

Big DIY Retail Tour Milton Keynes

October 2020



SteveLister.com

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Now this is huge coup for me.....a day out with the DIY insights legend that is Steve Collinge, Managing Director, Insight Retail Group.

Our tour of Milton Keynes started off in B&Q and then onto Screwfix, Toolstation, Selco, Homebase, The Range, B&M, Flooring SuperStore.com & finally Wickes.

It was a fascinating tour and to spend the day with Steve, hearing his views & insights into all things DIY & Home Improvement retail.

We would like to thank all the brilliant store managers & staff for letting us do this and appreciate the time they spent talking to us.

Let's take a look.....



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Insightdiy

Intelligence and Insight for the DIY Industry

What we looked at!

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This is from a customers viewpoint!

00

Firstly, I have to make something really clear here, I am not from the DIY or Home Improvements sector background and will be looking at the retail displays, point of sales marketing activations & overall customer journey.

I have worked with Stanley for the past six years and have enjoyed working with their teams on new in-store displays & marketing activations.

Im not an expert in this sector but Im looking at it from a customers point of view, what is attractive, impactful, engaging and will also give a frank, honest overview of what I see.

01

B&Q

Part of the Kingfisher Group, B&Q is the largest home improvement and garden centre retailer in the UK and Europe and the third largest in the world. The company strives to offer everything its customers need to perform home improvement and DIY projects.

When I knew that B&Q was going to be our first store I felt comfortable, I love B&Q, it's my DIY/Home Improvement store of choice and is my destination store.

It's always been a store I have trusted for great products at great prices and the service has always been the best.

However, today I would be entering with a more critical eye, a retail eye and from a customers perspective.....would it change?





B&Q

Footfall

As soon as you enter this store the first thing that hits you is the sheer size & scale of this location.

Retail Gazette publishes a live update on Covid-19's true impact on retail – Live footfall still shows that retail footfall is 38% down on this time last year.

Now these images were taken on Monday, mid morning and we were asked specifically not to include any staff members or customers, so you may look and think the footfall is less than it actually was!

B&Q

Social Distancing

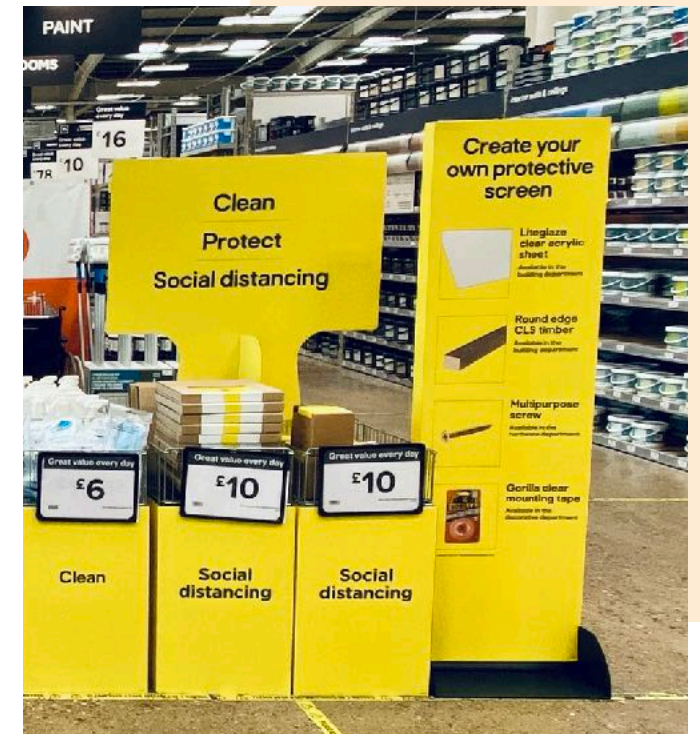
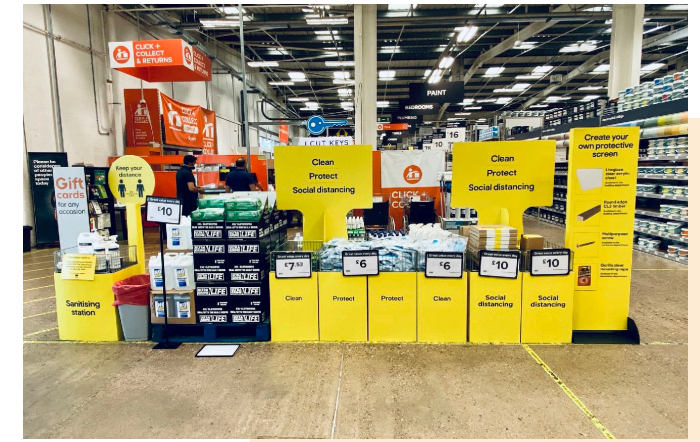
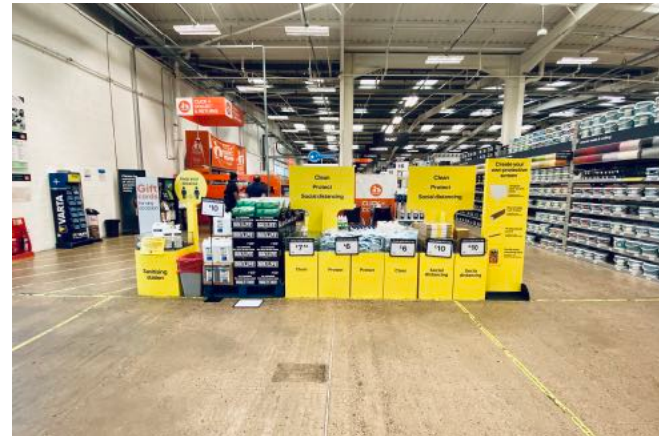
This is a good idea and any ideas to keep us safe in these uncertain times are undoubtedly a positive thing.

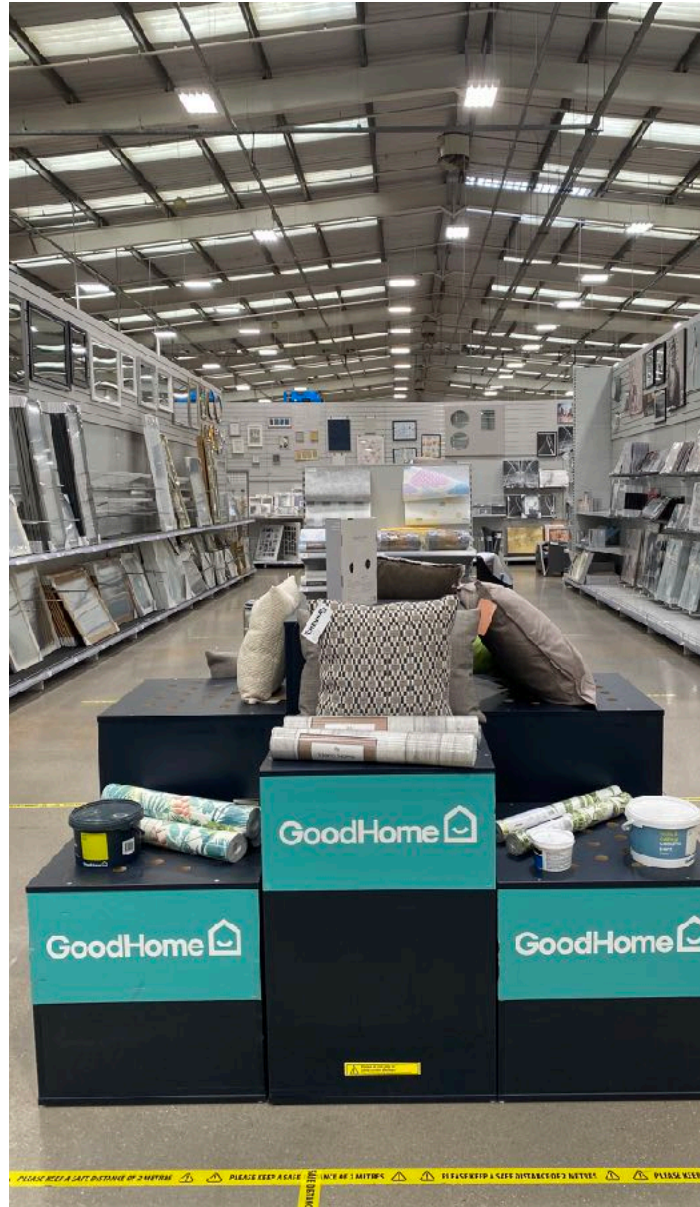
Im not too sure who this is aimed at.....home owners?

A great selection of cleaners products, protection items and social distancing messages.

A great pop-up cardboard display giving you clear instructions on how to 'Create your own protective screen'.....with the relevant departments where they are available from.

If it is for trade, bars, restaurants and cafe's then not sure why this wasn't in the Trade Point area.





B&Q

GoodHome

A soon as you enter store you are confronted by this large open space with two large black plinths..... looking like an Olympic podium.

Not sure if this was meant to have been a 'curated' set of the latest, 'must have' products or just a way of filling some space up but I was slightly confused at what this was meant to be and looked like it had been thrown together.

B&Q

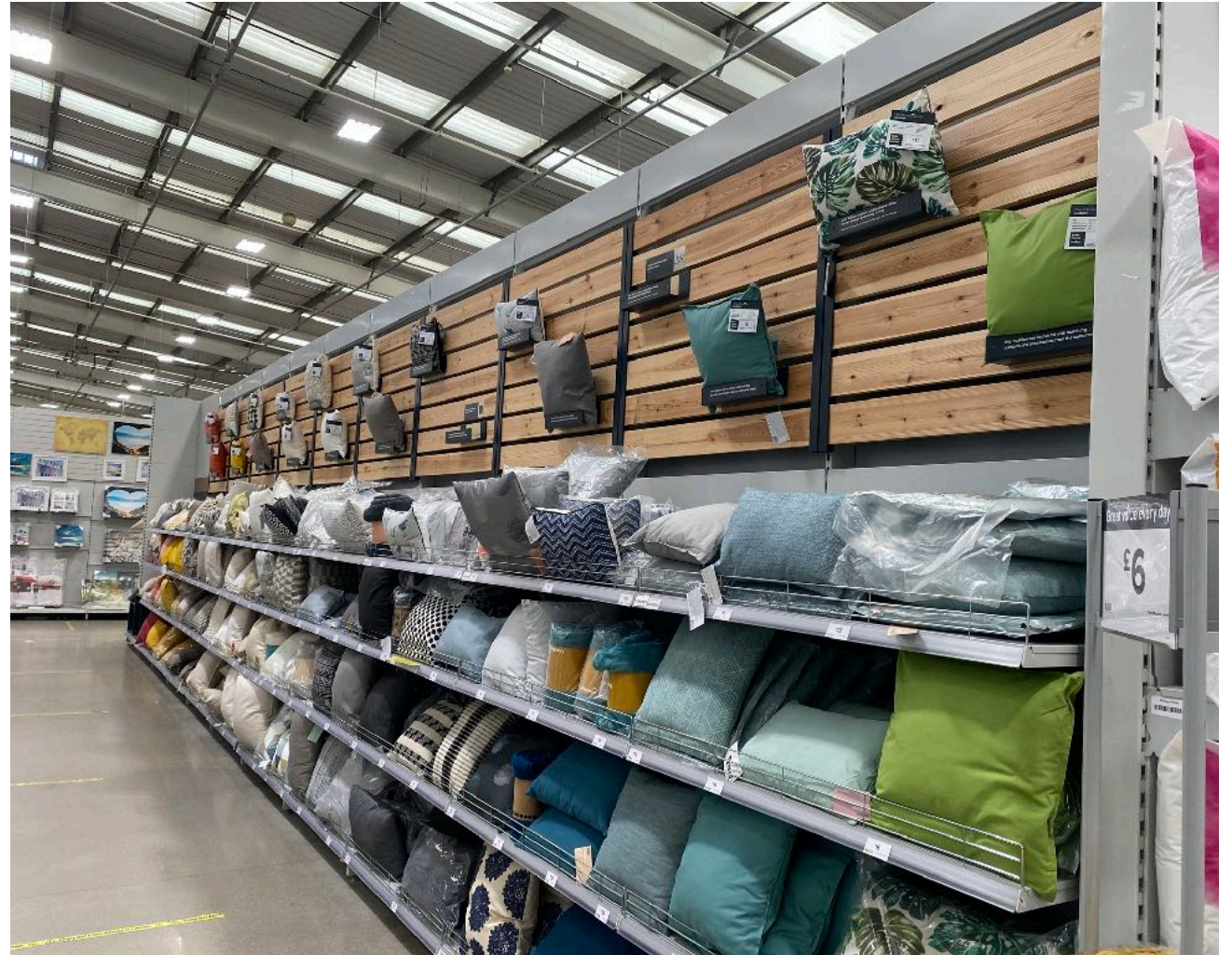
Home Furnishings

I really liked this display, wood panelled, high level display with all the cushions on.

It had little printed labels on the shelf stating that they could be matched with curtains & other accessories from the same range.

There were other wording about the range online!

Bright, colourful & engaging.....perfect when entering a home improvement store!



B&Q

Discontinued Display

On first look, I saw this and thought I liked this display.

It had a nice wooden slatted backdrop.....overlaid with some incredible fabrics.....or were they wall paper?

On closer inspection they were all labelled 'Discontinued'!

Did that mean they were cheaper because they were discontinued?

I wasn't sure, no products around to buy, maybe they were sold out.

Takes the award for 'Most Confusing Display' of the day award!



B&Q

Aisles

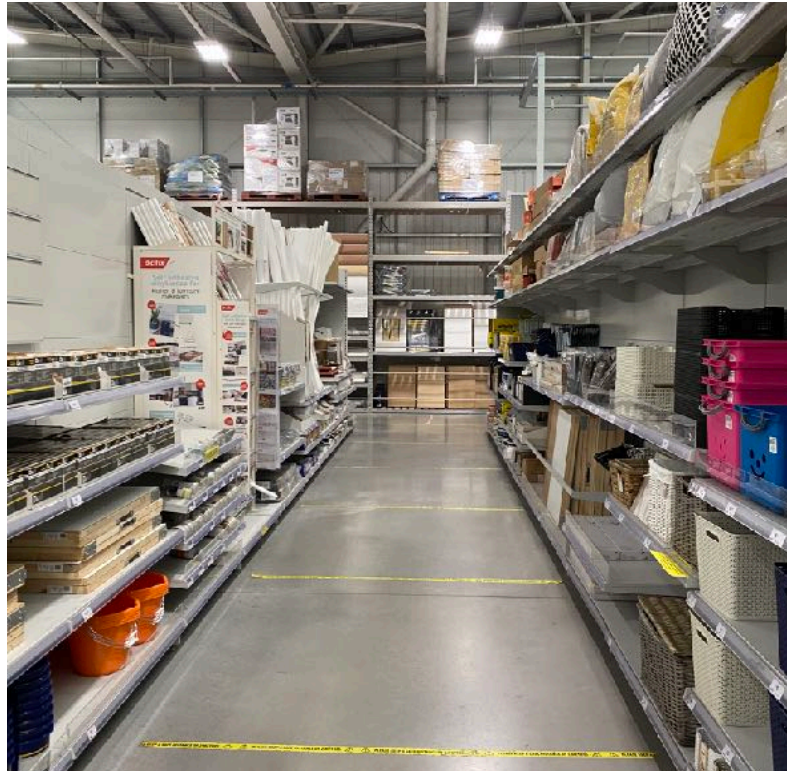
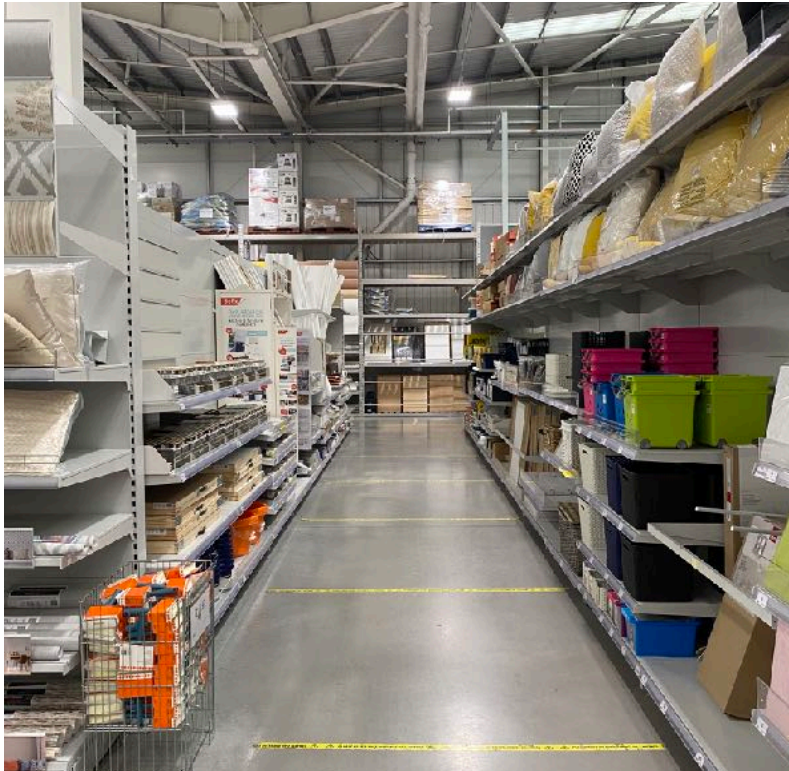
What can I say about the aisles with stores like B&Q.

I appreciate that they have an Aisle Numbers.....but when you are at each end of an aisle and looking down there is absolutely no visible flag flags or stoppers, site lines to attract your eye.

What's halfway down?.....I have no idea.

It's a huge long aisle full of products and insight data shows that customers do NOT go down each aisle in full, they tend to shop by going into & out of aisles!

Clearer signage would be so beneficial for customers as they want things to be easy to locate.



B&Q

In-store Marketing

The in-store marketing of their promotional '3 for 2' and '20% Off' was really effective.

The simplicity was really impactful and keeping with the B&Q orange corporate colours, white text and bold imagery worked really well.

Not too sure about the additional 'stuck on' customer notice but throughout the store these had real standout.



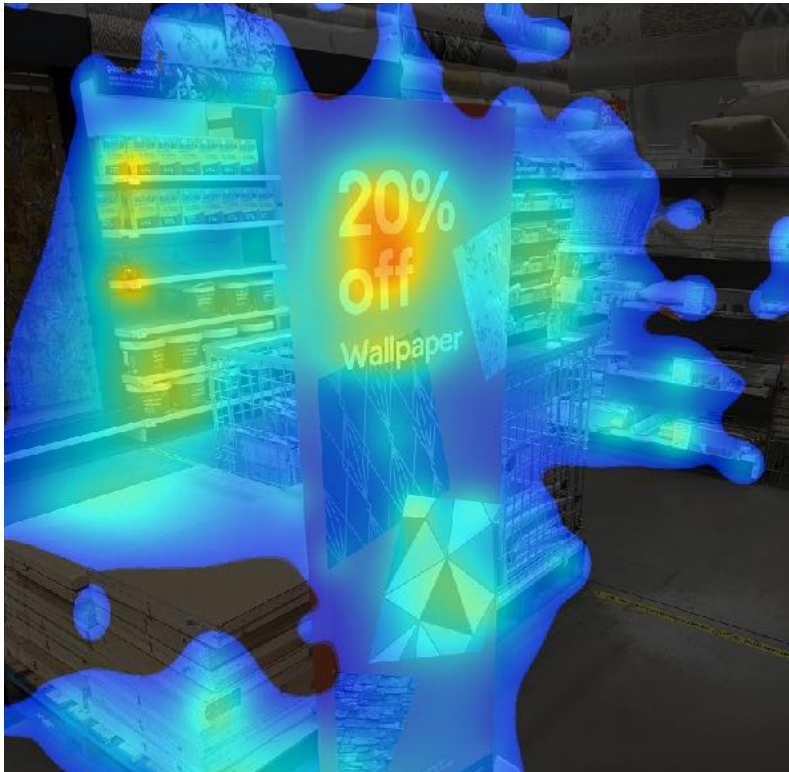
B&Q

Visual Analysis

This is the visual analysis for the previous '20% Off Wallpaper' marketing activation.

