GATHER is an innovative Pop-Up store and platform that is really worth a visit.

The wheel of commerce is turning in the Netherlands as anywhere else. Former Dutch department store brand V&D has been kicked out of business last year. Thus, a lot of prime locations, especially in city centers, brutally became empty overnight. If many of them have been rapidly picked-up by new retailers, a few previous department stores, such as the one in prosperous and vibrant Haarlem, near Amsterdam, are still struggling to find a brand able to fill in its 5-storey building.

The opportunity has been grabbed by Gather, a vibrant and innovative pop-up store, designed as a creative platform for brands, young talents and startups.
If pop-up stores have made successful inroads over the 5 past years in France, they originally have been misunderstood by property companies that believe that pop-up tenants would be the ideal remedy to tackle high vacancy rate in distressed malls. In fact, what matters in pop-up stores is “stores” and not “pop-up”. Without a relevant concept and a decent operating execution, a pop-up store is doomed to fail as miserably as “normal” stores. Even though they are exempt from paying full rent and operating expenses. On top of that, a relevant pop-up store is actually looking for prime and busy locations only and will reject cheap but unpopular shopping destinations.

Gather is literally a blueprint for pop-up store strategy and execution. Located on the ground floor of the former V&D (the other 4 storeys are still empty), Gather is a platform where retail and hospitality entrepreneurs are brought together in a vibrant and innovative atmosphere.

At Gather, visitors can find urban hip garments, craftsmen, bars and restaurants along with cultural venues such as a photo expo or a music festival. All the ingredients that make the place special. And popular.
GATHER Innovative Pop-Up On Steroid
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Basically, Gather’s success is all about content management. The place is managed as a live stage where all the different actors have their own contribution to make Gather permanently attractive and vibrant. To spread the word and attract a constant flow of visitors, Gather is betting on PR and social media marketing. An off the chart pop-up initiative indeed.

Gather is smart and savvy as far interior design and furniture are concerned. No useless spendings to keep the whole organization light and agile. As a consequence, the place looks like an underground urban warehouse which fits perfectly to the brand positioning.
When the former department store is rented, Gather will have to leave and reinvent itself somewhere else. However, in the meantime, both the landlord, the city hall of Haarlem as well as Gather have partnered successfully. A win/win relationship as we like in the retail industry. But which remains still pretty uncommon.

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