

UX Research: Solving for Footwear

Full Report of High Level Findings

Continued from Customer Pain Points In-Store Research

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Executive Summary

In-Store our biggest customer pain point is the footwear department. The main problem with the department is the messiness and disorganization, difficulty locating shoes, and items are often out of stock. To improve customer satisfaction in Footwear, it was discovered through this research that Academy needs to:

1. Reorganize our aisles and the way shoes and boxes are displayed.
2. Rethink our Store Environment

Within each of these solutions there are more detailed choices to be made. The options are found at the end of this document under [Solutions](#).

[Recommendations & Next Steps](#)

To make a decision on the specific solution that is best for Academy, it is recommended to first:

1. Get feedback from our REAL customers.
 - Run a survey and get assistance from the Customer Insights team. They may have some of this information already.
2. Find and understand the costs.
3. Do a prioritization map exercise to make the final choice.
 - Evaluate and choose the changes that are easier (*scope & effort*), more affordable, and enjoyed by our customers.

Background

We know we want to better the full customer experience of our stores, and we have hundreds of ideas to incorporate. The question is, which of those ideas are actually what our unique customers need and want? This research was the beginning of answering this question. After some data analysis of information we already have through the Aces Survey, it was brought to our attention customers are most dissatisfied with first, our footwear department, and second our apparel. For this sprint we chose to solve for the footwear problem first. This has been a problem much of the company is quite aware of, but for different reasons and priorities it has not yet been solved. The data reinforced the need. With this research we hope to aid Store

Design and any other departments that might be involved in this endeavor.

Goal

1. Understand customer pain points in-store and what areas we are struggling with the most.
2. Uncover what's really going on in our worst areas.
3. Provide recommendations and possible solutions for these problems.

Methodology & High Level Findings

1. Online Research

The attempt with this first research was to find any applicable facts and relevant research that could help us solve our problems and validate the need to change.

In-Store Data to Understand

- Footwear sales are currently down -2.6% compared to last year.
- Footwear sales make up 21% of all in-store revenue.

Online Research - Apparel & Footwear Survey 2016

[Apparel & Footwear Survey Report by BodyLabs](#)

Stats from this survey that directly affect our Footwear:

- \$62.4 Billion worth of apparel and footwear returned due to incorrect fit.¹
- 93% said they are likely to try on footwear before purchasing.
 - We are struggling to get our visitors to the shoe they are looking for. *(mess, disorganized, or out of stock)*
- 64% said they would purchase 1-2 pairs of shoes if they could ensure fit.
- Men shop 45% only in stores for footwear compared to women at 28%.

Key Takeaways:

Because almost ALL people come to footwear to try on shoes before they buy, it's obviously important for us to make sure they can locate the right style and fit first.

In the future once we've solved our mess and locating problems, we could consider more ways to ensure the correct fit for guests. We are currently talking

with the third party vendor, TrueFit for bettering the online shoe shopping experience.

Online Research - Store Environment

One study done by [International Journal of Marketing Studies](#) found the overall influence a store's environment has on consumers. These are the findings from their deliberate research, prioritized by environment influence on the consumer:

- Music is most important to consumer's comfort in the store and when there is music in stores they tend to spend more time in the store.
- Cleanliness motivates consumers to stay more and buy more from the cleanliness of the shelves to the floors.
- Temperature is third most important and if a retail outlet does not have air conditioning the consumer is discouraged to shop.
- Lighting is next of importance as it makes people want to stay more and allows them to evaluate the quality of the products they are interested in.

Key Takeaways:

Managers and retail owners must take into account the cleanliness, scent, lighting and colors of the outlets to match with the customer's attitudes and perceptions. Bettering these environment settings will reduce the mess customers are complaining about, and will help items be easier to locate.

2. Contextual Inquiry & Personal Walkthrough

This contextual inquiry at one of our stores was to help us further understand and investigate the "why" of the top 3 reasons customers are not enjoying the Footwear department, (*proven through ACES*).

Key Takeaways:

- Validated the 3 main reasons customers are unsatisfied.
- High aisles are inconvenient and dangerous
- Associate has to get the ladder down every 15 min.
- Boxes stacked rows deep add to the mess and danger (*customers don't even know to look there*).
- More options is covering up the real problem of inventory. (*Note: More options sales are also currently down.*)

3. Competitive Analysis

The stores in this analysis were carefully chosen and graded by situations that affect the overall organization of the shoes and accessibility of the shoes to the customer. This organization also makes the shoes easier or harder to locate (*our two biggest problems with footwear - disorganization & locating shoes*).

