



SHOPPING CENTRES
ASSOCIATION OF INDIA

Padma Shri Harshavardhan Neotia

Mall Talk

September 2025



SHOPPING CENTRES
ASSOCIATION OF INDIA

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of India
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Co-Operative Industrial Estate,
Marol, Andheri (East), Mumbai
400059.
Website: www.scai.in
Email : info@scai.in

PUBLISHER:
Shopping Centres Association
of India
info@scai.in

DESIGN:



beatscracker@gmail.com
+91 91122 91108

EDITORIAL & ADVERTISING
ENQUIRIES:
editormt2008@gmail.com

REGISTERED OFFICE:
Shopping Centres Association
of India
S-61A, Okhla Phase II, New Delhi,
110020.



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Anjeev Kumar Srivastava
COO, SCAI

As we step into September, our shopping centre continues its journey of growth, renewal, and meaningful connections. This month brings with it a season of fresh beginnings — from the back-to-school spirit to new lifestyle launches — and we are thrilled to share updates that reflect our promise of innovation and excellence.

At the core of our mission remains a focus on enhancing the visitor journey. Our teams have worked tirelessly to introduce a new mix of brands, seasonal activations, and engaging experiences that speak to the evolving needs of our patrons. September is also a time of inspiration, and through thoughtfully curated campaigns and trend highlights, we aim to deliver not just products, but memorable stories and moments.

In keeping with our responsibility to the industry, we continue to drive knowledge-sharing initiatives and collaborative platforms. This month, our masterclasses and workshops are designed to empower both businesses and customers, ensuring that our mall ecosystem stays ahead of the curve in shaping sustainable, forward-thinking retail practices.

Community remains the heartbeat of everything we do. From family-centric events to cultural showcases, our September line-up is built to celebrate togetherness and foster connections that go beyond shopping. We are proud to be a space where diverse voices come together, creating a dynamic hub that reflects the spirit of our city.

As the year gathers momentum, we look forward with optimism and determination to deliver even greater value to you — our patrons, partners, and community. Thank you for continuing to walk this journey with us. The best is yet to come, and we are excited to unveil more in the months ahead.

Anjeev Kumar



THOUGHT LEADERSHIP

Beyond the Cart: How Experiences are Powering India's Retail Future

By Anshuman Magazine, Chairman & CEO – India, South-East Asia, Middle East & Africa, CBRE.



Remember when going to the mall was a straightforward affair—walk in with a list, check off the essentials, maybe grab a quick bite, and head home? Those days are now behind us. The Indian retail landscape is

evolving rapidly, and developers are not just building malls anymore—they're building experiences.

Today's consumers want more than just a place to shop. They want to connect, be entertained, and create memories. The shift is clear: we're moving from transactional spaces to experiential destinations. And this change isn't a passing trend—it's a redefinition of what retail means in the modern era.

What's Fuelling the Shift?

In a world of hyperconnectivity and rapid gratification, shopping is no longer about just acquiring things. It's about how and where you acquire them. Consumers are increasingly drawn to places that offer value beyond the cart—spaces that allow them to explore, unwind, and engage.

Think about it: why limit a visit to buying clothes when you can also challenge your friends to an escape room, try a VR game, or enjoy a live stand-up show? This fusion of shopping and entertainment is becoming the heartbeat of new-age retail, and developers across India are taking note.

The Rise of Experience-Led Retail



Across India's metros—from Mumbai and Pune to Chennai and Hyderabad, and from Delhi NCR to Tier II cities like Lucknow and Bhubaneswar—developers are doubling down on experience. They're not just filling space with tenants; they're curating ecosystems. Entertainment, F&B, & social engagement zones are no longer optional—they're expected.

The data supports this shift. Entertainment zones, once limited to 10% of mall area, now command 13–15% and continue to grow.

Whether its anchor entertainment tenants spread over 45,000–50,000 sq. ft., or smaller, high-impact concepts ranging between 15,000–30,000 sq. ft., they're becoming essential pillars in tenant mixes.

We're also seeing the F&B category taking centre stage. Earlier, it occupied 11–12% of the mall's layout. Today, that's up to 20%. Because let's face it—what's a movie or shopping spree without a great meal or coffee catch-up?

From Leasing to Curating: A Developer's New Mandate



For the developers, this evolution calls for a fundamental shift in how they approach retail spaces. Leasing square footage is no longer enough. They must curate experiences now.

That means seeking partners who don't just fill space but bring it alive. Entertainment operators who can host poetry slams, interactive gaming lounges, or thematic dining concepts are increasingly valuable. Even pop-ups and short-term activations—if thoughtfully done—can draw footfall and enhance engagement.

In many ways, we're taking a page from the playbook of India's amusement and theme park industry. Their success in driving traffic through bundled experiences, dynamic pricing, and multi-generational appeal is something retail spaces can learn from—and adapt to fit within urban footprints.

Strategic Space Planning: It's All About Balance

Developers now need to balance the demands of traditional retailers with the rising need for engaging, flexible, and immersive spaces.

The old KPI of sales per square foot still matters, but we're now adding another equally important metric: experience per square foot.

This shift has led to the emergence of hybrid layouts—anchor fashion brands coexisting with microbreweries, virtual golf lounges, immersive escape rooms, and local art exhibits. These combinations not only attract wider demographics but also increase dwell time, driving sales across categories.

And let's not forget standalone formats—high-street developments, retail parks, and entertainment hubs. These too are now integrating F&B and experiential elements at the core of their planning, rather than as afterthoughts.

Embracing "Glocal" Experiences



India's diversity means one size doesn't fit all. What excites a crowd in Bengaluru might not resonate the same way in Chandigarh or Kolkata. As developers, collaborating with local partners who understand regional tastes, festivals, and cultural nuances is becoming a key differentiator.

