

FRAGRANCE AND PERSONAL CARE

Sephora offers experiential retail in new Manhattan locations

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Sephora's newest store on 34th Street

By DANNY PARISI

Sephora is bringing a more curated retail experience to Manhattan beauty customers with the opening of two new locations: one on 34th Street and one on 5th Avenue.

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These two stores offer Sephora's "experiential" take on retail with its TIP Workshop idea, a store concept that makes heavy use of consultants and studios to give users a hands-on and curated experience with the products. As one of the world's largest retailers of luxury cosmetics, this presents a big opportunity for beauty brands to capture a new segment of customers.

"Sephora's innovative store elements tie into our core approach of Teach, Inspire and Play, offering our clients an unparalleled retail experience," said Deborah Yeh, senior vice president of marketing and brand at **Sephora**, New York. "They can shop with us on their own terms, deciding how much or how little help they want.

"They can either sit with our highly trained, unbiased Beauty Advisors for a service, like a Mini Facial or Custom Makeover, or explore on their own with our new Tap and Try technology, iPads loaded with tutorials and Sephora Virtual Artist at our Workshop Table, or explore scent families at Fragrance IQ with our exclusive InstaScent technology."

Experiential retail

Beauty products, despite being one of the most popular sectors for influencer marketing, are an area where customers desire the ability to sample the product before they buy, especially since this product will be applied to their face and interact with their skin tone in a way that is not easily demonstrated through pictures or video.

This desire has led to a proliferation of samples throughout the beauty industry, as well as customers relying on the expertise of sales associates.

As one of the largest retailers for luxury cosmetics, Sephora is embracing this idea with what it calls "experiential retail."

Through the use of its Beauty TIP Workshop, Sephora offers customers a retail experience based heavily on the use

of trying out the products in a guided environment with the help of experts.



Image courtesy of LVMH's Sephora

Now, Sephora is bringing this retail concept to one of the biggest luxury-consuming cities in the world with two new stores in Manhattan that will make experiential retail a central part of the experience.

The 34th Street store is now Sephora's largest store in America, and the retailer has stuffed it full of products and workshops where customers can receive consultations about their individual skincare and beauty needs or take group classes to better familiarize themselves with how to make the best use of the products on sale.

Sephora's new store has also attracted some prestigious brands. La Mer and Jo Malone are two of those new brands, whose sale at 34th Street marks their first placement in Sephora stores in North America.

Both stores also will have a Sephora Beauty Studio in the center where customers can get one-on-one makeovers from expert staff.

Digital and physical

Sephora is committed to the idea of turning the physical retail location into an experiential place where consumers can try on and test products before they buy them.

This ethos extends outside of the bounds of the store as well, as the retailer has recently unveiled a mobile tool that lets users virtually apply different products to their face through augmented reality to see how they look.

Virtual Artist is Sephora's mobile and online tool that allows users to try on makeup through augmented reality technology. The application has now been updated to include eyeshadow capabilities in which users can try their own blend of products, test expert looks and follow tutorials ([see story](#)).



Sephora's augmented reality mobile platform

With the combination of both online experiential shopping and in-store experiential shopping, Sephora is poised to offer its customers a variety of ways to know exactly what they are getting from a product before they take it home with them.

"Our innovative Beauty TIP Workshop concept encourages and supports a thriving beauty community, one that's focused on inclusiveness, promotes self-expression, celebration and education through our unparalleled service experiences, designed to teach and inspire our New York-based clients to play and discover beauty," Mr. McDonald said.

"Our clients sit for consultations because they're curious and want to learn about beauty," Ms. Yeh said. "We invest heavily in training to ensure our Beauty Advisors are knowledgeable about every brand and product we sell, and can teach and inspire our clients in every beauty interaction.

"We want them to leave with products they love and the knowledge on how to use them."

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