

# SUPERMARKET & RETAILER



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ISSUE 11, 2023 [www.supermarket.co.za](http://www.supermarket.co.za)

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Delight your customers ...

**The Ostrich Effect only  
applies to humans**

Canned, chilled, frozen & bottled ...

**Quality, freshness  
& convenience rule**

Packaging & printing solutions ...

**Technology & sustainability  
goals driving change**

Hardware, DIY & home improvement ...

**How to nail your sales**



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# Contents



Image: <https://wildsmithskin.com/>

## FEATURES

### Packaging & printing solutions

Technological advancements and investment in research and development are driving packaging, labelling and associated printing innovations, with retailers, suppliers, and manufacturers experimenting with different options in their bid to find better and more sustainable solutions.



Freepik\_image by vecstock

### Canned, chilled, frozen & bottled

Easy to store, shelf stable, nutritious, and often of high quality, Canned & Bottled foods are a reliable and relatively cost-effective food solution. With long shelf life, they reduce food wastage, while the cans and bottles can be recycled and are economically efficient. Product innovation is adding energy and interest to the Frozen food category, and the promise of convenience has always been one of the big attractions.

Meanwhile, Chilled foods are practical, can be easily prepared and answer the need for convenience.

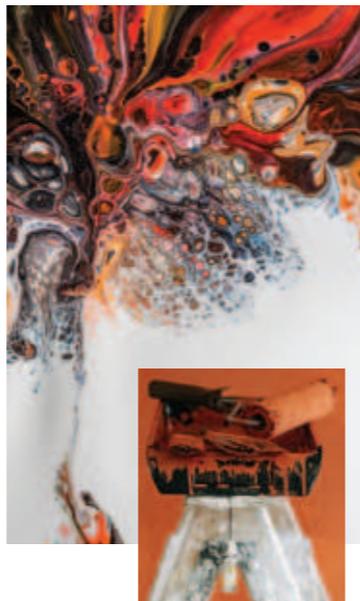


Image courtesy of Alexander Ant, Pexels  
Inset: courtesy of Ivan Samkov, Pexels

### Hardware, DIY & home improvement

Covid-19 restrictions, which required many to stay home, provided people with the opportunity to carry out home improvement activities.

Key players in the DIY and Hardware Store market experienced double-digit year-over-year growth [2019 vs 2020]. Now, sales are returning or have returned to pre-pandemic levels.



<https://skeptics.stackexchange.com/>

## COLUMNS

### Delight your customers

Aki Kalliatakis discusses the myth that when ostriches feel frightened, they bury their heads in the ground. According to wildlife experts, this is not true ... but this weird effect does bizarrely apply to us peculiar human beings. When we are faced with

uncertainty, embarrassment, possible bad news or even a little bit of fear, we are very likely to avoid it than face it head on.



<https://plannersweb.com>

### Reward your team appropriately

Hippo Zourides suggests that you analyse your business and decide whether the 'team' is as important as you, as the owner or investor and whether they should be incentivised to produce more for your business.

## NEWS

### Collaborative Category Management

Open communication enables suppliers and retailers to align their objectives, identify opportunities plus gaps, decide on resource allocation, and agree on key performance indicators.

### Disruptive technology is driving progress

Disruptive technologies such as Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Internet of Things (IoT), more particularly Industrial IoT (IIoT), are enabling smart manufacturing practices. Importantly, these technologies are growth drivers for the manufacturing industry.

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# Retailers and consumers under pressure: Navigating shipping challenges



Helen Maister

Port congestion, once a global challenge with fleets of anchored ships, is now a distant memory in most major trade hubs. This has raised hopes for the first disruption-free holiday shipping season since 2019. However, South Africa stands out as a significant exception. Satellite data

currently indicates that nearly 100 cargo vessels, loaded with fuel, bulk dry goods, containers and cars, are waiting outside the ports of Durban and Richards Bay. Some are anchored near Cape Town and Gqeberha. The terminals are grappling with various issues, from adverse weather to aging equipment. This coinciding with a staggering 336% year-on-year increase in shipping prices.

Consequently, retailers and consumers may face an unwelcome price shock during December



Image courtesy of <https://infrastructurenews.co.za/>

seasonal sales, and even January sell-offs. The concern extends beyond increased costs for imported goods – there’s a real danger that stock may not reach the shelves on time due to port congestion, further aggravated by the need for restocking following the July looting in KwaZulu-Natal and Gauteng.

Several contributing factors compound this situation. Amid the Covid-19 shipping interruption in the first half of the previous year, a significant amount of capacity was deferred. The subsequent

economic revival was better than expected, leading shipping lines to swiftly reinstate capacity, prioritising additional capacity on the Asia-US trade routes due to their continuous high demand and willingness to pay the highest premiums. Accordingly, capacity on the Asia-South Africa trade diminished, resulting in sparse capacity for both ships and containers. Shipping prices surged ten times from July 2020 to the current date, influencing the ultimate cost transferred to consumers.

