

Designing a stylish and functional retail environment



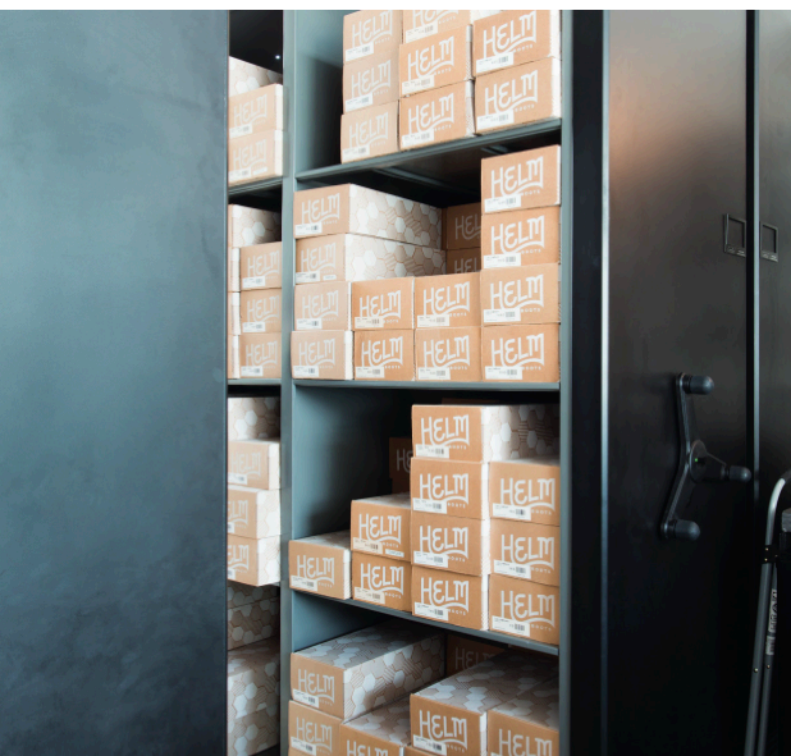
THE CHALLENGE:

SMALL RETAIL SPACE, LOTS OF INVENTORY

Based in Austin, Texas, HELM Boots designs and manufactures high-quality leather boots, belts, and other merchandise that's made in the USA. The company primarily sells its products through its website and decided about a year ago to move into its new flagship location on Austin's east side.

The new location would result in more foot traffic, but it was smaller than the previous retail store. Despite the smaller space, the shop still needed to keep inventory on hand to allow for customer try on and to convey the look and feel of the brand.

"We knew we had to get creative with how we were going to store our inventory, while also creating the right environment," said HELM founder Brad Day. "We didn't want to corner off a big chunk of the store and put drapes up, or build a new wall to hide all the inventory."



THE SOLUTION: SHELVES THAT MOVE

The company's creative director had seen Spacesaver systems in a library, and the store's design team wondered if they could modify the concept for use in a retail setting. They contacted the Austin-based Spacesaver distributor to discuss various considerations like how the shelving could be configured, where the system could be located within the retail space, what the optimal size would be, and other options. They decided to go with Spacesaver, and the local Spacesaver team swung into action. "The guys were great about coming out and measuring, and we talked a lot about how wide it needed to be, the space in between, and how high," Day said. "We did the right work up front."

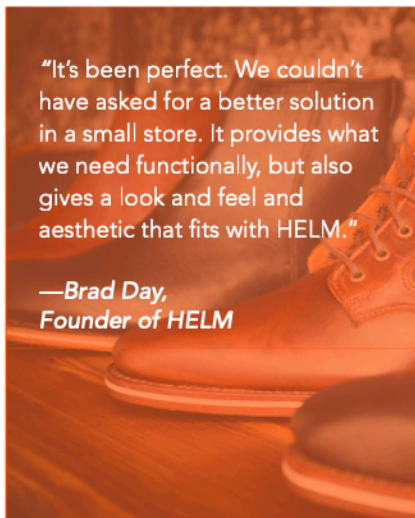
Aside from the technical details, Day wanted the system's appearance to reflect the brand's commitment to quality. "We wanted to have a look and feel that's consistent with a brand that sells premium shoes," he said. "We talked about the color and the texture and what was the right feel for what we're trying to accomplish, which was a bit more of an elevated look in the store, a bit more elegant."



The color scheme mainly plays off black and white, so they decided that a black lustre finish would fit in perfectly. “We wanted something that would blend in, but when people notice it, would look really cool and fit the vibe of the brand,” Day said. The Spacesaver system was part of the initial build-out and the shop’s wallpaper was applied and fixtures were added after the system was installed.

THE RESULT: ‘PEOPLE LOVE IT’

The end result is a compact shelving system that’s as functional and stylish as the product it stores. The system is robust enough to store all the inventory required, while still being easily accessible by the clerks and complementing the store’s interior design. “People love it,” Day said. “They think it’s super clever.”



Day added that the Spacesaver solution is ideal, particularly for shops that need to make the most of every square inch of available space. “It’s been perfect,” he said. “We couldn’t have asked for a better solution in a small store. It provides what we need functionally, but also gives a look and feel and aesthetic that fits with HELM.”

