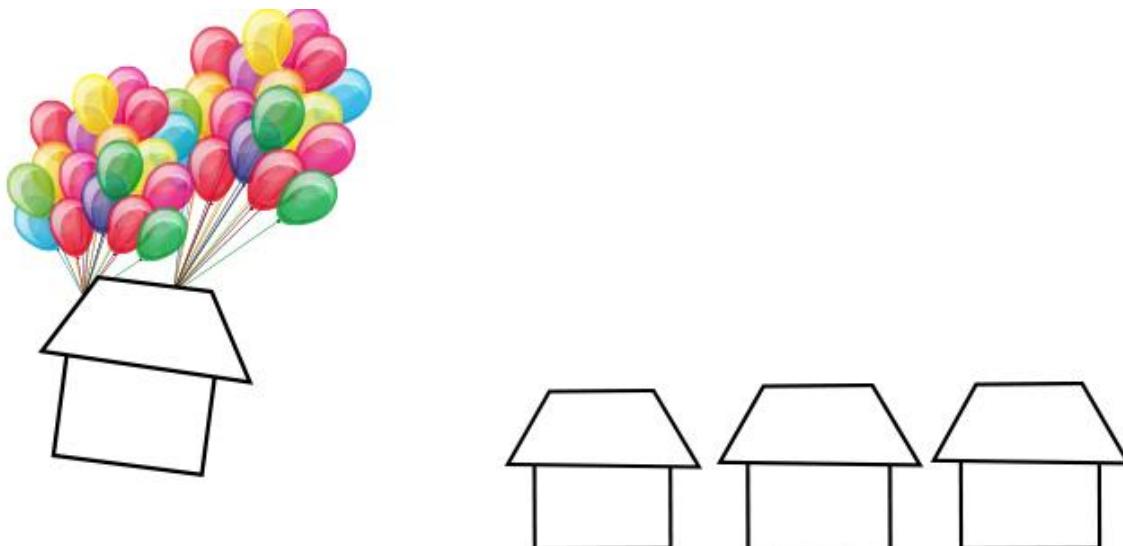


EDUCATION

WHAT IT TAKES TO CREATE A SUCCESSFUL POP UP STORE

by Katie Garton Desir, POPAI USA



Pop-up stores are more mainstream this year than any other year. I remember in 2010 I was telling all of my friends about the cool Real Simple pop-up store in NYC, and no one knew what a “pop-up store” meant. Today, they’re “popping up” everywhere. Chicago. New York. LA. Canada. London.

What is a pop-up store? Whether it be a wall, a school bus, a section built in a department store, or a tent outside, a pop-up store is a temporary retail location that offers a specialized shopping experience. They usually “pop up” during holidays like Halloween and Christmas, but now they’re showing up any time of the year. These types of stores are typically made when a brand wants to test the waters of having a permanent store, market a new product or line in a special way, or promote special collaborations for a seasonal campaign. All great opportunities for press.

So what does it take to make a pop-up? Well, let me tell you. I had the opportunity to interview a marketing team who makes successful pop-ups for brands, producers who are making the displays, and a marketing director for a European real estate company. But let's start off with why.

WHY BUILD A POP-UP?

Brands, retailers, and agencies tend to build pop-ups for two reasons, said Ilona Taillade, Co-founder and CCO of BrandSpots, a full-service pop-up provider in Europe. The reasons are “1. Pop-ups are a tool to provide feedback and an opportunity to get to know the consumer. 2. Pop-ups are a testing spot to find out what works and what doesn’t.” I'd also like to add in the reason of getting press.

Since Pop-ups are temporary stores that only last anywhere from one day to five weeks, brands, retailers, and agencies can try anything in the space and see how their shoppers respond. Whether they have physical feedback cards, look at blog posts from bloggers or hope for print publications, Pop-ups are a great space to get feedback. The atmosphere is different from any permanent brick-and-mortar, so shoppers are willing to have a different shopping experience.

Pop-ups can draw in new shoppers and make old shoppers more loyal. No matter what, a Pop-up will tell you who your shoppers are and what new locations you should open in the future. They provide a space where you can test new displays, new environments and new sales strategies. Overall, Pop-ups are a great way to see what your product offers all the while getting press for it.

WHO'S INVOLVED IN THE PRODUCTION?

Generally, brands, retailers, advertising agencies, brand marketers, and producers are the masterminds of these specialized retail locations. I had the privilege of talking to Lauren Austin and Dani Skoller of MKG, Jared Schiffman of PERCH Interactive, and Chris Cummings of InnoMark Communications to see how each company contributes to the production of a successful pop-up shop.

