

# DISCUSSING RETAIL

**RETAIL DESTINATION** SPOKE TO RESORTS WORLD COMMERCIAL OPERATIONS MANAGER **ANAND BASU-ATTWOOD**, AND ART SOFTWARE GROUP DIRECTOR **GARETH JORDAN** ABOUT *THE RETAIL DISCUSSIONS: CENTRE MANAGEMENT SERIES WITH RETAIL ADVANTAGE*



the retail manager at Resorts World in Birmingham my primary role was to ensure that the brand partners were ready to trade ahead of the centre opening. Another key part of my role has been working with some of our commercial partners on a wider

ABOVE: RESORTS WORLD BIRMINGHAM USES RETAIL ADVANTAGE TO IDENTIFY TRENDS, AND HELP IDENTIFY BRANDS THAT NEED A LITTLE BIT OF ADDITIONAL SUPPORT

ABOVE LEFT: ANAND BASU-ATTWOOD AND ABOVE RIGHT: GARETH JORDAN

**Q: What was the idea behind the *RETAIL Discussions* series? Why will it be of interest to *Retail Destination* managers and landlords?**

**JORDAN:** RETAIL Discussions brings retail and leisure professionals together through personal experience and use of technology. Retail Advantage is recognised for helping managers and landlords create value from data. The retail landscape and its supported needs are always evolving, so it is good to talk about what is happening with tips to stay sharp and learn together. This digital series is about analysis and advice with shared insights and unique perspectives.

**Q: Anand, Can you give a bit of background on your role and expertise in the retail world and the perspective you will be bringing to the series?**

**BASU-ATTWOOD:** I started my life in retail as a part-time sales advisor whilst studying, and I quickly caught the bug and decided that I wanted to pursue a career and try and work my way up. I worked in some of the largest shopping centres in the UK on the one hand, whilst also experiencing great city centre locations through to setting up an event sale in a marquee at Cheshire Oaks. When I joined specialist outlet operator Realm as

scale across the portfolio, such as rolling out a new programme of mystery shopping or improving sales collation and communication, which is how I have worked closely with ART on their Retail Advantage platform over the past few years.

**Q: Can you give a bit more detail on the main topics that will be discussed and why they are going to be the point of focus for the series?**

**JORDAN:** Topics on the agenda include new behaviours, leasing strategies, and harnessing the explosion of data, which goes hand in hand to make the most successful retail destinations.

Whether you want to understand how to get more from the data you collect or learn more about how the industry is using smart tools to simply and quickly achieve connection and more community spirit, RETAIL Discussions is an opportunity to delve into the digital layer of place-making.

**Q: How would you define an active management style and why should landlords/centre managers take an active approach?**

**BASU-ATTWOOD:** To me, an active management style in the retail property sector is all about having



an intensive asset management model, led by a centre management team who are resourced and skilled to use the data properly. Across Resorts World and the wider Realm portfolio, this is clear through the policy of employing managers with a strong retail/hospitality background so they can understand what is going on from the analysis of the data, and then act on it to drive performance. By building the relationships with the brands and by using the commercial expertise of the management team, we can utilise local and market intelligence to improve the performance and encourage growth of the brands through a culture of collaboration.

**JORDAN:** Making bold decisions is much easier with the data behind you to support these changes. But the rewards won't come unless you are regularly adapting your strategy and communicating with the stores that you have working in the retail spaces in front of you.

An analogy that came up in conversation with the Realm team recently was fitness apps – incredibly effective, providing you actually take that walk or that bike ride. Using an agile toolset like Retail Advantage supports a huge difference in how you are able to fine-tune your retail or leisure destination and support trade, but the other key component to making a successful shopping hotspot is hands-on use of the information you have access to.

**Q: Can you talk a little bit about Retail Advantage and what it does, what benefits it can have for retail destinations?**

**JORDAN:** Retail Advantage emerged from a need to adapt to the changes in retail. Property landlords, as well as retail and leisure operators,

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**RETAIL ADVANTAGE ENABLES US TO SEE HOW EACH BRAND PARTNER IS PERFORMING**

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were finding it difficult to keep pace with changes in consumer spending and as a result, opportunities were being missed. Destination teams needed faster understanding in order to capitalise and adapt their strategies. Empowering all areas of mixed-use retail and leisure site management, we designed Retail Advantage to provide KPI analysis that helps grow sales, inform leasing and marketing decisions, assist operational excellence and attract and support brand partners.

**BASU-ATTWOOD:** Retail Advantage enables us to see how each brand partner is performing, at a granular daily level at Resorts World through to a macro, cross-centre, level for brands in multiple centres within our portfolio. This allows us to identify trends on both levels, and help identify brands that need a little bit of additional support at a centre level through things like focused marketing activity, social media pushes, sales and service training or even a fresh set of eyes on in-store visual merchandising. As an event-driven centre, one of the most useful tools on Retail Advantage for us has been the events calendar.

On a larger scale, we have also been able to use Retail Advantage to help us make long-term decisions about the future of the centre. We used the data from Retail Advantage to help us identify the brands that we wanted to retain, and in some cases relocate, whilst also identifying which part of the centre could be given over to leisure. This has resulted in the repurposing of part of the centre from retail to a brand new bowling alley, so far both the performance and the guest feedback have been better than forecast, while most of the retained retail brands have been performing extremely well too.

**The RETAIL Discussions: Centre Management Series with Retail Advantage will launch on [Retail Destination](#) and on [www.artsoftwaregroup.com](http://www.artsoftwaregroup.com)**

BELOW: RESORTS WORLD BIRMINGHAM ANALYSED DATA FROM RETAIL ADVANTAGE TO IDENTIFY WHICH AREA OF THE CENTRE COULD BE GIVEN OVER TO A BOWLING ALLEY

