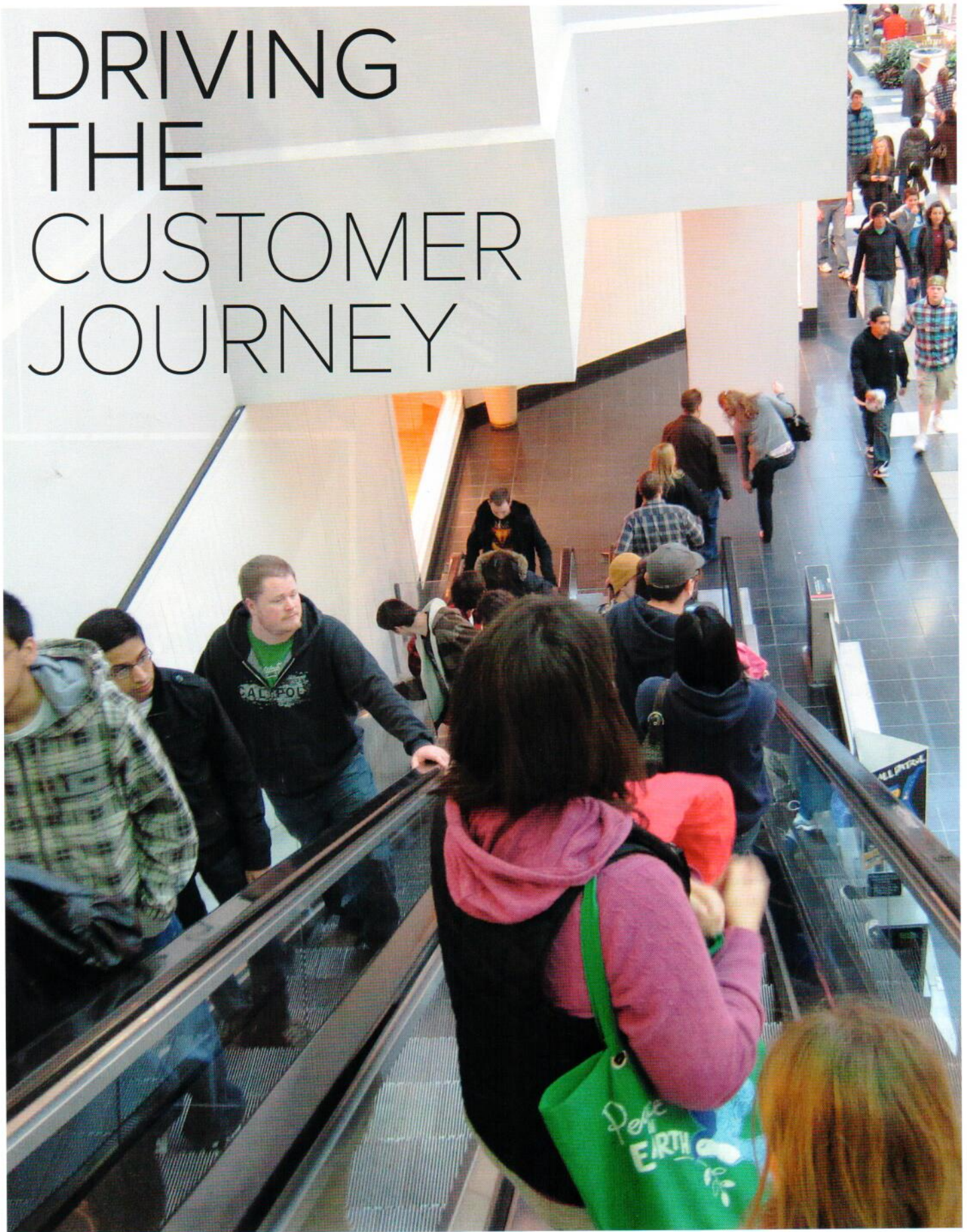


# DRIVING THE CUSTOMER JOURNEY



## OnBrand talks customer service

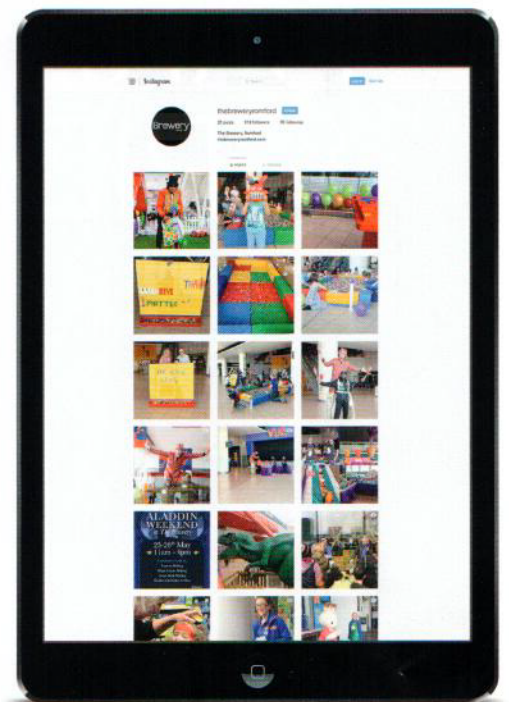
**H**appy customers mean full tills, a great reputation and motivated retailers and staff. It is the circle of shopping centre life. However, the satisfaction goes way further than some think: it is a full service, 24/7 requirement where all touchpoints must be joined up and work in harmony. So how can centres achieve this level of customer service and satisfaction?

"The five main things that people are looking for when they come to a shopping centre's website are: opening hours, store info, offers, car park info and centre info," says Michael Higgins, web developer at full-service marketing agency in the shopping centre arena, OnBrand. "As this is the most sought-after information to the user, it is important that this is easy to find from the home page of the website. To do this, we ensure that there is a very simple and easy to understand navigation menu."

First impressions count, which means it is crucial that customers have all the information they need quickly to hand. As recent research from OnBrand establishes, this means building a fully responsive, mobile-compatible website which shows these five pieces of information about a centre in plain sight.

"We use the top bar above the header to contain the opening hours and contact details so that they are always visible to the user whatever page they happen to be on," Higgins adds.

There will also be those who prefer to pick up the phone to get their information. The best course of action is an automated service to deal with the most common questions, offering five options and then providing some music for the caller while they wait. OnBrand advises that when pre-recording messages, the tone should be upbeat, friendly and the message should let your caller know about opening times and



