

London Menswear Retailer Takes In-store Tech to New Levels

by **CLAIRE NUTTER**

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With the retail world returning to the importance of the store and the need to revamp bricks-and-mortar in a way fit for the digital age, the real challenge has begun to find the most suitable technology to achieve the seamless shopping experiences today's device-agnostic shoppers crave.

Looking to be a pioneer in this regard is London premium menswear lifestyle store The Dandy Lab, which serves as a testing group for in-store innovation that enhances the customer experience.

The store came about due to the need to create more personalized experiences and bring customer service back to life through technology — no doubt pleasing for the 31 percent of U.K. shoppers whose choice of retailer is influenced by the offer of a more personalized experience, according to Planet Retail's Shopology data.



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MEANINGFUL TECHNOLOGY

What may seem surprising is that the amount of technology is currently quite limited. According to co-founder Julija Bainiaksina, rather than simply deploying technology for technology's sake, the idea is to truly test concepts first and understand consumer behavior on a deep level to ensure that the systems implemented make sense and add real value to the shopper journey.

The most notable feature is near field communications-enabled interactive screens. Using NFC tags attached to items, users can scan products to discover more about the item and the craftsmen who manufactured it. With the range very much focused on high-quality British tailoring, giving consumers a back story of the garments adds a level of authenticity in keeping with the premium feel of the store.

An additional element of interaction is the color scanner technology powered by tech partner Snap Fashion. Users scan the color of an item to find products of a similar or purposefully clashing shade. The search results are projected on the wall at the rear of the store to inspire other shoppers.

BEYOND THE STORE

Working with tech partner Iconeme, The Dandy Lab also utilizes 'smart' beacon-enabled mannequins which allow shoppers to engage and interact with the store even when it is closed. Using the Iconeme app, shoppers within range of the store are able to receive information about items the mannequins are wearing.

Downstairs opens up into a social space which the Lab intends to use to host various events, including workshops.

This adds an additional element to the store, giving a more personal feel and encouraging dwell time.

Catering to the ways of the modern shopper, visitors can charge their phones through wireless chargers and tap into the store's free Wi-Fi. Catering to the smartphone shopper is essential to get visitors engaging with their phones in-store in a way that will retain them within the retailer's ecosystem. Currently there is little in the way of mobile innovation at The Dandy Lab, but this is an area the retailer intends to exploit as the concept evolves.

The Dandy Lab has teamed up with a number of tech partners to bring innovation to life in the store. Moving forward, the retailer's aim is to develop an internal platform which will give a single view of all the different technologies to enable closer, more holistic analysis of the shopper.

This will open up a business-to-business element, enabling The Dandy Lab to take lessons learned and implement solutions into other retail outlets. This intrinsic understanding of the shopper is a crucial tool in building out the more relevant, contextualized and engaging in-store experiences.