

The Shiseido Store is located within the district of Ginza

Tokyo can do Transformation

Tomorrow's success needs digitalisation. How this can be combined with the analogue retail is shown in an impressive manner by Tokyo's flagship stores. Matthias Spanke, founder of BIG IDEAS Visual Merchandising, had a closer look at storytelling, selfie paradises, and service in Japan's shopping magnet Number One.

Retail is facing a rapidly-changing world since the time of industrialisation – with fundamental consequences for every retailer. Without any excepti-

on. "In times of digitalisation the term 'retail disruption' seems quite appropriate", explains Visual Merchandising expert Matthias Spanke from BIG IDEAS

Visual Merchandising, who just recently travelled to Tokyo and wrote a travel report about it. "Disruption is a dis-function which makes the revolution



The XFLAG customer can browse through the product range at a huge screen

of trading necessary – especially retail and its visual merchandising." If everything turns out well, something new and wonderful is about to arise. This seems to be the only way for retailers to face the future. "Tokyo's flagship stores are showing that exactly this transformation can be done in an exemplary manner", says Spanke. Whether it's a luxury label, an electronic paradise or brands for the youth culture, Tokyo pushes digital trends pro-active and comes up with innovative approaches for new shopping experiences.

Advantages of Online Shopping in the Stationary Retail Sector

XFLAG is the entertainment branch of the Japanese social media giant Mixi. It became famous in 2013 through a released online game called Monster Strike, which lists this year more than 45 million users worldwide. The XFLAG store has two floors. On the ground floor merchandising items of the XFLAG games are offered. On the basement level one can find a café as well as an event stage. Only a few products are displayed in the sales areas, because the whole product assortment can only be called up at a gigantic touch display. By using the XFLAG Application the customer can login on one of the provided terminals in front of the touch screen and browse through the range of products. After putting the chosen articles in the virtual shopping basket and having it paid via the App, the customer can get it only a few minutes

later at the store's Pick-Up Station. This store concept offers a new shopping experience that combines stationary retail with the benefits of mobile shopping.

Customisation with state-of-the-art technologies

In October 2017, the new Asics flagship store opened. The store brings together two retail areas, which set the stage for the brands Asics, Asics Tiger and Haglöfs. The Asics Institute of Sport Science developed unique and innovative experiences for their customers. The core topic: made-to-measure! The Asics Fitness Lab and Asics Food ID offer body measurements as well as motion analysis – these results are the basis for recommendations on how to exercise properly and how to find the best product, of course. The Custom Apparel Service provides three-dimensional body measurements and tailor-made



Asics' measurements are the basis for product recommendations



New Balance's credo: perfect fit and individual design



products as well. Natural wood, plants and simple concrete elements restage the latest technologies quite appealing.

Sneakers – superior with Perfect Fit and Individual Design

Not comfortable? Not possible! That's the New Balance Store's credo spread on a sales floor area of 1,400 square metres distributed over four floors. According to the store's statement, they do not have uncomfortable sneakers. New Balance sets focus on Running and Lifestyle. With their so-called 'NB-Stride' System, the foot is being measured in length, width and girth to find the best shoe on site. In special stations individual sneakers are being designed, huge screens show the latest technology of the materials. The little ones should be tomorrow's customers as well: The Kids area offers a backlit

perforated wall where they can be creative with acrylic sticks in colour. In a nutshell: This store has a wonderful mixture of aesthetics, technology with added values and entertainment. Of course, everything in the right balance.

Storytelling – the Forest within urban Big Cities

Back to nature! This flagship store – the second store worldwide besides the one in London – brings nature to urban spaces. The British brand Hunter Boots offers on almost 300 square meters sales area Footwear, Outwear as well as Accessories. With a tradition of over 160 years, the distinctive DNA of this brand is being implemented in a consequent and modern manner. After stepping inside the store, the customer finds itself in the middle of an imaginary birch forest under a floated roof con-

struction. The natural elements, which are typical for the brand, are brought harmonious in line with the urban ambiance. With this, Hunter Boots has its fingers on the pulse of the times. Just think about current trends like urban gardening or urban bird watching, which became popular in Berlin and other metropolises as well as in other countries and are expressions for the people's longing for nature in urban spaces.

Selfie Paradise for Young and Old

At the Line Friends Store it's (almost) all about emotions. Line is a Japanese Instant Messaging Application with more than 700 million users worldwide. Almost the half of all messages are special character emoticons in order to express ones emotional state. The Lines Friends Store presents the main

