



Erasing the line between clicks and bricks – What to expect at ICSC RECon 2018 - by Diana Perry

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As we pull out our suitcases and pack them with comfy shoes (yet far more uncomfortable ones), a handful of chargers, our favorite neck pillow, suits, sunnies and our squished-face badge we are almost ready for the world's largest global CRE conference, ICSC RECon in fabulous Las Vegas.

I feel like so much has happened in the last year and ICSC needs to be quick to the draw to update the RECon show accordingly. In reflecting, I think of topics including, clicks to bricks, experiential retail, the unbelievable popularity of breweries/distilleries/wineries, the post department store era, Amazon acquiring Whole Foods, Amazon vs. Walmart, urban food markets, exaggerated and un-factual press over store closures, increased shopping center navigation, highlighting women in CRE, digital storefronts, AR/VR, and utilizing social media, particularly Instagram. But instead of projecting what to expect, I reached out to Shannon Troy, media relations manager of ICSC to get the full scoop on all of the happenings at RECon 2018. Below are some of the top things to check out at the show.

Troy mentioned the debut of a new Innovation Exchange expo which will span both Monday and Tuesday. The expo she said is, “dedicated to the cutting-edge technology that is shaping experiential retail and erasing the line between clicks and bricks.” According to Shopping Centers Today April edition, ICSC president, Tom McGee mentioned that some of the new tech includes artificial intelligence, virtual reality, big data collection and robotics. I certainly look forward to catching some of the live demos and speaker sessions and soaking up all I can about anything new tech.

Another area to investigate is the RECon SPREE exhibition, made of e-tailers looking to open bricks and mortar stores. Perhaps one of them could be the next to fill one of your pop-up vacancies.

Set some time aside in between pool party hopping and checking in on your booth construction to catch, “Online to Offline: Digitally Native Brands and their Expansion into Brick & Mortar,” a session taking place on Sunday, May 20th. One of the speakers includes my friends over at The News Funnel along with Fifth Wall Ventures out of L.A. The insightful description reads, “Since 2012, the number of new stores being opened by digitally native vertical brands (DNVB) has grown in excess of 100% annually, showing that the future of retail is truly omni-channel.” I think one of the most fascinating things about this session will be the education on how to reformat leases for these emerging brands that are new to bricks and mortar.

Be sure you dress to impress at the lunch keynote presentation on Tuesday with co-founder of Rent the Runway, Jennifer Fleiss. I highly admire this brand and concept and am a frequent flyer with them. I’m sure Jennifer will bring her innovation and energy to the stage as she talks about her clicks to bricks enterprise.

Look forward to seeing all of you at the ICSC RECon 2018 show and don’t forget, what happens in Vegas, ends up on social media.

Fun Fact: ICSC will be broadcasting via Facebook live during the show so if you can’t get out to sin city, you can still tune in.

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