

May 2025

Footfall Growth Strategy: Mall in the Middle East

Shopping complex positioned in the Affordable Premium Segment

Shubh Bhaskar
BSc.(H) Mathematics
Sri Venkateswara College, DU

Table of contents

01

Executive Summary

Overview of challenges,
strategy, and expected impact

02

Context & Objective

Problem faced & Role of
benchmarking in identifying
solutions

03

Benchmark Overview

Profile of City Center Doha

04

Initiative Mapping

Major initiatives taken by
City Center Doha

Table of contents

05

Performance Trends

Engagement and retention
success indicators

06

Success Drivers

Underlying enablers

07

Transferable Insights

Customization
considerations for client

08

Strategic Suggestions

strategic moves for the
client

09

Conclusion

10

Bibliography

Executive Summary

Objective of the Study

This study aims to develop a strategy for increasing footfall at the client's mall by analyzing the successful initiatives and strategies implemented by City Center Doha, a leading retail destination. The focus is on identifying transferable strategies and providing actionable recommendations to address footfall stagnation at the client's mall.

Challenges Faced by the Client

The client's mall has been experiencing stagnation in footfall, with decreasing customer visits over recent periods. This is a critical issue, as it impacts tenant satisfaction, sales, and the overall mall experience. The need for a strategic overhaul is essential to regain shopper interest and boost visitor engagement.

Key Findings from City Center Doha

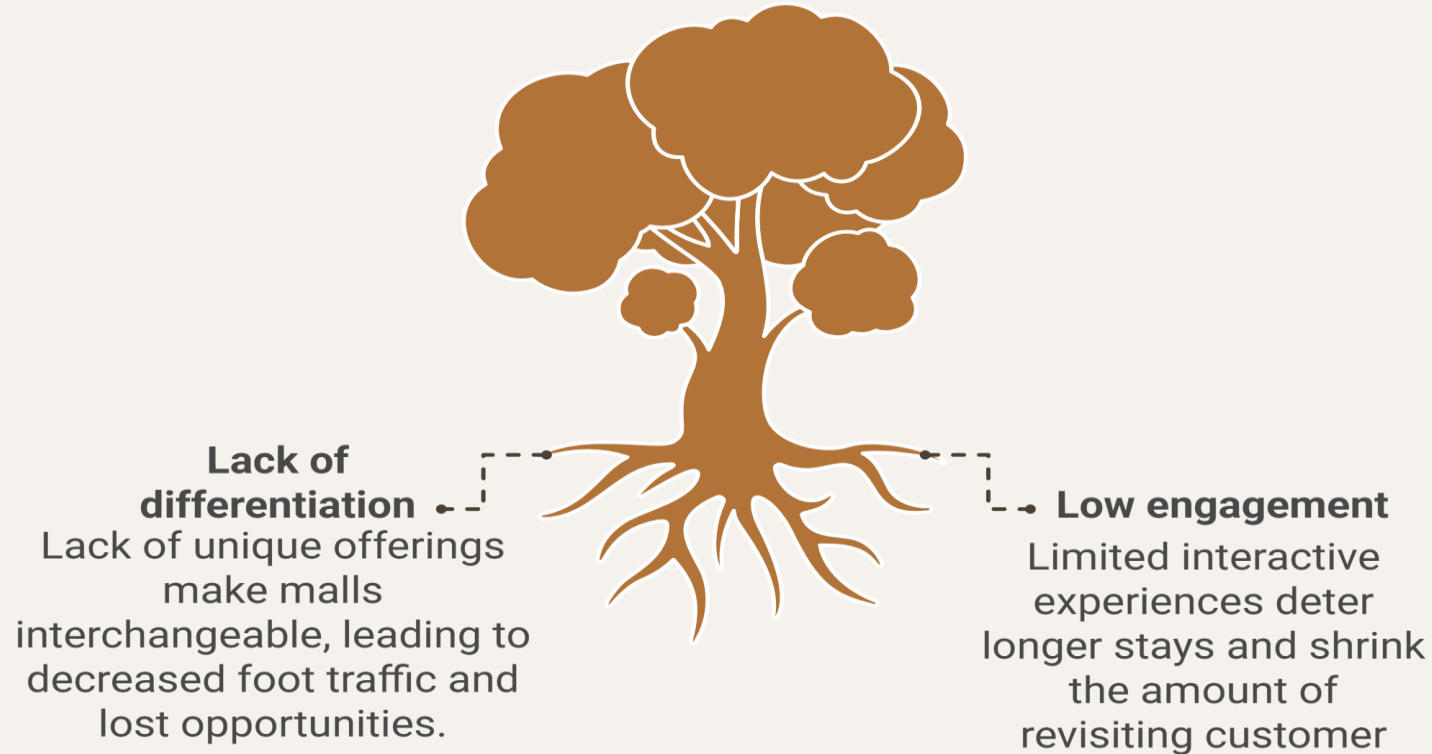
- Boast a dynamic and diverse tenant mix
- Regular in undertaking customer centric initiatives to boost footfall
- Engage tenants through pop-up shops and brand partnerships
- Maintain a strong online presence through their website
- Adaptive when it comes to health and safety

Recommendations for the Client's Mall

- Develop a curated tenant mix
- Create experiential areas and signature zones
- Enhance marketing and calendar events
- Optimize tenant engagement
- Enhance accessibility and shopper experience
- Develop a dedicated loyalty program

