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A TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADER  
OF THE MODERN TIMES

## ROSEMARIE BOSCH-ONG

SEVP AND COO, WILCON DEPOT INC.  
PRESIDENT, PRA

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2023 OUTSTANDING FILIPINO  
RETAILERS (OFR) AWARDS  
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THE FUTURE OF RETAIL:  
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## Letter from the EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Wow, what a night! Our recent Outstanding Filipino Retailers Awards (special edition) was a night to remember as the country's movers and shakers of retail gathered together to honor our outstanding retailers who survived and thrived thru resiliency, innovation, and concern for the environment during the pandemic years. We all know how retail struggled during those times. Bur thru sheer grit, and concern for their employees and their communities, they rose above the challenges and difficulties. That alone is already a badge of honor that every retailer -- big or small -- can proudly wear on their sleeves.



As your association, we were with you every step of the way during those pandemic years---providing knowledge and information, assistance, and representation to help you navigate the situation and prepare you for the new normal. We all healed as one!

Congratulations to all the winners and we also salute our Special Awards recipients ---- Ayala Malls, Robinsons Malls, and SM Supermalls --- for being the retailers' "crucible" that helped them "fight another day" Here's to more victories for retailers!

\*\*\*\*

As you may know, the PRA -- represented by our Vice Chairman Bobby Claudio (Toby's Sports) -- is at the forefront of lobbying for the VAT Exemption for foreign tourists. The bills are getting traction and with the blessings of President Bongbong Marcos, we hope this will move forward faster so that our country as a whole can benefit from a potential increase in tourism and tourist shopping. Once everything is already in place, we urge our retailers to participate in this program and help boost our tourism. 🙏

Evelyn Balmeo-Salire  
Editor-In-Chief

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# ROSEMARIE BOSCH-ONG:

## A TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADER OF THE MODERN TIMES

Navigating leadership is challenging enough but Rosemarie Bosch-Ong is a class in herself for handling two positions of leadership and responsibility during the toughest of times.

BY: GRACE C. DIEZ | EDITED BY: MAYAN SANGIL

**As Wilcon Depot Inc.'s SEVP (Senior Executive Vice President) and COO (Chief Operating Officer), as well as the Philippine Retailers Association (PRA) President, Rosemarie Bosch-Ong, had to muster her wit, intelligence, patience, and strength to steer the organizations she leads to not only survive but also to thrive amid rough waters.**

A look at Bosch-Ong's background enables one to understand how the indefatigable executive manages to steer two organizations with grace and sincere concern for the welfare of the people she serves and leads.

Bosch-Ong has an educational background in Economics and began her career at Wilcon Depot Inc. as a Purchasing Manager way back in the '80s. She steadily climbed the corporate ladder, meeting various types of workers and people in the company, before reaching her position as SEVP and COO. The journey provided insights and empathy that she would later be able to tap into for her leadership roles.

She shares a quick look at her experience which guided her journey.

"I learned the ropes at Wilcon as I rose from the ranks. When you talk of retail, it's all about service and engaging with the customers. It's not just about selling products, there's also an aspect of providing service. Na-develop iyong experience ko of dealing with people," Bosch-Ong says.

She further elucidates on this by connecting how their work at Wilcon is retail-oriented but is somehow also connected to a basic need—shelter.


"Selling is all about relationships and retail is about serving the needs of the market. The very basic needs are food, clothing, and shelter. Homes are under shelter so I'm in the business of knowing what the needs are, what are essential and important to people. We're basically addressing a basic need," she adds.

That said, retail is very close to Bosch-Ong's heart. She sees market conditions and the landscape through the lens of someone who worked from humble beginnings all the way to being on top. As a retailer, she is always on the lookout for trends and development in the industry. She's been the President of the Philippine Retailers Association (PRA) for almost five years (since 2018) now and prior to leading the organization, she's been with the PRA board since 2009.

### Transformational Leadership

Because of Bosch-Ong's concurrent roles in two highly respected organizations, a lot might wonder how she does it. When asked about her leadership style, she explains how it all depends on what the organization requires of her.





"It depends on the situation. For example, when Wilcon was still a small company, you have to make sure that you protect the assets of the company and ensure that you deliver its goals and objectives. Basically, I'm a transformational leader in the sense that I'm always trying to look for improvements. I always try to look for ways to elevate, you don't just stay in status quo," she explains.

According to her, a transformational leader is identified with change and creates a vision to guide the change through influence, inspiration, and execution.

"It's more of elevating the organization. You always induce to make positive changes," the PRA President states. "When dealing with transformation, you want to evolve, grow and get better. And that's my goal also with PRA. Marami na ring reforms implemented when it comes to structure. Similar to Wilcon as a young company, there's an effort to structure things and to look at and lay the foundations for the different aspects of the business. PRA is already strong with that already, so we implemented improvements, and you want the members to build on that and make them feel that the organization is there to help them," she adds.

### Leading during a time of pandemic

Her transformative leadership was tested on both organizations when the challenges of the pandemic came rolling in, engulfing industries with problems they have never faced and took on before. But as they say, the true test of a leader happens during a crisis.

The last three years called for a strategic shift to digitization and Bosch-Ong and her team delivered the retail innovations needed. Among these innovations are the Wilcon Browse, Call and Collect/Deliver and Personal Shoppers where Wilcon introduced a variety of effective shopping options to customers; the optimized Wilcon Depot website and social media channels which provided home tips, renovation, and improvement ideas as well as a Viber community for customers to have access to exciting offers, promotions, lifestyle inspirations and more; the Wilcon Depot loyalty App also earned points and rewards to loyal customers; the launch of Wilcon Online Store for home shopping experience for customers nationwide as well as a Virtual Reality Store Experience.

Bosch-Ong recalls the difficult yet transformative years that propelled them to adapt to the digital era.

"It's really about being adaptive, resilient, agile, and fast. When you're in a crisis, you have to be decisive and really make those decisions quickly even though everything was experimental at the time. Similarly, for PRA, I really pushed for digitization in our transformation because we want to be relevant to the members. We want the members to feel that we are there to support them," the executive shares. Bosch-Ong also emphasized the importance of being on the ground and aware of the current conditions affecting the people and the customers.

"It's important that as a leader, consultative ka and aware. You have to be collaborative. With that, you get the cooperation of all the members. We have to accept that leadership is dependent on people who support you. You can't achieve things on your own. A tree will not bear fruits without its branches. You need people to pull you and push you up," she generously shares this piece of wisdom. Under Bosch-Ong's tutelage, Wilcon was able to keep up with the latest trends which enables her to know the market pulse and bring something new to the table. Among these new offerings are materials and brands that promote environmental sustainability, energy, and cost-efficiency as well as innovative technology that are eco-friendly.

### Inclusive Leadership: Empowering Women and People to Thrive

Leading one big organization is challenging, but for Bosch-Ong, managing two was an even greater feat. However, taking on the role of PRA President presented a particularly tough challenge when she first started. "When I first became President, it was a particularly challenging time because the PRA was already an established organization. I had to navigate my new role while also breaking down boundaries," Bosch-Ong reflects.

"The most difficult part was figuring out how to deliver results, knowing that I had big shoes to fill. The past PRA Presidents were all accomplished and had steered the organization to greater heights," she thoughtfully adds. Bosch-Ong is often described as the "iron lady" in the business world, and for good reason. She has thrived in male-dominated industries like construction and retail, as well as in organizations like PRA, which were predominantly led by men. Her success can be attributed to her healthy mindset and determination to break down barriers and empower women in these industries. Rather than perceiving male dominance as an obstacle, she regards it as a challenge and a chance to effect meaningful change.

"It's not about being a female. It's about what you can bring to the table. What's important is what you can deliver and you just have to do your best regardless of your gender. It's about your competencies and more about being goal-focused, having a vision, and knowing how to execute and transform these into reality," she explains.

She lives by an important principle that she applies both at work and in her personal life.

