

Amazon's department stores sound like a very Amazon way to sell clothes



Amazon's rumored department store experiment could take a similarly high-tech approach to selling clothes as the company took with groceries, according to a new report from *The Wall Street Journal*. Amazon was previously reported to be considering opening department stores in California and Ohio, a natural expansion of the company's push into physical retail, and those department stores will reportedly feature its own clothing brands too.

Like Amazon's cashier-less Go stores, *The Journal* seems to suggest Amazon-branded department stores will focus on customer convenience, using several possible tech solutions. In one idea, customers "scan QR codes of items they want to try on by using a smartphone app," before sales associates gather and place those items in a dressing room.

A high-tech dressing room

Once in a fitting room, "customers could ask for more items

using a touch screen, which might be capable of recommending additional clothing based on the pieces shoppers liked," the article reads. Amazon has also reportedly considered introducing robots or automation to streamline the shopping experience. Exactly how is unclear.

The Wall Street Journal writes that Amazon's stores will sell Amazon's clothing brands first and foremost, but also feature offerings from retailers that sell on Amazon's online marketplace. The company made a major push into apparel in 2016, and has received increasing amounts of scrutiny following claims it copies competitors with its house brands. Amazon has reportedly already passed Walmart as the number one apparel retailer in the US, according to a Wells Fargo report cited by CNBC, and that's before whatever effect physical department stores could have on the recognition of the company and its brands. Selling its clothes in a department store could give Amazon's products an identity beyond their typically affordable price.

When asked about these plans by *The Verge*, Amazon said it doesn't comment on rumors. If these are the company's plans, Amazon department stores could offer a very different experience to a traditional clothing store, for both shoppers and employees. It's hard to not compare the automated, efficiency-minded solutions Amazon is reportedly considering for shoppers to the robotic way it manages employees in its own warehouses and distribution centers. For future employees, hopefully the comparisons end there.

<https://www.theverge.com/2021/9/22/22688707/amazon-department-store-qr-codes-automation>