Severe shipping congestion is anticipated to continue throughout the peak sales season and into the following year, with the additional challenge of the upcoming Chinese New Year. Consequently, South Africa’s importers face the need to navigate longer lead times, maintain higher inventory levels for FMCG items, closely manage cashflows and working capital needs amid increasing currency volatility and extended cash cycles.

*Helen Maister*  
Helen Maister



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## W&RSETA CONTINUES ON IMPROVED PERFORMANCE AND RECORDS UNQUALIFIED AUDIT REPORT

The Wholesale and Retail SETA (W&RSETA) presented its 2022/23 Annual Report and Annual Financial Statements to its stakeholders at the 2023 Annual General Meeting on 23 November. The SETA is on the upward trajectory having recorded an increase in its performance and receiving an unqualified audit report from the Auditor-General South Africa. These results are a demonstration of the W&RSETA's commitment to boost economic growth through various programmes that were implemented to improve productivity of its stakeholder companies, create jobs and support small businesses. While performance continued to peak reaching 83.78% in 2022/23, the impact of the W&RSETA's programmes is the true measure of the SETA's investment in skills development in the Wholesale and Retail Sector.



## Some of the W&RSETA's impactful areas for the 2022/23 financial year include the following:

- **R 236 million** disbursed in Mandatory **Grants** and **R 1.130 billion** in Discretionary Grants towards skills development initiatives.
- **15 672 unemployed youths** were registered on learnerships, occupational qualifications, skills programmes and occupationally directed programmes. **10 447 employees** were registered in various learning programmes.
- **10 347 completions** on learnerships, skills programmes, WIL and occupationally directed programmes (employed and unemployed).
- **1 629** trade union members received training.
- **598 artisans/technicians** were enrolled through the Artisan Development Programme.
- The W&RSETA Bursary Scheme benefited **3 393** students from TVET colleges, universities of technology and universities.
- **90 senior executives** enrolled on the International Leadership Development Programme and **283 Managers** on Retail Management Development Programme as part of the SETA's transformation agenda.
- **4 321 SMMEs** were supported for various skills development initiatives.
- **3 006** hawkers, spaza shop and micro enterprise owners benefited from the Informal Traders and Micro Enterprises Development Programme.
- The W&RSETA partnered with Kenyan university, Zetech, to expose 117 informal traders to the thriving informal trade of Nairobi focusing on technology and innovation.
- **2 782** graduates from TVET colleges and HETs were placed in wholesale and retail companies to gain workplace experience.
- The annual Entrepreneurship Development Programme benefited **257 young people**.
- The W&RSETA empowered **275 vulnerable women** to start or improve their businesses through the Taking Care of Business programme.
- **20** cooperatives and **177** community-based organisations participated in skills development programmes to ensure the sustainability of their businesses.

## W&RSETA Profile

The Wholesale and Retail Sector Education and Training Authority (W&RSETA) has been in existence for over 23 years, facilitating skills development in the Wholesale and Retail Sector. The W&RSETA operates within one of the top five biggest sectors of the South African economy, wholesale and retail, with large conglomerates that attribute to 19% of the country's active workforce. The sector comprises predominantly of small, medium and micro enterprises including informal traders.



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# The Ostrich Effect only applies to humans – Not ostriches!

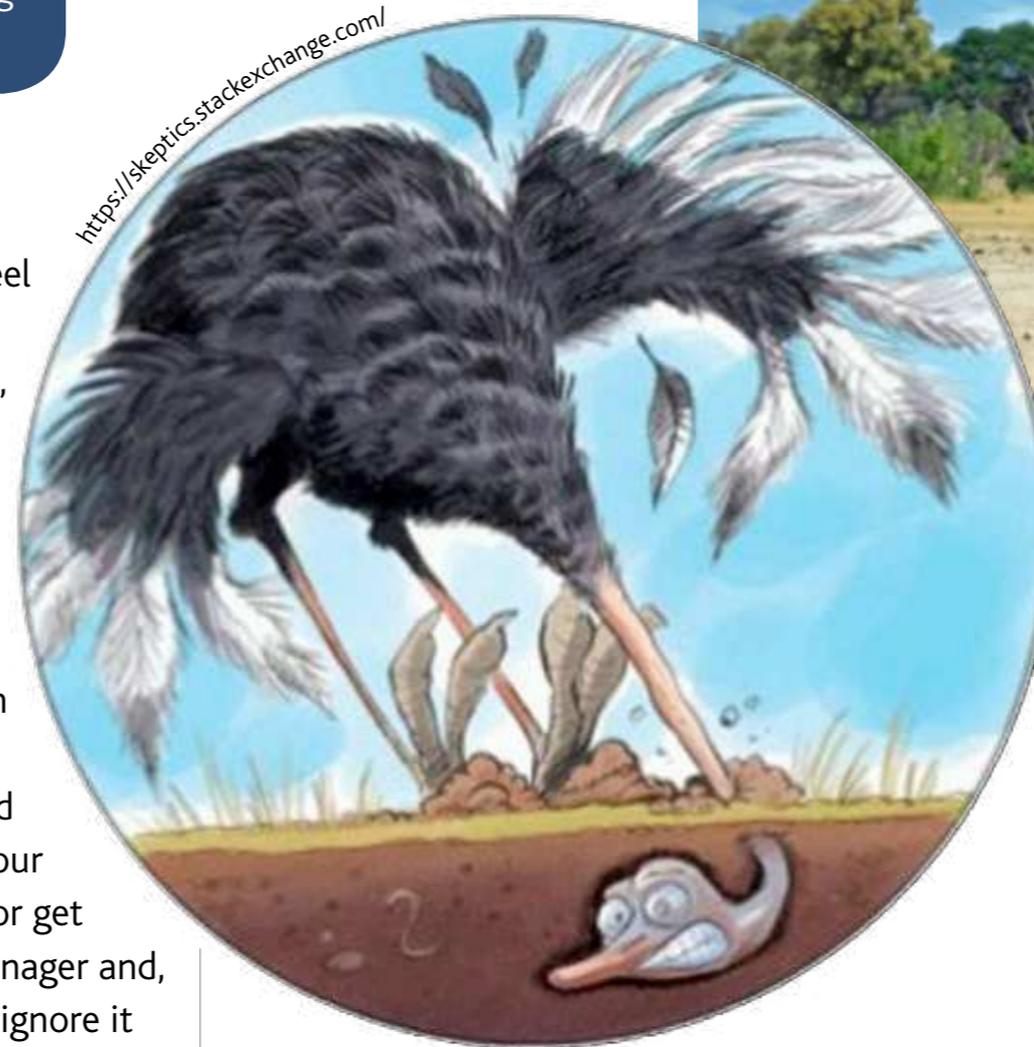
This is the next article in a series on how behavioural economics and 'being human' affects your business.