Brand Marketers

Brand marketers, such as MKG, are contacted by brands with certain goals and they have to come up with solutions. The most buzz-worthy solutions Lauren Austin, MKG's Creative Director, and Dani Skollar, a Marketing Associate, talked about were pop-up stores. They ensure press coverage and unique experiences because of highly interactive displays, photo-worthy products and environments, special products and the cultural hub they provide for shoppers.

MKG build creative spaces that bring a brand to life. Since pop-ups are temporary, they can use the latest technologies every time, have popular celebrities stop by and DJ or provide food, and have curated artwork covering the walls. They will do anything to bring more shoppers in and get them sharing about their experience on social media.

One of MKG's beliefs is “audiences like it when brands display ‘people-like’ qualities such as humor, kindness, and intelligence.” An example of their belief brought to life is the Docker's General Store in NYC. With the help of

partnerships, MKG humanized the brand and made deeper connections to their shoppers. Just take a look at these photos.



All

Images provided by MKG



The General Store was open for about 19 days and had more than 6000 visitors, more than 580 sales transactions, it added 1,100 likes to Docker's Facebook page, Docker's had a 12% increase in Twitter followers, and had NYTimes Coverage which has 31 mm (millions per month) in circulation.

MKG has the capabilities to make and curate displays for the pop-ups they're involved in, but some agencies do not. That is when producers come into play.

Producers

Producers are the people who make the displays interactive and unforgettable. Two companies who are experienced with pop-ups are InnoMark Communications, proud POPAI members, and PERCH Interactive.



Spirit Halloween's Zombie Wasteland display made by InnoMark



Spirit Halloween's Zombie Wasteland display made by InnoMark

While I interviewed Chris from InnoMark for our monthly member profile we also talked about their experience of making pop-up store displays — one of their pop-up displays won the 2012 Temporary Display of the Year Award at POPAI's OMA Awards. The biggest requirement for pop-up retailers, Chris mentioned, was "a solution that was easy to assemble, cost-conscious, and durable enough to withstand heavy seasonal traffic."

With InnoMark's experience, Chris says working with pop-up stores means more creative freedom, but more focus at the same time. InnoMark is usually given a turnaround time of only four to six weeks. They have to make sure the first design is the final design, because "if you're late, that's a miss-sell," says Chris. The positive thing about more creative freedom is that the producer gets the chance to create the atmosphere of the whole store. The displays sell the product and determine the shopper's experience.

But enough about the time. What about the materials? Chris says the materials don't really change; it's the internal structure and design that change. The only time materials do change is when the displays are used outside. In that case, producers tend to use different substrates. InnoMark uses more plastics, stain resistant ink and UV curing for better durability for rain, winds and sun.

A different take on pop-up displays comes from Jared Schiffman of PERCH. They specialize in interactive table displays that get shoppers to pick up a brand's product and create a buzz. They've created displays for pop-up stores like BaubleBar and Delta.



photo credit: PERCH

PERCH creates a display that encompasses branding, storytelling, imagery and a sense of place around a product. The product is not just in the store it's in people's lives. PERCH's displays make you experience a product before buying it.

No matter what producer you talk to, they're going to say pop-up store displays have to be more interactive to sell a product in a short amount of time. Another key component for a successful pop-up is location.

HOW DO YOU PICK A LOCATION?

This year, we've seen locations in airport terminals, inside stores, and popular shopping streets. To learn more about pop-up locations I talked to Ilona Taillade of BrandSpots. They are "dedicated to providing brands, retailers and advertising/media agencies with a one-stop solution for leasing temporary locations for .. a physical presence in the form of a pop-up shop, outlet or window display in a variety of strategic locations Europe-wide," says Ilona. She says pop-up stores are the ultimate way to reach a desired shopper.

Since pop-ups are temporary, brands can plant stores wherever they want. The key is to find the perfect space. Ilona says "to get close to the consumer, smaller spaces are more effective. The location of the space is also important. A high street location will have a different impact to that of a space in a shopping centre." It may be different in the US, but from looking at the pop-up stores this year, Ilona's statements seem true. Why are Pop-up stores increasing in popularity?

This may be my own opinion, hopefully you've learned the same thing through this article, but pop-up stores are more engaging and special. In today's age, we are fighting for shoppers to come into stores because of online offers, but pop-up stores are effective in delivering a different experience. They make the brand come to life. The temporary aspect of the displays simulates the desire of change. So why wouldn't pop-up stores increase in popularity? My speculation is that permanent retail stores will begin to look more like pop-up stores. The price of this change may not produce a desired ROI, but at what point should brands start to want to attract their audience in a different way? Pop-up stores create a buzz that creates press, loyal and passionate shoppers, and sales. What more could a brand want.

ABOUT POPAI

POPAI is the global association for marketing at retail. With over 1,700 member companies, representing Fortune 500 brand manufacturers and retailers as well as producers and agencies, its focus is on research, education, globalisation, technology, advocacy and networking.

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