

Open mind
Greater value



CASE STUDY

CityLife Shopping District: the creation of a unique and iconic destination

Case Study | Executive Summary

CITYLIFE SHOPPING DISTRICT: THE CREATION OF A UNIQUE AND ICONIC DESTINATION

Highlights

- Milan is Italy's most dynamic and cosmopolitan city where all new trends and novelties emerge. It has 3 million inhabitants, including the hinterland, and welcomes around 5 million tourists every year;
- As the country's economic capital, Milan has benefitted from a series of major regeneration projects, transforming the face of the city and relaunching its image internationally: 11 major regeneration projects in the last 10 years;
- In 2004, CityLife won a pitch for the requalification of the historic fairground district in Milan. In need of an ambitious and professional partner to study and help develop a new, unique and forward-looking shopping area to complete its project, Generali turned to Sonae Sierra. The Shopping Area not only had to capture the heart and soul of the city and its traditions, but it also had to stand out from its competitors, in particular the historical city centre shopping area, and become one of the landmarks of the city.

Key Numbers

10M

Visits in 2019

99%

Average occupancy index

32,000m²

GLA

24

Brands seen for the first time in Italy



Architecture and Engineering



Property Management



Investment Management

Case Study | Executive Summary

CITYLIFE SHOPPING DISTRICT: THE CREATION OF A UNIQUE AND ICONIC DESTINATION

Solution

Sonae Sierra with its extensive experience and innovative approach presented a unique proposal for CityLife's project:

- An innovative Shopping District with a **unique tenant mix dedicated to a continuously evolving city;**
- **Premium positioning** aiming to satisfy the diversified target;
- A carefully studied tenant mix **featuring new brands** seen for the first time in Milan and Italy.



Abstract

Milan is well known for its dynamic environment and cosmopolitan atmosphere; it is the city where all new trends are set and go on to flourish.

The city is highly competitive in terms of retail and the shopping experience it offers. It brings with it not only a history steeped in century-old traditions, but innovation too. In 2004, CityLife won the international pitch for the requalification of the Milan Fair area as a metropolitan city, before it was permanently relocated to another part of the city in 2005.

Generali was looking for an ambitious and professional partner to study and develop a new, unique and forward-looking Shopping Area.

Thanks to its in-depth knowledge and know-how, innovative spirit and integrated approach Sonae Sierra won the pitch to be part of CityLife's Shopping District project.

Ensuring a successful case and Shopping District meant thinking out of the box and beyond all boundaries, leading CityLife's Shopping District to become one of the landmarks of Milan, only two years after opening.



Introduction

CityLife's project for the requalification of the historic fairground district in Milan, which was going to be permanently moved to another part of the city in 2005, began in 2004 when Sonae Sierra won the international pitch. The project was chosen for its liveability and for the quality of the architecture and the environment.

Between 2007 and 2008, the important demolition and renovation of the twenty exhibition halls took place. Accordingly, a project to protect and recover the arboreal heritage of this area was carried out, saving 120 trees by providing them with a new home in the surrounding public parks.

The transformation plan, one of the biggest projects in Europe, included 366,000 sqm of total space, of which 314,000 sqm was floor space built for office, residential and retail purposes:

- **530 luxury residential units and three office towers (Tre Torri)** to accommodate 9,000 employees, designed by world-renowned architects Zaha Hadid, Arata Isozaki and Daniel Libeskind. Standing 202 metres tall, the Allianz tower designed by Isozaki is the tallest Italian building;
- **The shopping area** is situated in a mixed-use area, divided into open-air spaces and a closed pavilion;
- **Public spaces consisting of a green area** of 170,000 sqm, making it the second largest park in Milan.

The project is not yet complete as more offices and residential units will open in 2023, adding a new dimension to CityLife's project.



Background

In 2014, Sonae Sierra became involved in this ambitious project when it won the pitch, which involved several international companies, envisioning this new shopping and lifestyle flagship project in Milan.

