

GARRETT ROWLAND, NEW YORK



## PORTFOLIO: L'Occitane, New York

**P**ARIS-BASED L'OCCITANE EN Provence recently set out to create a new shopping model that supported both its digital-savvy and traditional consumers, by blending hospitality, digital integration and in-store concierge-style service. The retailer's internal merchandising and design teams partnered with design agency School House (New York) to incorporate the multi-sensory digital and physical experience into its latest New York flagship, which it calls the "experiential community boutique," this past December 2016 in the city's famous Flatiron Building.

"In today's digital age, the consumer demands immediate information and results. They are looking for a unique experience, a sense of community, and perhaps most importantly, to have fun," explains Paul Blackburn, associate vp, design and construction, L'Occitane. "We needed to offer a redefined



shopping model, to [pave] the way for the next generation of stores."

The store was created with two demo-

graphics in mind: First, a younger, autonomous shopper (predominantly millennials and Generation Z); and second, a slightly older, reserved customer who might benefit from a concierge-type experience. The store's centerpiece is the Smart Beauty fitting room, which utilizes a private digital platform, allowing visitors to browse products, make selections and sample items in store.

Located toward the back of the space, the Smart Beauty fitting room is composed of a large table with four separate stations, each paired with a sink and digital touchscreen terminal. Requested products are delivered to customers by a "beauty host" who is notified via an iPad alert. "It's technology without losing the human connection," says Blackburn.

In other areas of the store, shoppers can customize their own gift sets using a digital gift curator or browse a digital "notice board" with news of upcoming in-store events.—JA ▀