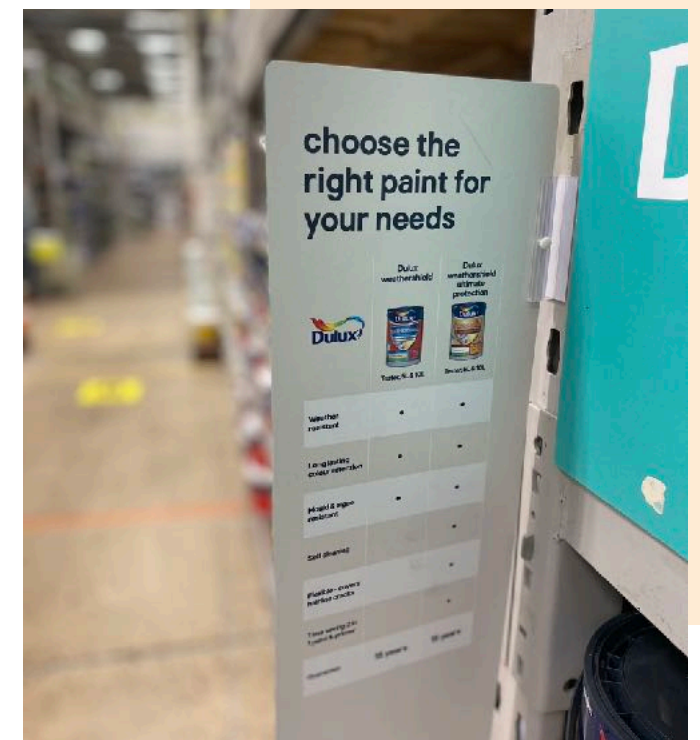
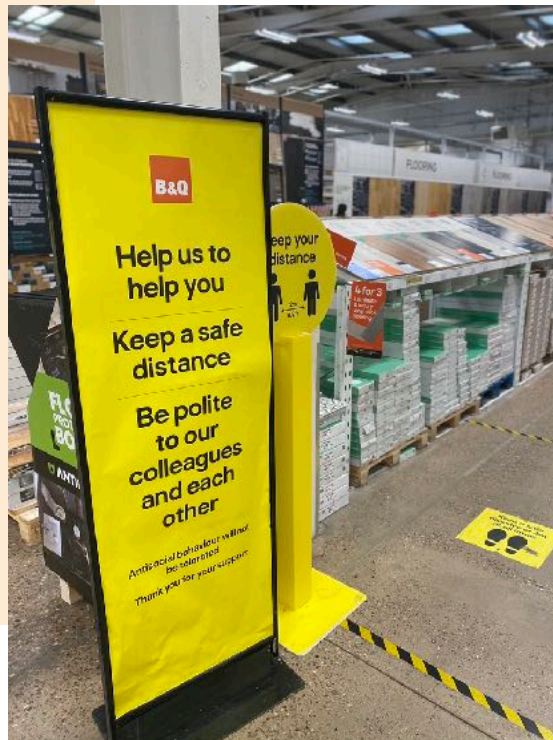
The short answer is.....this design works in-store and customers actually see it!!!

The report is in three parts, firstly the visual heat map, this shows the probability that each part of your image is seen within the initial 3-5 second first glance time period that is critical to bringing attention to your content. Secondly, this is a simplified version of the Heatmap results.. Each region shown has a numeric score which predicts the probability that a person will look somewhere in that region within the first glance time period. Finally, these are the 4 most likely gaze locations, in their most probable viewing order (1 is the most likely).



B&Q

In-store Marketing





B&Q

Cuprinol Shades

This was a lovely display highlighting the paints colours & applications.

It was a simple cardboard header panel with overlaid products like a wooded planter and bird box.

Beautiful colour range along the shelf edge.

It must be popular (or re-stocking issue?!) as there was very little product left on the shelf!

B&Q

Ronseal Fence Paint

This is the same for these displays, engaging and impactful and bringing the garden into the store.





B&Q

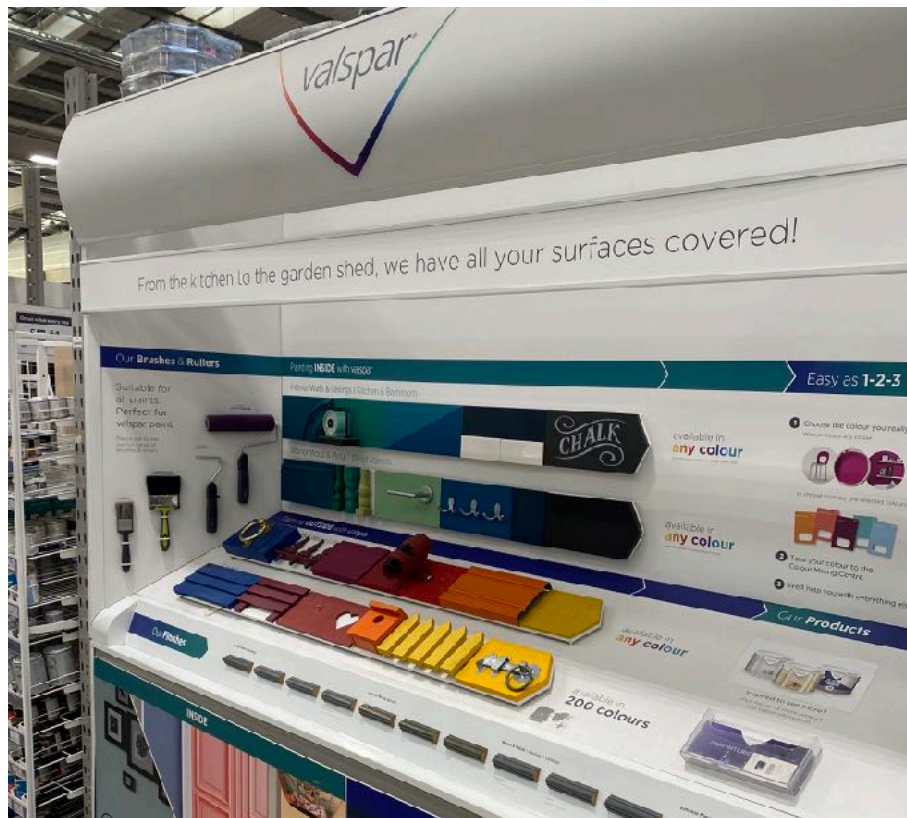
Valspar Exterior Garden & Decking

This was a standout display for me in this section. Brightly lit, printed lifestyle shots on the sides, clear messaging about the 'Colour Mixing Centre', the mixing process & the option of 200 colours. 3D paint pots gave a great connectivity to the product with colour swatches positioned perfectly on the front beneath the instructions. If the aim of this display was to bring the paints to life then it was achieved, great design.

B&Q

Valspar Wood & Metal Paint

This is how you do a paint display.....highly visual,
engaging, informative, impactful and effective!



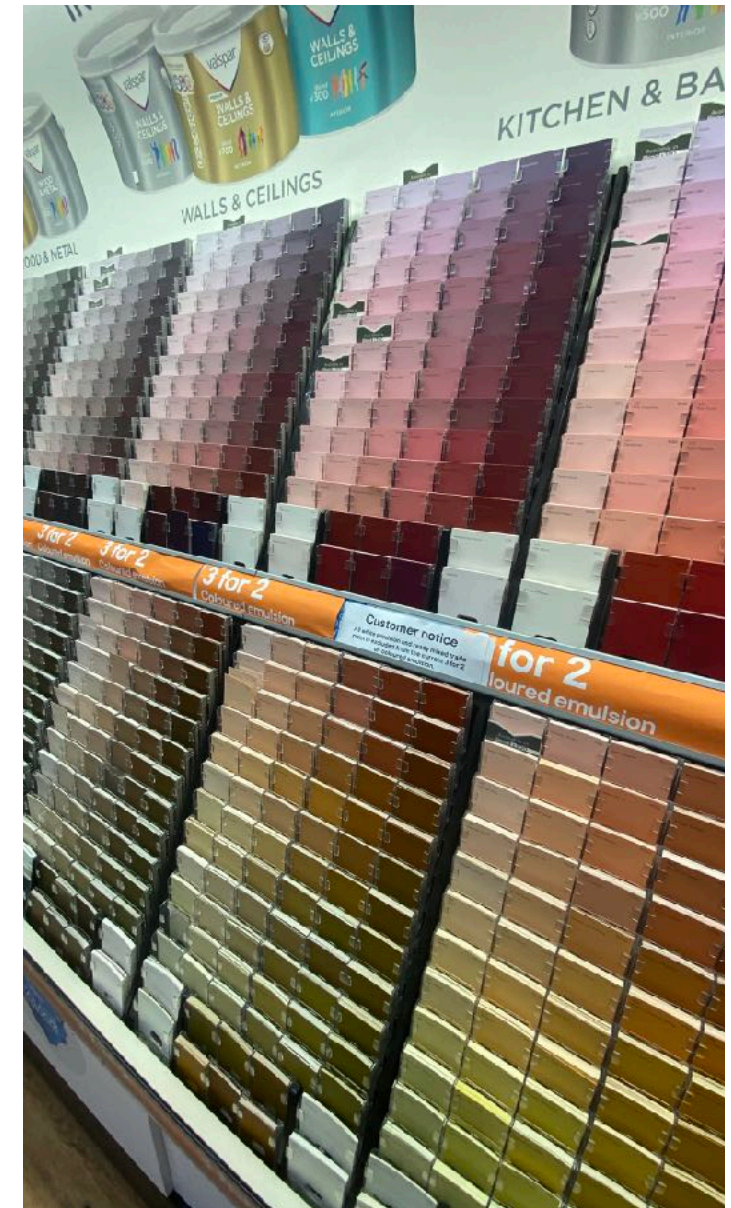
B&Q

Valspar Paint Display

This is the stand-out areas of the whole of B&Q.

Bright, colourful as you would expect from a paint brand but so well executed.

Note: These were taken in the B&Q Solihull Brand





B&Q

Exterior Paint Display

I found this display for Valspar exterior wood, metal & masonry plus the garden & decking paint really engaging.

There was something in it's striking white display with the colour swatches displayed in the front panel in a kaleidoscope of colour.

I wanted to understand further what customers actually see in-store, so I analysed it through the visual analysis tool.....the results are on the next page!

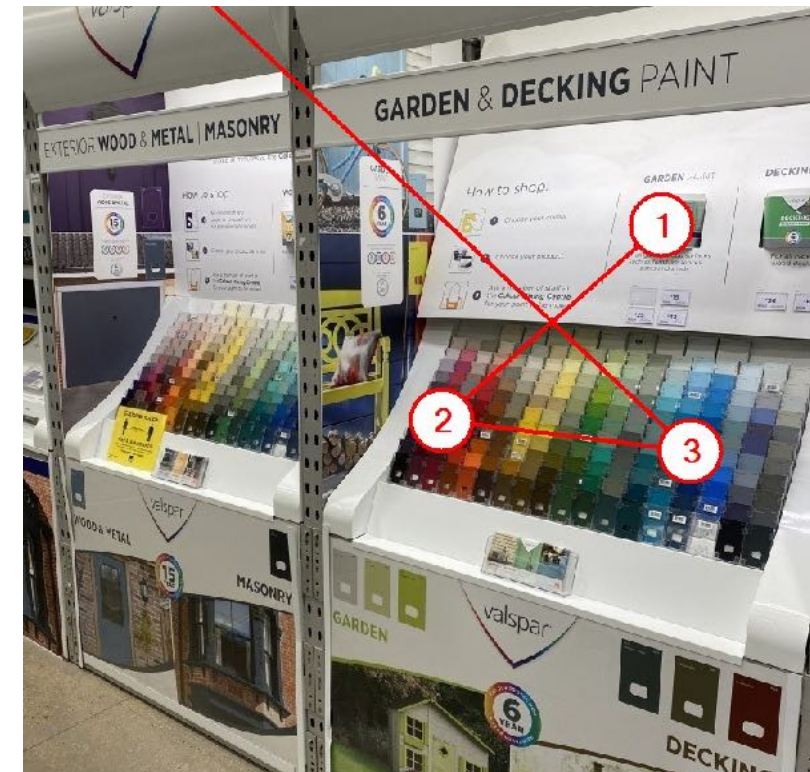
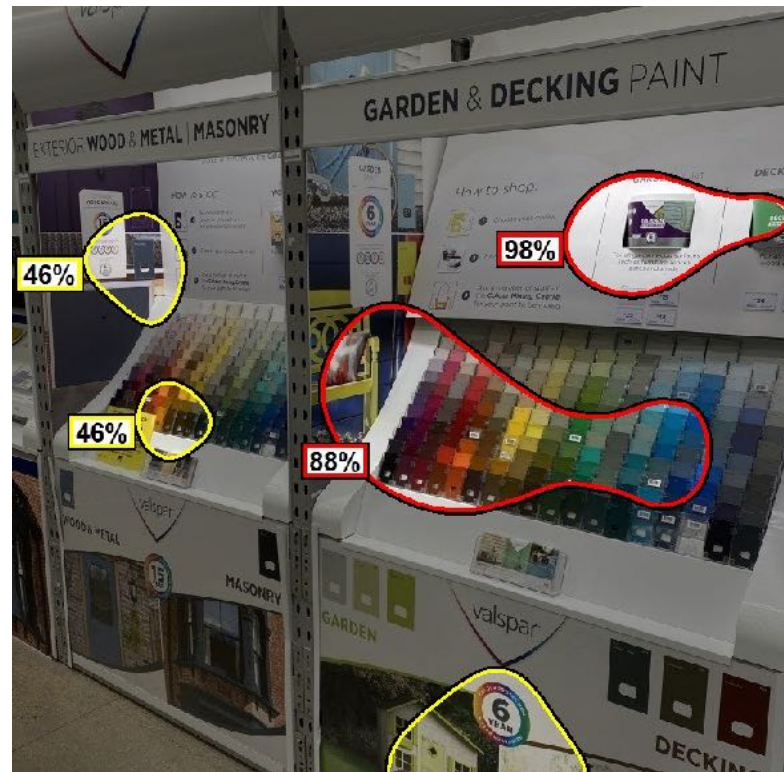
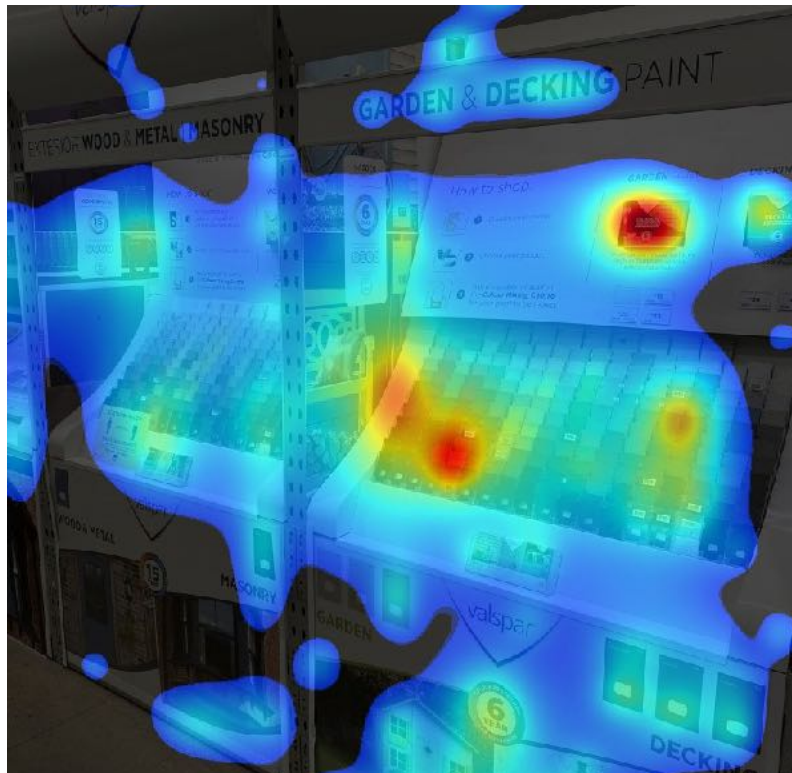
B&Q

Visual Analysis

This is the visual analysis for the previous Valspar Exterior Paint display.

Is this effective? The short answer is.....this design works in-store and customers actually see it!!!

The report is in three parts, firstly the visual heat map, this shows the probability that each part of your image is seen within the initial 3-5 second first glance time period that is critical to bringing attention to your content. Secondly, this is a simplified version of the Heatmap results.. Each region shown has a numeric score which predicts the probability that a person will look somewhere in that region within the first glance time period. Finally, these are the 4 most likely gaze locations, in their most probable viewing order (1 is the most likely).