"I believe in the law of harvest: you reap what you sow. It's quite connected with the golden rule and equality and fairness. You always live in a balance, doing good and right. When you do good things, you reap good things. It's really more about hard work, perseverance, and doing the best that you can," she pensively shares, adding that to live and lead that way, everything just follows. Positivity begets positivity.

Bosch-Ong's positive leadership style prioritizes empowerment and growth. This has been especially evident in her leadership of the PRA Secretariat, where she has empowered people to take on leadership roles even during the most challenging times. By trusting her team and delegating responsibilities, she has created an engaged and motivated workforce, contributing to the organization's success and fostering a culture of empowerment and growth.

### Moving Forward with PRA

In her leadership at PRA over the years, the moments she values and finds memorable are the ones that involved engaging with the over 400 members such as when they hold big events, retail shows, learning sessions with the members, and them working together hand-in-hand. Bosch-Ong is also quite grateful that she works with a dynamic board as they learn from one another.

When asked about what she considers her important achievement and milestones as PRA President, Bosch-Ong humbly responded with a milestone that centers on the people.

"I think the biggest achievement was representing the retail industry, especially during and after the pandemic. Being their voice during forums and how to help them, being part of the technical working group, being consulted, and being the voice of the members," she beams. Bosch-Ong is especially proud of pushing forward with the NRCE (National Retail Conference and Expo), the biggest retail show experience in the Philippines despite all the challenges. It was a testament to her role as a decisive and transformative leader.

"We still continued with the programs. We can't just sit and watch the world go by," she declares.

As the PRA under Bosch-Ong's leadership intends to move forward in the recovery phase, the President's vision remains consistent: to steer the organization to greater heights, professionalize the secretariat and help Philippine retailers become globally competitive and propel the country as the ultimate retail and shopping destination in Asia. She urges the members to work together for these visions.

"Filipinos are known to be resilient and adaptive. There is no challenge that we can't face together. The Bayanihan is alive, tried, and tested during the pandemic by how we supported and helped each other. As an organization, it's important that we collaborate and support each other as we give our best talent and our time in helping our industry reach greater heights," she concludes with renewed optimism. ☺

## GOLDEN ABC INC. ANNOUNCES MS. ALICE LIU AS PRESIDENT AND COO

*GOLDEN ABC Inc. (GABC) has appointed its Chief Retail Officer Ms. Alice T. Liu as the President and Chief Operating Officer effective March 2023. The announcement was made by GABC Chairman and CEO Mr. Bernie H. Liu during a company event held recently at Solaire Resort and Casino.*

Ms. Liu has been with the company since 1988 and has served as GABC's Chief Retail Officer since 2019. She holds a Bachelor's degree in Management from the Ateneo de

Manila University and completed the Key Executives Program of Harvard Business School in 2006.

"Through the years, she has consistently exemplified excellence and has been a driving force not only for GABC but for the fashion retail industry. We look forward to more milestones as Ms. Liu continues to steer GABC forward as a company that is building brands for the world," said Mr. Bernie Liu. 📧



## WILCON DEPOT, NOW BIGGER AND BOLDER—OPENED ITS 85TH STORE IN ROSARIO, BATANGAS

*The Philippines' leading retailer of home improvement and construction supplies, Wilcon Depot has successfully opened its 85th home construction retail outlet in Rosario, Batangas.*

As a trusted building partner, Wilcon Depot continues its store expansion in different areas and regions, including Batangas, where it will launch its 5th branch on March 31, 2023, in Barangay Baybayin, Rosario, Batangas, following the success of stores in Batangas City, Lipa City, Lemery, and Sto. Tomas, Batangas.

The new Wilcon Depot store aims to provide an extensive selection of high-quality products and exceptional customer service, catering to the increasing demand for home improvement solutions in the growing municipality of Rosario and its neighboring areas.

Rosario, Batangas is a first class municipality and one of the oldest towns in Batangas. It is strategically located with its access to vital cities and municipalities. This makes Rosario an ideal location for Wilcon Depot to expand its retail operations and reach more customers in the region.

The company has continuously offered high-quality products and services through its exclusive brands and in-house brand such as Pozzi, trusted bathroom solutions; Grohe, Plumbing solutions; Rubi, a partner when it comes to tile cutting necessities; Hamden, an ideal partner for your kitchen needs; Alphalux, an energy-efficient lighting solutions brand; Grespania, a high-quality ceramics Spanish tiles; Herberia, an Italian tile brand for a lavish home interior; Kaze, an appliance that will make your space clean and healthy; Hills, a trusted brand for constructions and electrical necessities; and P.tech, your partner for reliable household necessities, and many more.

Valued customers can also shop online at Wilcon by visiting [shop.wilcon.com.ph/](http://shop.wilcon.com.ph/). Wilcon Depot also offers Browse, Call, and Collect or Deliver, and Wilcon Virtual Tour services to complement the in-store shopping experience. Homeowners and builders can also enjoy a more personalized and immersive shopping experience with its Virtual Reality Store Experience—The Wilcon VR Store Experience can take its customers into a new world of retail home shopping like never before.

Currently the company has 18 branches in Metro Manila and 67 stores in key cities and municipalities of Luzon, Visayas, and Mindanao, wherein 76 are depot stores and 9 are home essentials stores.

This 2023, Wilcon Depot plans to open twelve (12) more retail stores as part of their company's #FlyingHighTo100 store expansion campaign, wherein the company aims to have 100 operating stores nationwide by 2025, barring any unexpected external factors.

The opening celebration opened with a motorcade in barangays near the new store. Wilcon's valued suppliers and industry partners also joined the motorcade. Wilcon Depot VP for Investor Relations, Mary Jean Alger and AVPs for Sales and Operations led a ribbon-cutting ceremony at the store, which was attended by government officials from Rosario and Batangas, valued suppliers, and media partners. 📧



*Wilcon Depot, the Philippines' leading home improvement and construction retailer, recently opened its 85th store in Rosario, Batangas, marking another milestone in Wilcon's ongoing expansion. The ribbon-cutting ceremony was led by (L-R) Wilcon Depot AVP for Sales and Operations Rowell Suarez, Desiree Cuervo, Erine Barja, Mariwasa Siam Ceramics, Inc. VP for Sales and Marketing Khun Pavaret Lila, Rosario Batangas Hon. Vice Mayor Atanacio Zara, Batangas 4th District Congresswoman Hon. Lianda Bolilla, Wilcon Depot VP for Investor Relations Mary Jean Alger, Rosario Batangas Hon. Mayor Leovigildo Morpe, Batangas Governor Hermilando Mandanas representative Kennedy Laroza, Wilcon Depot AVP for Sales and Operations Rubylyn Candelaria, Francisco Lazaro and Hany Cruz.*

# EXCITING FEATURES AWAIT AT ARANETA CITY'S GATEWAY MALL 2

*A new urban destination rises at the heart of Metro Manila -- Gateway Mall 2, the latest lifestyle offering of Araneta City!*

Covering more than 200,000 square meters of retail space, this highly-anticipated extension of the multi-awarded Gateway Mall provides additional choices for shopping, dining, entertainment, and leisure at the metro's pioneering commercial district. In line with Araneta City's long history of pioneering traditions, expect a new and improved mall experience in Gateway Mall 2. Get ready for its full opening and keep an eye on its exciting attractions.

## *Engaging design*

Gateway Mall 2's contemporary facade transforms into an urban oasis, with greens and water features, all set to put any visitor at ease. Grand columns of decorative light strips array the hallways to give the mall an indoor piazza vibe. From the ground floor, visitors will be greeted by The Lagoon. With its relaxing water feature and lush green surroundings, it serves as a beautiful centerpiece to the hard-to-miss array of popular food brands lines up along the mall's Restaurant Collection.

A must-see feature can be spotted at the mall's spacious atrium. It has a ceiling powered by a 700-square-meter LED-activated Quantum Skyview -- a first in any mall in the country. Positioned as one of the mall's major highlights, Quantum Skyview presents visitors with an innovative visual spectacle like no other.

