



FROM THE FIELD IN MILAN

5 ideas from Milan's flagships to copy on a small scale

What big brands are doing in their 2026 stores, the version for a specialist store, and a plan for the first 30 days.

Free · use it and share it

Speed or discovery: a store has to choose

Over 40% of Gen Z and millennials say in-store experiences make them more likely to buy from a retailer, while 37% of consumers put convenience first (ICSC and McKinsey, 2026).

Flagships choose discovery and make it visible. That makes them a good lab to watch. You don't need 200 square metres and an architect to borrow the idea: for each of the five cases there's a specialist-store version you can try on a small budget.

L'OTTOCENTO, VIALE PIAVE

Let people touch

WHAT THE BIG BRAND DOES

A materials library: visitors touch wood species, raw blocks and furniture sections.

WORKS FOR

Furniture, fabrics, eyewear, footwear, bikes

SMALL-SCALE, IN YOUR STORE

A sample corner where customers touch and compare, with a card for each material.

01

HOKA, BRERA

Create a fixed appointment

WHAT THE BIG BRAND DOES

A weekly run club that trains runners for the city races.

WORKS FOR

Sport, wine shops, bookshops, hardware, gardening

SMALL-SCALE, IN YOUR STORE

A fixed appointment, always on the same day: an outing, a class, a tasting, a workshop.

02

LIU JO CIRCLE, CORSO VITTORIO EMANUELE

03

Customise in front of the customer

WHAT THE BIG BRAND DOES

A corner where jeans are customised with crystals, embroidery and laser, starting from a consultation.

WORKS FOR

Clothing, jewellery, eyewear, leather goods

SMALL-SCALE, IN YOUR STORE

A made-to-measure service with a dedicated person and a recognisable name: engraving, hemming, frame fitting, adjustment.

POP MART, VIA DANTE

04

Give a reason to come back

WHAT THE BIG BRAND DOES

Stores designed as experiences around its collectible characters.

WORKS FOR

Toys, books, perfume, wine, stationery

SMALL-SCALE, IN YOUR STORE

A release calendar announced in advance, with one launch or limited edition a month.

RALPH LAUREN, VIA DELLA SPIGA

05

Become a destination

WHAT THE BIG BRAND DOES

Its first home-only store, next to the flagship, the bar and the kids' boutique.

WORKS FOR

Bookshop with café, bike shop with workshop, wine shop with evenings

SMALL-SCALE, IN YOUR STORE

Expand one step into a nearby category your customers already look for.

YOUR PLAN

The first 30 days

Pick one idea only, the one closest to what you already do. Set a date before the end of January.

WEEK	WHAT I DO	WHO OWNS IT	DONE
1	Choose the idea and the date. Prepare the space or the service.		
2	Tell your best customers, in person or on WhatsApp. Post it on Instagram and your Google profile.		
3	First edition. Note who comes and what they ask.		
4	Count who came back and who bought. Decide whether to make it permanent.		

How I measure it

INDICATOR	BEFORE	AFTER 30 DAYS
Customers at the event	–	
Customers back within a month		
New contacts (WhatsApp, email)		
New reviews		

Behind the scenes, not in the installations

What flagships do with a whole team, a specialist store can do with one person and an AI assistant: managing bookings and reminders for the fixed appointment, preparing material cards, drafting the release calendar. Every text is checked by a person before it goes out.

THREE PROMPTS TO START

Copy and adapt

- 01 I run a [type of store] in [neighbourhood]. Suggest 5 ideas for a monthly in-store appointment for my customers, low cost and one hour max.
- 02 Write a card for this material for a non-expert customer, in 5 lines: [name, origin, features, care].
- 03 Prepare a release calendar for the next 3 months with these launches: [list]. For each, a WhatsApp message of max 200 characters.

NEXT STEP

Want to know where to start in your store?

Book the free **MiRT Diagnosis**: a 30-minute video call. First we look at your store from the outside (Google profile, reviews, website, what AI assistants say); on the call we show you the three places where AI saves you time or wins you customers.

BOOK THE DIAGNOSIS →

Want all the trends? Comment **RADAR** under one of our posts and we'll send you the MiRT Radar 2027 (in Italian): 10 specialist retail trends, with the first move for each.

SOURCES

1. [ICSC and McKinsey, Shopping in the Age of AI, April 2026](#)
2. [Design Diffusion, L'Ottocento flagship, 23 March 2026](#)
3. [The Running Club, Hoka opens in Milan, 17 April 2026](#)
4. [Beyond the Magazine, Liu Jo Circle, 1 October 2026](#)
5. [ItaliaOggi, Pop Mart's second Milan store, 7 September 2026](#)
6. [MF Milano Finanza, Ralph Lauren's first home store, 18 April 2026](#)

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