Mall of Africa owner to roll out retail app across shopping mall portfolio

Attacq Limited, the developer of Waterfall City and Logistics Hub, has launched an online retail app called Shôping. According to the JSE-listed Reit, which owns the Mall of Africa, the Shôping app will curate unique experiences for mall visitors, in line with Attacq's mission to put the customer "back at the centre of the retail experience".

Given the rise of e-commerce across the globe, prioritising digital touchpoints is the most effective way to ensure relevance for a brand, or retail destination, on today's cluttered customer journey, says Attacq in a statement. This involves making malls more vibrant and modern, with a digital layer of experiences that complement the tangible value-adds and atmosphere of the physical, lifestyle and entertainment proposition that is the mall experience.

Since the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic, traditional brick-and-mortar retail centres have struggled to maintain footfall and relevance, especially in the face of an online shopping environment that has accelerated in response to restrictions on mobility, public spaces and social gatherings. Shopping centres that averted disaster were those able to pivot to omnichannel strategies that prioritised user experience and convenience.

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"Shopping centres are by their very nature, physical entities. However, in era in which we are all required to physically distance, we believed it important to bridge the divide between bricks and mortar and online, by facilitating a curated experience attuned to the needs and wants of each mall visitor," says Michael Clampett, head of asset and property management: retail at Attacq.

Parking perks, virtual currency

The Shôping app was specifically designed to change the way visitors experience the mall. The app facilitates integrated digital engagement with the mall's shopper community. Users are eligible for parking perks, are able to navigate the Mall of

Africa at the touch of a button, and they're able to send and redeem digital gift vouchers whilst also earning loyalty stamps from their favourite participating stores.

App users can receive Zaka, a virtual currency that can be redeemed at participating stores, by way of a gift from an employer, friend, family, or even reload their Zaka wallet themselves as well as gain access to Attacq's interconnected loyalty programme.

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Integrate online and offline

Jackie van Niekerk, incoming CEO at Attacq, says, "Our main objective with Shôping was to integrate the online and offline world for an effective and incentivised user experience. We wanted to help facilitate customer product research at home in the build to that potential shopper's planned trip to the mall.

"By leveraging smartphone and cloud technology we were able to deliver a personalised experience that engages the customer even before they arrive at the mall. Notifications and messages about relevant promotions or products will also be shared instantaneously to enhance the experience of visiting one of our retail destinations."

The Shôping app will be rolled out at the Mall of Africa as first-phase, and then later across all of Attacq's retail portfolio. In collaboration with the project team at Attacq, the Dashpay team, a subsidiary of the JSE-listed Capital Appreciation Limited, also deserve acknowledgment in seeing Shôping through to fruition in partnership with the Attacq team.

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