



SACSC
South African Council
of Shopping Centres

MOMENTUM

THE YELLOW BRICK ROAD TO RETAIL'S FUTURE



DRAFT PROGRAMME

**SACSC ANNUAL
CONGRESS**

**DURBAN ICC
19-21 OCT 2026**

MOMENTUM

THE YELLOW BRICK ROAD TO RETAIL'S FUTURE



10h00 – 17h00

Registration
& Info Desk

10h00 – 20h30

Exhibition
Open

10h30 – 12h30

Delegate Bag
Collection

19 OCT
MONDAY

Retail Tours

07h30 – 13h15 **Retail Tours (Gateway Theatre of Shopping, Oceans Mall & Westown Square)**
(Registration for tour delegates at 06h30)

Speed Networking Lunch (13h00 - 14h00)

13h00 Connections create momentum. Step into a fast-paced networking experience designed to spark meaningful conversations. Meet fellow delegates from across the retail property industry, exchange fresh ideas, uncover new opportunities, and expand your professional network in an engaging, speed networking lunch on the go.

Session 1 (14h45 – 17h30)

14h45 **Congress Opens**

15h00 **SACSC Welcome**

15h15 **After the War**

2026 has been an unnecessarily turbulent year. It started so well, inflation was low, and rate cuts and growth were on the way. And then came the war. Oil rocketed, putting pressure on inflation, interest rates and growth. This should have been a short war, but it's getting longer. And the global economy's performance for the rest of the year depends on it. Where is South Africa in all of this?



Jeremy Gardiner

Director
NINETY ONE

16h10 **South Africa Wins Gold on the Global Retail Stage**

Team Braai-nary, comprising four BSc Property Studies students representing University of Cape Town, represented South Africa for the first time at the Future Retail Challenge, at the World Retail Congress 2026 in Berlin. Responding to a global brief focused on reimagining the role of the physical store in an AI-driven retail world, and one of seven teams / countries represented, South Africa ultimately took the win and brought home the GOLD.

Jamian Wiese

BSc (Hons) Property Studies, UCT

Mbalenhle Mokwena

BSc Property Studies, UCT

Senzwa Gum

BSc (Hons) Property Studies, UCT

Tumelo Magwane

BSc (Hons) Property Studies, UCT

16h50 **South Africa's Epic Overtake**

The shopping centre as we know it is dying – not from neglect, but from obsolescence. Consumers no longer need malls. And with agentic AI now shopping, comparing, and buying on their behalf, that need will only erode further. The centre's original promise — convenience and selection under one roof — has been handed to a smartphone. The centre of the future is not a shopping centre. It's the centre of something entirely new. Something better. Join renowned retail futurist Doug Stephens as he lays out a bold vision for what comes next.



Doug Stephens

Business Futurist | Retail Expert /
Founder & CEO
RETAIL PROPHET

17h30 – 20h00 **Networking Cocktail Party**

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20 OCT
TUESDAY

Session 2 (09h15 – 12h00)

09h15 Welcome Day 2

09h30 **Connection is Everything**

'Toto, I don't think we're in Kansas anymore'. Retail has changed as has the modern consumer. Connecting with them through authenticity, empathy, intimacy and community are key if we are to survive the tornado of disruption that continues to dominate the retail landscape.

Put on your glittery red shoes as we take an adventure through the values of the modern consumer and how retail can avoid the fate of the wicked witch...



Ken Hughes

Customer Experience Strategist

10h15 **Momentum Is Built, Not Found: Designing the Future of Retail Through Culture, Community, and Co-Creation**

In today's retail landscape, success is driven by relevance and strong community connections. As consumer expectations evolve, retail has become a destination for engagement, participation, and belonging. Melissa Gonzalez draws on global retail and experiential design insights to show how culture, community, and co-creation are shaping the future of retail. Delegates will gain practical strategies to create engaging retail environments, strengthen customer loyalty, foster meaningful partnerships, and embrace continuous learning to remain competitive in a rapidly changing marketplace.

Melissa Gonzalez

Retail Strategist | Principal, MG2
Advisory | Founder
THE LIONESQUE GROUP

11h15 **The Future of Customer Experience: From Sensory Merchandising to Sensory Accessibility**

This keynote explores how environments influence the way people shop, navigate, engage, and experience space. Drawing on global examples of sensory merchandising, customer experience, neuroscience, and accessibility, Joe and Meg demonstrate how lighting, sound, touch, spatial design, and other sensory elements shape perception, behaviour, and emotional connection. Combining complementary expertise, they provide practical insights into creating memorable, inclusive, and engaging environments that enhance customer experience, reduce barriers, strengthen connections, and support business objectives.



Joe Baer

Founder and CEO
ZENGENIUS



Meg Lefeld

Director of Business
Development
ZENGENIUS

12h00 **Lunch**

Session 3 (13h15 – 14h45)

13h15 **The Longevity Racetrack: Seizing the Opportunities in Retail & Real Estate**

Longevity science is emerging as one of the greatest business opportunities of our time, transforming how leaders, retailers and property owners prepare for the future. As people live longer, healthier lives, ageing consumers are driving demand for wellness, convenience, community and meaningful experiences. Retail destinations are evolving into lifestyle ecosystems that integrate healthcare, hospitality and wellbeing, creating new opportunities for innovation and growth. At the same time, executives must invest in their own longevity to sustain performance and lead effectively. Organisations that embrace these shifts early will be best positioned to thrive in the rapidly expanding longevity economy.