International entertainment brands entering India are already doing this—embracing "glocalization." From adapting themes to match local sensibilities to offering food menus tailored to Indian palates, they're investing in cultural fit. For us, that's a blueprint for successful, experience-rich retail environments.

The Tangible Benefits of Going Experiential

While creating memorable spaces is fulfilling from a brand & design standpoint, it also makes solid business sense. It would lead to increased footfall, longer dwell time, cross-category spending, as well as tenant satisfaction. Unique experiences become destination drivers. People come not just to shop but to spend quality time. The more time someone spends in a mall, the more likely they are to explore additional categories—from F&B to fashion.

Entertainment and dining encourage cross-spending, benefiting not just anchor tenants but also niche brands. Last but not the least, higher traffic means more business for tenants, leading to lower churn and higher occupancy.

The Future: From Malls to Memory-Makers

As we look ahead, the Indian retail landscape will continue to evolve—faster, deeper, and with more creativity. For developers, the message is clear: retail is no longer just about what people buy, but about what they experience.

To remain relevant, we must lean into this evolution—designing spaces that are versatile, interactive, and emotionally resonant. Spaces that people visit not out of necessity, but desire. Spaces that turn casual shoppers into loyal visitors.

Because in this new chapter of Indian retail, the journey matters as much as the destination. And the most successful developers? They're not just building malls—they're now building moments.





PERSONALITY OF THE MONTH

Harshavardhan Neotia, the Chairman of the Ambuja Neotia Group gives us some insights into business, what he holds closer to his heart, strategies, and growth plans



In India's evolving urban narrative, few names resonate as deeply as

Harshavardhan Neotia. As the Chairman of the Ambuja Neotia Group, he has been instrumental in reshaping the real estate and lifestyle infrastructure landscape of Eastern India. From pioneering inclusive housing to creating community-centric malls, his vision seamlessly blends commercial sensibility with cultural consciousness.

In 1999, Neotia was conferred the Padma Shri, one of India's highest civilian honours for his outstanding contribution to trade and industry, particularly for his pioneering work in affordable housing and responsible urban development. Known for his belief in "building spaces that build people," his approach to retail and real estate has never been merely transactional.

His landmark projects—like the City Centre malls are not just shopping destinations but vibrant urban hubs that celebrate human connection, leisure, & local identity.

At a time when the retail sector is undergoing a transformation, driven by technology, shifting consumer behaviour, and the need for meaningful experiences, Neotia's insights offer both clarity and inspiration. In this exclusive conversation, he reflects on his journey, the state of retail, the evolution of shopping malls, and the future of consumer spaces in India.

What did the Padma Shri mean to you — personally and professionally?

The Padma Shri was conferred for our initiative in social housing. It was designed by the legendary architect B.V. Doshi. To be recognised nationally at such an early stage was both humbling and deeply affirming. This award made us more conscious of our responsibility. It grounded us in a deeper purpose to shape spaces that improve the way people live, meaningfully.

How do your verticals — real estate, hospitality, healthcare, education, and retail align with your broader vision?

Our vision has been about creating spaces that are functional, aesthetic, and socially conscious. Whether it's a home, a hospital, or a resort, we see each as a canvas to enhance mental, physical, and emotional well-being.

These sectors are not isolated silos they are interconnected pieces of a more holistic life experience.

What inspired your venture into real estate and lifestyle infrastructure, especially retail?

I have been drawn to the language of architecture, its ability to express culture, emotion, and intent. Retail emerged as a natural extension. City Centre Salt Lake, conceptualised by the visionary Charles Correa, was an early affirmation that spaces could be more than commercial, they could be cultural, human, and deeply contextual. Malls, to me, are not just retail boxes; they are urban courtyards open, intuitive, and inviting where people gather, linger, and engage. That belief continues to guide us

How do you define the role of malls today beyond commerce?

Malls today are more than retail destinations—they are evolving into shared environments where people engage, unwind, and connect. When designed with thought and empathy, they add depth to city life. We have seen this unfold across our City Centre Malls in Salt Lake, Patna, Siliguri, and Raipur. Each has quietly influenced its micro-market shaping local economies, redefining leisure, and touching lives in ways that go beyond commerce. Over time, these spaces have become part of the community's weekly routine, offering familiarity, discovery, and delight.

How do you measure a mall's success today?

While footfall and sales remain essential, today's benchmarks are more layered depth of engagement, time spent, and emotional resonance.

Malls have evolved into media ecosystems. When people linger, share, and return with others, it signals that you have built more than a destination you have nurtured affinity.

How important are entertainment and F&B today?

Food and entertainment have steadily become the heartbeats of modern malls—driving footfall not just on weekends but across the week. Whether it's a family outing, a birthday gathering, or a spontaneous meet up, the experience often begins with where to eat or unwind. Our planning, design, and tenant mix increasingly reflect this shift—making more room for immersive dining, curated F&B, and social spaces that foster connection.



What will the mall of 2030

look like?

I believe the mall of 2030 will be far more flexible and dynamic constantly adapting to how people engage with space, culture, and commerce. It may blend technology and tactility, where AR / VR, immersive storytelling, & interactive brand experiences coexist with quiet zones, art, wellness, learning and even convention centre. It won't follow a fixed format but evolve with time responsive to shifting habits, generational tastes, and the deeper desire for discovery and shared experiences

How do you view the current state of organised retail in India?

Organised retail in India is entering a defining phase—propelled by aspirational consumption, rising disposable incomes, and the rapid evolution of Tier II & III markets. But growth alone isn't the full story. The challenge and opportunity lies in harmonising technology with human touch. Retail must now move beyond efficiency to emotion, blending data with design, & omnichannel presence with real-world delight. It's not about replacing one format with another, but about creating integrated journeys that feel intuitive, personal, and meaningful

Will brick and mortar retail stay relevant in an e-commerce world?

