

RETAIL

## Pop-ups answer experiential yearnings, lead to discretionary spending

November 17, 2017



*Moby Mart is a self-driving, staff-free convenience store with an artificially intelligent hologram as your guide. Moby Mart is designed to eventually deliver to different locations on demand using self-driving technology, and take itself back to the warehouse to restock. Image credit: Appear Here*

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By JEN KING

Luxury brands commonly leverage pop-up shops to tap into consumers' penchant for experiential retail, but how does a brand source a vacant storefront for these temporary activations?

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**Luxury Daily**

Launched in 2013, Appear Here is an online platform dedicated to connecting brands with landlords who have available short-term lease spaces in high-traffic areas in cities around the world. If a brand is looking for a warehouse-like venue for an in-the-works pop-up concept, for example, Appear Here aggregates available spaces, with the help of a personal concierge, that fit the brand's idea specifications.

"In the summer of 2012, Ross Bailey and a friend designed a range of T-shirts inspired by the HRH Queen Elizabeth for her Diamond Jubilee, but they had a hard time finding the space to set up shop," said Elizabeth Layne, CMO at [Appear Here](#), New York. "After securing a space in SoHo and opening their store, Rock & Rule, Buckingham Palace authorities ordered Ross to stop selling his rebellious shirts.

"He kept his operation running by smuggling products prohibition-style to customers," she said. "Up until that point, landlords conducted business behind closed doors, and it was unheard of to rent retail space online.

"Ross launched Appear Here in 2013, and the company is now being used by international brands, independent designers and entrepreneurs from the likes of Google, Nike, TopShop and Kanye West."



*Elizabeth Layne, CMO of Appear Here*

In this Q&A, Ms. Layne discusses why temporary storefronts are attractive, ways the concept has changed since 2013, how department stores fit into the equation and why consumers will always enjoy physical retail in a digital, ecommerce-heavy world.

Here is the dialogue:

Since Appear Here's 2013 launch, how has the pop-up concept evolved?

Since our launch, Appear Here has grown to a community of 100,000 brands looking for space and thousands of spaces in the top retail cities in the world.

We've seen the most interesting shops, from a **Cadbury Egg Cafe**, a Kanye West "Life of Pablo" pop-up, to a **fashion retail shop** in an abandoned men's restroom.

Do you think the future of retail will leverage a temporary concept more and more? Where do department stores fall within this?

Definitely, with the rise of ecommerce and the retail scene changing, retailers are looking for alternate ways to get their products in front of consumers via experiences.

As for department stores, we work closely with **Topshop** to place smaller retailers within the stores' concession stands. We call it our In Residence program.

We'll be seeing more of this as a way for department stores to bring in more consumers to discover their new **favorite handmade jewelry** brand or try an interesting new type of ice cream, such as **Pan-n-Ice**, which was one of the latest brands to book inside Topshop in New York.

In Paris we had stores such as **L'Exception** launch a physical store of the cult French Web site. The store also stocked the likes of Carven, MM6, Maison Margiela and Cacharel.

How does Appear Here source its locations?

We want to be in top retail destinations so London, Paris and New York were an automatic first choice.

Appear Here works with 1,200 landlords, including the top 10 biggest landlords in the United Kingdom and the top two biggest landlords in Europe. Two of the biggest real estate firms in the world, Blackstone and Simon Property Group, plus some of the biggest in New York, Brookfield, list their property with Appear Here.

Additionally, we work exclusively with these landlords, meaning they only list short-term retail space on our site and nowhere else, and we are backed by real estate firms Simon Venture Group and Meyer Bergman.

Embedded Video: <https://www.youtube.com/embed/YAKdHF1agnA>

*New York Destinations | Appear Here*

Why is an online portal for renting space and making connections important in today's retail landscape?

Having an online marketplace allows Appear Here to connect brands and entrepreneurs with empty spaces

immediately.

By revolutionizing the process of renting short-term space and bringing it all online, Appear Here helps brands access prime retail spaces for a fraction of the cost and makes booking space as easy as booking a hotel room, like an Airbnb for retail.

