

Pop-up fashion stores: a clue to invigorate brands

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Abstract

The purpose of this paper is to offer a descriptive study of the main reasons for which retail brands in Madrid create ephemeral shopping experiences.

The methodological approach consisted of five in-depth interviews to industry experts in various fields related to pop-up stores as well as six in-depth interviews to small fashion retailers that have set up flash retail venues.

The analysis of insights provided by industry experts and small fashion retailer brands confirms the authors' initial hypothesis: pop-up stores are an effective business marketing tool that invigorates consumers through an enhanced shopping experience. This is especially significant for consumers who already have a direct and personal relationship with brands. The evolution of consumers' shopping behavior indicates that pop-up stores do not drive brands' sales but become a relevant marketing tool to target customers in a more effective way. Another finding confirmed by interviewees is that pop-up concept stores provide legitimization to previously unknown brands and therefore increase their brand awareness among consumers.

A limitation to this paper is the scarcity of research data on pop-up store consumer spending.

However, the results of this study could provide useful insights to upcoming fashion brands as well as established fashion retailers and mass market brands about the benefits of adopting one of the latest and most dynamic retail formats closely related to street marketing.

Keywords: Pop-up Fashion Stores, Branding, Consumer Behavior, Experiential Retail, Spain, Gentrification

Article classification: Research paper

Introduction

Pop-up stores are not new in the retail panorama; brands have been using them as a marketing tool for the past decade but in the last five years pop-up stores have exploded the retail picture, among other reasons because of the empty space available for retailers due to the economical crisis. Many big fashion companies see them as a sales channel, another way of “eating the cake” in the sense of increasing profits through little efforts (Marciniak, 2009; Moore, 2010).

In this respect, pop-up store locations require cheaper investments than regular rents of traditional stores but novelty, surprise and spontaneity are higher.

The growth of fashion e-tail is another reason for the need of enhancing consumers’ shopping experience especially in the case of brands with no offline store.

Apart from the above mentioned, another factor that turns ephemeral retail into more than another fashion trend is the evolving consumers’ behavior that seeks new experiences to feel the brands as a part of their own lives (Surchi, 2010; Russo, 2012; Díaz Soloaga, 2014).

Ephemeral stores that sell products and services for a short period of time are a consolidated phenomenon in the retail panorama (Niehm, 2007). There are multiple reasons for the growth of pop-ups, flea and open markets, and something in society tell us that the economical crisis is not the main one (Surchi, 2010).

Also known as flash retail (Marketek, 2013), some people see them as a threat for traditional retail while others see the pop-up trend as an opportunity both for emerging brands and renowned ones.

A pop-up store is “a new experiential marketing format intended to engage consumers. It is a promotional/retail setting designed to offer an exclusive and highly experiential interaction for the consumer” (Niehm, 2007).

To start with some historical facts, Vacant is referred to as the first pop-up retail experience. The California-based company was created after its founder, Russ Miller, traveled to Japan in 1999. He observed the Japanese consumers’ behavior and how they shopped with anxiety due to the scarcity of some goods. After returning to the US he created a new retail concept based on the idea of searching for rare, special items in customized places to sell out stock in a very short period of time.

Another pioneer of the pop-up phenomenon was the Japanese high-end luxury fashion retailer Comme des Garçons who opened guerrilla stores in the late 1990s. By using decontextualized locations such as food trucks or building entrances and by setting up stores in uncommercial areas of Paris, Warsaw or New York, the brand started using ephemeral retail as a promotional tool with huge success. Such temporary stores were just as effective for the brand as a photographic campaign or an advertising billboard due to their unannounced and surprise effect.

The fact that US-based retailer Target opened a floating pop-up boat on Hudson River in New York for two weeks during Black Friday in 2002 made a mark on the pop-up phenomenon because of the astonishing effect of having an established fashion brand temporarily sell clothes in an unbelievable place.

