



The Future of Jewelry Retail

Unlocking Gen Z



FORTY FORWARD ▶

HumanX by IA Retail



Set to make up 80% of the luxury market by 2030:
Gen Z are just getting started.

HumanX by IA Retail is a research initiative to transform retail design by understanding consumer needs and behaviors. Diving into different sectors, we explore industry trends, challenges, and opportunities.

In our first installment, we explore the world of jewelry retail and its potential to unlock new consumer bases.

Gen Zers are barreling down the great wealth transfer, set to spend more and earlier. But what drives them? Excites them? And how can jewelry brands break down the invisible barrier of their storefronts?

'We engaged with Gen Zers and reviewed market and generational research to start the conversation.

At a Glance

Gen Zers associate jewelry stores with old-fashioned store designs, sales-focused interactions, and a sense of intimidation, otherness, and lack of belonging.

Jewelry brands have the opportunity to re-invent to remain relevant.

Barriers

- 6 in 10 Gen Zers shop at jewelry stores 'never' or 'less than yearly'
- Key barriers include a stiff, unapproachable, and stuffy atmosphere associated with jewelry shops
- Unapproachable jewelry storefronts fail to invite Gen Zers in, preventing jewelry brands from cultivating early-stage brand loyalty

Attractors

- Non-traditional store design acts as a key attractor for Gen Zers to visit jewelry stores
- Unique and customer-led brand activators create lasting loyalty
- Freedom to browse and discover new finds independently reassures Gen Zers they won't be upsold and helps create a welcoming atmosphere

Our Take

- Implementing dedicated, flexible 'makerspace' that caters to events, pop-ups, and community initiatives will attract early-stage Gen Zer brand loyalty
- Curated consignment with frequently changing displays targeted towards Gen Zer buzzwords showcases relevance

Ethical Storytelling

Gen Zers are placing a heightened focus on human-made jewelry in an era of automation and want to hear brands tell their stories.

71%

of Gen Zers see quality and craftsmanship as the #1 factor when choosing a jewelry brand.



39%

of Gen Zers report ethical and sustainable sourcing practices as their main motivator when choosing where to shop.



“The more creativity and knowledge that brands can share with us, the better! We want to hear their story.”

“I think that sustainable and ethical practices are key with Gen Zers. Fine jewelry has an impression of negative mining and business practices in the past.”

Authentic Delight

Glimmers of joy and community activation through pop-ups, non-traditional store design, and customer-catered events entice Gen Zers to step over the store threshold.

57%

of GenZers are more likely to visit a store if the brand hosts pop-ups.



86%

of Gen Zers reported that non-traditional store design would encourage them to visit a jewelry retailer.



“Newer brands are creating pop-ups and more interesting shop experiences. Our generation needs that innovation.”

“I take note of brands catering to current fashion trends (think loud and unique as opposed to traditional) that are in high-traffic areas.”

Self-led Exploration

Holy grail independent thrift shop finds and archival fashion trending on TikTok unveil Gen Zer's obsession with finding second-hand, curated, and uniquely them gems on their own. Self-guided exploration and discovery take preference over direct sales and consultation.

6 mil

views of #ArchiveFashion on TikTok.
(TikTok Insights, 2024)

64%

of Gen-Z prefer buying second-hand items to purchasing new ones (ThredUp, 2023).



TikTok vintage jewelry haul: looking for the holy grail of exclusivity



Dipping toes into the circular economy: secondhand jewelry is on the up.

"I find jewelry stores intimidating and too direct. It feels like I'll have to talk to people instead of being able to browse."

"I don't want a sales person to approach me when I step into the store. I want to find and explore independently as a first step."

