

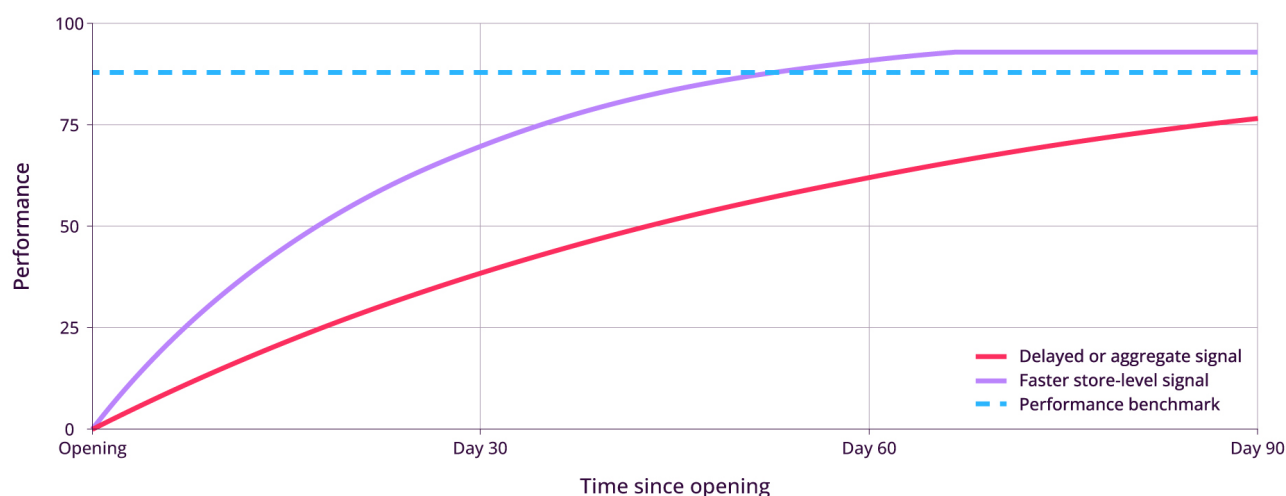
THE FIRST 90 DAYS



A practical operating guide for retail teams

THE FIRST 90 DAYS

Every new store begins without the track record of your best locations. This guide shows how to define what good looks like before opening, separate launch demand from execution, and use the first 90 days to close the right gaps quickly.



THE OPERATING QUESTION

How quickly is the new store closing the execution gap with comparable high-performing stores, and what should the team change next?

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How to use this guide

Use it before an opening to agree the behaviors and comparison stores. Use it during launch to separate demand from execution. Use it through day 90 to prioritize coaching and decide whether the store is genuinely on track.

OPENING DAY IS ONLY THE START

A full store is not the same as a store that is ready to perform consistently.

Opening a store is a milestone. Getting it to perform like your strongest comparable locations is the operational job that follows.

A new store begins with no execution history. Sales can show whether customers bought, but they do not show whether the intended service model is landing, whether key behaviors are happening on every shift, or whether early friction is being hidden by launch demand.

The first 90 days should answer three practical questions:



Is the experience landing?

Are the service, checkout, and frontline behaviors that define the format showing up consistently?



Where is the gap?

Which stores, shifts, or days are falling behind relevant high-performing locations, and on which behaviors?



What action will close it?

What should the store manager coach now, and is that action improving execution and commercial performance?



This guide follows the new-store ramp through three windows: before day one, launch, and days 1–90. The operating principle is simple. Use a fast customer signal to see what is happening while it can still be changed, and use a relevant benchmark to make the action specific.

2 BEFORE DAY ONE: DEFINE WHAT GOOD LOOKS LIKE

A new store needs a target it can execute, not a vague instruction to deliver a great experience.

Finishing the build is only half the job. The team, playbook, systems, and stock must deliver the experience the format promised from the first hour. Before opening, the frontline behaviors that distinguish your strongest comparable stores should be defined.

