

How Do You Know When It Is Time to Renovate Your Showroom?

What You Need to Know Before Renovating: Questions, Challenges and Solutions



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The retail world is going through major changes as technology enters the brick-and-mortar world and consumers expect offline shopping to be an immersive experience. These shifts in expectation are driving more and more retailers to make major changes to their spaces; decorative plumbing showrooms are no exception.

No matter what the business, an owner or manager has to ask one important question- what is it that we do? Does a kitchen and bath showroom sell products, or does it sell solutions? When it is so easy to buy products online, the role of a showroom is to improve the lives of the customer. That means making every shopping trip an experience from the moment a person walks through the doors. From 2018 forward, retail spaces including showrooms, need to focus on

turning every shopping trip into a connection between the brand and consumer.

For many showroom owners, keeping up with these retail trends means renovating. Let's review the major considerations facing showroom owners before and during renovations and share some of our expert solutions.

Before Renovating

There are a number of things to consider when heading into a renovation of any type. The mess, the expense and most importantly the cost. The cost of retail renovations goes beyond construction of the space and fixtures; company down-time adds significantly to the overall expense.

Some choose to manage the renovation project on their own, either employing an architect or designing the layout on their own;

local contractors are the common choice for construction and installation. The goal is to put the entire space to work, so that each square foot boosts sales.

Define the financial goals

Any renovation budget has to take return on investment into account. While the numbers are not set in stone, industry figures suggest that renovations provide at least a 10 percent increase in sales, with an average sitting somewhere around 30 percent.

Keep the clientele in mind- customer experience is a key driver of business value. The most successful renovations put customer research to use, so by understanding what the target clientele wants, showroom owners can design a space that reflects consumers' values, beliefs, attitudes and aspirations. This is what it takes to create real fans of a brand or showroom, which means repeat business established through trust and a common vision.

Analyze the existing space

Layout

- Is the space easy to navigate?
- Are there limits due to the existing floor plan or any other space requirements?
- Upper floors should have wide staircase access and no dark corners. Mirrors, lighting and open displays keep customers from feeling trapped.
- Eliminate dead-ends and make sure clients don't miss a thing.
- Are there windows to work with? Large front windows can turn into incredible display areas that work inside and outside.
- With or without natural light, lighting is critical. It sets the tone for the visit: is it theatrical, soft or bright?

Display Fixtures

- How are smaller items like hardware and faucets displayed? Opt for hardware or faucet slat walls to keep the look organized and clean.

- Take stock of worn-out or dated displays
- How are existing displays used? Do products fit properly?
- Are there any manufacturer displays that should be moved or updated?

Practical concerns

- Who will handle the design, display fabrication and installation? Design can be done in-house but displays and construction require expertise.
- When will you renovate? Choosing a slow time of year is a good option to keep disruption to a minimum.
- How long will the renovation take?
- If renovations will require the space to close, how much company downtime can the showroom manage?
- Renovations are messy. Make plans to keep the mess out of sight and don't let the disruption affect the customers.
- Displays: custom or pre-made? Some showrooms choose to design and replace displays over a year or two, meaning each piece is exactly what is needed. The drawback is that displays may not fit into the overall design.
- Most issues stem from timing. Make a schedule and stick to it.

The Importance of Good Showroom Design

Showroom design is playing a bigger and bigger role in customer experience. Gone are the days of the warehouse-style plumbing showroom. When consumers spend an average of \$20,000 on their kitchen renovations and an average of \$5,000 on a bathroom renovation, they are looking for high-end decorative plumbing



SH Design-Build Rendering

PLUMBING & SHOWROOMS



Bender Showroom Floor Plan Render, Norwalk, CT (Plan and Render by SH Design-Build)

items, accessories and appliances that look great and last.

Layout and design have to multi-task

- Create an atmosphere that fits the brand
- Guide customers through the showroom
- Help sales staff do their jobs
- Show off the merchandise
- Eliminate clutter

The mood of the showroom is set the moment a customer walks through the door. First impressions are pivotal: how will customers be greeted? Some showrooms choose a front-facing reception desk, others have a welcome area with seats,

beverages and design magazines, catalogues and other engaging materials. When a reception area fits the brand, customers immediately know what to expect during their visit.

Note: Reception areas are not always necessary if there are first-floor offices. Another option is to create a stand-out display at the entrance showcasing top products.

Showroom floor plans work best when they are optimized for sales. When customers are led along a strategic path, they don't miss a single product or display. An optimized sales path guides customer through a unique and enjoyable shopping experience that inspires purchases. Layouts incorporating mini-suites

and lifestyle graphics let clients imagine themselves at home, completing the immersive experience.

Well-planned layouts also help sales associates do their jobs efficiently. It's no secret in the industry that the top advocates for showroom renovations are members of the sales team! A clean, organized space makes it easier for sales people to offer a variety of home improvement solutions without having to run all over the showroom.

This is a key element to creating a personalized shopping experience tailored to clients' needs.

Displays are another major consideration, since they keep clutter to a minimum and allow the mer-

chandise to speak for itself. There are many options on the market for prebuilt display fixtures, slat walls and platforms; however, products may not fit perfectly, and they can be hard to modify. It is also a challenge to get all prebuilt displays to match.

Note: The relationship between display fixtures and merchandise is straightforward- the more expensive the display looks, the more expensive the products look.

Custom-made fixtures are not as expensive as they sound. They fit well in the space, ensure a consistent look, and show off your products perfectly. Choosing custom modular display components makes integration easier and allows showroom managers to move displays around according to seasons, trends and customer behavior.

Choosing a Design-Build Firm

After reviewing the financial concerns, the logistics and the limitations of local contractors, it is no wonder many showroom owners choose to put off renovations, even at the expense of customer experience and sales goals.

Working with a design-build firm eliminates the need to hire an architect and a contractor. Design-build firms like SH have an in-house team of designers, engineers and fabrication specialists to manage all aspects of the renovation process. When everything is handled by one firm, you can easily keep track of the process and keep a tighter schedule.

To eliminate stress and guesswork, experienced showroom owners go one step further and choose SH Design-Build, a firm that specializes in renovating plumbing showrooms. SH provides the complete package- design, layout, display fabrication, delivery and installation. 🌐



Bath & Idea Center by Chesapeake Noland Co. (a Winsupply Company), Chesapeake, VA (Design, Fabrication and Installation by SH Design-Build)

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