Context & Objective

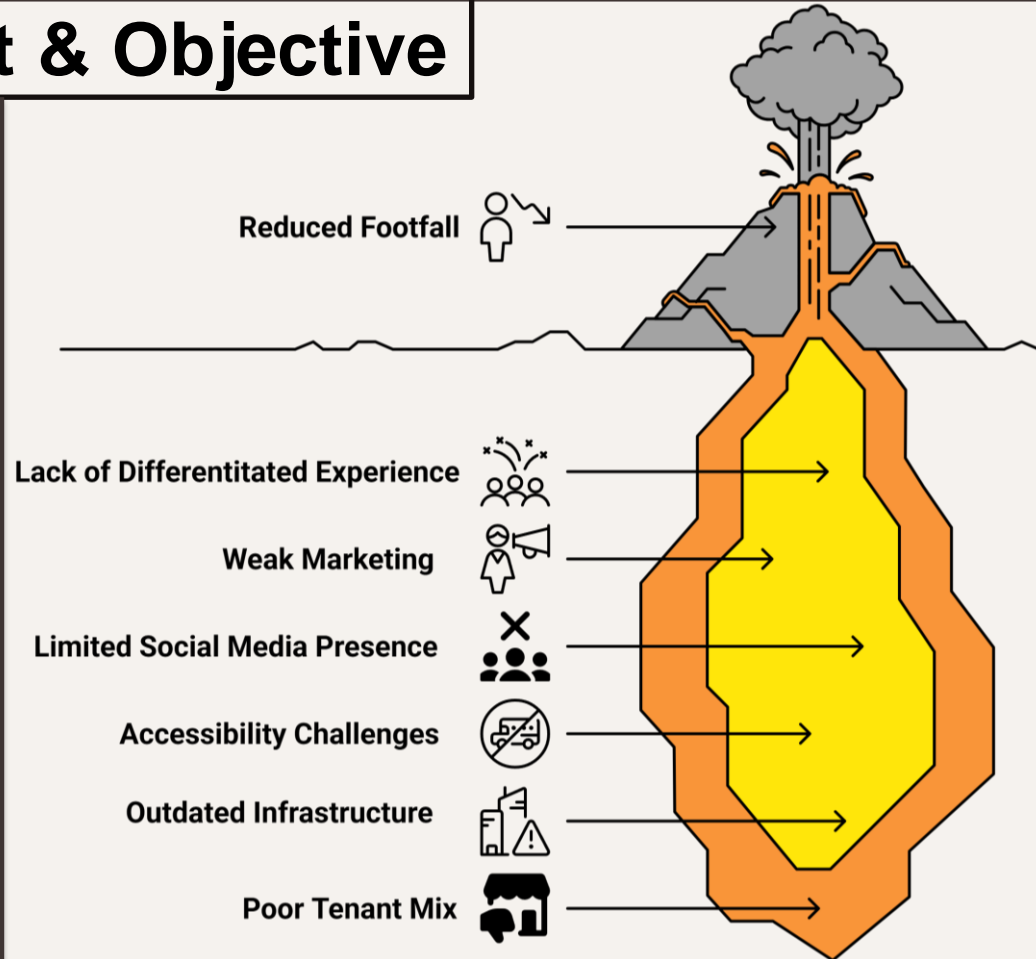
Footfall stagnation in client's mall



Context & Objective

Barriers to Footfall Growth

- ❖ Based on regional trends, several **recurring challenges** have been observed across malls with stagnating footfall.
- ❖ While we do not assume these apply directly to the client's property, they represent **probable friction points** that limit engagement, repeat visits, and dwell time in many similar malls.
- ❖ These include undifferentiated experiences, weak marketing, limited digital presence, poor tenant mix, accessibility issues, and outdated infrastructure. Addressing such barriers can unlock significant growth potential.



Context & Objective

Why should we benchmark
and why choose City Center
Doha?

Identify Strategies

Benchmarking helps
discover proven strategies
and adapt best practices.



Footfall leader

City Center Doha has seen a
steady growth in footfall
numbers during 2022-24



Reveal Innovation Gaps

Benchmarking reveals
innovation gaps and growth
levers through comparison.

Customer-Centric ideation

City Center Doha is revered for
its customer-centric innovation
and event programming

Benchmark Overview

City Center Doha benefits from its high-traffic location in the heart of Doha's commercial hub. Its massive scale and hotel connectivity make it a natural choice for tourists, professionals, and families — reinforcing consistent footfall across seasons.



