Thinking across channels
Retail designers’ competencies in the context of omnichannel in retail
Retail Design

CUSTOMER
- needs
- shopping behaviour

RETAILER
- business strategy
- brand identity

understanding

unique & creative translation

COMMERCIAL SPACES
- holistic design of
  - profitable – functional - aesthetic
  - spaces (virtual / physical)
    - products
    - services
    - experience brand
technological & digital developments

CUSTOMER
shopping behaviour

RETailer
business strategy

COMMERCIAL SPACES

holistic design of
profitable – functional - aesthetic
spaces (virtual / physical)

↓

products
services

experience brand
This pair is so perfect, I can't wait to buy them cheaper online somewhere. What's your WiFi password?
omnichannel
multichannel
seamless retail
onlife retail
phygital retail
life retail
360° retail
...

- customer-centric approach
- integrate commercial channels
- simultaneously and interchangeably usable during buying process
- seamless and personalised shopping experience
“How should we train future retail designers in the context of current developments in the field of retail?”
Retail design education @ Hasselt University

- Since 2008 → part of the interior design programme (4 years)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>3rd BA 1module</th>
<th>MA 1 year (elective)</th>
<th>Summerschool 1 week</th>
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<tr>
<td>lectures</td>
<td>design studio</td>
<td>workshops</td>
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<td>research seminar</td>
<td>workshops</td>
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<td>branding</td>
<td>interior design</td>
<td>customer experience &amp; journey</td>
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<td>sensorial experience</td>
<td>omnichannel retail</td>
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<td>retail design research</td>
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<td>retail design basics</td>
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<tr>
<td>detailed physical store design</td>
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<td>physical store concept of the future</td>
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<tr>
<td>detailed physical store design + thesis</td>
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</table>
What is the future profile of a retail designer?

What are the required competencies?
Research methodology

What? the practice of retail design

Who? practitioners involved in the development of the physical store

How? semi-structured interviews

Topics? “How should we train future retail designers?”

Current practice
- design process
- competencies
- omnichannel digitalization
- difficulties

Future practice (10-15 years)
- competencies
- discipline in general
- omnichannel digitalization

Education
- curriculum
- courses
- personal experience
Participating retail design agencies

17 participating agencies

Located in 3 countries
- Belgium: 5
- Germany: 4
- The Netherlands: 8

31 respondents
- 18 senior designers (+ 10 years exp.)
- 11 junior designers
- 2 non-designers

30 interviews
- 30-90 min./interview
- voice recorded
- 26 face-to-face interviews
- 4 Skype interviews
Analysis process

Objective?
- development of a retail design competence framework
- define the required competencies of future retail designers

Methodology
- Grounded Theory
- coding interview transcripts (NVIVO)
- defining thematic competency categories
- categorisation of K-S-A into theoretical competence framework

"The holistic model of professional competence"
(Cheetham & Chivers, 1996)
Retail design competence model

META-COMPETENCIES
ex: holistic thinking, problem solving, analytical thinking, commercial thinking,

- Research
- Design
- Socio-cultural sciences
- Branding
- Marketing & strategy
- Omnichannel & digital
- Communication
- Organisation & management

RETAIL DESIGN COMPETENCE
1. awareness of digital developments understanding the functioning and application of digital solutions

2. the ability to think across channels

3. the ability to integrate digital applications into the store design
Awareness of digital developments & solutions understanding their functioning/application

Why?

- to be able to **think/design** differently & **generate ideas**
- to be able to **communicate** with others e.g. external partners/agencies
- to be able to **advise** the retailer
The ability to think across channels

What?
- consider all consumer touchpoints during the process

How?
- channel **integration** (online → offline)
- create **consistency** between channels
  
  *e.g.: consistent brand story/experience or visual identity across channel*
- rethink **role/function** of the physical store
  
  *e.g.: pick-up point ↔ experience center?*

When?
- at the beginning of the process
- using customer journey maps & personas
The ability to integrate digital applications into the store design

Retail designers should consider:

- routing & lay-out of the store
- role of the staff (supporting ↔ minimizing role)
- changing function of in-store elements (ex: check-out)
- technics (e.g. cables, electrical conduits)
- added value of application (commercial tools ↔ gadget)
- digital content
- aesthetics
- consumer needs and their shopping behaviour
- the brand (values & identity)
Implications for retail design education

Retail design curriculum
- 16 respondents → integrate the topic ‘omnichannel & digital’

**theoretical component**
- knowledge of digital developments
- understanding application & functioning

**practical component**
- thinking across channels
- customer journey mapping & personas
- idea generation
- seamless store concepts
Implications for retail design education

Retail design education...

