



Sweet as Media

One question, more than any other, ripples through this issue of *The Hub*.

That question is, “What do we really mean when we say ‘retail as media’? It’s not a new question, exactly, but we don’t yet have an answer to it.

Is retail a vessel for advertising and promotions, just like television, radio and print? Many seem very comfortable with that idea and are finding ways to package, sell and measure it that way.

Or is retail a medium unlike any other, a platform for experiences more than a channel for messages? Here’s where it gets a little dicey

How do we measure an experience?

because it raises a more difficult question: How do we measure an experience?

Maybe we don’t. Maybe we buy into the concept that if we create a better shopping experience, sales will go up. So will brand image, equity and loyalty.

In effect, that’s what Bob Thacker is doing at OfficeMax (*page 24*). That’s what Julie Gilbert is doing at Best Buy (*page 32*). That’s what Andy Austin is doing at AT&T Stores (*page 6*). That’s what I saw first-hand a couple of weeks ago at a remarkable little shop called Economy Candy on New York’s Lower East Side.

Economy Candy is not a huge store, but it creates a huge impression. It feels like a warehouse and a small shop all in one shot, packed to the rafters with candy, candy, and more candy. They just pile it high and watch it fly.

The other thing about Economy Candy is the smell, which can be described in just one word: Sugar. The place is jammed with shoppers and filled with a cash register’s ring. Sweet.

Retail as media, indeed.

Tim Manners, Editor-in-Chief

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