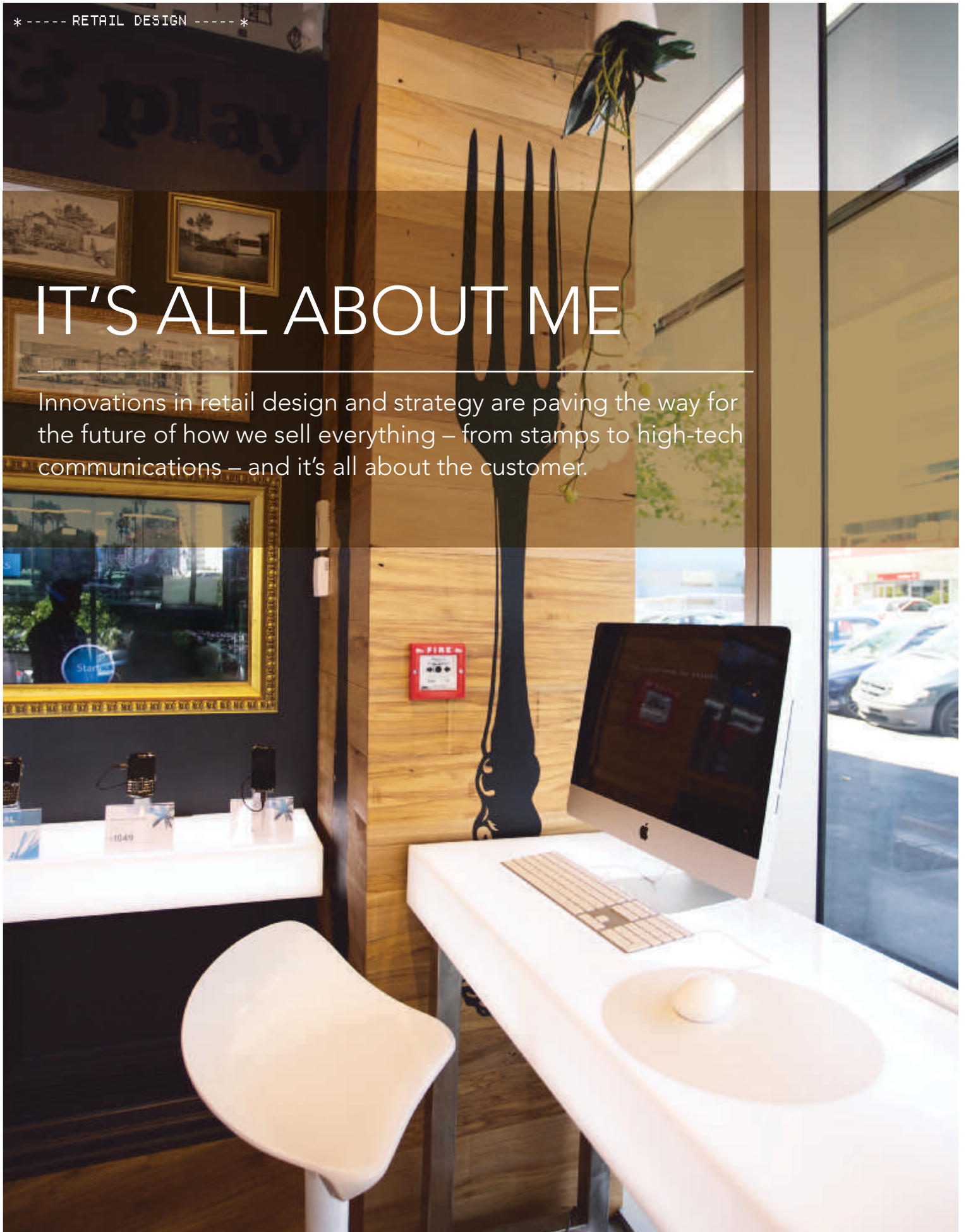


# IT'S ALL ABOUT ME

Innovations in retail design and strategy are paving the way for the future of how we sell everything – from stamps to high-tech communications – and it's all about the customer.





**Left** Quirky and eclectic furniture is scattered throughout the store providing platforms to display the latest in telecommunications products.

**Below** The store is designed around different states of mind that people experience in different daily settings.

**Opposite** The new concept store takes customers out of a typical 'techno' retail experience and into something like visiting a funky friend's home.

A case in point in this customer-centric design approach is Telecom's new concept store launched late last year in Auckland. It takes the customer out of the traditional 'telco' retail experience and into something akin to visiting your friend's funky home and checking out their new high-tech gadgets.

A complete turnaround on the usual bright lights and screens of telco retail, the concept store invites customers into a veritable playground of five inviting spaces that reflect where they would normally use Telecom technologies – 'Home Sweet Home', 'Work and Play', 'Out and About', 'Let's Talk', and 'Help is Here'.

"We've put the technology into people's lives, rather than the other way round," says Sven Baker, CEO of Designworks, the New Zealand strategic design company that worked collaboratively with architects Gascoigne Associates who

assisted with the implementation of the new concept store.

"We've built the store around different states of mind that people

"We've put the technology into people's lives, rather than the other way round."

experience in different daily settings – such as being on the road, in the home, or in the office. Then we've embedded the technology into those environments in relevant ways."