Good behavior measures are observable, coachable, and commercially relevant. Depending on the format, they may include greeting the customer, offering assistance, making a relevant recommendation, explaining a loyalty benefit, completing a demonstration, or even a simple smile.

Build the opening benchmark

- Choose a small group of established stores with similar formats, customer missions, local markets, and operating conditions.
- Identify the frontline behaviors that separate the strongest performers in that group.
- Set a clear target for each behavior and agree how often the new store will be reviewed.
- Decide who owns the response when a gap appears (the store manager, district leader, training team, or another function)



Do not confuse deployment with execution

Head office can define a playbook, train the opening team, and set clear service standards. But the new store needs a way to continuously verify execution. Periodic checks such as mystery shopping and field visits can confirm what happened at one moment. They cannot show whether the intended experience is being delivered consistently across every shift and daypart. Continuous verification helps leaders see where execution is holding, where it is slipping, and where support is needed before poor habits become established.

Where TruRating fits

TruRating provides a continuous customer read from the first day a store trades. It helps teams see whether the behaviors that define strong performance are being delivered by store, shift, and daypart, rather than relying on occasional checks or waiting for sales trends to emerge.

3 LAUNCH: SEPARATE DEMAND FROM EXPERIENCE

Opening-week momentum can hide the issues that will matter in month three.

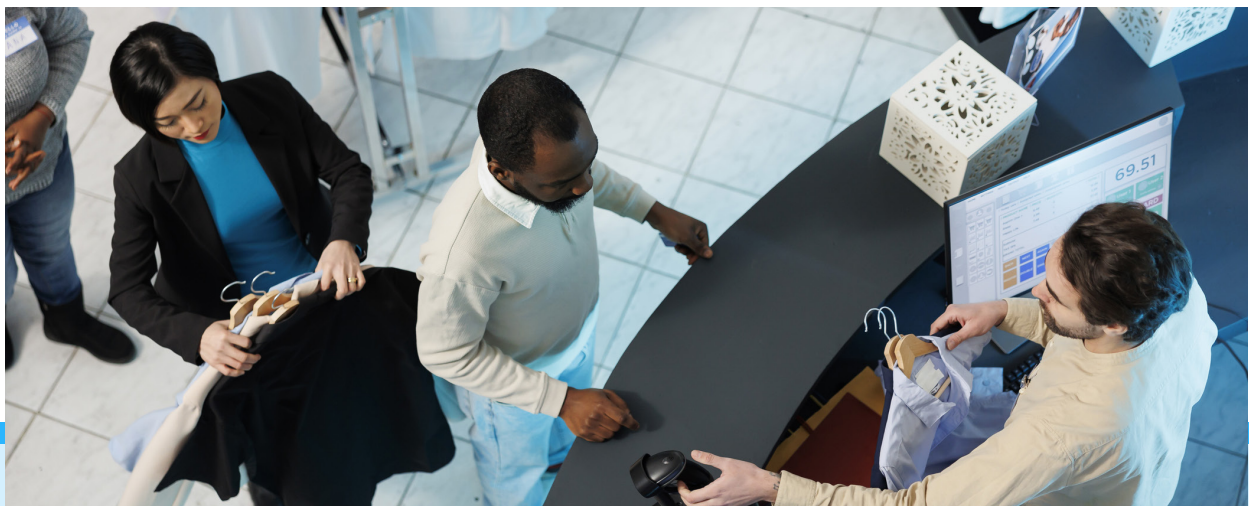
A strong opening can create the impression that everything is working. The store is busy and sales are healthy, but early demand does not prove that the experience underneath is right.

Customers may still be facing long waits, inconsistent service, poor staff availability, confusing navigation, or missed selling behaviors. Launch activity can keep sales high enough to hide those problems. When demand settles, the store may be left with execution habits that are already costing conversion, basket size, or repeat visits.

Measure sales and experience together. Sales tell you the result. A store-level customer read helps explain the conditions behind it, while the issue is still inexpensive to fix.