Prime Location

Located in West Bay, Doha, a key business and tourism district in Qatar



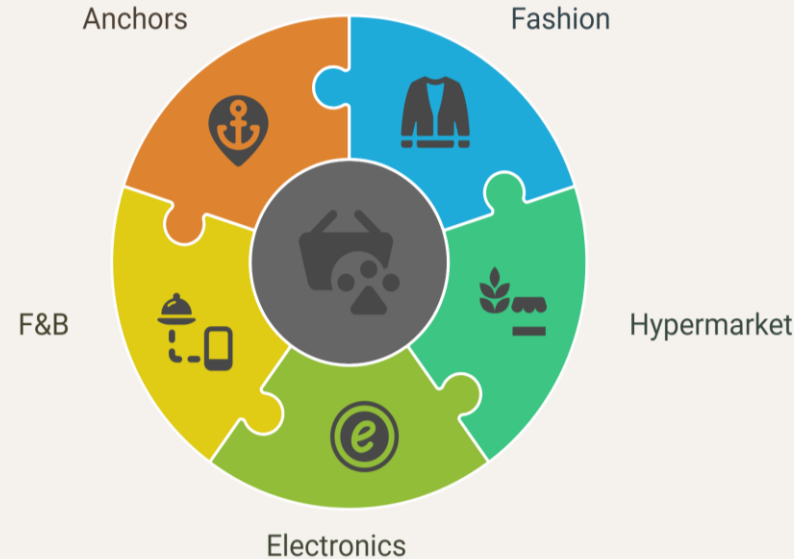
Size

One of the largest malls in Qatar with over 140000 sqm of retail space



High Visibility

Connected to three major hotels in the West Bay area

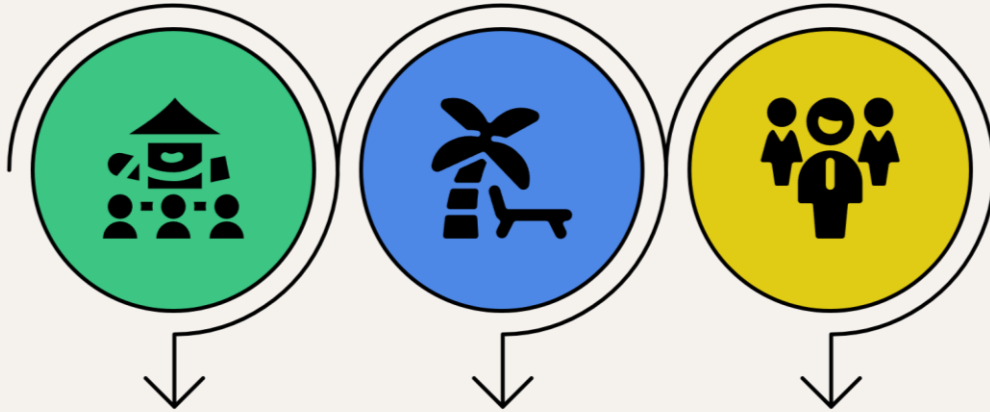


City Center Doha's tenant portfolio blends essentials, entertainment, and international brands — ensuring relevance for daily needs and destination visits alike. Anchors like Carrefour and VOX Cinemas act as core traffic magnets across demographics.

Benchmark Overview

Shopper Base

Primarily families, tourists, and office-goers from nearby hotels and business hubs. Strong weekday lunch and evening footfall, with peak family traffic on weekends.



Locals & Expats

Mid-income locals and expats

Hotel Tourists

Tourists staying in nearby hotels

Young Adults

Young adults and families

Footfall Breakdown

Shoppers residing in core catchment and tourists make up city center's footfall

Extended Reach

Secondary service area made accessible due to the hotels located nearby



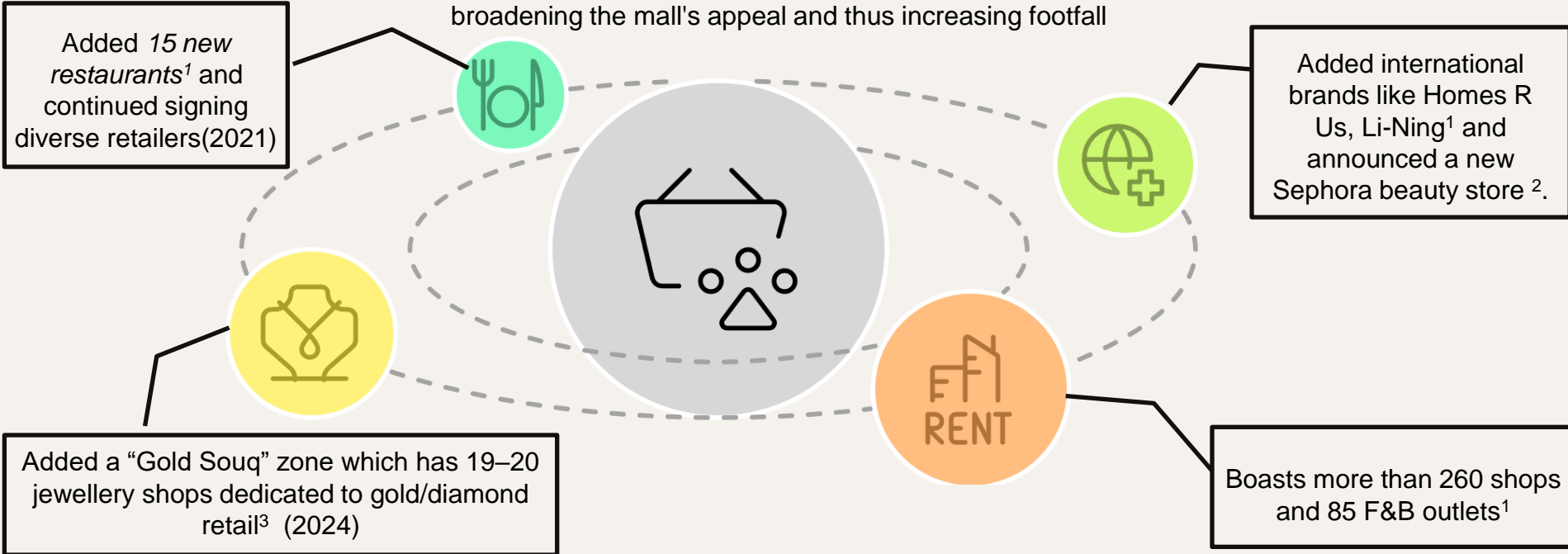
Core Catchment

Primary service area:
West Bay, Dafna, Al Sadd, The Pearl

Initiative Mapping

Aggressive expansion of brands

City Center Doha's strategy of **diversifying its retail mix** with both general and specialized offerings and focusing on quality creates multiple compelling reasons for people to visit the mall. Each of these additions caters to different needs and desires, broadening the mall's appeal and thus increasing footfall



