

# POP-UPS: SENSE OF EXCITEMENT



Text: Lyndsey Dennis

**Pop-ups are a go-to marketing strategy for many retailers looking to drive brand awareness and a powerful expansion tool to test new markets.**

Whether it's open for one day or three months, a pop-up shop generates a sense of excitement for fans of a brand, immersing them into a different, exciting and memorable experience.

'Pop-ups offer that much-needed flexibility to create bigger experiences and allow brands to be in the right place at the right time,' says Elizabeth Layne, chief marketing officer at Appear Here that specialises in finding temporary spaces for brands. 'Pop-ups also offer retailers the opportunity to test the market first, whether that's trialling a new location or retail concept.'

Appear Here worked alongside menswear brand EJDER to take over an underground toilet in Old Street Station and transform it into a store, which won Best Pop-up Store at the MAPIC Awards. EJDER partnered with 24 Hour Club on the space - an underground space for an underground brand - working with the original layout and playing with the raw, industrial feel by keeping the original tiling and using metal bars and chains to display the clothing.

Looking forward, Layne believes more brands will start looking at retail space as media space, which means pop-ups will become part of their marketing spend. 'Already, many brands are discovering that pop-ups are their best performing brand marketing channel, where they're getting better CPMs than other traditional advertising like out of home or TV. Some brands, like LYST, are also using shopfronts as advertising solutions. They've discovered a shop front is much more cost effective than a billboard, and there's a lot more you can do in one. For London Fashion Week, they rented shops in high footfall areas and fly-posted the shopfronts with their latest advertising campaign.'

Sloane Stanley has created a dedicated revolving pop-up space within a prime retail unit on King's Road in Knightsbridge known as The Concept Store. This year the store has welcomed dairy-free ice-cream specialist Nana Nice Cream for its debut

London pop-up, fashion label Memsahib Collections, as well as Seraphina, Summerbox and Fofolles World.

'Many consumers expect the pop-up shopping experience to deliver something unique and different to a standard bricks and mortar store, with many offering exclusive in store experiences that can't be replicated online. The Nana Nice Cream pop-up also hosted a series of exciting events from yoga classes and wellness talks with leading experts in the field, to a breakfast bar with Rude Health,' says Hannah Grievson, commercial property manager at Sloane Stanley.

Pop-ups are also the ideal store format to cater for specialised shopping or seasonal products, for example, the Christmas Cracker pop-up that allows the brand to expand its reach to a greater audience during its key trading period.

Harvey Nichols' fifth floor rooftop in Knightsbridge regularly hosts temporary brand experiences, including a Bombay Sapphire bar in the summer and the current Nutella pop-up for the winter. The terrace has been transformed into an Italian alpine winter lodge, where visitors can enjoy breakfast favourites with a Nutella twist.

'Pop-ups enable brands to be visible to consumers in different landscapes, and are a cost-effective solution as they allow retailers to test the market without investing heavily in retail space. The short-term nature of pop-ups also generates a sense of excitement,' says Mark Neilly, creative manager at visual merchandising specialist Lucky Fox. >

Above: MADE PRESENTS took up residency at The Truman Brewery in East London for 10 days, showcasing the latest interiors trends from MADE.COM and hosting a number of inspirational workshops.

The company recently designed a pop-up space for Levi's in the denim tailor space in Selfridges to showcase its sew-on patch collaboration with Poppy Delevingne. 'The space had to typify the look and feel of a functional workshop whilst complimenting both the Selfridges denim studio and the Levi's in-store identity, which heavily emphasises natural wooden surfaces. Working primarily in plywood, we were asked to incorporate a series of practical workspaces where customers could consult with the in-house tailors and customise their Levi's jeans and jackets with rips and trims, and Poppy Delevingne's festival-inspired patches,' explains Neilly.

'The financial pressure on high street fashion retailers means that there will always be a place for cost-effective solutions such as pop-ups. It would also make sense for savvy brands to utilise the large number of retail spaces becoming vacant - M&S has recently confirmed it will close more than 30 UK stores, and eight stores will be left empty as a result of Gap pulling Banana Republic out of the UK - by turning them into low commitment and low risk pop-up ventures,' says Neilly.

London souvenir store We Built This City in Carnaby is a great example of pop-up to permanent, beginning life with an eight-week pop-up and now taking up permanent residency. The retailer is now dipping its toe in the Camden scene with a second pop-up. We Built This City collaborates with local artists, designers and makers in the capital, offering them a platform for their work and hosting creative workshops and live events.

MADE PRESENTS took up residency at The Truman Brewery in East London for 10 days in November, showcasing the latest interiors trends from MADE.COM and hosting a number of inspirational workshops and a cafe serving coffee and cake in the day and cocktails in the evening. The pop-up invited fans of MADE.COM to learn more from the designers behind the iconic furniture with a panel discussion on the Hygge trend.

Still in the capital, US eco-friendly womenswear label Reformation has launched its first physical presence in the UK with a pop-up in Seven Dials. The space acts as a showroom rather than a traditional store; shoppers are invited to browse and try on items only normally available in the USA, and then use touch screen technology to order via the online shop.

London is a particular focus for pop-up marketplace specialist Storefront, which has been inundated with requests from clients to extend its services into London. 'As it is one of the world's top retail destinations, it was an obvious move for us,' says Matthew Greenwell, director of Storefront. 'Opening here allows us to now offer a seamless service to all bases of the fashion triangle - New York, Paris, London.'

'Demand from retailers for pop-ups is growing exponentially. In the past pop-ups have been generally associated with short durations such as one to two weeks. However, our fastest growing customer segment is medium to large size retailers/brands using pop-ups for durations of six - 18 months. They are using them as a powerful expansion tool to test new markets. For example, inside the space of a year a retailer could launch three six-month pop-ups across Hong Kong, New York and Paris,' says Greenwell. 'Additionally, pop-ups are great for creating immersive experiences to connect with customers in new ways. For example, Casper launched a pop-up recently in London where customers could book a bed to have a nap!'

It's these experiences that keep a brand fresh, exciting and engaging for customers, and the perfect way for a retailer to test out new store formats and locations. **RF**

From top to bottom

Designed by Lucky Fox, the Levi's pop-up in the denim tailor space in Selfridges showcased its sew-on patch collaboration with Poppy Delevingne.

The fifth floor terrace at Harvey Nichols has been transformed into an Italian alpine winter lodge, where visitors can enjoy breakfast favourites with a Nutella twist.

The 24 Hour EJDERR Club has taken over an underground toilet at Old Street Station and won Best Pop-up Store at the MAPIC Awards.

We Built This City is testing the waters in Camden with a pop-up. Reformation has launched into the UK with its first UK pop-up store in Seven Dials.

