



Case Study



Transforming a historical 300 sf retail space in SoHo into a trendy flagship in two months. Wait... what?

Yes, you read that right. Many say the most precious commodity is time. Boy are you telling me. After months of initial conversations about how this project could unfold, time kept ticking away as the concept designer from UK perfected the layout with Nixon. But every day in Concept Design was one less day in Construction and the mother of all retail days - Black Friday - was looming closer and closer.

Managing this project was one of the great challenges our Founder has had in his career and one of the most rewarding. While the space was small that posed more challenges than one might expect. There was literally no staging area and construction



THE CHALLENGE

Where to start? This was the first US store the Nixon team had undertaken with their new design. A design created by a UK based firm and perfected in locations throughout Europe and Australia. They didn't have a dedicated Design & Construction team, they didn't have a US based fixture company for a store that is almost entirely fixtures, and the space they found was in a historical review district in complex Manhattan. Oh, and they had only two months to go from handing off the conceptual design to getting the store open by Black Friday. A tall task indeed. In fact most would say impossible.

materials had to be held in NJ until the GC was ready for them. The size also makes compliance with ADA even more difficult and modifications to the fixtures were required.

All was tracking until one day the GC called and said that the light fixtures had a long-lead time. Now again this is a small store and there are only so many lights. We couldn't simply accept that the lights weren't going to arrive in time. Calls were made to the manufacturer's US Headquarters in Miami and less than a week later the lights arrived in NYC.

What really matters when you have a challenging project is to maintain positive and open communications lines. The client needs to know weekly what hurdles have been cleared, and which are ahead. But without having an experienced design and construction team in-house they relied on the expertise of our Founder managing the project, and positive reinforcement that they were on-track to open on time, which they did.

THE SOLUTION

From the onset it was obvious this project wasn't going to follow a typical process. Getting the drawings prepared and into permitting is doable, but the historical review in NYC can kill a project. The Landmarks Preservation Commission, which oversees such things, were engaged early and with a very open dialogue to understand what they would approve prior to submittal. This was key since the client wanted the entire brick storefront painted black. Secondly, after an initial round of discussions with fixture vendors - none of which wanted to even propose on the project because of the timelines - the suggestion was made to the client to require bidding contractors to provide the fixture work under their umbrella. This decision

THE RESULT

Be using a permitting process called "self-certification" we had a permit in under two weeks. While we didn't yet have the historical review approval, we knew - with about 98% certainty - that what we proposed would be approved based on our upfront conversations with them. The fixture vendor drove the pieces from suburban Milwaukee to Manhattan themselves and did the install. Why? It cut down on some of the work they would have had to do in the shop and streamlined the install as they knew exactly how to put them together. In the end the store was open for a highly successful opening the day before Thanksgiving.