Aki Kalliatakis

aki@leadershiplaunchpad.co.za

There's a myth that when ostriches feel frightened, they bury their heads in the ground. According to wildlife experts, this is not true ... but this weird effect does bizarrely apply to us peculiar human beings. When we are faced with uncertainty, embarrassment, possible bad news or even a little bit of fear, we are very likely to avoid it than face it head on.

So, for example, you may see a dreaded text message about an overdraft from your bank, or see an email from the taxman, or get an urgent voice mail to contact your manager and, rather than dealing with it, most people ignore it until the last possible moment. It's just completely who we are. We see this happening with our fitness or trying to lose weight, with our relationships, recycling and taking care of our environment and, of course, our finances. A good psychologist will say we are in denial – and denial inevitable leads to inaction. Sometimes the problem goes away on its own but, more often than not, it escalates.



<https://skeptics.stackexchange.com/>



<https://birdfact.com/>

## Where did the myth originate from?

Historians trace the origin of this myth to the Roman writer, philosopher and naturalist Pliny the Elder, who lived from AD23 to AD79.

One of Pliny's most influential works was *Naturalis Historia* which translates as 'natural history'. This enormous work covered many topics in zoology, among various other subjects.

Pliny spent some time in the African Roman colonies. In Book X (book 10), Pliny writes about ostriches ... "They imagine when they have thrust their head and neck into a bush, that the whole of their body is concealed." The modern-day idiom probably came sometime after. While ostriches don't bury their heads in the sand, they sometimes sit on the ground and stretch their necks across the ground when they feel in danger ... probably to give themselves a low profile that blends in with the surrounding foliage.

Male ostriches build rudimental nests, which are essentially just hollows scraped in the dirt with his claws. Once the eggs are laid, ostriches periodically reach into the nest and turn the eggs over. This ensures that incubation is even. The ground gets very cold at night and the egg must be warmed up evenly. From a distance, this might give the impression that the ostrich is reaching into a hollow in the ground, or burying its head in the ground.

<https://birdfact.com/articles/do-ostriches-bury-their-heads-in-the-sand>

But, as a business that deals with customers, the good news is that you can use this little psychological quirk to your advantage.

If you think about your customers' lives at the moment, you know that the majority of them are under a lot of stress. Most of us sit with daily worries about finances, power and water failures,

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wars and crime. It seems like every day brings even more pressure. It's enough to make you want to cloister yourself in a monastery for the rest of your life – or, at least, to avoid shopping. No retail therapy possible here.

As far as your customers are concerned, they know they need to take action – but the Ostrich Effect keeps them stuck. Even if you sell things that they desperately need, if you are not strategic in how you communicate your messages, you may accidentally scare them off.

So what tactics can you use to make them more successful in avoiding action – and to help your business thrive?

Firstly, and obviously, identify the hassles in their lives that are overwhelming, stressful or embarrassing for them, and try to understand the emotions that go with that. Then use communication to educate them and point out the positive side of taking action.

