



Shopping experience set to change with 'retailtainment' in North West

Warrington-based fit out specialist Morris and Spottiswood is predicting a significant change in the look, feel and experience of the North West's high street shops in the year ahead as retailers revamp their stores and inject the 'wow factor' in response to competition from online shopping and consumer demand for more 'retailtainment'.

"Shopping is increasingly becoming a social and leisure pastime and we are seeing a steady rise in demand from leading retailers looking to redesign and revamp their stores to accommodate a range of in-store entertainment activities aimed at keeping customers shopping longer by making the experience fun and engaging for the whole family," says Chris Saxton, managing director of the fit out division at Morris and Spottiswood, one of Britain's largest shopfitters. He claims shoppers are now looking for a 'friendly', 'open' and 'interactive' in-store shopping experience and astute retailers are responding to this with new features as a way of maintaining competitive advantage.

"These typically range from in-store, theatre-style Continental coffee bars aimed at attracting younger consumers to meet up with friends over a cappuccino, to interactive toy and sporting departments where shoppers can test drive the products.

Large supermarket chains are also recognising that while customers are spending an average three per cent of their waking hours shopping in stores, these retailers can keep people in stores longer by improving their retail experience with special features such as crèches, specialised boutiques and interactive display areas.

The rise of internet shopping has also changed the high street's traditional role, he adds. "Popular though online shopping is, most people agree that it's no substitute for the actual experience of going into a shop and having the opportunity to see and touch the goods," says Chris. "Far from spelling the death knell for the high street, for many businesses the growth of internet retailing has provided a real opportunity by making it even more essential that they have a high street outlet providing an effective showcase for customers to touch, feel, sample and test-drive their products."

Ends

Photo: Chris Saxton, new managing director of fit out at Morris and Spottiswood.

Editor's note: *Morris and Spottiswood is a leading provider of fit out and maintenance services to the retail, banking, commercial, education and healthcare sectors across North West England and Scotland. Established in 1925, the company is Britain's third largest shopfitter.*

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