

## Green Today, Gone Tomorrow: Making Pop-up Stores Sustainable

**M**arket needs don't always sync with sustainability goals. For a space to be built green, so the thinking goes, it should last. LEED even gives a project a point for a 10-year lease (hoping there won't be a major reno during the decade). That's because long-term buildouts conserve resources, reduce waste, and minimize construction impacts.

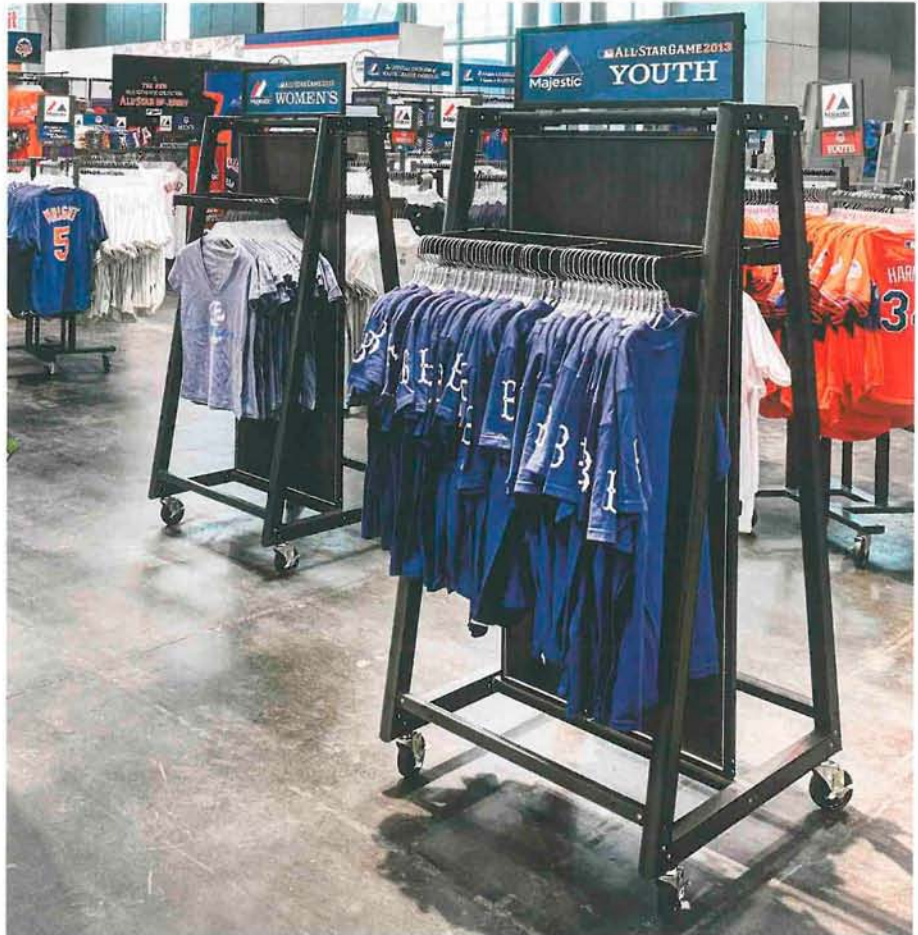
But as consumers have grown more fickle and become experience junkies, retailers have steadily decreased the time between renovations. In fact, many eliminate it altogether by designing flexible spaces that enable constant flux. And then there are the spaces that make no apology for their transience—pop-ups enable concept testing, expansion testing, product launch promotion, and marketing message reinforcement. So their growing popularity comes as no surprise.

Despite their short-term leases, even the most temporary retail spaces can be eco-minded. Participants in A.R.E.'s Retail Environments Network LinkedIn group recently provided these six ideas for greening a pop-up:

### 1 MINIMIZE FIXTURING.

"Too often, even in permanent installations, brands rely too heavily on overwrought fixtures to somehow connect brand (product) and guest (consumer)," says Chris Weigand, president of Peninsula, Ohio-based Chris Weigand Design. "Let the product be the hero. After all, it's what is great about your brand. More often than not, you spent a lot of money on the packaging design. Let that sing."

