Amazon to open fashion store where algorithms suggest what to try on

20 January 2022

Amazon.com Inc's recipe for the department store of the future includes algorithmic recommendations and what one corporate director called "a magic closet" in the fitting room.

The online retailer is making another push to grow its fashion business, announcing on Thursday it will open its first-ever apparel store this year, with a tech twist. "We wouldn't do anything in physical retail unless we felt we could significantly improve the customer experience," said Simoina Vasen, a managing director.

At 30,000 square feet (2,787 sq meters), the planned "Amazon Style" shop near Los Angeles is smaller than the typical department store. Model items are on the racks, and customers scan a code using Amazon's mobile app to select the color and size they would like. To try on the clothes, which are stored in the back, shoppers enter a virtual queue for a fitting room that they unlock with their smartphone when it is ready.

Inside, the dressing room is "a personal space for you to continue shopping without ever having to leave," Vasen said. Each has a touchscreen letting shoppers request more items that staff deliver to a secure, two-sided closet "within minutes," she said.

"It's like a magic closet with seemingly endless selection," Vasen said.

The touchscreens suggest items to shoppers too. Amazon keeps a record of every good a customer scans so its algorithms personalize clothing recommendations. Shoppers can fill out a style survey as well. By the time they arrive in a fitting room, employees have already deposited customers' requested items and others that Amazon has nicked.
has picked.
Shoppers can opt out with a concierge's help, Amazon said.

Amazon has unveiled tech to help customers choose outfits before. The company has surpassed Walmart Inc as the most-shopped clothing retailer in the United States, according to analyst research.

But it still has room to expand and compete with the likes of Macy's Inc and Nordstrom Inc, which have opened smaller-format stores. Amazon's lineup of physical grocery and convenience shops have yet to upend brick-and-mortar retail.
The company's new store aims to attract a broad range of shoppers with hundreds of brands, Vasen said, declining to name examples.

It has hundreds of associates, and no cashier-less checkout like some Amazon stores, Vasen said. Still, using a biometric system known as Amazon One, customers can pay with a swipe of their palm.

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