

# Retail apocalypse? No way, SA!

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Buying online may be convenient, but most local shoppers still prefer hitting the malls.

For South Africans, going to the shopping centre is about more than simply filling our trolleys. Our malls are a destination in and of themselves. They are about social connection, distraction and entertainment. And where shopping is concerned, the brand experience – a significant factor in the customer journey – cannot be replicated online. Interacting with store assistants, being able to touch, experience and physically compare products before making the purchasing decision, are key differentiators.

“As a below-the-line marketing agency, we need to ensure that the brands we work with are exactly where their customers are, which in recent months has been trending back up towards the shopping centres,” says Lauren Durant, CEO, Tradeway Promotions. “This can be seen in the footfall numbers in the various shopping centres owned by Liberty Two Degrees (L2D), such as Sandton City, Melrose Arch and Nelson Mandela Square.

Added to the increases in footfall, spending per customer is also on the rise, this is according to the Statista reports on shopping behaviour showcasing that customer spending in South Africa rose by 54% between the 4th quarter of 2020 and the 2nd quarter of 2021.

“This may be attributed to the appropriate and diverse mix of advertising currently being used to address customer needs and supporting the customer experience,” says Durant.

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