## *More fun and entertainment*

To boost an inviting live-work-play environment, Gateway Mall 2 highlights recreation and leisure. It offers interesting

attractions like Paeng's Gateway Bowl for bowling and billiards enthusiasts, and Ppop/Kpop Town Cafe for music fans.

The new mall also boasts 18 brand-new cinemas with advanced technology, plus a VIP lounge. They are all designed with plush interiors, comfortable seats, and ample leg room for viewing comfort and pleasure.

## *Refuge for urbanites*

Gateway Mall 2's crowning glory is the Sagrada Familia Church, a 1,000-person capacity air-conditioned church on the roof deck. It has a high-ceiling design, pure white interiors, and modern glass windows that cultivate a calming environment.

Outside the church is a landscaped Sensory Garden, which will be filled with water elements and aromatic herbal plants. This restorative pocket of nature will help reduce anxiety and provide respite from hectic days. It also serves as an attractive access to the all-day dining restaurant and patisseries of ibis Styles Araneta City, the first ibis Styles branded hotel in the country that will open beside the mall soon.

With these exciting features, Araneta City's Gateway Mall 2 is expected to provide more opportunities for a break from the urban routine. So get ready to explore this mall and enjoy a new mall experience only at the City of Firsts! 📍



## BAYO RECEIVES GAWAD YAMANG ISIP AWARD FOR FEMALE EMPOWERMENT INITIATIVES

*Bayo, a renowned fashion brand, was recently honored with the prestigious Gawad Yamang Isip (GYI) Award by the Intellectual Property Office of the Philippines (IPOPHL) on April 26, 2023. This recognition holds special significance for Bayo as this year's theme focused on "Women and IP: Accelerating Innovation and Creativity."*

Championing female empowerment is a core value for Bayo. As an active participant-member of the United Nations Global Compact (UNGC), the company is committed to advancing the UN Sustainable Development Goals (UN SDG), particularly emphasizing gender equality.

Anna Lagon, Bayo's co-CEO and Chief

Creative Officer, shared, "As a brand dedicated to designing pieces that pay homage to our heritage and dress the modern Filipina throughout their journey in womanhood, we place great importance on collaborating with women, listening to their stories, and finding ways to support them as they explore their craft. Women bring a unique perspective to everything from design to business."

Bayo's workforce predominantly comprises women, with women employed at every level, from the production line to the C-suite. Many of Bayo's sustainability projects align with the gender equality SDG, implementing tangible, measurable, and effective policies to empower women.

Under the #JourneytoZero campaign, Bayo has undertaken numerous projects in circular fashion, with a particular focus on handweaving. Since 2018, the company has partnered with communities in Aklan, Bulacan, Cebu, and Baguio to create woven textiles for Bayo's garments. Through these initiatives, women are provided fair wages and sustainable livelihood opportunities.

In a serendipitous alignment, this year's GYI also shed light on Bill 1716, known as the "Safeguarding the Traditional Property Rights of Indigenous Peoples Bill," which aims to protect the intellectual property of indigenous designs. Bayo has long been a champion of Filipino crafts, incorporating traditional art forms into their designs. Lagon passionately expressed, "We tell the weavers that they are not ordinary makers. What they do preserves our culture, and they should take immense pride in that." 📍



# RETAILERS HARNESS AI AND MACHINE LEARNING

TO COMBAT SOARING INFLATION AND OPTIMIZE DEMAND FORECASTING

By: Kristie Davison, Vice President Sales Asia Pacific, RELEX Solutions



**Soaring inflation will continue to challenge retailers in the Philippines and around the globe in 2023. Businesses must find ways to maximize resources and minimize waste as the increased cost of operations, weakened consumer purchasing power, and enduring supply chain disruptions, such as climate change, impact the scarcity of raw materials.**

Retailers face a significant challenge in terms of revenue loss due to surpluses and shortages. Particularly in the Philippines, stock replenishment is often done manually or powered by retail solutions with limited capacity. The more distribution channels a company has, the more difficult it is for retailers to understand how much inventory they require.



By incorporating the latest advancements in artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning, companies are empowered to use data-driven demand forecasts that can analyze the impact a range of variables might have on demand to increase the accuracy of predictions, including historical demand patterns, internal business decisions, and

external factors. Accurate demand forecasts can be leveraged throughout your supply chain to improve decision-making and outcomes.

For an omnichannel business strategy, it's crucial for retailers to tailor their demand forecasting strategies to each sales channel. Online orders tend to follow a different sales pattern than brick-and-mortar sales. For one, they're often driven by a couple of factors, including easier price comparison on digital platforms or holiday seasonal orders that are usually placed online well ahead of time, followed by a wave of procrastinators rushing to brick-and-mortar stores for last-minute purchases.

Through the integration of AI and machine learning, retailers can accurately anticipate demand at the store, sales, and fulfillment levels, ensuring that the appropriate inventory is available where and when it is needed. This approach not only enhances the customer experience but also optimizes resource allocation and pricing strategies, which are essential for outpacing competition and tackling inflation. 📦

## WELCOME NEW MEMBERS!





# THE FUTURE OF RETAIL: THE AGE OF CONVERGENCE, PART 2

By Gino Dizon, Yukiko Tsukamoto and Marc-André Kamel



*Gino Dizon and Yukiko Tsukamoto are Partners based in Bain & Company Manila and Marc-André Kamel is a Partner at Bain & Company based in Paris.*

In the last edition of this publication, we outlined how retail was entering an age of convergence characterized by the blurring of boundaries between incumbent retailers and digital insurgents.

That's partly because incumbents and tech-first retailers have become more evenly matched in the wake of Covid-19. Prior to the pandemic, the overall momentum was with digital natives. Amid store overcapacity, many traditional retailers were struggling to adapt to the rise of e-commerce, competition from discounters, and waves of innovation. At the same time, ecosystem players such as Amazon, Alibaba, and JD.com were gaining share, partly by supporting their retail offering with profit generated by their extensive nonretail activities.

Covid-19 accelerated bankruptcies at surprisingly few store-first retailers. More striking was the number of incumbent retailers that gained a second wind. Some were in categories that experienced stronger demand in the pandemic, such as grocery. Others moved with the speed of digital natives to extend their existing omnichannel capabilities, adopt nimbler ways of working, and strengthen both sales and profit.

Ecosystem players and online marketplaces continued their relentless march during the pandemic. Our analysis shows that they captured about 60% of global retail growth between 2013 and 2021, solidifying a dominant position in key markets.

However, the drastic shift in sentiment about tech stocks has put ecosystem players under more pressure to generate profits, rather than relying on stellar revenue growth to enthrone investors. Tighter funding in tech is already having an even bigger impact outside ecosystems, threatening the existence of some innovative digital newcomers that had been competing hard with incumbents. Easy access to capital had masked the fact that these businesses were subscale and lacked a proper profit engine. The failure of the weakest of these ambitious lossmakers, along with a greater focus on retailing basics at stronger players, should help improve the overall profitability of digital-native retailers, offsetting the impact of the tougher funding environment and higher customer acquisition costs.

So, the playing field has been leveled to some extent, with incumbents emerging from the pandemic in stronger shape than many might have predicted, and tech-first retailers facing a few headwinds after years of mostly enjoying tailwinds. This equalization should allow executive teams (and investors) to see

more clearly the imbalances that remain, most notably in scale.

Scale was already crucial in retail. Now convergence is making it even more important. Incumbent retailers still face the challenge of somehow matching the vast sums tech-first players are investing in digital tools, data analytics, and other technology. Now, digital natives are also riding two horses at once, continuing to pour money into tech while funding a new push into physical retailing (and a more asset-heavy balance sheet).

Only scale can pay for transformations like these, by allowing companies to raise capital more easily, invest more in the business (both in terms of capital expenditure and price-cutting), and amortize assets across a larger base.

What else will retailers need to do, beyond building scale through mergers and acquisitions or organic growth? It's a given that tomorrow's industry leaders will have an elevated purpose and greater sustainability. They will continuously recharge their business by realizing cost reductions every year.