Thought behind store choices for analysis:

- 2 Specialty Stores
- 2 Competitor Stores

Specialty Stores - In a [study done in 2014](#), Footlocker was ranked top favorite shoe store and DSW was ranked fourth by the general population of consumers.

Competitor Stores - DSG and Bass Pro's shoe departments and overall sports or outdoor store situations are very comparable because they do not only focus on shoes, but manage many departments similar to Academy.

[View images from the research.](#)

4. Empathy Map - Digital Associate Product Team Work

[View Empathy Map - Last Page](#)

After going through all the research up to this point it was a struggle to find more areas for work specifically for the Digital Associates Product team. This methodology was chosen to get further insight into the journey and struggles of the associate in footwear. I wanted to continue this map with a Journey Map, but could not for the sake of time. When this research was completed, the same takeaways were found that were found from the previous research. The takeaway that would benefit the associate the most would be the overall reorganization of the aisles and displays. As found in other research and predicted from the beginning, an app to assist associates with finding the shoes, and putting them back in a back room situation would be a great set of work for Digital Associates & Store Tech together. This of course can not happen until decisions are made in regards to the reorganization of the department.

Solutions

If we want to increase footwear sales we need to reorganize the ways our shoes are displayed and think about the overall “store atmosphere”. The following solution ideas for reorganization all have the potential of needing a back room situation. If this is the case, we will definitely need support from DA & Store Tech to create a tool to track, pick up, and put back inventory.

Here are the details to some ideas for us to consider.

1. Reorganize our aisles (the way shoes and boxes are displayed)

a. Keep boxes on the floor (ex *DSW*)

i. Lower more of our aisles

1. It would make it easier for customers to find associates for assistance.
2. It would open up the space and create a more inviting showroom for customers to look through.
3. It would take away the need for ladders while also taking away the awkward and dangerous situation.
4. Depending on the amount of inventory we have left that can not fit on the floor we still may need to consider a back room.

ii. Use dividers to separate displays for those aisles

1. Dividers would clean up the organization problem even more, making it easier for customers to look for their shoes, and associates to maintain each stack and display.
2. This would assist in eliminating our second problem with customer satisfaction - “Shoes are hard to locate.”

b. Partly on floor (ex *Bass Pro*)

i. Lower more of our aisles

Same benefits listed as the “Keeping boxes on the floor” explanation.

- ii. Use dividers to separate displays for those aisles.
Same benefits listed as the “Keeping boxes on the floor” explanation.
 - iii. Add a few aisles for shoes to be displayed without boxes.
 - 1. It gives customers a cleaner, simplified display to browse through select shoes - more of a “showroom” feel.
 - 2. Less boxes on the floor = less mess on the floor.
 - 3. A back room will possibly need to be considered for this choice.
- c. Completely off floor (ex DSG or Footlocker)**
- i. Lower more of our aisles
Same benefits listed as the “Keeping boxes on the floor” explanation.
 - ii. Add a few more aisles just for shoes to be displayed on without boxes.
Same benefits listed as the “Boxes partly off the floor” explanation.
 - iii. A back room will possibly need to be considered for this choice.

2. Rethink our Store Environment

a. Lighting

- Consider replacing or adding lighting structures to bring more focus to the shoes on display. Best examples are Footlocker with focused lighting directly on displays, or DSW with elegant lighting that spreads across the entire department.

b. Display & Layout

- Display & treat each department differently, designing for the experience the customer is looking to have as an end goal of buying and using our products. (ex DSG like image & Bass Pro)
- By designing each department to it’s unique products and end customer goals, we can expect to create a more enticing store experience and gain more sales.

