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FORGING the way forward into the future of retail, Quill City Mall Kuala Lumpur is taking a new turn in 2020 with a brand-new retail strategy that marries physical shopping with digital advert.

This move is all about creating a meaningful shopping platform for stakeholders, including local entrepreneurs.

“The idea behind this is to reposition the mall in this challenging market.

“It redefines the purpose of a mall and creates our own playing field. This new concept integrates online and offline shopping and aims to pull the online audience to the offline experience,” said Quill City Mall Kuala Lumpur senior vice-president Justin Liew.

To inspire confidence in this idea, he said they would have the largest physical space of 4,831sq m – the largest space in South-East Asia – in the form of a “phygital” store called the JD Concept Store.

To kick-start this move into the phygital era of shopping, five retail industry experts explored the future of retail as impacted by the phygital era during an expert forum held at Quill City Convention Centre.

Five industry experts led the forum on “Future Proof Your Business – New retail Innovations and Interventions” moderated by Jonathan Case.

The panel consisted of Quill Group of Companies chief executive officer Koong Wai Seng, industry expert Anwar Jumabhoy, Smuzcity founder Kent Lee, Grubcycle founder Redza Shahid and PUC Bhd chief executive officer Cheong Chia Chou.

Koong said it was time they welcomed the phygital era as more retail sales had shifted online with the rise and prevalence of technology.

“However, the joy of being able to see, touch and feel the product prior to purchase still remains. The platform of purchase itself is secondary to consumers.

“While the fun of shopping has not changed, the way we shop certainly has. Ever-evolving consumer expectations require retailers to constantly adapt to meet their needs for comfort, convenience and entertainment.

“We need to challenge retailers on pushing their products online to reimagine the essential role physical experience plays in building strong and memorable relationships with their customers,” said Koong.

He said a phygital mall created a balanced retail ecosystem converging in experience and fostering a meaningful and intimate relationship between all stakeholders.

“It is about designing a shopping platform, a journey within a physical space, with consumer-centric tech infrastructure that facilitates interaction between consumers and brands throughout the shopping experience,” he added.

Koong said the decision to build phygital features into the mall came from the purpose to become a tool to empower small and medium sized retailers and home-grown entrepreneurs, and with technology-fuelled infrastructures and phygital tools, international and local businesses are encouraged to expand their audience reach and improve their bottom line.

“From borderless payment and borderless logistics to live streaming marketing by influencers, Quill City Mall Kuala Lumpur is determined to provide a borderless shopping and retail platform where local shoppers as well as businesses can access the global marketplace for purchase and trade.

“Retailers, from small to large, both international and local, will be able to leverage on the phygital infrastructure we have built to engage with audiences that they would not have otherwise.

“Part of leading into the future means lifting everyone in the industry as you grow,” he said.

Quill City Mall Kuala Lumpur also announced new tenants that are already on board to build their very first phygital concept store in Malaysia including JDX Presto, E-Sports Center and UniKL.