to tactics and strategies to expand the reach of your business and fine tune the experience.

These items normally require some degree of design and alignment with the concept and mood of your business, but are mostly things that done systematically day by day will add value to your business and improve the engagement with your community.

Group Element Design Checklist

Group elements are larger parts of your store. The front, for example, is made up of the door, the display window, the awning and sidewalk, among others. This section looks at these larger parts and breaks down every component so that there are no loose ends.

Outdoor living room:
Invite people to hang out, relax outside your door, even when not patronizing the store

p. 35



- ☐ Furniture, planters, chairs
- ☐ Instagram- ready spots
- ☐ Lights and mood
- ☐ Climate control for comfort
- ☐ Coherent color palette
- ☐ “Walls” defining the outdoor room

Entrance funnel: Design the door and other entrance elements to channel foot traffic from the sidewalk to the inside of the store

p. 37



- ☐ Set mood with color, texture, smell, sound
- ☐ Props and sidewalk elements
- ☐ Geometry, graphics, text or messages on the floor
- ☐ Service window (to-go service)
- ☐ Lighting, transparency, depth to background
- ☐ Signage, text, information

Design the storefront:
Manage your frontage as sign and control what is seen from outside

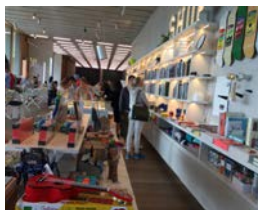
p. 39



- ☐ Geometry and composition
- ☐ Dynamic display window
- ☐ Materials/textures/colors
- ☐ Awning type and clearance
- ☐ Door/ window design, opacity
- ☐ Sign design and location

Circulation design:
Create a natural path to focus on highlights, displays and services as users walk through the store

p. 41



- ☐ Design a logical path through the store
- ☐ Reinforce the path with floor signs & graphics
- ☐ Create pauses on important store sections
- ☐ Direct attention with signs and lighting
- ☐ Mark the path with floor lines & furniture orientation
- ☐ Pauses, seat angles, mirrors directed at focal points

Frontage Nanopark:
Create a small private garden for public use out front.

p. 43



- ☐ Built-in or freestanding planters
- ☐ Seating
- ☐ Garden wall
- ☐ Interactivity
- ☐ Hanging plants, structure

Brand Design: Create a graphic image that supports your story

p. 44



- ☐ Choose the family of symbols that best fits
- ☐ Design the symbol
- ☐ Choose appropriate fonts/typography
- ☐ Manual for signs, other applications

Shade and shadow: Provide shade and shelter additional to street trees: awnings, canopies, etc.

p. 48



- ☐ Trellis, awning, hard canopy, pergola, artistic
- ☐ Plants, trees, artificial lighting
- ☐ Structural system: hanging or post & lintel
- ☐ Branding
- ☐ Materials, colors and textures
- ☐ Operability

Surround with sound: Create the specific mood for your store experience using sound or curated playlists

p. 55



- ☐ Music or sound
- ☐ Curated playlist
- ☐ Type and volume of music
- ☐ Speaker location

Goodwill stage: A sidewalk display for neighbors and customers to perform in a play to engage with your brand

p. 56



- ☐ Keep your brand's mood and key message
- ☐ Props, plants, picture frames
- ☐ Place relevant books to educate about the mission
- ☐ Mix of display, free goodies and sale objects
- ☐ Storytelling aids like postcards

Single Element Design Checklist

Single elements are the smallest components of a commercial storefront. In this section we will look at these individual components and break them down to their parts so that every detail about them is covered and working towards your objectives.

Wait for the sign: Display your brand visibly and appropriately on a well designed and sized sign

p. 57



- ☐ Location
- ☐ Scale and proportions
- ☐ Flat or blade; other signs
- ☐ Painted on wall/glass or 3D
- ☐ Match materials with environment
- ☐ Light source, temperature and intensity

Dynamic display window: Create an active storefront with built-in live activity that enhances the experience

p. 59



- ☐ Design and mood
- ☐ Screens, pre-recorded video
- ☐ Staging of store activity
- ☐ Projection into sidewalk or building walls
- ☐ Site-specific display or outsourced art show
- ☐ Signage, text on window glass, others

Walk-thru window: A window for express service, typically selling coffee to go, but can be applied creatively

p. 61



- ☐ Staging
- ☐ Lighting type, temperature and intensity
- ☐ Signs
- ☐ Design and easy access for cleanup
- ☐ Depth and height of counter

Awning or canopy: Protect from the elements, extend the frontage into the sidewalk and help with branding

p. 62



- ☐ Mood under the canopy, coherence with store
- ☐ Min. 8' of clearance, projection and span
- ☐ Hard, soft, retractable, operable
- ☐ Lighting type, temperature and intensity
- ☐ Materials and texture
- ☐ Branding, Signage

Floor geometry: Floor treatment can define the circulation and support the narrative by linking different store sections

p. 64



- ☐ Geometry, guiding lines, patterns
- ☐ Tile or floorboard sizing and patterns
- ☐ Continuity, joints, interaction of materials
- ☐ Floor graphics to guide the path through the store
- ☐ Materials, textures and colors
- ☐ Highlighted circulation, lighting and angles

Store sections: Design each section to highlight merchandise, support the narrative and keep the path through the store interesting

p. 66



- ☐ Something fuzzy, something shiny, plants, books, branding
- ☐ Welcome table to greet, place daily promotions
- ☐ Pick a theme for each, tie with branding, written cards and color accent
- ☐ Soft right: establish brand's character
- ☐ Use openings, mirrors, lighting to frame a glimpse of the next
- ☐ Other stations: novelties, thematic sections

