

Leekes offers customers an in depth look at their department store with Google Business Photos



About Leekes

Leekes is an independent, family-owned business that has been around for 115 years. They operate 5 department stores throughout the UK, offering quality home furnishings.

- www.leekes.co.uk
- [View Tour and Map Here](#)

Challenge

Leekes is an established department store and brand that is trying to become a household name in a new area to which it has recently expanded.

In an effort to draw attention to their brand and new store in Coventry, UK, Leekes decided that they would develop a virtual 360-degree, panoramic view of their business interior. However, because there are over 45 departments spread across 2 floors within 185,000 sq ft, Leekes needed to produce a virtual tour that was organized and easy to use in order to be effective.

Solution

After weighing several options, Leekes chose Google Business Photos to properly execute their vision. Leekes felt that Google Business Photos, which stitches together HDR panoramic images into a Google Maps Street View-style virtual tour, was the best option on the market.

"We looked at several other proprietary 360-degree tour solutions...They were either clunky, the technology was a little bit old, or they weren't cross-browser compliant. None of them stood out as elegantly and robustly as Google Business Photos."

- Geraint Martin, head of e-commerce



Bird's-eye view of one of Leekes' 45 departments.

"People have shorter attention spans. They're not going to read dense content about what Leekes is and what it does. [Google Business Photos] enables people to have a very quick understanding of what we're about in a way that is a bit of fun."

- Geraint Martin, head of e-commerce

360° Tour - How to use

Ground Floor First Floor

Click a department below to take the tour

Floor Plan

Click to use the department map

To rotate the camera

Use the wheel in the panel at the top left corner

Or use the left and right arrows on your keyboard

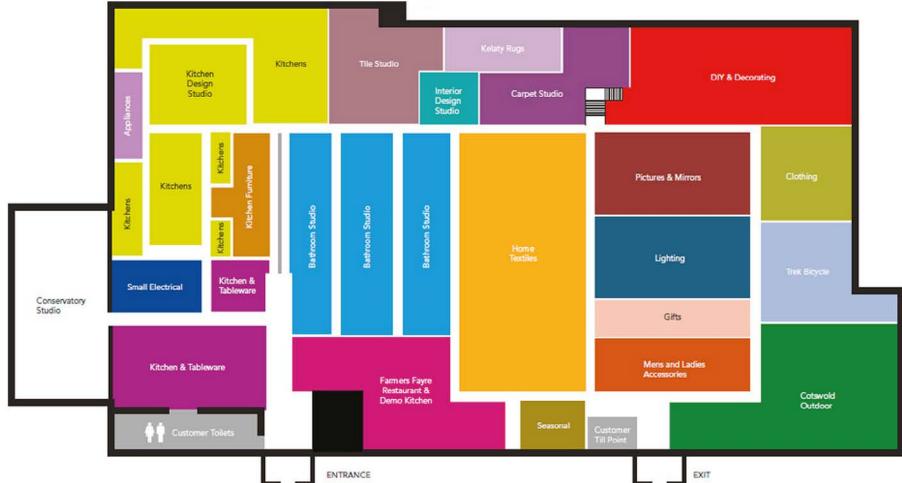
To move in-store

Use the wheel in the panel at the top left corner

Click to select floor

Click and drag with your mouse

Or use the up and down arrows on your keyboard



Leekes' floor plan overlay, delineating the store and virtual tour by department. (above)

Leekes' virtual tour instruction guide. (left)

After opting to use Google Business Photos, Leekes contacted and hired Jonathan Hagen, a local Google Trusted Photographer who is certified by Google to collect and upload the imagery necessary for the virtual tour. The photo shoot was executed by a single photographer in a few hours, before the store opened for business; the imagery was published on Google within a matter of days.

The photo shoot yielded a high-quality, smooth interactive tour. A 360-degree, panoramic view of Leekes' interior can easily be found on Google Search, Google Maps and Leekes' Google+ Local page. Once inside the virtual tour, users can "walk around" and explore the store and its many departments. To maximize their use of Google Business Photos, Leekes embedded the virtual tour on their own website, inviting new and old customers into their new store in Coventry, UK.

The Leekes team also decided to take advantage of Google Maps API, which allowed them to independently create a graphic overlay leading into the virtual tour. Created internally at Leekes, the overlay delineates every individual department in their store; a customer can click on a department to begin their tour from where they wish.

Martin stated that the virtual tour was completed "quickly and elegantly." With the use of Google Business Photos, Leekes is able to invite people into their department store to explore all 45 departments. The virtual tour is an intuitive tool, making usability an afterthought for customers, wholly allowing them to focus on browsing the store. Since the launch of the virtual tour on Leekes' own website, visitors have been spending an impressive four minutes, on average, virtually exploring Leekes.

"The photography was excellent. The navigation was excellent. The movement between nodes was wonderful."
- Geraint Martin, head of e-commerce

