

dialogue



23.

Talking about...
How leisure grabs
us with experience

The Mix: Reviving the Modern City
Retail: How to Engage Consumers
The Avenues: Shopping Redefined
Research: Brand Awareness Survey

A Gensler publication

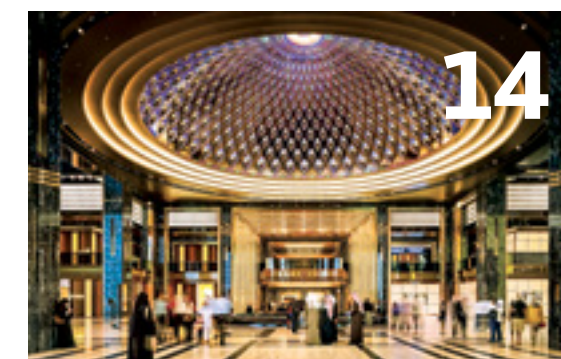
Cities are actively investing in infrastructure and amenities. There's a return to urbanism. And it gains momentum as cities create more livable, walkable, civic environments.

Elva Rubio, design principal, Gensler Chicago

There's an app for "walkability." As our smartphones make us more aware of what's around us, they're changing how we use our cities. Unraveling the labyrinth of transit, our phones help get us to places we experience on foot. Once there, an urbane new mix grabs our attention—the standout destinations are complex and four-dimensional, an experiential armature of settings and activities. Even sports venues figure as engines of regeneration that anchor urban life. Tech and transit tether it all together, but today's walkable cities unfold one great place at a time.

ON THE COVER:
Interior of Japan's new Izu Velodrome, a world-class wood cycling track training and competition venue.

opposite, clockwise from top:
Topshop, Los Angeles;
Izu Velodrome; The Avenues,
Kuwait City.



Features

2
The Reimagined City
Mixed use, closely linked to transit, is the way that cities put their destinations on the map now to spur growth.

10
Retail: A Design Dialogue
Retailers are on the front lines of consumer trends. We got under the hood to learn how design helps keep their edge.

22
Banking on Experience
As retail banking moves to the cloud, Chase's new branch bank gives customers a place to anchor the relationship.

25
A Breakthrough Branch
PNC's net-zero branch bank in Fort Lauderdale makes PNC the benchmark of sustainable high performance in retail banking.

26
Brands: Only Connect
Gensler's new brand awareness survey reveals that every touch-point matters if the goal is to connect with consumers.

Departments

14
Case Study: The Avenues
Kuwait City's newly expanded retail destination is redefining the shopping experience in the Gulf and internationally.

29
Leisure & Lifestyle Research
Our researchers are investigating how technology changes the leisure experience and leisure's growing impact on cities.

30
First Person: YUM!'s KFC
YUM!'s Dyke Shipp on the challenges that legacy brand KFC faces staying relevant to its customers in 120 countries.

32
News + Views
A velodrome in Japan trains champions. SFO brings light to Terminal 3. And Nokia helps spark innovation in London.

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ONLINE CONTENT

1

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2

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MIXED USE

+

THE
REIMAGINED
CITY



Cities large and small are turning to mixed use to renew or fuel growth and provide the urbanity—supported by new infrastructure and amenities—on which their economic future depends.

BY VERNON MAYS

After suffering a black eye in the latter half of the 20th century, cities are back. A shift in demographics, the need for housing, demand for office space, and a clamor for retail and entertainment options all portend well for urban districts that include a range of uses and mix them in close proximity. “Cities are actively investing in infrastructure and amenities,” says Gensler’s Elva Rubio. “There’s a return to urbanism. And it gains momentum as cities create more livable, walkable, civic environments.”

In Chicago, the wave of improvements began with major infrastructure investment, and then led to the creation of Millennium Park. Now the city is focusing its attention on the 50-acre Navy Pier. The Midwest’s most

visited tourist destination—hosting 9 million+ visitors in 2011—Navy Pier is undergoing a huge transformation aimed at broadening its appeal and expanding its viability as a year-round attraction. “Gensler created the vision for the pier,” says Rubio. “From that we developed a master plan comprised of several different projects. Now we oversee everything that is going on there—from landscape to special projects, collaborating with other architects.”

The firm has reimagined the mixed-use project as a gathering place for Chicago-area residents and tourists alike, with better connections to pedestrian and bike paths along Lake Michigan and to adjacent neighborhoods. The competition-winning

opposite: Chicago’s Navy Pier builds on the success of nearby Millennium Park, adding an array of retail, cultural, and hospitality offerings.

below: Proposed new uses for the 50-acre Navy Pier include a boutique hotel and venues for nighttime entertainment.



landscape by James Corner Field Operations, designers of New York's celebrated High Line, complements a broader vision of the pier that calls for an expanded Chicago Children's Museum, a larger facility for the Chicago Shakespeare Theater, new nighttime entertainment attractions, and upgraded retail and restaurants. "We're working to make Navy Pier a civic place," says Rubio.

Driven by retail

While Chicago's lakefront and its entertainment potential are strong attractions, other cities are banking on the rise of walkable urbanism to spark new mixed-use developments. Take OliverMcMillan's River Oaks District, a retail-focused development now under way in Houston. Covering six city blocks in an affluent neighborhood, it will add new housing, office space, and 270,000 square feet of luxury and boutique retail lining shade-covered streets. "It's about creating a city street-like pedestrian district that's activated 24/7 by the mix, including new offices and some 300 new residences," Gensler's Duncan Paterson explains.

River Oaks has been significantly recalibrated for a changing market, notes Gensler's Marty Borko. "OliverMcMillan took it from a highrise to a 'city neighborhood' pattern, with retail at the base and office and residential above." For Houston, some retail and restaurant tenants want two-story spaces, often with dramatic interiors and roof terraces, while others are looking for more intimate spaces, some as small as 600 square feet. "When you put them together," Borko says, "it gives River Oaks a much more interesting streetscape."

Sparkling renewal

US cities large and small are embracing mixed use as a catalyst for revitalization. In Hartford, Connecticut, for example, Gensler is working with a developer team on a proposed mixed-use district in the area between the XL Center arena and Hartford's historic railroad station. Transit

WHAT'S CHANGING IN

Mixed Use

- Walkable, anchoring urban-scale districts
- Linked to transit hubs
- Incorporating a much richer mix of activities



Established US cities and emerging urban centers in Asia are banking on the rising importance of walkable urbanism to sustain new mixed-use developments.

clockwise, from top left: The JW Marriott and The Ritz-Carlton Tower at L.A. LIVE; FIGat7th in Los Angeles; the River Oaks District in Houston; and young shoppers at Topshop's grand opening event at LA's The Grove.

is a key component driving the downtown project, whose goal is to remove outdated buildings and stimulate a wide variety of activity within the "walkshed" of a recast Union Station, envisioned as a hub for commuter rail and bus service. Likewise, in Indianapolis, the city believed so strongly in the future of the 14-acre CityWay development that it financed a construction loan to push the project ahead. Developer Buckingham Companies' new urban neighborhood combines restaurants, offices, upscale residences, and The Alexander, a Gensler-designed, 209-room hotel that makes fine art a feature.

Department stores can be found in many US cities' downtowns, notes Gensler's Kathleen Jordan. They stand to benefit from walkable urbanism—and are doing so in some markets. Elsewhere, "they often seem frozen in time: well maintained, but dated in their decor; convenient, but not compelling," she says. "To attract a younger, urban clientele, these forgotten flagships need to reconnect with the city life around them."

An innovative approach to mixed use is being taken in San Francisco, where Forest City is leading the redevelopment of a 4.5-acre, mixed-use site currently anchored by the mid-1920s San Francisco Chronicle Building. Aimed at the city's buoyant, tech-fueled economy, the 5M Project redefines large-scale mixed use in light of local precedents like the SoMa and Mission districts. "It's in the heart of the city's transit corridor, a location that can support high density," says Gensler's Lewis Knight. "The premise is that a tighter, more diverse mix of uses will spur breakthrough innovation and deliver greater economic benefit."