Initiative Mapping

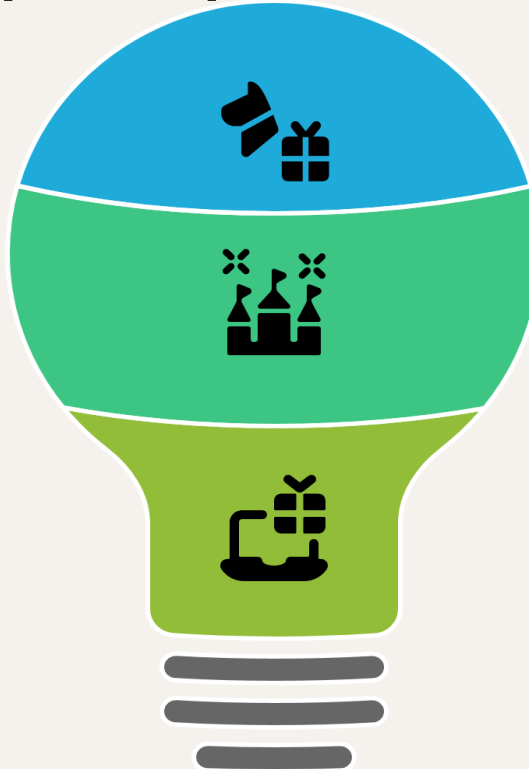
High-profile promotions

20th Anniversary Campaign

A 20-day promotion with prizes to engage shoppers⁴ such events act as powerful incentives for people to visits

Seasonal Sales

Regular sales and competitions during holidays and seasons boost footfall by creating a sense of urgency and excitement, encouraging both planned and impulse visits



National Events

Hosting events like Qatar National Day with live performances⁵ taps into local sentiment, drawing in families and community groups.

Initiative Mapping

Thematic zones and attractions



Soho Square

An open-air extension with cafés, dining, and a water feature⁴

Boosts evening and weekend footfall by attracting diners and tourists seeking outdoor leisure



Mini golf

A recreational, low-cost activity suited for teens and families.⁴

Encourages repeat visits, especially among youth, and makes the mall a multi-purpose venue.



Fun City

Indoor entertainment zone designed for kids with rides and games

Drives family visits, increases dwell time, and supports F&B footfall as parents stay longer.



Gold Souq

Designed like a traditional Arabic market with arches and décor.

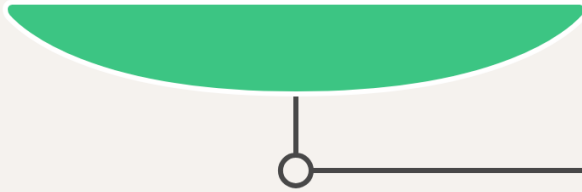
Appeals to tourists and locals seeking cultural ambiance, supporting premium retail footfall.

Initiative Mapping

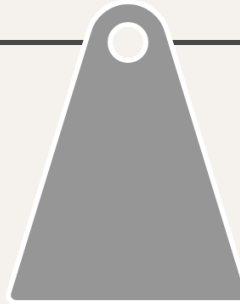
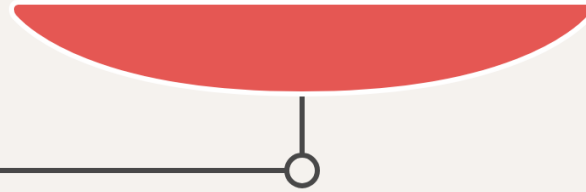
Web presence and social media



Positive Aspect



Missed Opportunity



- ❖ City Centre Doha Maintains an updated website⁴
- ❖ The mall actively uses social media for announcements(events, giveaways , etc)
- ❖ These actions drive planned visits, increases campaign visibility, and helps attract new and repeat footfall.

City Center Doha does not have a dedicated app and loyalty system thus they miss out on-

- ❖ Retention Tools to induce revisits
- ❖ Data Insights on visiting customers
- ❖ Ability to push personalized offers

Initiative Mapping

Strategic collaborations amplify a mall's reach, relevance, and experience. By partnering with hotels, transport networks, and popular brands, City Center Doha taps into ready footfall streams, enhances convenience, and offers fresh attractions—turning passive visitors into active shoppers.



Hotel Connections

A new extension links City Center directly to Marriott Marquis, JW Marriott & Rotana, channeling steady footfall from high-occupancy hotels.⁶

Government Partnerships

A pedestrian bridge to DECC Station boosts convenience whose opening was co-hosted by City Center, attracts daily commuters and tourists.⁶

Brand Alliances

Big names like McDonald's (with McCafé) and upcoming Sephora signal strong brand trust and attract diverse audiences.⁷

Community Engagement

National Day⁹ celebrations and blood donation drives enhance mall visibility and build local engagement.