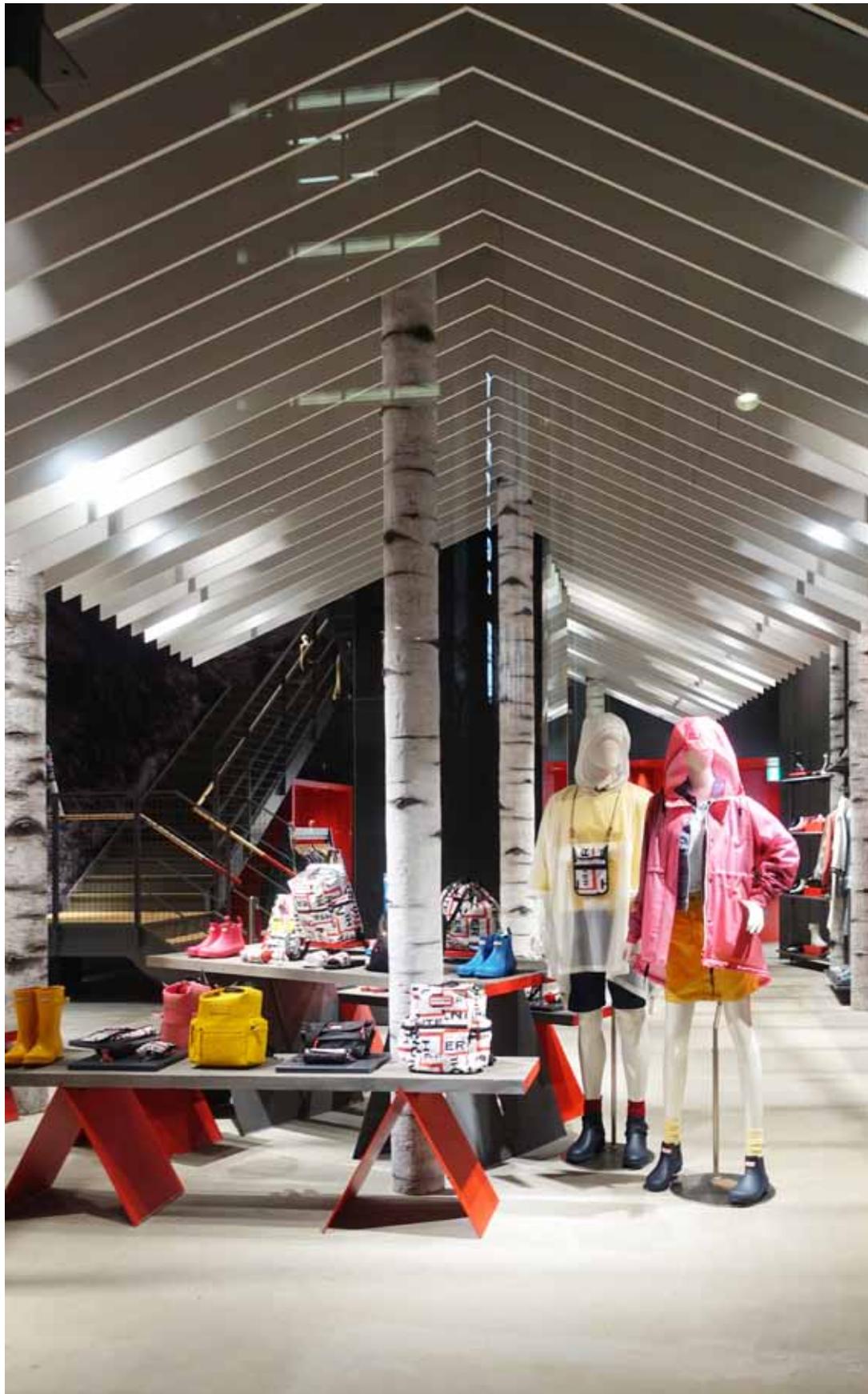


Matthias Spanke reports about retail novelties from Tokyo

characters of the application. On three floors, nearly every product from the world of the favourite characters can be found – from soft toys to coffee cups even to stationary. The entire store offers countless selfie moments, already together with appropriate hashtags. Really every customer pauses and captures these shopping moments with their smartphones. Even if one doesn't know the application or the characters belonging to the messaging app, the store is definitely worth a visit. This place shows how social media can be integrated in the brand's marketing by using well planned selfie moments.

Beauty and Service - down to the smallest Detail

Japans biggest cosmetic company Shi-seido reopened in January its flagship store in Tokyo's district of Ginza. Every one of the four floors offer different functions with different service fea-



The Hunter Store welcomes its customers with natural ambiance



The Line Friends Store creates selfie moments with their main emoticon characters



The reopened Shiseido Store

tures. Rigorously implemented: The store design has been inspired by single steps of putting on make. The layer aesthetics is arranged through the floor levels. On the ground floor as well as on the first floor are sales areas for cosmetic products. Besides, the first floor houses a Skin Care Salon. One level higher is a photo studio, a hair salon and make-up salon. On the fourth floor a private area for cosmetic treatments and a café are waiting for "Members

Only". With its flagship store, Shiseido sets new standards when it comes to design and service quality.

What can only be recognised at a few places around the world – like in Tokyo – is not only a systematic transformation of the stationary trade. It is furthermore about being able to enjoy new challenges like the elementary change through digitalisation and to create new shopping experiences at

the interface between the analogue and digital world. With all of its risks, and with all of its chances. By acting like Tokyo's shops, it seems amazingly playful, but pursues corporate goals. The customer as well as the retailer benefits from it. The fundamental disturbance of a whole branch leads here to create something new.

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Photos: BIG IDEAS Visual Merchandising