Growing new communities

In many Asian cities, particularly in China, explosive population growth and migration from rural areas continue to demand large-scale developments. "Mixed use is the best strategy for creating them," notes Gensler's Shamim Ahmadzadegan. "You can't ignore the local context and community preferences. You need to provide the elements, including green space, that engage people and resonate with their tastes and needs."

Cultural amenities are also becoming a requirement in these walkable mixed-use projects, especially as the Chinese government presses developers to provide appropriate settings for art and music. Gensler's proposed Hongqi Hegou transportation Hub in Chongqing, for example, is both an important transit center for the city and a destination that mixes cultural facilities and an elevated urban park with entertainment, retail, office, and residential uses.

A rising standard of living for large numbers of Chinese citizens also has generated a robust market for high-end retail and resorts, which is fueling rapid growth along the Cotai Strip in Macau. There, Gensler is at work on a 3.5-million-square-foot integrated resort for Las Vegas Sands Corporation called The Parisian. It's a mini-district in itself, with 3,000 hotel rooms, a casino, retail, restaurants, and theaters.

"Sands' idea for mixed use is to make entertainment the anchor, combining a rich variety of experiences in a compelling, exciting environment," says Gensler's Andy Cohen. "These integrated resorts take people to a whole new realm. That's their appeal."

The resurgence of urban centers and an understanding of the synergy they require are leading many cities to plan new developments in the transit-served, amenity-rich downtown core.



above, from top: Shenbei Arena is the heart of a new urban district in China. Coex, in Seoul, is a retail center being remade on a civic scale.

opposite: Shanghai's planned South Bund Kunyang Town takes full advantage of the city's waterfront. Across the Huangpu River, the Shanghai Tower completes the world's first transit-served, super-highrise mixed-use district.

Headed downtown

The resurgent popularity of urban centers and a better understanding of the synergy they require are leading many cities to locate large new developments in the transit-served, amenity-rich downtown core. "A vital connection to transit helps integrate them with their communities," says Gensler's Tom Ito, citing Gensler projects in China, India, and Latin America. "As with US cities, it's a sustainable move that helps alleviate traffic congestion and pollution." One such project is Parque Arauco in Santiago, Chile—redeveloping an aging mall as a mixed-use district with office towers and hotels to complement expanded retail offerings. Elsewhere in Latin America, security concerns mean that customers arrive and depart by car in a protected setting, says Gensler's Michael Gatti. "Personal safety is paramount."

The renewed popularity of urban living is bringing new categories, like professional sports, downtown. "Long gone are the days of putting a sports facility at the edge, in a sea of parking," says Gensler's Ron Turner. "Even older European cities now find ways to make room for new arenas at close-in locations." Each of Gensler's current sports venues is a major part of a larger mixed-use project, he notes. In China, the new 18,000-seat Shenbei Arena in Shenyang will be a catalyst for future growth of the Shenbei City area that the arena anchors. On a similar note, creating a central gathering place for downtown Seoul is a key intention

ONLINE CONTENT



DEPARTMENT STORE REVIVAL
Kathleen Jordan's six-part *GenslerOn* series looks at department stores: why and how they're coming back.

Click the above icon to view this online, or go to <http://bit.ly/k-jordan>

of Gensler's work on Coex, an existing 900,000-square-foot retail center that is Asia's largest below-grade mall. Despite its size, Coex was largely hidden within an enormous mixed-use complex that includes a convention center, hotels, office towers, and a large subway station. "This is a major cross-roads," says Paterson. "Our view is that this isn't a freestanding mall, it's virtually a district of the city. Coex is the connective tissue." Gensler is reworking visitor circulation, improving entry points, creating new gathering spaces, and opening the primary focal points to daylight and views, to remake Coex as a highly visible civic space on the order of Rockefeller Plaza.

Building stronger economies

With its strong economy, Turkey is investing heavily in urban infrastructure befitting its new standing. "Istanbul is a world destination," says Borko. "Mixed-use development is preferred there, because it lets the city and its visitors mix business with pleasure." After doing the concept master plan for the 170-acre Istanbul Financial Center, Gensler is now planning the 370-acre Istanbul Seven Gardens development. It mixes office, retail, and hospitality with 4,000 residential units and 150 acres of recreational open space, including Istanbul's first theme park.

Establishing a strong sense of place is intrinsic to Gensler's approach. "Placemaking is the heart of great mixed use," says Gensler's David Glover. Taking commerce, entertainment, and events as the raw materials, "we orchestrate an array of physical elements and programmatic sequences to create a compelling experience. It's a complex alchemy." Done well, it produces real places—identifiable, vibrantly successful, and truly valued by the community. "People want to be there," he adds. "For mixed use, that's always the most important thing."

Vernon Mays is a Gensler senior editor and a contributing editor at *Architect* magazine.



right: Featuring a collection of fine art, The Alexander hotel benefits a new 14-acre neighborhood in Indianapolis.



UNDER THE HOOD:

RETAIL

Retailers are on the front lines of consumer trends. To understand how they keep their edge, we got “under the hood” with five designers with deep roots in the sector.

BY MIMI ZEIGER



AARON BIRNEY
Retail design director,
Gensler Los Angeles.



ANDREW BORNAND
Digital experience director,
Gensler San Francisco.



OWAIN ROBERTS
Retail design director,
Gensler London.



ALAN ROBLES
Experience designer,
Gensler Los Angeles.



KATE RUSSELL
Retail design director,
Gensler New York.

top: Gensler's design for Liz Claiborne is just one of the shop-in-shop rollouts the firm has created for JCP.

How is the focus on customer experience changing retail?

Kate Russell: Retailers address the whole experience of the customer's life. That has many implications. For example, the categories of specialty retail used to be much more defined, but that's not true now. You have to understand the products that are typically shown together, but also suggest how they might merge and what happens when there's a bit of everything in a space.

It's not just that categories that don't seem to go together are converging, but that the experience components of art, food, and fashion are also starting to come together.

I see a lot of department stores that abandoned food 40 years ago and are now thinking of how to incorporate it. They've seen the success of many different purveyors of experience in food, such as Eataly in New York and the Mercado in Spain, that have large gourmet departments of kitchen things and fresh food—quick, chic food on the go. American department stores are

starting to look at food in a new way because they see successful examples in Japan and South Korea of how to incorporate fresh food and make it part of the experience. In London, they see Harrods—the classic example of a department store with a gourmet food hall. But they also see smaller US retail establishments that make the café and fresh, organic food an integral part of the design—distinguishing them experientially from other stores that just put a coffee shop inside and call it a day.

What's the place of technology in today's retail experience?

Alan Robles: The realignments between online and in the store are the most significant change I'm seeing in retail right now. Can customers check themselves out? What's their online experience in the store? Some retailers limit what you can buy with soft checkout, using your smartphone, but others let you buy anything you want—you can wait and it will be there in an hour.

Owain Roberts: It's very hard to impress people with technology nowadays because it's omnipresent. It's tempting to put smart devices or their content in stores, but the customers already have it on their phones. Technology works best when you don't see it, when it's intuitive, when it helps the retail experience but it's not shouting at you. When you incorporate it in a retail environment, it can't be just a gimmick.

Andrew Bornand: The thing about technology is it becomes obsolete quickly, so the cost of creating an experience that depends on it has to pay for itself in a very short time. That's why most retailers would rather let customers use their own smartphones as the point of interaction, rather than have to install something in the store. But a smartphone can only do so much. It doesn't



lend itself to viewing luxury products or high-ticket items. For those, you really need to see a bigger picture or greater detail to be engaged.

KR: I advocate using technology only when it does something that you can't do in another way. If you can do without it, you probably should. I agree that the best technology is seamlessly integrated, enhancing the experience without people noticing that it's there. If there's an interactive component, it needs to be unique—something you can't experience anywhere else. That's when it becomes interesting.