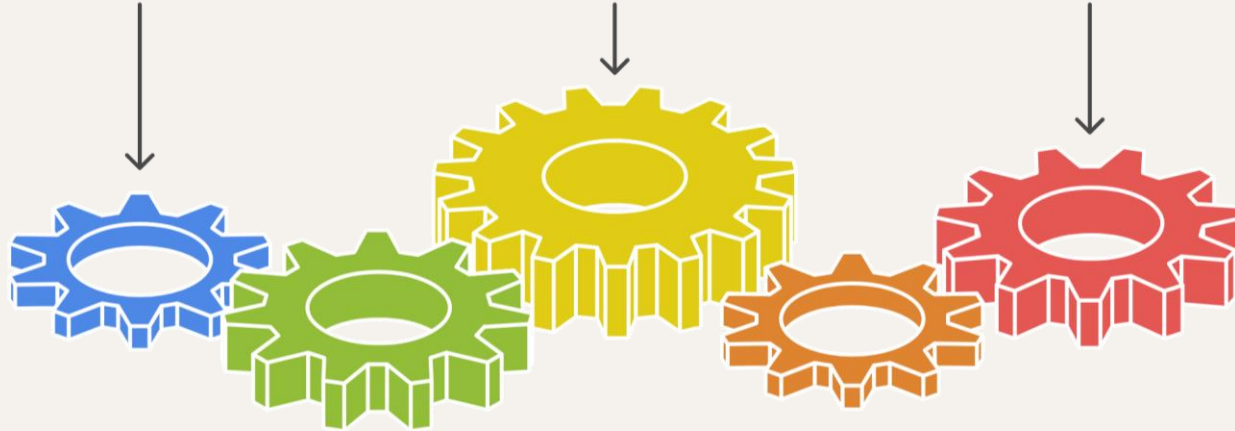
Initiative Mapping

Accessibility and Experience Enhancement

Opened new
Pedestrian Bridge

Renovate Food
Courts

Created Link Corridor



Created Covered
Walkway

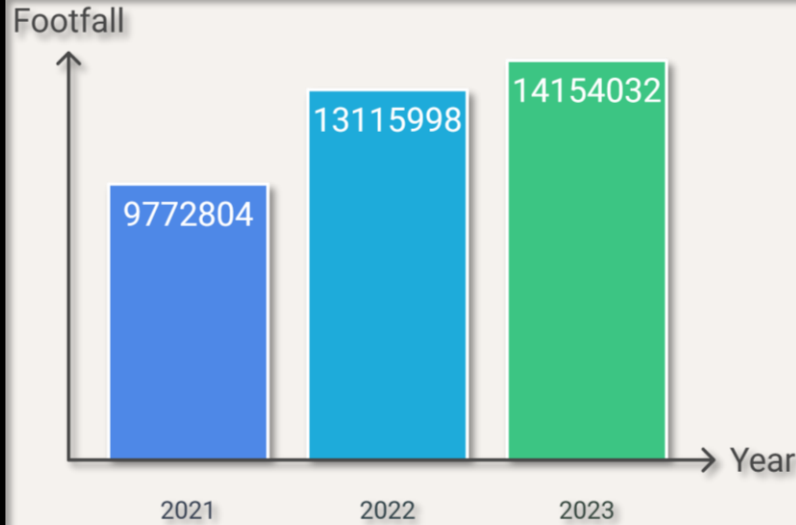
Added Exterior Plaza

The new metro bridge, hotel link corridor, and outdoor plaza significantly ease access and circulation.⁶

These upgrades draw in metro commuters⁸, tourists, and casual passersby—converting them into mall visitors.

Better flow and visibility mean more spontaneous visits, longer stays, and increased spending.

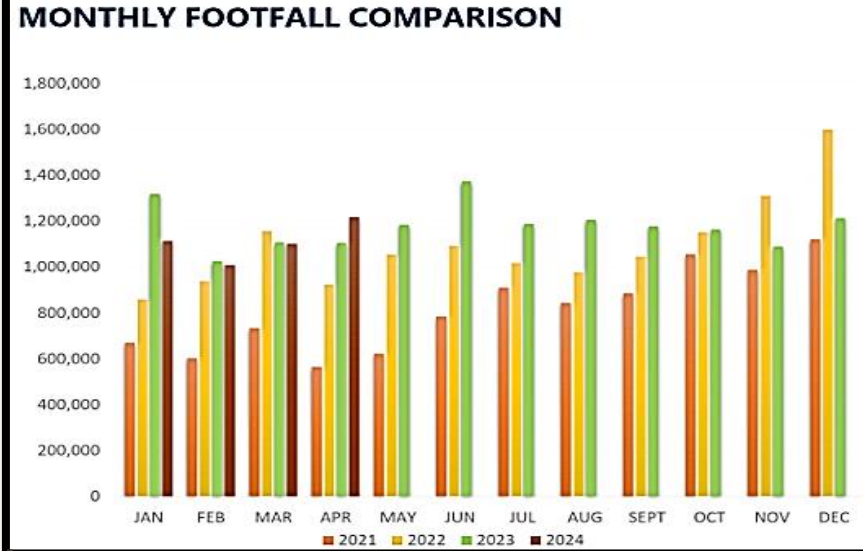
Performance Trends (2022–2024)



City Center Doha has shown consistent year-on-year growth in footfall:

This represents a **34.2% increase** from 2021 to 2022 and a **7.9% increase** from 2022 to 2023, indicating strong recovery post covid followed by steady growth in consumer interest

