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<http://www.mycbbook.com/blogs>**Modern Day Malls: Fantastic Third Places For Consumers**

In mankind's history of thousands of years, only a hundred or so years ago, if someone said "I am going shopping," it would have meant only one thing: That person was going to the market to buy something. (By some accounts, John Wanamaker's Philadelphia store, opened in 1877, is considered to be the origin of the modern day department store.) In current times, however, that phrase has come to mean a multi-faceted event.

The modern store now serves as "public space"—for people to meet, chat, mingle, watch, walk, sit, hang out, and yes, not infrequently, buy something. In fact, many consumers today "live" so much of their lives just hanging out at these malls, stores, and cafes that some have called these public spaces "third places" (after homes and offices).

Now there is no turning back. These days and going forward, consumers will do much of their nonessential buying only in these "fantasy marketplaces." The experience marketers offer customers in these marketplaces will help them sell their wares. But even more important, they will serve a larger societal purpose at the same time, namely, making enjoyable spaces available to the public. The modern mall, then, performs a great public service—bringing citizens the small delights of diversions in the world of goods, without necessarily having to buy them.



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