The Jewelry Store of the Future

Breaking down entry thresholds through digitally enabled, curation-led displays;
inviting long-term loyalty with makerspaces geared for events



Main transactional counter moved to one side, allowing a more self-guided shopping experience

Clear centralized path for intuitive wayfinding, ability to roam without feeling watched/judged

Curated displays organized into categories of trending styles

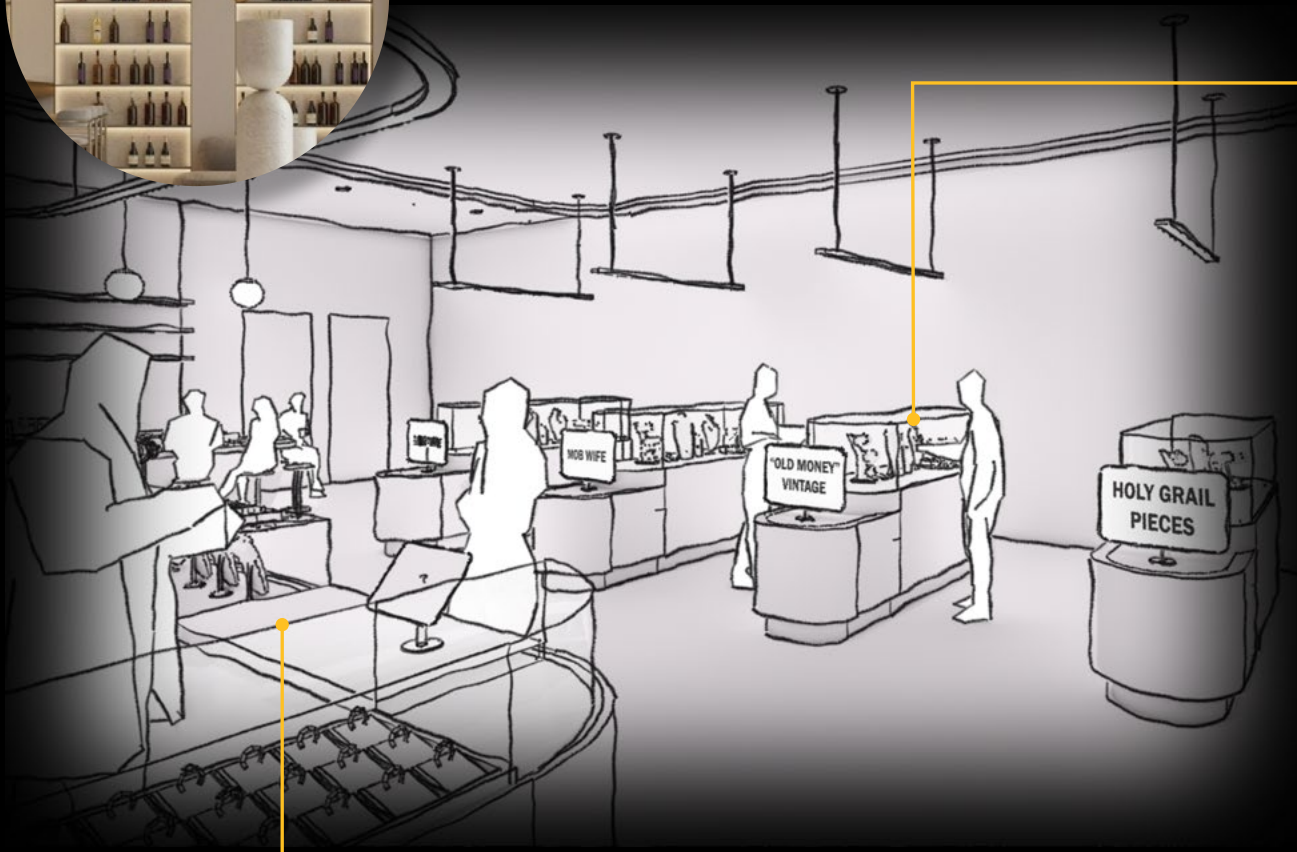
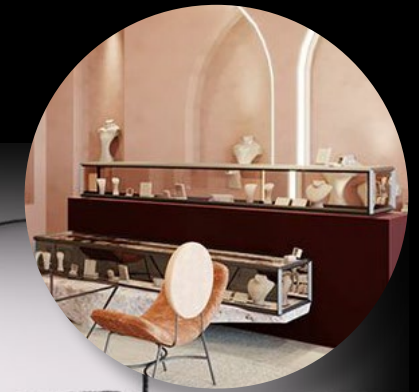
Digital integration and emphasis on technology

