Retail Innovation Shout Out: Lululemon Experiments with New Merchandise

by Sonia Parekh

For die-hard Lululemon fans, there is a new site to see when you visit Vancouver. Part product laboratory and part store, the new retail location offers customers an opportunity to shop for their favorite styles and get access to some limited edition merchandise which won't be distributed to most other stores. And while shopping, customers can catch a glimpse of how it all happens. Just behind the cash register you will find not only the design studio, but also the actual factory where the exclusive merchandise is produced.

The concept store helps Lululemon innovate the customer experience as well as the merchandise. Much of the product assortment is not the traditional athletic apparel you would expect from the brand. The company is using the store to test clothing for many other occasions, from casual to evening. And the designers at this lab work on an accelerated timeline so that they are able to react to trends immediately. Best selling styles and concepts are presented to the main design team on a monthly basis to be incorporated into the line for broader distribution.

The Lululemon concept store in Vancouver brings retail, product development and production under one roof – while also finding a way to increase engagement with loyal fans and test new products. Now that’s innovation in retail!

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Originally published on December 11th, 2013

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