Incumbents and first-wave digital natives will also "tech up" by upgrading legacy infrastructure; by using technology, data, and automation to improve and accelerate decision making; by increasing spending on innovation; and by gauging whether, when, and how much to invest in new digital opportunities such as nonfungible tokens and the metaverse. Beyond that, we think winners will do the following:

**Undergo a customer epiphany.** The customer will increasingly shape decisions, not the channel. That's a key light-bulb moment. Knowing how consumers behave in your store or on your website won't be enough. Retailers will instead need a holistic understanding of how people live, work, shop, and amuse themselves, partly gained through integrating external data from social media and other sources.

**Excel at omnichannel 3.0.** The future is omnichannel, and retailers will have to push the boundaries of what's possible to stand out. That means coming to grips with web3 digital innovations and applications such as blockchains and the metaverse. But resource constraints require ruthless prioritization of the most promising omni 3.0 bets.

**Grow beyond trade.** Opportunities include retail media, data monetization, and other digitally enabled revenue streams. Retailers can gain further resilience by creating or extending consumer or business-to-business ecosystems and expanding in circular markets.

**Play talent Tetris.** Most retailers must play a tricky game of "talent Tetris" to become the employer of choice in tighter labor markets. Winners will also respond quickly when innovation makes some jobs more value-accretive than others, all the while investing heavily in technology and automation. Some are standing out by offering attractive compensation and high levels of responsibility.

The age of convergence is dawning—and it's rich with promise. 🌟



# SONIC BRANDING AGENCY HOMONYM LAUNCHES MUSIC PARTNERSHIP WITH PHILIPPINE RETAILERS ASSOCIATION

Manila-based agency Homonym, pioneers of Sonic Branding in the Philippines, has officially partnered with the Philippine Retailers Association (PRA). This bright and promising sound adventure kicked off with the launch of PRA's very own Sonic Identity and Brand during their Q1 General Membership Meeting last March 16, 2023.

Homonym Founder and CEO Mike Constantino had this to say about the launch: "...with PRA being the pulse and voice of the retail industry for the past 46 years, there was so much rich history to build on when we created their Sonic Logo. And we're beyond grateful to be able to literally give them that pulse and voice through Sonic Branding."

Crafted via Homonym's home studio, Sunny Side Sound, the PRA's Sonic Logo will be utilized in their social content, walk-in music for their board of directors and executives and upcoming events like the 29th National Retail Conference and Stores Asia Expo (NRCE).

PRA Secretary General Evelyn Salire explained the value and importance of the partnership: "We (PRA) are always on the lookout for the latest innovations and technologies to help our members achieve their goals. Mike and I reconnected during the pandemic as we were curious how music can help our members refresh their stores and establishments after a tough past couple of pandemic years. We, along with our members, are excited to be on this audio journey with Homonym."

Constantino adds: "2023 has been a year of Homonym exploring more collaborations, especially with industries and fields that are

not necessarily associated with our usual music and audio world. The PRA is a perfect example of us reaching out to help retailers – respected marketers and branding professionals themselves – utilize the power of sound to uplift customers/store staff to help generate more sales."

The collaboration opens the doors for active PRA members to utilize Homonym's services at a preferred rate. The sonic agency can help retailers strategize and create their brand's sound and differentiate themselves in this highly competitive space. They're also providing their fully-digital plug-and-play Music Curation Service. This includes real-time uploading of retailers' messages – which Homonym's studios also produces in-house – featuring meticulously curated international and local hits (made possible by PRA's long-time partnership with FILSCAP).

Active PRA members can reach out to the PRA secretariat at [info@philretailers.com](mailto:info@philretailers.com) or to Homonym at [yo@homonym-inc.com](mailto:yo@homonym-inc.com) for inquiries and opportunities. 📧



(From left to right): PRA's Ivan Verzonilla, Mayan Sangli, Ana Marie "BM" Miranda, Evelyn Salire with Homonym's Mike Constantino, CJ Araneta and Cham Perillo

## THE ROLE OF EXPERIENCE AND INNOVATION IN LEADING FAMILY BUSINESSES IN RETAIL

### LET'S TALK RETAIL EPISODE 34

*While experience and innovation are often seen as separate concepts in the business world, combining them can lead to tremendous growth and success for companies. As the retail industry continues to evolve, the ability to adapt and innovate is becoming increasingly important. But how can businesses balance the need for innovation with the benefits of experience and established practices?*

Let us provide you with an insightful discussion on the topic through PRA's Let's Talk Retail 34th episode, which features Neelam Gopwani, the Managing Director of House of Branded Lifestyle, Inc. (HOBLI). In this episode, we delve into the ways that businesses can harness the power of experience and innovation to achieve success and drive growth in the dynamic retail landscape.

Also, Neelam shared her insights on the post-pandemic retail landscape, highlighting the need for businesses to adjust and adapt to the new reality.

According to Neelam, the pandemic has blurred the lines between online and offline retail, creating a new business model where both channels are intertwined. As businesses continue to navigate the challenges of the post-pandemic era, it is crucial to embrace digital transformation as a key driver of success.

When asked if online will replace the brick and mortar stores, she said "online will not replace the brick and mortar. When it comes to the culture of the Philippines, it's not a shopping experience... you don't go just to buy a certain thing, you are in the mall to experience a lot of things – whether it is a movie or dining out.

That shopping experience is very important, you just need to make a way to merge the both of them, to make it one business model instead of two."

On the other hand, to learn about Neelam's insights on using influencers to reach your market and achieve sustainability goals, check out the PRA's Let's Talk Retail 34th episode on their YouTube channel and Spotify account. By tuning in, you can gain valuable knowledge on how to effectively adjust and adapt to thrive in the constantly evolving retail landscape. 📺



# DOT, PRA COLLABORATE ON MICRO RETAIL TOURISM 2.0: IGNITING ESSENTIAL INNOVATIONS AND PRODUCT ENHANCEMENTS


*The Department of Tourism (DOT) and the Philippine Retailers Association (PRA) joined forces to formalize their commitment to the implementation of Micro Retail Tourism 2.0: "Essential Innovations and Product Enhancement." This groundbreaking initiative aims to establish a robust ecosystem that fosters the growth of Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) operating in the retail and tourism sectors.*

Recognizing the critical role of MSMEs in the Philippine economy, the collaborative effort between the DOT and the PRA seeks to empower these businesses by assisting them in enhancing their products and services, refining their marketing strategies, and meeting the ever-evolving demands of consumers. With Micro Retail Tourism 2.0, the DOT and the PRA are poised to usher in a new era of growth and innovation within the retail and tourism landscape.

PRA President, Rosemarie B. Ong, expressed her enthusiasm for the initiative, stating, "We want to provide our MSMEs with the necessary support to develop their products and services, strengthen their marketing capabilities, and implement vital product enhancements that resonate with the needs of discerning consumers."

The momentous memorandum of understanding (MOU) signing took place on May 24, 2023, at the esteemed premises of the Department of Tourism. The ceremony was graced by the

presence of prominent dignitaries including DOT Undersecretary Shahlimar Tamano, DOT Assistant Secretary Ma. Rica Bueno, PRA President Ms. Rosemarie B. Ong, and PRA Assistant Secretary General Ana Marie Miranda.

By forging this strategic alliance, the DOT, and the PRA aim to bolster the competitiveness and sustainability of MSMEs in the retail and tourism sectors. Through collaborative efforts, innovative strategies, and valuable resources, Micro Retail Tourism 2.0 endeavors to drive economic growth, foster job creation, and unleash the full potential of Filipino entrepreneurs. 



