

Barcelona Shopping Line

The city's main shopping thoroughfare is known as the Barcelona Shopping Line. Its uniqueness with regard to other shopping districts lies in the fact that it encompasses an extensive area (5 kilometres), is mainly pedestrian, and forms an integral part of the city and the lives of its inhabitants. These shops, which are part of the history of the city, are characterized by a wide range of products which set Barcelona apart and make it different from other cities. They are also synonymous with quality, due to their service and the way they attend to customers. The shops on the route are identified by the Shopping Line logo -- four coloured diamonds in a white circle within a blue circle in Barcelona.

The Barcelona Shopping Line Office was set up in 1999; its **aim** is mainly to position Barcelona as an international shopping city and to promote Barcelona's five-kilometre Shopping Line. According to Turisme de Barcelona, Barcelona's image as a shopping destination is a place where architecture, culture and services are combined.

The office created an umbrella brand, which includes the logotypes of the shops on the Barcelona Shopping Line. The goal is to advertise them by channelling international demand and improving the provision of services to the customers from abroad.

The BSL office is involved in five spheres of **activity**:

- *Signage* (both indoor and outdoor or, in other words, private and public). Perspex displays for shop windows and shop fronts, lights in the shape of a shopping bag, BCC and BSL banners (colour-coded by zones), Bus Shopping Line.
- *Information*. General information leaflet, Shopping Map.
- *Promotional entertainments and events*.
- *Promotion*. Collaboration agreements with congresses, trade fairs and major events (limited period)
- *Fostering loyalty*. Customer record cards will be introduced and incentives and gifts will be given to customers according to their potential for purchasing.

Actions

The two main objectives are to improve the provision of services and reduce costs for joint actions. To achieve them, the BSL office signs collaboration agreements with institutions linked the world of commerce (e.g.:agreement with Caixa De Catalunya Savings Bank: lower commissions on international credit cards).

The BSL Office makes a strong promotional activity addressed to the guests of the city's hotel. Thanks to different books and magazines (Book Style, Barna Plus, Miscellaneous publications) the tourists become aware of Barcelona's landmark shops.

BSL office is involved in the most important events organised in the city, such as congresses, conventions, incentive trips, specialist trade fairs and salons, sporting and cultural activities, etc. A very important segment of potential customer of the shopping line is represented by the cruise ships passengers, those in transit as well as those arriving or departing.

An example of a product created by BSL Office, with the collaboration of Turisme de Barcelona is "Christmas Shopping in Barcelona". It is addressed to specific market segments and countries and it has particular advantages in terms of prices and services offered.

According to Turisme de Barcelona, the city is "a major shopping showcase. Its range of shops is a combination of tradition and modernity. They are part of the city's identity and uniqueness and, together with the major brands from Spain and abroad, make it a shopping city of international standing". **We found out that along the Shopping line you can find international shops with the same products that you can find in other Cities and even with the same prices! Shopping in Barcelona, is not so different from shopping in another European city. We even remarked that in the BSL there are more or less the same shops we went into at Orio Centre. What is different is the location and the atmosphere.**

The four areas and the Bus

The Shopping Line is made up of four areas:

1. Diagonal – Pedralbes;
2. Eixample - Modernisme – Gaudí;
3. Gothic Quarter - Pl. de Catalunya;
4. La Rambla - Port Vell - El Raval - La Ribera.

The Shopping Line Bus, TombBus, (tomb means a round-trip), links the areas, running from Plaza Catalunya to El Corte Inglés store at the top end of the Diagonal and back, making 28 stops along the way. Buses leave every seven minutes from 7.30am to 9.30pm on weekdays, and every 15 minutes from 9.30am to 9.30pm on Saturdays.

Barcelona Shopping Line Office lists the advantages and obligations of its members.

Advantages:

- Preferential treatment for credit cards issued by foreign banks
- Attractive signage
- Channelling demand to your shop, through information campaigns and communication tools implemented by the Barcelona Shopping Line Office.
- Catalogue of the shops on the Barcelona Shopping Line, geared to specific market segments, namely, congresses, conventions and incentive trips.
- Collaboration with the city's hotels in matters regarding the nationality of tourists, with the aim of informing and raising awareness among tourists.
- Special attention to the cruise industry.

Obligations

- Their shop/s must be located along the Shopping Line.
- To meet the criteria of quality in the provision of services.
- To display prominently the logo showing that they are part of Barcelona Shopping Line.
- To use the Barcelona Shopping Line brand according to the graphic standards manual. The Barcelona Shopping Line is synonymous with a quality brand.
- To provide correct information about prices in euros.
- To be able to attend to customers in their own language (minimum 4 languages).
- If applicable, use the tax-free facility for tourists.
- To give preferential treatment to foreign clients, in terms of assistance and service.
- To open all day.

Empirical Analysis

In order to try to verify if what they say about the Barcelona Shopping Line is true, we made a limited empirical analysis. We went into some shops, members of the BSL asking some questions to the shop directors:

- Conti, Av. Diagonal, 512. Men's Fashion;
- Modelo, Av Diagonal, 506. Men's Fashion;
- Gonzalo Comella, Via Augusta 2. Men's, Women's, Children's Fashion;
- Calçats Padevì, Av. Portal de l'Àngel, 42. Shoes;
- Cottet Òptics, Av. Portal de l'Àngel, 40. Optician's;
- Casas Sabaters, Av. Portal de l'Àngel, 40. Shoes;
- Felgar, Av. Portal de l'Àngel, 25. Women's Fashion.

The first three shops we went in are on the Diagonal, the others are in the historical centre.

Some considerations after the empirical analysis:

1. In the Shopping Line, we didn't find just traditional and Spanish shops. The products they're selling were not only Spanish, and they differed in percentage depending on the shops;
2. Almost all the shops had the logo in the shop windows or behind the cash desk, the only exception was Cottet Òptics, where they forgot to put the logo again in the shop window when they changed it;
3. According to our interlocutors, being part of the BSL didn't bring any advantages. So why being a member? The membership to the BSL is decided at a higher level, not by the single shop of the chain;
4. All the shop directors agreed on the advantages connected with the promotion of the shops made through the Shopping Line;
5. In the opinion of the shop directors there are not particular rate of discount for customers of the Shopping Line. Only the Optician talked about some benefit for particular groups (e.g. Rotary Club);
6. The description of the BSL shops found on the web, according to which those shops are "synonymous with quality, due to their service and the way they attend to customers" doesn't reflect the truth. We didn't observe particular kindness of the shop assistants, just usual courtesy and the quality is the same you can find in all the shops of the firms considered.
7. We got a Shopping Line map, like all the tourists in their hotel. Here we could find all the addresses of the shops member of the BSL. It's one of the several maps you get in Barcelona,

but I think it's really useful because it brings you to other shops more distant from the centre, that otherwise one would not visit.

8. The shops positioned on the Diagonal are not in a pedestrian zone. It's not so pleasant taking a walk and window-shopping in the traffic. Shop directors have to consider it, they need people to know that they are there and, in this sense, the promotion done by the BSL is one of the better solutions.
9. In our opinion, the shops that need more promotion are those away from the city centre, while those in the historical city don't have to do so much because people would come in anyway. In some cases we find "free riders". Among shops of the BCL there are also others that are not, but people would enter both of them, also those which are not paying any fees.