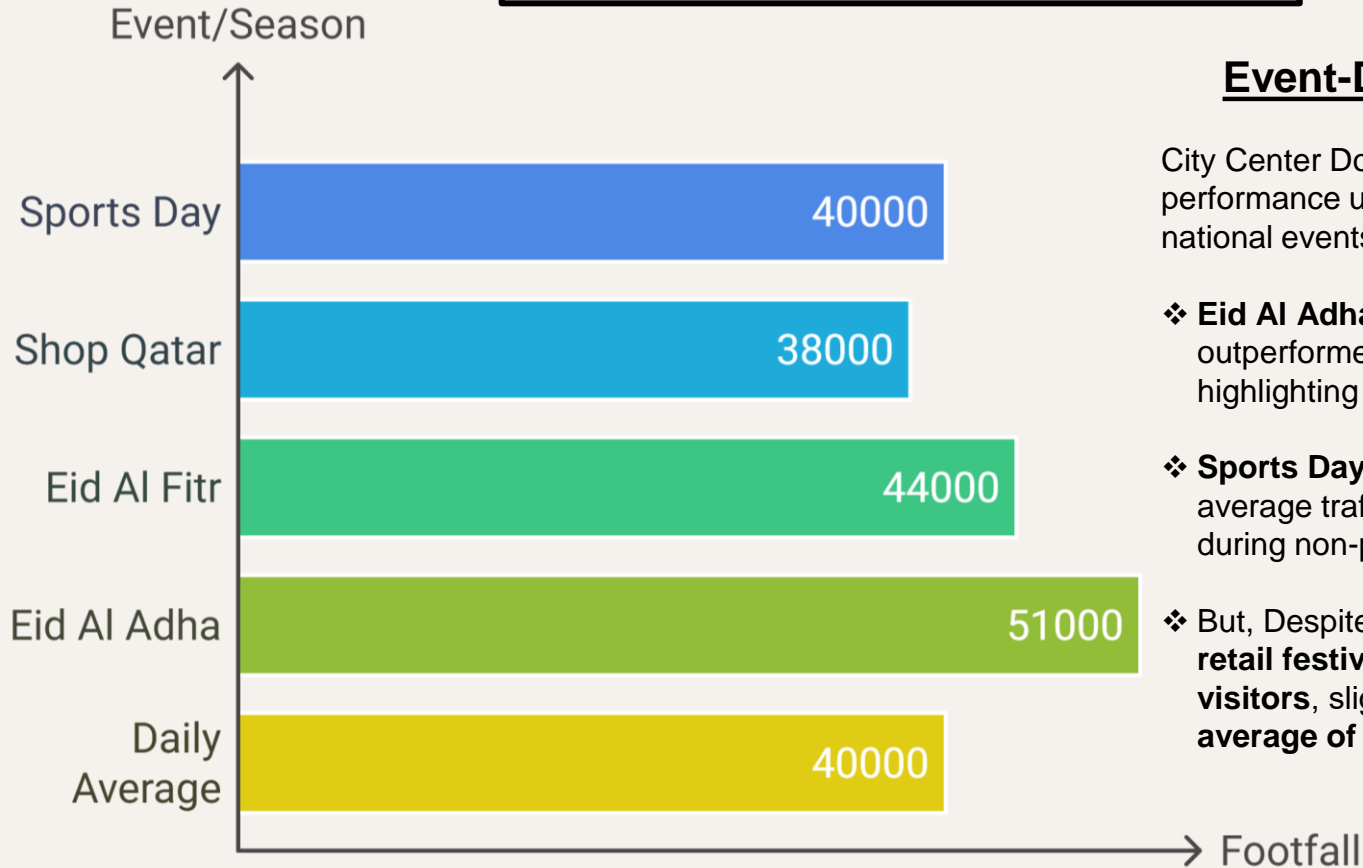
F
O
O
T
F
A
L
L



Footfall peaks consistently in **April, June, and December**, likely linked to Ramadan/Eid, summer holidays, and year-end festivities.

There is a noticeable **seasonal dip in February, May, and September**, suggesting opportunities to activate low-traffic months.

Performance Trends (2022–2024)



Event-Driven Footfall Surge

City Center Doha has shown consistent performance uplifts during key cultural and national events:

- ❖ **Eid Al Adha (51,000)** and **Eid Al Fitr (44,000)** outperformed the **daily average of 40,000**, highlighting the power of festive engagement.
- ❖ **Sports Day (40,000)** aligned closely with average traffic, maintaining momentum even during non-peak retail periods.
- ❖ But, Despite being a **nationally promoted retail festival** *Shop Qatar* recorded **38,000 visitors**, slightly below the mall's **daily average of 40,000**.

SUCCESS DRIVERS

Improved Accessibility

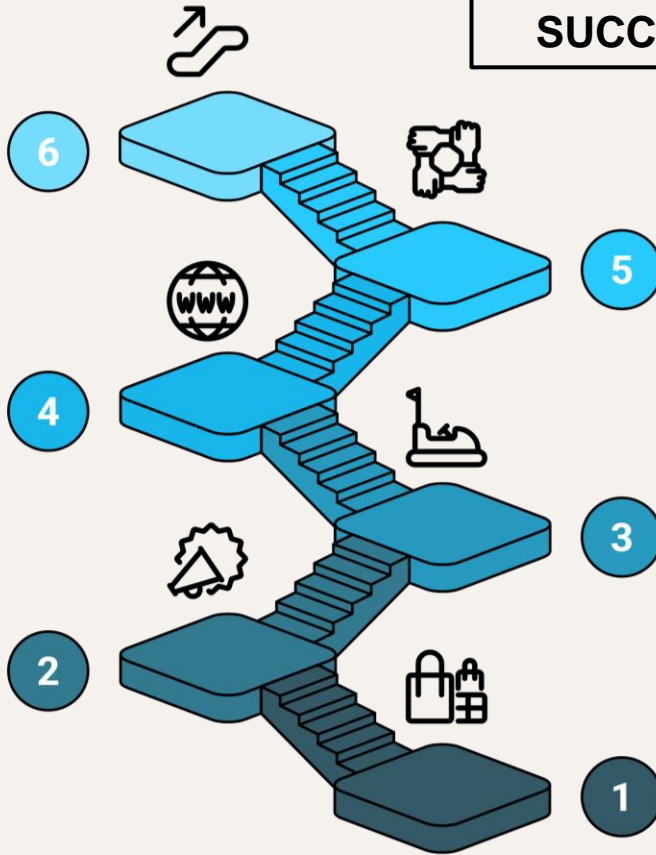
New pedestrian bridge, hotel link corridors, and renovated zones have led to better flow and visitor satisfaction.