On the other hand through Internet a paradox may be observed: mid-class people feel closer to high end brands while upper class society chooses low end brands if the design is appealing. Fashion runways can be viewed through live streaming and fast fashion brands, such as Zara, H&M, Mango or Topshop offer them replicas just a few weeks later. Once again, Target, the discount retailer was a pioneer of this trend in 2004 by launching a summer pop-up store in upper class Hamptons of Long Island.

The idea is not just to find bargains but instead to buy different and unique items of clothing and accessories at an adequate price in a nearby area or city. This was the goal that Gucci or Chanel had in mind when they opened temporary stores like Prada in Paris in 2009 even though it was just during the renovation of their flagship store in Faubourg St Honoré.

In this manner, renowned fashion brands adopt the pop-up phenomenon to sell affordable product ranges that are not usually available at their stores. A recent example is the ephemeral store opened by Marc Jacobs in Manhattan in 2013 to market its new Daisy fragrance or Marni's open-to-the-public Flower Market set up in Milan in September 2014. Both were held during the Fashion Weeks of New York and Milan respectively. Another key of success of the pop-up retail format is to strategically choose a suitable time of the year to place it, such as the holiday (Christmas) season, sales periods or during a fashion industry celebration or event.

As has been previously mentioned, one of the main reasons for the surge of flash retail is the vacancy rate of commercial spaces in big cities but also in towns. For instance, according to London Metric, the vacancy rate in London is 9% and in the northwest it is 20%. The 1980s trend to sign contracts for 25 years and in the 1990s to do so for 15 years explains the current vacancy of retail space, since retailers look for new locations in shopping malls, department

stores or shop in shop retail spaces and reduce the number of shops in towns or cities where they formerly used to be.

In less developed economies but still big cities such as Madrid, the trend is likewise. Fewer stores but more specialized (Delso, 2014): brands seek a more unique and memorable experience either by tapping on the sensorial or the intellect, as exemplified by Adolfo Dominguez's flagship store on Serrano Street. At the end of 2013, the vacancy rate in Madrid was 11,9 % (JLL, Market Pulse Research 2013). Therefore, the emergence of pop-up stores and the whole idea of ephemeral retail is the result of an evolution in consumption (Russo, 2012).

Another issue to consider is that Spain has no strong tradition of shopping in garage sales and neighborhood or flea markets. As Mikel Bilbao states "the garage sales concept belongs to American culture to such an extent that it may be claimed that pop-up stores are simply a sophistication of this shopping format in private spaces".

Research methodology and findings

Before presenting the method used to conduct this study, it is worthwhile taking into account the different flash retail formats that coexist:

- Retailer pop-up stores, used to launch or enhance a special collection or product range under a same brand; to create a different consumer experience, to test a market niche or to showcase the brand to an unknown market.
- On the other hand, pop-up concept stores are used to create a unique thematic ambience that brings together a variety of brands under a same concept, usually associated to a distinct lifestyle. The pop-up organizer is in charge of the concepts' creation, managing all the installment and location costs and promoting the event to potential customers. The brands sharing this same space are united under the common theme. They tend to pay a fixed rental fee and a variable fee according to sales results, although the contract model may vary.

In order to be able to study the specific context of pop-up stores in Madrid, Spain's capital city, various in-depth interviews were done to the following fashion industry experts:

1. Borja Oria: Director. Head of Retail & Consumer. Arcano Investment Banking. President of Acotex (Textile & Accessories Business Association).
2. Pilar Riaño: Director of Modaes.es Magazine.
3. Miguel Bonet: Partner at Better, Pop-up Agency. Creators of The Apartment, The Hovse, El Cuartel by City Lights, August and The Table pop-up stores.
4. Mikel Bilbao: Partner at GBS Finanzas. Private Equity Manager.

5. Gloria María López: Founder of Beñ, a company that represents Spanish fashion brands' pop-up store openings abroad.

Each of the above mentioned has great knowledge of the pop-up retail format due their leading role in their specific professional field within the fashion industry. Interviews were conducted from June to October 2014.

