

Yuppiechef's foray into physical retail continues with flagship V&A opening

By  Lauren Hartzenberg

15 Oct 2018

Kitchen and homeware retailer [Yuppiechef](#) opened the doors to its new flagship store in Cape Town's V&A Waterfront on 1 October. The look and feel of the company's third brick and mortar space echoes that of the first two - industrial, yet modern and polished with a premium selection of products to delight cooks and foodies.



This Waterfront opening follows the successful launch of the [Tygervally](#) and [Gardens](#) stores in 2018. But it's hard to believe that in September last year, none of these branches existed. Then, Yuppiechef was still strictly an e-tailer – albeit with a large loyal following.

As a business that began in the lounge of a Plumstead home in 2006, the company emerged as a pioneer in South Africa's nascent online retail space and has remained a market leader.

Entering the competitive homeware category, Yuppiechef was destined to go up against retailers with similar product offerings at similar price points, so they differentiated themselves from the get-go with superior customer experience and service – from the crisp, easy-to-navigate site design to the handwritten 'thank you' notes and Yuppiechef magnets customers receive with each package ordered.



Yuppiechef extends physical offering with second store opening

20 Jun 2018



Integrated customer experience

With the rollout of another physical store, it seems the brand has what it takes to crack brick and mortar retail, which is largely in need of an innovation boost in SA. “The potential in this environment is incredible, and we’re excited to offer V&A visitors a new retail experience,” says CEO and co-founder Andrew Smith.

As most of us have heard, the future of retail lies in omnichannel, which is a multi-channel approach to marketing, selling and serving customers in a way that creates a cohesive customer experience no matter how or where a customer reaches out. “We are inviting our customers to engage with us on their terms – whether that’s in person or online,” says Smith.



Any omnichannel evangelist will rightfully preach about how seamless integration between the channels is vital to the approach. These are some of the simple but effective ways that Yuppiechef is offering an integrated experience to its in-store shoppers:

- Pricing and specials will always be the same online and in stores.
- Online customer reviews have been integrated into the price labels in the store.
- QR codes can be easily scanned for access to additional product information.
- Any item can be bought in store and delivered to a home, or conversely bought online and collected in the store.

They’re also addressing the common gripe of having to wait in line to pay for goods by having a “no queue” point-of-sale system, which means that customers can pay for their basket of items at any position in the store, aided by a store assistant equipped with a mobile device.

Yuppiechef designed this mobile point-of-sale software themselves, building on the exact same system as their online store, meaning everything – from product and order information, to prices and stock availability – is available to all branches in real-time.



Next-generation store design

The new 200sqm Waterfront store boasts high-quality wooden panelling and engineered quartz countertops that make the space warm and welcoming whilst showcasing the large variety of kitchen and homeware products for sale.

But what's perhaps most interesting is that the Yuppiechef team has used virtual reality (VR) technology to design the store layout.

On their website, [Yuppiechef explains](#) that since using interior design firm ARRCC to assist in honing the style and finish of their first retail space, design capability has since moved in-house. They've successfully created 3D models of their stores, which helps when planning ancillary store items like stock depth, budgets, marketing plans and replenishment stock flow.

Now, Yuppiechef has built fully-immersive VR models of their stores that anyone in the team can use to get a feel for and test store layouts, long before the shop-fitters arrived to commence construction. Being able to digitally walk the aisles of the new store prior to building enables spacing and design issues to be corrected before excess time and money is spent.



Paul Tyler from SA shopfitting company, RMS Shopfitting, says that in his 25 years in the industry he's not encountered

this level of advanced technological design.

“The Yuppiechef VR experience is completely life-like in the fact that you can stand in the store and look at detail that might be problematic in the real world. It allows you to solve issues that you wouldn’t necessarily be able to do off a drawing. The detail also includes smaller details like the individual lights, which can be adjusted according to requirements, all in virtual reality,” he says.

From an e-commerce startup to an omnichannel retailer providing top-draw customer service in both the physical and digital realm, it seems Yuppiechef is establishing itself as a shopfitting pioneer too.

The new Yuppiechef store is located at Shop 6195 on the Ground Floor at the V&A Waterfront, Cape Town.

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