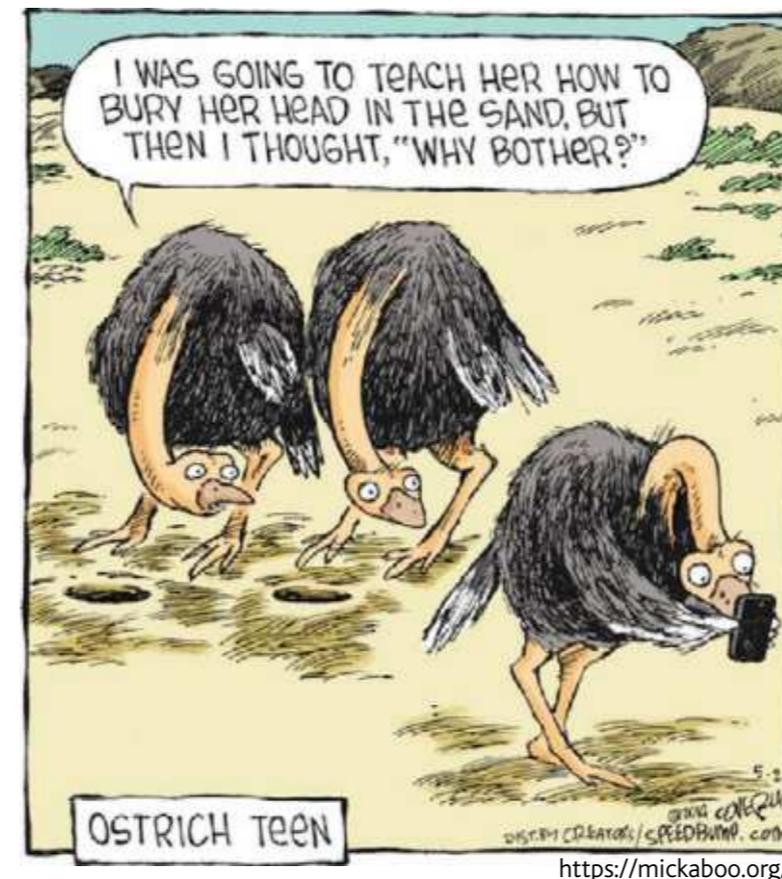
For example, you could probably guess that almost every customer is on some form of a diet, and eating chocolates and ice cream is stress inducing. But, if you emphasise that a particular item has less sugar or fat, it makes it easier for them to choose it. Many sweetened carbonated drinks companies don't use the word 'diet' to describe their product anymore. There are just too many bad connotations linked to dieting, so instead they use different words and images.

Another great way to help your customers avoid inaction is to use fun and humour. We all know that having a bit of a laugh lightens the mood and



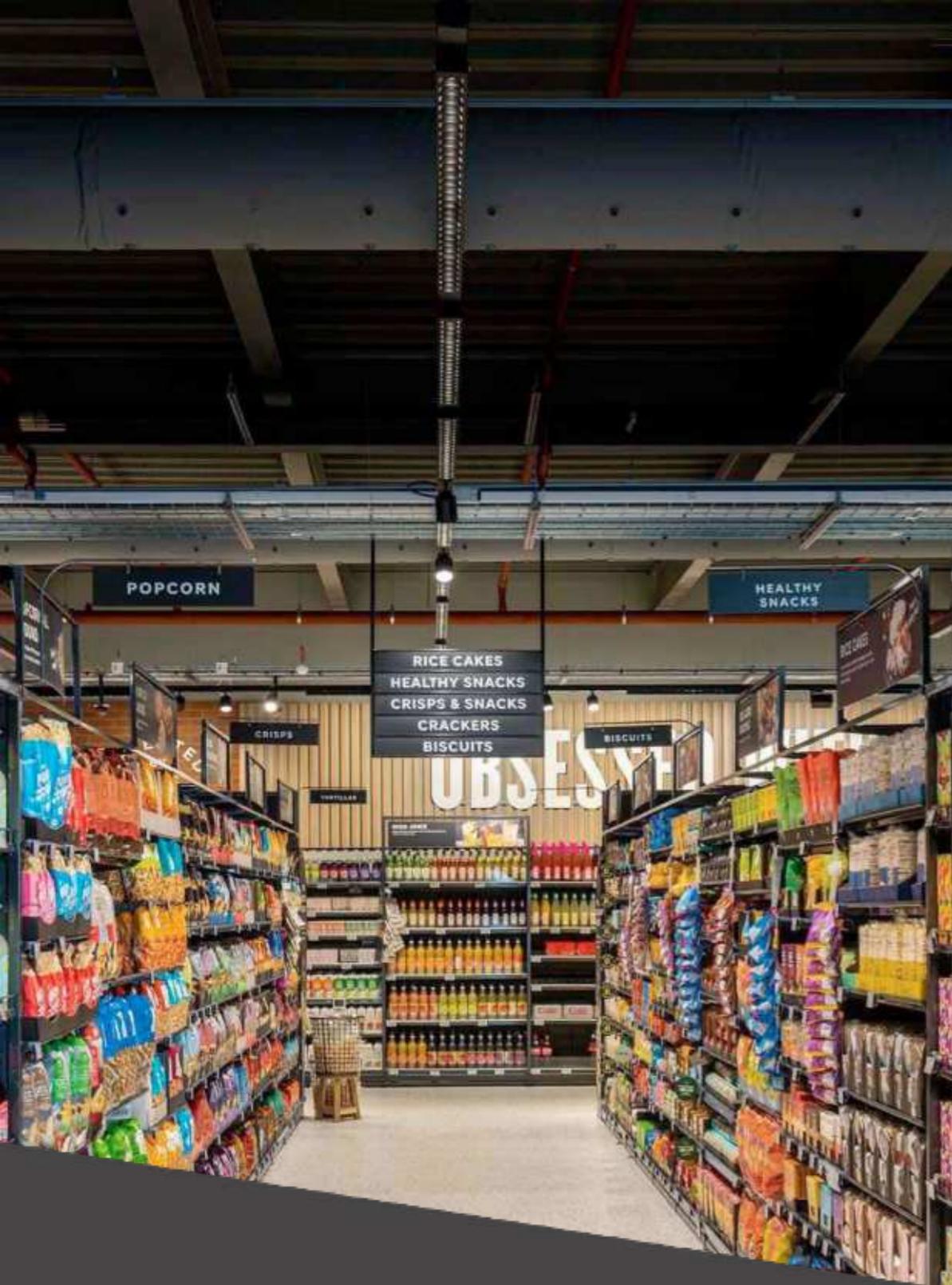
“ Another great way to help your customers avoid inaction is to use fun and humour. We all know that having a bit of a laugh lightens the mood and makes embarrassment much easier to deal with. ”

