

Big Data - at your service!

FORUM, ISTANBUL



THE PROLIFERATION OF DATA IN MARKETING WAS MEANT TO KILL OFF MALLS AND THE HIGH STREET. INSTEAD, IT EMPHASISED THE VITAL ROLE THAT PHYSICAL PLACES HAVE TO PLAY FOR BRANDS AND CUSTOMERS. IN AN INDUSTRY THAT IS TRULY GLOBAL, SAYS DAN INNES, MANAGING DIRECTOR OF INNESCO, BIG DATA IS THE ONLY CURRENCY TO DEAL IN.

If Tom McGee, the ICSC's new President and CEO, visits MAPIC to witness the latest marketing trends in his industry, what will he find? The future surely lies with data. The relationship between online and in-store has always been a rocky one, but it's widely acknowledged that the demise of the shopping mall

and high street was a premature cry, and the irony is that we have technology and big data to thank for that. The very thing that was meant to increase product sales online has demonstrated that stores and centres have a critical role to play when engaging customers and brands more deeply. So how has this all come about, and how can marketers harness its potential?

The Internet of Everything

Big data is the buzzword around the world of retail property as we begin to make sense of information that's been sitting at our feet this whole time. Behind the various data feeds such as footfall, expenditure, Wi-Fi log-ins, app downloads, car park usage, tweets, likes and loyalty programmes lies an abundance of opportunity for asset and centre managers alike. Retail property teams are embracing big data in their droves, using new tools, software and hardware to gather, and quickly interpret, the performance of their mall – typically in real time. This is the Internet of Everything for shopping centre owners. Those that aggregate all this data and act on its findings will succeed – those that

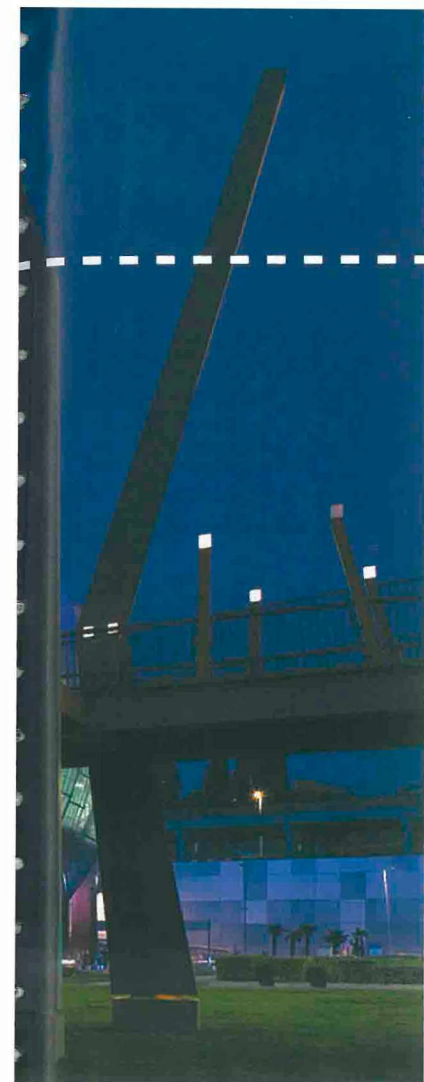
continue to focus on individual performance indicators will fall back.

For years, CIMA course students from around the world have laughed at John Wanamaker's quote: "Half the money I spend on advertising is wasted; the trouble is I don't know which half" – but no longer! The days of scattergun spending or, equally, discount marketing and advertising in retail property are gone. This dramatic shift is due to the implementation of 'big data' platforms – marketing budgets can be adjusted up or down according to the specific asset and its performance using accurate and analysable data.

To clarify, the retail property industry has not necessarily been ignorant when it comes to applying data in order to make wiser business decisions. Information like catchment reach, weighted spend, audience penetration, dwell time and demographics have been foundational tools during investment, development and leasing stages.

Highly detailed BIM models apply architectural data to create virtual models of future shopping centres – expect to see hundreds of these at MAPIC this year. The data used to create 3D or 4D rendered BIM models, combined with virtual reality technology like Oculus Rift, allow all parties in the development phase, from city planners to landlords and leasing agents, to make commercially sound business decisions.

Meanwhile, as the markets, and especially the Internet, become awash with often misleading, inaccurate or incomplete information, people will become more selective about whose data they use. As with all vital business decisions, trust will become a determining factor. Gone are the days of fantastical yet unsubstantiated press



releases promising the world – especially from emerging markets. The bar has been raised dramatically since then – the relationship between data provider and customer will become more valued, and nowhere more than in the shopping centre industry.

Ann Winblad, MD at Hummer-Winblad Venture Partners, famously stated: “Data is the new oil.” This is to say that data, like oil, is highly valuable, but only when refined. Shopping centre landlords and marketers alike are utilising trusted data ‘refineries’ and adjusting their marketing campaigns accordingly.

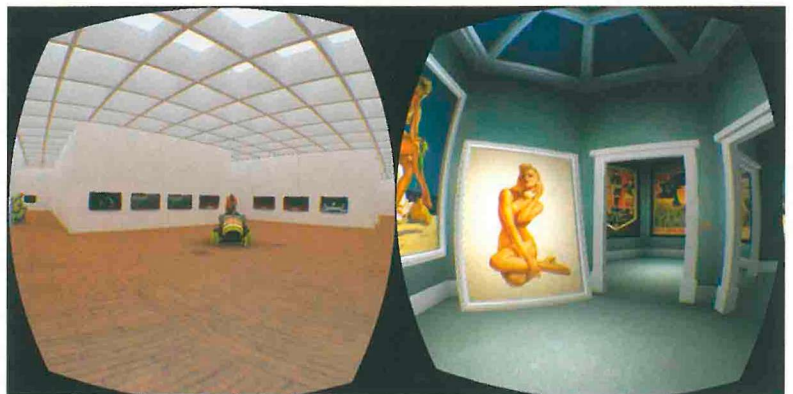
With the vast amount of measurable data available, some landlords prefer a concentrated approach. Land Securities partnered with Coniq to introduce a new loyalty programme at Trinity Leeds, creating the ‘Love Trinity Leeds’ loyalty app. The app collects customer data at the point of purchase, which in turn relays where and how much users spend. This spend data is regarded as the Holy Grail, and one of the most important data feeds in the retail industry.

Elsewhere, MyDeck, the Mall-Connect platform that aggregates all shopping centre performance data, has been implemented at Forum Istanbul and other shopping centres to make sense of the multitude of different channels and data feeds to inform their management team with a customised dashboard.

Breaking down geographical challenges has been the singular achievement of B2B marketers in the last decade. Many asset managers are monitoring the performance of developments and assets they control from the other side of the world – so communication has risen quickly up the agenda. As the accuracy of data and speed with which news is transmitting increases, the tide has turned against those being economical with the truth.

Robert Bonwell, CEO of Retail EMEA at JLL, believes data is a key tool for the European and global retail market, stating: “What is particularly important as the [retail] industry goes forward is the forensic nature of the retail intelligence you need to understand the retail asset.”

With 2015 nearly over, data, technology and innovation have all played an important role in the industry’s advances and had a significant impact on the accuracy of marketing. In an industry that is truly global – with investors, occupiers and competitors coming from foreign shores – big data is the only currency to deal in.



OCULUS RIFT BEING USED AT UR-LAB IN PARIS