

Brick-and-mortar retail is not dead in a post-pandemic world

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While brick-and-mortar retail has been hit hard due to Covid-19, it is still far from dead. Hamiltons Advertising - a leading creative agency operating predominately in the retail space - has already seen a return to traditional shopping through the increased consumer dwell time in two recently opened client stores, Food Lover's Market Waterfall Ridge and Food Lover's Market Paarl.



The main feature in Food Lover's Market stores will always be the fresh aisles. In Food Lover's Market Waterfall Ridge, customers are greeted with an LED "Hey Food Lovers" sign.



In-store animatronics create visual and talkable moments, such as the waving farmer on a tractor and an animatronic cow that moves and moo's above the dairy department. These are hugely popular with consumers and can be credited with the increased time spent in these areas.

Says Lisa Currey - MD of Hamiltons Advertising, "Consumers have increased the time spent in stores now that South Africa is on Level 1. While not the case for supermarkets, other sectors experienced the natural reluctance to shop in-store during the lockdown - but as more people become vaccinated, we have seen customers welcome a return to all traditional shopping. There is potentially a world of opportunity for brick-and-mortar retailers who employ the right kind of savvy and innovation as shopping in person remains a strong preference for many South Africans."

How can brick-and-mortar retailers capitalise on this

To capitalise on this opportunity, retailers should create in-store experiences that inspire customers to keep coming back. Says Currey, "Customers expect better in-store experiences from retailers today, and I believe those expectations will only grow over the years. Attention to detail, shareable moments, colour, theatre, layout and consistent visual appeal are all crucial elements of a great customer experience."

For Food Lover's Market in Paarl, the team at Hamiltons rose to the challenge of transforming a traditional bricks-and-mortar space into a theatre for food lovers, by employing a slew of creative concepts to keep the customer informed, entertained and engaged while shopping.

Says Currey, "We love the idea of departmental theatre and creating spaces where the customer can feel closer and more engaged with the product to have a full sensory shopping experience."

The Hamiltons team works closely with architects and project managers, as well as contractors. The process of creative store design includes consultations with the client to understand what they would like to achieve in their store, interpreting



The design of Bubs' Fish and Chips includes a striped canopy which creates the nostalgia of an old-fashioned fish and chip shop.

the architectural plans and presenting creative mood boards and departmental mock-ups for approval. Their one-stop-shop in-house solution makes for the speedy delivery of the project from start to finish. Once the creative is signed off, the team project manages onsite installation for a full turnkey solution.



Liberal use of LED signage throughout stores create departmental theatre where the customer can feel closer and more engaged with the product. It is also an opportunity to cross-merchandise and create appetite appeal. The latest addition is the new wine department at Willowbridge, where our on-screen wine connoisseur gives visual and auditory suggestions on pairing and palate.



The state-of-the-art butchery at Food Lover's Market William Moffett boasts an LED screen that creates appetite appeal through value-adding recipe ideas, while effectively promoting products throughout the store through cross-merchandising. The butchery look and feel is a merge of old-school and artisanal, with a recessed wood look bulkhead and 2D farm animals and slick black tiles.

And the shops of the future?

The shops of the future will focus on in-store design and ambience that make you feel good being there. It will reflect the brand identity and values through the deployment of music, art, texture and technology. Stores will focus on hospitality rather than traditional retail, and areas of interest will be created throughout their space. Going to a brick-and-mortar store will become a destination shopping experience that encourages customers to browse, share and interact with the brand beyond just purchasing a product. It's all about adding value and convenience of shop.

“In a hugely competitive market that is becoming increasingly noisy and commoditised, it is important that a brand creates a fantastic customer experience to be the first choice as a shopping destination. As retail becomes more competitive, Hamiltons aim is to future-proof bricks-and-mortar clients by helping them create unique in-store experiences and spatial identity - a turnkey solution from concept and design, through to implementation and with a huge payload for the bottom line.”



Fresh Society is a hub for fresh salads, fruit cups, smoothies and juices. The LED screens play bright and bold content to draw attention to the department, and serves as a menu, while the greenery and white mesh bulkhead enhances the healthy and fresh feel of the department.



Harbourside, the seafood department at Food Lover's Market, is an experiential experience and features a boat to merchandise the fresh fish on the slab - as well as model seagulls and audio

sounds of the sea to complete all the senses.

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