**DESTINATION RETAILING**: **HOW IS YOUR BUSINESS SUPERIOR TO ALL OTHER BUSINESSES LIKE YOURS?**

*How is your business superior to your competitors? A destination business is one that makes your customer drive over an hour to your store when there is a perfectly good competitor in my town.*

**It refers to a store that customers seek out because of it provides an experience for the customer regardless of the location.**

Inevitably, people will say they provide good service, nice employees, good array of products, convenient, but so is Amazon. Then you might say “We’re family owned and operated.” “We’re the place where quality products and services come together.” “We’re the hometown experts.”

Consumers unconsciously flip a switch when they hear these statements and stop listening.

Tell us your company’s signature strength that your competitors don’t possess and that makes their business different from every other business. (You don't have to be public about it, but here's an opportunity to get help from your neighbors.)

“What makes your business superior to every other business in your industry.”

Can you answer that in one sentence, because consumers are busy, and they have tiny attention spans. Yes, it's hard, but when you can get there, you'll be closer to becoming a destination business.

More and more, customers will expect these destinations to deliver unique and memorable experiences that we simply can’t anywhere else – digitally or otherwise. Consumers will increasingly choose businesses that offer either *anywhere convenience* or *only-here* *experiences.*Everything in the middle may as well be invisible.

The future of physical shopping is *about creating a compelling destination and a location-specific brand experience*. Retailers are restructuring stores and changing how success is measured. No longer solely focused on the transaction, **brands are creating inspiring, interactive, immersive environments** to build loyal customers. These spaces engage the senses and give consumers a reason to linger.

Here is one website that synthesizes what’s trending nationally. <https://www.shopassociation.org/destination-retail/>

* **Experience economy**. Customer services need to be intuitive and highly personalized. Harris research for Eventbrite found that **78% of Millennials would spend money on an experience or event before buying something desirable.**
* **Conviviality culture**. Consumers are **looking for new spaces in which to socialize, share, engage**, and learn. Brands can extend the reach of their relationships by becoming the heart of the community, converting online followers into physical footfall.
* **Instant gratification**. The Internet has created a sense of immediacy. By making everything available at the click of a button, it has redefined expectations for immediate gratification. So, brick-and-mortar retailers must work hard to match the convenience of online shopping: click and collect, search, and price comparison.

“Click and collect is 2016’s big convenience driver,” says Natalie Berg, retail insights director at Planet Retail. “With around half of global shoppers looking for convenient pickup points**, click-and-collect is no longer a nice-to-have; it’s now a prerequisite.**” To enhance convenience, retailers are collaborating with like-minded but non-competing brands to improve the overall customer experience. Create cross promotional retail events with nearby businesses.

It is time to turn brick-and-mortar stores into destination centers and community hubs where consumers enjoy events and experiences. To do so, consider the following strategies:

1. Create unique, experience-driven concepts that will inspire consumers to choose physical over digital.
2. Your brand needs to support entrepreneurs and start-up culture, be it through a co-working space, lab, or incubator.
3. Focus on fitness and health. The values and activities that wellness fanatics hold dear are now reaching the mass market.
4. Re-energize urban districts and channel multi-category lifestyle hubs that offer curated expertise on tap.
5. Diversify your retail mix with popups, experiential and convenience formats.
6. Support and learn from your local community. Create attractions that tie into new social pastimes.
7. Encourage consumers to spend more time with you and like-minded brands to co-create experiences.