## NEWLY ELECTED DIRECTORS AND OFFICERS INDUCTED INTO PRA-CEBU CHAPTER

*The Philippine Retailers Association (PRA) - Cebu Chapter proudly announces the induction of its newly elected directors and officers during a Membership Meeting held on May 24, 2023, at City Stores Plaza, Cebu City. Led by its President, Christian Paro-an, the new set of officers is poised to steer the chapter toward greater success and growth.*

The induction ceremony was graced by Cebu City Mayor Michael Rama, who commended the PRA-Cebu Chapter for its significant contributions to the local retail industry. Mayor Rama emphasized the importance of collaboration between the public and private sectors in driving economic development and ensuring the prosperity of Cebu City.

The newly elected officers of PRA-Cebu Chapter include Mr. James Co as Vice President for Business Development, May Tan Go as Vice President for Membership, Jay Fernandez as Vice President for Ways and Means, Camille Aldeguer as Vice President for Finance, Jane Ong as Secretary/Treasurer, Robert Go as Chairman of the Board, and Chester Lim as the Past President. Atty. Paul Santos, PRA Chairman and President of Picture City, led the induction ceremony, inspiring the new officers and members

to uphold the highest standards of professionalism and commitment to the retail industry.

With a dynamic leadership team at its helm, PRA-Cebu Chapter is poised to enhance the retail landscape in Cebu City, promoting collaboration, innovation, and sustainable growth within the sector. 



# UNVEILING RETAIL BREAKTHROUGHS AT THE 29TH NRCE

The Philippine Retailers Association (PRA), the national organization of retailers, shopping centers, and allied industries, is proud to announce the staging of its groundbreaking and largest retail industry event in the country - the National Retail Conference and Expo (NRCE).

For its 29th edition, the NRCE is even bigger and bolder, providing premier learning sessions from visionary and progressive industry leaders, along with a world-class exhibition to cater to their business needs and facilitate growth and success.

With "Retail Breakthrough" as its overarching theme, the NRCE 2023 Organizing Committee, led by Overall Chairman and Rustan Commercial President, Mr. Donnie Tantoco, along with NRCE 2023 Conference Chairman and Blims Lifestyle Group COO, Mr. Greg Lim, as well as NRCE 2023 Expo Chairmen, iRipple's CEO, Ivan Lanuza, and SVP for Retail of The Expressions, Shirley Ng, firmly believe that retailers should be prepared to spread their wings, embrace the forthcoming wave of discoveries, learn new skills and competencies, and execute growth in retail breakthroughs.

This year's headliners are undoubtedly a powerhouse. Ayala Land's Director, Mariana Zobel de Ayala, will open the 29th NRCE with her captivating and impactful keynote session on "The Power of



Women at the Forefront of Progress," highlighting the transformative power of women's representation and voices in the retail industry. Additionally, Jollibee's Chief Business Officer, Joseph Tanbuntiong, a proud Filipino and global brand, will deliver an engaging and thought-provoking closing keynote session on "Rapid Expansion: Challenges and Opportunities in Managing Business Growth." This session will bring into focus strategies for effectively managing rapid expansion in the ever-evolving business landscape, including investing in technology and infrastructure, cultivating a robust team and organizational culture, and fostering agility and adaptability.

Running parallel to the powerful conference is Retail Solutions Asia, formerly known as the Stores Asia Expo, a top-tier exhibition where seasoned and new retail suppliers showcase their world-class products and services. It serves as an opportunity for businesses to expand and increase their market reach. Retail Solutions Asia is a premier community where you can broaden your horizons, make valuable connections, and witness big ideas come to life. The PRA's commitment to providing a magnanimous, information-rich, and top-of-the-line program like the 29th NRCE is evident. None of this would be possible without the generous support of our sponsors: Relx Solutions (Diamond), ETP International PTE LTD, Anchanto (Platinum), Security Bank (Silver), and Retailgate Technologies (Official Technology Partner).

Register now at [www.nrce-ph.com](http://www.nrce-ph.com) and reserve your seats in groups to avail of a discount. We look forward to seeing you all in August! 📍

## SENATE COMMITTEE DISCUSSES PROPOSED VAT REFUND FOR NON-RESIDENT TOURISTS IN THE PHILIPPINES

The Senate Committee on Ways and Means held a Public Hearing on June 14, 2023, to discuss the proposed Value Added Tax (VAT) Refund for Non-Resident Tourists in the Philippines. Led by Senator Win Gatchalian, the hearing brought together stakeholders and resource persons to explore the potential benefits of the scheme.



Mr. Bobby Claudio, Vice Chairman of the Philippine Retailers Association (PRA) and a member of the Private Sector Advisory Council (PSAC), voiced strong support for the implementation of the VAT Refund scheme. The PRA believes that such a scheme would generate additional tourism revenue for the country.

The proposed VAT Refund scheme aims to allow non-resident tourists to receive a refund on the value-added tax paid for selected products purchased during their visit to the Philippines.

This incentive encourages tourists to make more purchases, contributing to the growth of the local economy. Implementing the VAT Refund scheme for non-resident tourists is expected to enhance the competitiveness of the Philippines as a preferred tourism destination. This move aligns with neighboring countries that already offer similar schemes, attracting more visitors and boosting the country's overall tourism industry.

During the public hearing, stakeholders discussed important aspects such as the refund claiming process, eligible products, and the projected economic impact. Senator Win Gatchalian expressed optimism about the scheme's potential to revitalize the tourism sector and boost the Philippine economy, emphasizing the need to balance incentives for tourists with the interests of local businesses.

The Senate Committee on Ways and Means will evaluate the insights gathered during the public hearing and deliberate on the proposed VAT Refund for Non-Resident Tourists. The committee aims to ensure that the scheme aligns with the country's economic objectives and creates an attractive and competitive environment for tourism. If successfully implemented, the VAT Refund scheme for non-resident tourists has the potential to position the Philippines as the next shopping destination in Asia. By attracting more visitors and encouraging increased spending, the scheme could drive economic growth, create opportunities for local businesses, and stimulate job creation in the tourism sector. 📍

# Delivering Top-Quality Protection For Retail Shops

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 **AMERSEC**<sup>®</sup>  
Shoplifting Prevention Systems

Keep store aesthetics unchanged while keeping merchandise protected with Amersec's innovative technology for shoplifting prevention.



# METRO MANILA RETAIL MARKET CONTINUES TO RECOVER

By: Joey Roi Bondoc

Photo from The Guardian



**Joey Roi Bondoc is Colliers' Associate Director and Head of Research. He covers residential, office, retail, leisure, and industrial segments and conducts macroeconomic analysis and regularly assesses the impact of economic growth to the real estate sector. He handles client engagement activities through market overview presentations to equity analysts, property investors, and real estate firms, and has become quite a familiar face in the local and even regional real estate news circles as his reports have consistently been cited by national news programs and major broadsheets.**

Holiday spending stoked the country's retail segment in Q4 2022. An upside for the sector is that Filipinos continue to spend even after the festive season despite elevated prices. Given a sanguine macroeconomic and consumer confidence outlook, Colliers believes that the retail sector will continue to grow over the next 12 months, resulting in greater absorption of mall space and marginal rise in lease rates. However, the delivery of substantial new supply starting H2 2023 will be a major concern.

Colliers Philippines believes that now is an opportune time for landlords planning to take advantage of retail sector's recovery to launch retail REITs. Lease rates are starting to increase that's why retailers should be quick in locking in prime spaces in major business districts. Meanwhile, given the growing interest from foreign retailers, Colliers recommends that mall operators seize the demand from these firms by taking into account their sizes and fit out requirements. Online and offline shopping will continue to complement each other, which should compel mall operators and retailers to ramp up their omnichannel strategies.

## Launch of retail REITs

Colliers believes that property developers with retail footprint should consider divesting malls into their REIT portfolio especially now that the retail segment is recovering. Malls generate recurring income and are now a viable REIT asset class as vacancies are declining and lease rates are starting to increase. In our view, developers should carefully assess which retail outlets to add to their REIT portfolio and should consider projected mall space absorption as well as profiles of retailers willing to take up brick-and-mortar spaces.

Developers should take advantage of renewed interest from foreign and homegrown retailers as well as continued expansion of Philippine economy mainly driven by personal consumption expenditure.

