

l'œil

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in depth study of new
consumption trends

by L'Observatoire Cetelem

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Shopping centres that take you on a journey

All shopping centres strive to offer visitors unique experiences. But do they all need to focus on human contact and interaction?

<https://youtu.be/hLhswj2zFDw>

Seen around the world

Property development group Unibail-Rodamco-Westfield recently signed a partnership with The Void (the market leader in virtual reality) to offer visitors to its shopping malls in Europe and the United States unique and immersive virtual experiences based on cutting-edge technology. Shoppers can also plunge themselves into virtual reality video games, including *Star Wars*, *Ralph* and *Ghostbusters*. All of which allows Unibail to stand out from the competition.



What to think of it?

To observe the evolution of shopping centres is to understand the expectations of consumers **who are ever keener to make shopping less of a chore, less repetitive** and more of an experience. Indeed, at some point shopping centres started turning into amusement parks, with ice rinks, aquariums and funfair rides. Later they started organising concerts, mini-shows and cooking demonstrations, as soon as this became trendy. More recently, they embraced Pokemon hunting to attract the screen addicts of generation Z. They have now entered the era of virtual reality, as illustrated by the partnership between Unibail and The Void, an alliance whose **uniqueness stems less from the final proposition than from the apparent lack of any commonality between the two companies**. Who, just five years ago, would have imagined that such a partnership could be forged? First and foremost, it proves that **“retailtainment” has become a crucial component** of the development strategies of shopping centres. It also reminds us that **retail has, since the very beginning, revolved around stimulating emotions** and that the way in which these are expressed is purely a reflection of the times. **A permanent invitation to go “elsewhere”**.

What if shops were prepared to carry offerings other than their own?

In Biarritz, you don't need to be thinking of buying a property to visit an estate agency.

<https://lesoulor1925.com>

Seen in Biarritz

Founded in 1925, shoe brand Le Soulor (relaunched in 2017) recently opened a workshop in the premises of... an estate agency, Carmen Immobilier, which has decided to open its doors to local artisans to generate extra traffic. In the 15 square metres allocated to the business, Le Soulor presents its latest shoe collections, including its hiking model, the bestseller in the range. This residency is initially intended to last for six months, but other agencies in the Carmen Immobilier network are now being invited to share their floorspace with local craft industries. In Paris, Le Soulor's products have been sold from a bookshop in the 20th *arrondissement* since May.



What to think of it?

With major retailers deserting town centres (discouraged by rental costs and shrinking populations) and the appearance of a new generation of consumers who grew up with the web (making them curious and impatient), the partnership that has burgeoned between Le Soulor and the Carmen Immobilier network confirms **that the future of retail resides partially in its capacity to come up with new models**. Inventing new models primarily means **breaking down barriers**. Barriers between sectors and markets, between rituals and habits, between the real and the virtual and, of course, psychological barriers. **So why not have an estate agency that doubles as a parcel pick-up point, a showroom or a meeting point?** And could a local brand rely on local retailers to promote it? Why should a small brand have to develop its own distribution network from the moment it is founded? Inventing new models means **knowing how to turn shops into eye-opening locations that stimulate emotions**, thus shifting them away from fulfilling purely economic requirements. Why do we always need to know what to expect from the store we are visiting? **Why not have points of sale that mix the predictable with the unexpected?** Here, the Carmen network of estate agencies **is promoting the values of solidarity and encouragement**, by giving the Le Soulor brand a new and unexpected opportunity **to present its wares and highlight its local origins**. What's more, each brand gains access to the clientele of the other, because going off the beaten path does not mean losing sight of the essentials.

To attract a new generation of consumers, reinventing the rules of one's market is the first step

Many clothing retailers appear to be interested in the idea of offering clothes for hire. An Italian initiative is the most recent example of the practice.

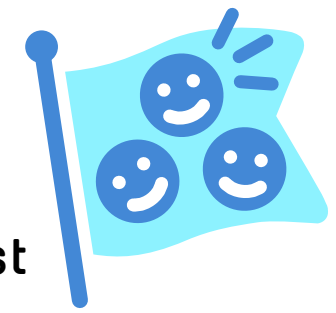
Seen in Italy and the United States

Last month, Twinset, an Italian premium fashion brand for women, launched an offering christened "Please don't buy", which is comprised entirely of clothes for hire, designed for special occasions such as ceremonies, birthdays and job interviews, with a strong focus placed on generation Z, which does not account for much of its clientele. To maximise its chances of success, the brand has equipped itself with an in-house launderette and a sewing workshop for simple repairs. It is also considering setting up an insurance system which, for a small price, would cover any damage. "Please don't buy" is now available in eight stores in Italy. Another ten or so stores look set to follow suit. This summer in the United States, Nike launched a shoe subscription scheme for children aged 2 to 10.