Andrew B: Uniqlo's new San Francisco store has what it calls a “magic mirror”—while looking in it, you put on a jacket, for example, and you use gestures to change the color. And that jacket, in all those colors, is just a few steps away. In a sense, it's replicating what you could do without a “magic mirror,” but it's engaging—something newer and better than you could find elsewhere. It positions Uniqlo as the technology leader. That mirror was all over the media when the store opened—it was so out of the ordinary.

Aaron Birney: Retailers often want to localize their stores, which can be prohibitively costly. Technology can help with that, providing a way to create a place-specific or personalized message. Microsoft is a good example: the digital ribbon in its stores creates synergy with the online experience. It tells stories about the products, and—by incorporating local scenery and landmarks—helps tie each store to its community with locally relevant messages.

KR: The opposite of just adding technology for the sake of technology is addressing service as a really important component of any retail setting. Even more than a digital experience, service is a way to get a more personal experience into a space. And the expectation of service as a differentiator happens at every price point now.



above: Uniqlo San Francisco creates a compelling multilevel retail experience that mixes the real and digital.

above right: Technology adds to the customer experience at Aetrex, Englewood Cliffs, NJ.

left: In Los Angeles, Dylan's Candy Bar appeals to everyone's sweet tooth.

ONLINE CONTENT



RETAIL REWIRED
Gensler's Barry Bourbon and Resource's Dan Shust on retail's real/digital collision, a *GenslerOn* post and SXSW presentation.

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What's causing people's service expectations to change?

KR: It used to be that if you were shopping at the high end, you expected a certain level of service because you were spending a zillion dollars. Today, people shopping at much lower tiers of retail expect service to be part of the experience. Because of the shift in the economy and the way people look at parting with their money, it's no longer a tiered system. Instead of thinking, "I'm shopping here because this is all I can afford," the attitude is, "If I'm going to give you my money, you're going to give me something nice in return."

For lower-end brands, that expectation of service—providing a nicety like free tailoring, for example, or a personal shopping service—is new. Whatever that nicety is, the smart brands at that price point are separating themselves from their competitors by figuring out what's right for them and how to offer it to their customers.

OR: As customers, we're not only expected to invest our hard-earned cash on products, but now we have to invest our hard-earned free time. Everyone understands that online shopping is immensely convenient, that you can shop at any time of the day and anywhere in the world thanks to smartphones and technology. But shopping is more than just a transaction of cash for a product. It's about meaningful connections.

KR: There has to be an experience that connects with the customer. The idea of drawing people into the theater of retail rather than having them do it online is something that every brand struggles with: what should that experience be? When I look at how a brand sits in the marketplace—how it compares in price with other brands versus how it's actually viewed by customers at large—I look for what really differentiates the brand in their minds and how best to get that across.



As retail designers, how do you approach luxury and authenticity?

Aaron B: Luxury is always in the eye of the beholder, so defining it in a broader sense hinges on a shared sense of the difference between luxury and something less. Take leather versus vinyl: you can't fake real leather, because it has a completely different message than vinyl, down to the scent.

The way the seams are detailed and the sheer materiality of leather communicate luxury. As designers, we have to make sure that we're speaking the same language as our clients and their customers. We have to arrive at a shared set of core principles.

AR: As the design develops and constraints arise, we often find clients fighting for the concepts that convey these core principles in the most authentic way. Authenticity is frequently how luxury differentiates itself.

Aaron B: Authenticity can elevate a brand at any price point. Take El Pollo Loco, the quick-serve restaurant chain. Its restaurants make the effort to cut their own fresh salsa and marinate their own chicken—the food isn't coming frozen off a truck. Some of the grillmasters have been with the restaurants for 20 years. They have a following, like chefs at "name" restaurants. As designers, we look for these nuggets of authenticity—things that are as memorable to the people who work there as they are to their

customers. If we can bring them forward in the design, the resulting sense of authenticity helps set the brand apart. Authenticity is really accrued experience. Experience of a brand is personal, yet communities of customers share it. What they share, stretched and pulled by every new generation, is what prompts reinvention. But it has to ring true every time.

Mimi Zeiger is a contributing editor at *Architect* magazine.



above: Topshop's Los Angeles store offers complimentary personal shoppers, VIP fitting rooms, and concierge service.

left: Fine home goods sold at Hudson Grace in San Francisco have a gallery-like appearance.

ONLINE CONTENT



TOPSHOP DEBUTS IN LOS ANGELES
Topshop's opening in LA drew 50,000 people. On *GenslerOn*, Irwin Miller narrates his short film of the event.

Click the above icon to view this online, or go to <http://bit.ly/i-miller>



The open layout of the Microsoft Surface Pop-Up Store in Manhattan.



TALK TOWN OF THE

BY VERNON MAYS

Kuwait City's The Avenues was envisioned as an urbane, walkable shopping experience that its teeming Grand Avenue expresses perfectly.



The Avenues, Kuwait City's newly expanded retail destination, is redefining the shopping experience in the Gulf and internationally, adding urbanity to the retail experience.

Shopping in Kuwait looks different than it does in the West. It's more social. In Kuwait, groups of people arrange to meet at shopping centers and stroll through together—almost like spending a leisurely day at the park. With alcoholic drinks off the menu, entertainment consists mostly of shopping and dining out. Keeping that experience fresh and new is a huge challenge.

So when Gensler was asked by Kuwait-based developer Mabaneer to embark on a massive expansion of The Avenues, creating what has become the main retail area of Kuwait City, these cultural facts of life demanded a new design approach. The 900,000-square-foot addition, which opened in late 2012, feels more like a city than a retail center. Its rich variety of urban spaces and architectural forms creates an engaging, multilayered setting that attracts a wide range of shoppers, holds their attention, and keeps them coming back for more. There's nothing else quite like it.

Located in the city's Al Rai district, The Avenues opened in 2007 with 230 retail units in its first phase. Phase II was completed a year later, providing 200 more luxury shops and outdoor dining spots. As

Mabaneer Chairman Mohammed A. Alshaya explains, The Avenues is a key project in a national plan "to transform Kuwait into a business center and trade region." The Gensler-designed Phase III expansion adds more than 400 stores and 40 cafés and restaurants. "After Alshaya searched the world for a design partner, he concluded that Gensler had both the design sensibility and expertise to create the largest shopping destination in Kuwait," says Gensler's Andy

Cohen. "It was a great relationship from the very start."

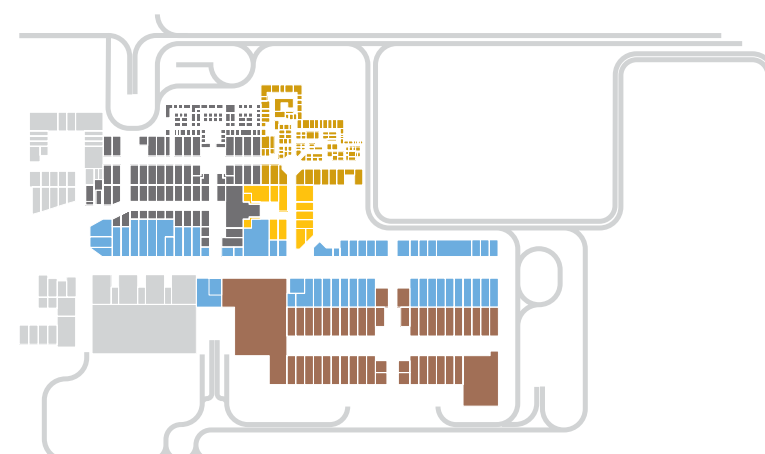
Alshaya was a key collaborator in generating the idea for a walkable, urban shopping experience. "He had a clear vision of what he wanted—a major thoroughfare similar to the Champs-Élysées or Rodeo Drive, where people can walk along a promenade and enjoy the sense that they're outdoors," says Gensler's Chris Johnson. The Avenues'

GRAND AVENUE

above: The retail façades along Grand Avenue reflect a mix of styles, like a city streetscape that has evolved over many years.

opposite: Shopping is a social activity in Kuwait and Grand Avenue provides numerous stopping points where people can easily meet up.

