

# surestyle



The Essential Guide to  
**RETAIL STORE  
LAYOUTS**

Creating Engaging Spaces

# THE INSIGHT

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The ever-increasing chasm between in store and online shopping behaviour of consumers prompts new stores to create an extraordinary customer experience. With the core philosophy of delivering value to shoppers, interior designers and brand managers spend countless hours in furnishing a store layout that is efficient and trendy at the same time.

Finalising a retail store layout encompasses a variety of strategies that revolve around timeframe, space management, lighting, fixtures and signage. The retail universe has transformed owing to a broader inclusion of technology and overtaxed consumer attention. Safe to say that designing the interaction of the customer with your merchandise is a science in itself!

So, if you are looking to open a retail store or revamp your existing one, this ebook is perfect for you. It takes into perspective, facts revealed by data analytics as well as retail essentials to inspire you for your new store layout. From basics to professional tips and retail best practices – get started on your first steps to capture your customer's attention.



# RETAIL ESSENTIALS

## THE PRINCIPLES

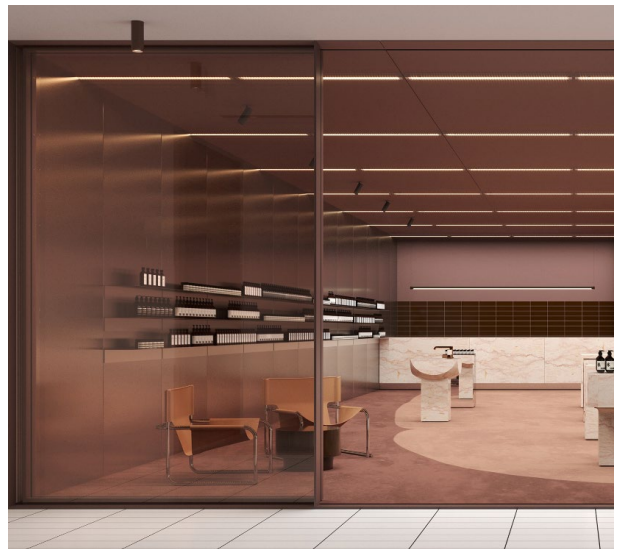
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### 1. SPACE MANAGEMENT

Whichever type of store layout you go for, breathable spaces and no narrow aisles is a must. Giving the customers space to think is essential for their decision making. Aspects like store organisation, shopper navigation, eye level, fixtures (slat panel, flexiplus, flexiwall, promotional units, floor gondolas, garment racks, signage, mannequins, accessory displays, etc.) are part of the plan in designing the space.

Add innovative and creative elements in the store to define brand image and message. Blending style and function will tie the whole customer experience together.

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### 2. VISUAL MERCHANDISE

Visual merchandising is powerful. The potential of the store window should never be underestimated. Capture your shoppers' attention with a striking display of merchandise. It is what they see before entering and definitely, a space to explore creativity.

Nevertheless, external and internal branding should be in sync. This will not only make the customers want to return to the store but also differentiate the retail outlet from the competitors.

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### 3. LIGHTING & APPEAL

Due attention should be paid to create the right atmosphere and ambience for the shoppers. Lighting is the key for this. Not too harsh to cause eye strain, not too warm to be uncomfortable. It should highlight the products you are selling and make them look most appealing while also, making the customers look great when they look in the mirror.

If your store has trial/fitting rooms, good luminance must be ensured in and around the rooms to make the experience more appealing for the shoppers. Functional lights like signage and those directing consumers to focus areas need to be installed as well.



## 4. DIRECTING THE CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE

Providing the right perspective to the customers and controlling their view is the sign of a well-executed retail store layout. Designs that rank high on preference offer a clear view of the store interior from outside.

Hiring professional consultants or designers for crafting a functional store layout is always a great investment. It helps in positively influencing customer behaviour and how they navigate your store. From turning right after entering to reaching the billing counter, a comfortable, smooth and unique customer experience defines success.