I believe physical retail will not only remain relevant, it will remain indispensable, particularly in India. While digital consumption has surged, what we are witnessing is not a displacement but a convergence. Most online-first brands are actively seeking physical presence, and traditional players are embracing omnichannel models. This interplay reaffirms that coexistence isn't just a trend—it's the future.

In India, shopping is more than a transaction, it's often a social ritual, woven into family routines, festive traditions, & cultural expressions. Malls, in that sense, are not just retail destinations; they are modern town squares safe, aspirational spaces for leisure, celebration, and collective engagement.

However, staying relevant will require constant reinvention. Technology will play a pivotal role—not just in logistics or payments, but in shaping immersive, data-driven, hyper-personalised experiences. From AI-powered assistance to AR/VR product trials, smart wayfinding to sentiment aware analytics brick and mortar formats must now anticipate intent, not just respond to it. At Ambuja Neotia, we see our malls as living ecosystems where design, behaviour insights, and digital integration come together to create richer experiences. The goal isn't to compete with e-commerce, it's to offer something e-commerce cannot: a tactile, sensorial, emotionally resonant environment that makes people return, engage, and belong.

What are the challenges mall developers face today?

The challenges today are both structural and strategic. On one hand, there's a clear shortage of skilled retail talent be it store management, data-driven merchandising, or experience design. On the other, there's an even greater demand for reinvention. Today's consumer is dynamic, discerning, and digitally fluent. They don't just seek products—they seek discovery, delight, and personal relevance. Malls must feel alive, week after week. That means curating not just the right tenant mix, but an evolving cultural and lifestyle calendar that sustains excitement across all 52 weeks of the year.

At Ambuja Neotia, we have seen how festivals, pop-ups, art shows, wellness events, & weekend performances transform our malls into places where people return for something new each time. Developers must now think like storytellers keeping the space fresh, emotionally resonant, and deeply aligned with shifting consumer moods and aspirations.

Do you see yourself as a business leader, cultural builder, or urban reformer?

We have strived to blend business intent with design sensitivity & cultural awareness. I don't view these as distinct roles but as facets of a larger purpose: to nurture places that are thoughtful, purposeful, & intuitively human.

Whether it's the play of light in a corridor or a landscaped nook that anchors someone's daily ritual, we have aimed to shape environments that invite pause, comfort, and quiet connection.

What advice would you offer to young entrepreneurs entering retail today?

If there's one thing I have understood over the years, it's that retail is all about facilitating social exchange. The spaces that endure are those that offer people more than utility they offer shared moments, comfort, and a reason to return. To those starting out, I would say: *"trends will change, technology will evolve but the human instinct to gather, to explore, to be part of something tangible, will remain. If your spaces can spark conversation, encourage lingering, or simply bring people together in quiet, meaningful ways, then you are building something that goes beyond commerce. You are contributing to the social rhythm of a place."*





TREND THOUGHTS

Loyalty That Pays Off: How Smart Rewards Drive Bigger Orders and Deeper Connections

Loyalty programs are no longer just a nice to have, they're proving to be a powerful growth engine for restaurants. A striking 83% of restaurant leaders with a loyalty program report that it has increased average order size and encouraged repeat visits. It's no wonder that 71% plan to increase their investments in loyalty initiatives over the next year.

Consumers agree: 69% say they value loyalty programs that are personalized, with exclusive discounts and reward systems based on their preferences. The opportunity? Turn transactional moments into long-term relationships aligning perks with customer behavior. For instance, rewarding frequent purchases of the same menu item with a targeted discount can create a more meaningful customer experience and higher ROI.

To make loyalty programs truly impactful, restaurant operators should analyze sales data and tailor offers that reflect customer behaviour. Whether that's tiered rewards, members-only pricing, or limited-time offers, personalization remains the secret sauce.

Pro Tip:

Implementing a loyalty program doesn't need to be complex. Platforms like Square Loyalty let businesses set rewards based on visits, spending, or purchase categories — with instant access to insights for fine-tuning promotions and campaigns.

Case Study: TokyoTaco's Organic Growth Playbook



In **Sydney's eclectic Newtown** neighbourhood, TokyoTaco has built a fiercely loyal local following not through heavy marketing, but by focusing on experience. "We've been very lucky to create a strong local following," said Co-Founder Jordan Hajek. By using Square Loyalty to offer points for discounts and free items, they've encouraged steady repeat business.

This strategy is paying off. TokyoTaco now ranks in the top 20% of Uber Eats sales across Australia and New Zealand. "You really need to concentrate on building that local customer base and understanding who they are, what they want, and how to connect with them," Hajek explained.

Communication Is the Next Loyalty Frontier

While loyalty programs are highly effective, many restaurants face a communication gap. Only 44% of restaurant leaders say they're effectively improving customer relationships through fast, easy communication channels.

Meanwhile, customers are telling restaurants exactly how they want to be reached. According to recent data, email remains the top communication method (63%), followed by text messaging (44%). Social media has its place, but one-to-one communication via email and SMS — is far more impactful for driving return visits and promoting special offers.

How Consumers Prefer to Hear from Restaurants	2024	2023
Email	63%	63%
Text messages	44%	32%
Facebook	22%	36%
Instagram	15%	20%
Social media DMs	16%	23%
Chat on website	13%	14%
TikTok	10%	14%

Key takeaway



Customers who opt into loyalty programs or promotions want to hear from you — directly. Investing in personalized email and text messaging campaigns can significantly strengthen customer relationships & loyalty outcomes, while social media continues to serve broader brand awareness.