In addition, during the same period of time, six Spanish brands with presence in some of Madrid's most renowned pop-ups were interviewed. Their point of view is key to gain insight into the impact flash retail has on their brands.

1. Suturno, accessories and interior decoration
2. Ecoology, sustainable fashion
3. Shallowww, streetwear
4. Papiroga, jewelry
5. Pol, ready-to-wear brand that stages shows in Madrid Mercedes Benz Fashion Week
6. Zubi, bags

Resulting from the analysis of each interview five main key points were established to structure this research paper:

1. Pop-up stores as consumers' response to experiential retail in mature markets.
2. Pop-ups as a reflection of the social trend focused on greater citizen participation in urban development and community life.
3. Pop-ups as a result of the growing role of the digital world and increase of ecommerce.
4. Pop-up concept stores enable a new branding mode for housed within them.
5. Ephemeral retail as a showcase of the consumer trend focused on bringing back the origin of products: craftsmanship, hand-made processes, identification of the creator and quality standards associated with places of origin.

Therefore, based upon the following explanation of each of these five key dimensions it can be stated that this ephemeral retail trend is not just a transitory phenomenon in Spain –a result of the recent economic crisis- but on the contrary it may be claimed that it is taking strong roots.

1. A changing consumer behavior due to the consequences of the economical crisis but anticipated by some brands.

The shopping experience at ephemeral stores is unique because space and time play a distinct role. Consumers know products will only be available for limited time so it is similar to

shopping in places such as airports, holiday destinations, or purchasing special or limited-edition products. Thus theoretically impulse buying should prevail but in reality brands' sales ratios are not higher than those of traditional brick-and-mortar stores¹. In spite of this, all in all the shopping experience in pop-up venues is positively valued by customers and they consider their expectations are fulfilled.

Consumers' shopping behavior at the point of sale has been scarcely researched up to date. In this respect, Jay Sang Ryu's study in 2011 is one of the most emblematic. Ryu conducted 245 interviews to ephemeral retail consumers in various airports of main cities in the United States.

The author was based upon the supposition that pop-up retail is different from that of traditional brick-and-mortar stores or online buying, so accordingly consumers' behavior should also differ.

Some of the hypotheses proposed and confirmed by Ryu's research were:

- a. Consumers' need for hedonic shopping experiences increases impulse buying and has a positive effect on their attitudes towards pop-up stores.
- b. Impulse buying behavior increases in the case of fashion pop-up stores.
- c. Research participants' shopping intentions at pop-up stores increased due to their positive attitude toward the stores.

To sum up, the study concludes that pop-up stores may be an effective retail strategy to target hedonic-seeking consumers.

However appealing the idea of stores popping unexpectedly and for a short-time period might be to catch consumers' attention this does not imply an immediate correlation to sales, regardless of the fact of consumer's memorable and surprising experience.

Overall, research findings seem to indicate that currently, pop-up retail formats are a useful tool to test new international markets and create brand awareness for potential customers or also become an opportunity for online players to experiment with a physical distribution channel. According to Borja Oria "it is a suitable way for renowned brands to learn about consumers' behavior in a specific location, before taking the risk of opening a permanent store".

¹ Interview to Miguel Bonet.

It is also evident that pop-up stores are a reflection of experiential marketing, since there are many dimensions that reinforce the emotional bond between the client and the brand:

- A frequently unannounced place and time of the store opening,
- An unexpected, surprising and innovative space,
- Personalized customer attention, often with the presence of the brand's own designer,
- The possibility of experiencing new sensations through a thematic ambience (decorative displays, music, smell...),
- A mix of different category brands (clothes, accessories, decoration, gastronomy, entertainment...) in a shared space with an underlying concept that provides meaning to the whole,
- An area within the pop-up store destined for entertainment purposes: listening to live music, buying food and drinks or delicatessen products.

