

Recession marketing for shopping malls

By [Linette Imrie](#)

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It is during the tough times, like the recent recession, that retailers tend to increase communication with marketing consultants and tenants; however, during boom times shopping centre tenants are generally quiet and fail to communicate to the centres' marketing departments.



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The result of some of these collaborative campaigns created between retailers and the shopping centre marketing departments during tough times are exceptional, with tenants seeing almost immediate results.

Target marketing

During both the good and the bad times, it no longer makes sense to advertise to the many to attract the few. Shopping centre management need to be wise with their marketing budgets, and aim instead at targeting specific customers. Marketers and marketing consultants need to obtain this vital information, which is more readily available from retailers and will assist in attracting customers who will be the most beneficial to a specific centre. For instance, who are those shoppers living within close vicinity to the centre that have money to spend and importantly, are in the market for the goods and services offered by a centre's tenants?

Good marketing strategies are imperative in yielding the best results for individual centres and for the property owner as a whole. However, the group has experienced a greater need for flexibility in these tough times as recent tenant mixes have become increasingly volatile and customer profiles have changed. Whilst shoppers may still be visiting malls as often as they did during boom times, they are no longer spending money so readily. Consumers are heavily indebted and are more cautious to part with their cash.

Measure each campaign

So, once a focused marketing strategy is in play, then what? This is where measurement of each campaign comes into play. Did it make an impact on that specific centre / tenant where it counts? For marketers, accountability and results driven communication has to be the name of the game. Gone are the days when promotions were held because 'it's what we always do'. Now more than ever, 'must have' campaigns need to replace the 'nice to have' campaigns.

In addition, let us not blame poor sales because of low budgets - creativity is key to gaining big impact. The South African Council of Shopping Centres' Spectrum awards proved that even smaller centres with limited budgets could compete with their larger counterparts if they have a great winning idea.

Find the USP

In conclusion, centres need to identify their USP, what sets it apart from other shopping centres? What is its point of differentiation? Once identified, these unique selling points need to be communicated well, to the right people.

In these challenging times, knowing your product (centre) and your customer, combined with great creativity will result in a profitable business.

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