



PORTFOLIO:

Innovasport, Mexico City

INNOVASPORT'S (MONTEREY, MEXICO) 30,000-square-foot flagship in Mexico City brims with the best of the best in sports apparel and accessories: adidas, Nike, Puma, Reebok. Yet, as important as those big labels are, communicating the Innovasport brand was the number one goal.

"There's now an equal playing field for all of the brands," says Brian Bettencourt, senior creative director at retail agency Watt Intl. (Toronto), which designed the space. "No one brand is more important than any other, so when the customer comes in, they feel comfortable and not inundated with branding."

The sporty store's simple format is divided by gender – men's to the right, women's to the left – with a "power aisle" spanning the

principle entrance between the two. Watt's VP of Intl. Business Juan Esquijarosa likens navigating the power aisle to following the Yellow Brick Road: "[The path] makes it easier to understand the layout without having to think too hard," he says.

Boutiques within the space, such as the Fan Zone (soccer area) and the runners' lounge, serve as key vantage points along the power aisle to drive shoppers deeper into the store. A heavy use of black throughout the environment makes the product the MVP and takes the focus off the architecture, while the color red, derived from the warmer tone found in Innovasport's blue-and-red helix-shaped logo, accents areas such as the ceiling within the shoe department. Since so much

color was stripped away, the design team opted for a high-gloss finish on the floor to add depth and liveliness.

To anchor the expansive footwear area – a category Bettencourt notes comprises about 70 percent of Innovasport's business – LEDs crisscross overhead in a pattern that's inspired by the house brand's logo and expresses motion. It's also a feature that can be adapted to contract or expand according to stores' future shoe allotments, not to mention it's easily spotted from a distance. "We want to get people excited," Esquijarosa says. "The colors help to dramatize the space and add depth and emotion. It's all about sports, and we want every customer to feel it."

– *Lauren Mang* ▴