

International retailing award for Gateway

The Gateway Theatre of Shopping, Umhlanga, has become the first retail complex in Africa to win a top marketing award from the International Council of Shopping Centres (ICSC), the global trade association of the shopping centre industry which has 57 000 members in some 80 countries. First introduced in 1972, Maxi awards recognise successful marketing programmes which have a substantial impact on the shopping centre.

The equivalent of an "Oscar" for retail marketing, the Maxi award was presented last week at a council ceremony in Chicago to Mike Rodel, regional manager of Old Mutual Property Group in KwaZulu-Natal.

Gateway's award was for its Bluetooth installation, the largest in any mall in Africa. Gateway is a flagship of the retail portfolio managed by Old Mutual Property Group.

The permission-based system enables Gateway retailers and mall management to offer a variety of communications directly to customer cellphones within the mall. This ranges from information on upcoming events to specific store specials and promotions.

The system also offers virtual competition registration, doing away with paper-based entries, and Bluetooth store-specific voucher dispersal. Communications are sent only to those customers who consent to receiving the information. It also enables mall management to communicate to retailers on a one-on-one basis.

The system, which has seen more than 800 people log on within a single day, was developed specifically for Gateway. It is based on tenant and customer group analysis.

Last year, Gateway won a Grand Prix Footprint award for Outstanding Promotions from the SA Council of Shopping Centres for the Valentine's Day event "Say Yes At Gateway", in which 10 couples married in a sumptuous ceremony at the centre.

The SA council is organising, in conjunction with the International Council of Shopping Centres, a World Retail Real Estate Summit in Cape Town in October 2007. More than 1200 delegates representing leading businesses in shopping centre investment, development and management are likely to attend the summit which will coincide with the 50th anniversary of the founding of the ICSC.

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