shopmobility quickly. Hold time is also essentially an easy marketing spot and could be used to tell the caller about an upcoming event, keeping them occupied so they won't feel as though they are being kept waiting.

Once shoppers arrive at a centre, clearly signposted parking areas with transparent parking costs are a must, especially those new to a centre. Making sure that staff trained to offer relevant information in a friendly and concise way, and be willing to drop their daily task to go above and beyond are good marks of excellent customer service. Customer service is key but without it, the centre is equally as faceless as an online store.

Research by OnBrand has shown that customers respond so much better when there's music involved.

Piyush Patel, director of production at OnBrand, explains how music influences shopper behaviour: "The pace of the track can have a huge influence on how people move through your centre. On a quiet day, you might want to play something calm to slow shoppers down and increase dwell time, keeping your centre as full as possible. Likewise, when you get busy on a weekend, a nice quick beat can keep customers moving and improve the flow throughout."

Add to that some in-centre messaging with relevant information, and this joined up approach ensures you hit one of the main touchpoints in a customer journey.

And the customer journey lasts far longer than after a visit, most notably through social media, which can be used both as a tool to build the centre's brand, but also as a social listening device to ensure any online or social complaints are met. Customers have grown to expect a fast response, which is why it is important to work to strict service level agreement. Through this, it means that customers are always satisfied, and mystery shopper targets are always met.

