

FRAGRANCE AND PERSONAL CARE

Sephora expands connected store initiative to new Paris stores

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Sephora's new connected stores in Paris

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LVMH-owned beauty retailer Sephora is continuing its efforts to turn its physical stores into more connected experiences with the unveiling of a connected Beauty Hub in two new Paris storefronts.

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The pilot stores were opened in March, but the new connected elements are just being added now. Sephora has been pushing the addition of connected digital elements to its physical stores in recent months, and these openings represent the next step in the process.

Beauty Hub

In the modern era, consumers are no longer thinking of ecommerce and shopping in-store as two separate experiences. Instead, consumers now predominately think of these two as different aspects of the overall relationship with brands.

Smart retailers and brands have been adjusting to this new paradigm by bringing connected digital elements to their physical stores to make switching between the two seamless for customers.

Sephora has been on the forefront of this effort, making digital a vital part of its overall ecosystem in addition to the physical store experience.

The latest addition to that project is what the retailer calls the "New Sephora Experience." Under this initiative, its stores will offer more connected options, including navigable screens around the store as well as the ability to engage customers with digital content while they browse the physical store.



Image courtesy of Sephora

The New Sephora Experience is now being rolled out at two locations near Paris, Nantes and Val d'Europe. These stores are being completely equipped with digital accessories to facilitate digital and physical shopping simultaneously.

When customers enter the store, they can browse through large touch screens full of content, tutorials, product listings and applications that give them a deeper view at the products on display.

Customers can virtually test out different products as well as physically trying them right there in the store.

The Beauty Hub comes with a virtual look book for consumers to browse as well as the Beauty Board, a social media platform where consumers can like and save different looks and products for purchase later on their shopping trip or after they leave and complete the purchase online.

Experiential retail

The new experiences created by Sephora for their Paris stores mirror innovations the retailer has brought to two of its flagship Manhattan stores as well.

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 ([see story](#)).



Image courtesy of Sephora

Outside of the retail environment, Sephora has been working to bring these types of omnichannel features to consumers at home as well. For example, the retailer has been experimenting with mobile apps that let consumers virtually "try on" makeup before they buy it.

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](#)).

With an expansion of this type of technology to Paris, Sephora is clearly making omnichannel retail a central part of its strategy. Expect more connected elements to infuse Sephora stores around the world in the future.

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