



Part 2: 2017's GLOBAL FOOTWEAR RETAIL CONFERENCE – DISRUPTIVE TECHNOLOGIES IN RETAIL

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Print personalised heels in 25 mins, send your customers text messages in store, virtual reality, Smart mirrors and Hackathons. This is part 2 of the highlights of the retail conference that Total Shoe Concept attended and supported last month in Hong Kong. Below are some of the exciting facts we came across.

The 2017 edition of GFRC returned to Fashion Access on 30 March 2017 in Hong Kong. Since the launch in 2015, the Global Footwear Retail Conference has been bringing together over 100 key footwear retailers to this annual meeting in Hong Kong to discuss on ground-breaking ideas, latest innovations, technologies and critical issues that are shaping the retail scene. The GFRC is an initiative of APLF.

Disruptive Technologies in retail

Claude-Eric Paquin President of the French Footwear Association mentions that most footwear retailers are facing major challenges like

- Fashion trends can no longer be anticipated,
- Seasons no longer exist
- New competitors are entering the market every day
- Consumers loyalty is disappearing
- C to C, a real alternative to traditional shopping
- Consumers want personalized, sustainable, cheaper and quality products all at the same time

But Claude-Eric also mentions the emergence of new technology can be an opportunity for footwear retailers:

- Live streaming: It can improve communication for customer
- Virtual reality: it can create new shopping experiences for customer
- 3D printing: it can help consumers to define their own product.

PRINT YOUR HEELS

Éram a French footwear retailer offer an exciting concept where customers can personalize their shoes and create and print their own heels . Have a look at the video below and on their website; [ERAM](#)

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PERSONALISE A SHOE THROUGH AN APP

And [Chamberlan](#) that allows you to create and personalise a shoe through an app on their website.

Also Ashok Jayaraman, Founder [www.Fashion-Disruptors.com](#) speaks of some exciting now retail innovations like

- **iBeacon Technology**; "...retail or other venues that have beacons in place can detect where a customer is at any given moment. Then the retailer can push timely messages to that customer promoting products or providing other useful information... Once inside, beacons can be used to make personalized offers, speed checkout processes and pretty much anything else the retailer can dream up." Read more about this at this article on forbes: [read more](#)
- **RTID Smart mirrors**, read more about this [here](#)
- **Hackathons**; Hackathons are the new way to push the boundaries of what you know and learn what you don't. It can take 1 or more days and it's typically a collaborative event where people make things out of hardware and software. These creations can push boundaries, solve problems and look really cool.
- **On site customization**
- **Mobile payments and self check outs**



Ashok also says there is **good news about retail..**

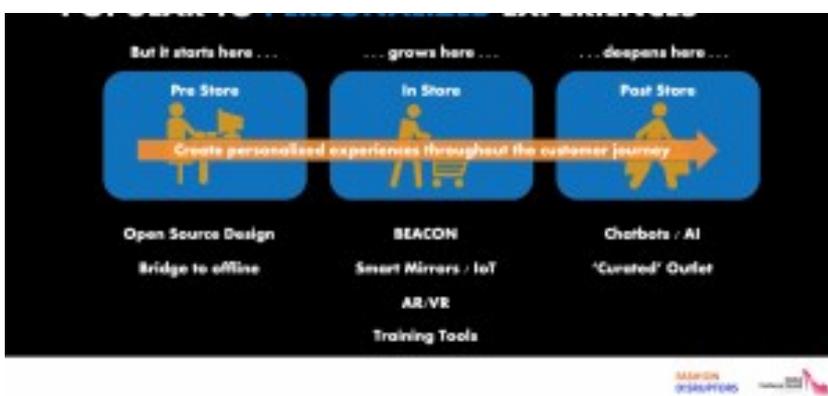
"The future of e-commerce is bricks & mortar. Online vs. Physical Store sales are not a zero-sum game but retail is in the middle of a transformative phase."

