

# Out with boring, in with experience

By [Danette Breitenbach](#)

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Nike Direct president Heidi O'Neill said, "Retail isn't dead, boring retail is." To be successful today, bricks and mortar stores must move from selling as their main purpose to providing consumers with a combination of products and experiences that are engaging and inspirational.



Image credit: Messe Düsseldorf/ctillmann

EuroShop, the world's biggest retail trade fair, recently hosted a breakfast on the upcoming EuroShop 2020. Ulrich Spaan, from the EHI Retail Institute outlined some of the trends in retail today.

## Sense of community

"Stores need to offer consumers a sense of community through an interactive experience that allows consumers to feel and touch," he says. This is true for all types of retail, from fashion, sports and food. "For example, at the IPER Arese store in Italy, consumers can buy food while experiencing food production such as the making of mozzarella cheese," he adds.

Brands are using their stores not to sell, but to build their brand and create brand awareness by doing it differently. "Louis Vuitton has pop-up stores in New York and Chicago and while there is a lot of merchandise in the store it is about the consumer experience."



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Stores need to make it social. "A store is no longer just a place to go to buy, but a place to gather. It needs to offer a social experience as the Sephora Flagship store in Shanghai does. Also, in Shanghai, Harry's Kitchen, a children's birthday store lets children cook with a chef," he says.

The Gucci store in Soho, is a combination of retail and experience where consumers can go and relax. “The store incorporates a huge library and feels more like a living room than a store,” he says.



A store can also be a place where events take place.

It must be personal. The Nike House of innovation in Shanghai and New York lets you select your own shoelaces. “It also has a digital aspect so you can select your show, size and colour and then pick it up in locker downstairs,” he explains.

## Digital influence

There is no getting around digital. “The impact of technology cannot be denied, and digitalisation means interaction and customer experience, regardless of what technology you choose, be it Artificial Intelligence (AI), omnichannel, data validation, dynamic pricing, etc.”

He believes AI will be very relevant. “It is not perfect in many of the cases where parts of the technology are being used, but it shows the direction we are going. Even the future of food stores will change as the Hema (Alibaba) supermarket in Shanghai, which is not new but a good example, shows.”

Don’t underestimate Amazon in the United States either, he says. “They have moved into the physical in many directions from bookstores to organic food and are rolling out automated stores that are working well. I am not saying this is the future of food stores, but for convenience stores – once the technology is more available – it will work well.



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## Euroshop 2020

EuroShop takes place 16 - 20 February 2020. It takes place every three years and in 2017 the show sold 127,558m<sup>2</sup> of space, with 2,369 exhibitors from 60 countries and 113,905 visitors from around the world.

Major themes of the show include retail marketing, expo and event marketing, retail technology, lighting, visual merchandising, shopfitting and store design, foodservice equipment and refrigeration and energy management.

## ABOUT DANETTE BREITENBACH

Danette Breitenbach is a marketing & media editor at Bizcommunity.com. Previously she freelanced in the marketing and media sector, including for Bizcommunity. She was editor and publisher of AdVantage, the publication that served the marketing, media and advertising industry in southern Africa. She has worked extensively in print media, mainly B2B. She has a Masters in Financial Journalism from Wits.

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