## 5. CUSTOMER ENGAGEMENT

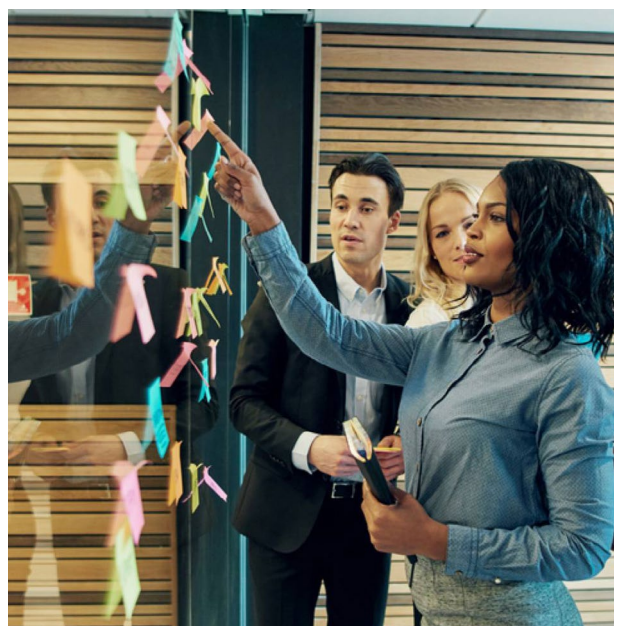
'Grab & Go' or 'Discovery' – Customers come with a variety of mindsets for a retail store to cater to. Engaging all types of shoppers efficiently is vital for success. There are many driving elements in a store that make the experience easy and effective. Some of these include taking advantage of subconscious human tendency to turn right, choosing a good eye level (an average man is 5'9", an average woman is 5'4"), arranging categories and signage, spreading popular products well through the space, unobstructive layout, utilising vertical shelves and creating gaze plots.



## 6. TIME MANAGEMENT

Time is of the essence, always. With most retail stores being taken on lease rather than bought, it is crucial to complete designing and interior décor within a short timeframe. The sooner the store is ready, the sooner the sales can begin.

Manage time effectively by setting achievable goals through task prioritisation. The more focused and time-conscious you remain, the clearer these tasks will become - thus being completed quicker.



# STEPS TO PLAN STORE LAYOUT

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## 1. PUT DOWN THE RIGHT FLOOR PLAN ON PAPER!

There are several basic floor plans for retail stores – grid, free-flow, diagonal, angular, loop, forced path, straight and geometric. We will get into what each of these styles entail. Choosing any of them is essentially emphasising on the desired purchasing behaviour. Utilising the entire space without compromising is the key to selecting the right plan.

Put down the plan on paper to get a clearer picture. It will help you visualise the end-goal and guide you in case you wish to mix two or more floor plans.

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## 2. BE COGNIZANT OF CUSTOMER TRAFFIC FLOW & BEHAVIOUR

Put yourself in the customer's shoes before you start planning the position of fixtures, aisles and pathways. Ensure a comfortable customer experience always.

The decompression zone, where the customer first enters should guide the transition. They say, 'shoppers browse a store, the way they drive'. So in countries like US they have a tendency to turn right. So, be aware of where you are leading your customers in the store.



### 3. POSITION YOUR CHECK OUT AREA OR BILLING COUNTER

Feng shui expert DeAnna Radaj says, “Store checkout and register placements are one of the biggest mistakes seen in retail store layouts”. Front left could be a good positioning of the billing counter as customers tend to drift right on entering. Some experts suggest the rear of the store as a good place for a check out counter. The basic idea is to be less distracting and not take up attractive space that can be used for branding and promotion.



### 4. PLACE THE PRODUCTS FOR MAXIMUM EXPOSURE

This is the point where retail owners tend to get ahead of themselves. Often, once the design plans are laid, they tend to be quick to shop for fixtures, installing and loading them with products. But the fixtures need to be flexible to accommodate the changing displays like featured and seasonal merchandise.

Also, before considering position of fixtures, you need to consider the placements of your classic, seasonal, limited edition and sale products. This is product mapping. It is a science that requires constant updating.



### 5. CREATE SPACING BETWEEN PRODUCTS & FIXTURES

Once the general idea of the store layout and product mapping is clear in your head, it is time to consider the placement of fixtures and displays. These should define your brand in terms of appeal and experience they offer.

Create personal space for your shoppers during this step. Even though the fixtures may be bustling with merchandise, enough space between them will ensure that your customers don't abandon a product on being nudged or bumped by another customer from behind.



## 6. DISCOVER WAYS TO APPEAL ALL SENSES

Visuals are key at a retail store but if other senses are delighted as well, it enables a heightened customer experience. One they are not going to forget easily.

