



Scale By Design: FAO Schwarz

Scaling FAO's Brand DNA Across Formats.

Some brands do not just sell products.
They carry a piece of childhood.

Bringing FAO Schwarz back to Manhattan was more than a design challenge, it was an invitation to create memories.

Chute Gerdeman reimagined what FAO Schwarz could mean to a new generation, without losing what it meant to generations before.

The flagship at Rockefeller Plaza, 20,000 square feet in the heart of New York City, became the prototype for that vision. Every square foot was designed to do one thing: create unforgettable moments to stop people in their tracks.

Coordinated with FAO's iconic packaging art by Illustrator Ty Mattson, this is a world to discover and explore, where every turn reveals something unexpected. It is not a store to just shop and leave.

15,000 shoppers on opening day.

\$185,000 in revenue on day one.

Hard to ignore a success story like that. Most importantly, a beloved brand that had been away returned as something familiar but entirely new. People immediately wanted to rediscover it and share their delight.



Perfecting the Prototype.

At FAO Schwarz, wonder lives in the details. And wonder, it turns out, requires precision.

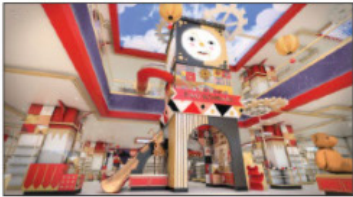
Every corner of the FAO Schwarz flagship was designed with intention. Custom branded fixtures and oversized architectural flourishes layer the space from floor to ceiling, creating an imaginative world unto itself. It is a place that feels like anything is possible. Merely calling it a store that sells toys does not fully capture that.

The famous FAO Clock Tower anchors the store as its theatrical heart, drawing the eye upward and giving the whole experience a grand sense of scale. At the Rockefeller plaza entrance, a larger-than-life tin rocket ship transforms a spiral staircase into a colossal toy launch pad. The big floor piano turns walking into a keyboard concerto. Each element was designed for the moment a guest looks up, reaches for their phone, and wants to share where they are.

Within the flagship, shop-in-shop destinations give partner brands such as Build-A-Bear, Barbie, and Melissa and Doug their own distinct home within the world of FAO Schwarz.



Adapting the Prototype.



FLAGSHIP

Typical location:
Stand alone, high-traffic tourist destination

Footprint:
- 1500-3000m2
- 2 floors at 35m x 35m each



MEDIUM STORE FORMAT

Typical location:
Indoor Mall

Footprint:
- 500m2
- 15m x 33m



SMALL STORE FORMAT

Typical location:
Travel Retail, airports

Footprint:
- 75-150m2
- 10m x 10m



SHOP-IN-SHOP

Typical location:
Department stores

Footprint:
- 50m2
- 6m x 8.3m
- Open / Wall / Column Format



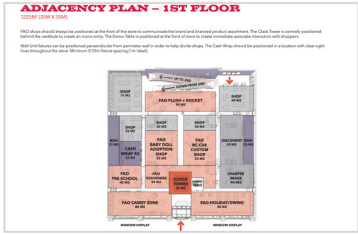
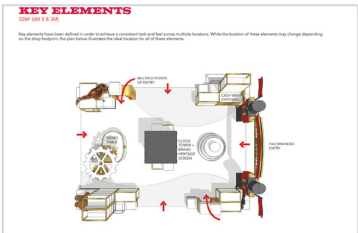
Building a Brand DNA That Scales

After bringing FAO Schwarz back to New York City, the next challenge was equally ambitious: take everything that made the flagship extraordinary and build a system that could replicate it anywhere in the world.

Chute Gerdeman developed the FAO Schwarz Global Design Standards Manual, defining how the brand comes to life across four distinct store formats. From a two-floor, 3,000 square meter flagship to a 50 square meter shop-in-shop, every location delivers the same sense of wonder, scaled to unique contexts.

Six design principles anchor the entire system: Wonderment, Big Imagination, Customer Engagement, Special Always, Easter Egg, and Spend and Do. Every design decision, at every format, is measured against them.

The Clock Tower, for example, is mandatory at all levels. It is the brand's anchor and its most recognizable touchpoint. It's the larger-than-life heart at every FAO Schwarz brand experience, whatever the scale.



FAO ♥ Target: Not Your Typical Brand Partnership

Two of America's most beloved retail brands.
Two very distinct design languages. One month
to make them feel like they had always
belonged together.

The FAO Schwarz and Target partnership was
the kind of brief that energizes a creative team.

