

Shoppertainment is key to success for malls of the future



Shopping centres are being expanded, renovated and some newly built across South Africa, with projects like Fourways Mall more than doubling in size to 178 000m² – but malls are no longer just about shopping, they are all about convenience, entertainment, and experiences for the whole family.

The growth in online sales in some markets like electronics and fashion has had an immense impact on retailers in those verticals and consumers have greater expectations of brick and mortar stores than ever before.

Store-based retailing remains more profitable for big brands, and McKinsey research highlights that successful malls will differentiate their offerings with a focus on experience and convenience, and they will have to explore new formats of shopping and entertainment.

That is where shoppertainment comes in – a blend of shopping and entertainment that takes the drudge out of shopping and spices it up with a variety of entertainment options that appeal to the whole family.

In a city like Johannesburg, without an ocean or a mountain to offer outdoor entertainment, destinations that can provide leisure and entertainment options are increasingly popular – the proliferation of restaurants with expansive play areas is but one example of how businesses have

evolved to increase customer dwell time.

Anchor tenants that draw foot traffic are still key, however the move towards experiential shopping implies the need for a far broader tenant mix, including luxury brands where shoppers want to have a sensory experience before they buy, and novel independent stores that cannot be experienced anywhere else.

Another way to enhance shoppers' experience is to create themed zones within the mall, such as a food court or entertainment zone, a specialised fashion zone, or even a home-interest zone.

Carefully planning the way that these zones are linked also helps shoppers navigate their way through expansive malls and helps them plot the time they spend in each section to make the most of their experience.

The multi-billion development currently underway at Fourways Mall is transforming the centre into South Africa's ultimate shoppertainment destination that celebrates experiences, relationships and

adaptable spaces. Several exciting venues within the property have already opened in line with its strategy of creating an unprecedented family-oriented shopping experience, with others to follow towards the end of the year and early in 2019.

The new 1 350m² Fun Company store, which includes the latest tenpin bowling, bumper cars and a 4D theatre, opened in December 2017, adding further entertainment offerings to the 4 500m² Bounce facility and Fourways favourite, Adventure Golf, is still located outdoors. KidZania, a 8 500m² children's edutainment offering, is likely to be popular with families and school groups across Gauteng, significantly expanding the mall's natural catchment area.

With the expected anchor tenants already secured, the Mall will also welcome lifestyle brands like Lindt, Sorbet Man, Hamleys, Cotton On, Nike, G Star Raw, Starbucks and Superdry, while many existing tenants, such as Mr Price, the Foschini Group, Edgars and Woolworths, are expanding their footprints.

In addition to permanent shoppertainment venues, successful malls will also have spaces for temporary or pop-up installations to keep their offering fresh and seasonally relevant.

Fourways Mall will offer the city's winter holiday "staycationers" a range of specially curated experiences set to unleash creativity and fun among visitors of all ages.

Fourteen pop-up entertainment stations along the shoppers' journey include opportunities for fun selfies with props supplied, as well as opportunities for different forms of expressive art. "Spot of Fun" encourages kids of all ages to stick coloured dots anywhere and everywhere, breaking all the rules that would apply at home, while three pillars in the mall will be covered in bubble wrap for satisfactory bubble-popping stress relief. Visitors can tickle the ivories on a "floating" baby grand piano, or they can put their bucket list out to the universe on a massive magnetic wall.