THE AVENUES: EACH DISTRICT IS A UNIQUE EXPERIENCE



- GRAND AVENUE
- THE MALL
- PRESTIGE
- SOKU
- THE SOUK

(NOTE: Bazaar district is underground)





SOKU



above: An upper-level lounge offers views of the active streetscape below.

left: The hip SoKu district appeals to young, trendy shoppers with its industrial loft look.

latest phase changes the game for retail centers globally. Applying the tools of urban planning to the project type enables it to make a quantum leap in scale, notes Gensler's Tariq Shaikh. "It's not sufficient today just to assemble a huge collection of brands in one location," he says. "That's why we designed The Avenues for urbanity, building on the principles of placemaking."

Finding precedents

Before planning the expansion, Gensler's design team set off on a wide-ranging research exercise to study the world's most iconic retail settings. Many celebrated shopping locations—including Paris, London, New York, Istanbul, Milan, and Tokyo—were sketched, photographed, and analyzed in an effort to redefine contemporary retail by examining how urban retail has succeeded in the past. "We looked at character, atmosphere, and place, and then turned our attention to proportion, materiality, and finishes," Gensler landscape architect Peter Sheard recounts.

With their research as a springboard, the designers explored options for a central promenade based on historical precedents like Barcelona's sinuous Las Ramblas and Copenhagen's highly walkable Strøget. The intention was to create a monumental

SOCIAL CENTERPIECE

425m

Length of the new promenade in the Grand Avenue district.

EXPONENTIAL GROWTH

400+

Number of new stores added in Phase III of The Avenues.

shopping destination that appears to have evolved incrementally. In the end, the prototype of a Parisian boulevard won the day, inspiring Grand Avenue, the main pedestrian spine and largest retail district. Lined with an impressive roster of retail brands and populated with towering palms, it stretches longer than four football fields.

Adding character

To humanize the center's scale and make it easy for shoppers to navigate, Gensler divided the project into distinct districts. Grand Avenue establishes the overarching theme, featuring retail façades that blend European, regional, and contemporary styles. "That gives the streets their particular character," says Sheard. "Each district is

designed to have a character all its own, which is part of the entertainment aspect of The Avenues—the fact that you can experience different atmospheres within the same retail center, rather than having one formula applied throughout."

The other districts include The Mall, which links the new addition to the existing sections and provides a wide selection of fashions and jewelry. The SoKu—South of Kuwait—district borrows from New York's SoHo with an urban vibe and numerous cafés, bistros, and eateries to attract young, trendy consumers. The subterranean Bazaar district, with 34 retail units amid vaulted walkways and colonnaded shops, draws inspiration from Istanbul's Grand

Bazaar. The Prestige district, with its soaring central dome, is home to high-end brands. Small retailers thrive in The Souk, a district whose old-style buildings and narrow streets invoke the region's traditions.

Differences in the size and scale of the circulation paths also lend richness and variety to the scene. The Prestige district, for example, is generously proportioned with high-end finishes. "It exudes luxury," Gensler's George Miller-Ramos says. "The combination of traditional elements and contemporary elements creates a framework for the brands that lets them shine through."

Grand Avenue is the widest pedestrian thoroughfare in The Avenues, 22 meters



THE MALL



above: The Avenues' distinct districts deliver a rich variety of shopping experiences.

left and below: Contemporary architecture provides a clean, minimalist backdrop in The Mall, allowing each brand to stand out.



PRESTIGE

right: Luxury brands are concentrated in the Prestige district, with elegant materials and generous spaces exuding the feeling of a world-class shopping experience.

opposite: The district's central plaza features a soaring iridescent dome that spans 36 meters across the space.



THE SOUK



above and right: The Souk district's dense and narrow streets, sheltered from the sun, recall Kuwait's traditional forms and textures.



(72 feet) across. The added width accommodates large crowds and the cafés that spill out into the space. In the smaller districts—SoKu, for instance—the streets are as narrow as 6 meters (20 feet). The walls feel higher there because they are closer together. Small plazas, surrounded by upper-level walkways, dot the district interior. And most of the buildings are designed to give SoKu an urban texture.

Making a real place

Alshaya approved the use of quality materials like brick, stone, and concrete that give authenticity to the shop façades and a lasting quality to the development. "This is not an amusement park. These are real buildings with real materials. The streets feel like real streets," says Miller-Ramos. The storefronts in the Prestige district, for example, are 18 meters (59 feet) tall, with a central rotunda whose dome is 36 meters (118 feet) across. The surfaces throughout are clad in black marble. Similarly, the circulation paths are detailed and constructed as if they were city streets, not interior corridors.

While the client wanted to create the feeling of an open-air environment, the hot



Kuwaiti climate dictated that the high-end mall be enclosed in order to maintain a comfortable temperature inside. Natural light pours in through the transparent roof made of a high-strength plastic, ETFE. Compared to glass, ETFE film is a fraction of the weight, transmits more daylight, and costs far less to install. It's also resilient, self-cleaning, and recyclable. The material's advantages aren't just functional, however. It also delivered huge revenue potential to the client, because the covering permitted the circulation space to be counted as open space instead of as enclosed, built space.

That meant that it was not included in the calculation of allowable square footage on the site. "This is a big advantage for the client, because it gives them a substantial reserve of site area that they can put to future use as more retail space or for some other type of facility," says Miller-Ramos.

Navigation through a mall of this scale can be difficult, but Gensler's brand designers addressed the issue by unifying the various districts with custom graphics and wayfinding solutions that are easy for customers to understand. Like many cities, The Avenues

provides environmental markers and distinct graphic patterns that help shoppers find their way. These human touches—implemented through a comprehensive system of banners, directional signs, and information kiosks—are tailored to each district to give it added personality.

Now that the new districts have opened for business, The Avenues is the place to be in Kuwait, says Miller-Ramos. "It's the talk of the town." The launch of Phase III, which coincided with events celebrating the 50th anniversary of Kuwait's constitution, saw a

number of The Avenues' stores break their sales records. "Without question, The Avenues' expansion has raised the bar for retail development in the Gulf."

The Avenues exceeded Mabanee's expectations even before it was open, the company reported, with more than 85 percent of the new tenant space preleased. Buoyed by that success, Gensler is already hard at work designing the next phase.

Vernon Mays is a senior editor at Gensler and a contributing editor at *Architect*.

Banking on Experience

As retail banking customers shift their transactions to smartphones and other mobile devices, Chase's new branch bank anticipates how its clients will anchor those cloud-based relationships to a real place.

BY J. MICHAEL WELTON



above: Self-service terminals equipped with touchscreen monitors greet customers when they enter the branch.



above: Chase launched its new branch concept in a vibrant, high-traffic location on San Francisco's Union Square.

At first blush, it seems an unlikely setting for a revolution. Snugged into the ground floor of a century-old San Francisco building is the first example of Chase Bank's new branch bank concept. But what better place could there be to launch the next generation of retail banking than the former Argonaut Club—strategically located on a prime corner facing Union Square, in the heart of the city's retail district?

Surprisingly, your first encounter as you walk into this bank is a warm greeting from a real person. That's a sign that technology here, visible and impressive though it is, must work hand-in-glove with the more human dimensions of Chase's retail banking services. It's also a telling symbol of Chase's evolving approach to branch design—one that places the customer at the center of the transaction.

"The traditional image of wood paneling, teller lines, and cashiers—almost all of that goes away," says Michael G. Meyer, Chase Bank SVP and Head of Architecture, Design and Engineering. "What can't go away is the human interaction."

The point here is to support the customer relationship. Near the entry is an array of ATM-like flat screens; in the background are café tables at standing height, with kiosks and conference rooms behind. But there are also a number of bankers unobtrusively standing by, ready to answer questions and offer solutions when needed.

"Technologies should be fully integrated into the space, but our priority today is to provide personal service for progressive users," Meyer says. "It's welcoming, not overwhelming," adds Gensler's Chip Williams. "It tells people that Chase is there to help them connect, explore, learn, and make choices."

