

RETAIL

Retail Store Tours shines spotlight on emotional experiences

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Retail Store Tours will be offered in New York's SoHo neighborhood. Image credit: Retail Store Tours

By STAFF REPORTS

In the current retail environment, stores are being elevated above the transactional to deliver experiences to consumers.

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As marketers look to adapt to changes and shoppers' heightened expectations, a new program aims to provide an active learning environment for them to discover and study some of the effective innovators. Launching concurrently with the National Retail Federation's Retail's Big Show, Consumers in Motion's Retail Store Tours will take small groups on curated tours of New York shops, allowing them to gain a firsthand perspective on best practices.

Retail revealed

During the NRF conference last year, Consumers in Motion ran expo tours. After hearing feedback from delegates who participated, the company decided to launch its Retail Store Tours series, starting with New York.

On Jan. 13 and 17, the tour operator will host participants for a four-hour experience. After gathering at either Westfield World Trade Center's Oculus or SoHo, guests will have a chance to engage with other attendees.

The tour will begin with a presentation that will cover the themes of "See, Feel, Think, Act and Touch." This will be followed with tours of eight to 10 stores that were picked as prime examples of these tactics, including some from the fashion, beauty and luxury categories.

For instance, Sugarfina was picked for its ability to turn candy into a more luxurious feeling product through elements such as packaging.



Sugarfina store. Image credit: Retail Store Tours

Under Armour, on the other hand, represents action. Its digitally enhanced store features a live ticker of consumers signing up for its fitness tracker applications.

Encouraging connection is Eataly, which enhances the grocery store experience with restaurant-style engagement.

"In the digital age, the retail environment is evolving to a new experience where the emotional aspects of seeing, feeling and touching are becoming more important than ever before, to create a reason for a customer to visit a store," said Myung Choi, executive vice president of brand strategy and development at Retail Store Tours.

Following New York, Retail Store Tours plans to expand the experience to other markets.

Rather than looking at ecommerce and digital as competitors to the traditional bricks-and-mortar store, retailers should think of them as complementary channels, according to panelists speaking at Fashion-Culture-Design.

During the "Who Owns the Future of Retail?" session, insiders weighed in on everything from the state of the mall to the engagement opportunities that exist for brands within the physical store. Consumers today have practically unlimited options, giving them the control in the retail relationship, and making a point-of-view and differentiation all the more important ([see story](#)).

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