

## Best Buy Gets Some Rhythm

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I've been predicting the death of big box retail for a while now. I first predicted (and I think we'll soon see, accurately) [[Circuit City]] would go, and then they would be followed a few years later by [[Best Buy]]. This is due to a number of reasons (mostly due to simple economics regarding the cost of ownership of physical space vs. a website and a few warehouses), but one reason was that the [[brick and mortar]] retailers just weren't doing anything creative. They have been selling mostly the same things for two decades now. However, I happened into my local Best Buy today, and I have to say, they are doing a pretty good job of proving me wrong.

Not too long ago, they decided to start selling [[Apple]] computers, and to further that goal, added a special, very "Apple-like" sub-section in their computer department. Now, I see that they have done it again, only this time, they've ventured off into an even different direction.

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That's right, Best Buy is in the musical instrument business now. While they've always had a few junky keyboards and maybe a (extremely low quality) electric and/or acoustic guitar, it appears they're putting in all the marbles on this one. I looked around the department for probably twenty minutes, and I have to say, I'm completely blown away. Previously, if someone asked me to describe what I thought a Best Buy musical instrument department might look like, I would have described it as a single row, with a few in-house brands of instruments (possibly a Dynex or Insignia guitar, rebranded from a crappy [[Peavey]] or something). I would have been completely wrong. All the major instrument makers are there, you'll see names like [[Fender]], [[Yamaha]], [[Roland]], etc. That's just the beginning though. Just like you would expect at a real musical instrument retailer, there are dedicated playing rooms (one for drums with two drum kits set up, one for guitars with a wall of amps), setups for digital production (keyboards attached to [[iMac]]s with [[GarageBand]]), DJ equipment...pretty much everything. And while they might not have quite the sheer volume of a place like [[Guitar Center]]...it's pretty impressive.

The bottom line here, is that I applaud Best Buy for thinking outside of the box. This type of work is going to be what makes you stay relevant, at least for the next decade. One thing that I would really love to see at Best Buy is an expansion on their computer department. Just like how they've transitioned from selling musical instruments that only a casual consumer might be interested in, to carrying instruments legitimate musicians might actually appreciate, having a computer department with things like [[motherboards]], [[processors]], more choices of [[memory]] and [[video cards]], etc. would go a long way to giving them some additional cred. Maybe even steal a bit from the massive home appliance section, which seems extremely unnecessary in size.