What looks positive	What may still be hidden	What to check now
High sales	Launch demand is compensating for service friction	Greeting, availability, wait time, checkout ease
Strong traffic	Coverage or conversion gaps are being masked	Assistance, recommendations, conversion by shift
Positive overall experience scores	A few shifts carry most of the gap	Shift and day variation



4 DAYS 1-90:

BENCHMARK AGAINST THE RIGHT STORES

The network average is a reference point. Comparable high-performing stores are a management tool.

As launch demand fades, the store has to stand on its own. This is the period that shows whether execution is becoming consistent and whether the location is building toward sustainable performance.

Network-wide average experience scores can be misleading. Local demand, competition, customer mix, price sensitivity, staffing, store format, and shopping mission all shape performance. A downtown store may operate very differently from a suburban destination location. When every format and market is blended into one number, useful context disappears.

Compare like with like instead. Select a small group of stores with similar conditions, then use the strongest performers in that group as the benchmark. This makes the conversation more specific. The question is no longer why the new store is below average. It is why a comparable store greets more customers, makes more recommendations, keeps checkout moving more consistently, or earns a stronger return intent.

A relevant peer group also prevents the wrong intervention. It helps leaders distinguish between a local market constraint, a format issue, and an execution gap that the store team can actually change.



If you can show a store manager another set of stores that are very like them, with very similar preconditions, then you can have a much more targeted conversation about why there's a difference between the two stores. ”

Gareth Johns, Chief Customer and Data Officer, TruRating



EXAMPLE:

The core experience landed quickly, one behavior did not

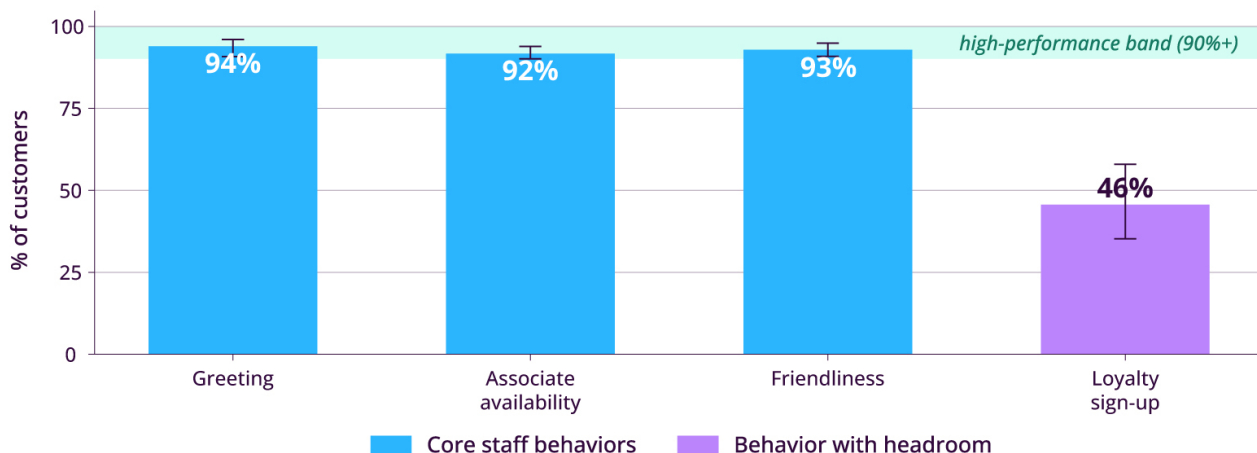
At a national off-price apparel retailer, core staff behaviors including greeting, associate availability, and friendliness all scored above 90%. Store-to-store variation was narrow, showing that the experience was being delivered consistently rather than a network average hiding weaker locations.

When the retailer opened a group of new stores, those locations reached similar scores within

their first weeks. One behavior lagged. Fewer customers said they had been invited to join the loyalty program.

Because the result was available by individual store, the retailer could identify the new locations missing the behavior and coach those teams directly. The ramp did not depend on waiting months for the store to mature. It depended on making one visible gap manageable.

