

Cultural Signals Canvas

SPOTTING OPPORTUNITIES IN CULTURAL SHIFTS

DATE *Fall, 2007*

PURPOSE *Ongoing evaluation of the retail space in general and how that impacts our brand, customers, messaging, and model.*

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Observations

What behavior changes am I noticing?

- *Amazon*
- *Starbucks is taking off*
- *B/N and Borders are creating a more experiential store*
- *Millennial customers are missing for us*
- *Competitors in urban areas*
- *Our stores are in the suburbs*

Moments

What's happening right now that's creating urgency?

- *Amazon Prime*
- *Bowling Alone book*
- *Housing market is weak*
- *Apple launched the iPhone*

Intersections

Are any moments amplifying nascent or developing moments?

- *Third Place + Bowling Alone*
- *Amazon growing + Prime changing shopping behavior*
- *Young looking to cities + mobile phones are doing more*

Insights

What do these patterns reveal about what people actually want?

- *Belonging over transactions*
- *Convenience = default*
- *Younger people like walkable, urban areas*
- *Authentic community*

**People don't want to shop for just products. They want to belong to communities that reflect who they are.*

Impact

What assumptions are breaking down?

Assumption: Shopping in physical stores is what people do
Breaking: Amazon/online making this obsolete.

Assumption: Suburban strip mall locations serve customers well
Breaking: Young people are moving to cities, not suburbs where our stores are located.

Assumption: Physical retail is for browsing and buying products
Breaking: Third place movement shows physical spaces must offer experience/community, not just products.

Assumption: Current customer base will sustain us
Breaking: Customer base aging with no young pipeline to replace them

Pause or Go

Before reacting, sit with the insights. Is this worth pursuing?

Go! We should definitely start exploring options

Assets

What strengths become more valuable given these shifts?

- *Relationships with 40,000+ nonprofits*
- *Physical real estate (some locations)*
- *Content creation expertise*
- *No debt and big donors*
- *Brand trust in nonprofit community*
- *Publishing capabilities*

Opportunity

What behavior changes am I noticing?

OPTION A: Transform to Third Place + Digital Hybrid
Wind down most stores and create "flagships" in walkable areas. Launch platform for educational content

OPTION B: Publishing Powerhouse
Close all stores, become a publisher of nonprofit resources. Distribute in all channels.

OPTION C: Nonprofit Content Producer
We help create content for nonprofits and build distribution platforms.

