

CLIENT



SECTOR

RETAIL & COMMERCE

DELIVERABLE

INNOVATION STRATEGY
CONCEPT DEVELOPMENT
ENVIRONMENTAL DESIGN

Designed a transformational new omnichannel experience



The Challenge

With Toys 'R' Us on the brink of bankruptcy, the team needed a strategy and prototype for a future-state store.

The toy store was lacking relevancy. It was a major challenge for parents to visit stores with children, with aisle after aisle of "No, sorry's" for one rare "Yes, you can have that." Once their strength, the toy store's vast selection added to the stress of finding the one perfect item. Those who knew exactly what they wanted could find it more easily online, and super stores provided good enough convenience at prices that commoditized the category even further.

Meanwhile, children were delving deeper into content outside of the toy store, watching unboxing videos, toy previews and cartoons, and connecting to licenses through apps, games, and movie clips.

We needed to bring the magic back to the toy store — to capture the excitement around content and make it more relevant than the competition.

The Key Insight

If Toys 'R' Us was going to compete against a new breed of online and offline competition, their physical stores needed to occupy a unique space within the modern commercial ecosystem. It needed to shift away from selling SKUs and start creating connection with brands, toymakers, and the communities that love them.

We developed a strategic vision for the business that focused on connection through play, and on establishing Toys 'R' Us as a second stage for the stories behind the toys. We brought our strategic vision to life with:

- A highly interactive, new in-store experience that encouraged children to engage with their favorite stories.
- A toy lab for our brand partners to pilot products, de-risk their investments, and have children actually engage with the test lab.
- A Wishing Wand that tracked the children's journey around the store, incentivized them to share their interest in products, and find their next favorite toy. This sophisticated web of customer data allowed the retailer to map preferences, make recommendations, and more accurately predict sales.

These components were closely integrated to create a revolutionary customer experience centered on inspiration, interaction, and emotional connection.

The Outcome

Within 10 months of beginning this project, we had our first wave of initiatives in pilot in time for the 2015 holiday season. This included a live multi-store trial in partnership with media and content producers, an updated store design look and feel, and a technology-enabled format. The data collected has been used to re-imagine store layouts, improve sell-through beyond the store, de-risk toy investment, build better experiences around toy licenses, and scale the program to dozens of more stores for the 2016 holiday season.

Finally, and potentially most importantly, it has started to transform parents' knee-jerk response of "No, sorry" to "Yes! Let's go to Toys 'R' Us".

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