New stores match the network on core behaviors; loyalty sign-up is the one gap to coach



KEY TAKEAWAY

Benchmark the new store against a credible peer group, not the whole network. Then look for the smallest set of behaviors that explains the performance difference and can be coached locally.

5 FIND THE GAP, COACH IT, PROVE IT

Once the behavior behind the number is visible, the ramp becomes a coaching exercise rather than a waiting game.

These examples show what retailers have found when they measured a specific frontline or operational behavior and linked it to customer or commercial performance. The measures differ by retailer, but the process is consistent.

Identify the behavior associated with stronger performance, find where it is not being delivered consistently, and focus coaching on the stores and shifts with the greatest opportunity.

Vertical	Behavior measured	Observed or modeled impact
Apparel	Recommending complementary products	+4% UPT; 1.6% modeled same-store revenue opportunity at 80% execution
Grocery	Keeping checkout moving consistently	Poor checkout linked to 0.75 fewer visits; \$7.2 million modeled upside from lifting weaker stores to median performance
Electronics	Delivering a product demonstration	+37% ATV; 0.6% modeled revenue opportunity from closing the largest execution gaps
Quick-service restaurants	Greeting customers with a smile	+\$1.26 ATV; \$5.4 million modeled comparable-store sales for each 1% improvement across 55 restaurants

ATV = average transaction value. UPT = units per transaction. Results and modeled opportunities vary by retailer, format, and operating conditions. Figures are drawn from individual TruRating client programs and should not be treated as universal benchmarks.



Turn the gap into a weekly coaching rhythm

Finding a gap is only useful if store teams know what to do next. Review the evidence each week, choose one behavior with the clearest opportunity, agree how the manager will coach it, and track whether delivery improves.

For a new store, this creates a repeatable operating rhythm. The manager gets a manageable next action, while district and central teams can see whether the intervention is closing the gap.

Where TruRating fits

TruCoaching turns TruRating data into a focused weekly data plan for each store. Instead of giving every location the same training message, it identifies a priority behavior, summarizes the relevant customer signal, and provides practical prompts for team huddles and shift briefings.

A useful coaching rule

Keep the focus narrow. One clearly evidenced behavior, coached consistently, is more likely to change than a long list of generic priorities.

Identify the behavior, then focus on the stores and shifts that need to improve

InMotion had already established product demonstrations as a core part of its assisted-selling model. The question was not whether demonstrations worked. It was whether they were being delivered consistently across every location.

By asking customers whether they received a product demonstration and linking the answer to trans-

action value, TruRating found a 37% ATV difference when a demonstration was delivered. Improving delivery in the stores with the largest gaps represented a modeled 0.6% revenue opportunity. That gave field leaders a precise coaching target. Instead of retraining the whole network, they could focus on the stores and shifts where a proven behavior was not happening consistently.

INMOTION

“

We always knew these were the behaviors that delivered uplift. Having a way to prove it at store and shift level makes it easy to cascade internally and focus teams on the actions that drive value.

”

– Operations Support Specialist, InMotion

6 ACT WITH PRECISION

A faster signal allows teams to pinpoint the exact store, shift, or team where execution is breaking down and coach the people who can change it.

The value is not simply receiving a report sooner. A network-level result can show that performance changed. A precise read can show where and when it changed, whether the issue is concentrated in one shift or daypart, and which team is closest to the cause. That allows leaders to investigate while the context is still fresh and focus support where it can make a difference.

Fortnum & Mason has opened new formats and locations across the UK. Using TruRating's hourly heat maps, the team can identify friction within the trading day and investigate it that same afternoon, rather than waiting for the issue to appear in a later report.

“

When we see an amber score at two o'clock in the afternoon, we can ask what happened. A poorly matched lunch break? Sickness? Something that slowed the tills down? Our teams go away, find out what happened surgically, and fix it.