It may be claimed that the four dimensions that underpin experiential marketing (Atwal and Williams, 2009), are at the roots of a pop-up creation: entertainment, escapism, education or aesthetics. Some pop-up settings include workshops linked to the products on sale; others combine the shopping experience with food or concerts. The idea is to go beyond a merely transactional sales concept and to motivate customers to embrace the pop-up store brand and so to establish a relationship with the brands housed within it. Pop-up stores are an example of retailtainment: a combination of retail and entertainment that aims to increase brand awareness instead of pursuing immediate sales (Codeluppi, 2001).

This is the reason for which many Spanish fashion brands join together to set up ephemeral stores abroad. It is considered as a strategy to make the brand known to new markets and to test products. According to Gloria María López, representative of Beïñ, a company that organizes such settings in New York, "pop-ups are the first contact of an upcoming brand with an international market. They are not about selling products but about showcasing the brand to potential customers". In some cases, they are the previous step before a brand's internationalization. In others, they are a retail test to analyze the strengths and weaknesses of a brand.

2. In a very sophisticated and technological society there is an emerging necessity of going back to the roots of life, meaning that individuals and families value artisan, handmade products, original items, and love processes that tell them the story of "the way back to earth". Urban orchards, homemade bread, clothing customization and recyclable processes in houses are more than a trend they belong to our current society. Many pop-up stores are based on this idea of recovering traditions and authenticity. Some relevant examples are Love your local

market <http://loveyourlocalmarket.org.uk/> in the UK and Mercado de Motores in Madrid <https://www.facebook.com/mercadodemotores>.

Most multi-brand pop-up stores are based on the concept of massclusivity (Marciniak, Budnarowska, 2006), in other words: they offer exclusive products that no longer mean being expensive. On the contrary, exclusivity is based on aspects such as the production process (handmade brands), limited editions (upcoming brands) or importing of foreign brands with no physical presence in the local market. In addition, both the pop-up's advertising modes and the ephemeral format in itself create the impression of a unique, exclusive and distinct setting. Pop-ups such as The Hovse or Mercado de la Central de diseño (Matadero de Madrid) offer ephemeral restaurants with local products and promote themselves around an "underground" concept. The aim is to enhance the slow movement and a return to the traditional amidst urban settings that are dominated by big fashion retailer chains.

3. The increasing numbers of fashion ecommerce and online fashion players are the forth reason of the ephemeral retail movement. Fast fashion brands consider online stores just like any other store because their sales are soaring.

The e-tail experience is more functional and lacks the power of the physical buying experience. Consumers are aware of the high standards pop-up store organizers have to allow participants to be part of the event and they know that they tend to give a chance to new, unknown brands with no previous background but with a good performance in the ephemeral sphere.

It is unusual to find Spanish fast fashion chains such as Zara or Massimo Dutti setting pop-up stores since their behavior is more conventional in terms of retail unlike similar fashion retailers in other countries. To mention just some, Urban Outfitters, H&M, American Apparel or UNIQLO have used different types of ephemeral stores housed in trucks or containers and moving freely around a country or across music festivals.

Even Amazon, the online retail giant aims to promote its new fashion section by opening a pop-up store in New York. Although its core identity spins on the advantages of e-commerce, it is aware of the fact that to promote fashion consumption, a physical experience is a must.

The emerging, local Spanish fashion brands interviewed for this research all agree that their presence at pop-ups does not seek to increase sales but is more of a storefront to attract potential customers to the online store. According to Miguel Bonet, from Better, the website of The Hovse receives between 1800 to 2000 daily visits during the pop-up store event and an average

of 3,5 minutes of time is spent on the web visiting the 90 brands that participate in the event. In other words, Bonet claims that: “customers appreciate and use web information, although at the same time they also value other communication formats such as special edition magazines that are printed just for the pop-up event”.

