



The virtual experience was a 360-degree capture of the retailer's physical environment | Photo source [Cost Plus World Market](#)

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VIRTUAL HOLIDAY STORE RECREATES IN-STORE EXPERIENCE



Cost Plus World Market digitally recreated an in-store layout and featured a storytelling layer of content

Spotted: Consumers around the world have had to rely heavily on online shopping over the majority of the past year as they have been hesitant to physically visit stores. However, many shoppers have started to miss the experience of browsing in person and gaining inspiration.

As a solution, home furnishings retailer Cost Plus World Market launched a virtual holiday store where customers could buy and browse over 550 holiday products in a realistic online store setting. Developed with customer experience technology provider Rightpoint, the digital store experience recreated an in-store layout and featured a storytelling layer of content designed to inspire customers to explore, add products to their cart, and learn more about seasonal trends.

Cost Plus World Market conceptualised the idea for the holiday store based on shopper feedback, where they voiced that they like to browse its selection rather than going out for one particular item. The virtual experience was a 360-degree capture of the retailer's physical environment, where customers could navigate through the aisles by clicking on circles on the floor. They could also shop for products by clicking on a snowflake icon that displayed product information and enabled them to add the items to their cart. Not only was the store available to use on any web browser, but shoppers were also encouraged to use virtual reality headsets to make the experience even more realistic.

Customers were able to access the virtual holiday store from the Cost Plus World Market homepage, and the company already has its next virtual store in the works for the spring.

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Takeaway:

The outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic has made going into a store a dangerous activity, which has made many shoppers miss the experience of physically browsing for items as it helps them gain inspiration. Unlike other virtual shopping experiences, the Cost Plus World's holiday store recreates a real in-store layout and allows customers to learn and gain inspiration from seasonal trends. This makes a big difference for consumers who usually go out to do their holiday shopping, and it provides them with a sense of familiarity during these unprecedented times.