Sonae Sierra provided Architecture and Engineering services to study this remarkable project. Property Management services were then provided in the pre-opening phase; since the opening of the Shopping District, Property Management services as well as Asset Management services have been provided.

“ In CityLife we had the opportunity to create a new milestone into European Retail market. We worked to design the best possible experience for the “Milanese” people: a new place for the city, where anybody can enjoy in synergy with outstanding architectures of CityLife and its beautiful park. ”

Design Manager - Italy





CITYLIFE SHOPPING DISTRICT: THE CREATION OF A UNIQUE AND ICONIC DESTINATION

Challenge

Milan is a continuously evolving city, it does not only embrace trends, it creates and spreads new phenomenon.

To complete CityLife's project for the requalification of the Milan old fair district, Sonae Sierra had to put forward a unique and innovative idea for a Shopping Area, which reflected and complemented the city and its traditions.

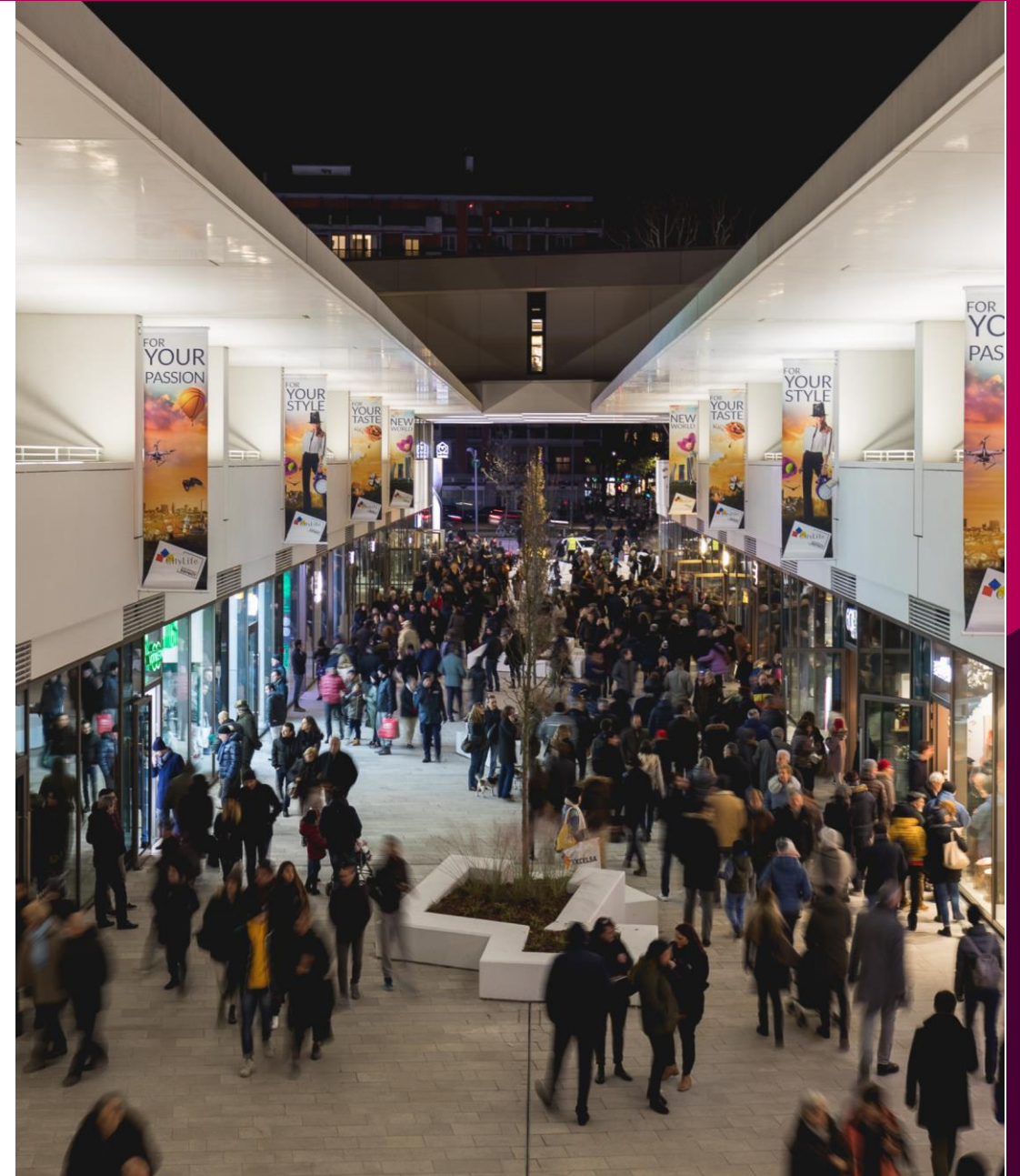
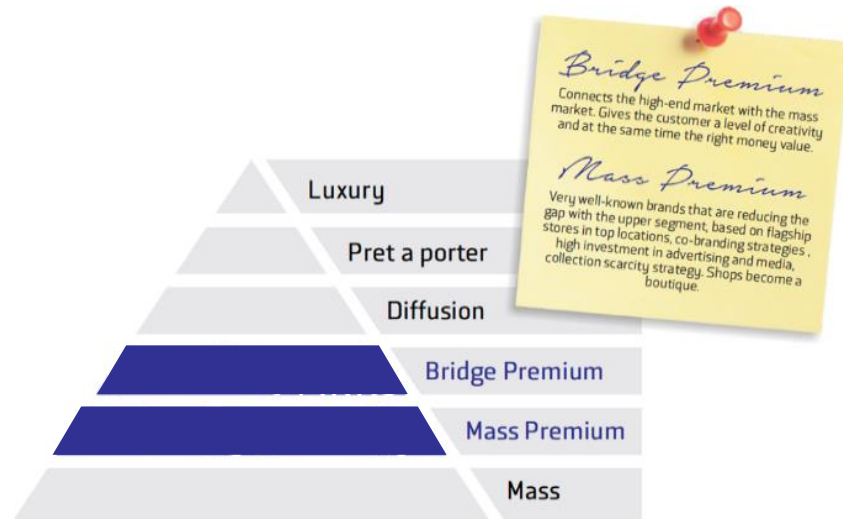
It also had to stand out from its competitors, while respecting the life and soul of the entire project. The Shopping Area also presented the difficult challenge of integrating the different spaces (open-air spaces and a closed pavilion) into one single successful commercial project.

