WHAT MAKES A GOOD TOWN FOR RETAILERS?

Domenica Scordo, retail analyst at BNP Paribas Real Estate, the leading property adviser, shares her thoughts:

“What makes a good town for retailers is a concept that is undergoing change. Traditionally, locations with large shopper numbers and ample available spend would be considered to be ideal.

However, as shopper spending shifts from in-town to out-of-town locations and online, it is critical for retailers and landlords to create town centres which offer community engagement, where consumers will visit for the experience (not just the offer) and be able to engage in a pleasant environment that provides a sense of community and belonging. It is this point of difference that will allow bricks and mortar to effectively compete against the convenience of out-of-town and online shopping.

A key to a town’s attractiveness is its physical appearance and the quality of its tenant mix. Therefore, the power of shop fascias should not be underestimated, as they are very important in projecting a town’s image and act as a way to entice customers into the store to spend money. They also help to promote brand awareness and help gain customer trust.

But with vacancy rates rising as many retailers consolidate, we are seeing many household stores disappear from our local high streets, making it even more important for retailers to innovate and think about alternative ways to communicate their brand.

The stores that retailers choose to keep open are going to have to change so that they can more effectively compete with the convenience of internet shopping, which allows consumers to browse, reserve or purchase, often from a very wide selection of goods. It is now up to retailers to create attractive stores which offer shoppers an experience that simply cannot be replicated by a website.

For many who have halted expansions plans and are now focusing on store refits, now is a perfect opportunity to create ‘experience’ stores that will engage their customers and draw them away from their computers.
It should also be remembered that shopping hasn’t lost its popularity; people still enjoy physically visiting stores and it remains one of the UK’s top leisure activities. For many, whilst online provision offers some clear advantages, the solitary of shopping online is one of its biggest disadvantages, which could potentially end up as just another administrative task with no pleasure obtained from the purchase.

For those retailers that have survived the last five years, now is the time to critically look at their brand and decide what differentiates them from the competition and create stores that celebrate their individuality. This process of retailer reinvention will help to make our high streets attractive places that people again want to visit, whatever the weather.”

-ends-

About BNP Paribas Real Estate
BNP Paribas Real Estate, leading international real estate provider, offers to its clients a comprehensive range of services that span the entire real estate lifecycle: property development, transaction, consulting, valuation, property management and investment management.
BNP Paribas Real Estate has local expertise on a global scale through its presence in 36 countries through more than 150 offices and 3,400 employees (16 wholly owned subsidiaries and 20 by its Alliance network, that represents today more than 3,000 people). BNP Paribas Real Estate is a subsidiary of BNP Paribas.
For more information: www.realestate.bnpparibas.com
Real Estate for a changing world
Press contacts: Alex Tucker, UK Press Officer, +44 (0) 207338 4086 alex.tucker@bnpparibas.com