Nando's restaurant chain transformed a public service announcement into a shot at a close rival. It was a pretty impressive piece of marketing. In its 2020 ad campaign seemingly inspired by KFC's "Finger Lickin' Good" slogan and the need for better hygiene during the Covid-19 epidemic, the company's created ... well, this. <https://memeburn.com/2020/03/nandos-covid-19-ad-campaign/>



makes embarrassment much easier to deal with. It's not about clever slogans – although those could work – but more about bringing a smile to their faces. There are so many beautiful examples in our country at the moment and if you just type in 'funny adverts' into your browser, you will see many, many examples of how companies use humour when a situation can be potentially stressful. We've seen it with courier companies and businesses that help you book an overnight stay in a bed and breakfast.

Another element of fun can be through the use of gamification. This can be very simple ... like giving customers a little sticker or badge, making an announcement, or even a digital award when they have achieved something.



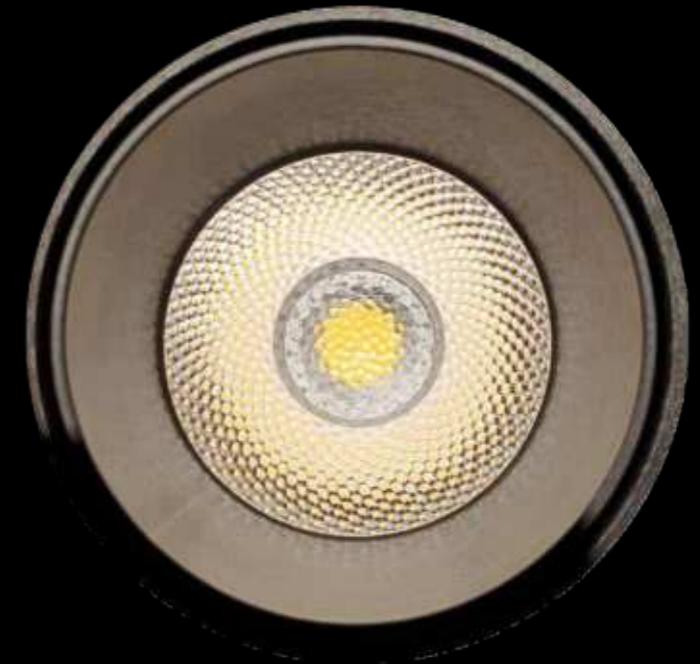
## Introducing *Convision!* Leading-edge luminaires featuring glare free lens technology.

Apart from all the other known advantages, LED lighting can be quite harsh on the eye in terms of glare, especially in retail stores where the focus is on highlighting products without too much concern for the customer's visual comfort.

*Convision* Lens technology resolves this problem by channeling the light emitted via the LED chip through a special lens creating an almost glare-free visual surface and in some fittings creating a "dark light" effect. It also reduces general light loss out of the fitting, so objects appear brighter with the same amount of lumens emitted. The new *Convision* lenses are available in track spots, downlights, and continuous line (E-Line) with a glare rating in some cases as low as UGR<19.

### Take a closer Look...

Convex microstructures on the lens surface inspired by nature, reducing contrasts and ensuring soothing light emission.



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Image: Joel Abraham, Unsplash

But perhaps my favourite example is an Indian restaurant in London called Dishoom.

They could offer every customer 16% discount if they finished their meal and paid by 6 pm. But they don't. Instead, what they do is ... when the waiter brings you your bill, he also leaves a big dice. If you throw a six, you get your meal for free. This has the positive effect of not only encouraging customers to actually spend more (because, after all, imagine you skimmed on the meal and then discovered that it was all for free – that would make you feel a little bit stupid). But the practice also immediately creates a great sense of fun and enthusiasm in the whole restaurant and, needless to say, people talk about it to all of their friends and family.