At a time when its customers can handle many of their retail banking transactions with mobile technology, the new Chase branch concept gives them a reason to come inside. It's a new kind of banking experience, one that integrates real and virtual interactivity while exuding the feel of a hotel lobby or even the retail shops on Union Square. But it's by no means a big box experience. "It's still a financial institution," Meyer says. "The design is well

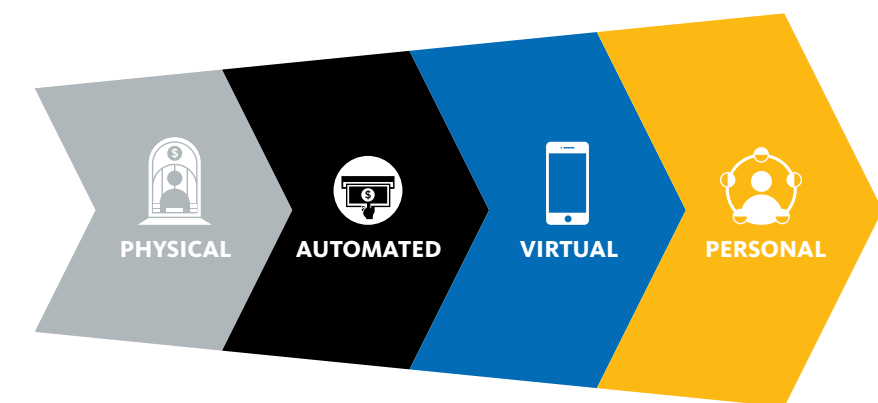
thought out—it mixes visual impact and presence with stability. The aim throughout is to solidify our customers' sense of who Chase is."

Building on trust

Retail banking may have taken its share of knocks during the past five years, but Chase has emerged from the fray with a greatly enhanced reputation. The new branch concept is designed to build on that solid foundation, winning customers who are increasingly savvy about their money and discerning about their banking relationships. Chase's Union Square branch embraces new realities in banking today, while its vibrant, unexpected location in the city speaks to the bank's commitment to its customers' active lifestyles.

"Chase is at the forefront of a global trend," says Gensler's Owain Roberts. "It understands that retail banking is more than a series of transactions—it's an experience that responds to the customer's unique wants and needs. People are turned off today by a one-size-fits-all mentality, especially from national and global brands. They want a

EVOLUTION of the customer service model



The changing dynamic of how people bank means the design of retail branches must evolve too.

“We want to avoid the **me too** experience that pervades retail banking.”

— Michael G. Meyer, Chase Bank

meaningful relationship that speaks to them as individuals.”

So Chase's new branch concept puts a premium on face-to-face interaction. Bankers there can offer their customers whatever level of support they want or need. “The idea is to connect and reconnect with them,” says Douglas Wittnebel, who led the design team for Gensler.

Since the banking experience is no longer just about sales, products, or services, this new design places the human relationship front and center. Technology is part of it, but Chase wants to be seen as a trusted advisor. “People want convenience, speed of transaction, and full confidence that the interaction will be handled in a private way—safely and securely,” Meyer says.

Global and local

While Chase's new San Francisco branch provides a localized experience tailored to its setting, it's also the opening act in a program that soon will roll out across the US. “We designed it as a kit of parts,”

Wittnebel explains. “Other branches may be larger or smaller, depending on the location.” Some of the elements, including the technology, will be consistent, but others can vary to address nuances of place and setting, with dialogue and input from the local Chase team.

“We want to avoid the ‘me too’ experience that pervades retail banking,” Meyer says. “The new branches are designed to be simple and intuitive to use. That has to be created from within, by focusing so clearly on the needs of every customer. An exciting new look is the headline, so to speak, but what's truly revolutionary about our new concept is its ability to keep pace with the future. It's designed to change.”

For Union Square, Chase has built a jewel box of a space, appropriate for a destination where the cream of the retail world competes intensely for the consumer's eyes and feet. One competitive edge inside the new branch is its 7-foot-high, 19-foot-long curving video wall—with 18 high-definition screens projecting time-lapse videography

of local San Francisco scenes. “It's one of the features that ties this branch to the city,” Meyer says. “In other locations, that tailoring may be as modest as varying the artwork and finishes.”

The Chase logo does appear on the video wall, but only as a punctuation mark at film's end. Those walking by can easily view familiar images of San Francisco's financial district, its bay, and its bridges. “The spirit of place prevails,” Meyer says.

It's part of a new kind of bank, specifically designed to connect with customers.

J. Michael Welton writes for the *New York Times*, the *Washington Post*, and *Dwell*.

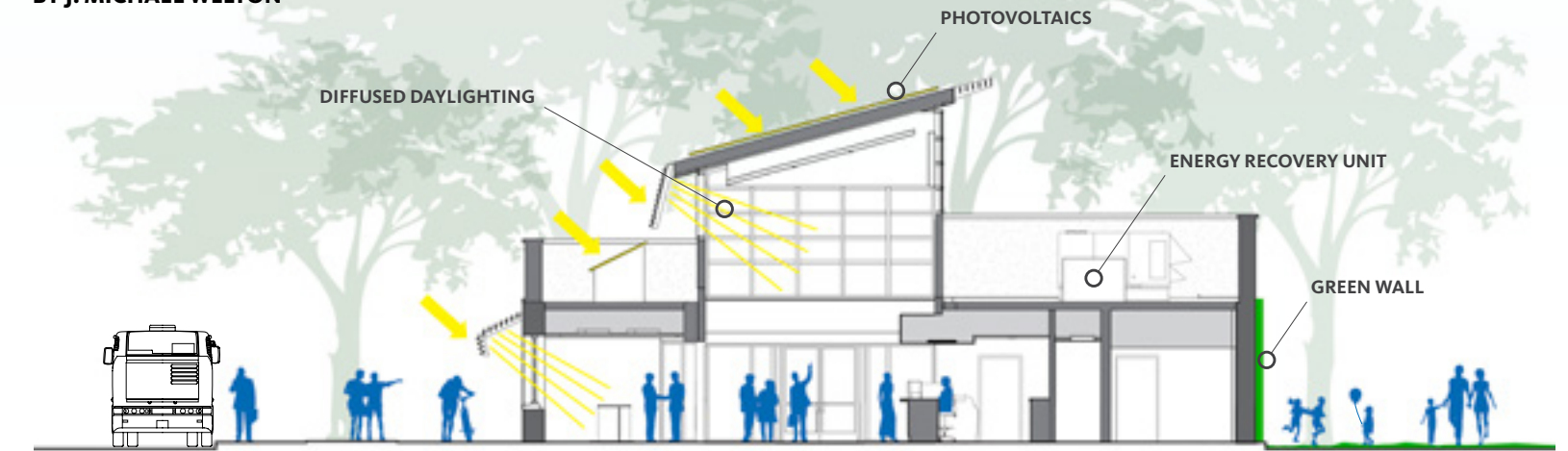
below: Working in a relaxed setting, Chase bankers stand by to offer face-to-face assistance to their customers.



PNC LOOKS BEYOND LEED

A net-zero PNC branch in Fort Lauderdale, Florida, returns power to the grid and breaks new ground for branch bank architecture.

BY J. MICHAEL WELTON



below: PNC's net-zero branch bank integrates design and system strategies like daylighting, photovoltaic panels, and high-efficiency heating and cooling with measures addressing its operations.

PNC Bank's commitment to sustainability can be summed up in two words: *net zero*. Its just-opened, 4,900-square-foot branch bank in Fort Lauderdale will generate more power than it consumes annually. “During the cooler winter months, it returns power to the city's electrical grid; during the hot summer months, it pulls power from it,” Gensler's Benjamin Callam explains.

Callam is part of the Gensler team that designed the project for PNC, a company that's well known for its commitment to green design. In Fort Lauderdale, that commitment has been extended to create a new branch bank prototype that's unlike anything PNC has ever done. “It's a textbook example of how to design a super-sustainable retail bank,” says Gensler's Jordan Goldstein. “Instead of following a playbook, we created a playbook.”