Shared spaces: Add value by partnering with complementary businesses and bundling to create more interesting products

p. 67



- ☐ Designate areas for pop-ups
- ☐ Strategic alliance with bookseller
- ☐ Designate areas for permanent sharing
- ☐ Coffee shop, tea room
- ☐ Introduce art exhibits with your displays

Signage and information

Carefully curate how information about food, offers, partners or promotions is displayed

p. 69



- ☐ Stories of products, supply chain and creators
- ☐ Coherence with branding and visual system
- ☐ Hand written/printed signs
- ☐ QR codes, broadcasting of promotions and offers
- ☐ Hanging, floor or free-standing signs

Curb Extensions: Create a parklet, a curbside pickup station or a product display on the parking area outside your store

p. 71



- ☐ Shade and shadow
- ☐ Sidewalk level match
- ☐ Plants
- ☐ Seating
- ☐ Activation, entertainment

Backdrop: Finish up the design by establishing a clear relationship between foreground, midground and background

p. 73



- ☐ Establish hierarchies
- ☐ Layered displays
- ☐ Determine background, mid ground & foreground
- ☐ Props: lights, screens, furniture
- ☐ Establish focal points and highlights

Lighting Element Design Checklist

Lights are key to setting the mood and telling your story. Too bright, too white or too hard could be costly mistakes. Good lighting design will help you highlight important parts of the store, guide circulation and create hierarchies of spaces. Lighting design and details are broken up here so nothing is left out in the creation of the in-store experience.

Facade and sidewalk lighting: Create a mood and experience for the outdoor “room” in front of the store

p. 53



☐ Levels of lighting

☐ Type, temperature, intensity

☐ Fixture type/design

☐ Tint or specially colored light

☐ Direction of light source

Display window lighting: Properly light up display/frontage and create a nighttime sidewalk experience

p. 53



☐ Levels of lighting

☐ Type, temperature, intensity

☐ Fixture type/design

☐ Tint or specially colored light

☐ Direction of light source

☐ String, other projecting lights

Interior light: Create indoor mood, properly light up displays and create an atmosphere

p. 54



☐ Levels of lighting

☐ Type, temperature, intensity

☐ Fixture type/design

☐ Tint or specially colored light

☐ Direction of light source

☐ Neon signs, other displays

Executive Production Checklist

The Executive Production is everything you do on a daily basis to keep up your store’s engagement with the public and relationship with its community. These are not quite design-based actions but rather small steps to make sure you are always connected to your local government, local organizations and your neighbors. And always keep creating wealth for you and your community!



Code compliance Verify rules in your city or town code before you design and implement new ideas

p. 75



Become Instafriendly: Perform a show from opening to closing and have customers participate

p. 78



The Triple bottom line: Take time and allocate some resources to improve your business, neighborhood and community

p. 75



Be the producer: Put on a show from opening to closing and have customers participate as cast

p. 78



Build community: Open up the store as a community hub, become a beloved center of the neighborhood

p. 76



Eyes on the street: Give an “Always open” vibe by staging the after hours sidewalk experience

p. 79



Recycle, repurpose, reuse: Add value and character by reusing and repurposing old furniture or lights

p. 77



Keep it clean: Constant upkeep. A spotless store sends the message of care and attention to detail

p. 80



Recruit local firepower: Find local craftsmen and makers labs that can supply for your building needs

p. 77



Museum Cards: Branded cards with information about products, recommendations or suggestions

p. 81

RESOURCES

The **United States Small Business Administration** (sba.gov) is the US Government agency dedicated to connecting entrepreneurs and small business owners with funding.

The **Incremental Development Alliance** helps small builders and developers with insight on how to create and manage projects, and though they focus more on residential ones, they are a great resource for building and keeping scale.

Non-Profits like **SCORE** or **USASBE** have several resources that can be freely accessed to learn about retail businesses, scan the current business climate and learn about setting up, financing, operating and owning a business.

The **Main Street America Institute** (mainstreet.org) is a Non-Profit associated to the National Trust for Historic Preservation which helps stakeholders in historic Main Streets, and larger ones through Urban Main.

The **Project for Public Spaces** is a Non-Profit dedicated to the creation of better public spaces through the philosophy of Placemaking. They have many resources for public spaces but also work with markets and have excellent information that is free and easy to access in their site pps.org

There are also companies that help

small businesses to succeed by providing resources for every stage of opening and managing a business. A very complete site is **Fit Small Business** (fitsmallbusiness.com) and one focused on restaurants is **RestoHub** (restohub.org)

All of these recommendations come from having been in contact with those sites or the people who are behind them and deeming the information relevant and reliable for specific needs at specific times.

Please conduct your own search and find the perfect match for your specific needs. These are just leads to help you start.

There are also several books that although have been published in earlier years, still have enough insight to be relevant today. Here's a small list that might help:

- Robert J. Gibbs, [Principles of Urban Retail Planning and Development](#)
- Christopher Alexander, [A Pattern Language](#)
- Adam Alter, [Drunk Tank Pink](#)
- James T. Murray, [Store Front: The Disappearing Face Of New York](#)
- Hans Karssenberg, Jeroen Laven, Meredith Glaser & Mattijs van 't Hoff, Editors, [The City At Eye Level. Lessons From Street Plынths](#)
- Charles Marohn, [Strong Towns](#)

The Ten No-B.S. Rules For Successful Storefront Design

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