B&Q

Bathroom Planner

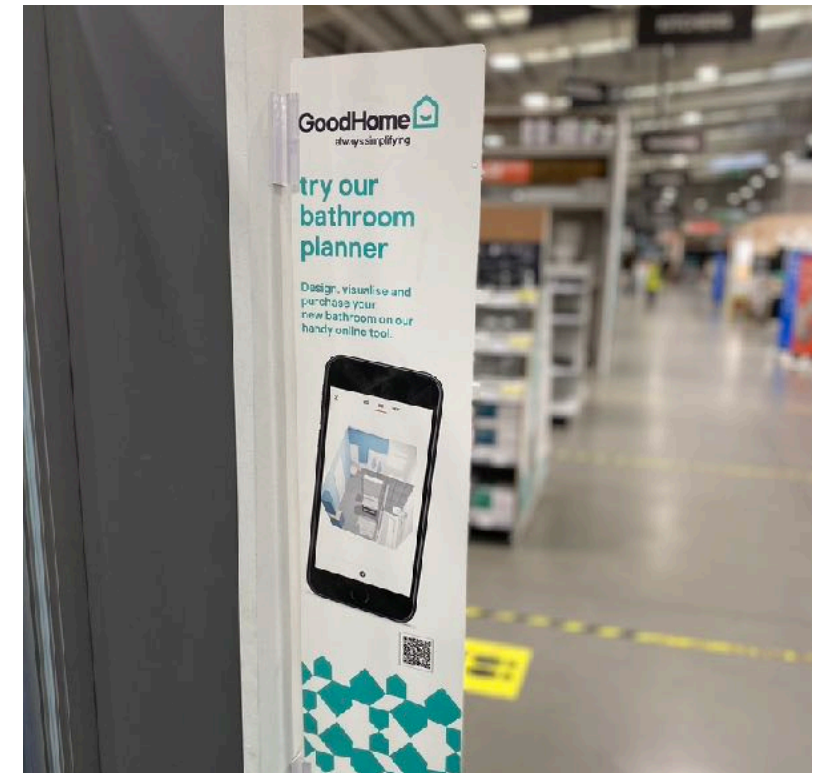
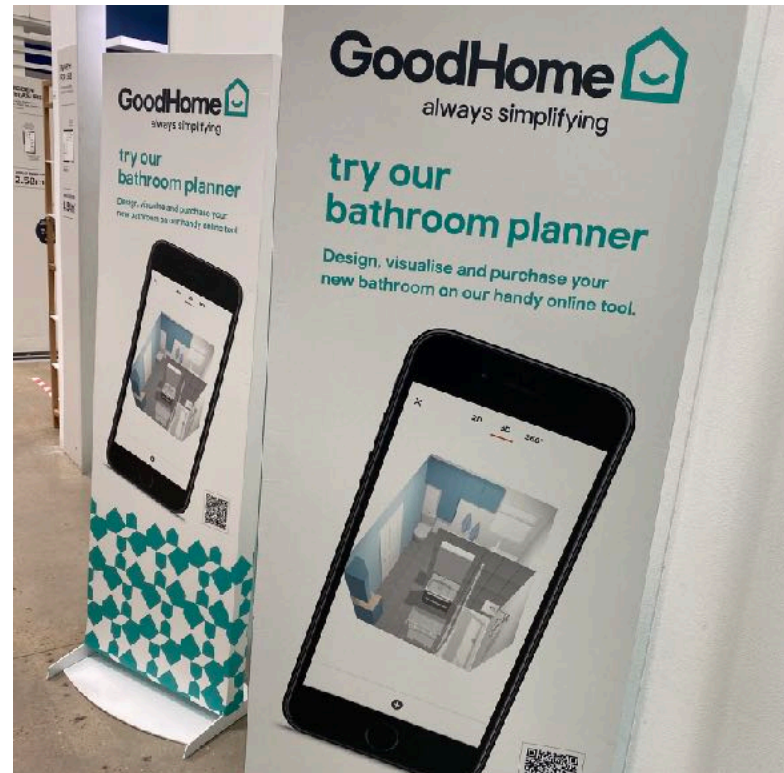
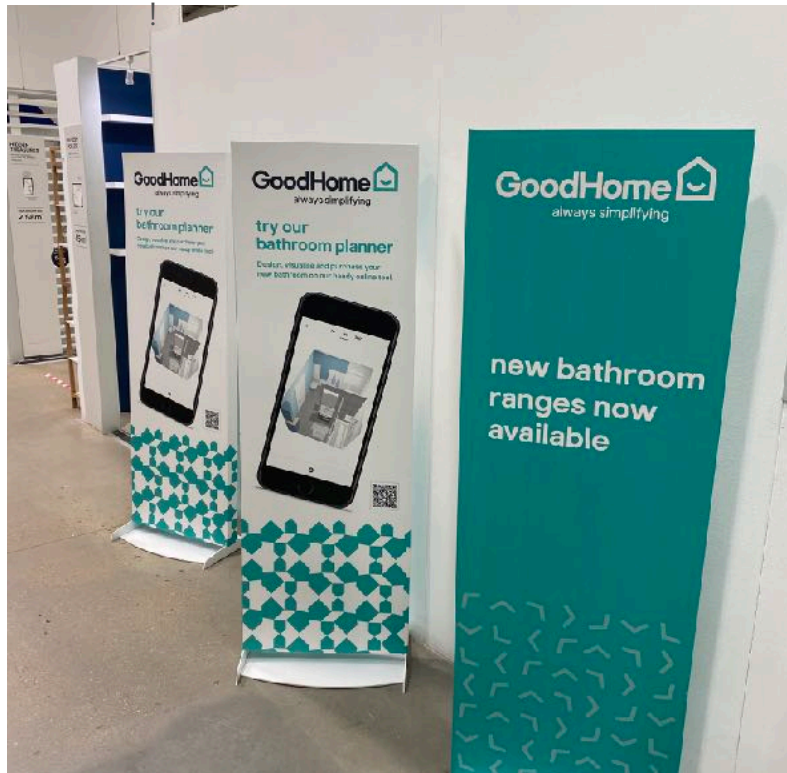
This is the GoodHome Bathroom Planner from B&Q.

This is a great idea to design your bathroom using this online 3D modelling software.

If you haven't seen it before you can plan your bathroom, take a virtual tour to help you visualise your ideas as it instantly creates realistic, 360 degree view of your bathroom.

It also gives you inspiration & guidance with their ready-made bathrooms.

Customers can sit in the comfort of their own home and design!

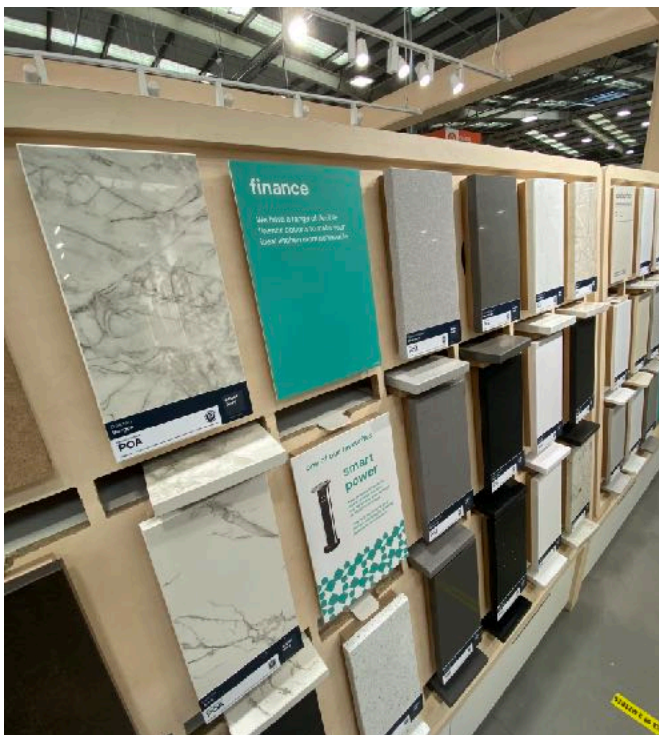
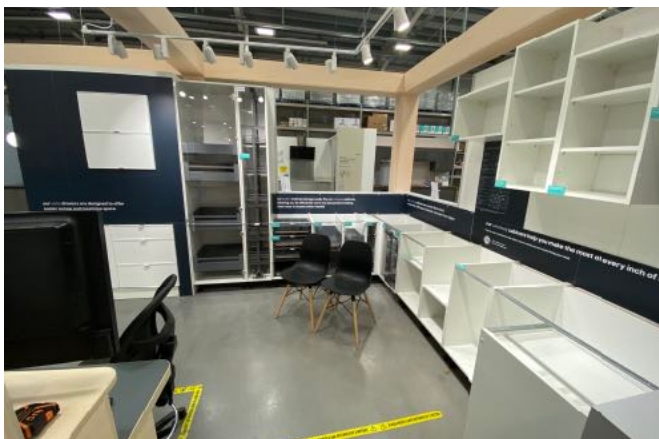




B&Q Kitchens

Beautifully designed & beautifully affordable!
On the corner of the kitchen area there was a pop-up displays highlighting the fact that B&Q were the Kitchen Compare 'Lowest Priced - National DIY Retailer of Kitchens 2019' along with their awards for 2017 & 2018.

Always good to showcase your awards & price credentials clearly to consumers!



B&Q Kitchens

I haven't purchased a new kitchen for many years but if I were to then this would be the place for me. The products were incredibly well displayed. Very simply layout, flowed perfectly and I could see myself in here designing my new kitchen with the team. We spoke at length with the two kitchen teams members, what a credit they were to B&Q. These are exactly the people you want in your stores, friendly, keen, not pushy, hugely knowledgable and very approachable. We asked about how they were coping with the customer restrictions & online planning sessions and they were very positive and you could clearly tell they loved their jobs.

B&Q

Flooring

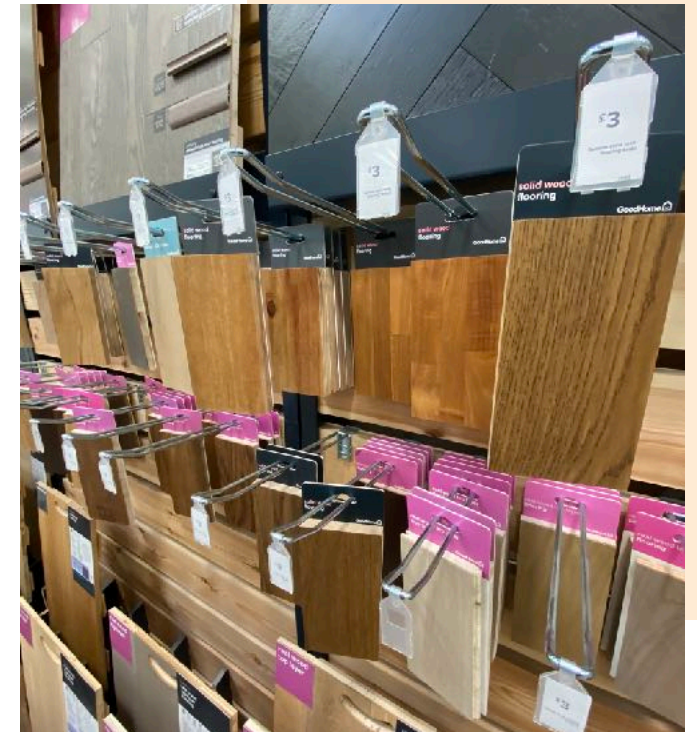
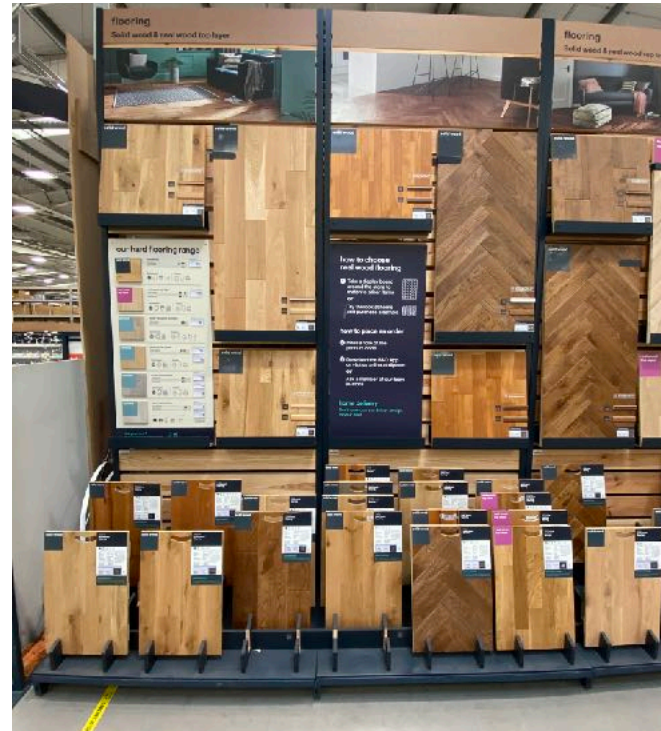
Really engaging area for solid wood & real wood top layer flooring.

Clear instructional panels with how to choose the right real wood floor with clear pricing.

The large working samples were easy to lift out and place on the floor.

However the standout feature for me was the small samples you could buy and take away.

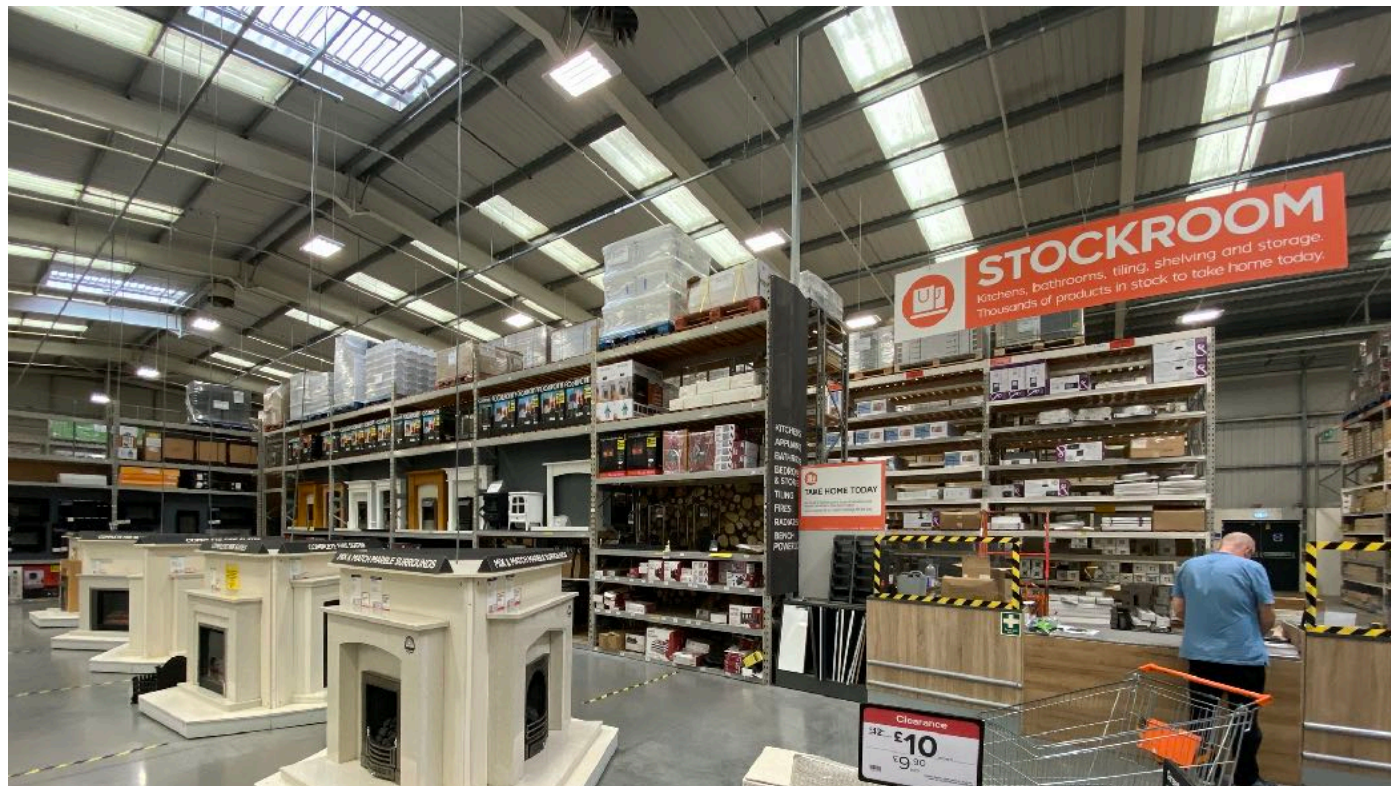
I actually hadn't seen this before and thought it was a great idea as seeing samples in situ, at home is always an issue.



B&Q

Stockroom

Clearly signposted area for the 'Stockroom' where you can collect kitchens, bathrooms, tiling, shelving & storage products to take home.

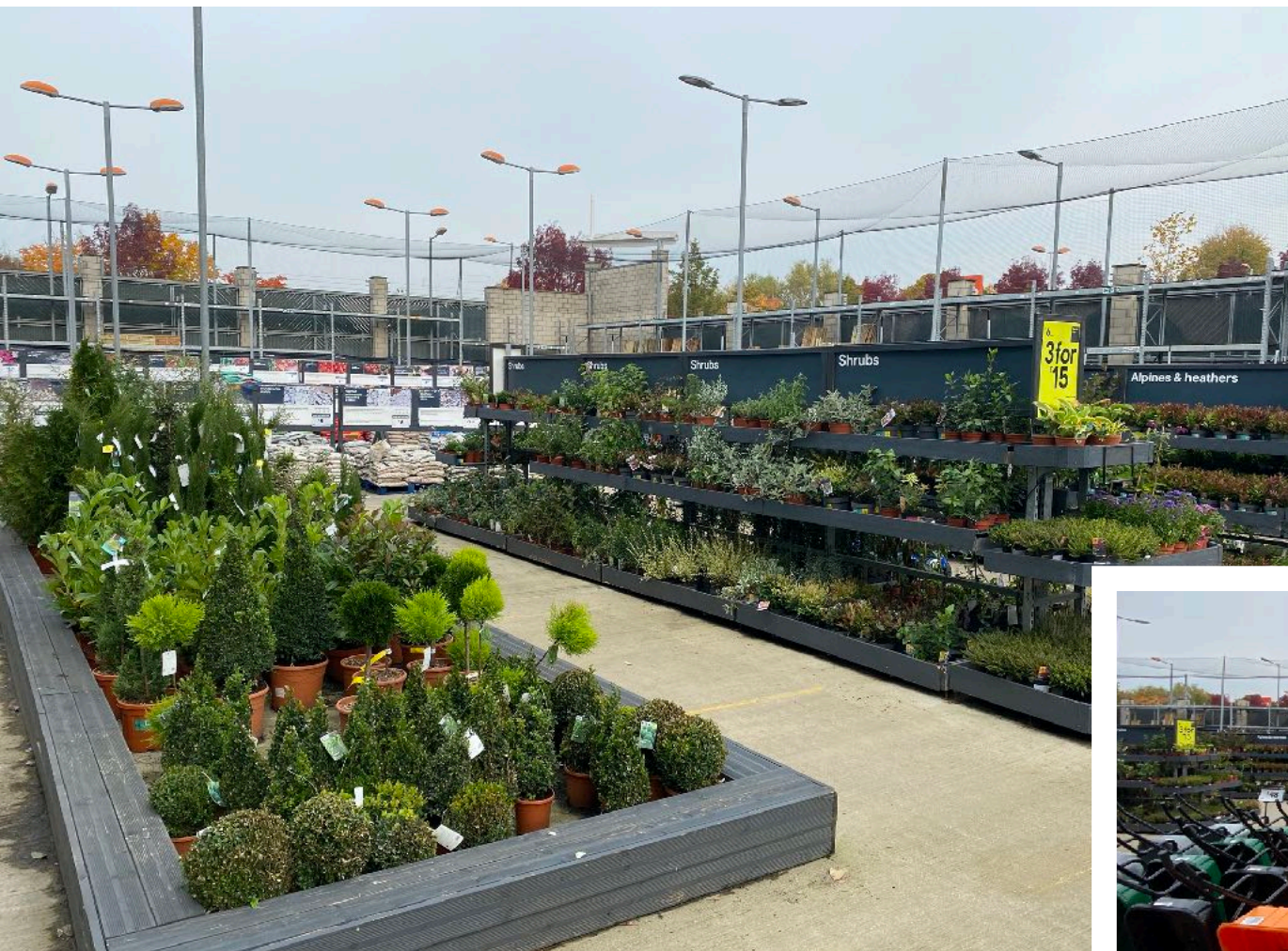


B&Q

Trade Point

Again, clearly signposted area for the 'Trade Point' area where I was reliably informed that this area is at it's busiest at the beginning of the day when the tradesmen are collecting all their supplies for their day.