PNC's net-zero branch bank is actually making two statements. First, it's providing a retail setting that conveys what PNC is

about—in terms of business practices, as well as bricks and mortar. Second, it's demonstrating that it's possible for a visually pleasing spatial experience to give back, in terms of energy. “The branch has a unique design driven by solar orientation and passive solar features,” Goldstein says. “We hit the net-zero target with a building that has a clean, modern aesthetic.”

The Gensler team didn't work in a vacuum. They drew on design criteria for net-zero buildings developed by the US Department of Energy and Pacific Northwest National Laboratory. The team also applied the City of Fort Lauderdale's master plan for the South Central district, where the branch is located. Finally, the team took a hard look at the current PNC branch bank concept, retaining its light-colored brick and its stucco-and-metal paneling while adding to its already numerous sustainable features.

“The turning point for the design was to integrate the photovoltaic panels with the

building,” says Callam. Instead of making a separate array for additional panels, an aluminum screen covering the clerestory windows above the south end of the building incorporates them. The screen reduces glare from daylight inside the branch and gives it an identifiable and expressive character on the exterior.

Gensler and PNC joined forces to cut the new branch's power consumption in half compared to the current concept. “We looked at heating and cooling, IT, ATMs, security systems, even the marketing displays—almost every aspect of the branch's operations,” Callam notes. A heating-and-cooling system with a slightly larger capacity proved more energy-efficient than its predecessor. Circuits on timers mean that everything but essential equipment shuts down after business hours. Motion sensors attached to the computer monitors turn them off when not in use. The branch's LED lighting is also state of the art. “PNC has used LED technology for several years,” Callam says. “But it has evolved so rapidly that we've had to update our design three or four times to keep up with the changes. We've saved PNC more energy every time.”

Fort Lauderdale is PNC's first net-zero branch bank, Callam notes. “It proves the concept and lays claim to being the most energy-efficient net-zero bank in the US.”

J. Michael Welton writes for the *New York Times*, the *Washington Post*, and *Dwell*.



above: The design incorporates energy-producing photovoltaics into the building fabric.

ONLY CONNECT

For brands of every type, establishing real affinity with the customer is the Holy Grail. And today, every touchpoint matters, as Gensler's new brand awareness survey reveals.

BY KEVIN CRAFT



Microsoft's launch of the Surface tablet led to a high-profile location on Times Square.

Brand awareness reflects many different strands of experience and expectation. For the café chains that compete for our loyalty, it's not just about the coffee: chic design and the familiarity engrained by constant encounter can be just as habit-forming. Similarly, the smart devices we carry reflect their cachet as well as their technological edge over competing brands. Technology matters, of course, but emotional factors like in-crowd appeal may matter more.

These different factors fall under the umbrella of brand engagement, the ability of a brand to forge a distinct emotional connection with target customers. The process of forming an attachment between a person and a brand is closely associated with retail and leisure brands of all stripes. Today, though, public institutions, universities, airports, and even cities are equally brand savvy—and actively pondering what their brands communicate and how to engage their target audiences.

For Gensler's Deanna Francl, brand engagement is the new brand loyalty. "Easy access to far more choices, faster ways to comparison shop, and the wariness that economic ups and downs can induce have made consumers more fickle," she says. "Always being meaningful is how you keep them loyal, but this requires constant interaction and reengagement with target customers." She pinpoints two salient questions that brands face today: What constitutes meaningful brand engagement? How can it be measured? To help answer these questions, Gensler surveyed more than 2,500 consumers to understand what brand engagement means to them and why certain brands inspire loyalty.

Matching personal values

The economist Thorstein Veblen observed in 1899 that what people buy is more an expression of their personal preferences than simply a means of obtaining necessary goods. Bryant Simon updates this idea in his 2011 book, *Everything but the Coffee*, arguing that people turn to retail and other brands for "fulfillment, happiness, and connection." As Gensler's brand awareness survey found, their behavior reflects this: 88 percent of respondents agreed with the statement, "I often choose brands that match my personal values." And 73 percent of them agreed that they avoid brands they perceive to be going against those values.

A deeper look at the data shows that consumers who express a high level of affinity for their favorite brands are more likely to



JUMP IN BRAND AWARENESS

FROM **07%** TO **15%**

Unaided brand awareness doubled in the months following the new DoubleTree by Hilton brand launch.

judge a brand based on how well it reflects their personal values and style. Affinity here is measured by such metrics as how far they would be willing to travel to buy the brand and how bad they would feel if it ceased to exist. "We found that individuals with high brand affinity are two to three times more likely to say that it expresses their personal style and values than low-affinity individuals," says Gensler's Andreas Andreou, who did the statistical analysis of the survey responses. "Low-affinity individuals have a more transactional relationship to brands, driven by value for the money."

Engaging, not overloading

Given the ubiquity of smartphones, tablets, and social networks, consumers are subject to a growing flood of communications. Retail brands in particular are often early adapters to any new development that lets them pinpoint their customers on the basis of ever more finely tuned demographics.

But there's a growing school of thought that suggests that the sheer quantity of digital

interactions is taking a toll. It begs for more human interactions, in real places, to break up the monotony of combing through emails, tweets, and status updates. As a result, brands that are looking to have an impact on their target customers are questioning if their online connections are really meaningful. Can they fully engage with their clientele without establishing and nurturing first-person relationships?

The survey data suggest that while a high number of Facebook likes and positive Yelp reviews can help shape the way brands are perceived by consumers, meaningful face-to-face engagement is a stronger driver of brand affinity. Respondents were more likely to say they felt "very satisfied" after interacting with a brand as a real experience than after interacting with it virtually.

It's a commitment

"The retail setting still has a lot of power in our digital world," says Gensler's Michael Gatti. "Brand engagement is a commitment—a personal, emotional relationship

that has to be robust enough to weather the inevitable ups and downs." Adds Francl, "It's the pinnacle for which brands are striving." Gensler's survey found that brands that foster high affinity among customers have a far greater chance of earning their long-term loyalty. Thinking of their favorite brand, a majority of respondents said they would be willing to spend more for it, even if an identical offering were available at lower cost. And 50 percent of the respondents said they would be devastated if their favorite brand ceased to exist.

"It's one thing to follow a brand on Twitter or Pinterest; it's another to say you would spend more money for it or would be devastated if it disappeared," Francl says. "That's real engagement." As Gensler's brand awareness survey clearly shows, understanding brand engagement means looking beyond traditional transactional metrics. "Brands are personal and people are possessive," she notes. "Every customer wants to say, 'This brand is mine'—that's where engagement starts. Smart brands aim to make it an enduring relationship."

Kevin Craft is a Gensler senior writer and the editor of its thought leadership blog, *GenslerOn*.

clockwise, from above: Doubletree's 50-city media tour to boost brand awareness; a UK luxury brand's new flagship store in Kobe; Burt's Bees new design and merchandising, both with strong brand appeal to customers.



Leisure & Lifestyle

BY TIM PITTMAN

Interaction with Gensler's clients and their customers, paired with direct-to-consumer survey research, has helped the firm develop a robust research program that includes projects investigating the leisure/lifestyle sector's major themes and drivers of change. Gensler's brand awareness survey is part of this. Other initiatives address what people mean by "experience" at a time when they routinely blend the real and the virtual, and how and when to make technology an integral part of leisure's physical settings. Here's a brief report on what Gensler research teams are learning.

Delivering experience

Leisure clients are seeking new ways to enhance consumer experience and engagement as the increasing pace of technological change shapes and reshapes their competitive landscape. Sports venues, for example, have to come up with new reasons for fans to leave the comfort of home. To do so, Gensler researchers found, these venues have to give fans a game-day experience that's decidedly better than if they stayed home. Locating sports venues in prime downtown locations helps. This is driving earlier sponsor involvement, 24/7 venue programming that looks beyond the stadium gates, and strategies to engage fans through their smart devices—before, during, and after the games.

