

A Reborn Marshall Field's Means the World to Chicago

From the 1800s to 2006, Marshall Field's embodied the best of Chicago as an international city. It was a worldwide fashion and culinary trendsetter; customer service leader; retail innovator; Chicago's number three shopping and cultural destination; something for everyone, regardless of social class; and much more. Surviving two world wars, the Great Depression and two fires, Marshall Field's remained a constant.

Despite promises that the conversion to Macy's would be nothing more than a name change, many now agree that the store has declined significantly in the past four years. Maintenance of the architectural wonder has diminished, with reports of whole escalators walled off, deferred repairs, and reduced cleanliness. Service and merchandise have declined, with the store shrunken by more than an entire floor (so far). Much of this has been justified in the name of increasing profits, but how sustainable can this be in the long term?

As our city and country attempt to recover from the Great Recession, it is clearer than ever what is needed: A return to the corporate values that the store at 111 N. State St. embodies when it is run in quality, service, and name as Marshall Field's. The return of Marshall Field's to State Street would be an exceptional antidote to these exceptional economic times, an extraordinary comeback that would give an incredible boost to State Street and all of Chicago's psyche.

Why It Makes Sense

There are those who suggest that it is not possible for Macy's to run a store in the spirit of Marshall Field's. Yet Macy's own Bloomingdale's stores attempt just that. Also consider the example of Hilton Hotels, which has streamlined its operations and burnished its reputation by maintaining the quality and identity of historic hotels like The Palmer House and The Drake.

With the resources of both Macy's and Bloomingdale's, one solution would be for Macy's to give what four out of five Chicagoans truly want—Marshall Field's returned to State Street, backed by the best of both chains. Such a solution would finally make many customers feel happy and respected and be a true fulfillment of Macy's localization plan. This would greatly serve customers and shareholders alike. If Macy's cannot do that, another alternative would be to sell the store to another department store operator that could serve as a worthy steward.

Until Macy's gives us customers what we overwhelmingly want, we can best help by not shopping at Macy's and Bloomingdale's and instead shopping at other Chicago stores.

Thanks to your help, it is only a matter of time until visionary business and civic leaders with the needed clout come forward to bring back Marshall Field's.

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81% of Chicago Shoppers Want Marshall Field's to Return.*

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