

# Relevant retail research analysis at annual SACSC conference

 By [Lauren Hartzenberg](#)

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Stakeholders forming part of the broader shopping centre and retail industries are gathering at The Maslow Hotel in Sandton today for the annual South African Council of Shopping Centres (SACSC) Research Conference. Sponsored by Cushman & Wakefield Excellerate, this year's event boasts a stellar [line-up of speakers](#) seeking to highlight, dissect and analyse industry trends affecting business's bottom line.

Topics on the agenda cover trends in food and beverage, the value of loyalty programmes, an economic and consumer outlook, tenant management and content marketing, to name a few.

SACSC CEO Amanda Stops gave us the lowdown on the importance of the conference to the sector, how the event has grown since inception, and her top retail trends to watch.



Amanda Stops

***Describe what the South African Council of Shopping Centres does and the role it plays in the broader retail industry.***

The South African Council of Shopping Centres is a non-profit company focusing on enhancing and nurturing the shopping centre and retail industry in the country. We are a membership-driven entity and currently have over 2,000 members representing more than 1,000 different companies in South Africa. Our main aim is to provide up-to-date research, education and provide a platform for our members to network and exchange ideas among each other.

***What is the purpose of the annual SACSC Research Conference?***

The annual SACSC Research Conference is an event where important trends and industry information are brought to light for those who attend. The main purpose of this event is to ensure that each and every one who is in attendance is kept abreast of critical information and trends in a dynamic and fast-paced industry. The event focuses on three main areas being the consumer, technology and trends, with an array of speakers covering numerous topics.



Food and beverage retail trends to be discussed at SACSC conference

17 Mar 2017



***How has the event changed since its inception?***

The event has definitely grown over the years. When we decided to embark on this project in 2010, our main purpose was to provide a platform for industry leaders to share their research with each other. We initially had a few speakers and afforded attendees an opportunity to share their suggestions and ideas.

Fast forward to current day, we now have even more speakers who will touch on everything from the economy to technology, food to trends. The SACSC Research Conference is about case studies and practical examples that showcase the latest information on consumers, trends and technology in the shopping centre and retail environment.

### ■ ***In your opinion, what are the top retail trends to watch over the next few years?***

Various technology trends are definitely top of mind, including paperless invoice apps, drone delivery, etc. However for me, the most relevant and important is the focus on the consumer. Understanding the consumer in a lot more detail, not in generic terms and not by traditional demographics. I think this is going to become even more important going forward.

Then trends linked to food and/or experience. Customers are looking for new, for innovation, for different... and I think SA and the shopping centre industry will embrace these trends to meet the needs of the customer now and in years to come.



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Amanda Stops 26 Jan 2017



### ■ ***What are you most looking forward to on this year's programme?***

It is honestly hard to answer because I am genuinely looking forward to the entire event as each segment or speaker raises a new issue or brings to light new trends and information. However, to answer your question, I am looking forward to the feedback from our delegates. They are the ones who these events are tailored for and we use their views on the event to construct and improve on the next one.

## **ABOUT LAUREN HARTZENBERG**

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