

BESPOKE incubator

IS TAILORING A FUTURISTIC FOOTPRINT

BY BETH FEINSTEIN-BARTL

AN INNOVATIVE INCUBATOR'S BLENDING OF DIGITAL WITH BRICK-AND-MORTAR IS CREATING A JETSONS-STYLE MARKETPLACE.

With its launch in May 2015, Bespoke at Westfield San Francisco Centre created omnichannel vibrancy by injecting the Internet into the classic shopping-center format. The concept capitalizes on the disruptive ideas of Silicon Valley, providing an opportunity to test and sell e-commerce goods in the real world. Its very name—Bespoke—denotes tailored for tech.

The new space epitomizes developers' growing investments in features designed to boost foot traffic and occupancy rates while enhancing relevance to smartphone users, particularly Millennials. Such experiments are designed to reinvigorate the typical mall experience.

Bespoke's futuristic footprint is being called evolutionary, not only for what's happening inside the 37,000-sq.-ft. space, but also for its far-reaching impact on how retailers manage big data and interact with customers. The space's giant testing lab amps up New Age demands to make shopping centers

more than, well, places to shop. Its high-speed Wi-Fi-infused trifecta encompasses:

- A 15,000-sq.-ft. flexible event area with capacity up to 1,200 guests. Brands can use the space to debut a new fashion line with a runway show, host a workshop on how to select diamond jewelry, or throw a reception for media and VIPs to celebrate the release of the latest tech gadget.

- A 14,000-sq.-ft. co-working space with 24/7 access features private offices, shared and dedicated desks, sleep nooks, a library, a bocce ball court, and a climbing wall. Users are focused on retail and/or technology in some capacity. To foster the next big thing in tech and retail, the area includes storefront conference rooms that seamlessly convert into popup shops.

- A 5,000-sq.-ft. demo zone for launches and beta tests includes white-boxed retail popup shops and a digital facade with massive media walls, gestural sensors, and plug-and-play templates.

All spaces are built for entrepreneurs, brands, retailers, and startups at all stages of business to leverage. Rentals are avail-





Photo: Westfield Corp.

Bespoke's 37,000-sq.-ft. store at Westfield San Francisco Centre brings e-commerce in-store. The demo zone, pictured here, hosts launches and includes retail popup shops and a digital facade with media walls and plug-and-play templates.

able for a day, a weekend, or longer. The space's conditions—inside a mall that attracts 20 million annual visitors—provide a natural testing environment.

At the grand opening, for example, a nonprofit showcased collections from local fashion designers in the demo zone popup while three brands operated popup shops set up from the co-working space: Bow & Drape showcased its on-demand personalization experience; Product Hunt launched its first

physical presence for visitors to discover new tech creations; and Shoes of Prey showcased a shoe customization experience.

Westfield may consider opening similar spaces at its other properties, say Bespoke representatives.

Beth Feinstein-Bartl is a seasoned freelance journalist. She has covered issues ranging from manufacturing processes to design for A.R.E. | POPAI The New Association.



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