- needs to respond to these developments in retail

- should not only focus on physical/interior design aspects of retail design

- needs to train future retail designers to create relevant brand experiences in seamless world of retail

- needs to be multidisciplinary on the level of:
  - curriculum
  - mix of students
Future research

Ambition

Reflect on a **concept for a retail design programme** in which students can acquire the competencies as defined in the retail design competence model.
Defining competencies at key moments in RD process

ANALYSIS
- retail trends

STRATEGY
- commercial thinking

CONCEPT
- holistic thinking

DESIGN
- developing concept manual

DETAILED DESIGN
- knowledge visual merchandising

IMPLEMENT
- marketing knowledge

EVALUATE
- psychology

Retail Design Lab
Objective

- What is the current offer of retail design programmes (internationally)?
- What type of retail designer do they educate?
  - vision on retail design & the retail designer?
  - learning objectives & key competencies
  - subject areas
  - didactic methodologies (e.g. learning tools?)

retail design competence model = lens to study and compare programmes
International benchmark Retail Design education

Questionnaire

- Contacted 38 schools
- Focus:
  - General characteristics
    *e.g. course subjects, student admissions, level, duration, programme focus, etc.*
  - Key competencies that students will acquire

Aim

- Expectations retail design practice ↔ objectives programme
- Learn from best-practice examples → on site
- International collaboration
Thank you

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Analysis process

Objective?
- development of a **retail design competence framework**
- define the **required competencies** of future retail designers

**Competence ➔ holistic approach**
- an integrated cluster of **knowledge, skills and attitudes**
- required to **perform** job related tasks & to function **effectively**
- defined in relation to realistic professional **tasks**
- defined in **context** of the actual profession

(Mulder et al., 2008; Gonzi & Hager, 2010)
Analysis process

The holistic model of professional competence
Adapted and simplified from Cheetham & Chivers (1996)
What is best-practice?

- omni-channel vs. single channel
- strategy vs. design
- multi-disciplinary vs. disciplinary
- generalist vs. specialist

**Profile Outcome**
- Seemless Strategic Concept Developer in Retail
- Phygital Retail Designer

**Student Admission**
- Designer, Psychologist, Sociologist, Marketer, Service Designer, ...

**Educational Concept**
- Concept

**Learning Objective**
- T-shaped
Bachelor vs. Master @ Hasselt University

- Bachelor
- Master

Graph showing the comparison between Bachelor and Master programs in terms of research, analysis, designer's sensitivity, tangibles, intangibles, and expertise.
Tools

Designer tools
Ben jij een ontwerper en je kan wel enkele tools gebruiken om tot meer belevingsgerichte winkels te komen? Bekijk hier ons aanbod.

Retailer tools
Je hebt een eigen winkel en bent op zoek naar handige tools om je winkel te verbeteren, bekijk hier hoe wij je kunnen helpen.

BEKIJK DE TOOLS

BEKIJK DE TOOLS
## Zintuigenmatrix

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MW1</th>
<th>MW2</th>
<th>MW3</th>
<th>MW4</th>
<th>Product</th>
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<td>(type product dat verkocht wordt)</td>
<td>(kwaliteit/meerwaarde van het pand)</td>
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<td>Producten (verkopen)</td>
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Blauw versus oranje

Bebin, Heresty & Suter voerden in 2003 een onderzoek naar het gebruik van kleur in een winkelinterieur. In deze seminaties wordt de toepassing van blauw (koele kleur) tegenover oranje (warme kleur) geplaatst waarbij de effecten van verschillende soorten licht hierop tevens verklaard worden.

Lees meer

Aantrekkelijke kleuren

Hoewel er al veel onderzoek uitgevoerd werd naar de effecten van kleur, is er maar een klein deel dat uitgevoerd werd in een retail context. Bellizzi, Crowley & Hasty deden in 1983 een studie naar het gebruik van kleur in winkelinterieurs.