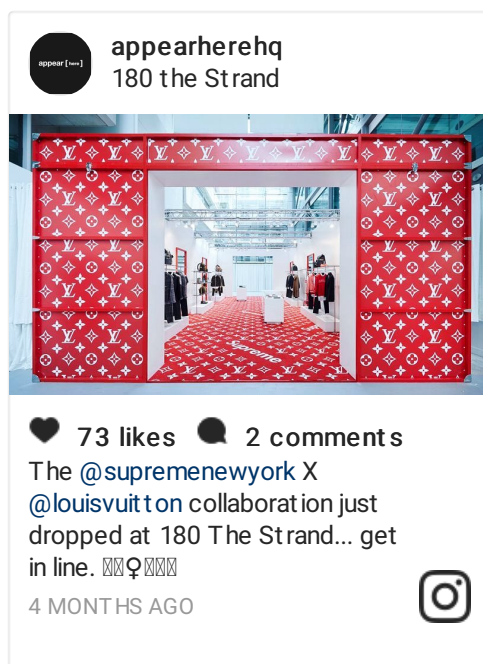
For landlords, Appear Here offers a global community of thousands of brands looking for space. Additionally, Appear Here provides landlords with the ease of renting out unused spaces for unique and innovative ideas that draw attention and foot traffic while earning them more than 1.5 times more than traditional rentals.

For luxury clients, what are the parameters most often considered when booking a pop-up venue?

When it comes to luxury clients, they believe that location and layout are the two most important factors when selecting a space.

Luxury brands typically have a vision in mind of what they want to do in the space and where they want to do, so it's a matter of finding that for them in order to make their idea come to life.

Another parameter that is considered is the status of the space. If they appear on a certain street, what other brands will they be alongside? Does the space have some type of history or unique story behind it that makes them stand out amongst the rest?



For brands in the digital-only space, such as Net-A-Porter, why is the pop-up a necessary strategy for awareness? We're seeing a lot of big ecommerce brands such as Net-A-Porter, Away, Mizzen+Main, and Rhone use pop-up space as a way to drive more awareness within their consumers.

A lot of discretionary shopping habits are done because of exciting experiences.

By giving consumers the opportunity to come into a store, touch the product and be delighted by customer service, shoppers are left with memorable experiences to share that they wouldn't otherwise find online.

As ecommerce continues to explode, do you think consumers will always enjoy going to a physical shop?

Yes, definitely. Traditional retail is changing as we know it as consumers are looking for more experiential retail shops — something with more meaning and impact.

Now that we live in an era of social sharing, consumers want stores they can photograph and share with their friends and family. Only a physical shop can offer this, and big ecommerce brands such as Amazon are moving toward this.

Millennials aren't traditionalists, they're more educated and culturally diverse than any generation before.

[Millennials are] constantly looking for meaning and impact.

Because millennials are requiring more of brands when it comes to wielding their capital, retailers are reinventing the way they do business and are opting out of the one-dimensional cash exchange to instead build retail playgrounds for millennials to shop in.

How has the pop-up concept benefited from in-store tech?

Our stance has always been, “don’t incorporate tech for tech’s sake,” rather tech needs to solve a problem and provide a purpose, such as connecting both online and offline, tracking, efficient payments and being able to offer a more personalized experience.

We’ve worked with numerous tech partners, including Square, to provide hardware for point-of-sales transactions and streamlined checkout counters.

Of all the thousands of pop-ups Appear Here has been involved with, which is your most-memorable and why? Appear Here teamed up with Unicef NEXTGeneration and The Hampstead Kitchen to give Imad Alarnab, a chef and refugee, a second chance to relaunch the restaurant he lost after leaving his native Syria.

Just 24 hours after being announced, Imad’s Syrian Kitchen sold out all 800 tickets as Londoners from all backgrounds came together to show their support and experience his delicious family-style Syrian dishes. The three-course menu was carefully prepared and designed to be shared amongst friends, spreading the recipes and traditions of Syria in a space that’s as unique as the culture.

Embedded Video: <https://www.youtube.com/embed/hAkRXe1vRdA>

*Imad's Syrian Kitchen / Appear Here*

We wanted to share a positive story about Syria’s refugees, in contrast to everything coming out in the news, and prove that there was an appetite for Syrian food in London. Imad wanted to create a place that brought people together, so his menu focused on the sort of food he’d eat at home.

Everything was placed on sharing platters to encourage people to talk to one another. Proceeds from the ticket sales were donated to charity #CookForSyria.

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