

3 consumer trends to keep an eye on in 2019

The third annual RCS Retail Summit - held in Cape Town and Johannesburg - featured three industry experts who presented their takes on the latest trends shaping consumer behaviour within a South African context.



From left: Deven Moodley, Warren Owen, Nicolas Diacono, Dion Chang and Rudi Visser

RCS retail partnerships executive Deven Moodley says that South African companies that understand and respond to the rapid shift in consumer trends quickly will gain an advantage over competitors.

“Despite the emphasis on technical innovation at the summit, using technology does not guarantee you a competitive advantage. Companies that respond to the acute, consistent feedback loop created by the changing expectations of customers and stakeholders using technology, however, will be in a position to differentiate themselves from other players,” he says.

Moodley has summarised the talks into three unmissable consumer trends.

High social justice barometer

In his keynote address, Flux Trends analyst Dion Chang identified a number of broad ‘tribes’ that are warping our world, the most significant of which are the youth: Generation Z (nine to 18 years) and Generation Alpha (aged 0 to 8).

What he termed disruptors in human form, Chang believes this group of people are challenging the way the world operates. He said that their naturally high social justice barometer is spawning activism against everything from gender inequality and political injustice to climate change inaction.

Responsible businesses – that use technology to support causes that resonate with Generation Z; give back to the community; are environmentally responsible; are taking a stand on important social issues – will be well received by this generation of people.



Dion Chang

Less AI, more eye to eye

According to Echangeur technological trends expert Nicolas Diacono, artificial intelligence (AI) continues to dominate tech investment and innovation globally – with investment expected to reach \$150bn in 2030 by the Chinese government alone.

In the face of this trend, brick and mortar stores will come under increased pressure as machines empower consumers to take control of their online shopping experience – unless retailers find innovative ways to merge online and offline and create customer loyalty by understanding how they engage with their brands.



What the latest technological innovation means for the future of retail

Maroefah Smith 2 Jul 2019



Mobility, connectedness and employee productivity

Closer to home, 2Way Systems MD Warren Owen explored the future of workforce mobility. Owen's presentation clarified the need to automate for the workforce, rather than automate the workforce; arguing that employees are a vital part of the feedback loop that leads to improved marketing – a process key to establishing a competitive advantage over competitors.

He says companies should seek to use technology in ways that improve mobility and connectedness while improving employee productivity.

The RCS Retail Summit was hosted by RCS, a South African provider of white-label consumer credit, and Echangeur, the customer trends and innovation unit of European Bank BNP Paribas Personal Finance.

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