



House of Rituals – the perfect balance between technology and wellness

On its 20th anniversary, the cosmetics brand Rituals planned to mark the occasion with a huge gift to themselves: a house. “Standing as the first flagship store for Rituals, as well as a lab where products and experiences are tested by real customers, House of Rituals was to be an exciting new venture for the brand,” says Menno Huizinga, Senior Solutions Architect at First Impression. Within the store, an audio-visual collaboration between First Impression and BrightSign was planned to bring the new Talisman perfume range to life and entice customers to sample the scents.

The Challenge

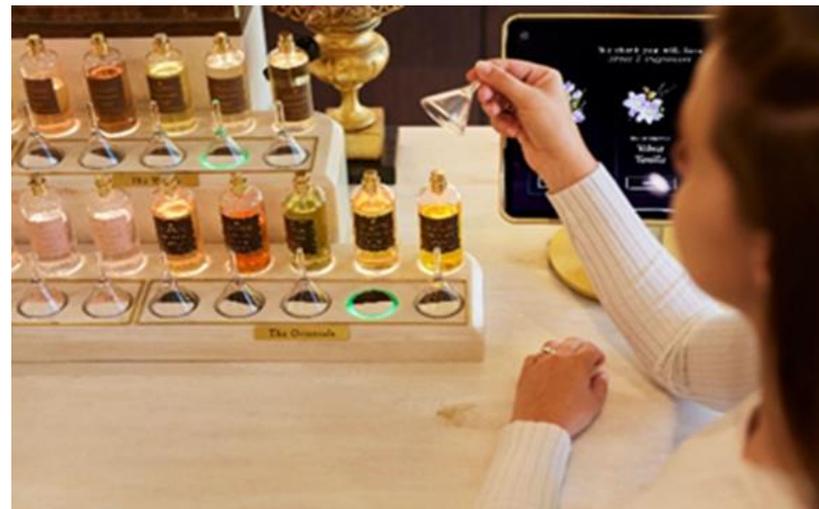
At 1900 sq. mt., this store is much larger in size than Rituals’ other 1150 outlets around the world (typically 100 sq. mt.) and is located in Kalverstraat, Amsterdam’s premier shopping street. “One of the key concepts of the experience store was to start selling perfumes and Rituals wanted to secure a foothold in this market in a very creative way” says Menno, “We were invited into the project to explore how audio-visual technology could strengthen the brand experience and showcase the store’s perfume range.”



The Solution

Within the final House of Rituals experience store, the Talisman collection of 25 extraordinary fragrances spanning five fragrance families is the stand-out display, powered by BrightSign players. Here, customers can select a Rituals perfume based on their favourite scent in an AV display that connects the Rituals scent profiles with two worldwide known databases. Two customers can use the application at a time, accessing it through iPads placed to the left and right of the display. The customer is invited to enter their favourite perfume first, and the system automatically finds the closest scent from the Rituals range. A further questionnaire invites customers to enter the basic ingredients that they like (eg: White Tea and Blond Santal) and the application illuminates LED lights under all the bottles of perfumes aligned with this scent – narrowing it down to three possibilities, which a customer can then sample and purchase. Scents for the user of the left iPad are highlighted in green, the right in red. When a customer picks up a glass pipette from the display, a video plays to showcase the perfume's ingredients and background information.

“The stunning display for the Talisman collection is built around the innovative use of lighting to guide the customer's choice” says Menno. “BrightSign players were selected for their outstanding reliability and upgradeability. BrightSign offers customers free OS updates for life but allows them to select the updates that are relevant to their installation. This keeps the hardware as up-to-date as First Impression and Rituals need it to be, without loading it up with redundant features and functions. Consumer devices such as PCs are forced to accept updates and security patches as they're issued – often bloating the software so the device needs more memory to function properly. As a result, PC players often need replacing every 3-4 years, whilst BrightSign's players can be in service for 8-9 years or more. In addition, energy efficiency is designed into BrightSign players which typically only consume 10-15W, compared with 70-80W for even an efficient PC. Lower heat output also reduces the need for cooling and improves reliability, as overheating can reduce player life.



To create the stunning display, First Impression built a bridge between two different programming worlds. A development team of six programmers created a fully custom skin around the BrightSign players, allowing the players (running BrightSign OS) to interact smoothly with the iPads (running iOS). This innovation extends BrightSign players beyond their normal functionality and took six months to develop. A local network interfaces the BrightSign players to the iPads, and UDP commands are used to control the player.

Two BrightSign HD1024 players control the feature lighting in tune with the digital signage presentation. By this means, the BrightSign players activate the LED strips under the bottles to draw the customers' attention to the perfumes the application has selected.

Alongside creating an exceptional customer experience, the application delivers valuable purchasing data to Rituals, detecting which perfume families are most popular amongst their clientele. “Every choice a customer makes is logged,” explains Menno. “And the only personal information Rituals receives is the customer's gender, but the store can use this data in marketing.

The display can connect the options showcased to the customer with what they eventually purchased, and can even show metrics on most popular times and hours of sales. Rituals can act upon the data that the customer enters to maximise sales return.”

Furthermore, the maintenance of audio-visual displays can be a point of stress and lost time in retail. First Impression offers Rituals a monitoring service based on BrightSign’s BrightAuthor Connected and custom NOC software, making sure the experience is hardly ever disturbed. “In just seconds, the service department of First Impression receives notice that one of the displays has an error and it can be fixed before the customer notices,” says Menno.

The Result

Due to the pandemic, the House of Rituals store opened by appointment only with strictly limited numbers. However, the technology has been working like clockwork. “Although the technology was developed for the flagship store, Rituals is so impressed with the concept that it wants to roll it out to every single one of its premium and flagship stores – taking the perfume range around the world,” says Menno.

Furthermore, First Impression has offered House of Rituals a flexible, easy to access approach to managing their in-store brand experience through a custom store control system and App. “At the click of a button, content delivered by the screens can be changed for the new season, for Christmas or for Valentine’s Day,” explains Menno,

In addition, First Impression created a custom plug-in to allow the BrightSign application to extract data from the store management system which House of Rituals runs on. “As a result, the screens automatically reflect store opening times – switching to out-of-hours content from half an hour after closing to half an hour before opening,” says Menno. The displays can also be powered down altogether.

The application draws on the Stack data to ensure that the customer is only offered lines that are available in store on that specific day.

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Light and sound are normally the key factors in audio-visual displays, but the Talisman collection shows how scent can also be smoothly integrated into an unforgettable in-store experience.

The display not only showcases Rituals’ new ventures into the world of perfume but provides valuable marketing data behind the scenes to make it a success.

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