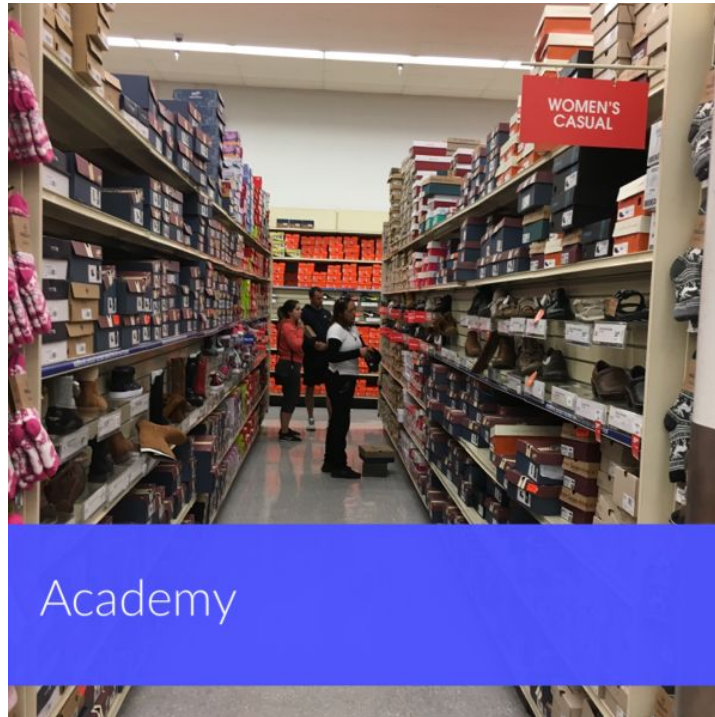
Recommendations & Next Steps

Before choosing which of these solutions are best for Academy there are a few things we need to do.

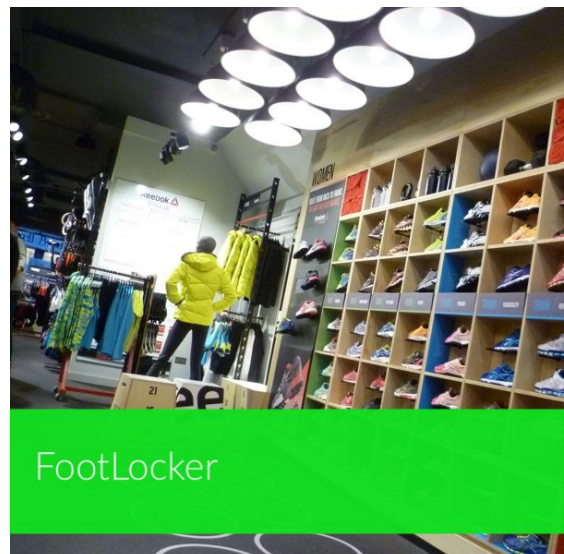
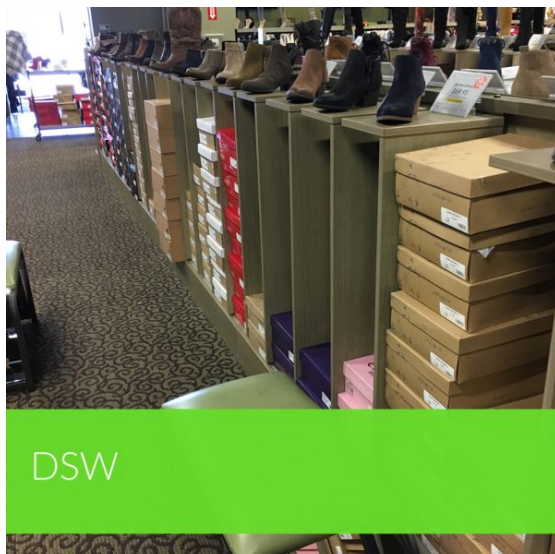
4. Get feedback from our REAL customers.
 - Run a survey and get assistance from the Customer Insights team. They may have some of this information already.
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Appendix

Images for Competitive Analysis



Specialty Stores:



Competitor Stores:



DSG



Bass Pro

Associate Empathy Map

Associate Empathy Map

By UX Researcher - Kelsi Harris

Product Team: Digital Associate

Date: 12/14/16

Solving for Pain Points in Footwear

Persona - Darien, the Chiller

Darien has been at Academy for a little over 3 months now working in Footwear. This job is just a part time job to get him some extra cash while he's taking college courses. All he really wants to do is get his job done quickly.



User Insight



Pains

1. Organizing boxes is very difficult and is a constant job.
2. Customers mess them up as soon as he fixes them.
3. Helping customers find shoes. - Ladder, aisle height
4. Inventory isn't always correct if he tries to use that to help him.

Needs

1. A new system of organizing the boxes or tool to help him get the job done faster.
 - One that keeps the boxes organized longer.

Opportunities

1. Reorganize aisles
 - Would help the associate at his job by simplifying organization and would help inventory be more accurate so associate could assist customers better.
2. Rethink Store Environment
 - App to assist with Inventory (DA & StoreTech)