## Lock in space in prime locations

Colliers believes that retailers should be quick in securing mall spaces in key business districts across Metro Manila now that vacancy rates are declining while rents are gradually increasing. In our view, this trend is likely to persist in the market as footfall is rebounding across the capital region. We still see substantial vacancies in selected malls in Quezon City, Bay Area, and Alabang and retailers should further explore the viability of opening physical space in these locations. Looking forward, we see a heightened competition for prime retail space especially in key business districts that will house new and expansive office and residential towers.

## Seize the demand from foreign retailers entering the Philippine market

Colliers sees an improving demand for physical space from foreign retailers. We attribute this to improving consumer demand on the back of sustained macroeconomic expansion as well as the enactment of measures that further relax the country's retail regulatory environment. Mall operators should capture demand from foreign retailers planning to enter the country by taking into account their sizes and fit-out requirements.

## Mall space take-up improves

In Q1 2023, vacancy across malls in the capital region dropped to 14% from 15.4% in Q3 2022. Major developers have been reporting that consumer traffic has now reverted to 90-100% of pre-Covid levels. Some mall operators even noted that footfall especially in Q4 2022 was even greater than pre-pandemic levels. With rising purchasing power due to improving consumer confidence (according to the latest central bank survey) and personal income tax cuts implemented by the government, retailers have been active in taking up physical mall space. Colliers believes that while online shopping will remain relevant among Filipino consumers (especially among young shoppers), in-store shopping will continue to rebound, as shown by relentless absorption of physical mall space within Metro Manila.

Colliers believes that mall operators should not consider online presence as competition but as a necessary complement to retailers' omnichannel strategies. Both retailers and mall operators unable to update their omnichannel presence will be left behind.

Colliers is optimistic that sound macroeconomic fundamentals are likely to support the retail sector's growth over the next 12 months. The reactivation of high-density retail, staging of various events at malls' activity centres, and renewed interest in experiential retail should entice more Filipinos to visit physical malls and further stoke spending. 📍

# Leverage data-driven marketing to increase customer loyalty

BY JUBIN MEHTA



With a background in tech journalism and corporate communications, Jubin Mehta is a customer loyalty and engagement analyst at Capillary Technologies. Capillary works with 250+ enterprise brands across the globe to deliver ROI driver loyalty programs that customers love.

With a global economic downturn and correction in marketing spending, brand marketers across the globe are focusing on more making getting the maximum ROI on their campaigns. At Capillary, having worked with more than 250 enterprises, we see that a majority of the marketing budget is spent on acquiring new customers while it is a known fact that loyal customers are the ones who contribute more towards business growth. In such a scenario, it is incredibly important to focus on customer loyalty and have programs that provide genuine value to customers. And this is where data-driven marketing comes into play.

## What is data-driven marketing?

Data-driven marketing refers to the practice of utilizing data and analytics to guide marketing strategies, decision-making, and campaign execution. Data-driven marketing encompasses a range of activities, including customer segmentation, predictive modeling, A/B testing, marketing automation, and performance tracking. It enables marketers to optimize their campaigns, allocate resources effectively, and measure the impact of their efforts with greater precision.

According to a BCG report in association with Capillary, "75% of companies acknowledged that data is the most important lever to drive growth and efficiency." And this is why data-driven marketing is so important.



94% companies enrich in-house customer data using external data and >80% use channel effectiveness reports as a feedback mechanism regularly in media buying decisions.

But only...

25% companies buy media programmatically across all channels while ~20% companies personalize both channel and timing of communication

**"Decisions for where the dollars go are not analytically driven"**

CMO, mid-sized Retail Firm, USA

## Common Pitfalls for implementing data-driven marketing

This is easy to understand and data-driven marketing has become a bit of a buzz word but what really holds back marketers from using data adequately?

**Not having a strategy in place:** One of the most significant pitfalls is diving into data-driven marketing without a clear strategy. It is crucial to establish specific goals, identify key performance indicators (KPIs), and outline the steps needed to achieve desired outcomes.

**Not having access to rich data:** Data is the lifeblood of data-driven marketing. However, many businesses struggle with accessing the right data or having incomplete and inaccurate data. Lack of data integration, siloed systems, or outdated data sources can limit the effectiveness of data-driven marketing efforts. Lack of technology to segment and target the audience: Segmentation and targeting are crucial aspects of data-driven marketing. However, without the right technology like Capillary's Nudge Framework, businesses may find it challenging to effectively segment their audience and deliver personalized messages.

## How to overcome these challenges?

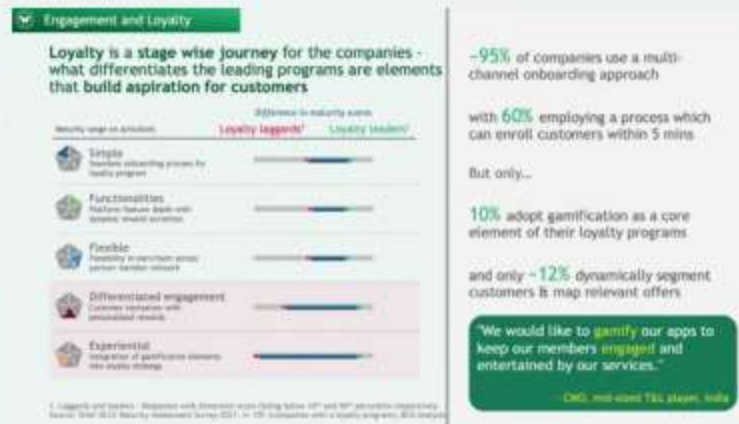
**Collecting Meaningful Data:** In today's digital age, there are several touch points where data is generated such as online forms, transactional systems, or customer surveys. Designing seamless customer journeys can help in collecting meaningful data which would generate reliable, actionable insights.

## Having a Headless Technology in Place:

A headless technology architecture allows for flexibility, scalability, and seamless integration of various systems and channels. By decoupling the front-end presentation layer from the back-end systems, businesses can leverage multiple marketing technologies and tools to collect, analyze, and activate data.

## Having the Entire Organization Aligned to Drive Loyalty as an Outcome:

Implementing data-driven marketing requires a holistic approach and alignment across the entire organization. It's not just the responsibility of the marketing department; every department should be involved in driving customer loyalty as an outcome.



## Leveraging on technology

Leveraging technology is a critical component of successful data-driven marketing. By utilizing various tools and platforms, businesses can enhance their marketing efforts, gain valuable insights, and drive customer loyalty. Choosing the right platform: There is a wide range of technology tools available to support data-driven marketing initiatives. Customer Data Platforms (CDPs) help businesses collect, unify, and manage customer data from multiple sources. Loyalty software helps design and manage loyalty programs and Engagement software facilitates personalized and timely communication with customers across various channels. A single platform like Capillary gives all of these capabilities.

**Forming a 360-degree customer view:** By integrating data from different touchpoints, such as transactions, website interactions, social media, and customer service interactions, businesses can gain a comprehensive understanding of individual customers. This holistic view enables deeper insights into customer preferences, and behaviors, and brings the ability to deliver hyper-personalization.

## Reducing CAC, Increase ROI, and driving customer loyalty

In conclusion, the implementation of data-driven marketing strategies can lead to significant benefits for businesses, including reducing customer acquisition costs (CAC), increasing return on investment (ROI), and driving customer loyalty. Reducing CAC is a crucial objective for any organization, as it directly impacts profitability. Data-driven marketing enables businesses to identify the most effective channels, campaigns, and customer segments to acquire new customers at a lower cost. By analyzing data, businesses can allocate their resources more efficiently and focus on the strategies that yield the highest ROI. This leads to improved cost-effectiveness and a more sustainable approach to customer acquisition. And increase in ROI is a key metric that reflects the overall success of marketing efforts.

Both of these drive focus on customer loyalty and when data-driven marketing is implemented in the right fashion, business growth and customer loyalty are a natural outcome.

