

CONFERENCE *The Store's* **Gwen Morrison** reports from WPP's Global Retail Forum

MIAMI: SOME of the Group's most provocative retail thought leaders joined 200 WPP agencies and clients from 13 countries at the 2017 WPP Global Retail Forum in May, with everyone focused on the theme 'Reimagine Retail.'

With data and technology impacting the ways consumers experience brands, the pressure is on to make emotional connections at retail. Digital allows us to redefine shopping moments but also demands that we rethink what's at the heart of customer relationships. As brick and mortar retail in developed markets goes through a 'right size' tsunami, there will also be more emphasis on embedding new technologies into physical stores to stay relevant.

Retailers and brands need to deliver connected shopping experiences in an increasing complex environment. Yet they also need to have purpose and resonate emotionally with their core consumer. Presenters urged new approaches to address evolving retail formats and new shopper mindsets, emphasizing that in a digital world physical retail must be more immersive and enriching.

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Participants were treated to a view of the not so distant future, where sensors and data are ushering in AI-driven decision-making. J. Walker Smith of Kantar Futures explained how these new innovations will fundamentally change the path to purchase and how consumers will browse, decide and shop.

With temporary retail on the rise, The Store introduced a new collaboration with VML, Barrows and Samsung, who unveiled a new 'Connected Pop-Up' store system. This 'Plug and Play' will be available to WPP clients this summer (see Bulletin, page 3).

Kantar Retail's Bryan Gildenberg encouraged CPG brands and retailers to 're-wire' the core 4Ps of marketing – product, promotion, placement and price for the new digitally-enabled shopper. Zac Kraemer of VML described today's connected shopper as a mindset, rather than a generation.

The mandate to reimagine retail



Bottom row (left to right): Cheryl Grishkewich, Loblaw Companies Limited; Hermann Behrens, FITCH; Patricia Paiva, Coca-Cola; Todd Szahun, Geometry Global; Jill Orr, Triad Retail Media; Claire Capeci, J. Walter Thompson; Bob Thacker, formerly of Target and OfficeMax; Gwen Morrison, The Store; Lorenzo Vallone, Mirum; Aleka Karachalios, Dell; Andy Heddle, VML; Dave Marcotte, Kantar Retail – Top row (left to right): Ricardo Leme Lopes, Geometry Global; Logan Freedman, Take 5 Media Group; Zac Kraemer, VML; Melinda Myhre, The Store; Vishal Shah, Instagram; Jon Bird, VML

Joe Lampertius of Grey Shopper brought Amazon 'Insiders' together to share how they will continue to innovate and evolve how consumers will purchase through subscription, replenishment and discovery.

Catalyst's Kieley Taylor presented actionable tips for driving business results through social media. Social in retail was further described by a panel on the 'Convergence of Commerce and Content.' J. Walter Thompson, Triad Retail Media and Instagram discussed how marketers need to weave brand stories into social and other platforms of influence. Jill Orr from Triad's London office shared a range of shoppable media that has disrupted retail as we knew it.

Mindshare's client, Target, presented its 'Target Guest Access' which leverages data and technology to deliver incremental value through their new platform and has the ability to share data in real time for contextually relevant messaging.

Dave Marcotte of Kantar Retail demonstrated the acceleration of change in the Latin American markets and how retailers there are consolidating. Geometry Brazil and Coca-Cola talked about the challenges of shopper marketing in LatAm while MUV co-presented with fashion retailer, Privalia, on how it drives engagement and transactions primarily on their mobile app.

Hermann Behrens of FITCH appealed to retailers and brands to respond to the core emotions of consumers, creating experiences that are meaningful, memorable and generous. He noted that not only is this the right thing to do, there are financial rewards for brands that create powerful human experiences.

A longer version of this article is available in *The WIRE* online: wire.wpp.com