Web Presence

Consistent updates and digital campaigns on website have led to stronger customer connection and event visibility.

High-Profile Promotions

Events on National Day, 20th Anniversary, Eid etc. have driven buzz, increased visits, and boosted retention.



Strategic Collaborations

Hotel integration, Qatar Rail bridge, and tenant activations have expanded access and brand engagement.

Thematic Zones

Fun City, Soho Square, mini-golf, Gold Souq these additions have enhanced family appeal and increased dwell time.

Brand Expansion

Big-name entries (Sephora, McDonald's 3rd outlet) refresh tenant mix and have kept offerings dynamic.

2021



2023

In the period between 2021 and 2023 City Centre Doha has seen:-

- Increase in footfall indicated by both daily (5.26%) and annual figures (44.83%)
- Increased diversity in retail mix demonstrated by increase in number of shops (22.8%)

TRANSFERABLE INSIGHTS



Create Experience Zones

Implement experience zones that cater to different demographics, such as children, families, and millennials, based on the client's target audience.



Launch Events

Plan and execute seasonal festivals, workshops, and cultural events aligned with local festivals and holidays.



Strengthen Digital Presence

Increase digital engagement through social media, a potential app, and an active online presence to connect with customers in real-time.



Forge Partnerships

Form partnerships with nearby businesses, brands, and local authorities for mutual promotional campaigns and cross-promotion.



Dynamise Tenant Mix

Regularly refresh brand offerings with trending categories and pop-ups to keep the mall experience fresh and relevant.



Optimize Layout

Improve in-mall navigation, seating, and shaded or air-conditioned walkways. Renovate food courts and entrances to make first impressions count. Connect directly to transit or high-traffic nodes, if possible.



Suboptimal Event Strategy

Major focus on Eid and other national holidays but very little local or community-oriented programming like art fairs, weekly markets etc. to drive non-peak time visits.

TRANSFERABLE INSIGHTS

Strategic Gaps at City Center Doha

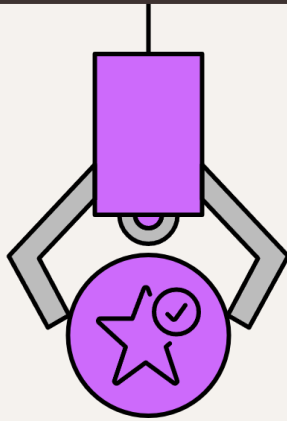
Limited Immersive Attractions

The mall currently lacks immersive anchors such as VR zones, family edutainment centers, or experiential retail hubs. It relies heavily on large-scale national holiday events, with limited ongoing engagement. In contrast, other leading malls in Qatar like **Mall of Qatar** (KidZania¹⁰, Xtremeland), **Doha Festival City** (Angry Birds World, Virtuocity¹¹), and **Place Vendôme** (dancing fountain shows¹², waterfront experiences) offer continuous, family-focused attractions that enhance footfall and dwell time.

No Loyalty App or CRM System

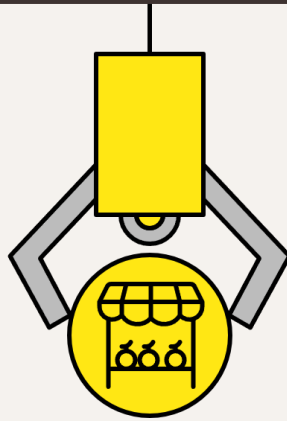
Malls with loyalty platforms report more foot traffic are able to incentivize repeat footfall through rewards and gamification and additionally can track preferences and push tailored deals to increase visits.

Strategic Recommendations



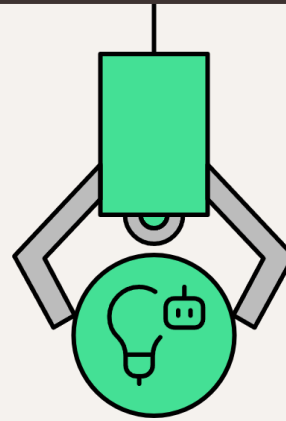
Loyalty Program

Launch a branded loyalty program & app with personalized deals and point rewards. Significantly boosting repeat footfall and allow targeted marketing.¹³



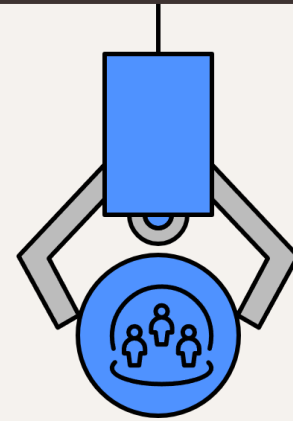
Pop-up Spaces

Create a modular space for seasonal pop-up stores, artisan markets, and brand showcases rotate events keeping the mix dynamic.



Modern Amenities

Modernize by improving internal navigation, adding walkways and connectivity to public transport refreshing key zones and elevating overall experience.