Retailers face a strikingly parallel set of issues. Faced with online competition, department stores are ramping up their efforts to leverage their traditional strengths. To do this, a Gensler study found, they are pursuing such strategies as upgrading the quality of the customer experience and integrating their customers' personal technology more effectively—both at home and in the store. Some retail banks are similarly interested in providing a new kind of customer experience that combines the best of online and place-based, personally delivered services.

Working leisure in

Parallel Gensler research on trends and drivers of performance in the workplace and on the changing nature of cities points to an evolving amenity mix in settings and districts that in the past would have been centered on work alone. Recognizing a desire for city-style amenities, suburban campuses are embracing food trucks, "name" restaurants, and gathering places with a deliberately urban feel.

Researchers have also identified a move toward a richer mix of uses in city centers that takes the adaptability or hackability of older loft districts as a model. Leisure is increasingly in the picture in urban development, catering to a younger, hipper population that looks for a wealth of workday, evening, and weekend options within relatively dense and ideally transit-served urban neighborhoods.

Tim Pittman is Gensler's New York City-based research communications manager.



above and right: KFC localizes its restaurants to specific markets through photography, color choices—even the styles of seating.



FIRST PERSON: YUM!'s KFC

Saying “fresh” in 120+ countries.

With 14,200 restaurants in 120 countries, YUM! Restaurants International takes Bucky Fuller's maxim, “think globally, act locally,” to heart. Dyke Shipp, YUM!'s chief development officer, worked with Gensler to create a contemporary expression of YUM!'s KFC brand. “Fresh food in a fast-food world is a differentiator,” Shipp says. Developed as a kit of parts, KFC's new restaurant design speaks in a modern, culturally aware idiom, whatever the location.

How do you say “fresh” in a quick-serve context?

Dyke Shipp: Distinctive graphics and messaging express the idea of great-tasting food freshly prepared right there. The bigger move is a new operational system that creates separation at the front counter, so customers can order at one point and collect their food at another—a big shift with implications for our kitchen and flow. It lets us focus on the customers as they order, and speed up delivery. While their colleagues are gathering orders, checking them, and presenting them, the up-front part of our team has time to personalize each transaction, acquaint people with our menu offerings, yet keep the queue moving along swiftly.

As a truly global brand, how does KFC speak “local”?

DS: KFC is a brand with remarkable reach and affinity. Our design options have an underlying similarity that effectively communicates KFC's story and unique attributes, creating a brand edge. Yet it allows local flexibility in how this is expressed in different places and cultures. Our menu has the same diversity, mixing globally familiar food choices with others that appeal to distinct tastes.

Give some examples of tailoring to a local market.

DS: To localize a restaurant's design to a specific market, we might include photography that reflects it, moderate or intensify the color balance, and tune the seating to local habits like lingering over meals or socializing during them. Color, graphics, messaging, and furniture are the design options, but the best tool for localizing the experience is the restaurant staff. They do more to bring forward KFC's global brand and local spirit than anything else.

For KFC, how do mature markets compare to new ones?

DS: Certainly, the challenges of launching a legacy brand to a new group of consumers are different from those of sustaining that legacy brand among a group of consumers who have a lot of experience with it. KFC's brand life cycle moves across a spectrum—from its entry into new markets to its growth stage, when it's becoming more established, to its reinvention in mature markets.

In established markets, we sustain the KFC brand by keeping our product offerings balanced between familiar favorites and new tastes. To improve the experience, we elevate our customer interaction and ensure that the restaurants themselves stay contemporary, comfortable, and relevant.

Allison Arieff, who interviewed Dyke Shipp, is a content strategist at San Francisco's SPUR and a contributing columnist for the *New York Times*.

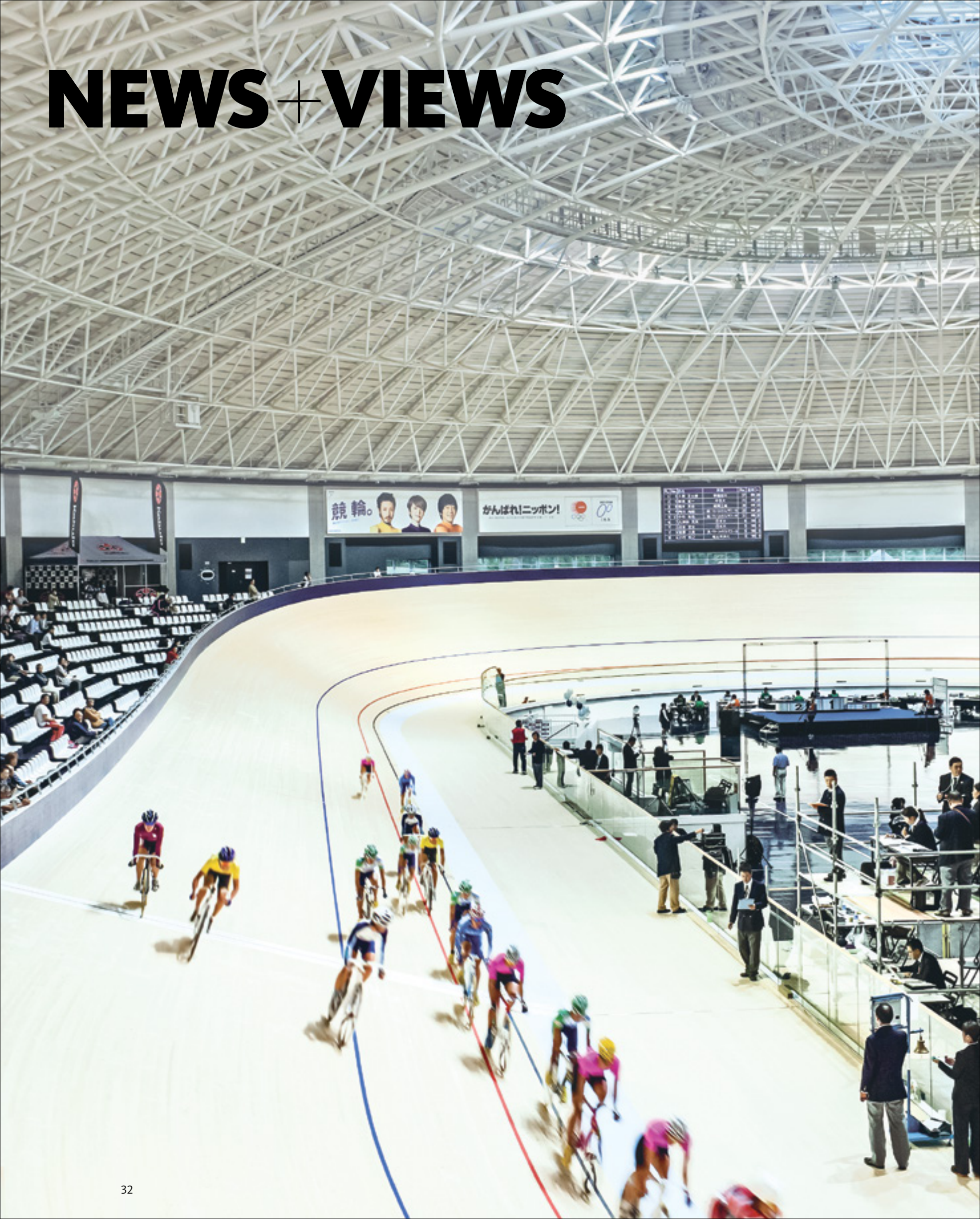


above: Graphics connect KFC's legacy brand globally with the idea of great food that's freshly prepared.

KEY FACTS AND INSIGHTS

- 1 Localizing a global brand means conveying a cohesive message in a culturally apt idiom. The staff is key, supported by the design.
- 2 Legacy brands have two distinct challenges: entering new markets and sustaining established ones—introducing vs. reintroducing.