Likewise, for Papiroga, the accessories brand “after the pop-up event, web site visits increase as well as views of our social media accounts”. Zubi’s managers go to a further extent claiming: “In our case, website visits increase before the event. Some people cannot come to the pop-up store but they see our name in the advertisements and decide to find out more about us”.

In some cases, ephemeral stores are useful to learn more about the customers that visit a brand’s corner in the location. According to the founder of Ecoology: “Customers are different, so it is an opportunity to target potential clients and to open new markets”. Therefore, pop-up stores work as a market research tool that can be then used to improve the online store.

In a similar way, brands with an online presence use this retail strategy to interact with customers, communicate the brand history and identity. Their aim is to create brand awareness, and at the same time encourage product engagement with the visitor.

Prenda offline is a pop-up store that is set up every year in Madrid’s Triball district, bringing together brands that are only available online. None of these brands make significant profits during the event –despite some exceptions- but they do increase their own website’s traffic. Most of these companies market their products internationally and have already participated in pop-up venues abroad. According to its organizers: “These brands have not yet taken the risk of opening a physical store or selling in multi-brand stores in Spain because they consider that the Spanish consumer does not tend to shop for unknown labels – unlike British or American ones”. Thus the main goal of Prenda offline and of many Spanish pop-up events is to make Spanish customers have a closer contact with new, emerging talents and local products in an offline location.

The insights provided by the in-depth interviews allow concluding that pop-up stores are effective only with mid-market products. Premium, high-end brands tend to underperform in ephemeral settings and therefore prefer to focus their market strategy online (and be considered a niche brand) or else they aim to belong to a multi-brand store with a well-established and permanent physical presence. As exemplified by the designer of POL fashion brand: “My clothes are not successful in pop-ups. I think it is due to a pricing perception. The customers of pop-up stores are willing to pay more for a product than what they pay at a fast fashion retail

chain but not so much as to buy an expensive one... I prefer brick-and-mortar stores that sell products that are similar to mine”.

In any case, fashion brands with an online presence that are willing to appear in pop-up stores do so to target potential clients. All in all, e-commerce still has a limitation: many customers refuse to buy products if they cannot touch them or try them on (Chi Lin, 2003).

4. The importance of branding and experiencing the real thing. Despite the fact that e-tail finds its own ways to create engagement, consumers still need a brick-and-mortar experience. Pop-ups are a perfect way of practicing *showrooming*: the current habit of consumers to examine the product or merchandise of a specific brand in an official or temporary store and then to go to surf Internet to find the same product at a cheaper price. At the same time, pop-up stores are a successful tool to create buzz among consumers and drive traffic to the official web page prior to a brand’s international expansion when there is no brand awareness in the new country.

Such was the case of Victoria Plimsolls’, the pop-up store opened by the Spanish shoe brand Victoria in Boxpark, a modular container area in Spitalfields market, London from May to October 2014. Another example is that of Beñ (Be in Fashion Spain); a platform that has opened pop-up stores for Spanish brands in New York’s Soho in 2013. Each of the openings was based upon a different concept: “Touch of Spain referred to products of Spanish origin, Green Spain focused on brands with sustainable processes and Spanish Soho Mile offered products designed with associations to traditional Spanish aesthetics (mainly colors and prints)”, states Gloria María López, the project’s alma mater. Beñ’s mission, like that of all Spanish pop-up stores opened abroad is to export an ensemble of values and characteristics commonly referred to as Marca España (Spain’s Brand) with the aim of communicating all their potential to a foreign clientele.

In the past fifteen years, companies’ communications have embraced a branding dimension in order to construct an identity even before the brand is visible at the point of sale. Traditionally, consumers have trusted renowned brands that had built a prestigious name only after many years of market presence. Pop-up concept stores create a two-way flow of trust between the pop-up brand and the brands housed within it, states the director of Modaes.es.

