

**CLEVELAND DESIGN DISTRICT\_v2**  
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**The Background:**

Northeast Ohio has been home to many successful consumer product marketers/manufacturers (Faber-Castell/Creativity for Kids, Hoover, InterDesign, Little Tikes, Moen, MTD, Step2, Royal Appliance, Rubbermaid and others). The collective resources of these companies represent a regional critical mass in manufacturing, marketing, sales, distribution and most importantly research & development, and design. In the last ten years consumers have become more aware of design, and are demanding better designs and more innovative products.

However, Northeast Ohio currently lacks a vibrant design culture that can enable companies to be at the leading edge of new product development. By failing to foster a creative core, our consumer product marketing/manufacturing resources will be jeopardized. Northeast Ohio produces some of the most sought-after design talent in the US (graduates of the Cleveland Institute of Art Industrial Design program), but the design culture to keep them in Cleveland does not exist.

**The Idea:**

Develop a district in Downtown Cleveland that represents the heart of design in Cleveland. The core of the district, along the Euclid Corridor in Downtown Cleveland, would be comprised of sales showrooms for regional consumer product companies. Utilizing vacant storefronts, the design district core allows a clustering of companies/brands for the purpose of creating synergy, an identity for design in the region, and a unique retail buyer experience. Live/work areas within the district, with abundant warehouse space, enable the growth of design/innovation-driven organizations, improving networking and fueling innovation. The showrooms create a lively street scene for visitors and residents, while creating a dynamic customer feedback loop. The district would rely on the many amenities downtown to create a distinct experience for visitors. With hotels, restaurants, entertainment and transportation all in close proximity, and the future development of support services (focus group and meeting facilities, catering, etc.), the benefits of clustering would be immediate. The showrooms help place an emphasis on design and innovation, which are key elements in securing new business. Over time, corporate marketing and R&D/design, in an effort to connect with the sales function, would relocate to the design district, growing the working population and further enhancing the downtown experience. The appearance of a lively retail scene will begin to emerge, without the need for initial consumer foot traffic/purchases (retail buyers buy in thousands, consumers buy in ones). Design consultancies, ad agencies, graphics and IT firms would likely grow to support corporate functions. All of these elements would contribute to a vital design culture. Finally, the critical mass of creative consumer-oriented professionals will inspire and accelerate innovation, while making it easier to attract and retain designers.

**An Emphasis on Design:**

A key to the success of this district is creating a concentrated, high-end experience and embracing outstanding design (the district should be a unique showplace). A design focus should be apparent in the design of showrooms, window displays, street furniture/fixtures, promotional materials, etc.