Final Word

A well-executed loyalty program, powered by data and supported by direct communication, can turn first-time guests into lifelong patrons. The opportunity for growth is clear and restaurants that act on it will lead the pack.





MARKET TALK

Speak and Show: Why Communication Is the Retail Industry's Superpower

In the shopping mall and retail industry, communication is the invisible thread that holds operations, customer experience, and team dynamics together. From frontline staff interacting with shoppers to mall managers coordinating large-scale events, the ability to communicate effectively—both verbally and non-verbally—can be the difference between success and mediocrity.

Verbal communication, whether spoken or written, is the direct exchange of ideas, instructions, or feedback. In the retail environment, it's everywhere—greetings at the entrance, product information shared by sales associates, promotional announcements, or coordination between the departments. But it's not just about what is said—it's how it's said. A friendly tone, clear articulation, and appropriate choice of words can elevate a customer's experience & reinforce brand image.

Customer Centricity



Consider a shopper walking into a high-end store. A warm greeting delivered with a confident tone instantly sets a positive tone.

Compare that to a disengaged “Hi” with no eye contact—the difference in impact is immense, despite both being verbal communication.

Within mall operations, verbal clarity is equally vital. Instructions for event setups, emergency briefings, or staff coordination must be precise and actionable. Ambiguity can lead to confusion, operational errors, & ultimately, a diminished visitor experience.

Verbal skills are also crucial in conflict resolution. Whether handling customer complaints or managing tenant concerns, the tone and language used can either diffuse tension or escalate it. Politeness, empathy, and solution-oriented dialogue build trust and cooperation.

However, even the best words fall flat without the support of non-verbal communication. Facial expressions, posture, gestures, tone of voice, and eye contact often speak louder than words. Studies suggest that non-verbal cues account for the majority of how messages are perceived.

Making It Count

In retail settings, positive body language—like open posture, eye contact, and attentiveness—enhances customer perception. Negative cues, such as slouching or checking a phone while interacting, can signal disinterest or lack of professionalism. Non-verbal communication also plays a key role in leadership. A composed, attentive, and respectful demeanor from senior staff sets a constructive tone for the entire team.



Team members often mirror the energy and attitude demonstrated by their leaders. Consistency between verbal and non-verbal cues is where communication becomes most powerful. Misalignment—like saying “We value your business” while appearing distracted—undermines trust. On the other hand, aligned cues—such as a sincere compliment paired with a smile and eye contact—build motivation and loyalty.

Crisis Management

In high-pressure situations such as emergencies, clear verbal directions must be reinforced with confident body language to reassure and guide the public. During evacuations, staff posture, expressions, and gestures can offer comfort and clarity that words alone may not.

Cultural awareness adds another layer of complexity. Shopping malls welcome diverse demographics, and communication styles vary across cultures. While direct eye contact may convey respect in some cultures, it may be considered impolite in others. Retail professionals must learn to adjust and respond with cultural sensitivity. Simple yet powerful practices—like multi lingual signage, assistance in native languages, and staff training on etiquette—can make malls more inclusive and welcoming to everyone.

With communication being so central to success, ongoing training is essential. Workshops on listening, tone modulation, body language, and cultural competence help teams navigate everyday interactions more effectively. Role-plays and feedback sessions build real-world readiness and confidence.

Ultimately, communication isn’t just a soft skill—it’s a strategic asset. It enhances team productivity, reduces misunderstandings, improves customer satisfaction, & elevates a brand’s image. In a people-driven industry, mastering both what you say and how you say it is critical to operational excellence and emotional connection.

Whether assisting a shopper, resolving a complaint, leading a team, or managing events, communication remains the one skill that elevates every other. Used effectively, it doesn’t just inform—it connects, influences, and inspires.





MALL WATCH

RUNWAL REALTY – RETAIL

Setting the Benchmark for Indian Retail

Our Journey, Our Why

We've always believed that a mall is more than real estate—it's social infrastructure. What began as a developer's conviction in the power of well-placed, well-run assets has matured into a retail platform that sets the bar for curation, experience, governance and brand outcomes. As Runwal Realty's retail vertical, we build destinations that are intuitive to navigate, inspiring to spend time in, and rewarding for our brand partners.



R City, our flagship on L.B.S. Marg, exemplifies that philosophy. It demonstrates what happens when scale meets soul—when thoughtful curation, intelligent planning and community-centred programming come together. In Thane, R Mall stands as the neighbourhood's everyday main street—reliable, convenient and increasingly experience-forward. Together, these two assets along with R Mall Mulund & R Odeon express our belief: the best malls aren't simply places to shop; they're places to belong.

R CITY — THE FLAGSHIP OF POSSIBILITY



Our role in retail story.

R City is where global discovery meets Mumbai's energy. The destination blends fashion leadership, beauty, home, tech, fine jewellery and a deep, contemporary F&B mix with marquee entertainment—turning a single errand into an all-day experience.

Where scale serves experience.

Spread across approximately 1.2 million sq ft of retail area, R City has been reimaged end to end in recent years—interiors, operations, leasing logic and marketing—to align with evolving aspirations. The result is a property that feels both iconic and current: fresh storefronts and adjacencies, better movement logic, warmer hospitality, and programming that rewards repeat visits.

Curation as a craft.

We design floors for natural cross flow and high discovery value: fashion into beauty and accessories; home into electronics; kids into edutainment; & dining that punctuates the journey. Anchors in entertainment make the destination a magnet for families, while a thoughtful mix of premium and emerging brands ensures newness without losing familiarity.

Partnership mindset.

With consolidated ownership and a long term lens, we work shoulder to shoulder with retailers—right sizing boxes, tuning adjacencies, co creating events and content, and investing in phygital journeys that start on a screen and convert in store.

A living culture calendar.

