

PERFECT PARTNERSHIP:

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COLLABORATION

Collaboration is key when retailers, designers and shopfitters are creating the perfect retail environment.



'Store owners want to make sure their stores pack a visual punch. A beautiful, vibrant and exciting interior and exterior could mean the difference between closing the sale or watching customers leave, or even worse just pass you by,' says Robert Hudson, director of the National Association of Shopfitters (NAS).

The NAS will once again host its Design Partnership Awards in September, which celebrate the success of retail, non-retail and leisure collaboration between interior designers, shopfitters and fit-out contractors. 'The NAS is promoting greater collaboration between designers and fit-out contractors. This is essential to the ongoing success of the whole interiors sector to facilitate the continuous flow of exciting and exhilarating environments,' says Hudson. 'We continue to review and develop new categories, which continue to acknowledge the essential ingredients that make a vibrant and exciting interior. This year we are looking for lighting which is a critical part of the success of an interior.'

When looking at designs that are memorable, Hudson notes in the last two years of the awards the NAS has seen Hackett on Regent Street and Gieves and Hawkes on Savile Row illustrate this point exactly. 'It might be the light fixtures, the colours on the wall or even a sign outside.

If you're looking to take your store's look from ordinary to extraordinary, attention to minute detail is critical,' he says.

'Collaborative working between the design team and shopfitter is pivotal to project success,' says Nick Openshaw, design director at property services group Styles&Wood. 'Working together, we can evaluate the peculiarities of each project, after all, no two are the same, and develop a robust plan which accurately responds to the client's needs whilst providing best value and programme certainty. Clearly planning for change is also of importance as this invariably happens for a variety of reasons.'

Design consultancy gpstudio, fit-out specialist Portview, and design and project management company Leckenby Associates have collaborated on The Whisky Shop in Paris, where the interiors of the 19th century building were stripped back and traditional features highlighted.

'With complex projects of this nature it's very important to work as a collaborative team: different skills bases working seamlessly together to create something stronger than the sum of parts. With this project, gpstudio, Leckenby Associates and Portview worked closely to achieve such a result in terms of "quality" across design, programme, budget and shopfit,' explains



This page (from left to right):

Portview collaborated with architect and interior design firm Househam Henderson on Kate Spade's Regent Street flagship; communication and collaboration is key, as was the case with Styles&Wood's work with PEP&CO at seven locations.

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Dynamic Resources says collaborative working between designer and shopfitter is extremely important, especially with overseas projects like G Star RAW in Paris; the staircase at Kate Spade's Regent Street flagship was a particular challenge, requiring an extensive section of the first floor to be cut out to accommodate it; gpstudio, Leckenby Associates and Portview worked very closely on The Whisky Shop in Paris.



time zone differentials we can't always get answers to or from our clients right away. However, due to the trust that is placed in us by our clients and a bespoke online LIVE reporting tool that we have set up, it is possible to see what is going on in store 24/7,' says Chalmers. She stresses the importance of sequence planning: 'The client and the project manager must have a good relationship and keep in contact to ensure they know any changes in the plans and to make sure the store is open and delivered on time. Inevitably, we find there is a positive chemistry that evolves between the two parties and that helps considerably to get a tough job done on time and on budget.' Something that every retailer, designer and shopfitter works towards. **Rf**



Gregor Jackson, partner at gpstudio.

'Programming of the whole project, including all the various trades and materials, is paramount to the success of the project and delivering the client's vision on time. This is even more important when we are working on mainland Europe as any delay or incorrect sequencing has a greater financial effect,' says Craig Leckenby, director at Leckenby Associates. 'However, in Paris we had a great site team as well as the back up here in the UK. The project was planned well in advance, and due to some legal delays with getting access to the site we were given a slightly longer lead in than we would normally get on a retail project and we used this time to ensure everything was in place.'

Portview recently collaborated with architect and interior design firm Househam Henderson on Kate Spade's Regent Street flagship. The £1.6m fit-out brought challenges for the project teams, not least that the upper floors of the building were occupied by 1,000 people working in open-plan offices, limiting the fit-out work to two-hour blocks and materials deliveries to a two-hour window each morning.

'Househam Henderson's previous experience with Portview was invaluable in the success of this project, particularly given

the design challenges such as the feature staircase and need for communication across multiple time-zones,' says Abigail Blumsohn, interior architect at Househam Henderson. 'The full project team, including Kate Spade's design team, worked together to guide the evolution of the scheme. The collaborative effort between the contractor, architect and brand led to the delivery of a quirky and high quality project which I believe we can all take pride in.'

PJ Ward, contracts manager at Portview, says: 'Collaborative working between design and shopfitter is extremely important. Portview liaised with the designers and the client from the start of the project to produce construction and drawings from the concept drawings. We aim to make everyone's job easier, including our own, so we spent time planning the sequence of this fit-out in order that we could meet the timescale, coordinate deliveries and cause as little disruption as possible for the other tenants in the building.'

Global retail services company Dynamic Resources agrees that collaborative working between designer and shopfitter is extremely important, especially with overseas projects. 'They should have a good relationship and understanding of each others skills sets and challenges, and be able to communicate and work together effectively. We make sure that our project managers visit clients regularly and keep in touch with both designers and shopfitters and also update and consult the client via phone/email on a daily basis when projects go live. I would say that the role of the project manager is totally vital acting both as a ringmaster and point of contact for all concerned,' says Laurie Chalmers, deputy managing director of Dynamic Resources.

'Recently we have been working on various projects in the US and Canada, as well as Sydney, Australia and due to

NAS Design Partnership Awards 2016



Taking place on 15 September 2016 at BAFTA in Piccadilly, the NAS Design Partnership Awards 2016 will once again celebrate the success of retail, non-retail and leisure collaboration between interior designers, shopfitters and fit-out contractors.

The awards pay tribute to those designers and contractors that continue to push the boundaries: who are not afraid of the challenges that they are presented with and who refuse to settle for anything but the very best.

Visit www.shopfitters.org for more information about the awards.