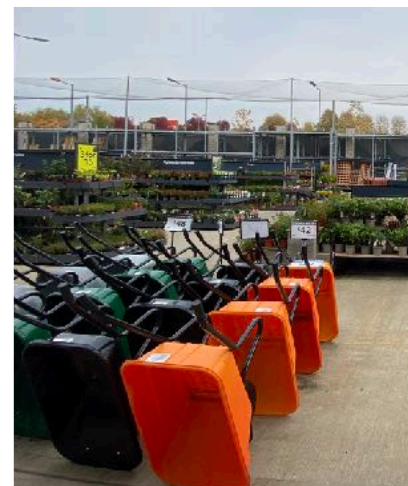




B&Q

Outdoor Garden Centre

With everyone at home in lockdown, gardens over the summer have been the saviour of many people. Excuse the pun but this must be a huge growth area for B&Q and I was expecting great things as I have always liked their plants & garden products. However, I was slightly underwhelmed by this one. No colour to inspire me, just a wall of green plants which was dominated by the huge job lot of wheelbarrows, maybe it's the season for this product with autumn leaves and everyone getting their gardens ready for winter.



New B&Q Adverts

I wanted to include these new B&Q adverts which put a more emotional spin on DIY & Home Improvements.

These were launched by creative agency, Uncommon.

As our homes have become so significant this year, not just our homes but our offices and refuges from the pandemic.....I absolutely love these as they are a departure from the endless instagram interior images!



02



Screwfix

Screwfix is the UK's largest multi channel supplier of Trade Tools, Plumbing, Electrical, Bathrooms and Kitchens. With over 30 years experience in the industry, they despatch tens of thousands of parcels every week for next day and weekend delivery to tradesmen, handymen and serious DIY enthusiasts all over the UK. Again, this is not my sector so I was looking at this with a completely fresh set of eyes.



Screwfix

Location

Now this was an interesting one for me as it was located right next door to their biggest competitor. I am sure that there are many people reading this report who knows the strategy behind this, the reasoning why customers can have both trade accounts, shop in each one for different supplies but it made it an interesting visit.

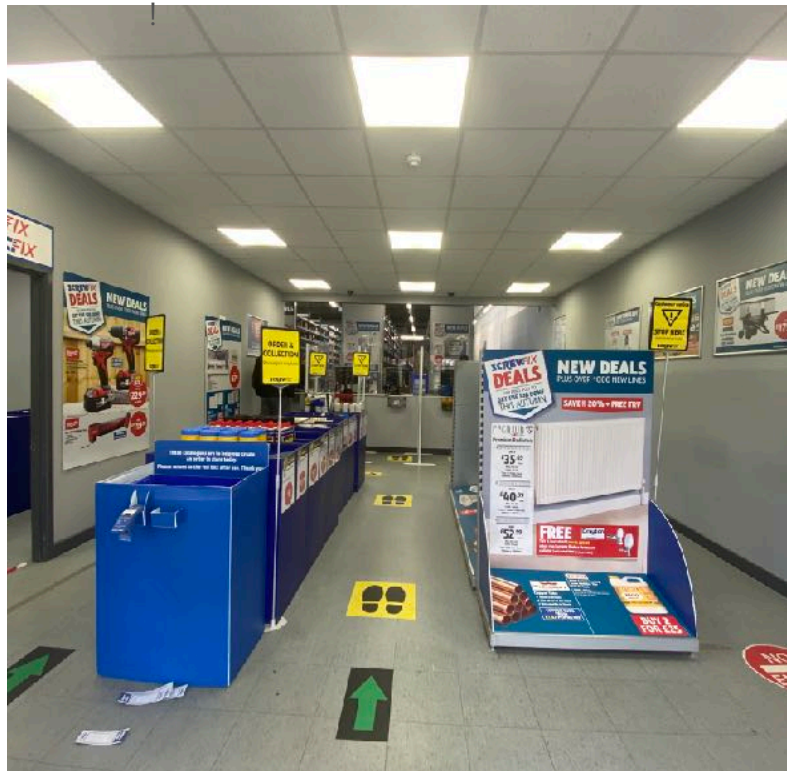
Screwfix

Inside was well designed for the COVID-19 restrictions with clearly marked lanes to go to the next available till point, well designed and had a great flow.

The area had well stocked dump bins of the key 'grab & go' products and point of sale marketing on the walls.

These areas are functional, customer have probably placed online orders and are coming to just collect, it looks a slick operation. We spoke with the manager who was brilliant, engaging & willing to let us photograph and have a chat.

I wonder how much customer interaction has decreased because of the current restrictions?



Screwfix

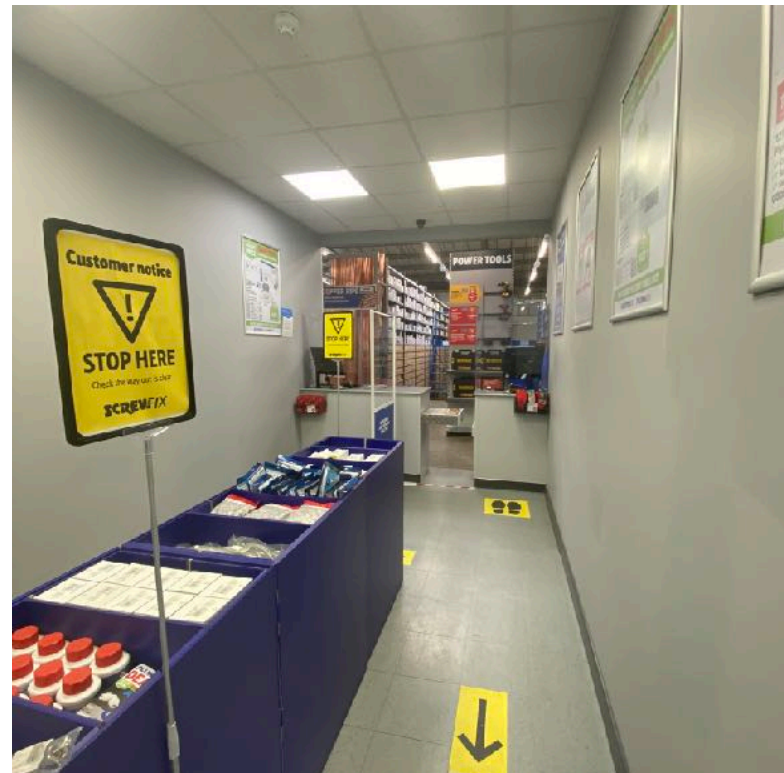
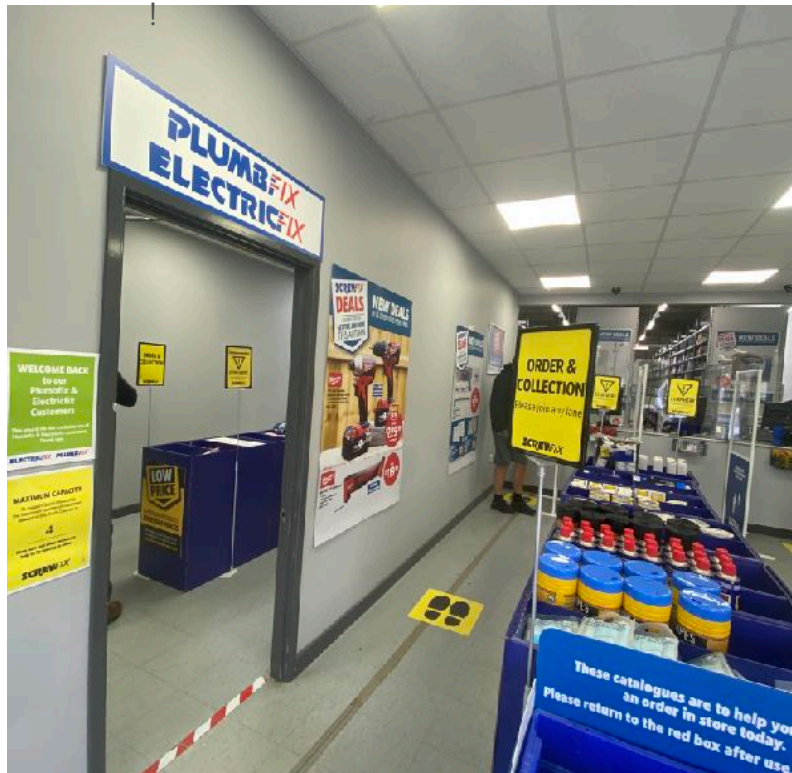
PlumbFix & ElectricFix

There is a completely different areas for PlumFix & ElectricFix customers off to the right hand side as you enter.

Clearly signposted on entry and again has the social distancing messaging with floor graphics to manage customer flow.

Dump bins formed the middle section, again these must be the top, high use, consumable products that customers need.

There was a lot of printed messaging and I wonder if all of it is necessary,....sometimes less is more.

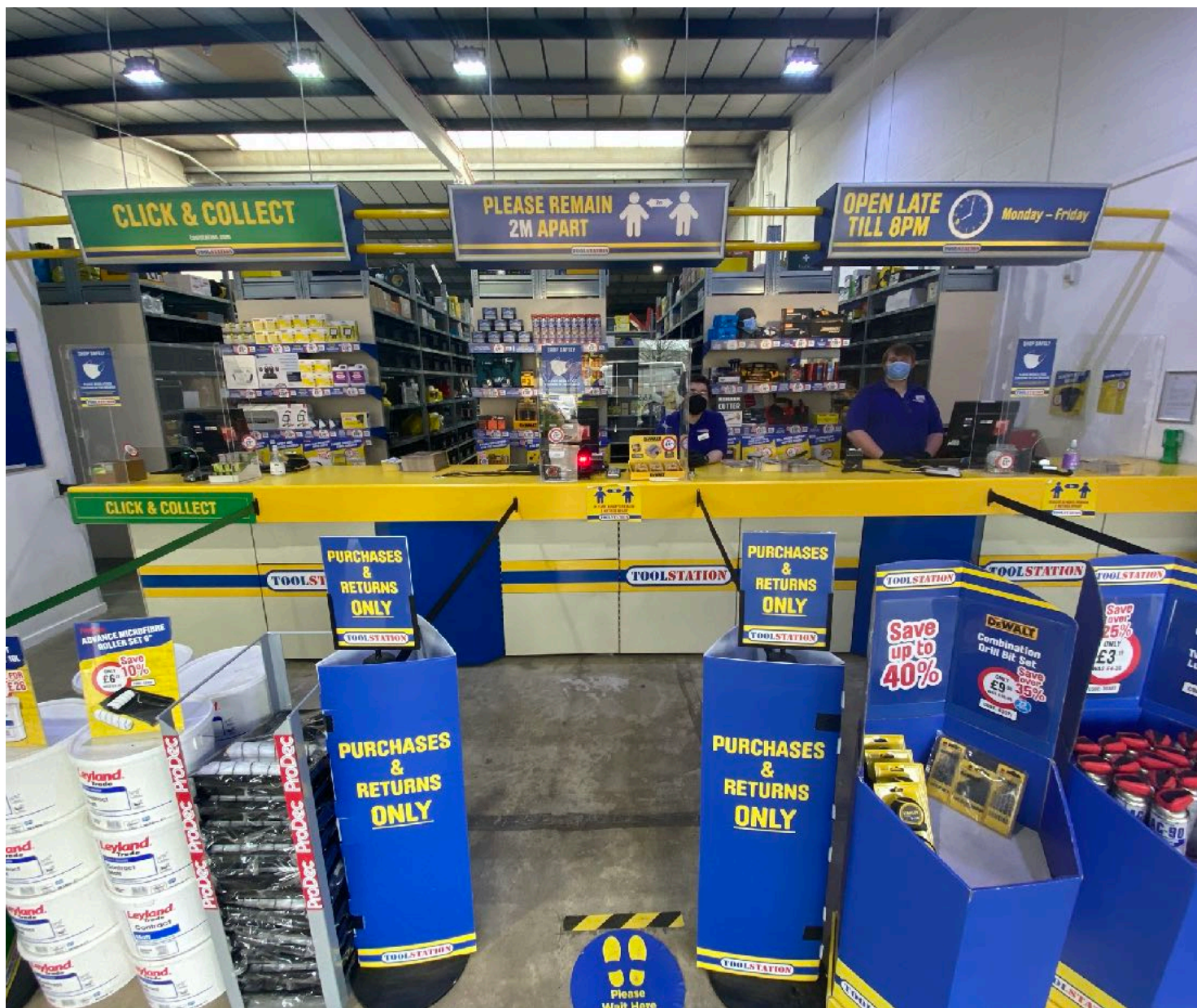


Toolstation



Toolstation is one of Britain's fastest growing suppliers of tools, accessories and building supplies to the trade, home improvers and self-builders. With a multi-channel offering, Toolstation customers can buy online, at hundreds of branches across the UK, through a dedicated UK call centre or via a mobile website.

This was positioned right next door to the Screwfix and I am sure that there is a strategic reason for this positioning which I was fascinated to hear from Steve Collinge. If I were a builder, I would have two trade accounts and manage both of them for the special offers across both.....which I am sure that is how they use these two companies.



Toolstation

Inside it was extremely well laid out with green colour coding for their 'Click & Collect' and blue for all other customers.

Products ranges stacked on the floor with social distancing messages and directional signage.

I felt really busy and borderline cluttered making it tight to manoeuvre into each lane.

The staff here were absolutely brilliant as we explained what we were doing.

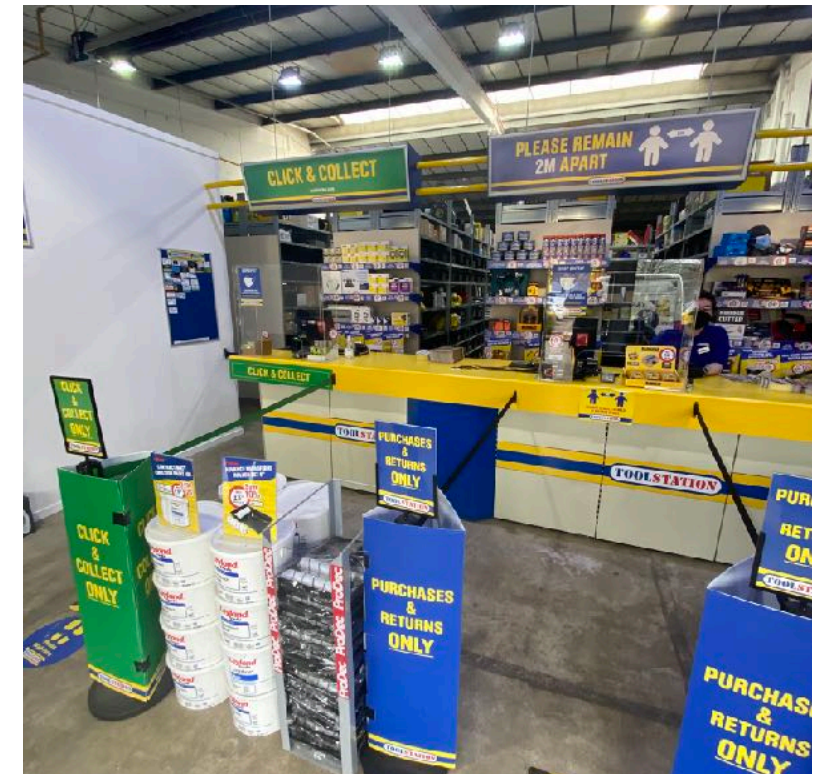
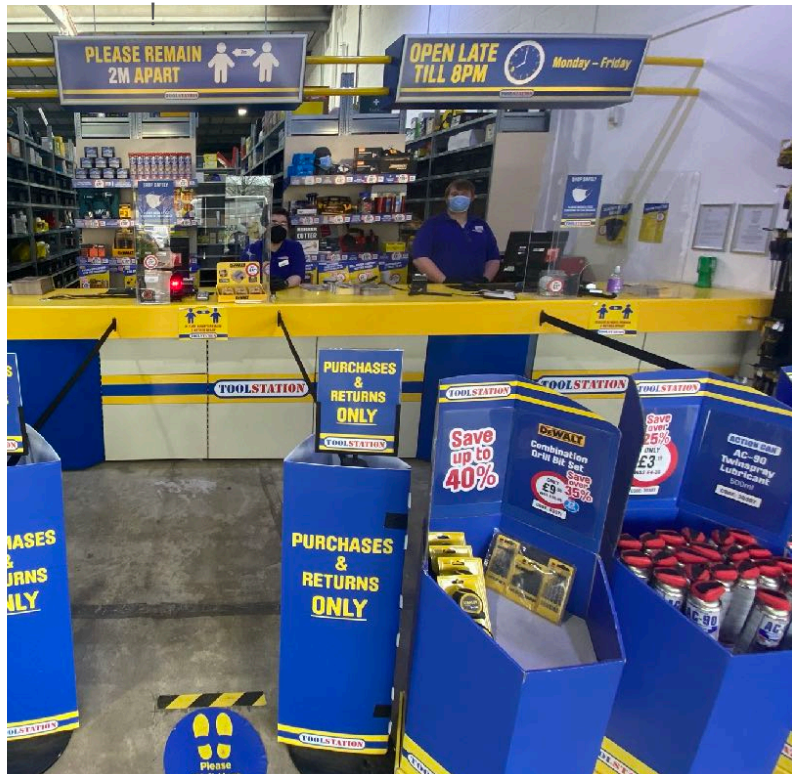
We asked about what big changes they had seen due to the COVID-19 restrictions and they said because of the coffee & soup machine being switched off that customers don't stop & chat, ask questions etc.....it's more of a transactional visit now, order, collect & leave.

Toolstation

This only had a small footprint, I am not sure if this it a typical size store.

Products were stacked on the floor with the latest deals to capture the customer attention and dump bins in the aisles and against the window.....I wonder how effective these are as they are facing you on exit when you're leaving the premises.

Maybe because of the lanes & current restrictions it's not normally laid out like this but it felt cluttered and slightly restrictive.



04

Selco Builders Warehouse

Selco's roots date back to 1895 in the Birmingham based and family owned Sewell & Co. (Timber) Ltd. Over the past century, Selco has flourished into the highly competitive and respected trade only builders' merchant it is today, with ambitious plans for continued growth.

The business model combines the best of traditional builders' merchanting with a modern self-service environment and many retail disciplines. Customer focus is at the very heart of the trade and Selco has built its business around serving the small/medium builder operating in the repair, maintenance and improvement sector.



Selco

Builders Warehouse

On entering this store, it had a very different feel to all the other stores we had visited up to that point.

I don't know if it was, maybe it was in a newer premises with natural light streaming through the ceiling sky lights but it felt so much brighter, lighter and more engaging.

The natural light seemed to bring all the colours to life as well.

The blue, yellow & white signage was easy to read and navigation around the store was simple.