[www.mcgill.ca/](http://www.mcgill.ca/)



“ Another tactic could be to move your customers thinking away from pessimism, depression, anxiety and hopelessness into an optimistic and positive future. ”

Finally, another tactic could be to move your customers thinking away from pessimism, depression, anxiety and hopelessness into an optimistic and positive future. The financial services industry, especially with pensions and various policies, tends to use fear to motivate customers to buy their products. But what if, instead of that, they actually painted a much rosier picture? Words are so powerful. Helping your customers see a better future for themselves and their families can be very powerful.

And, by the way, it turns out that ostriches don't actually bury their heads in the ground. Instead, they flop onto the sand and remain completely still to avoid being seen. That sounds like a good evolutionary survival strategy to me! **SR**

To summarise it all, remember that some customer's struggles and tribulations are difficult for them to deal with and they would rather bury their heads in the sand than face them.

“ It's your job as a manager to understand these emotions relating to your store and to look for openings to reframe their negativity and inaction, to educate them, to lighten up their lives and/or to help them imagine a better future for themselves. ”



[www.todayifoundout.com/](http://www.todayifoundout.com/)



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Touch:  
N/A (with a glass cover)

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## Attractive



Designed to deliver eye-catching imagery and videos for retail, the Polaris ID Series with its exquisite Full HD experience, provides immersive, impressive messaging to attract customers wherever needed.

## Alluring

The eye-catching nature of the Polaris ID Series is ideal for retailers to leverage it as a media and advertisement medium to interact with customers.

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# Technology & sustainability goals driving change in FMCG packaging & labelling

When it comes to packaging and print solutions, aesthetics, durability, legislative compliance, food safety, sustainability, functionality and environmental concerns all need to be taken into account.

This applies to packaging and labelling in the butchery, bakery, and deli, HMR and fresh produce, the fish counter and salad bar, as well as all departments in the store that carry packaged brands – in other words, the entire store.

Technological advancements and investment in research and development are driving packaging, labelling and associated printing innovations, with retailers, suppliers, and manufacturers experimenting with different options in their bid to find better and more sustainable solutions.

## Packaging trends

The demand for environmentally friendly and sustainable packaging and packaging materials has increased significantly. Jane Courtneil, in The Green Business Bureau, looked at alternative packaging solutions that can be used for on-shelf packaging and online orders.



Image courtesy of Marko Klaric, Pexels

## Packaging materials

Styrofoam, or expanded polystyrene (EPS), commonly used for takeaways and as packaging fill, is not biodegradable or economically recyclable. It gets into waterways, rivers and lands up in the sea as eternal microplastics. For packaging fill, biodegradable air 'peanuts' offers an effective alternative that doesn't pollute the environment and prevents against product movement and cushions against shocks.

Image: [www.kitepackaging.co.uk](http://www.kitepackaging.co.uk)



Kite Packaging's eco-friendly packaging solution has outstanding strength partnered with 100% recyclability, biodegradability and plastic-free paper construction.

It utilises expert engineering to create the honeycomb structure of tessellating honeycomb cells, with the hexagon being one of the strongest structural shapes there is. These cells lie flat in a highly compact roll and expand outwards when being wrapped around a product. This grants excellent flexibility, allowing any awkward shapes to be easily contorted around, in addition to eliminating the need for tape since the material can interlock into itself.

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## Corrugated bubble wrap

Bubble wrap packaging is plastic based and not eco-friendly. Upcycled corrugated cardboard "repurposes post-consumer cardboard waste and is given another life as a cushioning solution in the form of 100% recycled corrugated bubble wrap.



Image: [www.storopack.com](http://www.storopack.com)

Air cushions consist of 99% air and only 1% film. The low material consumption compared to other materials also minimises operating costs. Storopack produces an air pillow film consisting of 100% recycled material, both from post-industry and post-consumer waste. In the entire production process, 30% of greenhouse gases are saved and fossil resources are conserved.

## Air pillows

Inflatable air pillows are a more cost-effective solution to Styrofoam and plastic bubble wrap. The pillows provide cushioning around packed items and fill gaps in boxes. Because they are inflated by air, air pillows require less plastic to manufacture and are easier to transport. They can be reused and recycled and are biodegradable IF they are made from 100% recycled and biodegradable materials.

Image: [www.kitepackaging.co.uk](http://www.kitepackaging.co.uk)



These shreds, available in a spectrum of attractive hues, are reusable, recyclable and biodegradable with FSC and PEFC certifications to boot. The kraft variety is even produced from 100% recycled materials. The small shreds can work their way into every corner and small gap, providing great all-round protection while the paper is strong and high-quality with a 70-80gsm thickness. Choose from either zig-zag shreds or straight cut pieces depending on personal aesthetic preference.

## Recycled cardboard and paper

Cardboard is 100% biodegradable and can be recycled 5-7 times. Stock should be delivered in recycled boxes and ensure that your service provider is using materials that support sustainably managed forests (FSC-certified).

## Cornstarch packaging

Cornstarch is an organic material with plastic-like properties and can be used for bottles, moulded forms and loose-film packaging instead of petroleum-based packaging. It does compete with human and animal food supply as it derived from grains of corn.