NEWS + VIEWS



TRAINING CHAMPIONS

IZU VELODROME
NIHON CYCLE SPORTS CENTER, IZU, JAPAN



When the wood 250-meter indoor cycling track became the world standard in 1996, it left Japan without training facilities. The country hadn't placed in the world championships for 20 years, so JKA (Japan Keirin Association—*keirin* means "racing wheels") planned a velodrome at Nihon Cycle Sports Center for Union Cycliste Internationale (UCI) Category-1 sprinting events that could also serve as a world-class training center.

JKA asked Gensler to design a state-of-the-art velodrome that could toggle between these activities by adding temporary, race-only elements to a facility built mainly for training. It's sustainable, as JKA requested, using cool groundwater for air-conditioning and incorporating other measures to save energy and reduce operating costs.

Gensler's Jun Asakura and Masahi Kato worked with a third-generation designer of wood cycling tracks, Ralph Scheurmann.

Based in Germany, he proved to be globe-trottingly busy. After visiting Japan to plan the "dialogue" between the wood track and the building, he met with the Gensler team in three different cities in Europe where he was working. "Hunting for Scheurmann" is how Asakura describes their collaboration.

The Izu Velodrome encloses the wood track in sleek but durable industrial materials with low maintenance costs. Heat-resistant, fluoride-coated stainless steel plates were selected for the oval roof for their thinness, lightness, and contribution to building performance. Above the reinforced-concrete first floor, the exterior walls are crafted from galvanized corrugated steel panels that are visually consistent with the roof and "cleaner than architectural concrete or lightweight concrete panels," Kato explains.

The wood track is the centerpiece of the interior, surrounded by supporting spaces

ranging from the utilitarian—like locker rooms, bike maintenance, and doping control—to more public settings like an art exhibit space. Gensler also developed a compelling website and a print collateral system for the velodrome to communicate the high-speed rush of cycle racing. For the October 2011 opening, the Izu Velodrome Memorial Plaque Project, planned by the team, gave people the historic opportunity to put their names on engraved, Gensler-designed plaques. Some 2,000 people paid to line the velodrome's walls with them.

The new velodrome has already met its promise to resurrect Japan's international cycling presence, Kato notes. In January 2013, the Japanese contender Kazunari Watanabe took the silver at the UCI World Cup in Aguascalientes, Mexico.



TRAVELING LIGHT

TERMINAL 3, BOARDING AREA E
SAN FRANCISCO INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

SFO's recently renovated Terminal 2 is an unqualified success—passengers love it and concessions revenues have soared. Next in line is Terminal 3's Boarding Area E, which Gensler and Hensel-Phelps are renovating and expanding. Built in 1979, the nine-gate concourse is long, narrow, and dark. Gensler's redesign increases seating, food-and-beverage options, art, and amenities.

"San Francisco and the Bay Area strike you because of their varied landscapes," says Gensler's Melissa Mizell. "That inspired us." A large information terrace provides a vista point where travelers can plan their route. Subtle expansion of the concourse will add some 4,000 square feet of amenity space. Serving 1.5 million passengers a year, the regionally themed concessions—a pop-up store included—are designed as oases that preserve the openness of the larger setting.

New windows, clerestories, and skylights frame the views and let in filtered daylight. "The skylights are placed so the play of light in the space changes hourly and seasonally," Gensler's Jeff Henry explains. A new roof, more than 15 feet high, made it possible to insert a 25-foot-wide "picture window" at the north end of the concourse. With some of SFO's best views of the airplanes as they take off, "it should be a magnet for kids and adults," Henry predicts.

An upgraded concourse lighting system is expected to be at least 15 percent more efficient than the California Energy Code. Photovoltaic panels will also cut energy use. Another sustainable goal is to outdo Terminal 2's benchmark of 93 percent recycled waste. Air filtration/purification and low-emitting finishes will make for a high-quality indoor environment. Recycled content, regionally produced materials,

and sustainably harvested wood products round out a project aiming for LEED Gold.

One of the project's most sustainable aspects is its partial reuse of the 34-year-old structure. While substantially rebuilt, it retains core components like the supporting columns that would be extremely energy consuming to replace.

If light and volume are essential aesthetic elements in the concourse's redesign, their visual impact is reinforced by the team's use of art. Unique among airports, SFO has an accredited museum with a significant, regionally focused art collection and an imaginatively curated exhibit program that makes use of all of the terminals.

The Terminal 3 program features work by prominent Bay Area artists like Robert Bechtle, Jay DeFeo, Carlos Loarca, and James Torlakson. DeFeo, the subject of a recent career retrospective at the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, is represented at Terminal 3 by *Masquerade in Black*, a painting from that exhibition.

With Boarding Area E slated to open in 2014, the design-build team of Gensler and Hensel-Phelps is designing the renovation of an adjacent part of Terminal 3. Building on the success of Terminal 2, these major new projects continue the transformation of SFO's domestic terminals—work that's changed the game for US airports and the passengers and airlines they serve.



WHY WORK FROM HOME?

NOKIA WEST LONDON HEADQUARTERS
LONDON



ONLINE CONTENT

TOUR NOKIA LONDON

To experience Nokia's West London Headquarters yourself, take this video tour of the new space in use.

Click the above icon to view this online, or go to <http://bit.ly/nokialondon>



Nokia's new West London Headquarters is designed to woo talent and foster creative cross-pollination. Occupying three floors of a nine-story building, the 65,000-square-foot space pairs the community's social epicenters—villages—with workspace, client support, showrooms, and a restaurant.

Working with Nokia's brand team, Gensler found that the old headquarters was under-used because so many employees chose to work from home. To learn why, Gensler used a Workplace Performance Index survey to identify employee workstyles ranging from office-centered to entirely mobile. The new headquarters attracts them all.

While the number of traditional desks decreased, new workspaces of differing size, height, and configuration were added to accommodate the more mobile users. Transparency and "office rules" about when a person can be interrupted help minimize the distractions that make it hard to focus.

Keeping Nokia's culture at the forefront of the design, Gensler coupled technology and urbanity with sustainability and grit. A ground-floor space, facing an atrium, echoes its volume but achieves an intimate scale that helps conversations happen.

The working floor is designed for collaboration. Its three villages offer a variety of workstations, conference rooms, and plug-in spaces to support activity-based interactions. A "heart zone" at the center of the floor encourages off-the-cuff encounters. "Blending the four work-style profiles gave us an overall density of 1.8 people per desk," says Gensler's Matthew Kobylar.

Taking aesthetic cues from skate parks, the headquarters' ALUE restaurant is as spatially ambidextrous as the working floor. It can seat up to 125 people for dining or up to 240 people for town hall meetings, complete with audiovisual presentation and broadcast capabilities.

Gensler is preparing to carry out a post-occupancy Workplace Performance Index survey of the new headquarters, but—thanks to people's very positive initial reactions—it's already seen by Nokia as a precedent for future workplace projects.

Along with providing an attractive place to work, "it was important to Nokia to break down silos and fire up collaboration," says Gensler's Matt Jackson. "The transparency of the headquarters makes people visible, even when they're working on their own." The new headquarters has enabled Nokia to reengage its community. "The preference for working at home quickly went away," Jackson notes. "People love to be here."

dialogue

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pages 30–31

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Creative Media
Education & Culture
Financial Services Firms
Health & Wellness
Hospitality

Mission Critical
Mixed Use & Entertainment
Planning & Urban Design
Product Design
Professional Services Firms
Retail
Retail Centers
Science & Technology
Sports & Recreation
Workplace

Locations

Abu Dhabi	Denver	Minneapolis	San Ramon
Atlanta	Detroit	Morristown	São Paulo
Austin	Doha	New York	Seattle
Baltimore	Dubai	Newport Beach	Seoul
Bangalore	Hong Kong	Phoenix	Shanghai
Bangkok	Houston	Pittsburgh	Singapore
Beijing	La Crosse	Raleigh-Durham	Tampa
Boston	Las Vegas	San Diego	Tokyo
Charlotte	London	San Francisco	Toronto
Chicago	Los Angeles	San Jose	Washington DC
Dallas	Miami	San José	