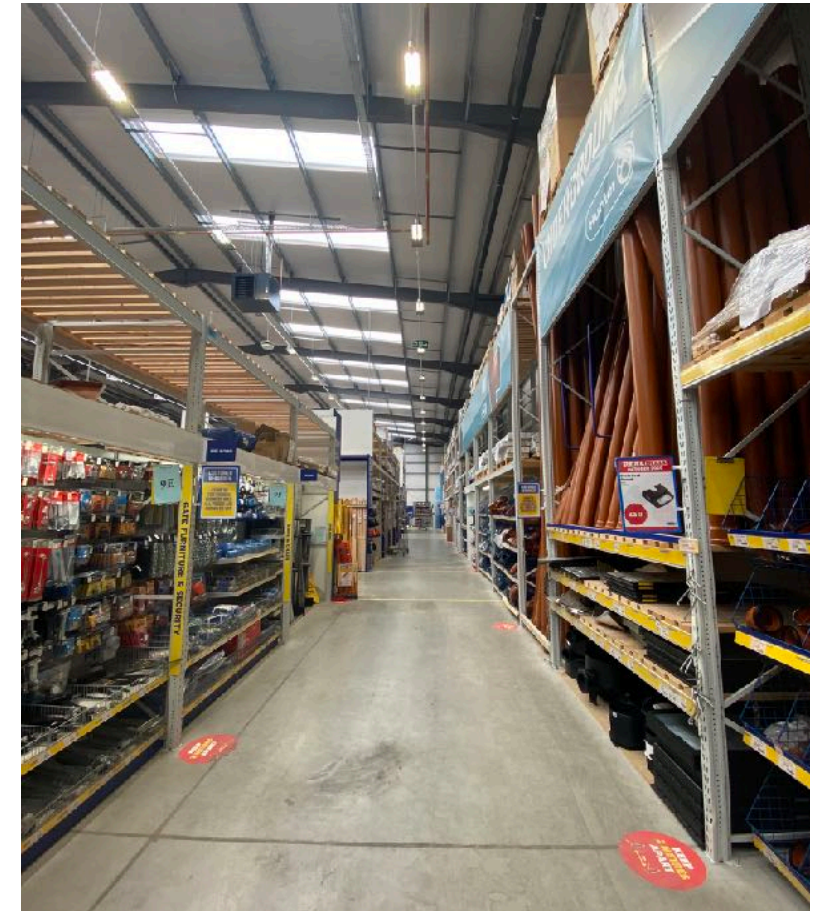
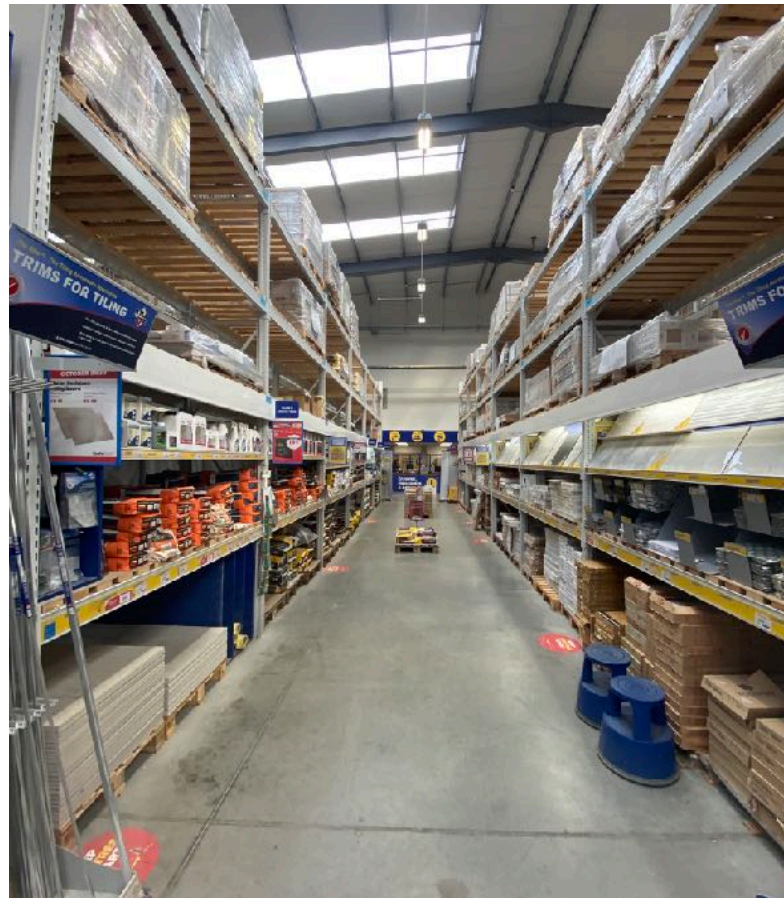
Selco

Builders Warehouse

The store was incredibly clean considering it was a builders warehouse.

The aisles wide and well laid out with product point of sale signage, shelf flags, clearly indicating where products were in the aisles and the shelves.

This created an easy way to pick a product out in what is a very busy retail environment.





Selco Builders Warehouse

I have never understood why brands who have displays in retailers like this with digital screens that don't work or are switched off.

There is an obvious additional cost for these brands to include digital screens & content onto their displays, so why not ensure they work.

Im not sure of the reason why this isn't currently working but as a consumer looking at this I think it gives a negative impression of the company.

If it's battery powered then change them.....if you need to service them.....ensure that they are maintained and working or just don't do them.

Selco

Builders Warehouse

Another example of how to confuse a potential customer when in-store.

Great looking kitchen display as soon as you enter this store on the left hand side.

On initial glance.....all looks well.

Then when you take a closer look, all the kitchens had an A4 printed, black & white notice stating "This kitchen range is no longer available".

So no kitchen available at Selco?

Are you still selling kitchens?

Or are you just waiting for them to be swapped out for the new range?





Selco

Builders Warehouse

They had a variety of these red pop-up displays around the store which had real impact & standout because they were RED.

Everything in the store is blue or yellow.

This is the first time I have seen a sign clearly stating that if you don't wear a face covering you will get a £200 fine!



Selco

Builders Warehouse

This is the exit of the store and it had some high level printed signage with re-enforcing messages about free delivered and the branch services like, mixing, click & collect, matching and cutting.

I did like the final signs you left.....thanking you for your trade!



Selco

Builders Warehouse

Paints & varnishes!

This is the same in every store, just shelf after shelf after shelf of products.....tins!

Im sure on a planogram these look all neat and tidy and contains all the ranges.

To consumers this just looks like a mass of tins! Customers buy by a project they are doing and need paints to be displayed like this!

Why has this never changed?

Someone will change this and then everyone will follow!



Selco

Builders Warehouse

This was slightly different and you can see that some sort of guidance and differentiation was attempted.

The headers guided to the different types of sealant.....I never looked hard enough to see if these really were categorised but it doesn't look like it from this photo.

I liked the shelf flags with the 'More Products....More Savings!'.

This did create standout as you walked down the aisle.

Homebase

Homebase is the UK's third largest home improvement retailer and is recognised for choice, style and customer service across the wider home enhancement market. It has 239 large, out-of-town stores throughout the UK and Republic of Ireland, and sells over 30,000 products across DIY and decorating, home and garden ranges, and has a growing internet offering.

Since June 2018, Homebase has been owned by Hilco Capital, a prominent financial investor and adviser, working across a broad range of sectors.





Homebase

I have always had a local Homebase store near where I live in Solihull, unfortunately it has been converted into a new M&S.

So I don't have one near me now and I was intrigued to find out what this store had to offer. On first entering the store it appeared to be half empty.

The store staff were trying desperately to fill this huge space with something but it looked cheap and too spaced out.

Homebase

The big bold, red racking system dominated the whole appearance of this store.

Obviously this is a huge hangover from the Bunnings acquisition and will take time to phase this out and move towards a new Homebase branding.

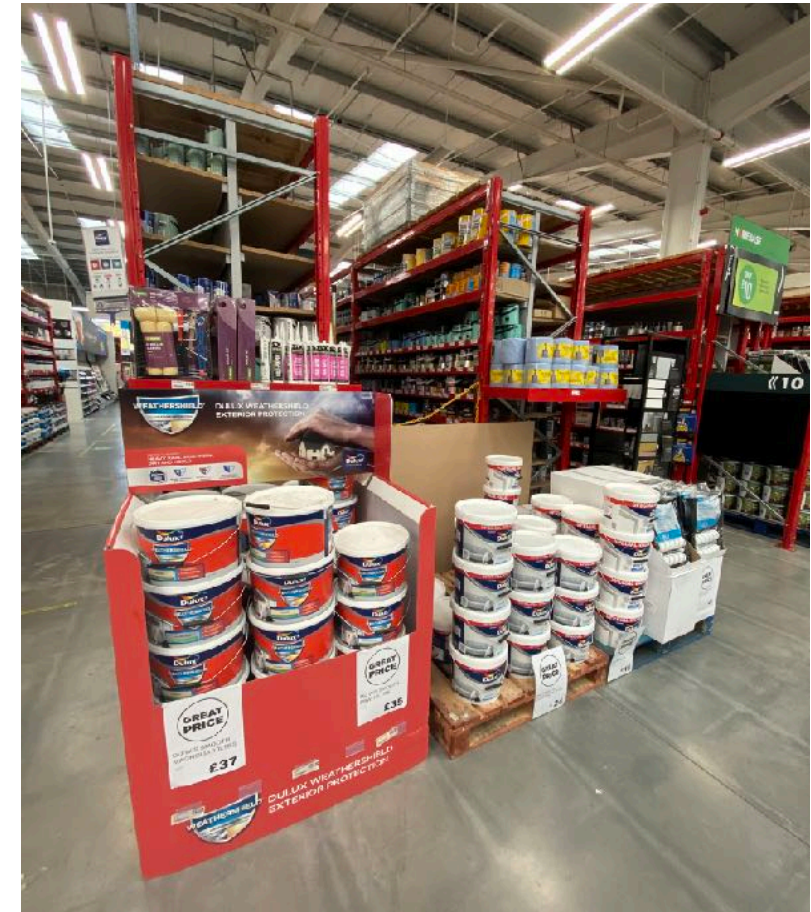
With all these elements, high level bays, huge spaces to try and fill it with products made it feel million miles away from my last Homebase experience in Solihull.

I am sure as they return to profit (actually.... I think it has already which is great news!) that a whole new store refurbishment plan will be underway!



Homebase

As we walked around the store there were more & more examples of huge spaces being filled with a disparate range of products, no flow, no customer journey. I cannot say anymore than that to be honest.

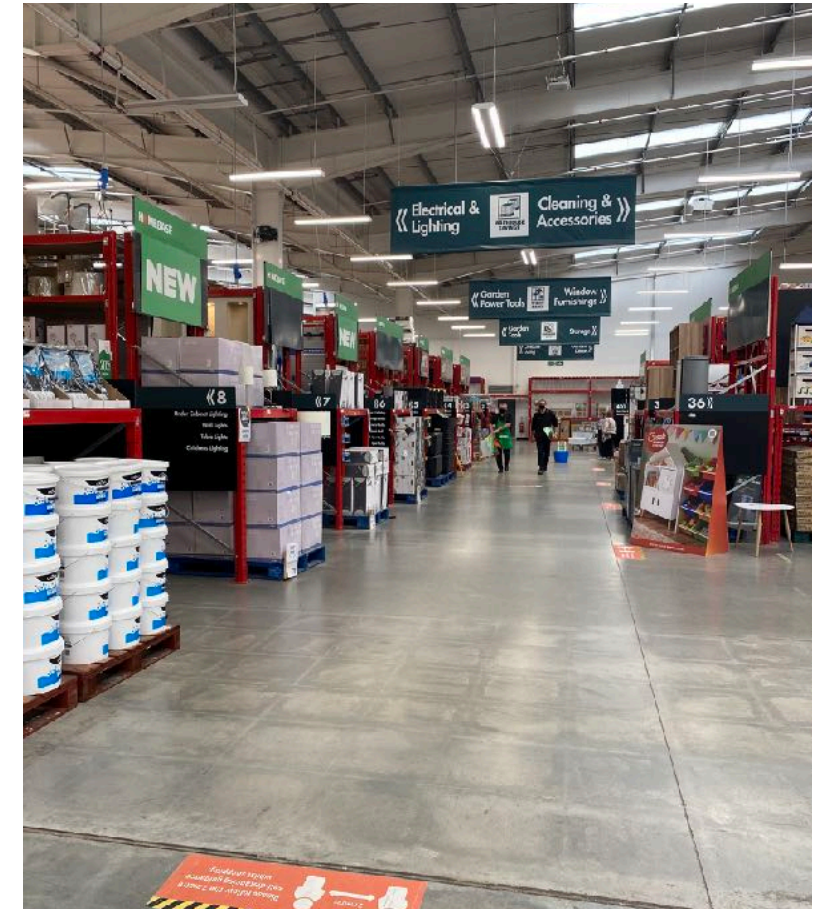


Homebase

This continues around the store! What more can I say!

However when went to the kitchen section there was an incredible Homebase team member who talked about their kitchens with passion, knowledge and was extremely positive about the future of not just his section but the whole store.

We spoke to the Manager, who I must also say is a credit to Homebase!



Homebase

Not too sure that a cream slatted background shows of these shower units very well.

With so many people having spent so much time at home over the pandemic lockdown.....this must be the opportunity to showcase these products that customers want to update.

Why not have a simple background of 'beaded water on a shower door'tiles or something at least to showcase the product in the location it's destined for.



Homebase

Storage & More

Now, unexpectedly.....out of the blue appeared this section.

Whoever has the responsibility for this section should get huge pat on the back, well done.

Bright, engaging, well curated and stopped me in my tracks.

It was 'the' stand out area of the whole store!

Why is this part of the store so good and the rest of it so poor?

And.....it got even better!



Homebase

Storage & More

Each 'Storage & More' section has an incredibly well curated range of storage products focusing on a different area of the home.

Shelving.....Kids Room.....Office.....this was so well done.

Colourful, engaging, clearly defined ranges and very well thought out with header boards signposting us to the area of interest with the products ready to buy off the shelf.



Homebase

Storage & More

The Living Room display had a beautifully designed pastel pink background.

With complimentary products for shelves, baskets and hanging wall solutions this gave me what customers need.....ideas with solutions!

The Garage display was just a genius design.....simple, effective printed white washed brick background to really bring this display to life.

I wish my garage was as tidy as this.....and now it can be!

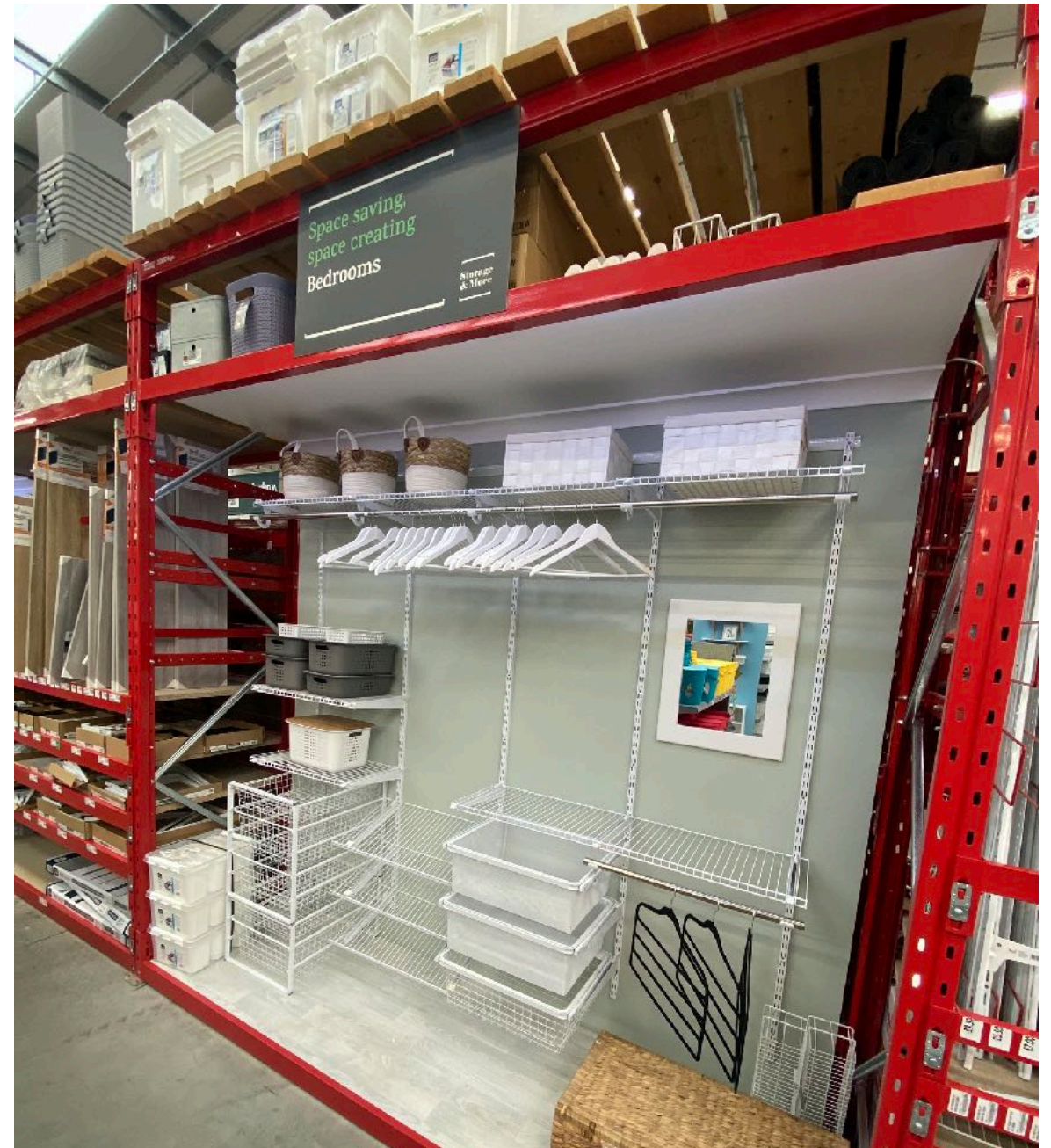
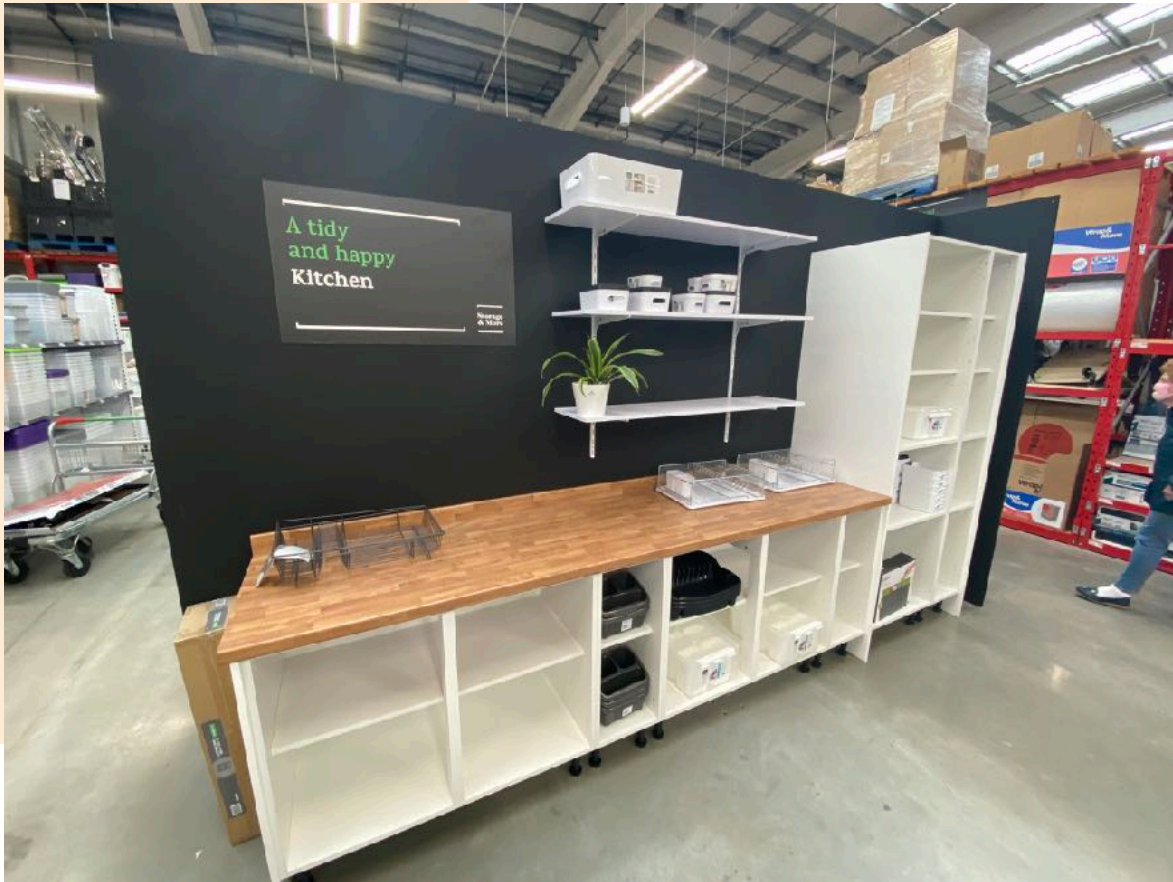


Homebase

Storage & More

The same imagination and great design was continued into the Kitchen & Bedrooms displays.