# Small Retailers Leverage Technology To Stay Fully Operational with Fewer Associates

By Gigi Lariosa, Country Manager for Philippines, Zebra Technologies



of qualified human resource or labor affects their overall business operations.

*According to the Department of Trade and Industry, there are approximately a million micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) in the Philippines, which contributes to a total of around 99.5% of local companies. These MSMEs have helped the country stabilize its growth over the past decade as one of the growing economies in Asia and around the world. Yet, their success is not without challenges. In fact, one of the key challenges faced by these MSMEs is human resource constraints. The lack*

According to Zebra's Small and Medium Sized Business Industry Lead – Amanda Honig, forward-thinking small business owners are turning to technology to maximize productivity and profits in view of unprecedented and challenging market disruptions. Investments in the right technology can elevate the overall shopper experience, even when there are fewer staff on hand.

## Staffing shortages can have a greater impact on small businesses

The role of the physical store is evolving, but it is still critical to the customer experience. According to NRF data, 80% of shopping still happens in stores. However, in Zebra's latest Global Shopper Study, only six-in-10 shoppers surveyed are satisfied with how well-equipped associates are to help them find items. Further, only 70% reported being happy with the availability of staff in the stores, and the level of information and help staff provides. This is concerning as it shows how significantly labor shortages continue to impact retailers. Whether the workforce is limited due to illness or staff departures, the impact of fewer associates on store floors and back rooms can have adverse effects across a business, especially when technology is not being used to augment headcount or the customer experience.

For a large retailer, the consequences of being short staffed may be minimal, for example limited to shifting employees from the backroom to the front of the store for a few hours. However, for small businesses, the impact can be devastating and potentially hurt their bottom line, as a few employee call outs may result in zero staff availability – and a full store closure – for an entire day. When met with the "Be Back Tomorrow" sign, customers may choose to shop elsewhere, potentially challenging their long-term loyalty. That is why forward-thinking small retailers should consider making larger investments in technology that makes it easier to manage staff schedules and rebalance workloads when teams are lean and foot traffic is high. Integrating solutions that make customers more self-sufficient in the store can also be highly valuable when there are only one or two associates available to work each shift.

## Streamline operations between the back and front of the store

There is often little delineation between the front of the store and backroom operations in a small retail business. The right technology can help ensure there is no disconnect between the two functions and increase efficiency when moving physical items between the front and back of the store.

Equipping associates with enterprise-class mobile devices can add valuable mobility and transparency to the inventory management process. This technology gives store associates on the sales floor insight into what products are available or scheduled for arrival so they can better support customers and ensure they are available to receive and replenish items when trucks arrive. It also makes the overall inventory management

process less time-consuming and more accurate than processes of the past, which relied on paper and pen to track item locations, sales, and more.

## Offer mobile checkout and more

Small businesses can add automation and efficiency to inventory management, sales, and more by embracing retail-ready technology solutions such as self-serve kiosks or checkout lanes, rugged tablets with added point-of-sale (POS) modules, or handheld mobile computers with built-in barcode scanners and accessorized with radio frequency identification (RFID) sleds. Mobile technology enables a convenient and seamless customer experience, giving employees more tools to assist shoppers in the moment, wherever they are. It also helps free store associates to deliver more of the high-touch customer service that differentiates many small businesses from their big box or online competitors.

For instance, with product knowledge in the palm of their hand, associates can provide a better experience by answering questions thoroughly and offer more information about a product without leaving the customer's side to check a computer or ask a colleague in the back. When an associate is not available, a kiosk can provide information about inventory styling, sizing, and selection. They can even be set up to support online ordering while in store, notify an associate of their arrival for order pickup, or process returns.

Kiosks can also serve as a POS to process transactions more efficiently, while rugged tablets and handheld computers can support associate-managed mobile POS. This can help avoid a situation where a single employee is stuck behind a register while multiple customers in the store need attention.

Employees calling out sick also does not have to mean resorting to options like closing the store for the day. Retail-ready technology helps maximize the power of a single associate to meet customer service expectations when faced with a disruption. In addition, it can help speed up onboarding and upskilling, making specific skills easier to learn or transfer on the spot if a designated employee is unexpectedly out sick or unavailable.

## Accommodating your associates' needs

Another approach to overcoming staffing shortages is to equip these mobile devices with software that helps automate staff scheduling or allows employees to automatically request a replacement when they are unable to make a shift. This will make it less likely that only a single employee will be in the store at any point in time.

Plus, technology adoption can help engage and retain a younger workforce, which is a possible long-term solution to this current labor problem. Millennials will soon make up about 75% of front-line workers, while Generation Z, born between the late 1990s and early 2010s, is projected to make up 30% of the workforce by 2030. Heading into the future, meeting the demands of younger workers for on-the-job technology will also be crucial for improving operations and maintaining a steady and devoted workforce.

Fortunately, for most small businesses, retail-ready technologies have become more accessible than ever before. There are enterprise-grade devices built for small businesses' needs and budgets, as well as cloud-based services that make both the hardware and software easy and affordable to deploy and manage. When you consider the cost of a store being closed a whole day or losing a few customer sales throughout the day due to staff inattention, the price of digitalizing store operations is manageable. Workers will be available and workflows improved – two critical components of a successful retail business. 📱



## AIRSPPEED GROUP MAKES IT HAPPEN FOR THE RETAIL SEGMENT WITH NEW SERVICE OPTIONS

*For 37 years, Airspeed makes it a mission to make things happen for businesses to prosper, communities to grow, and lives to be fulfilled.*

Airspeed is a corporate end-to-end logistics company that has been helping large, medium, small, to micro enterprises. It offers services combining air, sea, and land transportation providing clients with integrated and flexible solutions tailored to their needs.

Founded by Rosemarie P. Rafael in 1985, it now has more than a thousand employees, with presence in 97 countries. It has become one of the fastest-growing and most trusted logistics companies in the Philippines.

"We need to be innovative and creative so we listen very closely to the pulse of the market to meet the changing needs," says Airspeed Chairperson Rosemarie Rafael.

In today's fast-paced world, Airspeed has created customized services that will make it easier for customers to store, pick up, and deliver items they have ordered online. The Pick-up at SM Supermalls, powered by Airspeed, will ease the burden of e-commerce platforms in helping them meet the demands of today's online retail environment. Another option – Popbox powered by Airspeed, is the newest partnership with Light Rail



Manila Corporation. This smart locker offers convenient and contactless delivery for end users. It is initially located in 19 stations of the LRT-1, and gearing to expand to more locations soon. Airspeed recently launched PinaSpeed, a nationwide online pick-up and delivery platform for microbusinesses. Mrs. Rafael mentioned,

"The logistics industry has plenty of room for growth, and Airspeed intends to make it happen and be at the forefront of change."

And for businesses with presence in malls, Airspeed offers mall logistics program which includes outbound delivery, reverse logistics, inter-mall delivery services etc.

Airspeed intends to make it happen by continuing to innovate and create solutions for its stakeholders. 📧

## LEVI'S® CELEBRATES THE 150TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE ICONIC 501® JEANS WITH IMMERSIVE EXPERIENCE IN MANILA

*On May 20th, 1873, a young San Francisco company was granted a patent on the process of riveting pants which would eventually become known as the 501® jeans. 150 years later, these same pants have entrenched themselves as one of the most enduring icons of global style and the original template from which all other jeans have descended. For the biggest moment of its year-long celebration of the 150th anniversary, the Levi's® brand launched an immersive activation to honor the beloved 501® jeans. Open to the public from May 19 through May 21 at the Mall of Asia Central Atrium, the 501® Experience featured an archival exhibit, opportunities for custom pieces, local artisans and performers, and so much more.*

"Since its creation in 1873, Levi's® 501® jeans have not only become a staple of fashion but have also carved a permanent place in our cultural history," said Charisse Chua, Country Manager at Levi Strauss Philippines, Inc. Indeed, the 501® is an ever-expanding story - written and rewritten by everyone who wears them. It is a collection of characters, events, ambitions and memories from every day heroes to unbelievable icons. A living,

breathing saga with so much depth and no visible end in sight. It is indeed, the greatest story ever worn.

