

Trends that will seal the deal for retailing in 2017

By  [Amanda Stops](#)

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Retail success has become about constantly evolving to adapt, remain relevant and be appealing to customers. It's more competitive than ever before, which is driving exciting trends and innovation for shopping centres and retail.



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Here, six stand-out trends gathered from our interaction with shopping centres and retailers across the globe.

1. Be authentic

Authenticity has become the key to successful retail. More and more, shops and shopping centres are striving to create authentic places and this, in turn, makes places exciting. Without differentiation, they become exchangeable in consumers' eyes.

Being authentic requires being consistent. You have to wow your customer every day in every way. An authentic experience evokes unique emotions, so it's important to have a clear idea about how you want your customer to feel and how you want them to respond to your unique experience. Every touchpoint is an opportunity to stir these feelings.

2. Create an experience

It's no longer enough to offer goods and services. Experience is the new commodity. Engaging customers requires a personalised experience to form a bond or attachment. In the experience era, great customer service is vital. Think of working in retail as theatre. Our job becomes engaging with the audience. If staff are our actors, it becomes abundantly clear how important proper training and a shared ethos are to deliver a fabulous customer experience.

How you deliver your experience differentiates you. Exceptional customer service will wow your customers and they'll do your marketing for you. By over-delivering on their service expectations, they will always choose you.

3. Keep it fresh

Curious consumers want the next new thing. Top tools used to keep the customer experience fresh at places of shopping include more food offerings, refurbishing to keep current, creating appealing spaces with natural daylight, offering roving concierges and making centres family orientated with amazing areas for children.

Of course, for shopping malls, retailer mix is crucial for a differentiated experience. Only constant change prevents staleness.

4. Be brave

There's a growing number of cases where malls are giving up the security of long-term leases to create the flexibility to adapt and innovate as new ideas or trends emerge. More retailers create greater variety and experience for consumers, which flies in the face of the accepted 'safe option' of giving well-known retailers more space.

For shopping centres, this new approach may take some to embrace. But, when meeting the needs of today's curious, aware and demanding consumers, it is increasingly necessary.

5. Have conversations with customers

By connecting with people, a mall drives shopper visits in a sophisticated way. This means having great conversations – authentic ones. A good story never ends. It keeps on unfolding. A good story evokes emotion and makes people feel. And, as we are often reminded, people forget what you said, people forget what you did, but they never forget how you made them feel.

People want to be inspired and with the exciting communication new tools at our disposal, we have the opportunity to do this like never before.

6. Use tech tactically and collaboratively

Understanding your customer is a vital asset, and gathering and translating customer data has now become essential. In fact, there is a trend emerging for shopping centres to collaborate to better understand consumers.

More and more, budgets include a standard line item to develop new concepts and ideas – to create authentic innovation. Not only are malls leveraging technology for innovation, but also aligning and collaborating with shoppers, retailers and other partners.

ABOUT AMANDA STOPS

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