Solution

Sonae Sierra had to respond to the tough challenge of bringing together different elements into the same project, in an extremely competitive context with expectations running high. So, how did we succeed?

Following an extensive analysis of the location, the potential consumers, their needs and future desires, we compiled the winning proposal for the Positioning of the Shopping District.

A unique premium positioning depicted through a pyramid:





CITYLIFE SHOPPING DISTRICT: THE CREATION OF A UNIQUE AND ICONIC DESTINATION

Solution

We developed a truly unique place for people to shop and enjoy their free time and lifestyle activities in a modern, spacious environment. CityLife Shopping District is surrounded by the second largest public park in Milan and is nestled among the stunning contemporary Tre Torri architecture of acclaimed architects Zaha Hadid, Arata Isozaki and Daniel Libeskind.

Three experiences, all located in one unique shopping district. The Shopping District features three interconnected pedestrian areas that offer a unique shopping and lifestyle experience with an abundance of delights to discover. The three areas are:

- **The Mall** - a two-story closed space dedicated to food and fashion;
- **The Square** - a large central square with restaurants and services; and
- **The Street** - an open-air pedestrian walkway that hosts home, tech & design concepts.

Linked by a pedestrian pathway, the double-story shopping complex, the large central square and the open-air promenade bring together more than one hundred retail premises boasting a complete customer experience of fashion, food and entertainment and includes 80 shops, 20 restaurants & bars, a gourmet supermarket, an original fitness & wellness area, an aesthetic clinic and a historical Milanese multiplex cinema.