"Makerspace" event bar provides immersive brand expression with pop-up events and DIY classes

Authentication and consignment services promote more ethical consumption

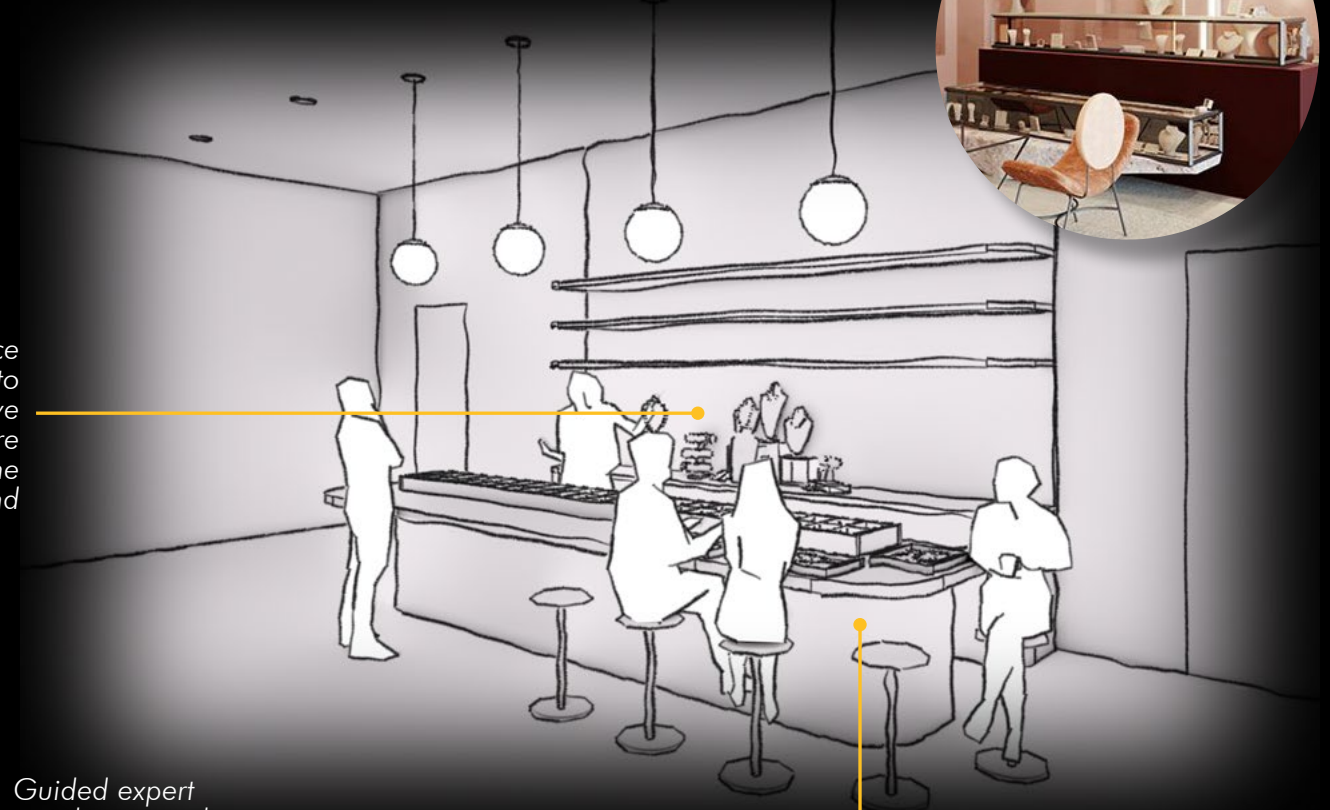
Lounge area at entry as a landing zone to make the first experience more welcoming





Curated displays organized into categories of trending styles and viral aesthetics

Community event space brings customers in to participate in the creative process and develop a more personal relationship with the brand



curated consignment

Authentication and consignment services emphasize the morality shift from rapid consumerism to longer term incitement in quality, ethical items

Merging digital and physical support through expanded virtual jewelry display using AR/AI and assistant support only when asked for.



