

In this case, the field actually yields a second, much larger question that should probably be taken up in the development project, as it will have an overriding influence on the design of the stores: the repositioning of the shopping experience in the face of increasing Internet sales.

Because the Internet provides a good shopping experience, the brick-and-mortar shops are seeing falling sales.

Because the brick-and-mortar shops are seeing falling sales, they need to understand the shopping experience.

This is not a paradox (yet), but an open question.

5 THEMES

The themes that can be identified in the field fall into two broad categories: those concentrating on the socially sensitive choice of an article of clothing in a private but isolated environment, and the theme of value creation in the live shopping experience.

6 FRAMES

The combination of these two paradoxes leads us to frame the problem as finding ways to support the social aspects of the choosing of clothing, and to bring this social aspect into the fitting room environment. This approach directly addresses the online sales problem: generally, the social sensitivity about shopping for clothes is well served by the Internet, which offers the possibility of sharing images and discussing items with friends before buying them. The main frame that the designers have worked on is one that will transfer this newfound strength of the Internet back to the store environment. This would mean turning the stores inside-out, as it were, to create an environment in which trying on clothes is the central (and unique and live) element that the store can offer. As a result, the proposal is not to hide the fitting room, but to make it central to the shopping experience and connect it to the broader social network of the shopper.

If the problem situation of the department store's declining sales is approached *as if* it is a problem of creating a more fulfilling social shopping experience, *then* the fitting rooms should be ... a catwalk.