From festival showcases to pop ups, art and large format celebrations, our year round programming turns R City into a cultural hub where Mumbai shops—and celebrates.

R Mall Thane — The Neighbourhood's Everyday Main Street



Close to life.

Strategically located on Ghodbunder Road, R Mall Thane is built for high frequency visits—daily needs during the week and unhurried time on weekends. The proposition is simple: everything you need, presented with warmth and efficiency.

Right sized for convenience.

With approximately 250,000 sq ft of leasable area, the asset is curated to feel immediate and accessible.

We focus on a clear, everyday use mix across fashion, electronics, wellness, services and family friendly F&B. The experience is designed around easy circulation, intuitive wayfinding and consistently reliable operations.

Made for the neighbourhood.

Our Thane thesis is to keep the promise of convenience while lifting the experience—steady brand refreshes, richer food programming, upgraded amenities, and events that reflect the community's rhythm.

Brand Partnerships: Curation with Depth

Global meets local.

Our mix reflects Mumbai's cosmopolitan palate & its love for trusted Indian favourites. At R City, this means a deep bench across fashion, beauty & home; a jewellery portfolio that ranges from heritage to contemporary; and an F&B line up that stretches from iconic Indian kitchens to modern global concepts.

Entertainment that extends dwell.

Family centric anchors turn a shopping trip into a day out, broadening the appeal and lifting baskets across the mall. The goal is simple: give people more to do together, and they'll discover more brands together.



Co-marketing that compounds.

We lean into content led campaigns, collaborative launches, visual storytelling and retail theatre—activations that are built to be shared and designed to convert.

Leadership Point of View: Leasing & Mix Strategy



Built for our catchments.

Strategically located on Ghodbunder Road, R Mall Thane is built for high frequency visits—daily needs during the week and unhurried time on weekends. The proposition is simple: everything you need, presented with warmth and efficiency.

Jewellery leadership.

At our flagship, we have intentionally created one of Mumbai's largest gold souks—a concentrated street of leading jewellery brands that brings choice, trust and convenience together in one place.

Home & lifestyle depth.

We host 16–18 home furnishing, décor and gifting brands, giving customers a complete “home” journey under one roof—from furniture and soft furnishings to tableware, lighting, décor accents and curated gifts.

Community, Culture, Continuity

Retail is a team sport—brands, customers, and the destination all win together. Our calendar blends festivals, seasonal showcases, creator led discoveries & signature moments like the **Retail Excellence Awards** that recognize excellence across the ecosystem. These aren't one off spectacles; they're compounding touchpoints that build loyalty, keep the tenant mix fresh, and anchor the mall's role as a civic stage.

Events & Experiences: Our Year Round Programming

R City — Mumbai's flagship stage

- **Festive worlds:** Immersive installations & workshops across Diwali and Christmas (e.g., Diwali Delights, Winter Fest), designed for discovery, photo moments and family participation.
- **Culture & live acts:** Ticketed comedy and music showcases programmed through leading partners (examples include national stand up tours and live gigs), alongside collaboratives with in mall anchors such as KidZania.
- **Gaming & youth leagues:** High energy formats like Battle of Besties, Laser Tag Championship, Game On Mania and UNO Showdown that bring communities of interest to the mall.
- **Retail theatre & value moments:** End of Season Sale, Freedom Fiesta & curated pop ups that turn shopping into an experience.
- **Industry celebration:** The annual **Retail Excellence Awards** hosted at R City to recognize outstanding store performance, service and visual storytelling.

R Mall Thane — the neighbourhood's festival square

- **Kids & family carnivals:** Character meet fiestas (e.g., Toon Fiesta), themed play zones and parent child workshops through the year.
- **Hands on learning weekends:** Maker style sessions such as the Science Fun Lab and creative craft pop ups around national days and school breaks.
- **Local culture & live entertainment:** Stand up evenings and community performances that make the mall a convenient night out.
- **Seasonal décor & offers:** Festive décor trails, in mall contests and shopping promotions that keep repeat visits fresh and rewarding.

THE RUNWAL WAY: PRINCIPLES THAT GUIDE US



Customer first—end to end.

We design the journey before we design the store fronts: welcoming entries, intuitive circulation, restful pauses, clean wayfinding, accessible amenities and hospitality that feels human. If it doesn't serve the guest, it doesn't ship.

Partners, not tenants.

We co plan boxes and adjacencies, calibrate launch calendars, and build content + campaigns shoulder to shoulder—with clear success metrics and fast feedback loops. Performance conversations are continuous, not quarterly.

Curation with intention.

Every addition must raise the street: the right category depth, a balance of global and Indian leaders, and concepts that are new to catchment without being unfamiliar. We protect discovery value and brand sightlines at all times.

Experience as the anchor.

Entertainment, art and food act as social glue. We program for shared moments—families, friends, fandoms—because dwell drives discovery and discovery lifts baskets across the mall.

Operational excellence as culture.

Lighting, cleanliness, safety, signage and courtesy are non negotiable. Back of house disciplines (BMS, waste, water, energy) are as important as front of house sparkle—and they show.

Governance with a long view.

With full ownership of R City and a neighbourhood thesis at Thane, capital allocation and decision cycles are sharp. ESG isn't an afterthought; it's embedded in planning, procurement and daily operations.

Build for tomorrow.

We keep running backlog of upgrades—digital touchpoints, material improvements, placemaking and technology—so the assets stay future ready without losing their soul.

Sustainability & Responsible Operations (Fy2024–25)

Water efficiency

- **Aerators (washroom jet sprays & basin taps):** ~30% water saving. Total water consumed: 31,352 KL; estimated without aerators: 40,758 KL; water saved: 9,406 KL.
- **Rainwater harvesting:** 30,952 KL of rainwater utilized for non potable applications, enabling a 21% reduction in water consumption for flush systems (flush water consumption: 144,532 KL).
- **Recycled water (STP):** 113,510 KL of treated water used for washroom flushing, irrigation, and cooling towers. Against total flush water consumption of 144,532 KL, this represents a 79% saving.

