

IN THE MIX: WHY POP-UPS HAVE BECOME A VITAL PART OF THE SHOPPING CENTRE MARKETING STRATEGY

There's a shake-up happening and shopping centres are embracing innovative initiatives in order to stay relevant to the fast-changing consumer. Among these initiatives, pop-ups, which offer personalised experiences for a limited time only, are increasingly on shopping centre operators must-have lists.

■ Lucy Land, Chief Marketing Officer, BrandSpots

Around the developed world, consumers are losing their appetite for more goods. Steve Howard, head of Ikea's sustainability unit, announced at a 2016 Guardian Sustainable Business debate, "In the west, we have probably hit peak stuff. We talk about peak oil. I'd say we've hit peak red meat, peak sugar, peak stuff... peak home furnishings."

Meanwhile, shopping centre development activity has been motivated by the need to meet consumer demand for larger centres offering a greater diversity of retailers, an array of leisure activities and a wider choice of food and drink offerings, according to research by Cushman & Wakefield. This might sound like a contradiction to the aforementioned consumers' decreased desire for buying goods. However, consider that leisure activities enhance wellbeing; while dining destinations encourage downtime and connectedness. Indeed, Westfield, which operates 34 shopping

centres worldwide, has revealed that it is increasingly dedicating more space to leisure, dining, events and entertainment to meet the growing needs from customers. These offerings reflect a marked shift from goods consumption to experientialism; we would rather spend money on experiences than on things. Among the diverse retailers, are pop-ups – with their experiential and lifestyle focus – are now a vital part of the mix.

"We're noticing a sharp increase in interest from shopping centres across Europe, who want to include innovative pop-up solutions as an integral part of their retail strategy," revealed Ilona Taillade, chief creative officer of media agency BrandSpots and chief marketing officer of pop-up platform We Are Pop Up. "Pop-ups create a FOMO [fear of missing out] effect due to their temporary nature. This is further enhanced by the innovative focus of a well-designed pop-up, which tells a story and creates an unexpected, memorable experience."



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Samsung Galaxy Studio in Westfield

Multi, which owns or manages more than 90 shopping centres across Europe and Turkey, was one of the first shopping centre operators to include pop-ups as part of their retail strategy, telling the story of an elephant conservation with the launch of the first worldwide pop-up, Elephant Parade in Antwerp, Belgium, 2008. “You should always have a story to tell – and every day we need to write a new chapter,” Steven Bervoets, general shopping manager for Shopping Stadsfeestzaa (a Multi shopping centre, Antwerp), enthused. “The biggest challenge for shopping centres today is to not become a boring collection of bricks containing tenants.”

Lifestyle destinations

The rise in pop-ups is, arguably, also a reflection that shopping centres are becoming one-stop lifestyle destinations. Different shopping centres provide various community facilities in the form of leisure activities and dining options,

while pop-up shops refresh the shopping centre mix and inject vitality into the retail scene. Westfield has long included pop-ups at the heart of their retail strategy for this reason. “Pop-ups complement our retail mix and ensure that every time a customer visits, we can provide a new experience,” Myf Ryan, chief marketing officer of Westfield Europe, said.

Technology in retail

Shopping centres are well aware that they need to stay relevant to the switched-on consumer. “The consumer has never been so informed or interpreted messages so quickly,” Juan Martinez, BrandSpots’ concept developer, said. “This means that brands and retailers have to focus even more on the customer experience.” Pop-ups provide the perfect opportunity to show-off new technologies that are integrated into a bespoke experience, whether it’s Samsung’s Galaxy Studio, which offered giveaways; >>



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Lucozade Zero Pop-up

personalised photo badges with the Gear 360; and the opportunity to escape reality with 360 video and 4D motion at Westfield London or the showcasing of Jaguar at intu Trafford Centre, which linked the F-PACE SUV to an augmented reality screen, adding digital content into the experience which shoppers could upload to social media.

“The biggest challenge is anticipating and staying ahead in a rapidly changing retail world. The customer’s needs are constantly evolving and we need to future our shopping centres to ensure we can adapt and continually meet our customer and retailers’ needs,” Myf Ryan revealed. So how will shopping centres continue to innovate? *Westfield’s How We Shop Now: What’s Next?* report unveiled the five key trends that will shape tomorrow’s retail industry. These included embracing the sharing economy by renting rather than buying goods; informative and inspirational offerings; lifestyle loyalty in

which “good” behaviour, from recycling to charity work, is rewarded; technology or enhanced assistance; and “supra-sensory” experiences – shoppers said that they want a full sensory experience to sit alongside new technology and enhance the retail experience.

These key developments reflect our changing attitudes: our quest for meaning, supported by the knowledge and information revolutions. And pop-ups are the perfect vehicle for this cultural shift. BrandSpots is embracing these trends – and supra-sensory experiences, in particular – by collaborating with Amsterdam’s MediaCollege to develop the shop of the future.

The aim of the project is to create a modular shopping experience, which will be dynamic, fun, interactive and tell stories. Through a modular environment, new concepts can be explored that can be used for a variety of brands. “Our strategic innovation approach is different



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Modular furniture

to regular innovation in that it is a never-ending process and continuously develops new insights,” said Juan Martinez, concept developer from BrandSpots.

What’s more, everything is created around the theme of the five senses: sight, hearing, touch, taste and smell. Harvard Business School professor Gerard Zaltman has stated in his book *How Customers Think: Essential Insights Into the Mind of the Markets* that 95% of human decisions are subconscious.

“We believe that in order to differentiate and create real customer engagement, brands must appeal to emotions instead of logic: it means the difference between ‘loving’ a brand and ‘liking’ it,” Juan explained.

We may have reached peak stuff, but one thing’s for certain: pop-ups – in all their innovative, fun and intriguing forms – are here to stay, ensuring shopping centres across Europe offer a whole lot more than a collection of bricks containing tenants; that they are loved destinations rather than merely liked. ■

Brandspots

BrandSpots is a Real Estate Partners (REP) company. It is a pan-European full-service pop-up provider and innovative outdoor media agency that combines smart technology with social media strategy. Helping brands, retailers and advertising/media agencies across the emerging range of media opportunities and physical environments throughout Europe, BrandSpots’ integrated approach – combining the best of traditional, digital and physical marketing with outdoor media – interlinks these activities for a consistent message.

POP-UP SHOPS

INDUSTRY TRENDS

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