Amazon Style: Why the concept should spread

By Chenu Alexis  •  June 18, 2022

On May 25, Amazon Style opened its first brick-and-mortar clothing store in the world in the United States. An opening chosen in Los Angeles, not in the trendy districts of West Hollywood or Beverly Hills, but in the north of the city, in the residential area of Glendale, within the Americana at Brand mall, a hybrid shopping street between chic and Disneyland vibes where families and young customers roam here year-round.

A place of mainstream shops such as H&M, Madewell, Lululemon, and & Other Stories, the Americana at Brand also gathers Urban Outfitters, Nordstrom, Nike and soon Chanel Beauty. A perfect place to experiment with new concepts, such as The Stranger Things store inspired by the TV show, a few months ago.

Welcomed by an army of sellers in black uniforms and masks, connected to a digital tablet, each customer is invited here to download the Amazon Shopping application. "It's the rule here," explained a saleswoman. "The first step is to educate each customer on how the store works and make sure they know how to use their app. Most customers already have an online account with Amazon, so the exercise is not very complicated. It is a bit different for tourists coming from Europe."
A first giant QR code invites customers, all with phone in hands, to enter all the personal fashion tastes, a recommended step which will launch a series of algorithms and will allow Amazon Style to offer personalized style recommendations once passing through the fitting room. And to do it right, Amazon has thought of everything: in the case of low battery, mobiles are recharged in a few minutes by the team in store.

In terms of atmosphere, Amazon Style has been inspired by social networks and offers an Instagrammable and Pinterestable, dynamic and experiential decor. On the walls: flowers, smileys, OMG signs, color, green panels, heart-shaped neon and “designer” look mini-lounges that catch the eye and are perfect for selfie moments.

The store is divided in different sections and corners with themes. From the entrance to the store, “customers most-loved” areas, a zoom on the trendy summer wardrobe; another dedicated to the “Influencer Looks” of the moment. A pre-chewed or formatted selection for customers, who only have to follow the directions to find their style.
Another strong point of Amazon Style, its compartmentalization by trend. The store declines the styles "Active", "Modern Casual", "Denim", "Day time dresses", "Summer casual", "Everyday Essentials", adds "surf and skate" section in order to match with LA culture, and new trends section as "Y2K", a concept that surfs on the 90s and the mid-2000s and which combines the pop culture of the millennial generation with the tech spirit of the era.

In the middle of the multiple corners, Amazon Style also highlights its own lines with "Amazon Essentials" and "Amazon Aware", a new well-crafted line operated by the design studio of Amazon Style, recently established in Los Angeles. Although unknown to the sellers in place that day, Amazon Aware is bringing together the basics of a fashion wardrobe certified "carbon neutral" and made from 50% recycled materials.
As for brands, the selection offered by Amazon Style is eclectic, but mainly targets young people between 20 and 35 years old. At the top, the "Premium brands" include Equipment, Hudson, John Varvatos, Theory, Velvet, Vince and Rebecca Taylor, each benefiting from a dedicated corner. The sportswear labels Champion, Lacoste and Nike are present; Levi’s and G-Star Raw too; the workwear of Carhartt and Dickies; the gymwear collections Seasum; as well as a several effective brands like RVCA or BB Dakota; the feminine wardrobe of star shoemaker Steve Madden. No unisex or gender-fluid category on the other hand. Amazon Style plays the commercial card first.

On the technical side, each garment in the store is offered here with a label with a QR Code allowing the customer to scan the desired item and then find it in the fitting room. After scanning-shopping, the application informs each customer of the room number and waiting time for access.
In Los Angeles, Amazon Style has dreamed big, with 40 cabins on the ground floor and upstairs. For the first fitting, the access time to the fitting-room was more than 5 minutes despite an average crowd in the store. Once the number has been obtained, the unlocking of the room is done using the mobile application.

Inside, a large room with mirror and digital screen where the pieces chosen via the application await customers, a selection supplemented by the suggestions of the house, pieces supposed to match with purchases of the day and detailed profile disclosed to the store entrance. Size problem with a piece? Ordering the right size is done on screen. Between one and two minutes, Amazon Style delivers to a private closet requested by a double-entry locker system the correct size.

The customer leaves with their chosen selection, can also have it delivered via the application and each final purchase requires checkout; enough in store to not have to wait.

While the choice of brands may seem limiting, the shopping experience imagined by Amazon Style is stunning and effective. Perfectly designed for young customers, also accessible to older customers, Amazon Style succeeds in turning e-commerce into a form of retail. The automation of the system could be achievable but future models...
taking customers into a new era of retail. The automation of the system could be questionable, limit human reflection and intuition, but its supporters see the advantage of helping customers in search of a style.

Just a few meters from Amazon Style, the big brands such as H&M or Lululemon seem to date from another era. Amazon Style has succeeded its launch.

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