Energy efficiency

- Smart timers deployed across common
- **area lights, exhaust systems, AHUs, fresh air fans, cooling tower fans, secondary pumps (chiller plant) and LMR AC units** saved **88,746 KVAH**—a **0.64%** reduction on common area consumption (**13,911,322 KVAH**).

Renewables

- **Solar power:** Up to 60% of power is sourced from solar, reinforcing our commitment to clean energy and lower operating intensity.

For R City, we continue to widen the brand aperture and deepen experiences—more global names, more immersive entertainment, and a sharper culinary story. For R Mall Thane, we're doubling down on convenience leadership—faster refresh cycles, richer food choices and community first programming. Beyond these two assets, our wider retail footprint—which includes R Mall Mulund and R Odeon—gives us a cross city perspective on catchment behaviour and category performance. We'll keep using that intelligence to make our flagship stronger and our neighbourhood hub more useful, one considered decision at a time.

Our vision is clear: to set the benchmark for Indian retail through destinations that are loved by customers, trusted by brands and run with the discipline of long term owners. That's the journey we're on at Runwal Reality – Retail. And we're just getting started.





TREND ANALYSIS

Beyond Demographics: Cracking the Code of Shopper Behaviour

In today's retail landscape, particularly within shopping malls, consumer understanding has grown far more complex—and crucial—than ever before. Traditional segmentation based on age, gender, or income is no longer enough. Shoppers aren't just demographics; they are dynamic decision-makers whose intent shifts in real time. Enter the Behaviour Graph.

The Behaviour Graph is a live, data-driven model that maps shoppers' actions, preferences, and paths capturing not who they are on paper, but what they are actually doing. Unlike static demographic models, it provides moment by moment insights into intent, enabling malls to personalise experiences, optimise operations, and boost conversions.

At its core, the Behaviour Graph connects the dots across touchpoints: foot traffic, app use, purchases, dwell time in zones, even contextual cues like weather or time of day. Taken together, these micro signals reveal the true motivations behind a visit or purchase.

From Guesswork to Precision

Historically, malls assumed teenagers meant fashion, families meant food courts. But two shoppers of the same age and income can have entirely different journeys—one browsing gaming consoles, the other stocking up on organics. Behaviour Graphs cut through these assumptions, enabling precise engagement.

Real-World Impact

Metro Square Mall implemented such a

system by layering footfall sensors, app analytics, Wi-Fi, and POS data. They discovered passersby ignored a premium sportswear store—except those who entered often spent big. A geo-targeted push campaign was launched: anyone walking within 20 feet received a personalised offer. The outcome? 38% higher footfall and 22% bigger basket sizes in three months.

New Dimensions of Engagement

Personalised Offers: Rewarding coffee lovers after bookstore visits.

Optimised Layouts: Adjusting zoning based on time-based drop-offs.

Dynamic Signage: Promoting kids' activities when families dominate foot traffic.

Smarter Loyalty: Incentivising not just purchases but app interactions and exploration.

Ethics First

Such power demands responsibility. Privacy, consent, and transparency must sit at the core. Shoppers need to know what's being collected and why, and opt-in features should be standard. Compliance with GDPR, DPDP, and regional data laws is non-negotiable.

The Future Is Behavioural

As malls shift from being pure shopping centres to lifestyle and experience destinations, behaviour-based intelligence will reshape retail. Expect AI-powered recommendations, AR navigation, and predictive tenant mix decisions—all driven by real-time shopper journeys.



MARKET TRENDS

Why the Marketing Team Needs an AI Strategy — Now



In the fast-changing world of retail, marketing has always been about understanding customers, catching their attention, and convincing them to visit and spend. But over the past few years, the rules have shifted. Shoppers are more informed, competition from e-commerce is fierce, and attention spans are shorter than ever. One technology is now redefining how malls can engage and retain customers: **Artificial Intelligence (AI)**. For shopping malls, adopting AI is no longer about being “tech-savvy” — it’s about survival and growth. The malls that use AI well will pull ahead, while those that don’t risk losing relevance. The reason is simple: AI gives marketing teams a sharper lens to see customer behaviour, act faster, and create experiences that feel personal to every visitor.

Think about the challenge of understanding your shoppers. Traditionally, you might rely on footfall counters, surveys, or occasional sales data. These methods give a broad picture but often miss the details that make marketing truly effective. AI changes that. By analysing loyalty card swipes,

purchase history, and even time spent in different zones of the mall, AI can reveal patterns you wouldn’t notice otherwise. It might tell you that weekday evenings attract office-goers looking for quick purchases, while weekends bring in families for entertainment and dining. That knowledge allows you to design different promotions for different groups — a “Quick Bite & Shop” weekday offer for busy professionals, and a “Family Fun Combo” on weekends.

Up, Close & Personal

Personalization like this used to be impossible at a large scale. But AI can now send targeted messages to thousands of shoppers at once, based on their preferences and behaviour. Imagine a customer who often visits sports stores getting a push notification: “Your favourite sneakers are 20% off at XYZ Sports today — just 100m from you.” Or a family visiting the cinema receiving a bundled food offer right before the film starts. These small, timely nudges create stronger connections and higher spending. AI isn’t just about delivering offers; it can also guide the planning behind them. Before launching a “Back to School” campaign, for example, AI can analyse past sales trends, social media chatter, and even weather forecasts to suggest the best timing and product focus. If the data shows that demand for school shoes spikes exactly two weeks before schools reopen, you can plan promotions to hit that window perfectly.