The persistence of the 501® as a true classic jean has also been due to the ability to constantly reimagine itself. The original style may be 150 years old, but Levi's® boldly explores modern spin-offs to the 501® by playing with fits, washes and colors. 📧



## 2GO TRAVEL REVITALIZES INTEREST FOR SEA TRAVEL IN THE PHILIPPINES THROUGH YOUNG ADVOCATES

Invites budding content creators to 2GOKada Creators Cruise

*2GO Travel, an advocate for Philippines tourism via sea travel, opens the opportunity to spark the same passion and interest in a new breed of creatives and content creators. As the government ramps up initiatives to invigorate tourism and modernize travel infrastructure, 2GO capitalizes on the perfect time to inspire the younger generation to experience the best of the Philippines by sea.*

In partnership with the Department of Tourism, 2GO is preparing a thrilling sail-elebration experience this summer for content creators, dubbed the 2GOKada Creators Cruise.

The 2GOKada Creators Cruise will be the summer's culminating activity for over 100 content creators—the 2GOKada community. This first-of-its-kind, invitation-only festival at sea will have the 2GOKada travel for free and get inspired by three days of workshops, masterclasses and a concert onboard. All these while experiencing stunning sea views and onboard amenities such as hotel-like accommodations, sundeck, salon and spa, and a variety of dining options on MV 2GO Masagana, one of 2GO's most modern vessels.

"2GO is excited to welcome the 2GOKada community and give them a taste of what keeps our passion for sea travel alive," said

Blessie Cruz, 2GO AVP for Marketing. "We know that as young creatives, the 2GOKada community are ready to discover new ways of seeing the Philippines and are game for trying new experiences. Through the 2GOKada Creators Cruise, we provide this opportunity for these creators to diversify their content, to offer new ideas and to ignite their creativity."

Sign-ups for the 2GOKada Creators Cruise are ongoing until May 1, 2023 through <https://bit.ly/2GOKada2023>.



## CAPILLARY NAMED A LEADER ON THE FORRESTER WAVE REPORT ON LOYALTY TECHNOLOGY SOLUTIONS

*Forrester, a global independent research firm comes up with the Wave reports in various industries. The Forrester Wave™ is a guide for buyers*

*considering their purchasing options in a technology marketplace and is based on Forrester's analysis and opinion. In its latest report, Forrester Wave for Loyalty Technology Solutions, Q1 2023, Capillary has been named a Leader along with Epsilon and Kobie.*

In Forrester's 28-criterion

evaluation of loyalty technology solution providers, they identified the 12 most significant ones — Annex Cloud, Bond Brand Loyalty, Capillary Technologies, Comarch, Epsilon, Kobie, Mastercard, Merkle, Oracle, Punchh, Salesforce, and Tenuity — and researched, analyzed, and scored them. The report shows how each provider measures up and helps B2C marketing professionals select the right one for their needs.

For the 'current offering' criteria, Capillary scored 4.12/5 followed by Epsilon which scored 4.10/5. The report authored by Mary Pilecki and Cole Walsh states, "Brands continue to invest in loyalty programs and loyalty technology solutions to help them engage

and retain consumers — who are cutting back on spending and looking for more deals in response to higher prices.

According to Forrester's Marketing Survey, 2023, 53% of B2C marketing decision-makers plan to increase their spend on loyalty technology in 2023, and economic uncertainty and scrutiny of marketing budgets has renewed marketers' focus on the profitability of their loyalty strategies."

The Forrester Wave™  
Loyalty Technology Solutions,  
Q1 2023 Report  
—  
Capillary Named  
a Leader

FORRESTER  
WAVE  
LEADER 2023  
Loyalty Technology  
Solutions

capillary

## VINCULUM'S 7-YEAR WINNING STREAK ON GARTNER MAGIC QUADRANT

Vinculum has been recognized by the Gartner Magic Quadrant for the 7th year in a row.

*Venkat Nott, Founder & CEO, Vinculum Group : "It's an honor to receive this recognition y-o-y from Gartner. It's a testament to our commitment to innovation and excellence in the retail industry."*

Vinculum Group: As a market-leading SaaS Omni Channel Software provider, Vinculum empowers brands to seamlessly syndicate and list product data to expand their reach through their own webstores, online marketplaces, and social channels managing orders and inventory across channels, while enabling fulfillment from any point across the supply chain. Our product suite also enables brands and companies with a ready technology stack to set up b2c and b2b marketplaces.

With over 400 satisfied customers like Alshamsi Holdings, Bata, Dairy Farm, Fossil, Janio, Jockey, Nykaa, P&G, Skechers etc. our cutting-edge deep-tech software product suite has earned us a place among the elite Global Supply Chain Competency Cohort of AWS, and our company is widely acclaimed by leading industry analysts and customer review sites such as Gartner, Forrester, G2, etc. 📍

# Gartner®



## MCI: EMPOWERING FILIPINO RETAILERS WITH GLOBALLY COMPETITIVE MARKETING SOLUTIONS

MCI enables Filipino retailers' access to globally competitive campaigns with end-to-end marketing solutions.

*MarketConnect Inc, or better known as MCI, is empowering Filipino retailers to connect better with their consumers, raise brand awareness, and increase their sales with marketing efforts at par with global standards.*

"One of our core principles in MCI is to provide campaigns with end-to-end digital marketing solutions to brands. This allows growth in terms of influence, revenues, and more importantly, market share." according to Steph Oller, President and CEO of MCI.

Currently, with the exponential growth of internet users, the rise of digital media, and unprecedented changes brought by the pandemic era; local retailers are shifting to marketing strategies to maximize online interaction. However, while the shift may be an easy, and practical strategy, local retailers may still have difficulty marketing to platforms flooded with similar products and services.

This is where MCI truly excels. It commits to deliver campaigns that produce impactful experiences. These High-level marketing efforts are customized to meet local client's specifics without compromising standards that make its strategies globally competitive.

Currently, MCI serves clients from multinationals to local brands, across different industries. Its guidelines on strong implementation sets itself apart and above other agencies. It delivers, and makes its client's objectives really happen.

### About MCI

MCI is an insight-driven advertising provider that believes in the power of communications that drive action. It is a full service digital marketing agency that specializes in through the line services. MCI is located in Bonifacio Global City, Capitol House 14th floor, 34th street. Learn More about MCI <https://connectwithmci.com/> or follow them at their Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/MarketConnectPH/>.





OUTSTANDING  
FILIPINO RETAILERS  
AWARDS

OFR  
AWARDS

## 2023 Outstanding Filipino Retailers (OFR) Awards Recognize Resilient Retailers and Exceptional Contributions

The 2023 Outstanding Filipino Retailers (OFR) Awards Night, held on June 8, 2023 at Okada Manila, celebrated the remarkable resilience, commitment, and dedication of Filipino retailers during challenging times. Themed "TIBAY: Gabi ng Pagpupugay," the event recognized their outstanding efforts, which served as an inspiration to their organizations and communities, making a significant impact amidst adversity.



The prestigious 2023 PRA President's Award was presented to Mr. Joey Concepcion, Founder of Go Negosyo. This distinguished honor acknowledged Mr. Concepcion's unwavering drive and devotion in uplifting Filipino businesses, particularly Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs). His initiatives in mitigating the negative impact of business closures have fostered resiliency and recovery, positively influencing the MSMEs, retail industry, and the overall economy.

The 2023 PRA Special Awards were bestowed upon malls and shopping centers that demonstrated unwavering commitment in supporting retailers during the pandemic. Ayala Malls, Robinsons Malls, and SM Supermalls received these accolades, acknowledging their exceptional dedication and efforts in providing a safe and conducive environment for retailers to operate amidst unprecedented circumstances. Their leadership, innovation, and compassion played a vital role in navigating the challenges of the pandemic and emerging stronger than ever before.

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