Dr Catherine Davies

Medical Doctor, Lecturer, Author

13h50 **From Township Hustle to Retail Innovative Brand**

In this inspiring solo presentation, Lesego Gumede shares the journey of building Sneaker Cleanic from a carport into a growing retail service brand. His story reflects the true meaning of momentum: starting with limited resources, using innovation to solve real customer problems, building community trust, and turning setbacks into fuel for growth. Through the lens of courage, heart and strategy, Lesego will take the audience through the realities of township entrepreneurship, the lessons behind building a customer-focused retail business, and the mindset needed to keep moving forward. This is a story of hope, transformation and proving that powerful retail brands can be built from anywhere.



Lesego Gumede

Founder
SNEAKER CLEANIC

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14h15

Brand, Purpose and Growth: The GalxBoy Journey

From a bold vision born in South Africa to one of the country's most recognisable streetwear brands, GalxBoy has redefined what it means to build a brand with purpose, culture and ambition. Join us for an engaging conversation with Kegomoditswe Sethosa, CEO of GalxBoy, as he shares the story behind the brand's remarkable rise, the challenges of scaling a proudly local business, and the mindset required to stay relevant in an ever-changing retail landscape.



Kegomoditswe
Sethosa
CEO
GALXBOY

14h45

Refreshment break

Session 4 (15h30 – 16h45)

15h30

Accelerating the Future of Commerce. How intelligent technology is redefining retail success.

Artificial intelligence is reshaping retail, transforming how businesses operate, compete and grow. As commerce platforms become increasingly connected, the integration of payments, operations, customer insights and intelligent decision-making is creating new opportunities to improve efficiency, personalise experiences and drive growth. This session explores how AI-powered ecosystems are redefining the retail landscape, why technology is becoming a key competitive advantage, and what business leaders need to understand to prepare for the next phase of commerce.

Speaker TBA

16h00

From Strategy to Scale: Building Momentum That Lasts

Retail leaders don't build momentum by standing still. They create it by anticipating change, challenging convention and consistently delivering experiences that keep customers coming back. In this thought-provoking session, discover the strategies, decisions and mindset that enable leading retailers to remain agile in a rapidly evolving market. From innovation and customer insight to operational excellence and long-term growth, gain practical lessons on how sustained momentum is created, maintained and accelerated.

Speaker TBA

16h30

Day 2 Wrap up

18h30 – 22h30

Offsite social event

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21 OCT
WEDNESDAY

Session 5 (09h00 – 11h00)

09h00	Welcome Day 3	
09h15	Malls: A Vital Pit-stop for SA's Consumer Class! The work we do focuses on the 'consumer class' of South Africa, i.e. the 14 million adults living in 'taxpaying households' that earn more than R10K per month. They take home, and spend, more than 85% of formal income in the country. My presentation will give an overview of who exactly these people are, how the segment has grown and shifted in the recent past, how they are doing financially, what their hopes and dreams are, what the major consumer trends are that shape their lives and, of course, where mall and mall culture fits into their aspirant lives. When you know all of that, it's a lot easier to work out what they want their pot of gold to look like at the end of the rainbow!	 Brandon de Kock Director of Storytelling BRANDMAPP
09h50	Innovation That Scales, Impact That Endures Discover how a groundbreaking South African retail concept is redefining convenience, affordability and sustainability through smart refill technology. By combining digital innovation, circular economy principles and strategic collaboration, this model is reducing plastic waste while expanding access to essential goods for underserved communities. Explore how scalable innovation can deliver measurable commercial, environmental and social impact – and why circular retail is fast becoming a blueprint for the future.	Speaker TBA
10h25	From Product to Movement: How Challenger Brands Create Cultural Movement Discover how bold brands move beyond selling products to shaping culture. This session explores how purpose, community and authentic storytelling can transform an emerging business into a movement that captures attention, builds loyal advocates and challenges established players. Gain fresh insight into creating emotional connections, inspiring participation and building a brand that people don't just buy from—they believe in and champion.	Speaker TBA
11h00	Brunch	

Session 6 (12h15 – 14h00)

12h15	Beyond the Transaction: Creating Retail Experiences that Captivate Retail is no longer just about transactions—it is about attention, engagement and experiences worth sharing. As social commerce reshapes consumer expectations, shopping centres must evolve from places to buy into destinations to discover, connect and be entertained. This session explores how the most successful retail environments are borrowing from the world of content, community and digital influence to create memorable experiences that keep customers returning.	Speaker TBA
13h00	Lead the Momentum: Transforming Challenges into Opportunity Momentum isn't just about moving forward—it's about creating the energy that inspires lasting change. Discover how courageous leadership, fresh thinking and purposeful action can accelerate innovation, strengthen teams and unlock new opportunities. Learn how to build momentum that aligns people, ideas and strategy, empowering your organisation to adapt, lead with confidence and turn today's challenges into tomorrow's competitive advantage.	Speaker TBA
13h45	Congress wrap up	
14h00	Congress close	