Image: [www.uline.com](http://www.uline.com)



Traditionally, polystyrene foam or Styrofoam is used to provide padding and protection to packed product during transit. Although lightweight, these materials do not decompose quickly and end up floating in water bodies or landfills for several years. However, biodegradable packing peanuts are made from natural and non-toxic materials which quickly decompose when discarded after use. These packaging materials can be used several times before discarding. Caption: [www.bluerosepackaging.com](http://www.bluerosepackaging.com)



Image: <https://wildsmithskin.com/>

## Mushroom packaging

Mushroom packaging is an alternative packaging solution uses clean and ground agricultural waste that is combined with mushroom roots, moulded into a particular shape, dried and used as packaging. It is highly biodegradable and petroleum-free.

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Images: <https://www.bzeos.com/>



similar to bacteria). When these micro-organisms are cultured in nutrient-limited concentrations of nitrogen, phosphorus, sulphur, or oxygen with excess carbon, they produce biodegradable polyester chains. Companies such as Nestle, Pepsico and Bacardi are introducing this new PHA plastic into their supply chain. Packaging and food service are the biggest markets for PHA.



**Ecological organic textiles**

Organic textiles such as hemp, organic or recycled cotton, tapioca, linen, poplin and palm leaves are biodegradable and can be used to manufacture reusable bags or organic packaging.

Organic images: [www.ecologicaltextiles.com/](http://www.ecologicaltextiles.com/)



**Seaweed packaging**

Seaweed packaging uses agar, which is a gelatinous substance found in seaweed and algae. The agar is extracted and dehydrated to produce a soft cushioning solution. This is one of the new green packaging solutions that could become widely used.

**Biodegradable plastics and recycled plastics**

While 100% recycled plastic packaging alternatives are available, plastic can only be recycled 2-3 times. On the other hand, biodegradable plastic – bioplastics – include a subset known as microbial polyesters, or polyhydroxyalkanoates (PHA). PHAs are polyesters made and stored in the natural world (as opposed to synthetic polyesters) by various bacteria and archaea (single cell organisms



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Brick-and-mortar retail must evolve with modern customer demands. Implementing efficient systems for click and collect, ship-from-store, and in-store pickup is essential for accuracy and enhancing the customer experience.



### IN-STORE PICKING

Retailers integrating eCommerce with physical stores can enhance efficiency in labour-intensive in-store picking. A range of technologies, including handheld devices, wearables, and automated solutions, cater to diverse retail needs.



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Visual: Bizerba USA\_Bizerba Tekno Label Inc.

Image: www.alibaba.com/



Image: www.researchgate.net



Different natural products can be used to create edible packaging, but the most effective and widely used is chitosan – a sugar that’s made from the chitin shells of shrimp and other crustaceans. It is one of the most abundant biopolymers after cellulose. [www.bzeos.com](http://www.bzeos.com)

**Edible film**

Edible films provide a sustainable packaging solution for wrapping food items. It can be used to wrap foodstuffs and is eaten as part of the product. It could simplify the storage and transportation of food stuffs and could eliminate plastic wrapping while protecting and packaging food items, rather than using environmentally harmful plastics.

**Minimalist packaging**

This solution uses the least amount of packaging required to protect the product. It results in less waste and a lower carbon footprint.



**Sustainable packaging and labelling solutions**



Corn starch pack visual: [www.mviecopack.com/](http://www.mviecopack.com/)

Packaging and labelling equipment featuring high-tech hardware, cutting-edge software, and remote capabilities has become easier to source and customise for store and back-end needs.

When it comes to packaging and labelling, Bizerba are acknowledged as industry leaders at a global level. They have long been at the forefront of product development, process innovation, and cutting-edge technology. Part of their success comes from their frequent collaborations with experts outside of their immediate field.

Bizerba says, “In the area of technology scouting, we actively research topics related to sustainability. For example, we are conducting in-house research into how to substitute compressed air, and we are



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Visual:  
www.bizerba.com

collaborating with Albstadt-Sigmaringen University in the field of alternative packaging materials. We have even created a dedicated product manager position for sustainable consumables.”

This spirit of innovative thought leadership is also impacting their labels. “Classic products require silicone liner that the labeller strips off before labelling. This produces enormous amounts of waste. We supply linerless labels with a surface finish so that they adhere to each other in layers. The corresponding, patented CleanCut® technology also ensures adhesive free blades, making every millimetre of linerless labels usable. The technology from Bizerba saves resources and will be an important component in sustainable packaging in the future.

One of the examples Bizerba shares is that if a producer changes rolls on average 2 000 times a year on each printer, this produces a ton of waste. With CleanCut® Linerless, this amount is close to zero.

## Cutting-edge technology for integrated and automated machines

Bizerba has for a range of automated, smart, integrated, and IoT-enabled packaging, labelling, weighing, and slicing products and solutions that improve efficiency, reduce wastage, and use less energy. At Interpack 2023 in Düsseldorf, Bizerba exhibited under the motto “Shape your future. Today”. They shared a multitude of IoT-enabled solutions, and also launched their new packaging and slicing machine that was developed in conjunction with Italian packaging specialists Italian Pack.