What to think of it?

Numerous fashion brands are now seeking to offer buyers new forms of relationship. This is a preoccupation that reflects their desire not only to **meet the expectations of a new generation of consumers**, who are known to be less interested in ownership than their elders, but also to respond to the fact that they account for an ever decreasing proportion of household budgets. Rental and subscription schemes are rooted in the same rationale. Both encourage consumers to adopt **a different attitude to consumption**. An attitude that is more mature, more conscious, more thoughtful, **conditioned more by their needs than by their urges, and no longer shaped by greed, the rush to accumulate and the irrepressible desire to keep up with trends**. These concepts also allow them to "get to know" brands without having to commit via a purchase, giving companies fresh opportunities to promote themselves with a narrative that doesn't just focus on low prices, limited editions and stylistic statements. This is just one more way for them to **draw attention to themselves** by highlighting their ethical practices and their commitment to reducing consumption, while also stoking people's desires. **Stimulating consumption without giving people the feeling that they are consuming**: such is the current equation that all retailers must now try to solve.



When fashion brands start imagining the most unlikely partnerships... Is this the ultimate strategy to recover market share?

Of course, brands have always entered into partnerships, but these have now become more than just an opportunistic way of having fun with an event.

Seen in shops

The post-summer season has seen countless surprising partnerships emerge in the fashion sector. One example is Guerlain joining forces with Le Coq Sportif to offer a jacket inspired by the codes of La Petite Robe Noire, the label's iconic fragrance. Another is the ancestral Breton knitwear brand Saint James, which has announced an improbable partnership with Avnier, the trendy clothing label of rapper Orelsan, to create a joint mini-collection. Meanwhile, eco-friendly sneaker brand Veja has teamed up with children's retailer Bonton for an unprecedented and quite surprising collaboration. Celio, on the other hand, is celebrating Coca Cola's 100th year in France by offering a capsule collection inspired by the 1970s. Other brands choose to form partnerships with TV series, such as Diesel with La Casa de Papel and Nike with Stranger Things. It is enough to make you wonder whether fashion brands could still exist without partnerships.

What to think of it?

While brands have always sought to build partnerships, in the past they were rare and usually involved the production of a limited edition to mark a cultural or sporting event (Roland-Garros or the release of a Disney movie, for instance). Today, **partnerships are popping up everywhere, to the point where they are becoming a normal part of life for brands**. The approach has also changed, given that the majority of deals now involve **forming an alliance with another brand, preferably from a completely different sector**, to attract new types of clientele and create a social media buzz, thus highlighting the company's vitality. **Generating the perception that a real event is taking place has become a strategic imperative**, which says as much about how the attention of consumers can be captured as it does about what they expect from the retail world. Because when they make a purchase, they are not just looking for a particular product or a brand, but **a symbol that reinforces their feeling of being defined by a lifestyle**. This is not about belonging to a sociological category, but to **a tribe who share the same aesthetic relationship with the world and harbour the same desire to show that they are at the forefront of modern life by inventing their own codes**. This has been well understood by the clothing industry, which makes other sectors seem still quite timid.



Word of the month

Aspirant: following in the wake of bohos and hipsters, “aspirants” are a new sociotype described by Elizabeth Currid-Halkette, an American professor of public policy. Aspirants are people who are not necessarily well-to-do, but who aspire to be better informed and educated, so as to be “better humans” who are more mindful of human rights and the environment. They invest in their children’s education, their pension, their health, their holidays, sport and organic/fair-trade food, rather than in other consumer goods.



Catching the eye

In a survey conducted in France, Italy, Germany and the United States for the Première Vision fashion fair, **45.8% of the French consumers questioned purchased at least one ethical fashion product in 2018** (eco-friendly, second-hand, locally produced, etc.). By way of comparison, the figure is 43.4% in Germany, 46.7% in Italy and 55.3% in the USA. Lack of information is the main obstacle to buying an ethical fashion item, far ahead of price or style.