In this manner, usually the pop-up brand organizer contacts the brands it wants to include in its space. According to the companies interviewed, they usually pay between 100 and 1000 euros as a fee to participate in the setting, or else they give a percentage of sales to the organizers. For

this reason, many pop-up stores try to bring together as many brands as possible to reach profits. “We carefully choose which pop-up to be in. Some events of this type have such a large and widespread offer that they create the contrary effect: the visitor feels overwhelmed and cannot find any common concept in the venue” state the designers from Shallowww.

The founders of Suturno insist that the most important factor for them is “the mixture of brands with very different profiles, which we perceive as a clear disadvantage that has made us decline many pop-up offerings”. They also point out that “even the best pop-up stores are unattractive from a financial profit point of view because they include both a fixed cost and then a percentage of sales. This makes sense because doing things right requires stronger investments for the organizers but it diminishes the brand’s profit expectations, and so as to only be able to cover costs even if sales were high”.

The aim of a pop-up is to reinforce both brands – the organizer and the participant. To segment its potential clients and be associate its identity to certain values; the pop-up brand usually presents itself as an ephemeral concept store; as a multi-brand store tied to a specific concept (such as sustainability, local production or designers’ ages to mention just some). The next step is to discover which companies fit into the event’s requirements.

In this respect, the location becomes an additional added value added for the brands. As was mentioned in key dimension number 3, they seek gentrified neighborhoods with an affluence of young, informed people that prioritize the different over the mainstream. At the same time they aim to cause bewilderment both by the location and setting: successful pop-up stores open up in abandoned factories, trucks or old markets. Some of them are even located in outlying districts such as Delicias (Mercado de Motores) or Legazpi (Matadero). The most surprising example might be that of Vfiles, a multi-brand store oriented towards young, trend setters that nonetheless decided to open an ephemeral store in the Hamptons, the New York area associated with a traditional, classic, older, and upper-class population. To sum up, the aim is to encourage bewilderment or astonishment, and to surround the shopping experience with an aura related more to entertainment than to a mere product sale. Above all, the idea is to associate both the organizer and the participating brands to values that cannot be usually adopted in traditional brick-and-mortar points of sale on commercial streets.

5. The growing importance of urbanism and the influence of neighborhoods on people’s lives.

The embedded necessity of human beings for belonging is also at the roots of pop-up stores, since they have a resemblance with old markets, plazas, vacant spaces and local boutiques.

However, this is not just a human trend but also an urgent requirement to activate parts of our cities that for some reason are out of fashion, depressed or even dangerous. Better cities and towns <http://bettercities.net> explores the concept of a citizen's active role in transforming a neighborhood.

Salesas and Fuencarral neighborhoods in Madrid are also examples of this process that started in the 2000s. Currently the best representative is Conde Duque district: a very dynamic area set apart from the establishment and social conventions. It is one of the most vibrant areas of the city and its century-old and dirty streets compared with the *Golden Shopping Mile* in Salamanca neighborhood are bustling with young professionals, immigrants and full of colorful vintage boutiques, flea markets, shabby music stores, corner markets and cool multi-brand men's stores. The pop-up store phenomenon is an evolution of the idea of taking the product to your local area rather than having the customer visit the traditional shopping areas.

Conde Duque is full of shops that open and close for a few weeks, decorated in a cool way with a "work in progress" touch and with space to socialize having a beer or coffee: an extremely appealing setting for customers that want to participate in the city's life in a more active way.

Occupying old-fashioned or empty buildings and apartments, and the exclusiveness around the event is another clue to the success of pop-up stores. The Hovse, Madrid in Love or The Patio, all in Madrid, are just some examples.

