

RETAIL

Simon launches on-the-go shopping services via chatbot

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Fashion Valley, a Simon property in San Diego, CA. Image credit: Simon

By STAFF REPORTS

Mall owner and manager Simon is delivering personalized assistance to shoppers at its 208 North American locations at scale through a chatbot concierge.

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Launched on Aug. 8, the mall chain's chatbot connects consumers with real-time information pertinent to their particular location through Facebook Messenger. Increasingly, malls are creating ways of bringing digital experiences to the bricks-and-mortar environment to ease consumers' searches.

AI assistance

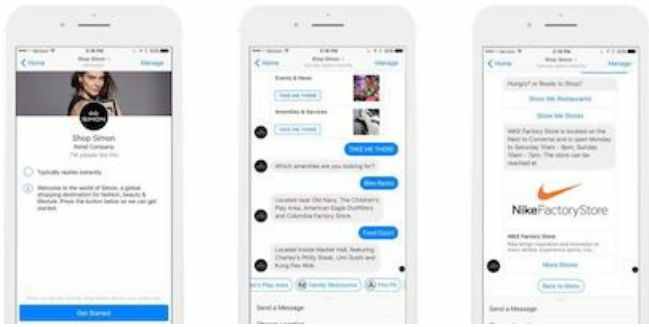
For its chatbot, Simon worked with artificial intelligence marketing platform Snaps.

When consumers first engage with the chatbot, they are asked to provide their location either through geolocation or by searching with a city and state. Once a shopping center has been found, the consumer can select from a menu that includes stores and restaurants, current promotions, events and news and amenities and services.

Clicking on restaurants and stores allows the user to access a directory. If a store or restaurant name is tapped, the user will be given conversational instructions about the location of a particular retailer or eatery as well as its hours and phone number.

Amenities and services provides access to information about features such as parking, WiFi, gift wrapping and mobile phone charging.

In addition to information, the chatbot will also serve up lifestyle content from Simon Said, the company's fashion, beauty and food publication. This will be tailored to the individual user's interests.



Screenshots of Simon's chatbot. Image courtesy of Simon

"Our concierge bot is another example of our ongoing efforts to enhance the shopping experience at our centers," said Mikael Thygesen, chief marketing officer for Simon and head of its innovation efforts, in a statement. "Millions of Facebook Messenger users now have access to a broad set of information about their favorite center through Facebook Messenger."

Before the holidays last year, Simon geared up for the busiest shopping season by rolling out digital directories to nine of its upscale shopping centers.

These interactive 65-inch LCD screens help shoppers navigate the malls, showing them the quickest route to take to get to a particular store and communicating with the user's mobile phone to provide on-the-go assistance ([see story](#)).

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