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## It's a myth: Brick-and-mortar stores are dead

Vic Bagerla/Dubai Filed on March 29, 2017

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One distinct advantage of brick-and-mortar stores: shoppers find them more appealing because it paves for

interaction not only with the sales staff waiting for inquiries but also with the products.

divert consumers to online offers? All these and more only reflect the huge impact of the Internet of Things on the current and future condition of retail in the world. Retailers are at the brink of balancing the effects of advancements and planning future investments for in-store development.

Is digital shopping spelling the end of brick-and-mortar stores? Does e-commerce curtail the operation of physical shops and

The state of retail paradigm

Digital retailing surged with the rise of technology offering quicker and cheaper assortments and shipping services. But an AT Kearney report published last year showed that 90 per cent of retail sales were done in physical shops while 95 per cent of all retail sales were grabbed by businesses with brick-and-mortar. In the UAE, the latest trend is for brands to open flagship stores, which are equipped with smart and online features that enhance customer experience.

At present, Dubai is consistent in maintaining its position as one of the world's best shopping destinations. Around 55 per cent of international retailers are present in the emirate according to a research by CBRE. More malls and other mega projects will be seen rising across Dubai skyline in the years to come signifying that there is still no end to brick and mortar shopping despite the rise in e-commerce and online retail.

The edge of physical over digital and combining both

Omnichannel solutions are neutralising the difference between digital and physical stores as technology and analytics try to fuse the advantages of both markets in pushing business profits way higher. However, in a report released by Salesfloor in 2014, it was found out that 50 per cent of respondents viewed online shopping with the lack of service that in-store can provide. The presence of a sales staff is one of the biggest factors why shoppers still want to go to physical stores.

Omnichannel commerce is definitely a merger of physical and technological advantage. With this solution, consumers are given an avenue to acquire the benefits of personalised customer service and digital experience. Shoppers find brick-andmortar as more appealing because it paves for interaction not only with the sales staff waiting for inquiries but also with the products. It is an environment where people and can fit, feel and touch the product before spending money on it. Moreover, the sales associate can converse and share tips so the customer can evaluate his choice before buying.

it. Rather, he would share how arrogant the staff is or how inconvenient their chairs are. This is interactive consumer experience that proves brick and mortar is contributing to the sales transaction of an organisation. Moreover, a customer's experience in the brick-and-mortar is integral to letting him purchase because physical is the primary

When a customer enters a store, he will not share his experience on social media about the colour of the coffee or the taste of

step in a shopping journey. A customer then reads product reviews online then goes to the store to validate the description stated in the Web pages. Thus, physical stores help create and capture value and inspire them to buy the product of avail of the services.

The future of retail

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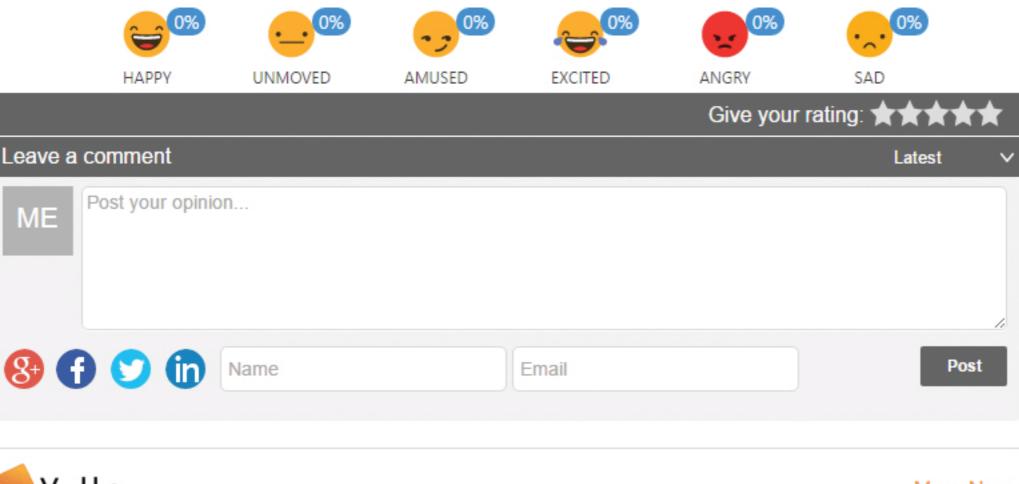
Combining both digital and physical advantages can give businesses the edge over their competitors. The combination allows them to move further forward to allow customers to shop where and when they please. Digital and physical shopping are not foes in business but the ability to merge their advantages are pivotal factors in pushing the figures forward.

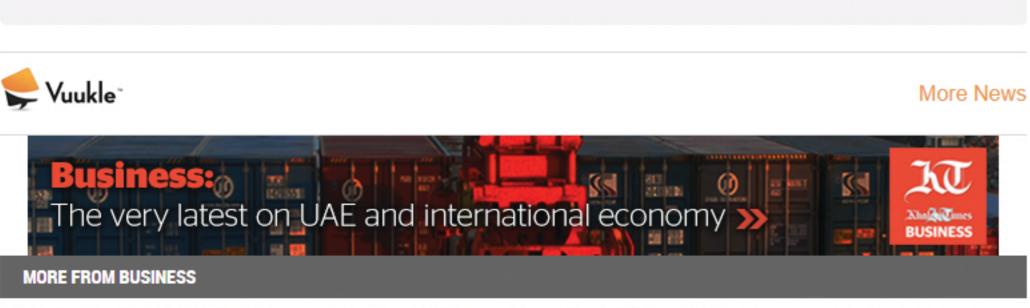
Successful retailers are those who take into their hands the ability to develop omnichannel strategies that maximise consumer services, satisfaction and profitability.

Over time, the retail sector will become an integration of digital resources and physical advantage. It is a strategy that will

address the needs of customer no matter how diverse and differentiated individual preferences are.

The writer is the CEO and CVO of Savant Data System. Views expressed are his own and do not reflect the newspaper's policy.





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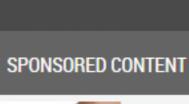
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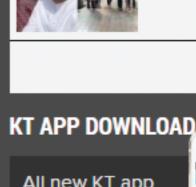


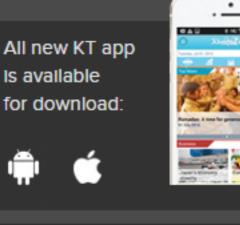
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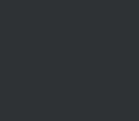
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