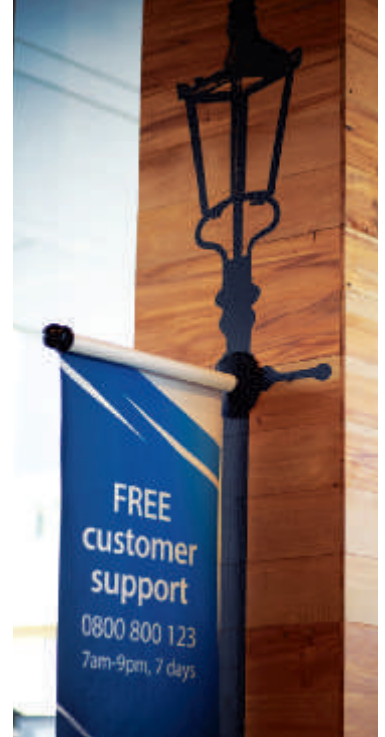
### Replacing the corporate

Telecom's broader strategic focus is to replace the 'corporate' experience with higher levels of customer-centricity, so the branding, promotion and point of sale is subtly



integrated into these spaces on blackboards, picture frames, postcards, screensavers and even water bottles.

Quirky and eclectic furniture and artwork sourced from New Zealand artists and designers are scattered throughout the store to stimulate human emotional levers, add warmth and bring the store alive – all while providing platforms to display the



**Above** Even the bottles of chilled water are subtly branded.

**Left** Artwork sourced from New Zealand artists, such as the quirky moose head shown, is scattered throughout the store.

**Right** Whimsical but practical; an image of an old street light appears to support a banner.

**Opposite** The concept store features different inviting spaces such as 'Home Sweet Home', 'Work and Play' and 'Out and About'.

## NEW ZEALAND POST

As Designworks has proved, it is possible to create a pleasant and memorable retail experience that builds brand around anything – even something as practical as selling stamps.

When New Zealand Post – which Designworks has been working with since 1999 – sought a solution to its underperforming philatelic stores, Designworks created the sophisticated standalone brand and store design REAL Aotearoa.

REAL Aotearoa transforms the customer experience of buying stamps and collectibles from fairly mundane and often tedious, to one which is more akin to visiting a gallery – in an environment where they can browse and buy authentic Kiwi art while completing their task of buying stamps.

The result has been a 200 per cent increase in customer volumes, a 150 per cent increase in customer purchasing and an increase in average customer spend from \$30 to \$75.

Over the past decade, Designworks has been behind the transformation of the New Zealand Post brand from basic postal

services to a vast array of areas including couriers, document management, banking, e-commerce, and international consultancy, amongst other things.

A major component of this has been redesigning the retail experience, with the last phase of a long-term strategic approach – Stores of the Future – now being rolled out across the country.

The first major redesign of New Zealand Post's retail network in more than a decade, the stores integrate New Zealand Post's postal and Kiwibank's financial services – two brands that were not designed to cohabit – into one cohesive space where customers can 'get things done'.

Designworks' Wellington manager, Shayne Priddle, says a large amount of work was done to map the 'customer journey' and define how to zone the environment around different functions – from meet-and-greet areas, self-service, buying and consulting, through to waiting in a queue (and making it a pleasant experience).

"Everything we did was based on asking how we can make the customer experience more conducive to getting things done. It's an entirely

customer-centric – as opposed to client-centric – approach."

Stores of the Future are being rolled out across New Zealand Post's network of 300 post shops over the next few years as shops come up for maintenance and upgrading. Around 50 have been completed to date. And, the success of the project has led to New Zealand Post and Designworks teaming up to complete a contract with Pos Malaysia through Transend Worldwide Ltd., New Zealand Post's international consulting subsidiary.

Priddle says the principles used for Stores of the Future helped to inform the approach-to-concept blueprint for Pos Malaysia's integration of traditional postal services with newer financial service products and retail merchandise. This was supported by an analysis of the Malaysian customer journey and market conditions.

"The team focus was to enhance the customer experience and we found that a Malaysian customer has a very different journey and different expectations to us. So there were some fundamental differences to consider.

"For example, people who use the postal services in Malaysia don't

stand in queues; they take a ticket, sit down and wait to be called. So we looked at how to make the waiting experience pleasant while creating an environment that informed the customer of what else was available in-store. And they're not used to being able to browse and buy products in a retail postal environment or having a 24-hour self-service postal lobby and ATMs.

"The design also had to introduce the concept of multi-transaction counters, a new experience for the Pos Malaysia customer as, currently, only certain transactions can be carried out at certain counters."

A concept store was launched in Jinjang, Kuala Lumpur, mid-2010 and, pending approval, is expected to be rolled out across Pos Malaysia's hundreds of stores later next year.

The project is a springboard to win further contracts in Asia with Transend for retail design strategy – where declining postal volumes are forcing companies to assess how to boost revenues from other parts of the business and maximise returns from their existing retail networks.

latest in telecommunications products, such as using a Mini Cooper to display hot-off-the-press GPS units.

“It’s all built around our philosophy of putting the customer at the centre of the experience and understanding their latent needs, rather than the traditional approach of an organisation imposing its views on the individual,” says Baker.

For Telecom, it’s the flagship of how they will sell technology in future.

### Simplifying technology

“Technology can seem extremely complicated, so we’ve taken a completely new approach to educating customers by creating a number of spaces within the store that simplify technology,” says Jodi Redden, Telecom’s Marketing Communications – Channel.

“Our customers can now learn

about, and interact with, our products in a manner in which they intend to use them at home, in the office or just out and about.”

This Telecom concept store is just one of many projects that reflect Designworks’ focus on merging its customers’ physical needs with a spatial experience that builds brands. ■

□ By **Alice Taylor** of IdeasShop.  
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