

Understanding In-store Influences

A reasonable proportion of purchase decisions are made in-store. Therefore, many retailers design their premises in a deliberate attempt to influence consumer's in-store behavior.

Your task in this activity is to review the examples below in order to identify what the firm is trying to achieve by their particular design of their servicescape.

Servicescape Examples

- A number of steakhouse restaurants are set-up like a 'saloon' in the Wild West in the cowboy era of America. They use old looking wood, and have beer barrels around the restaurant, skulls of buffalo on the walls, and so on.
- Some fast-food stores have 'uncomfortable' seats, where you cannot sit for long periods of time.
- Banks have branches with mini-offices and comfortable chairs to meet with customers wishing to open new accounts. Normal transacting customers have to stand in the queue and often have to talk through a security window.
- Starbuck's stores have a range of seating options, including outdoor, inside tables, and even lounge chairs.
- Casinos don't use any natural light in their main gambling areas, and they don't have clocks on the walls either.
- Walmart's aisles have easy to read signage of what items are stocked there. They also have installed touch-screen terminals in some stores to help find the location of items in the store.
- Department stores have far more unstructured layouts (unlike supermarkets), where customers are more likely to wander around the store in various directions.
- Many stores will play familiar or popular music in their stores.
- Many clothing stores have service standards, which require their salespeople to approach customers within the first 30 seconds of them entering the store.
- Supermarkets regularly have a proportion of their merchandise on special (at a discount).

Student Discussion Questions

1. What is the goal of each of the above designs/actions?
2. Do you think that these designs/actions are deliberate or are they sometimes accidental?
3. What degree of influence do you think that retailers have over consumer's in-store behavior?
4. What other examples can you add to the list retail design tactics?