Microsoft Is Permanently Closing Its Retail Stores



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Apple may be re-closing its retail stores due to the rising rate of COVID-19 infections in the U.S., but Microsoft has decided to close its stores permanently.

In a news post today, Microsoft announced “a strategic change

in its retail operations," with the result being the closure of all but four of its retail locations. However, the stores in London, NYC, Sydney and on the Redmond campus will be converted into Microsoft Experience Centers.

According to Microsoft Corporate Vice President, David Porter, the focus is turning to online-only. "Our sales have grown online as our product portfolio has evolved to largely digital offerings, and our talented team has proven success serving customers beyond any physical location … We are grateful to our Microsoft Store customers and we look forward to continuing to serve them online and with our retail sales team at Microsoft corporate locations."

Retail employees aren't losing their jobs. Instead, Microsoft says they'll continue to serve customers, but it will be done either remotely or from Microsoft corporate facilities once we're through this pandemic. All of Microsoft's retail locations are already closed, but the permanent closure is expected to cost the company a pre-tax charge of $450 million.

With regards to the future of retail staff, Porter commented, "We deliberately built teams with unique backgrounds and skills that could serve customers from anywhere. The evolution of our workforce ensured we could continue to serve customers of all sizes when they needed us most, working remotely these last months … Speaking over 120 languages, their diversity reflects the many communities we serve. Our commitment to growing and developing careers from this talent pool is stronger than ever."

Microsoft operates 116 stores worldwide, and while deciding to close them permanently removes the need to figure out how to re-open with social distancing in mind, it does remove key locations for showing off the Xbox Series X later this year ahead of the console's launch. Microsoft is making a habit of closing things down recently, though, with the announcement earlier this week that Mixer is shutting down next month.

https://www.entrepreneur.com/article/352477