

Consumer Innovation Shout Out: Spring Fashion Blooms

by Traci Stapleton

Here are a few of my favorite things: spring, fashion (specifically clothes), my town (specifically local shops), and giving back/helping others. All these good things mashed up last Thursday night, as I was home (a novelty on a Thursday night given #consultinglife) and I was able to take in a local benefit fashion show.

Two local entrepreneurs, Jessica Lallier of Lallier Event Design and Anna Owen of the Dressed + Blessed fashion blog, partnered with local retailers to present a fashion exhibit showcasing spring fashion trends on a runway crafted by local craftsman and retailer, Cornerstone Design Co. Local models donned items and accessories tailored to different age groups, shapes and sizes, and price points. Rompers and jumpsuits were constants, as well as statement earrings.

At intermission, we heard more about a local cause, Family Promise, which helps support families with transitional housing. The organization is unique in that it enables families to stay together and has different paths and housing options for various situations.

It clearly wasn't just me that loved this combination of things - they packed the house. After the runway show and presentation, each of the local boutiques had pop-up shops, and many of us walked out with shopping bags in hand. Local shops may be better positioned to create this community-driven customer experience, but there is nothing that should stand in the way of larger retailers driving similar initiatives.

Retailers should harness the power of their size to launch and test initiatives to learn quickly and test again, and then follow up with larger scale rollouts. We hear customers voting with their dollars on what is important to them, such as community, tailored experiences, products and purchases that give something back. There are different ways to deliver these aspects, and different paths to success for different retailers. The state of the industry demonstrates that product, pricing, promotion, and placement are no longer enough. Customers are looking for the difference, the experience that really elevates the purchase to deliver beyond just the product itself.

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