



## **Christmas - Creating Experiences Over Discounts**

If you are of a certain age you will remember the rise of shopping malls. They were the nexus of commerce...the place to see and be seen.

Fast-forward to the cyber age and many tired malls have been bulldozed over by a wave of online shopping. Dire reports suggest that another 15 percent of existing malls will be lost in the next decade. That said, the top tier of US malls is prospering because they have gotten the message that "experiences matter."

With increasing numbers of Christmas purchases occurring online each year (56% expected this year), many mall executives pulled out the stops in 2014 by creating experiences and events designed to draw shoppers away from their keyboards and into mall display areas. Here are a couple of examples:

Frozen Ice Palace - Fans of the Disney Movie Frozen could enjoy the genius of the Disney Imagineers and their favorite movie characters, as shoppers engaged an immersive experience in a number of malls throughout the US.

Adventure to Santa - Dreamworks created a Shrek themed Santa Experience that debuted at a number of malls. The 2000 square foot interactive Shrek Village included a virtual sleigh to the

North Pole and a process of getting to see and have a picture taken with Santa through a reservation system that averted long lines.

In a recent CBS news story about the future of malls, Rick Caruso, the owner of high end Los Angeles mall "The Grove" said it best, "I think the future of a traditional indoor mall <has> big challenges. Somehow they have to create a real different experience. How do they differentiate themselves? You've got to wrap it around an experience, you've got to wrap it around service." By the way, at The Grove, if you spend \$450 or more this holiday season, they will wrap you into a free Uber ride and take you home.

There is a lesson in this for all of us... Value is driven not simply by price but through the creation of "craveable" experiences. Whether at work or at home this holiday season...may you create warmly memorable and richly human experiences for those you serve.

Merry Christmas and the best of Experiences in the New Year!



and the Michelli Experience Crew



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