My award for 'Best in-store display'!



Homebase

Garden Centre

I was super critical of the B&Q garden centre as it lacked colour & imagination. Where B&Q failed.....Homebase excelled. So well laid out, perfectly organised and you can see that the Homebase team member responsible for this area absolutely loves their job, their company and knows how to display plants.



Homebase

Garden Centre

As you enter this area from the main building you are hit by a visual feast.....a riot of colour.

Plants are beautifully displayed and customers who don't have the imagination or knowledge of what to buy would have no problem filling their basket or trolley with these plants!

Who wouldn't be 'wowed' by these lovely displays.

Well done Homebase.....this is what customers want!





Homebase

Home Sealants

This was the stand-out product display of the whole day and won the overall 'wow' award!

Im am not exaggerating this display absolutely stopped us in our tracks.

Sealants.....boring, functional.....!

Not on this display.

Whoever designed this deserves an award.

Extremely well thought through.

Each product range clearly defined, big header panels with clear range messaging.

Colour clearly defined the different applications.

This is how you do an in-store product display!



Homebase

Home Sealants

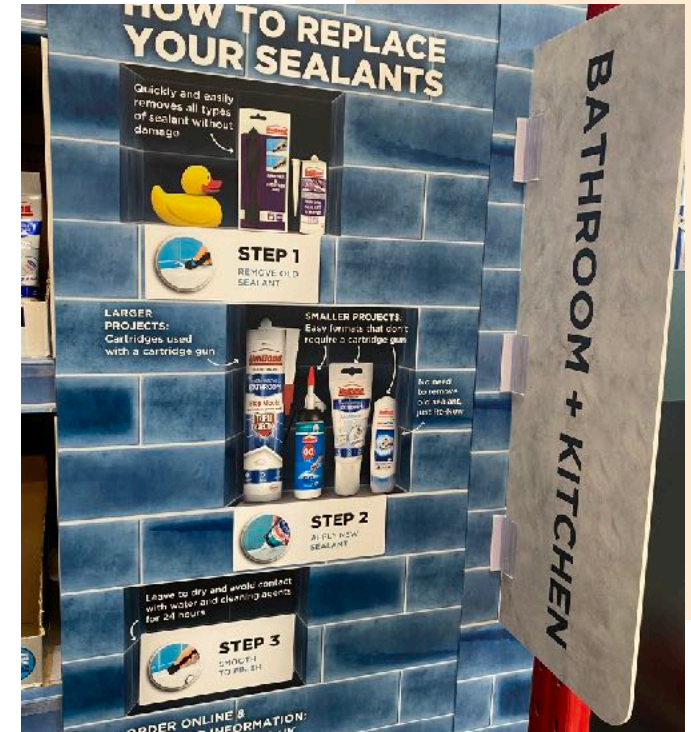
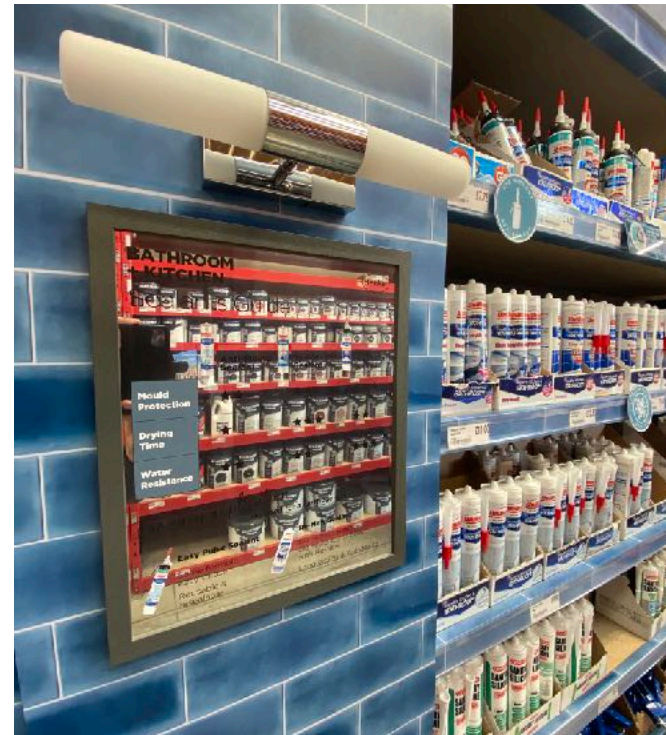
Each section was clearly defined by some thoughtfully printed panels.

The bathroom & kitchen sealants had a printed blue tiled background with a sink saying how you could refresh it with Unbind ReNew and an overprinted mirror which was a product selector! Genius idea!

The Indoor section had a red wallpaper effect with a 3D light, chair, cushions and a window with the products you could use to seal windows & door frames.

The Outdoor section has a red brick design, grass, drainpipe and front door with tips, 'did you know' facts and a QR code to scan for more ideas!

Thanks for making the whole day worthwhile!





The Range

06

The Range is recognized for its unique variety with more than 65,000 quality products across 16 departments including; DIY, Homewares, Furniture, Lighting, Arts & Crafts and Garden. The Ranges' ethos is to present mid-price home, leisure and garden products, drawing together everything that could be needed for a stylish home, all at affordable prices.

The Range continues to evolve, with 140 stores stretching all across the UK.

The Range

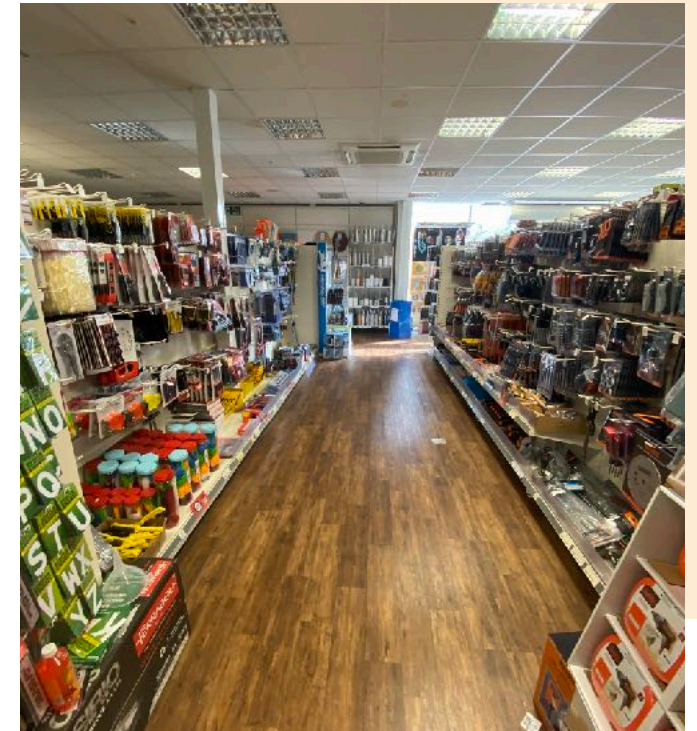
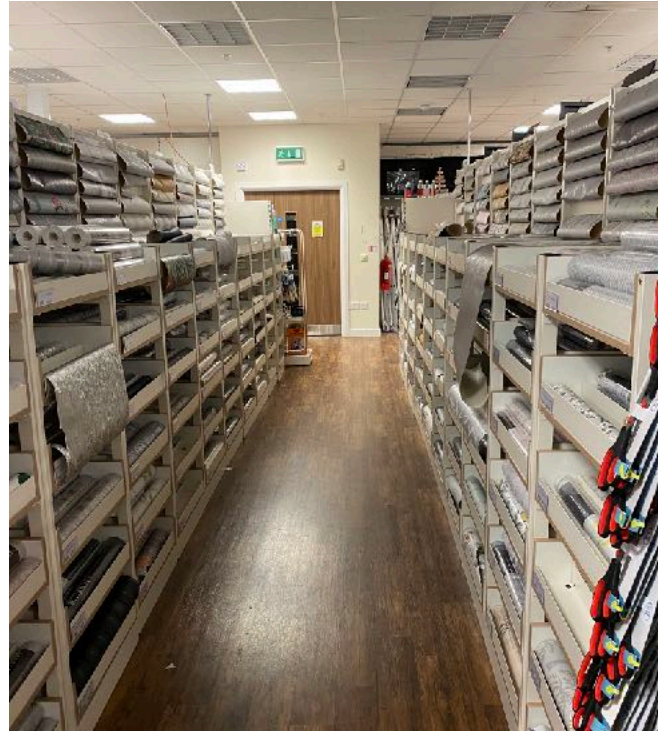
This is not a store we have near Solihull, so I was looking forward to seeing this as I have heard loads about it from documentaries to articles in the retail press.

I wasn't too sure what I was expecting but it sort of surprised me.

Firstly, I was absolutely rammed with product, mainly Halloween at the front of the store which you would expect at this time of the year.

Secondly the eclectic mix of products, wow I think I could have purchased anything in this store if I looked hard enough.

The lighting was very poor especially in the home improvement section.....paints & wallpapers are never showcased well in the dark!





The Range

Kitchens?

Who knew?

Now this was a surprise.....Kitchens in The Range?

And.....it was really well designed and presented.

Modern kitchen designs, great flooring, lighting.

This was an oasis of great design in.....well, sorry to be brutal but not very good retail design.

Will customers who are coming to The Range to buy a hair brush, monkey wrench, 24 pack of biscuits and rubbish bin deodorant buy a kitchen?

I doubt it!

I could be wrong but I loved the design!



The Range

Oh, everyone loves a hot tub!

Anyone for a Okanagan Spa for the bargain price of £2,995?

If you want to add the furniture its only £3,795!



The Range

This store had a great Iceland shop in shop added to one side of the store.

We didn't have time to go round this area but I am going to complete a separate 'Snapshot' tour report of Iceland.

I love their design and use of printed point of sale marketing.

Watch out for this report coming soon!



B&M

Home Store

07

B&M is a fast-growing discount retailer, operating from over 500 high street and out of town stores across the UK, as well as under the JA Woll brand in Germany.

In the UK, they offer customers a broad range of FMCG brands and non-grocery products at low prices. Their aim is to provide customers with a fun and exciting shopping experience, offering them great products and fantastic value so that they return again and again to a B&M store.

B&M

Home Store

WOW.....I must admit I haven't ever been to a B&M store before.

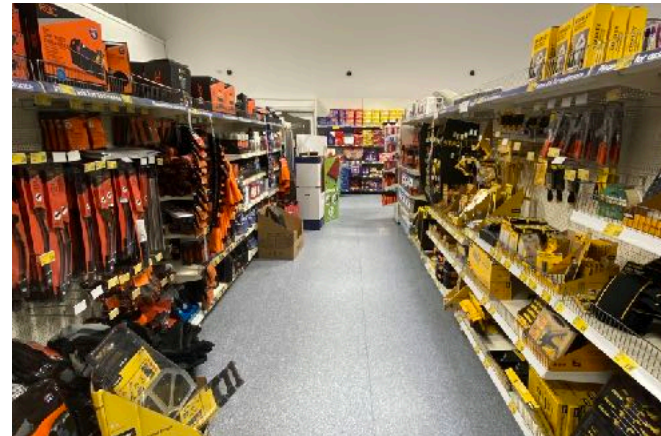
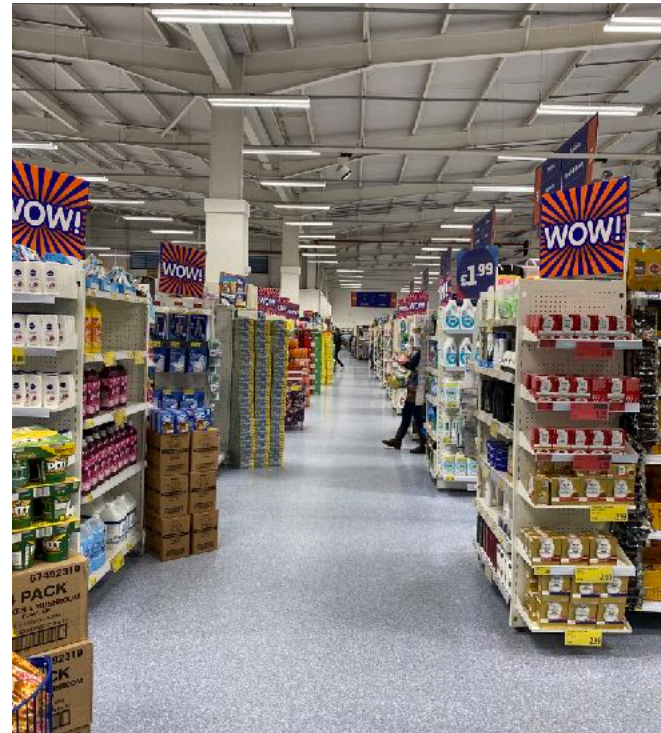
I don't know why, I think it's because we don't have one near us in Solihull.

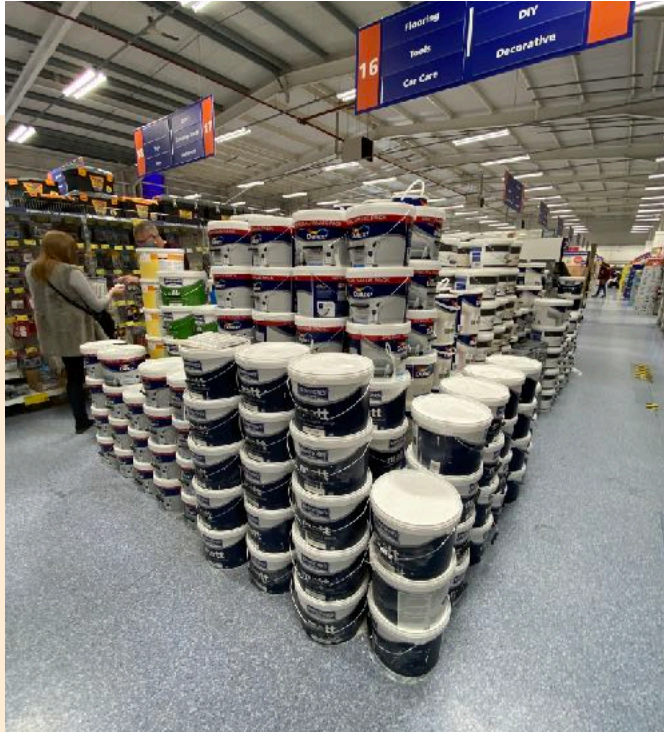
From doing a speedy walk up and down the aisles, it does exactly what it's meant to do.

I think it's meant to stack products fairly high and sell it fairly cheap.

The big brightly coloured WOW header panels completely dominate the aisle ends.

Not quite sure what they function other than to 'wow' me.





B&M Home Store

I was starting to learn something about the way paint is merchandised in these DIY & Home Improvement stores from my visit.

Put them all on shelves.

Stick them in some sort of nice planogram order.

Stack the tins up, higher and higher.

Let the customers spend ages looking, searching the for right product.....matt.....gloss.....eggshell.

Wow, it's hard work trying to find paint.

Maybe that's what the 'WOW' signage is for!

B&M

Home Store

Now we are going to award this display as special award for 'The most dangerous in-store display'

On each aisle end was a Jenga style stack of products, some of them with heavy products like cans of cider.

Now I am not a health & safety freak but this display was just about to fall over.

Just like the famous game, one small accidental nudge or a product taken off at the wrong time and the whole things will collapse and come tumbling down into the aisle.



08

Flooring superstore.com

Flooring SuperStore - The UK's Leading Flooring Specialist

It says on their website the following.....

'At Flooringsuperstore.com we have the widest selection of carpets online from cheap carpets to high quality carpets as well as a wide range of flooring options for vinyl flooring, luxury vinyl tiles, wood flooring, laminate and even artificial grass. By purchasing our products in bulk, we are able to offer huge discounts and sell high quality flooring at such cheap prices – helping you transform your home for less.'





Flooring superstore.com

The moment we stepped inside this store it felt different, very different.

It's simplicity was refreshing, low level displays giving a great sightline around the store and it was broken into different areas.

Sometimes less is more and this is exactly what this store delivered.

Flooring superstore.com

This was a great smaller format store to walk around.

Engaging, well defined areas with a bright, modern feel.....and the staff were very welcoming.

Is this because this company made the transition from online to physical retail?

How many companies have taken the jump into physical retail and succeeded?

Did this give them the opportunity to start from a fresh new perspective.....if it did, then it worked!