According to the eKommerce survey conducted by Kantar, e-commerce continued to grow year on year in 2019 (turnover is up 7.3% compared with 2018). Amazon is still the undisputed market leader, accounting for more than half of all sales in the United States and 20% in France. And according to. The Future Shopper 2019 survey, which questioned 15,000 people in the United States and Europe, **this dominance remains when it comes to searching for products (56%) and checking prices and reviews (64%).**



A glance in the rear-view mirror

As early as April 2013, L'Œil was reporting on a partnership between the worlds of retail and leisure. “Retailtainment” was already making the news.

On stage

The facts

On Saturday 6 April, the Hammerson group’s O’Parinor shopping centre hosted singer M. Pokora and musical troupe Robin des Bois. An autograph signing session with the artists and an audition for amateur performers were also held during the event. Two months earlier, the shopping centres of the Unibail-Rodamco group had organised similar events featuring the cast of the musical Sister Act. This mix of genres is only just taking off in France, having been pioneered in countries such as China, where K11 malls in Hong Kong and Shanghai feature shops alongside art galleries and a variety of shows and artistic performances on their concourses.

The analysis

Faced with the risk of “showrooming” (where shops only serve as display spaces and purchases are made online), which is something of a threat to physical retail, some shopping centres are responding by hosting shows. Not only is this an opportunity for their organisers to go out and meet new audiences, thus increasing their exposure, it is also a way for malls to increase the amount of time visitors spend inside them. Unexpected distractions of this kind tend to disrupt people’s shopping routines, while helping to transform points of sale into vibrant and friendly living spaces. Could this in turn instil consumers with a feeling of levity and put them in a good mood that makes them more likely to spend?

Summing up

In the Netherlands, supermarket chain Jumbo has opened tills at which customers can take the time to chat with staff. The initiative is aimed chiefly at older customers. Carrefour's new hypermarket concept, deployed in Dijon Toison d'Or, features a "bla-bla-bla till".

Google has announced the imminent launch of AR Beauty Try-On, a feature that allows users to try on make-up virtually while following a tutorial, thanks to machine learning and virtual reality technologies.

In Oslo, all electric taxis will soon be equipped with wireless charging systems, enabling them to operate 24/7.



Food retailer Intermarché recently announced that it was reformulating 900 of its products to ensure that they score higher on the Yuka app. This will be achieved primarily by removing additives.

In Belgium, the town of Woluwe-Saint-Lambert is offering a €1,500 bonus to anyone who gives up their car. The bonus is paid in instalments over five years, to ensure that beneficiaries do not move away from the town.

With nine branches across France, charity La Cravate Solidaire supplies smart outfits to job seekers.
<http://lacravatesolidaire.org/>

Intermarché is currently trialling the Kofr concept, which requires consumers to have a connected trunk in their garden, to which their online purchases can be delivered.



Tesla recently announced that all its models will soon be able to receive Netflix and Youtube streams. These services will only be accessible when the vehicle is stationary or in "AutoPilot" self-driving mode.

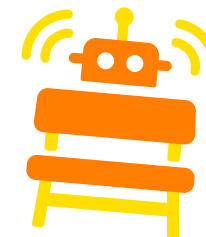
In Courtrai, in Belgium, retailer Colryut is currently trialling artificial intelligence to automatically recognise fruit and vegetables. The hope is that this will reduce waiting times. Initial results show that the correct item is recognised in 97% of cases.

In Ivry-sur-Seine, the first green cemetery was recently inaugurated. Bodies are interred directly in the ground, without a funerary monument, but with small stelae made from local wood species, caskets made from cardboard or from wood grown exclusively in France, graves dug by hand, no plastic flowers, no herbicides, etc.



Lidl has opened its first Lidl Zero supermarket in Woerden, in the Netherlands. The store generates its own energy and consumes no more than it produces.

As of next month in London, Selfridges customers will be able to visit a three-screen cinema (the largest screen has 80 seats) set up in the heart of the Oxford Street department store. All screens will feature the latest technology, as well as food and drink. Regular visitors will be able to take advantage of a loyalty programme.



*Employees of BNP Paribas Personal Finance help to uncover the micro-facts reported in L'Œil by L'Observatoire Cetelem.
👁️👁️ means that the fact or the news in brief was spotted by one of them.*

L'Œil de L'Observatoire Cetelem analyses micro-facts on consumption, revealing the emergence of new manners of spending.

Editorial Director: Sally Guilbert
Communication: Patricia Bosc – patricia.bosc@bnpparibas-pf.com
Designer and Writer: Patrice Duchemin
Design: Lords of Design™ / **Drawings:** Fred Chance™