Retail Case Study

PROJECT OVERVIEW

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Creating a Store-Ready Checkout Experience Toolkit for a Global Retailer



INDUSTRY

Retail

PRODUCTS AND SERVICES

Athletic Apparel and Footwear

BUSINESS TRANSFORMATION STORY & BUSINESS CHALLENGE

The client is an athletic footwear and apparel company, with a global footprint of retail stores spanning multiple formats. During peak traffic periods in its value format, the client sought a more consistent and efficient approach to managing checkout demand while protecting, and ideally elevating, the shopping experience.

Clarkston's initial assessment identified opportunities in queue design, line management, register utilization, checkout setup, and workstation organization. Variations in store layouts, operating practices, line busting, and exception handling contributed to inconsistent execution, longer wait times, and unnecessary movement.

The client engaged Clarkston's retail team to translate these findings into a store-ready checkout experience toolkit. The work combined operating standards, visual guidance, role clarity, accessibility, ergonomics, and rollout recommendations into a resource that stores could use within their existing environments.

PRIMARY OBJECTIVES

- Translate findings from the initial checkout assessment into a practical toolkit that store teams could use during daily operations and peak traffic periods
- Identify the operational levers that could improve checkout throughput, reduce real and perceived wait times, and support a more consistent customer experience
- Establish store-ready standards for queue design and layout, line management, checkout setup, and workstation ergonomics





RESOLUTION

- Reviewed existing guidance, store configurations, prior observations, and project constraints to confirm the toolkit's priority areas and define practical operating guardrails
- Developed queue design guidance covering queue positioning, capacity, customer routing, merchandising fixtures, signage, and accessibility considerations
- Defined line-management standards, including register-opening triggers, response-time expectations, role responsibilities, front-of-line coordination, exception handling, and mobile point-of-sale usage
- Created a new peak-period responsibility focused on directing customer flow, communicating wait times, supporting pre-checkout activities, and coordinating line-busting actions without adding dedicated labor
- Developed ergonomic recommendations for checkout and backwrap spacing, employee reach zones, equipment placement, and supply organization
- Introduced a standardized approach aligned with Lean 5S principles to create more consistent, organized, and visually managed checkout workstations
- Consolidated the guidance into a practical, visual resource designed to support store-level adoption, pilot testing, and ongoing refinement

KEY BENEFITS

- Equipped store teams with one consolidated resource for improving checkout flow within existing layouts and operating constraints
- Provided proactive register-opening triggers designed to help teams respond before queues and wait times exceeded target levels
- Standardized approaches to queue configuration, customer routing, open-register communication, exception management, and peak-period line relief

KEY BENEFITS

- Reduced operational ambiguity by clarifying roles, expected response times, and actions for common checkout scenarios
- Provided ergonomic and 5S standards intended to reduce unnecessary movement, improve workstation consistency, and support more efficient checkout execution
- Created a scalable foundation for pilot testing, field feedback, continuous improvement, and broader adoption across the store fleet

KPIs

- Developed 15+ new store level standards
- Recommended 3 pilot programs
- Established a new queue structure that reduces customer idle walk time by 50%

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