Community Partnerships

Partner with local artists, schools, and NGOs through in-mall art exhibitions, workshops, and kids' clubs. Engaging local communities creating loyalty and additional traffic¹³

Strategic Recommendations

Growth Roadmap in Phases

Underperforming Retail Space

Short-Term Actions

- ✓ Launch the Loyalty Program/App
- ✓ Activate social media campaigns
- ✓ Expand popular F&B outlets¹⁴

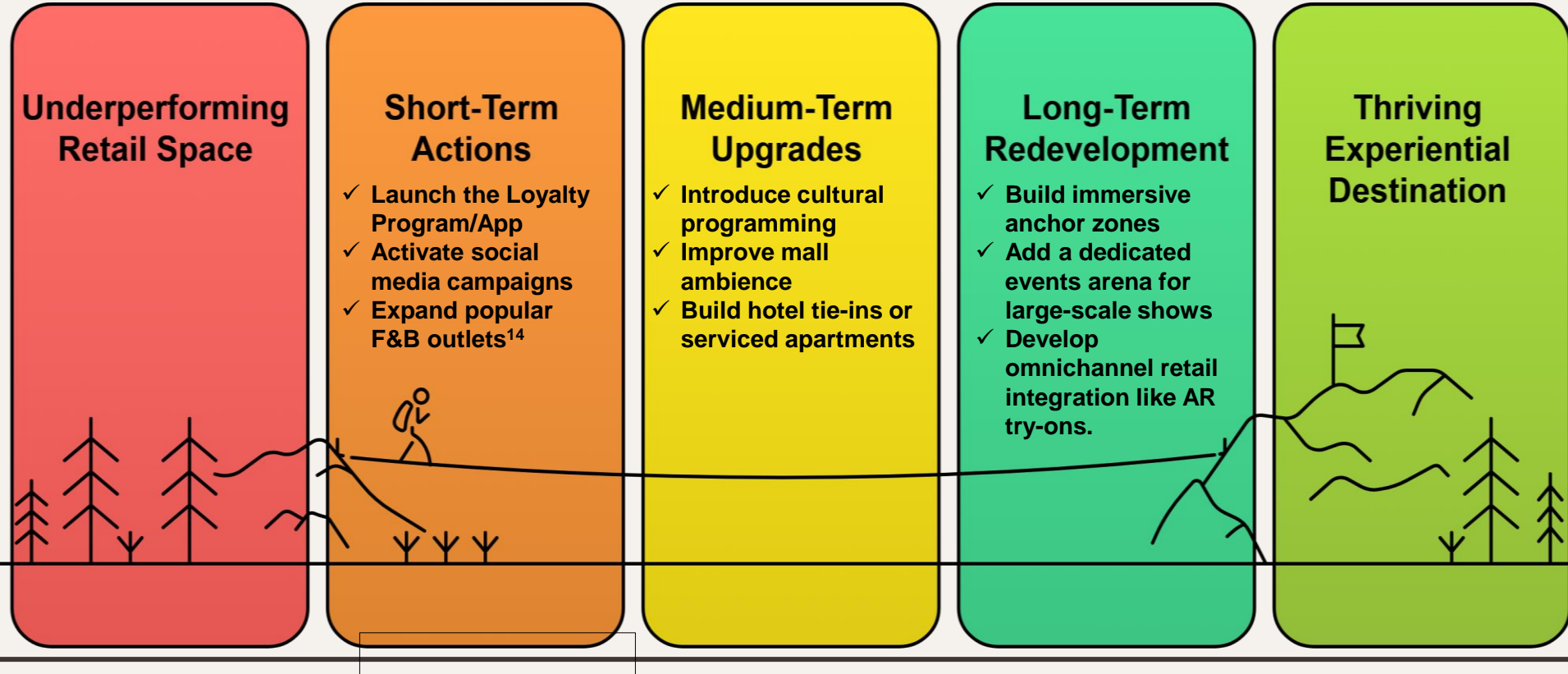
Medium-Term Upgrades

- ✓ Introduce cultural programming
- ✓ Improve mall ambience
- ✓ Build hotel tie-ins or serviced apartments

Long-Term Redevelopment

- ✓ Build immersive anchor zones
- ✓ Add a dedicated events arena for large-scale shows
- ✓ Develop omnichannel retail integration like AR try-ons.

Thriving Experiential Destination



CONCLUSION

Tenant Diversification

City Center Doha's emphasis on a balanced tenant mix, particularly the aggressive expansion of F&B and the introduction of experiential zones, aligns with the practices followed by leading malls. For the client, this suggests that merely relying on traditional retail is insufficient; there's a need to diversify offerings to include more dining, entertainment, and unique experiences to increase footfall and dwell time.

Experiential Zones

The success of City Center Doha's experiential features, such as the Gold Souq and Soho Square, highlights the importance of creating destinations within the mall. The client should focus on developing unique zones that differentiate them from other shopping malls and host frequent events to transform the mall from a place of transaction to a place of engagement.

Digital Engagement

While City Center Doha has a strong online presence, its lack of a loyalty program and mobile app is a missed opportunity. Implementing digital tools is essential for the client to enhance customer engagement, gather data, and drive repeat visits.

Accessibility and Convenience

City Center Doha's investment in infrastructure, most notably the direct metro link, underscores the significance of easy access. The client must prioritize improving accessibility and in-mall convenience to remove friction for shoppers.

Bibliography

1. thepeninsulaqatar.com
2. [Linkedin Sephora](#)
3. thepeninsulaqatar.com.
4. thepeninsulaqatar.com
5. iloveqatar.net
6. iloveqatar.net
7. [Linkedin Mcdonalds](#)
8. [Linkedin Metro bridge](#)
9. [Linkedin National Day](#)
10. <https://doha.kidzania.com/en-qa>
11. <https://www.dohafestivalcity.com/home/whats-inside/entertainment/virtuocity>
12. <https://www.placevendomeqatar.com/en/category/entertainment/entertainment/6324271048ebe6224f4534c4>
13. novus-loyalty.com.
14. foodinstitute.com.