It also brings agility to marketing. In the past, campaign materials had to be prepared well in advance. Now, AI allows you to respond instantly to real-world events. If a sudden rainstorm starts, AI connected to weather data can trigger instant promotions for hot beverages, rain gear, or indoor play zones. If a certain section of the mall has low foot traffic, AI can recommend a “Flash Sale” in nearby stores and push the offer to shoppers already in the building.

Ai In Action – How Malls are Already using it



Smart Footfall Insights – AI analyses entry gate camera feeds to predict peak visitor hours so events or sales can be timed for maximum impact.

Personalized Offers via Mall App – A kids wear shopper gets: “20% off at ABC Kids wear – valid for the next 2 hours only.”

Real-Time Weather Promotions – Sudden rain? Instant push: “Cozy up with hot chocolate – Buy 1, Get 1 Free today!”

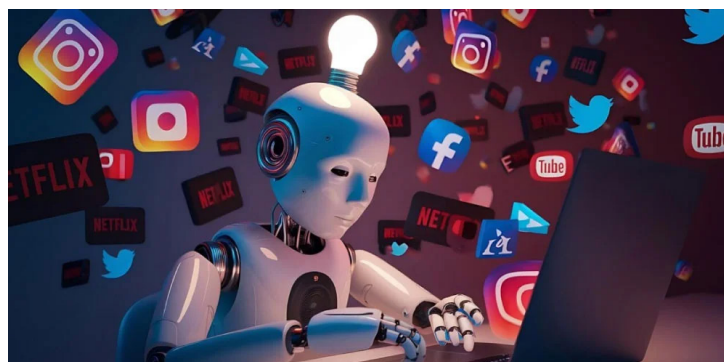
Social Media Trend Spotting – AI sees rooftop selfies going viral, prompting a #MallMoments contest.

Chatbots for Instant Help – A visitor asks for the baby changing room location on WhatsApp; AI replies instantly with a map link.

Social First

Social media, a key channel for mall marketing, also benefits from AI. These tools can scan which posts perform best, spot trending hashtags, and even suggest or auto-generate engaging captions. If AI notices that festival performance videos are outperforming static images, you can quickly shift your content strategy. It can also perform sentiment analysis – picking up early signals if customers are unhappy about something like parking – allowing the mall to respond before a problem escalates. For many malls, the biggest competition isn’t just the mall down the road – it’s online shopping. E-commerce platforms have been using AI for years to recommend products, adjust pricing dynamically, and target customers with laser precision. Physical malls can fight back by using AI to make the in-person shopping experience just as personalized and data-driven, but with the added value of entertainment, dining, and the social buzz that online stores can’t match.

Another advantage is operational efficiency. Marketing budgets are rarely unlimited, so AI can help teams get more done with less. Instead of spending hours manually compiling reports, AI can automatically create dashboards showing sales patterns, visitor trends, and campaign performance. AI chatbots can answer visitor queries – like store timings or ongoing offers – instantly on WhatsApp or the mall’s website, freeing up the marketing team to focus on creative work.



Getting Ahead with Technology

Getting started with AI doesn't require massive budgets or a team of data scientists. The first step is to audit the data you already have — from loyalty programs, store POS systems, and social media analytics. Then, pick one pilot project to test, such as AI-powered personalized notifications through your mall app, or automated social media scheduling. Affordable tools like Canva (for quick designs), ChatGPT (for content ideas), and Sprout Social (for analytics) can be great starting points. Once you see results, you can expand AI use into campaign planning, loyalty targeting, or real-time in-mall engagement.

In the end, AI is not about replacing the

human touch that makes mall marketing special. It's about enhancing it — helping you reach the right customer, with the right message, at the right time. It takes the guesswork out of decision-making, so the creative energy of the marketing team can be focused where it truly matters: building memorable experiences that keep shoppers coming back.

For shopping malls, the right time to embrace AI is not "someday." It's today. The faster the marketing team develops a clear AI strategy, the sooner they can turn data into action, ideas into impact, and visits into loyal relationships. In the retail race of the future, AI isn't the finishing line — it's the starting block.



We welcome your feedback at
editormt2008@gmail.com



REDESIGNING RELEVANCE

If You Can't Measure It, You Can't Fix It: The Case for F&B Performance Audits To Guide Better Lease Planning



In India's shopping malls, food and beverage (F&B) performance is too often treated as a black box. Sales are assumed, rents are negotiated, and decisions are made reactively—usually only when issues like declining footfall, rent abatement requests, or rising vacancies become unavoidable. The problem is not a lack of ambition; it's a lack of visibility. Without robust auditing and market analysis, even the most well-intentioned F&B strategies risk underperforming. In our F&B planning work for the shopping mall sector over the last 20+ years, we've uncovered that 85% of shopping malls have unbalanced F&B mixes which are impacting sales and rental return, of which many are what we call "under-footed" with strong development opportunities, while others require a more strategic rebalancing of F&B locations throughout the mall.

Our industry survey revealed that while every respondent tracks sales per square metre

and occupancy costs, far fewer measure performance by cuisine type, footfall conversion ratios, or tenant turnover. Even more concerning, only a minority incorporate customer satisfaction as a regular KPI. This narrow focus on base metrics misses critical insights into what actually drives long-term value.

Consider cuisine mix. Only one in three centres currently track performance at the cuisine level—despite repeated complaints of misalignment between trade area demand & operator supply. Without granular data, developers are left guessing which formats should be expanded, restructured, or phased out. Similarly, measuring customer spend per head or dwell time within dining zones is rare, even though these are direct indicators of whether the F&B offering is optimising customer engagement.

From simple strategic changes to tenancy mix during regular lease renewal processes, to expanding F&B GLA to capture unspent F&B rupee, there are many unique opportunities that can be identified to grow sales and improve rental performance of Malls around India.

