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## Multichannel Shopping Centre integration

# **Sonae Sierra starts international pilot project with the Digital Sitting Area in Hofgarten Solingen**

- First digital sitting area lounge in Germany
- A Sonae Sierra digital pilot project initiated in Solingen
- Improving a comprehensive digital strategy combining multichannel tools

Sonae Sierra, the international shopping centre specialist, is inaugurating a first of a kind digital sitting area lounge, in a pioneer project launch at Hofgarten Solingen. The project bears the name "Hofgarten on" and serves as a pilot project within Sonae Sierra's portfolio, which will be rolled out in other centres and geographies.

On an area of around 36 m<sup>2</sup>, the digital lounge contains several online platforms for customers, along with many different information and news contents, also games, as well as details on the centre and its tenants. In the digital sitting area, there is also free Wi-Fi, charging stations for smartphones and other devices as well as seating furniture. The area is divided into several zones in which monitors can be used individually or in groups, for gaming or interaction with shared content. There is also a separate online station for children with dedicated content and an adapted format. The platform is continuously enriched with content and other digital tools and interactive applications to support both the tenants' business and the customers' information and entertainment needs.

"Evolution in the retail industry emerges from new consumer desires and behaviours. This change turned the shopping centre into a 'social venue', where visitors purchase goods, services, leisure, but above all, a priceless Social Experience. This is what we are offering with the digital sitting area, a space of comfort, for information as well as entertainment. The combination of its modern design, interactive digital furniture and enriched content makes this pilot project a great step ahead in time where customers have much more to experience in a centre." says Sonae Sierra's CEO, Fernando Guedes de Oliveira.

## **Strategic approach to digital interaction**

Modern consumers are creating new and challenging opportunities for shopping centres where the combination of digital platforms and new communication channels will make them choose how to address their physical shopping experience. These digital tools funnel consumers into an emotional connection with the centre and its shops. It's the experience that is setting shopping trends.

Several strategies starting from online sales activation programs and loyalty clubs, to the introduction of new eco-brands in our tenant mix, and the strengthening of customer services such as gyms, sports facilities and health services are a key direction.

In Germany, Sonae Sierra has also implemented a digital strategy which is not only oriented to visitors but also to support the tenants' business. In 2012, Sonae Sierra bundled all existing measures in the field of digital communication: in the centres, these include free Wi-Fi access, charging stations and digital directories. Sonae Sierra shopping centres also have their own websites and apps integrated which guide visitors through the centre by means of a route planner and provide extensive information on promotions, events or services. Social media is also an integral part of the digital strategy which includes the Facebook pages of the centres and Youtube video channels. Moreover, and with a tenant focus, Sonae Sierra uses intranet-based platforms for tenant/centre communications with individual information and support on business activity.

## **Hofgarten Solingen – a new shopping world in the heart of the city**

In the heart of Solingen, the new shopping centre has 86 shops over three floors and 600 parking spaces. It features renowned international and national retailers as well as local providers spread across a gross leasable area (GLA) of 29,000 m<sup>2</sup>, with famous anchor tenants as dm, Edeka, H&M, Saturn, Spiele Max and TK Maxx, complemented by a glass façade food court comprising 16 restaurants overlooking the main city square. The modern architecture provides a wonderful panoramic view of the inner-city Graf-Wilhelm-Platz and is inspired by the theme of "Nature, industry and fashion". The Hofgarten Solingen is a joint development of Sonae Sierra and MAB Development, and was opened on October 24th 2013, less than two years after its construction began.

## **About Sonae Sierra**

Sonae Sierra, [www.sonaesierra.com](http://www.sonaesierra.com), is the international Shopping Centre specialist, with a passion for creating innovative shopping experiences. The Company owns 49 shopping centres and is present in 12 countries: Portugal, Spain, Italy, Germany, Greece, Romania, Croatia, Turkey Morocco, Algeria, Colombia and Brazil. Sonae Sierra manages and/or lets 85 Shopping Centres with a market value of more than €5.8 billion euros, and a total Gross Lettable Area of 2.4 million m<sup>2</sup> with over 8,500 tenants. In 2012, the Company welcomed 426 million visits in the Shopping Centres it manages. Currently, Sonae Sierra has 6 projects under development, including 4 for clients, and 4 new projects in pipeline.