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Social media olympians - Shopping centers taking medals in social

February 27, 2014 - Retail

With the buzz of the Olympics on everyone's mind, I thought it would be a perfect time to call out who (in my book) is taking home medals for shopping center social media. I've seen a big discrepancy between B2B social media marketing and B2C in our industry but many of those doing B2C are doing a great job; the B2B could use a bit more coaching. Below are examples of shopping centers to take note of. Whether you're involved in a center on the marketing, leasing, or management side, there is a lot you can learn here by following these centers to help give you inspiration for your own feeds and of course to learn what they're up to. I recently caught up with Sarah Wilson, leasing representative with The Wilder Companies, who is active on social media in her field. Sarah commented, "Being active on social media has evolved from free time to a useful tool for my job. It allows me to have eyes and ears inside properties across the country and get the real time buzz about local restaurants and store openings. Doing a great job on social isn't just in the numbers; it's in the quality of content and the conversation in these spaces that develops."

King of Prussia Mall -

Simon Malls

If you check out their website it screams social. Their homepage is setup almost like a Pinterest page showing many graphics that allow you to customize your view with filters including news & events, deals, social, and fashion. I've never seen another shopping mall do this before. On their social sites they have a good mix of content ranging from center and community events, retailer's new products, schedule updates, news items, trivia, thank you's and more. This Pennsylvania mall is active on Facebook, Twitter, FourSquare, Google+, Yelp, SyleSetter (Simon site), Instagram and TripAdvisor, all of which are listed on the homepage of their site. Their tenant list isn't the only thing impressive about this mall.

Atlantic Station - North

American Properties (NAP)

I learned quite a bit about this amazing shopping destination in Atlanta, GA at ICSC MOCIAL. With 1.5 million s/f of retail on 138-acres, this mixed-use development has a lot to talk about, and so do their 45,947 Facebook fans. Originally on the "Death Watch" list by local Atlanta real estate bloggers (prior to NAP acquiring the site), this center completely turned itself around and a huge part of getting their message out was via social. They knew that they needed to create a two-way street and gather insight from the community to improve the center and build meaningful relationships. It took a long time but the center did a complete 180 and retailers are now outperforming stores in their respective regions.

Union Market - EDENS

A bit more unique than your traditional shopping center - this year-round indoor market features 40 local and regional artisans, making up the culinary epicenter of the Capitol City, Washington, D.C. What stands out here is the extremely high level of engagement this epicenter has with its community. Each post of theirs has many likes, shares and comments - not an easy thing to achieve. I caught up with communications director at EDENS, Ryan Panitz and he said, "What I think makes this center unique from a social perspective is that for us, it's not about 'selling.' We are about building a community and the community doesn't always want to talk about the latest fashion trend or the 30% off sale. And what we are finding is that as we embed ourselves in the community conversations, more people want to engage with us including everyone from our neighbors to the Department of Interior to national and local media/bloggers."

The Street at Chestnut Hill -

WS Development

Based in Chestnut Hill, Mass. this 406,000 s/f development has gone through extensive renovation, development, and rebranding the last two years. Long stuck (for me) as another Chestnut Hill shopping mall, formerly "Chestnut Hill Shopping Center," they have become a separate destination and have really owned the market. My favorite thing about what The Street is doing is their Instagram feed, "shopthastreet." The feed exhibits a real local flavor filled with David's Tea - Tea of the Day, sunsets over the pond, snowmen, before and after photos, kids on Halloween and many others showing off this amazing center, its environment and community.

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