Equally telling, 67% of respondents said they would most value expert support in trade area research, cuisine optimisation, & leasing strategy. This highlights recognition that internal data alone is insufficient.



SUZEE BRAIN
Director – Titanium Food

Benchmarking against competitors, assessing emerging trends, and identifying white space opportunities require external perspective and analytical rigour.

A structured F&B performance audit provides precisely that. It evaluates each tenant's sales-to-rent ratio, tracks customer spend and visitation, and benchmarks against both domestic and international comparables. When layered with market analysis—including trade area profiling, demographic shifts, and trend adoption rates—the audit transforms from a diagnostic tool into a strategic roadmap.

The benefits are significant. With robust auditing, centres can identify underperforming operators early, negotiate more effective lease structures, and proactively re-curate tenant categories. They can also build evidence-based business cases for refurbishments, repositioning, or introducing new formats like food halls, cloud kitchens, or experiential anchors. Audits also shine a light

on operational inefficiencies—highlighting, for example, whether delivery platforms are cannibalising dine-in sales, or whether customer demand is shifting to health-conscious, sustainable options.

Importantly, professional audits reduce risk. Too often, leasing decisions in India rely on intuition or competitive imitation. By contrast, a performance audit grounded in market realities ensures that each leasing or design decision is justified by data, not conjecture. In an environment where footfall is volatile and tenant turnover is high, this rigour is no longer optional.

The cost of inaction is clear: underperforming tenants, declining yields, & lost customer loyalty. But the opportunity is just as evident. With comprehensive audits and market analysis, F&B can become one of the strongest drivers of asset performance and differentiation.

The question for developers is simple: Do you have the visibility you need to make the right F&B decisions?

“Secret Source” Performance Appraisal

Example

SCORE 1 – Tenancy Performance



SCORE 2 – Tenant/Use Performance



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Ti Titanium Food



Industry News

Inorbit Mall Debuts In Hubballi

Inorbit Mall has launched its new property in Hubballi, spread over 5,00,000 sq. ft. across LG+5 levels. The mall features 117 retail brands, 25+ dining options, and a 7-screen multiplex with 1,700+ seats. With parking space for 500+ cars, the mall aims to be the city's premier destination for shopping, food, and entertainment, reaffirming Inorbit's vision of creating immersive lifestyle hubs across India.



Trent Ltd. CEO Mr. P. Venkatesalu Inaugurates Burnt Toast, First Mall Store at Korum Mall, Thane.



South India's first UNIQLO store is now open at Orion Mall, Brigade Gateway!



WARM WELCOME

Ozone Galleria Mall – Dhanbad's Retail Pioneer!

Spanning over 2.15 lakh sq. ft., Ozone Galleria Mall brings you 50+ retail stores, a hypermarket, multiplex, food court & fine dining. Shop from Pantaloons, Smart Bazar, Levi's, Adidas, UCB, Mama Earth & more. Enjoy KFC, Domino's, The Yellow Chilli, plus entertainment like PVR-INOX & Horror House. With Sonotel 4-star hotel on top, it's the city's ultimate leisure & lifestyle destination.

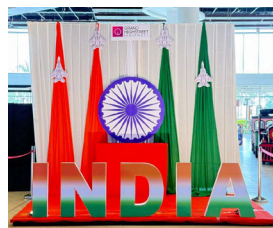




Event Watch

Independence Day Celebration In Malls

Grand High Street, Pune



Metro Junction Mall, Kalyan



Marina Mall, Chennai



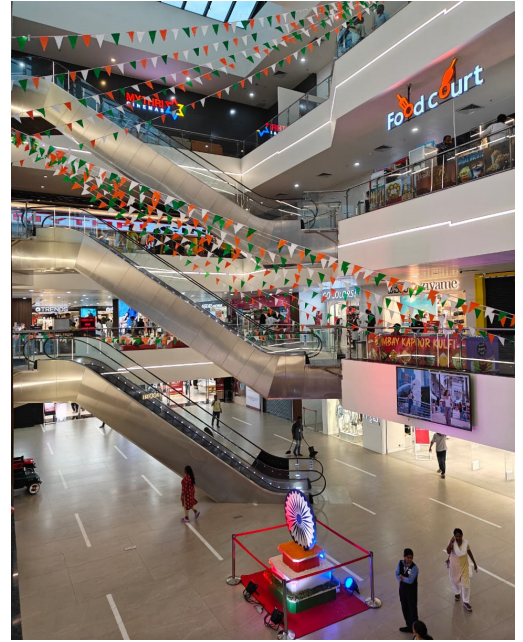
Tapadiya City Centre, Amravati



Vishal De Mall, Madurai



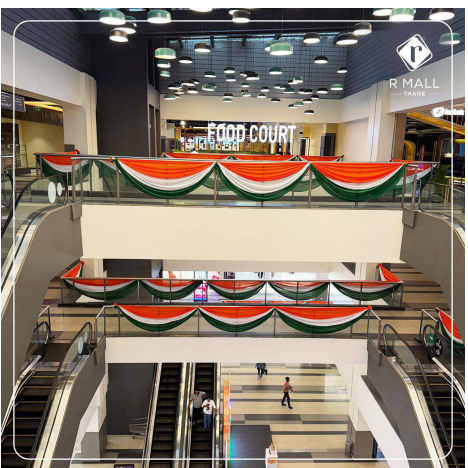
Varam Central Mall, Machilipatnam, AP



R city, Mumbai



R Mall Thane





SHOPPING CENTRES
ASSOCIATION OF INDIA

For More Information, Please Contact:

Sachin Nakti : +91 9029643729, sachinnatki@scai.in

Follow us: @scai08

