

Best Buy Follows Apple Store Example

Written by Marco Attard
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The Wall Street Journal reports Best Buy is getting a new look-- or rather, it is testing out a look rather similar to that of Apple's retail outlets as part of its latest turnaround strategy.



Now a test store close to Best Buy HQ has a Genius Bar... sorry, a "Solution Central" help desk manned by the black-tied Geek Squad. Customer can also pay for purchases in several locations (rather than checkout lines), while the store itself sports a stripped-down look housing less gadgets within a smaller footprint.

All are attempts at beating the current, inevitable showrooming trend. Best Buy says around 50% of customers use mobile devices to check on the prices of the competition while browsing its outlets.

The next part of the Best Buy turnaround strategy is job slashing-- the WSJ says Best Buy is set to eliminate 2400 store jobs (or 1.4% of a 167000-person workforce), including 600 Geek Squad positions. The reductions are separate from an undisclosed number of job cuts following the closing of 50 stores planned for 2012.

Will smaller, more customer-focused stores bring success to an ailing retailer still wholly dependent on the big-box format?

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