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WHAT THE CONSUMER REALLY WANTS!

Whenever consumers face uncertainty,
their behavior changes.
While retailers have learned
to be more innovative,
guardrails are needed.

INFLATION MANY RETAILERS FIND THEMSELVES UNABLE TO HANDLE NECESSARY INVESTMENTS ON THEIR OWN
INTERVIEW BIG ACROSS INTERVIEW ON JUSTIFIED CONSUMER FEARS AND CURRENT SUPPLY SHORTAGES
MAPIC 2022 SPECIAL EVENTS AND A FOCUS ON INNOVATION SHOULD INCREASE THE VALUE FOR PARTICIPANTS

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DEAR READER,

2022 was supposed to be a year that gave us a bit of a breather. In our January issue, industry representatives were reporting that it would certainly not be an easy year, but that a recovery was on the horizon following two years of crisis. This means that more long-term plans could finally be made.

However, just a few months later, everything has changed – again. The coronavirus crisis has yet to be resolved. Contrary to some predictions, supply chain problems are deteriorating again in view of the worsening situation in China. To make matters worse, a war is being waged in Europe. Our sympathy and support go out to the many victims, and we sincerely hope for an end to the war and swift reconstruction.

The situation in Ukraine is currently causing enormous uncertainty for European consumers. Inflation is on the rise and supply chain problems are intensifying yet again. Consumers are uncertain about what goods they can buy when and where and, above all, what they can still afford. “The positive experience that has been gained as a result of two years living in the midst of a pandemic is of no help in this regard,” says Stephan Rüschen, Professor of Food Retailing, in an interview with ACROSS (page 20). “Consumers simply do not trust generalized statements about supply security, so they act only in their own interests.” After two years of the pandemic, the self-interest of the consumer is precisely what confounds many retailers. While consumer research has yielded a wealth of insight into customer behavior during a global pandemic, many questions remain yet to be answered: What exactly do our new customers look like? What do they want? Where and how do they want it? On the one hand, the pandemic has shown that people want to shop, both quickly and safely, in a more scaled-down environment. The retail park success story demonstrates just that. On the other hand, there is a distinct, long-term trend toward more experience-oriented shopping. We would like to find solutions to this dichotomy. As such, this issue is devoted to consumer trends, including the much-cited “user experience”. On pages 16 to 61, you can read all about how market researchers perceive today’s customers, how shopping center operators and retailers are responding to these findings, and what they are planning for the future.

In 2022, there is one thing that will definitely be making a strong comeback: face-to-face meetings. MIPIM, the first major event of the year, has already taken place. Over the next few months, a number of conferences featuring exciting agendas are due to be held. The program of the largest industry gathering, MAPIC, which is scheduled to take place in November of this year, is also available – just in time for our new ACROSS issue. We spoke with MAPIC Director Francesco Pupillo about the need for conferences and trade shows, the changes that have occurred since the outbreak of the pandemic, and this year’s MAPIC program, complete with all of its highlights. You can read the full interview on page 86.

We hope you enjoy the latest issue of ACROSS.

Sincerely

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OPINION

Do You Have a Strategic Website? 8
PropTech Column by Peter Tonstad

Setting up for the Future in Times of Crisis 10
After months in crisis mode, many retailers now find themselves unable to handle necessary investments on their own, says Stefan Genth, Secretary General HDE

DEVELOPMENT

"Developers look for Game Changers" 13
Jorge Morgadinho, Reify's Managing Director, about the first business year of Sonae Sierra's new brand

COVER STORY

What the Consumer Really Wants 16
Whenever consumers face uncertainty, their behavior changes. At present, there are a number of reasons why they are doing so. While retailers have learned to be more innovative during times of uncertainty, guardrails are still needed

"Fear is Understandable" 20
Professor Stephan Rüschen talks about justified fears, current supply shortages, and why transparency is the order of the day for all retailers

"Consumer Trends - Do You Know the Latest Ones?" 24
The events of the last few years, increased transparency in general, and last but not least, technology and globalization have resulted in a new kind of customer

What Does the Shift in Consumer Behavior Mean for Retail Destinations? 26
Understanding detailed customer behavior and responding with specific values and services are no longer "extras"

People Want to Be Among Other People 28
Christoph Andexlinger, Chief Operations Officer SES Spar European Shopping Centers, talks about how brick-and-mortar retail locations can continue to be successful in the future

Why Shopping Centers, in Particular, Need Professional Event Management 30
Shopping centers and their tenants will only be able to leverage the potential of brick-and-mortar store spaces if a significantly modified fundamental approach is adopted

Making the Most of Customer Shopping Journeys 34
Integrating online with offline elements through PropTech partnerships is the path to maintaining a leading position, according to NEPI



Technology Trends Should Be Retail Trends 36
The extent to which retailers can satisfy the need of their customers significantly depends on the technology they utilize and master.

How Are Shopping Center Managers Working toward Enhancing the User Experience? 38
Focusing on continuously enhancing the user experience is a prerequisite for success. Three strategies can be adopted



Globetrotters of Consumer Society 41
Sustainability and digitalization are currently shaping the oft-cited customer journey in many respects

Collaboration is Key to Rebuilding the Retail Ecosystem 46
"Le 31" has become a model for Redevco's vision on how to redefine retail and create a connected community of stores, partners, and visitors

Spotlight on Customer Experience – The Food Retailer's Perspective 50
Customer experience has become even more important to grocery retailers since the pandemic. Consumers are increasingly concerned with the quality and origin of food.

Less Money, Same Value 54
Uncertainty is not the only thing that has led to cost cutting. Consumers have also sought out better value for clothing and goods in response to the cost-of-living crunch

Together: A Silver Lining for Retail Spaces 55
In order to become the "center of the community", retail spaces have to offer public services that people want and need, as well as opportunities for people to come together and build community

"Attention" is our ticket to post-COVID success 58
The hospitality industry is facing enormous challenges after the severe lockdown restrictions caused by the Corona pandemic and now unprecedented inflation

Improving the Customer Experience Through the Lens of Data 60
Data helps when it comes to making better decisions. PropTech enables landlords to connect using such data

RETAIL

Retail Trends That Are Shaping 2022 62
The ACROSS editorial team and our ACROSS board members have pinpointed eight trends that have proven to be real over the past six months and are shaping the industry

Grow Every Day@Calienna 70
Retail Shop Tip by Heidemarie Kriz

FOOD & BEVERAGES

Food Hall Revolution in Poland 71
Food halls contradict the traditional real estate model. However, they are a successful format attracting all generations



INVESTMENT

"Complete Predictability Is an Illusion" 74
Immofinanz Board Member Dietmar Reindl about the resilience of retail relationships, the need for more service, and the company's expansion plans.

"We Are Long-term Partners" 78
Hay Galis, CEO of BIG Shopping Centers, spoke with ACROSS about his expansion plans as well as customer and tenant needs

RESEARCH

"The Transition Has Not Been Completed" 82
Stationary retail can learn a lot from the European E-commerce Report 2021

EVENTS

MAPIC 2022: "It Is All About Connecting Players" 86
In times of transformation, we have to guide people better and more intensively, says MAPIC-Director Francesco Pupillo



EuroCIS 2022 90
The theme of EuroCIS 2022 is: "Tomorrow is the new today!". The leading trade fair for retail technology will take place in Düsseldorf from May 31 to June 2, 2022

Where the Industry Meets 92
Upcoming events in 2022