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Store Design

'Brand Master' Honest Ed

Nothing helps the learning process more than a real life example. And no one knew more about creating and effectively communicating an authentic brand like Toronto's icon of business and community leadership, Mr. Ed Mirvish. Here's how we first encountered the retail wizardry of Brand Master Honest Ed ...

In March of 1991, we were approached by the folks at a fledgling mass merchandising organization. They were searching for appropriate real estate in Canadian shopping centres and realized they would need a unique concept which could truly 'speak' to their customers. They hired **RLWdesign** to bring their brand to life (and quickly became the premier 'extreme value' store in Canada!).

As always, our research process included a thorough review of the current market place. It quickly became apparent that, without a doubt, the best and most enduring extreme value store to date was "*Honest Ed's*" in Toronto. Exploring this well-known warehouse for the first time, we found that it was surprisingly theatrical both inside and out. Every opportunity was taken to entertain customers and present the merchandise in a most engaging way. There were pictures of Honest Ed with various dignitaries and celebrities ... the charmingly funny captions and quips that poked fun at him ... the famous vault door ... and the giant entrance signs with their embedded folklore were truly authentic!

The "Honest Ed" brand was positioned to present Mr. Mirvish as a 'man of the people' who went to great lengths to help his customers save money and have fun. Everyone agreed that Honest Ed was charming, sincere, warm, funny, 'value-centric' and a very big personality. This powerful 'Mirvish message' was tremendously successful because all the design elements either supported the Honest Ed personality or reaffirmed that shoppers were going to get a great deal.

There is no question that Honest Ed's approach to retail added value to an otherwise common shopping experience. He showed the world how to develop a powerful brand for fire sale merchandise. Ed Mirvish was a trail blazer and an inspiration to us, not only during our work with that customer in 1991, but for many others since. All retailers would do well to study the business and community service model that has become so well-known as simply "*Honest Ed's*".

Want to hear more about the power of authentic branding and store design? E-mail us at info@rlwdesign.ca or give us a call at 905-845-2255 and we'll be happy to help!

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