

# Three key retail design directions for SA in 2016

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To stay relevant, retailers should reinvent their brick-and-mortar locations brand identity every three to five years.

If your store is ready for a revamp in 2016, what are the key aesthetics you should incorporate to cash in on South Africa's current consumer appetites?

Here are my three top smart retail design trends for 2016 that retailers should consider applying to their own spaces to maximise brand impact and improve slow sales in the current low-growth economic environment.

## Smaller floor space

New eco-friendly and affordable retail outlets, such as Melville's 27 Boxes container mall point to a long-term trend of retailers doing more with less space.



This trend has its roots in the pop-up shop explosion of the early 2000s, which trained consumers to appreciate innovative, smart design, and to be more comfortable shopping in tiny spaces.

Smaller retail outlets, done well, cut down on rent, one of the biggest cost factors for cash-strapped retailers trying to retain

market share in the current stagflation economy.

Expect smaller retail spaces to become more commonplace – but not more common. The key to wowing consumers in a small space is to make sure that every square centimetre of the space maximises design ideas and merchandise showcases. Think about designing your space like a permanent pop-up shop.

## South African perspective

South African retailers – even the large ones – are finally embracing the South African vernacular style in their outlets, rather than modelling their interiors on global design aesthetics.

The best South African retail designs of today have a distinctly unique, South African look and feel.

Key elements of this trend include the more obvious interpretations, such as shwe-shwe prints, wild animal motifs and retro Afrikaner 'kitsch', commonly found at Big Blue-type stores and a more mature design interpretation, pulling from the current crop of South African design talent, such as the distinct fabrics of Skinny la Minx or the uniquely South African furniture and objects d'art designed by Dokter and Misses.

South African shoppers live in South Africa for a reason - and they relate to brands and retailers who are as proud of their diverse heritage as they are.

## Smart technology

Current retail design needs to embrace technology as part of the design itself. Technology, such as beacons, smart audio-visual advertising touchscreens and NFC (Near Field Communication) pay points can no longer be an add-on after the fact.

These technologies need to be mindfully incorporated into the store design right from the beginning to ensure a seamless, professional retail interior, both in terms of aesthetics and in terms of the desired customer journey.

## ABOUT BRANDON WILLIAMS

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