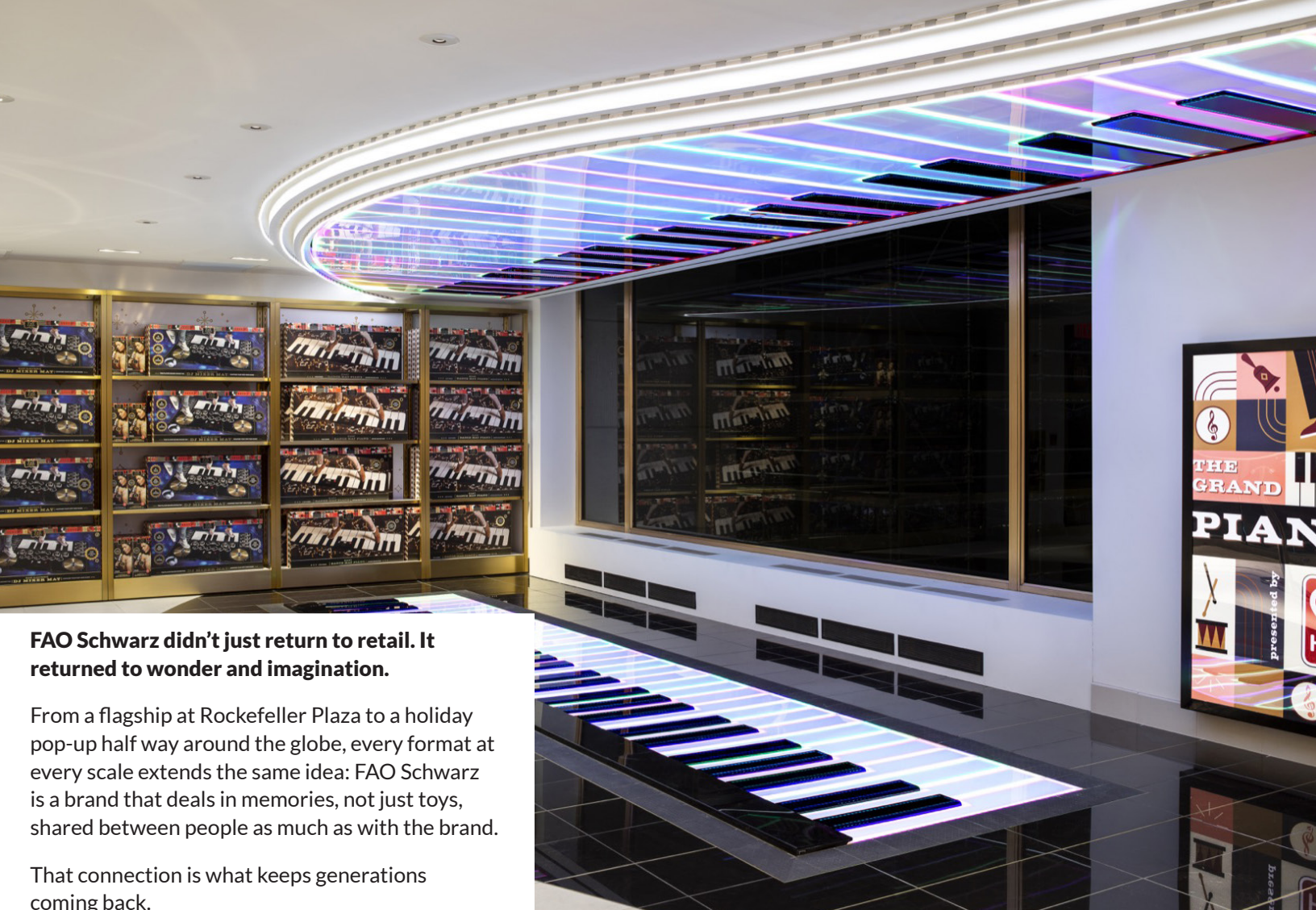
Rather than asking either brand to compromise,
Chute Gerdeman designed a space that celebrated
both. Distinct brand communications announced
Target's arrival at FAO Schwarz while giving the
partnership its own visual story.

Exclusive banner language built around each brand's
instantly recognizable figures, FAO's Toy Soldier and
Target's Bullseye the Dog, gave shoppers a reason
to look twice and linger a little longer.

Individual shops-in-shop established territory for
both Target private label and FAO products, giving
each room to shine.

In just over a month, two extraordinary brands
became one extraordinary destination. Creative
thinking moving at the speed of retail.





FAO Schwarz didn't just return to retail. It returned to wonder and imagination.

From a flagship at Rockefeller Plaza to a holiday pop-up half way around the globe, every format at every scale extends the same idea: FAO Schwarz is a brand that deals in memories, not just toys, shared between people as much as with the brand.

That connection is what keeps generations coming back.



Scale By Design

Design without scale isn't a design problem. It's a financial one.

Chute Gerdeman designs for the build from day one...
and everything that comes after.

85%

of construction projects exceed budget, by an average of 28%

(McKinsey, 20 countries / 70 years)

10 - 15%

typical cost increase from change orders mid-build, and higher when design changes drive them

(industry change order data)

+23%

revenue increase reported by companies with consistent brand presentation

(Lucidpress / Demand Metric)

**Looking to scale?
We can help.**

LET'S CHAT.

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