

## The “Shopper-Driven” Store Experience

*By Ralph Jacobson, Global Retail Solutions Executive*

### Historical view

The classic movie, “*Miracle on 34th Street*,” showed the interior of a major department store during the holiday selling season. How different do department stores really look today, now sixty years later? Sure fashions have changed... somewhat! However, how much has the shopping experience evolved over so many decades? Are today’s customers ready for something new, personalized, and innovative? Yes, they are, and they are enjoying these experiences in prototype stores around the world.

Customers are demanding products and services that drive their loyalty. The same customer may, on one shopping occasion, need only one or two items and require little or no employee assistance. The following shopping trip to the same store may require more intervention from the employees to fulfill a more complex shopping list. A store that has the flexibility to adapt to this customer’s varying needs provides more choice and control for the customer. Whether the customer needs full service or wants a quick self service process, the key is that the customer, not the retailer, drives the experience. Hence, the shopper-driven experience is what the most innovative retailers are now offering.

### Even high-service retailers are implementing “Shopper-Driven” choices

One perspective that full-service retailers have is that self-service has no place in their stores. IBM believes that a consumer should have the ability to choose their level of service based upon the particular shopping mission. For example, if a customer only needs to purchase a belt in a premier department store, she quickly finds the belts and selects the proper one. Should she not be able to scan the product and swipe her card and be on her way without waiting in line? Too many retailers feel self service detracts from customer service. This has proven to be simply inaccurate. Give the customer a choice of service levels, and they may return to shop your store for their personalized experience.

***The shopper-driven experience generates compelling reasons to shop your store:***





There are other aspects of the shopper-driven experience that create distinctive store environments. A North Eastern US grocer has implemented kiosks throughout a store which have as many as twenty-two applications on one device. They are finding significant usage levels of these kiosks. Additionally, digital media can drive item movement when featured and generate a tangible return on investment.

## Where the shopping experience is going now

There are myriad examples of innovative store experiences, many of which are conveniently located in the New York City Manhattan area. We highly recommend a visit there to navigate easily several concept and flagship stores of all retail formats. You will see everything from a hip specialty apparel store with a glass-enclosed shower stall on the sales floor (try to guess the purpose of that) to a high-end electronics showcase that does not even offer any merchandise for sale. You may contact IBM to arrange a customized store tour for your visit.

When you are ready to take the shopping experience to the next level, take the time to visit the 3D virtual worlds like Linden Lab® Second Life®. Some retailers are already increasing shareholder value with presences in such environments. IBM has invested heavily in 3D virtual worlds, and we encourage you to explore these new opportunities as well to see how they may translate to higher revenues for you.

To learn more about IBM Global Business Services, contact your IBM sales representative, or visit:

[ibm.com/retail](http://ibm.com/retail)



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