In the recently held learning session on Retail Management, Mr. Hans Clifford Yao, Program Director for Retail Management, and Mr. Bimbo Cabochan, our subject matter expert on digital retail, presented the international and local retail industry landscape, trends that are shaping and will shape the industry in the years to come, and gave advice on what business leaders can do now to ride the wave for success.

In the West, the retail industry is seeing a dramatic shift in buyer behavior. Malls are seeing a reduction in foot traffic, as consumers' busy and mobile lifestyles drive them towards online shopping. In the Philippines, meanwhile, consumers still prefer going to malls to shop, though we are already seeing a trend towards online shopping, as proven by the steady rise of e-commerce sites and delivery apps.

In reaction, retailers tend to either improve their brick-and-mortar stores and/or improve their online presence. Some brick-and-mortar stores have now become lifestyle-based and experience-based concept stores. Others have expanded their online presence to complement physical stores. On the other hand, some online stores have expanded into brick-and-mortar stores. These changes in the retail industry mean that online stores and brick-and-mortar stores are not replacements but complements to each other.

At the root of all these strategic decisions must be the business leaders' deep understanding of the brands' customers. Retailers need to go back to the basic tenet of customer intimacy and deliver the best experience across the multi-channel customer shopping journey. Buyer preferences will dictate how a brand chooses the sets of activities they must pursue, in design, marketing, operations, logistics.

These are just some of the lessons taught at the Retail Management and Strategy program, taught by Mr. Yao, who is also managing director of Washington Retailers as well as Adrenaline Group of Companies, and Mr. Cabochan, founding partner of digital enterprises such as Zoom Lab Digital for Retail and SMEs, Mindpool Asia Consulting, and Boost Asia Creative Solutions.

Ideal for retail business owners, upper to senior level managers, and decision makers, the program covers global retail trends and strategic planning, retail selling and promotional strategies, digital marketing, and driving profitability.

To know more about Retail Management and Strategy Program, please call Irene Chavez at the Ateneo Center for Continuing Education, landline (632) 830 2040, 0932 791 9190, or email sales.cce@ateneo.edu.