RLI *Shopping Centre Marketing*

Location, Location, Location

GAINING INSIGHT FROM LOCATION-BASED TECHNOLOGIES, MARKETERS ARE NOW ABLE TO DELIVER MORE TARGETED, EFFECTIVE CAMPAIGNS. HERE, BILL MCCARTHY, CEO OF EMEA AT SHOPPERTRAK, TALKS ABOUT THE USE OF SUCH TECHNOLOGIES TO UNLOCK INSIGHTS IN THE SHOPPING CENTRE.

The rise of location-based technologies has had a significant impact on shopping centres and their ability to create a seamless customer experience. Marketers are able to gather accurate insights about the customer journey – from where they park, to whether they visit the centre for entertainment, shopping or both.

Shopping centre marketers can also use location-based analytics to analyse how people are accessing the shopping centre (i.e. which entrances they are entering and exiting), which stores they are visiting, whether there is a particular cluster of shops that they visit, how long they spend there, and whether or not they make a purchase.

This information empowers marketers to create proactive strategies that target the right customers at the right time – resulting in a more tailored experience.

From mobile apps that provide more information about products and events to interactive maps that guide you around the centre, shopping centre marketers are finding more subtle and sophisticated ways to harness location-based technology.

Shopping centres are increasingly looking at technology that provides more detailed insight into shopper behaviour through Bluetooth Low Energy (BLE) beacon technology. A BLE beacon is a small device that emits a Bluetooth Low Energy signal, enabling shopping centres to communicate with nearby smartphone users.

The benefits include the ability to offer location-based content tailored to individual browsers or shoppers, as well as measuring the effectiveness of events hosted in the shopping centre.

Malls can also tap in to BLE to deliver a more personalised shopping experience for the consumer. By connecting to a customer's Bluetooth enabled smartphone app, the shopping centre can use beacons dotted around the centre to send 'push notifications' – including discount codes or promotion offers – based on the user's location. They can provide invaluable information about user habits, from how many times they return to a specific area within the complex (are they just visiting the cinema for example?) as well as which areas they are spending the most time in. This in turn can help to influence marketing campaigns and promotions.

Perhaps the biggest benefit of BLE is its ability to provide context to the environment around the shopper – enabling smartphone users to have rich, interactive connections relevant to their surroundings.

Wi-Fi. Everywhere.

Today's consumer expects to be connected at all times, with the majority of shopping centres now providing free Wi-Fi. This means that marketers can receive basic user data that can then be leveraged for marketing campaigns.

By asking simple questions such as 'who is logging in?' or 'how long are visitors on-site?' they can then can drill down to some of the finer details. Is it possible to control the login experience, for example? If so, it may be possible to send targeted messages to
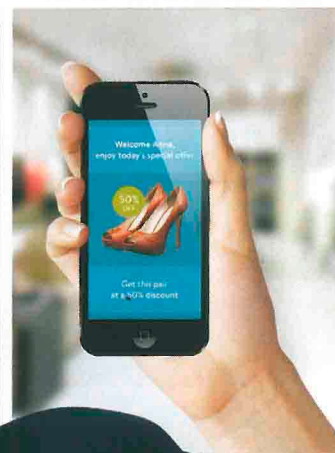
Wi-Fi users. Part of the marketing strategy may start by providing users with a map of the centre and some of its main attractions. As the centre begins to build a more detailed profile of the shopper however, these messages can become more personalised. If they frequently log-on during lunchtime, they may launch a second phase, messaging shoppers with the latest promotions available at the foodcourt.

Driving shopper engagement

Shopping centre managers are constantly looking at new ways to maintain an open dialogue with customers. To achieve this, it's crucial that they have a clear understanding of the customer and how they're engaging with the mall. Analysing shopper trends provides managers with insights that can be used to inform communication with customers – from loyalty programmes and one-off promotions to information available on centre-managed apps.

Managers may find, for example, that shoppers are entering the mall only to bypass the foodcourt. Armed with this information, the shopping centre may look to implement a new loyalty programme that provides shoppers with a voucher to spend on food and drink. Using location-based analytics, mall managers can then measure the success of this initiative by analysing whether traffic numbers, dwell times and fist-time visitors to the foodcourt have increased. Based on these insights, tweaks can be made to ensure that shopper communications are targeted, relevant and that they adapt over time as shopper behaviour trends evolve.

Information about customer behaviour can also be shared with individual retail tenants in order to create a joined-up approach that delivers results for the whole estate. This collaboration is invaluable in ensuring that the marketing and operational activity within the mall supports the needs of both the retailers and their customers.

By combining insights drawn from location-based technologies – whether that's social Wi-Fi logins or beacon technology – with information about the physical customer journey, marketers can deliver more effective campaigns based on known behaviour rather than assumptions.