These companies started online but went to real stores - offline too:

- Bonobos <https://bonobos.com>
- Birch box <https://www.birchbox.co.uk>
- Warby Parker <https://www.warbyparker.com>
- Amazon <https://www.amazon.com>
- Blue Nile <https://www.bluenile.com/uk/>
- Adore me <https://www.adoreme.com>

Ashok says the key is to personalise the customer journey pre-store, in-store and post-store

In summary . . .
POPULAR TO PERSONALIZED EXPERIENCES



Pre – store	In-Store	Post-Store
<i>Initiate conversation & Build the bridge</i>	<i>Seamless transition & Personalise offering</i>	<i>Sustain experience & Deepen relationship</i>
Open source' design mentality, involve customers in the design proces	Create hyper localised offerings e.g. using Beacon technology	Offer round-the-clock customer service for example using chatbots in combination with human agents
Incentivise customers to visit stores e.g. pick up in store, exclusive coupons, events	Create personalised experiences using IoT devices like RFID enabled smart-mirrors	Improve the traditional 'outlet' experience by partnering up with flash sales companies
	Use retail spaces to create new experiences for customers e.g. hackathons to disrupt the creative. Production and distribution process	
	Enable onsite customisation like onsite design studios, customisation and virtually reality hardware	
	Eliminate barriers to purchase like alternative checkout methods as mobile payments and self-check outs	

Hava look at the website www.Fashion-Disruptors.com where you can find more blogs about cool innovations in the retail, footwear and fashion industry

Virtual reality

Also Sergio Dulio manager of ATOM group speaks about the disruptive technologies and he shows the exciting virtual reality technology that Atom is working on.

ATOM Lab is creating goggles that you can put on in store and through these goggles

you can actively create your shoe using your fingers.

This video shows what it's all about in 30 seconds (put your volume up!):



Talking about the post - store experience;

VIP.com and FASHION Mii

VIP.com is one of the biggest flash sale companies in China and Hilary Wang, Senior Director International VIPSHOP talks about their success and VIP.com claims they are 'winning through cooperation. VIP.com is looking forward to a fruitful long-term partnership with our brand partners and assisting overseas retail giants to release the full potential in the enormous Chinese Market. '

'Apart from standard marketing channels, such as EDM, Weibo, Wechat, SEM etc., to interact with our members, we also actively engage in a variety of marketing campaigns with our partners like:

- Celebrity endorsements to promote brands and drive sales
- In-depth cooperation with brands
- 300M members & personalized recommendations to enhance brand image
- Utilize social media to communicate brand story
- Multi-channel marketing to shape the brand and boost brand exposure '

Shirley Saylor, Vice President International Business Development, Fashion Mii (Another huge player in the Chinese industry) adds to Hilary's list to drive traffic;

- We target to meet "HENRY" - High Earners, Not Rich Yet;
- Communicate less but Communicate BETTER
- Storytelling
- Visually Appealing

THE SILVERS

Eddie Wong, Senior Research Associate Fung Global Retail & Technology interestingly highlights the 'new' consumer; 'the silvers'. You can read some more in dept articles through the links below.

The Silver Wave -

Understanding The Aging Consumer

<https://fungglobalretailtech.com/research/silver-wave-understanding-aging-consumer/>

The Silvers Series III -

<https://fungglobalretailtech.com/research/silver-wave-understanding-aging-consumer/>

Federico Brugnoli, Sustainability Consultant ASSOCALZATURIFICI talks about *The value of sustainability in the Footwear Supply Chain*. We believe this subject is of such importance we will dedicate a separate article to what was discussed in this conference. Stay tuned...

We hope you've taken some useful information from this article and perhaps visit APLF Hong Kong in 2018 and be part of the next footwear and retail conference!

<http://www.leatherfair.aplf.com/en-us/>

Go back to [PART 1: Global Footwear Retail Conference, charts and the influence of political changes](#)

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