In many occasions, this retail format is used during the first stages of the refurbishment of impoverished neighborhoods, a process known as "gentrification" that has accelerated in the last years in the world's most important capital cities. The purpose is to encourage a sense of community in a specific area by introducing creative industries such as theatres, art galleries and design shops so as to increase the flow of visitors, and hence attracting new neighbors (Driggins, Snowden, 2012). In many cases the government finances this gentrification through incentives and specific monetary aid to small businessmen and storekeepers. For example, The Shop Revolution project carried out by the British government in areas such as Forest Hill or Kirkdale together with retail expert Mary Portas. Likewise for Triball, a public initiative which was carried out by Madrid's town hall in Malasaña area to re-populate empty buildings, promote upcoming, young brands and in the long term to rebrand Malasaña's image. Ten years after the project's implementation, Triball assembles one of Madrid's widest leisure options and is the most sought after area for ephemeral stores. To such an extent that in winter of 2013 a trend of opening pop-up restaurants for a few days was started in order to make neighbors aware of upcoming chefs' proposals.

In this respect, gentrification creates a curious effect: in the new trendy neighborhoods local produce out wins mass market ones, small storekeepers preside over big retailer chains and national products prevail over international ones. Williamsburg neighborhood, maybe the most gentrified area in the world, even refuses to let Starbucks or H&M settle within its perimeter (New York Times, 2011). The district is also home to Brooklyn brewery's head offices; it has the highest concentration of upcoming designer stores and hosts weekly pop-up events such as Smorgasburg, where local brands blend with nearby restaurants or the Artists and fleas market.

Williamsburg's case can be extended to any capital city in the world. For instance, London's Shoreditch neighborhood opens up Spitalfields and Columbia Road markets and ephemeral stores pop up every other weekend in old warehouses of Brick Lane. In addition, the district was chosen in 2012 as the setting for Boxpark, a shopping center based on the idea of weekly or monthly store rotation. Similarly Conde Duque area in Madrid has already been referred to by Spanish media as "the local commerce and artisan street" (SModa 2014, El Viajero 2014).

Conclusions

After having interviewed organizers, participants and experts of ephemeral retail various preliminary research findings may be concluded about the pop-up phenomenon in Madrid, together with its strengths and weaknesses:

- Pop-up stores act a marketing tool, not a way of boosting short term sales:

companies interviewed point out an increase in traffic to their web sites prior or immediately after the event, but they do not indicate a sales increase. More so, ephemeral retail organizers claim that the purpose of this type of events is to create brand awareness for a handful of brands, as a choice set apart from mass-market consumption.

- Pop-ups reinforce the values of participant brands: as may be concluded from in-depth interviews, direct sales and being associated with a specific value (nationality, craftsmanship or sustainability) are the main reasons that motivate brands. They carefully choose which pop-up to participate in according to the pop-up store's concept and in view of the other brands that will be housed in it. The aim is to blend in with its characteristics and overall, they insist it is about testing their customer's reaction to the brand's product in a physical setting.

- Pop-up stores look for an experiential relationship between the brand and the client: interviewees claim that the success of this phenomenon is due to the lack of personalization associated with online shopping and with buying in big retail chain stores. They consider that the only way to attract a young, fashion-conscious customer used to buying at discount prices is to blend shopping with leisure and entertainment.

Curiously enough, almost none of them place any value on the ephemeral dimension. The idea is not to evoke a transitory sense but to link the brand to a memorable experience (ecology, craftsmanship, culture, fun).

- **Spanish pop-up stores need to reinforce their conceptual dimension:** POL, Ecology, Shallowww or Zubi all claim that the current pop-up phenomenon would improve if organizers made a better selection of event participants and placed a stronger emphasis on the values they want to bring across. In their opinion, Madrid has too many pop-up offerings that all work in a similar way, so they are starting to lose appeal among customers.

- **The brick-and-mortar multi-brand store is still more popular than pop-ups.** All of the companies interviewed agree that it is best to join just two pop-up stores a year than to accept every proposal. In this respect, they conclude that overexposure goes against their products' identity and the specific nature of these events. In addition, they consider that both for image or economic purposes it is more effective to market their products through conventional multi-brand stores. Among other reasons, because these stores have a more loyal clientele that knows the products that are available. Also higher-priced products can be sold, unlike pop-up venues where visitors search for mid-range priced products.

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