

Spring has arrived in Southern California, and the excitement is just starting. The NCAA basketball finals have completed with the most exhilarating finish in recent memory, and Virginia beating Texas Tech in overtime. With the beginning of spring, baseball season is kicking off for another year of the Dodgers going to the World Series (here's hoping!) — and, just maybe, the New York Yankees can join them for what would be a great rivalry to return to the Fall Classic. Let's not forget the beginning of the second season of basketball with the playoffs just beginning, and we can expect another run at the championship by the Golden State Warriors.

But what else comes with spring? Yes, you got it — the annual Marcum Retail Symposium! This year's conference will take place on May 9 from 2:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m. at the JW Marriott in Los Angeles. Mark your calendar! You can find all the details about the agenda and our speakers at marcumevents.com.

If you've ever organized an event, then you understand the tremendous amount of work required to create something meaningful and relevant for your audience. Each year needs to build on the previous year, and the presentations need to be informative and interesting. Marcum and Fashion Manuscript have teamed up again to bring you what we believe is the best, most exciting and dynamic retail symposium in the country. I will let you be the final judge of that, so come and find out for yourself.

This year's symposium will focus on change. Over the last several years, we have seen a radically changing retail landscape, with malls either being re-visioned or even replaced. The Westfield Mall in Century City is a perfect example. No longer is Westfield dominated by apparel stores, but rather has elevated food and entertainment as the primary drivers. Malls were created in the 1960s and served the baby boomers well for many years. But now the shopping emporia of yesterday need to serve the millennials and Gen-Zers, who would rather use their mobile devices to shop. These new generations of shoppers are in it for the experience, and malls as we know them are changing to fit these needs.

For those of you who sell products, how you will reach the consumer will be different tomorrow than it is today, and our symposium will be a guide to take you through the changes.

Here's the lineup of topics and speakers for this year:

“Your College Marketing Strategy: The Impact of Peer Influencer Marketing, Learn How to Build Awareness and Customer Loyalty on College Campuses”

Liz Cerreto (@lizcerreto)
Madison Krause (@gaptoothginger)
Cindy Krupp, Founder, Krupp Group
Chloe Miller (chloeemiller_)
Janie Smukler, Co-Founder, 28 Row

“The Ever-changing Landscape of Influencer Marketing”

Kyle Hjelmeseeth, Founder, God & Beauty Influencer Agency
Courtney Halverson, Actress and Blogger (@prettylittlefawn)
Celina Zagami, Krupp Group
Joey Zauzig, Instagram Influencer (joeyzauzig)

“Responsibility and Sustainability in Fashion and Retail”

Dana Davis, Vice President of Sustainability, Product & Business Strategy, Mara Hoffman
Gregory Gausewitz, Product Sustainability Manager, REI
Andrea Kennedy, Founder of Fashionindex.com and Assistant Professor of Fashion Merchandising and Sustainability, LIM College
Shona Quinn, Sustainability Leader, Eileen Fisher
Allison Sommer, Director of Strategic Initiatives, The RealReal

THE ANNUAL MARCUM RETAIL SYMPOSIUM

By Ron Friedman

MARCUM
RETAIL
 SYMPOSIUM

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“Digitization and Innovative Technology at Retail”

Safir Bellali, Senior Director of Advanced Digital Creation, VF Corporation

Andrea Kennedy, Founder of Fashionindex.com and Assistant Professor of Fashion Merchandising and Sustainability, LIM College

“Data: The New Corporate Asset – Best Practices for Protecting Customer Data and Using Data to Build Customer Loyalty”

Gina Bibby, Partner at Brutzkus Gubner specializing in Fashion Technology

Todd Harple, Director, Experience Innovation and Pathfinding, Olympic Technology Group, Intel Corp.

Tarik Khan, Managing Director, Security, Risk & Compliance Advisory Services, LIFARS

“The Best Buyers Do These 5 Things”

Dan Jablons, Owner of Retail Smart Guys

This agenda will have you thinking about what works and what doesn't work for selling in today's environment. Social media is here to stay, and if the retailers and manufacturers don't get on board, the train will leave without them. Not only do retailers need to make sure their brands have a presence on social media platforms, they need to utilize influencers that can help spread brand awareness by acting as third party endorsers. These influencers can vary in age and style, but they all have direct reach to followers all over the world, who look to them for guidance on trends.

We are also hearing every day about responsibility and sustainability in every industry, not just fashion and retail. Read any magazine, newspaper or website, and you will find discussions about responsibility and sustainability at both the corporate and grassroots levels.

We are also hearing every day about unprotected data. Major corporations are being hacked, and customer credit card and other personal information is being stolen. This can happen to any of us, in business and in our personal lives, so we will be focusing on learning how to protect your data.

Each one of our speakers will give you something to think about, and I look forward to your feedback after the symposium.

I would like to thank the great team that has developed the Annual Marcum Retail Symposium: Gina Bibby, Karen Giberson, Dan Jablons, Andrea Kennedy and Jeff Mann. I really want to take an extra moment to comment on Jeff Mann. Over the past year, Jeff has inspired and led me through this planning to create something really special. At Marcum, we strive to be the best at what we do. Partnering with Jeff Mann and his team on this conference is a sure-fire guarantee we will deliver on this promise. We hope to see you on May 9.

As we leave you for now, remember that if you're not having fun, do something else.