Flooring superstore.com

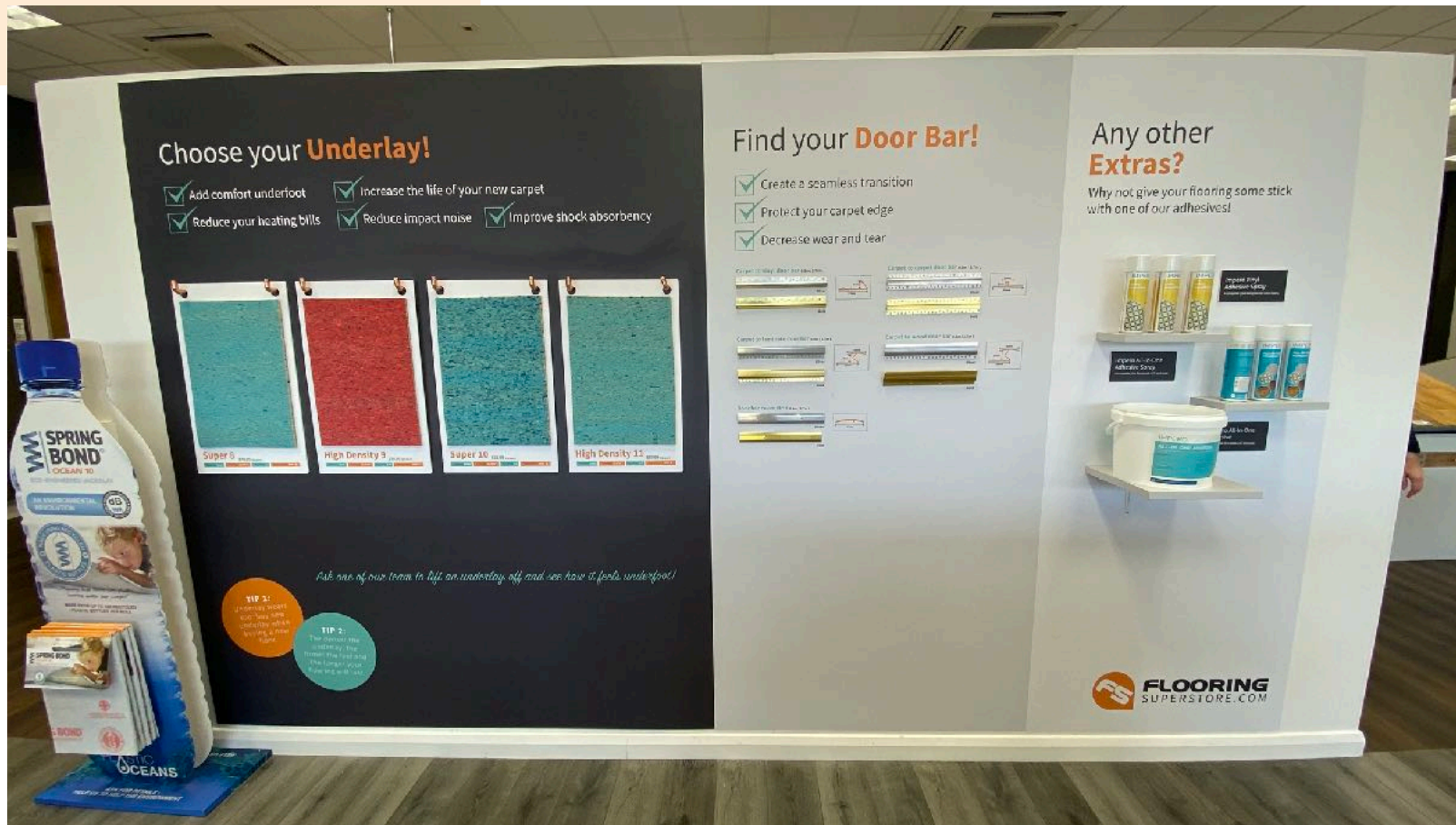
Sometimes in retail, brands & retailers try to create more and more options as they believe they are giving the customer more choice.

An edited choice is sometimes exactly what the customer is looking for and this store delivered it.

100's of underlays.....no, just four!

Racks of door bars.....no, just five and in a choice of silver or brass.

And an edited choice of extras.....well done you've designed a store for actual customers!



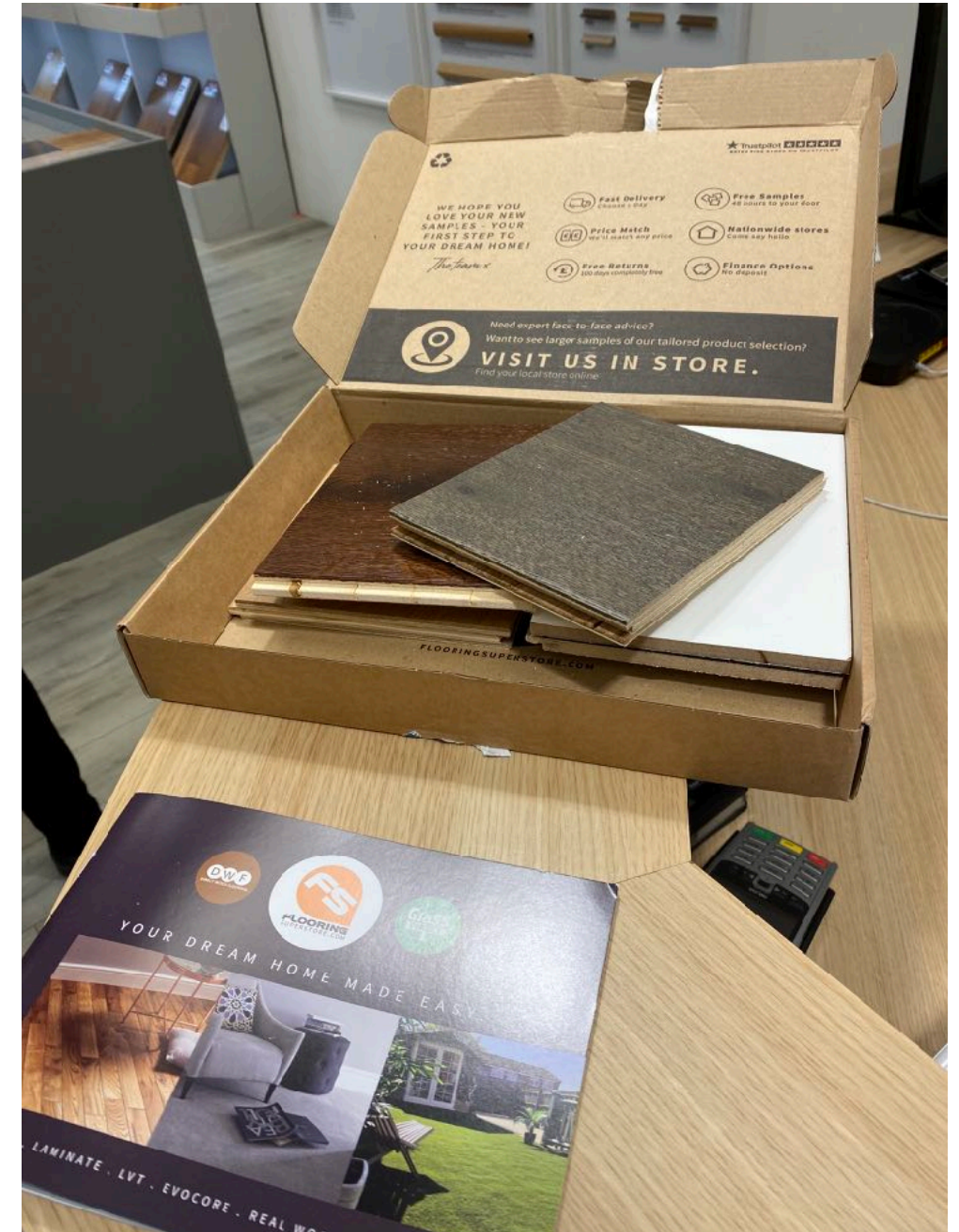
Flooring superstore.com

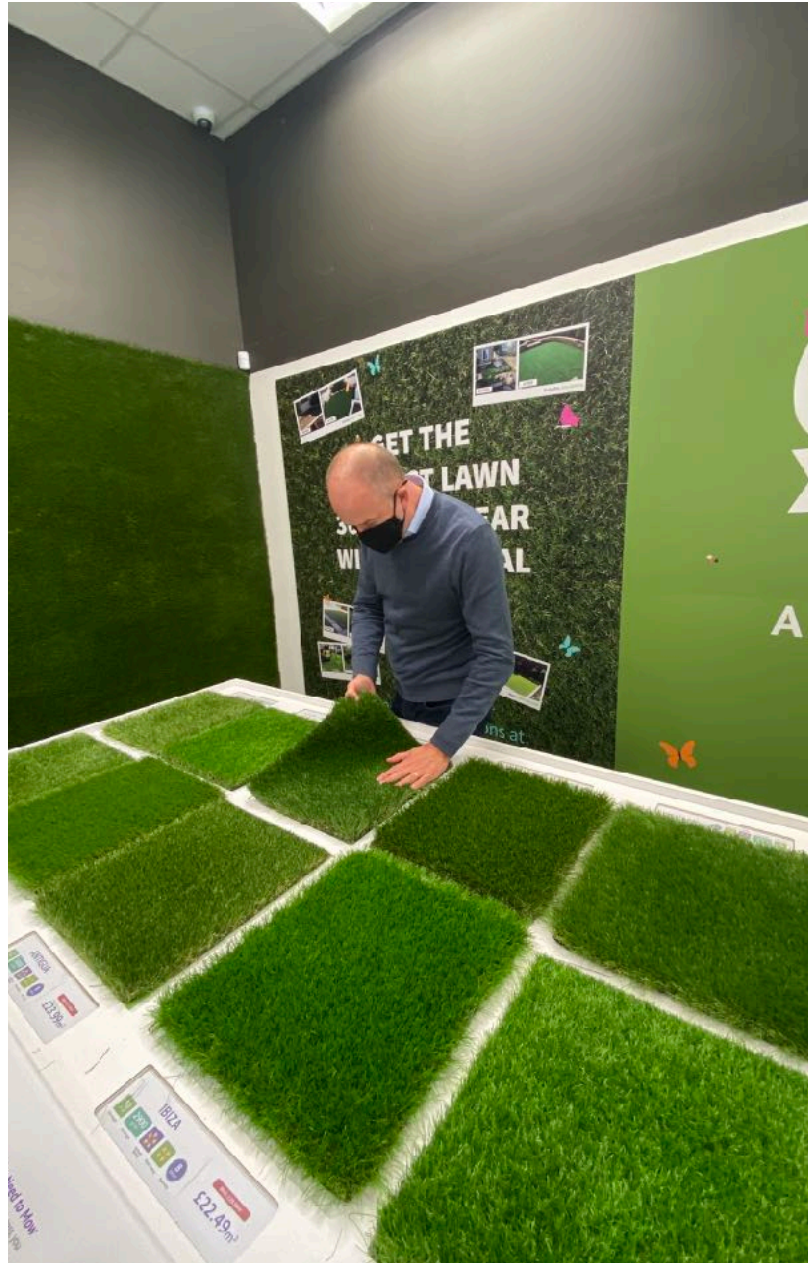
The laminate areas was so nicely laid out.
White display cases, subtle lighting with a
great range of products.



Flooring superstore.com

If ever there was such a thing as a
lovely sample box.....then this is it.





Flooring superstore.com

Now I know that artificial grass for gardens is a big thing.

I think I would have to remortgage my house to have this installed but what an incredible display.

Firstly, I didn't know there were so many variations and they are incredible, Tactile, visually appealing they did this so well.

If I was to buy an artificial lawn then I would buy it from here!





Wickes

09

With a portfolio of over 250 stores, Wickes is the second largest Home Improvement Big-Box retailer in the UK and stocks a wide selection of brand and own brand products designed to meet the requirements of all DIYers and Tradesmen, undertaking DIY projects, general repairs and maintenance. In 2011, DIY customers voted Wickes 'Britain's favourite DIY Store'.

Wickes

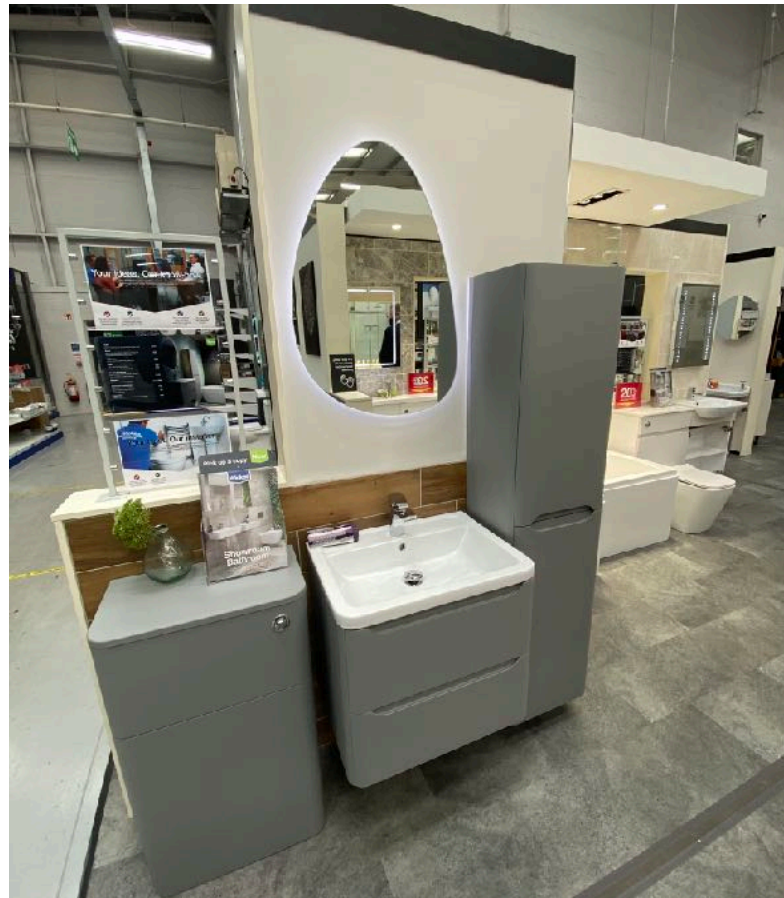
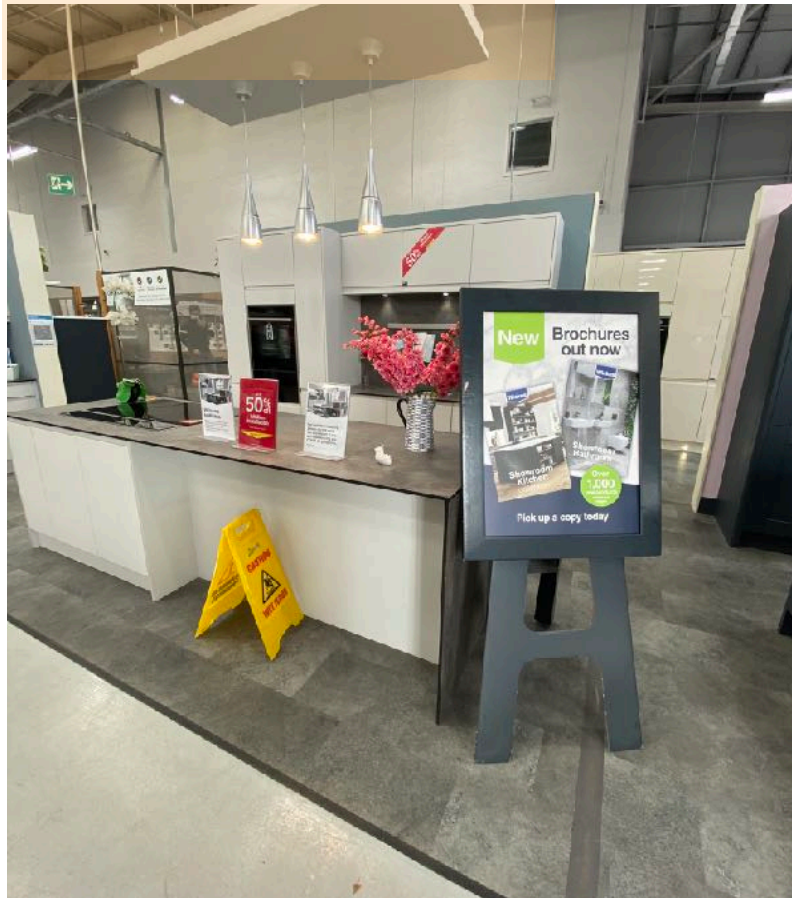
Kitchens & Bathrooms

The kitchen & bathroom area was on the right hand side as we walked in.

I found this area really engaging with a dark slate grey floor it really showed off the products.

The bathrooms had a tiles on the walls, radiators, mirrors and cabinets.....letting the customers dream.

10/10 from me on this section!





Wickes

Kitchen Display

This was an area called 'Decide' and was a brilliant, interactive areas for customers to select and put different elements of their new, dream kitchen together.

You could select a door, worktop and splash back and put them into this display so you can visualise how they all go together.

Perfect way to let customers select what they want and no pressure from any sales teams members.

You can see from the photo, Steve loved it.

Wickes

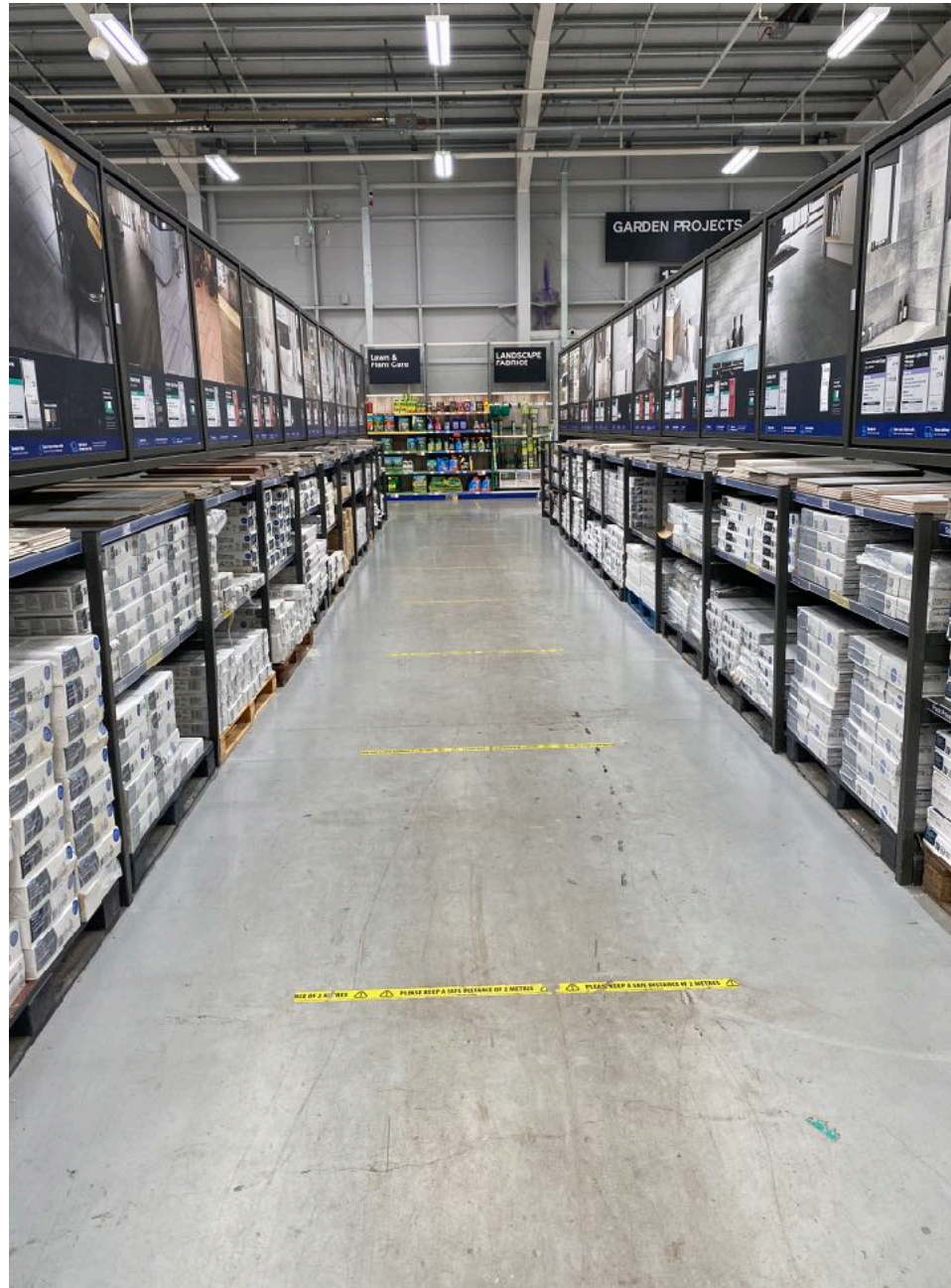
Retail Format

There's something different about Wickes I like.