Sound(music) elevates the ambience when it is complimenting your brand just like a good scent like cookies for a bakery attracts more shoppers. The sense of touch has been given great importance in an Apple store and if your product is edible, why not offer free tastings as well?



## 7. CREATE COMFORT ZONES

You may create fixture speed bumps to slow down your shoppers and unique displays to attract attention. But a retail store can be more than that. If a customer feels at home, they are more likely to stay longer and shop more.

Adding amenities like comfortable seating especially near dressing rooms or creating a lounge area for accompanying members of customers is a welcoming experience sure to make them return.

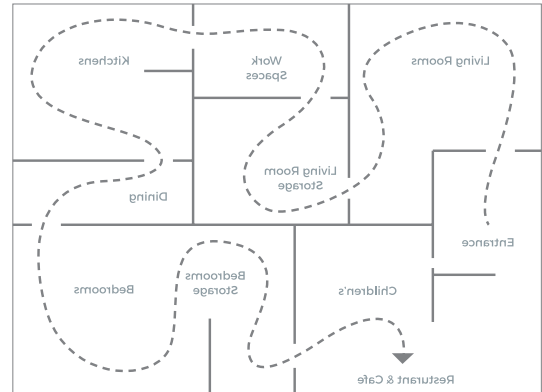


# TYPES OF STORE LAYOUTS

Deciding the retail store's basic layout is the foundation of the design strategy. Here are the basic types and some details on each.

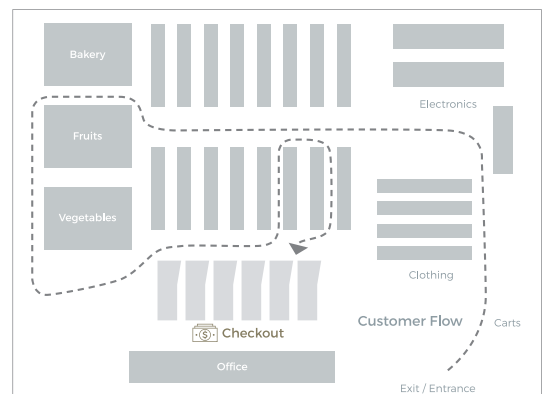
## 1. FORCED-PATH STORE LAYOUT

It uses a predetermined path to guide the customer through the store. IKEA stores are a good example of this layout. It is quite useful in managing customer traffic flow and enhancing sales.



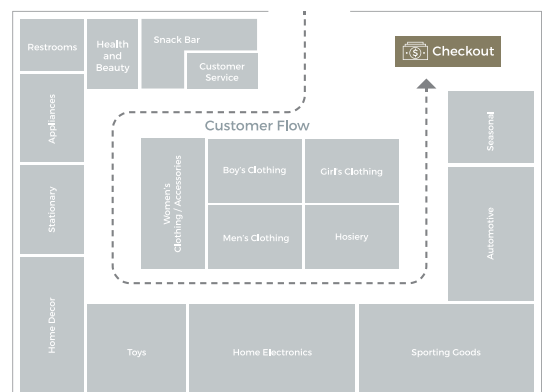
## 2. GRID STORE LAYOUT

A common layout at drug stores, this one uses standard fixtures and displays around efficient spacing for customer comfort. However, it lacks inspiration and can seem creatively flat.



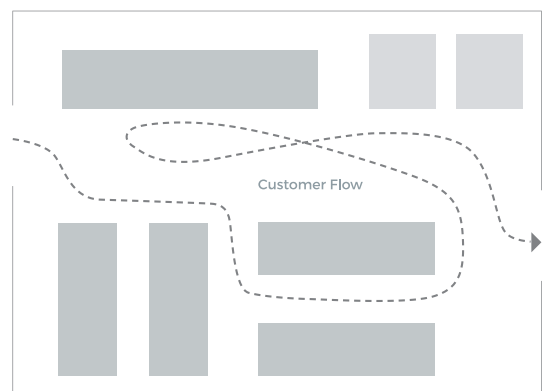
## 3. LOOP STORE LAYOUT

It is also called the 'racetrack layout'. The creation of a path to lead customers from entrance to check out accomplishes a loop effect. Designers use lighting or different colours to guide the customers on this track.



## 4. STRAIGHT STORE LAYOUT

This is simple and efficient. It allows creating personal spaces for shoppers as well as lead them towards featured merchandise at the back of the store.