Managing the carbon footprint starts with reducing usage, notes Jeffrey Baker, CEO of Boston-based popup producer Image 4. "So to green a pop-up, or anything for that matter, start by reducing the material use, especially weight. Weight means costly fuel for transport," he says.



*As Major League Baseball fans eagerly snatched up branded apparel at The Majestic Shop during a FanFest gift show, the booth could be reconfigured on the fly. Even merchandised fixtures moved easily on casters. Made by OPTO International, the fixture package included some units designed to be constructed and disassembled without the use of tools.*

### 2 DESIGN FOR MOBILITY.

"Think traveling road show. Aim to get in and out quickly so you can set up shop in the next town over, so to speak," says Weigand. He suggests modular designs so they can be easily reconfigured for various spaces.

Bruce Smith, director of retail services at McIntyre Group Installation Services in Ayr, Ontario, recommends fixtures that are easy to transport and easy to update. McIntyre offers

Swiftspace cashwraps and smaller access point stations. "They can be collapsed in seconds and moved from one space to another. When dated or damaged, surfaces and graphics can easily be changed in order to keep them current and in good shape," he says.

Image 4 account manager Rebecca Fitts suggests a demountable modular walling system that allows for easy setup and disassembly for multiple uses in different con-



figurations. Such temporary branded walls cut down significantly on construction waste, she says.

Shipping containers make great pop-up spaces, adds Vinay Patel, marketing associate at Boxman Studios. Based in Charlotte, N.C., Boxman turns decommissioned shipping containers into immersive environments. Containers are adaptable to various modular designs and are inherently mobile.

### 3 SOURCE SUSTAINABLE MATERIALS.

Specify materials that are recycled and reusable, says Kirei USA owner John Stein. The company's panels incorporate reclaimed and recycled materials including wheat, hemp, sorghum straw, coconut shells, wood, and plastic bottles.

Easily recyclable materials also can help a pop-up minimize adverse environmental impacts, adds Weigand. "Metal is a great material because it has universal value at the end of its life, though be mindful of shipping weight," he says.



Concealed strip LEDs directed at the graphic surfaces draw the eye, enabling this custom fixture to tell the story of the Jack Daniels Sinatra Select at the McCarran International Airport in Las Vegas.



Most of the technology for this interactive HTC One pop-up experience was preinstalled in 4-foot sections to enable quick setup. Due to the success of the program, leases were extended in seven of the 10 locations. One location was even retrofitted to sell the phones.

Another material trait to seek is renewability. Graphics can be made out of renewable materials such as corrugated. With today's finishes, corrugated graphics can appear fairly high-end, says Weigand.

Background colors can set the tone for a pop-up space and are easily achieved with zero-VOC paint, he adds. Also important to an effective pop-up is lighting. "If the space isn't illuminated very well, work with the space owner to see if you can improve the lighting. Use LED lighting, available in a range from cool to warm in color, where possible," Weigand says.

### 4 CONSIDER ENERGY CONSUMPTION.

In addition to minimizing lighting and plug loads, retailers can explore the use of renewable energy or purchase offsets, Stein notes.

### 5 REPAIR PROPERTY TO MAKE IT RE-RENTABLE.

Much like a trade show hall, the space housing a pop-up needs to remain move-in ready, notes David Jaacks, senior vice president of design and engineering at G3K Displays in North Springfield, Vt. Repairs to the property that address safety and municipal concerns will allow the space itself to be reusable.

### 6 REUSE FIXTURES AND MATERIALS.

After the pop-up closes, reuse as many elements as possible. When elements can't be reused whole, their components and materials should be reused or at least recycled. Design for disassembly is integral to achieving this. Baker suggests thinking about what can be repurposed, broken down, and applied to future projects from the start.

Marshall Grain Co., a Fort Worth, Texas-area pet products and organic gardening supply retailer, routinely repurposes materials, says Vice President Joyce Connelley. Many of the new applications are as temporary as pop-up stores. "For Christmas, we used pallets to build a ramp to simulate Santa's sleigh rising from the ground. We've also used them to build temporary outdoor dog washing stations," she says.

Another option, where possible, is renting elements, adds Baker. "Renting is a fantastic alternative to buying. Many users get a partial benefit of one item."



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