I couldn't quite put my finger on it but I then realised it was brighter than others, wider aisles and had some great high level signage.

As a customer I want to see a big product or lifestyle shot above the product, clear price details and pack sizes and products well stocked underneath.

Wickes delivered this in every aisle.



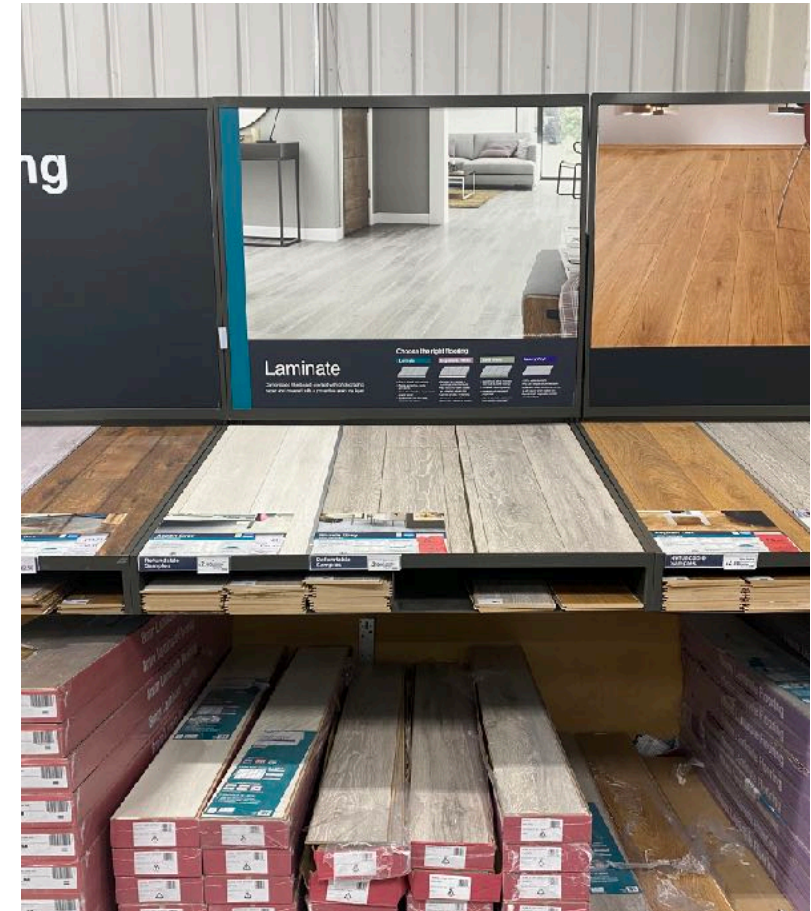
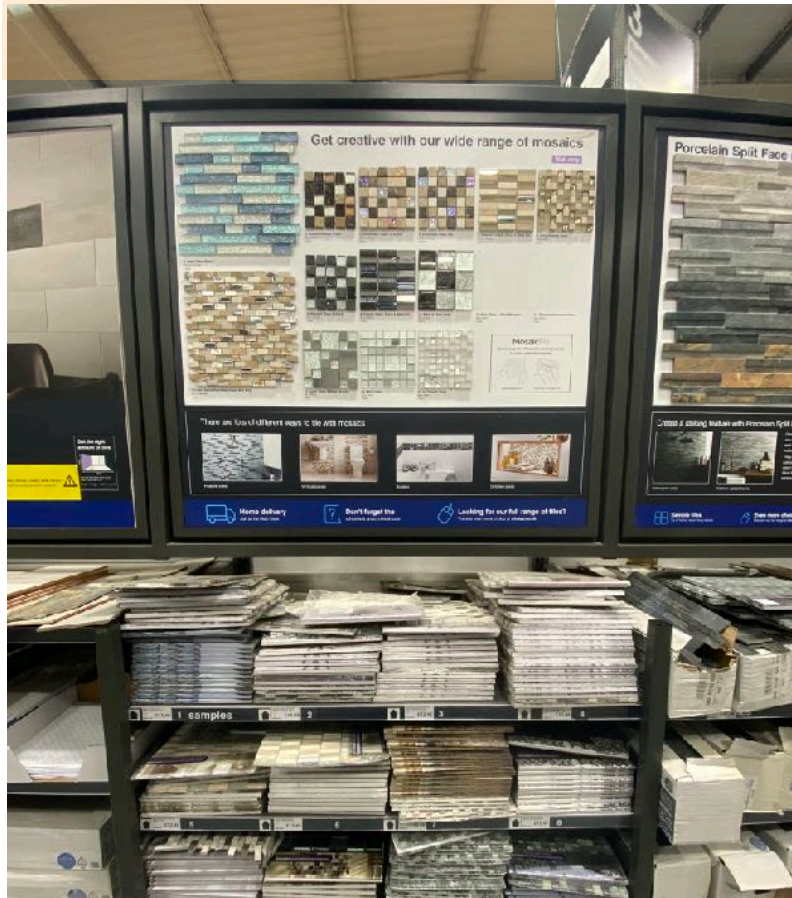
Wickes

High level displays

These are just some more examples of what I like about the high level signage.

Nicely designed, clear product information or with added samples.

The product packs underneath will always need constant tidying as customer will be picking stuff put and looking at products but overall a great experience.



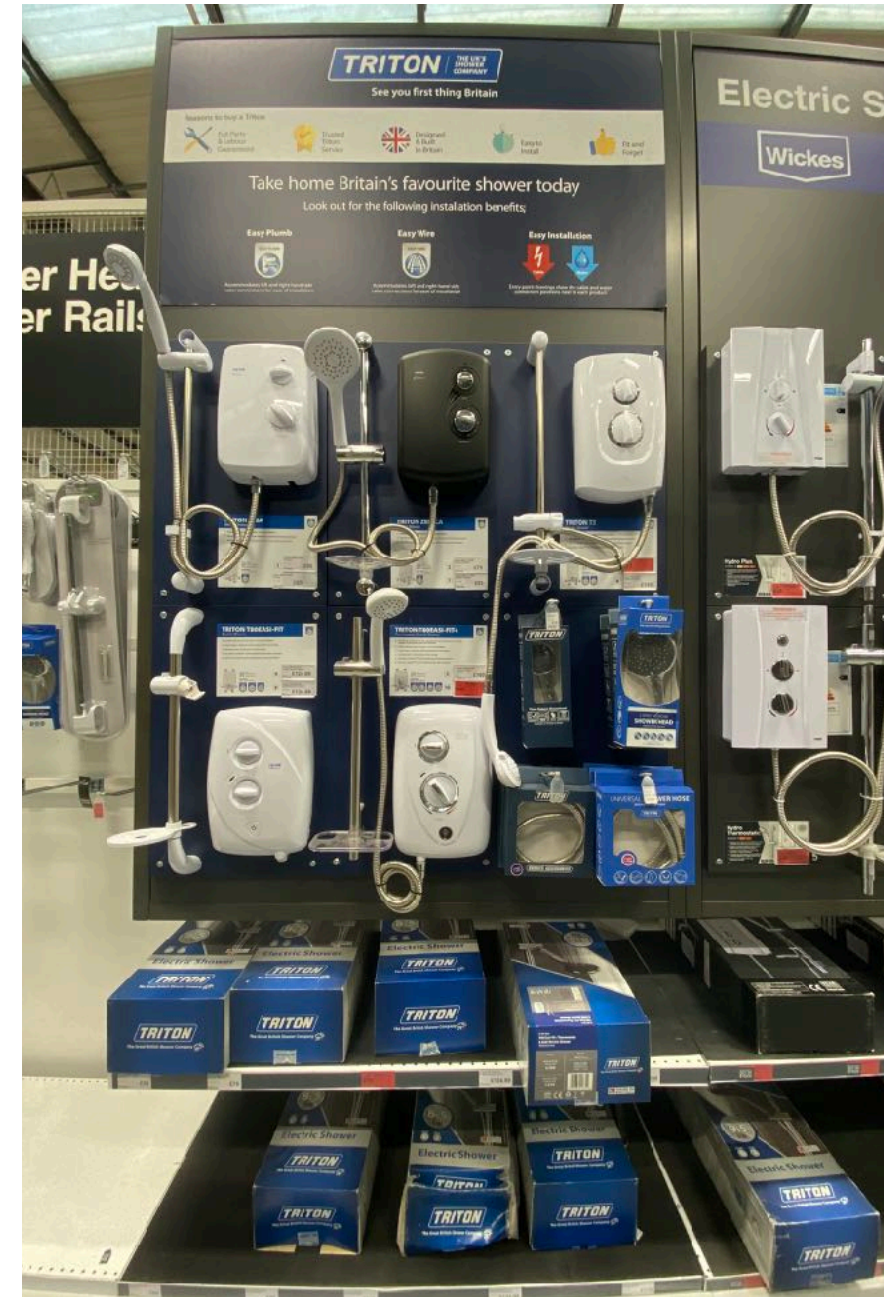
Wickes

Showers & Taps

Walking around the different areas it's always great to see well merchandised and engaging product displays.

The one thing I have said before is the lack of thought from other retailers about adjacent products or accessories..

If I am in this shower section I want to have accessories right there, new hoses or a new shower head, easy to pick up and buy.



Wickes

Paints

This area was really well organised and stocked. I have been a bit negative about paints in this report so far.

This was a good display, samples pots at the top, easy to reach if you are tall.

Colour swatches at eye level.

The paint ranges underneath with their corresponding colours.

Simple, effective and it makes it really easy for the customer to make a product selection quickly.



Wickes

Paint Samples

Now paint sampling must be an absolutely nightmare to manage in-store.

This was the first time I have ever seen this in a store!

Obviously customers are opening the little samples pots and then wiping it on the header board so see the colour.

Im not sure what this is telling you as a brand! Do they not trust you sample swatches?

NOTE: These images were taken in Wickes Birmingham and NOT Milton Keynes



Wickes

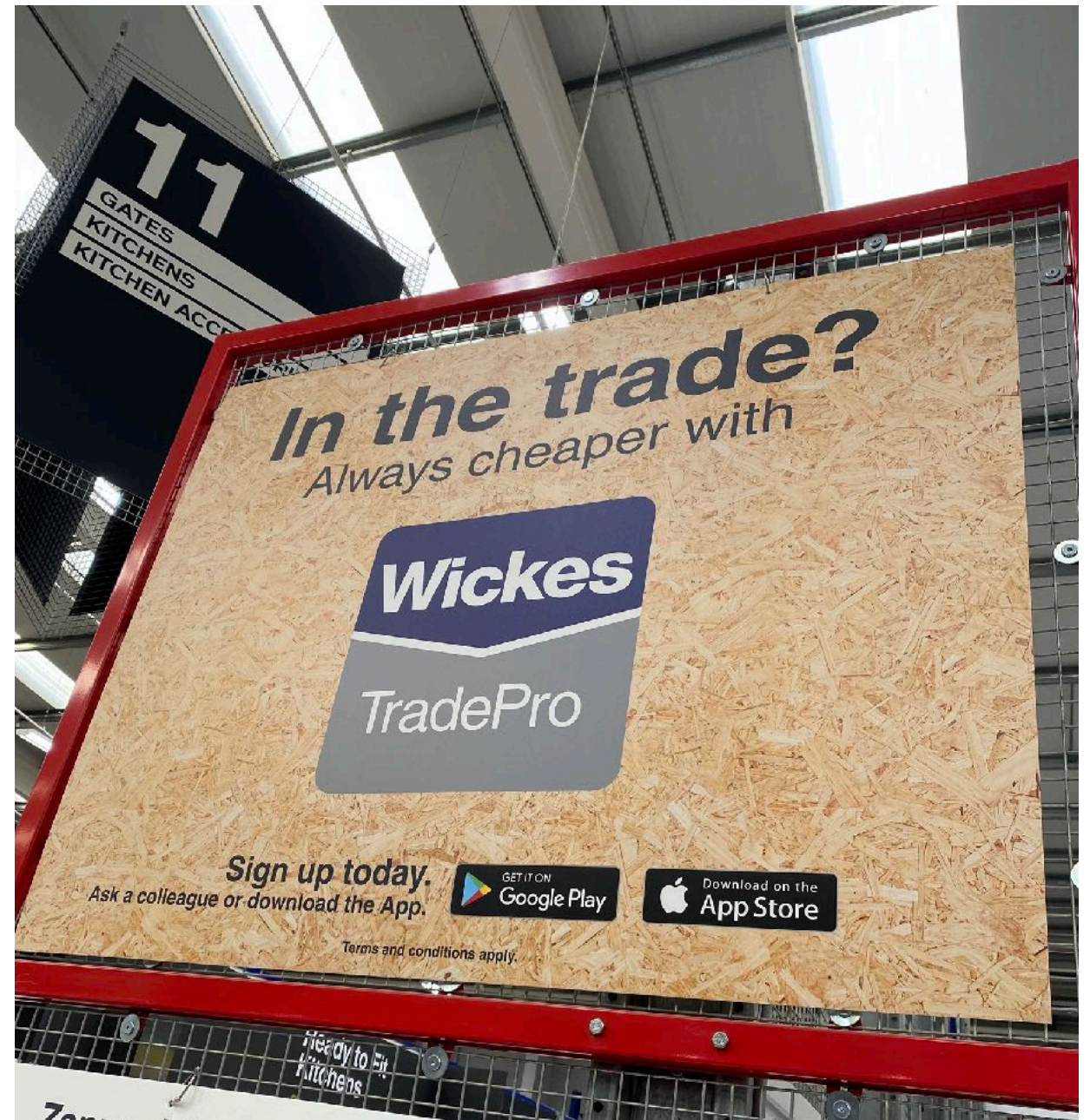
Point of Sale Marketing

As we walked around the Wickes store I really liked their printed point of sale marketing.

I wanted to showcase some of the great examples we saw as we walked around.

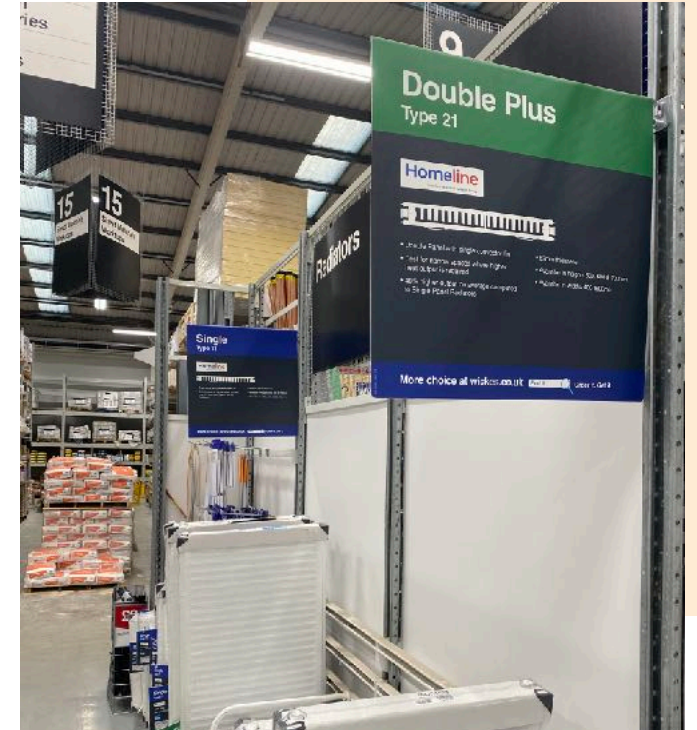
High level examples like this one which had a printed chip board effect to the ones on the next page.

The customer journey was easy, well signposted and had hints & tips, don't forget or shelf flags reminding you how to make it easier to trade at Wickes.



Wickes

Point of Sale Marketing



Wickes Garden Centre

These images were taken on a subsequent visit to the Wickes brand in Birmingham.

I absolutely loved the display for the garden chippings.

Perfect product & lifestyle shot at the top, product information, use area and a guide for the amount you would need for your project.

NOTE: These images were taken in Wickes Birmingham and NOT Milton Keynes



“

“The Home Improvement industry is unique in that we have the power to transform people’s lives. Just think of the injection of emotional positivity you feel every single time you walk into that freshly painted room, the brand-new kitchen and bathroom or the beautifully decorated bedroom. Bearing this in mind, the Home Improvement retail store experience is often desperately disappointing, with function taking the lead over inspiration and process taking priority over emotion. To survive in the decades to come, the established retailers must transform their businesses to become centres of inspiration, ideas and innovation, with the added help we need, to truly bring to life the homes we all dream of”.

Steve Collinge, Managing Director, Insight Retail Group



During our day together I had fascinating discussions around retail disruption, impact of discounters, how to engage with & inspire customers, challenges for big-box retailers and the key four future-proof categories for DIY & Home Improvement retailers.

The four key future-proof categories we discussed were:

1. **Decorative** – which is to say, paint, wallpaper, flooring & lighting – is the most aspirational DIY purchase journey.
2. **Live Garden** – Shopping for plants is a more emotional purchase journey – people are choosing something living to take home and nurture.
3. **Kitchens** – An in-store experience is essential to consumers shopping for a kitchen as they are difficult to buy online.
4. **Smart Home** – Smart home is a new and growing high-value category, so consumers naturally need more support with tech products.

10 Thoughts of The Day

“This DIY retail tour of Milton Keynes really opened my eyes to the complex retail environments and it was incredible to spend the day with Steve.

We are seeing all retail sectors under extremely pressure but it looks like DIY & Home Improvement has an opportunity to leverage the huge shift from office to home working. We are spending more time at home than ever before and this will continue to drive our focus on creating beautiful, instagrammable or MSTEams friendly spaces.

My thoughts are though that we all like to be inspired & dream, looking for ideas & inspirations to create something new. The DIY & Homeware sector is not designed in this way, it’s trying but its so product focused and NOT designed for projects.

Create engaging retail spaces that take us to places we want to go in the future and not in the past, boring retail is dead.”



SteveLister.com

Steve Lister

11

What's next?

The Big Retail Tour Westfield Stratford

with Dan Astarita, Sales Director, Kesslers

I am really looking forward to this retail tour at Westfield, Stratford, London with Dan.

It's going to be a fascinating tour of Westfield Stratford City, opened in 2011, this is the most popular shopping mall in the UK attracting 50 million shoppers annually with over 300 retailers over 184,000





**Let's
Talk....**

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