“

We did not create a single ambience, but a baseline for building different areas distinguished by variety and dynamism and with innovative and surprising concepts, all destined for a wider range of uses.

Among others, CityLife's Food Hall is a covered plaza designed to encourage work, business meetings, and for studying, entertainment, and relaxation, customers should feel at ease alone, in groups of colleagues or friends, or as a family or couple.

As ever, it's the detail and comfort that makes the difference: services for families, charging stations for phones and laptops, sophisticated lighting, acoustic treatment, nice landscape areas and even outside picnic areas can have a significant effect on dwell time, spending, and overall sales.

”

Design Manager - Italy

Solution | THREE SOULS, ONE SUCCESSFUL PROJECT

How did we manage to integrate three souls - **The Mall, The Street and The Square** - and transform them into a unique and successful commercial project?

After defining a clear positioning, we studied the different areas of the Shopping District, identified their strengths and weaknesses and leveraged the opportunities we had, always with an integrated approach in mind. The key was to offer to future customers a unique and exceptional shopping experience that was smooth and not fragmented, regardless of the different structural and architectural characteristics of the shopping areas. We defined 4 commercial clusters based on the specific features of each shopping area: The Street, The Square and The Mall (Level 0 and 1).

The Street represents the home, tech & design cluster. It is decentralised from The Mall and The Square, so for this reason, we introduced highly successful and popular flagship brands with innovative formats and seen for the first time in Italy such as DJI, Dyson, Huawei.

The Square hosts the bars and services cluster. It is an open-air area dedicated to fast food restaurants and services for the employees of the Tre Torri. Here, you can find new prestigious brands such as Juneco, the premium aesthetic clinic, and the world's first Nashi Argan hair salon and important services such as the CDI the health clinic.

The Mall is the heart of the Shopping District with its elegant and innovative architecture and design. Level 0 is committed to fashion with premium and niche brands, but we also decided to introduce a remarkable and unexpected element the fitness and wellness concept of Barry's and Natked. Level 1 is entirely centred on food. We wanted to create a disruptive food hall concept, distinguished from competitors and able to attract and meet the high expectations of the Milanese target population.



“

To achieve this level of success, we worked in a disruptive way, breaking down the classic and accepted rules usually involved in a tenant mix study.

We chose not to focus on each unit; instead, we studied the offer as a whole to reflect the harmony and concerted nature of the food hall itself. We implemented this approach by setting selection standards for the introduction of a brand that were not only based on rental values.

The uniqueness of the formats, brand innovation, high quality of the product and exclusivity of the offer have been the most important parameters to complete the food hall.

In the end, we presented the food hall offer to the client as one single concept with a host of brands that offer a complete range of flavours able to flourish together, all day in a synergic way.”

”

Deputy Manager, Leasing - Italy

Solution | AN EVENTFUL MARKETING ACTIVITY

During the first year, CityLife Shopping District hosted more than 260 event days and has already held events in collaboration with world famous brands such as Huawei, Lego, Mattel, National Geographic, Coca-Cola, Barilla, Elle and Cosmopolitan. The Shopping District has become an integral part of the city calendar hosting major events like Design Week, Fashion Week, Food Week and Wine Week.

The impact of the Shopping District's events has also been recognised by the important ICSC Solal Award Silver in 2019. This was thanks to the 2018 Christmas project involving the first Christmas tree with Artificial Intelligence, designed by Huawei.



Conclusion

CityLife Shopping District is the largest, new urban shopping district in Italy. Thanks to its wide range of premium retail, proximity to the city centre, efficient pedestrian and vehicular access and breath-taking architecture, this project is set to become one of Milan's top destinations.

In 2019, the second year after its opening, the Shopping District had 10 million visits and has already become one of the most popular destinations for iconic brands as they aspire to hold events and activities in the Shopping District Area.



We were able to create an iconic destination giving experiences to amaze our clients becoming soon one of the most visited places in Milan.



Design Manager - Italy



www.sonaesierra.com