Guided expert consultation and insights into jewelry creation when asked for

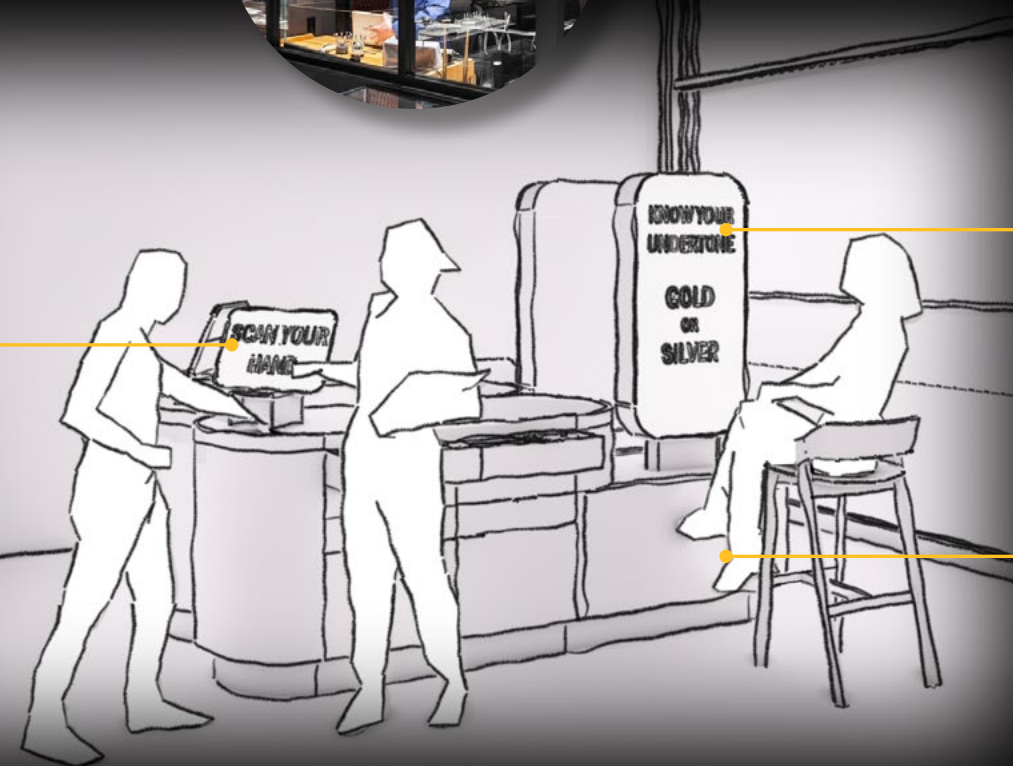
makerspace

Providing immersive brand expression, care and a feeling of luxury through exclusivity by creating tucked away, intimate areas bursting with brand recognition

"makerspace" can host pop-up activities (workshops, permanent jewelry events, etc)

Incorporating technology such as smart mirrors to help curate a selection specific to each customer

Digital integration gives opportunities for ultra-personalization and expertise when requested



digital integration

Our Retail Clients

Bloomingdale's	Tecovas	Whole Foods
Neiman Marcus	Woodhouse Day Spas	Mastercard
Studs	Sonos	American Express
R.F. Moeller Jewelry	David Yurman	Lego
Nike	Party City	Microsoft
REI	Alaska Airlines	McDonald's
Canada Goose	Chipotle	Whirlpool
Kontoor	Capital One	Leica
Tom Ford	T-Mobile	Pressed Cafe
Perry Ellis	adidas	American Airlines
Combatant Gentlemen	Bank of America	Mod Pizza
Estee Lauder	Wayfair	Citibank
Williams-Sonoma	Dyson	Yeti
Mercedes-Benz	JP Morgan Chase	BBVA
Nespresso	Blue Bottle Coffee	Peloton
Trunk Club	Lucid Motors	Tia
ASICS	Walgreens	

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