

Omnichannel and innovation highlighted at Beyond Retail

The UCS Solutions Beyond Retail 2015 conference, which took place recently in Joburg and Cape Town, provided challenging insights with a line-up of speakers that encompassed established and new pioneers in the retail industry, with special focus on embracing omnichannel and innovation. The event took a look at not only the speed of change, but also the intrinsic kind of change happening in the retail industry today.



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Omnichannel retailing is defined as the use of a variety of channels in a customer's shopping experience, including research before a purchase. Such channels include retail stores, online stores, mobile stores, mobile app stores, telephone sales and any other method of transacting with a customer. Omnichannel retailing is, therefore, clearly the future of retail in South Africa.

Taking up this theme, the conference was opened by Colin Fleming, Group E-commerce Executive at Massmart, whose presentation on Rethinking the Value Proposition highlighted the synthesis of experience, digital, e-commerce and IT. Peter Allerstorfer, founding partner of Silvertree Capital, followed up with an in-depth look at what makes a winning online business. The third speaker, the Head of Online and Mobile Business of Pick n Pay, Mike Cotterell, took the delegates on Pick n Pay's fulfilment journey before Justin Drennan, CEO and co-founder of Parcelninja, gave his presentation on disruptive online fulfilment models. Digitising Bricks and Mortar Commerce in a Mobile Economy was presented by Andre de Wet, CEO of PriceCheck, who focussed on how the cellphone is changing shopping forever. The conference was wrapped up by a discussion on the challenge to innovate by Professor Jon Foster-Pedley, Dean and Director of the Henley Business School.

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