

## Mall design and reorientation workshop at ISCF

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“There are very few developers in India, the rest are all builders,” remarked Susil Dungarwal, Founder & CEO, Squarefeet Management speaking at the mall reorientation, process

development and design workshop that kick started the second day of the India Shopping Centre Forum (ISCF) 2009.

Dungarwal shared a list of reasons that motivate builders in India to get into the mall business which are not good business decisions and no wonder that only about 10-12 percent malls in India can be called successful. For instance a builder may want to open a mall because that would lead to better returns than office space, while another may have managed to secure two tenants willing to open in his would-be mall!

While he pointed out to the lack of understanding of the mall concept, he guesstimated the average size of malls in India to be around 85,000 sq ft and referred to instances where a Shoppers Stop store or a Big Bazaar may also be referred to as a mall.

He said that over the next five years, with the rise in competition, segregation of footfalls will take place in favour of good malls. The learning curve is on the rise and reorientation of malls will take place and distressed properties will find new owners.

Sharing the learnings from some of the best performing malls and processes needed to develop successful malls, Kelvin Ng, CEO, Synergistic Real Estate China presented case studies on international mega malls, tourism mall, suburban mall, young adults mall and mixed use developments. He said that malls do not need to be big to be successful, what they do need is good ambience, good circulation and the right trade mix, which is the heart and soul of a shopping centre. Tenants are to be seen as strategic partners who grow with the developer.

Christopher Lanksbury, main board director/partner, Chapman Taylor, UK threw light on how some of the best performing international malls fare in design and architecture. He stated that design does not make a bad mall good, but it can certainly make a good mall much better. He stressed on the need for a clear design concept, which can also be arrived at in consultation with mall architects for options to create differentiation from competitors.

— Soma Chaturvedi