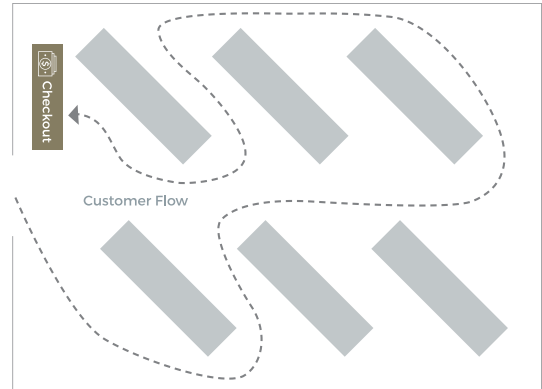




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## 5. DIAGONAL STORE LAYOUT

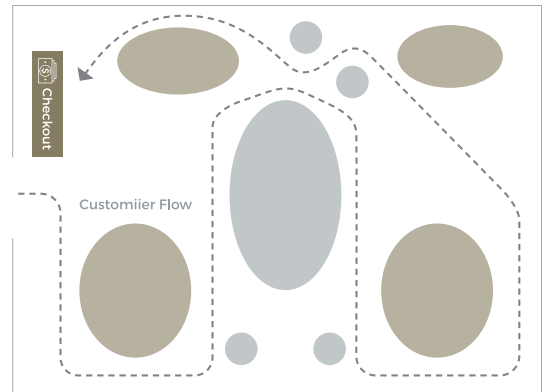
Utilising aisles placed at angles, this layout offers more exposure to merchandise and ease of navigation. Small stores can greatly benefit from this design.



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## 6. ANGULAR STORE LAYOUT

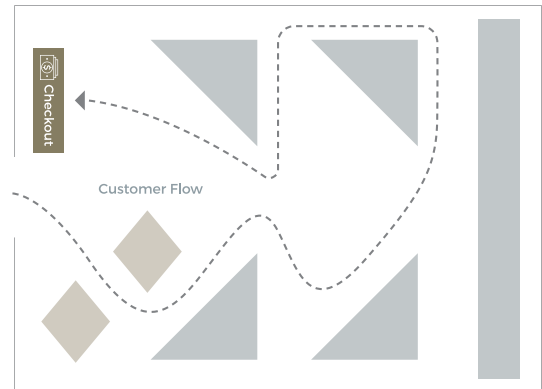
The name of this layout is misleading as it relies on curved walls and corners. Free standing products on curved fixtures tend to get noticed more often.



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## 7. GEOMETRIC STORE LAYOUT

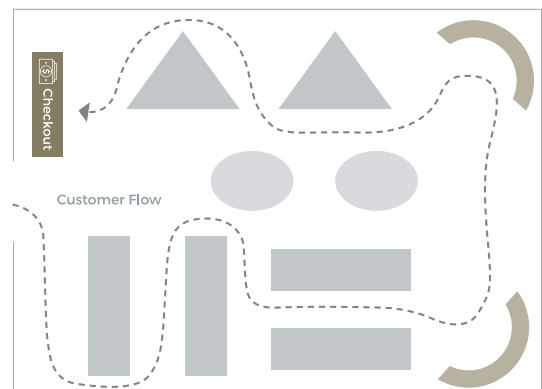
This layout is popular amongst millennials. With geometric placement of fixtures and displays, the layout looks artistic and offers a style statement.



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## 8. MIXED STORE LAYOUT

Best of both worlds or even more. Mixed layouts use design elements of multiple layouts to customise a store design that would best suit your brand concept.



# surestyle

FOR YOUR BUSINESS

We are a family owned and operated business based in Auckland (NZ) since 1975. With over 40 years of experience in creating fixtures and designing interior spaces, we are experts in turning our client's vision into reality. Our 360° handling of retail store projects includes design, manufacturing, constructing and delivering. Our team specialises in locally manufactured custom fixtures and retail essentials as well as sourcing high quality imported products.

Collaborating with us for your interior design requirements will enhance your brand, drive sales and improve the customer experience ten-fold.

Step Up your Retail Game!

## Feeling inspired?

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**Dispatch Warehouse:** Open 8:00am - 4:00pm, Mon - Fri  
29 Huia Road, Otahuhu, Auckland 1062, New Zealand

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