”

**Director of Retail,
Fortnum & Mason**

FORTNUM & MASON
EST 1707

Use the signal as support, not surveillance

The way the data is introduced matters. Store teams are more likely to engage when the signal recognizes what is working and directs support to a specific gap. Used as a blunt ranking or a “gotcha,” the same data can create resistance.

- Start with the behavior and the customer evidence, not a judgment about the team.
- Show the store a relevant comparison so the target feels credible.
- Agree one action and a review point rather than issuing a broad list of fixes.
- Recognize improvement and share what strong stores are doing differently.



THE 90-DAY OPERATING SCORECARD

Use a small set of signals to decide where support is needed first.

The scorecard should connect the commercial result with the execution behind it. These four signals give leaders a practical starting point for weekly reviews of a new store.

Signal	Question to answer	Gap it can reveal	Likely action
Conversion	Are we turning available traffic into transactions?	Waits, coverage, navigation, availability, or service friction.	Investigate the affected shift and remove the specific barrier.
Average transaction value	Are revenue-driving behaviors happening consistently?	Missed recommendations, demonstrations, assistance, or loyalty conversations.	Coach the behavior in the stores and shifts with the clearest gap.
Execution consistency	Is the playbook landing across every shift?	Variation in staff service and execution hidden by store or network averages.	Compare shifts, identify the outlier, and reinforce the standard.
Experience risk	Is friction appearing before sales are affected?	Early decline in service, ease, value, or return intent.	Intervene before the issues becomes a commercial trend.

Weekly review questions:

What changed?

Which signal moved, in which store, shift, or day?

What explains it?

Is the issued demand, format, staffing, training, or execution?

What will we coach?

Choose the smallest behavior change likely to close the gap.

Did it work?

Review whether execution improved and whether the commercial result followed.

Best-store ramp checklist

Window	What should be in place	Evidence to review
Before day one	Comparable stores selected; priority behaviors and owners agreed; store teams briefed on how the signal will be used.	Baseline targets and review cadence
Launch	Experience measured alongside sales; issues reviewed by store, shift, and daypart	Early friction and execution variation
Days 1-90	Behavior gaps coached; actions tracked; progress compared with relevant high-performing stores	Conversion, ATV, consistency, and risk trends

8 CLOSE THE GAP FASTER

The goal is to help each new store reach consistent performance sooner and make the next opening stronger.

The site, format, build, assortment, and opening plan create the conditions for success. The first 90 days show whether those choices translate into consistent execution.

Start with a clear benchmark. Measure the experience alongside sales, compare the new location with stores operating under similar conditions, and identify the behavior behind any performance gap. That gives the manager a focused coaching priority and gives leadership a way to see whether the store is improving.

Each opening should create a learning loop for the wider expansion program. The evidence can strengthen the playbook, benchmark, staffing model, and coaching priorities for the next store.

New stores do not need months of history before teams can begin improving. A relevant benchmark, continuous execution read, and focused coaching rhythm allow leaders to act early and use every opening to improve the next one.

HOW TRURATING CLOSSES THE GAP

A continuous store-level read

TruRating helps retailers identify the comparable stores that establish the right performance benchmark, show where a new location is falling behind, and understand which customer-facing behaviors are causing the gap.

By capturing transaction-linked feedback from 84%+ of customers at the point of payment, TruRating provides a representative view by store, format, shift, and daypart. Teams can distinguish a local execution issue from a wider problem with the format, staffing model, or playbook, then focus support where it will have the greatest effect.

TruCoaching turns that insight into a focused weekly plan. Managers receive one clear priority based on their store's performance, practical actions for team huddles and shift briefings, and a way to see whether execution is improving.

See how a live, store-level read could support your next opening.

Book a 20-minute walkthrough with the TruRating team.

[Speak to our team](#)



TruRating captures verified, transaction-linked customer feedback at the point of payment, providing representative signals by store, shift, and daypart. Case study figures are drawn from TruRating client programs, named where permitted and shown by vertical elsewhere.

Client outcomes vary. Modeled opportunities are based on observed relationships between customer-reported behaviors and transaction performance within the relevant client program.