

Transit Lounge



Bright Spot for Ladies Only



As you show so shall you sell seems to be the mantra driving Witco's retail design in Bangalore. It is not enough to carry fine merchandise and well-advertised brand names, how you present your merchandise sets you apart from the retailer to either side of you and the retailer down the street who may be carrying the same brand names or brands equally well known. This is the kind of distinction that RD&M designers have sought to bring in to Witco's first store in Bangalore.

The store speaks the language of the hip and the upmarket right from the word go. Whether it is the fountain at the foot of the stairs, the stairway leading up to the store on the first floor, the double glass door, or the fish basking under the trendy conical lamps - yes, an aquarium is strategically placed at the centre. They all speak the same language: luxurious shopping for people on the move.

Once inside, there are enough hidden and surprise elements that prod the customer to go around the entire store. Mirrors and visuals mounted at either 30 or 45-degree angles or at corners add to this effect. Mirrors also help make the 2000 sq ft store appear spacious.

The entire store is conveniently divided into three parts without actually obstructing the flow of traffic. The centre area houses an aquarium. Besides relaxing the shoppers, the aquarium suggests movement, reinforcing at a subconscious level that travel is pleasurable. A feature wall at the rear with props that hides the merchandise beyond is just enough to

make shoppers curious cats; to the left of the entrance is a partition with imageries on it. The partition again compels the consumer to seek what lies beyond: ladies travel accessories. To the right is luggage display, which also houses a massive installation unit in the centre to show off the new arrivals.

The feature wall is textured and painted white and leads to the brightly coloured ladies accessory zone. Orange, red and a dash of gray is the combination used for this section -- a drastic change from the rest of the store which is a more sober gray and blue. "This is to keep the



Directing Traffic: Installation area with ample space for movement & demonstration

stores with ample seating is a prerequisite. Whereas in Bangalore, shopping is more an individual affair and a smaller store doesn't fail to send the right signals," says Sameith.

Secondly, a distinct signature image is created through the choice of lighting, building and finishing materials, the colour palette, theme, graphics, and display. Store signage, which is always blue and yellow for Witco, is done in black and brushed steel to give it an upmarket edge and get the

customer in. Flex and bright colors are a no no.

Lighting is dramatic partly to distinguish the store from competitors and partly to make the store noticeable in the highly crowded and brightly-lit locale. Custom-made yellow CFLs are used to keep the ambience warm and blue lights to highlight the merchandise. This combination reflects the Witco brand colours, blue and yellow, otherwise absent in the Bangalore outlet. The lighting scheme also replicates familiar visual cues from Witco's stores in other parts of the region, so essential to reach out to new

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curiosity in the shopper alive. It also adds a surprise element," says Seema Sameith, chief architect (retail & entertainment), RD&M. Feature wall has interesting niches that are used as props.

store, called the Transit Store, has deviated substantially in terms of design from its counterparts in Chennai and other cities of south India. Firstly, the Bangalore store is a lot smaller: 2000 sq. ft as against the Chennai average of 8000 sq. ft. "We opted for a smaller place basically because we are strictly focussing on baggage and travel accessories for the upper class," says Witco's managing director V P Harris. Witco also stocks apparels in its Chennai stores. A few social factors have also prompted the chain to opt for a smaller store in Bangalore. "In Chennai and other parts of Tamil Nadu, shopping is like a family outing. People come in hordes to shop. Hence large stores with ample seating is a prerequisite.



No fish out of water: Shopping Time Made Relaxing Time



ANGLING FOR EYEBALLS: Images & Mirrors are Propped At Angles

shoppers without losing the traditional and loyal customers. The water body on the pavement at the foot of the stairway leading to the store, too, has blue lighting. Blue is universally accepted as a cool colour and adds to the 'premium' look.

Going by industry experts, India is slowly becoming a very brand conscious society and retail branding is recommended strongly. The reputation of a store is often represented by colours, materials and the visual cues inherent in design, they say. The fixtures used—steel rods, silver antique-finished metal frames, wood and glass—achieve this objective and give the Transit Store a distinct ambience of opulence.

Considering how the shopper quickly and conveniently finds the brand name she recognizes with and seeks inside the store, Samsonite takes the lead in visibility. Witco houses three brands: Samsonite, VIP and Delphi and is India's number one dealer for Samsonite. So the store shows off the brand as soon as the shopper enters followed by VIP and Delphi in that order. Here the retailer's distinctive visual merchandising not only becomes part of the retail image but also adds greatly to what shoppers look for in a shopping experience.

Fixtures and racks are kept very flexible to enable store managers to change the positions and hence interiors if need be. None of the fixtures are wall-mounted and they can be easily moved around.

The façade and sides of the store is sheer glass used to communicate directly with the shopper and invite him to make the move. And who says neighborhood watch does not help? Right next to the Transit Store is Qwiky's outlet, famous 'hang-out' for the hip and the hype. The clientele of Qwiky

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matches Witco's target profile. The glass wall to the side gives people sipping the cuppa a hint of what lies inside. An imagery of a girl playing in the beach mounted on the feature