Visual: Bizerba IPPE 2022 in Atlanta, Georgia USA.

The partners combined Bizerba’s A660 industrial slicer with Italian Pack’s Perseus tray sealer to create one complete line for slicing to target weight and hygienic packaging. There is also the option to flexibly combine the system with Bizerba inspection and labelling solutions for maximum product safety.

The solution relies on a technology that more than doubles the product life of fresh food, thus providing processing companies with an enormous gain in flexibility. There are also numerous options for making overall packaging much more environmentally friendly, such as cardboard trays and compostable films. Bizerba says ...

“ In the food industry, it is all about automating production, creating transparent processes, implementing market trends easily, and handling resources sustainably – all while maintaining the highest product quality. ”

One of the central tenets to this theme is connectivity. Michael Berke, Vice President for Sales and Marketing at Bizerba, says, “Connectivity has a green dimension at Bizerba. With our IoT-enabled solutions and services, we are designing a networked supply chain in the packaging sector that ensures demonstrably more cost-effective processes for slicing, inspecting and labelling through an automated work and data flow.”

According to Bizerba, the evolving market for packaging and labelling is calling for intuitive



## Linerless Labels

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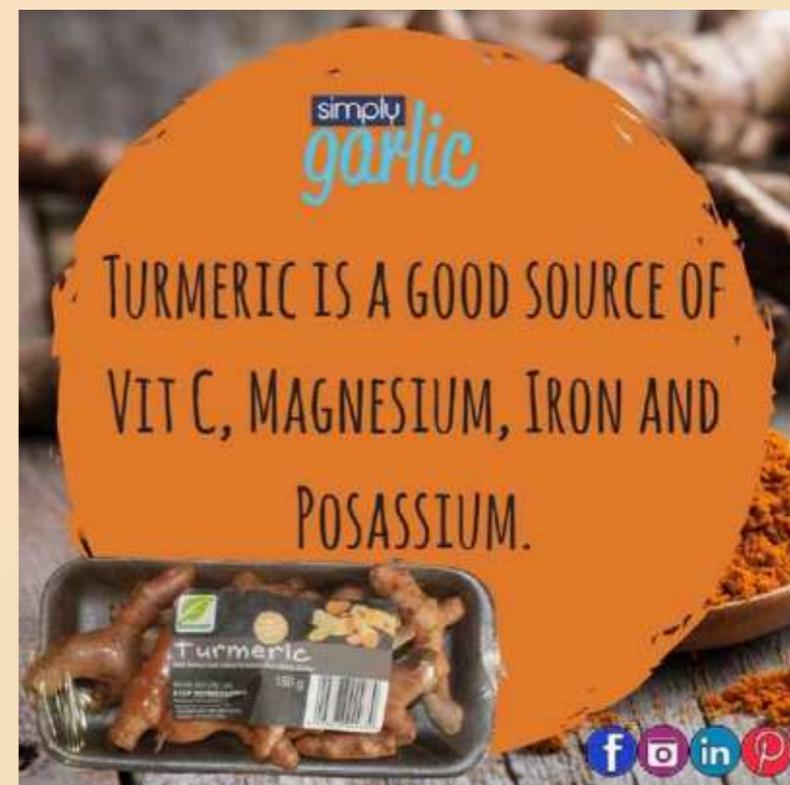
machines with a high degree of automation and a small space requirement, which also feature a short learning curve and ease of operation. By optimising production, saving time and energy, and reducing downtime, networked and modular systems are a win for retailers and wholesalers.

### Integrating sustainability: linerless labels and digital maintenance services

Sustainability is another key term that Bizerba is taking seriously. Their wrap-around labels (full wrap), multi-page labels (C-wrap), and classic labelling for individual packaging can all be used without a liner.

Bizerba says, "This allows up to 90% more labels to fit on a roll while simultaneously reducing waste. Even if labels often only make up a small part of the packaging, they play a key role in deciding whether packaging is sustainable or not."

Andreas W. Kraut, CEO and Shareholder of Bizerba, understands that maintenance is also a crucial component of a product's sustainability. He says, "Our cloud-based, digital services provide optimal support for decision-makers to get a handle on their maintenance and repair costs. Remote support, predictive maintenance or augmented reality – our digital services make it easier to plan what action is required, enabling us to help increase the availability of our customers' devices or systems in a sustainable way. And that has a significant impact on service efficiency and consequently also on resource consumption and emissions."



Visuals: [www.simplygarlic.co.za](http://www.simplygarlic.co.za)

### South Africa takes tough stance on labelling

A recent article in the Daily Maverick (3 November 2023, Adèle Sulcas) reports that regulations affecting food labelling and marketing in South Africa have entered the final round of decision-making before being finalised and passed into law. "With the public comment period for new food labelling and marketing regulations now closed, the finalisation process for the new regulations can get underway which are aimed at reducing obesity, diabetes and other non-communicable diseases (NCD) that are so prevalent in South Africa.

One of the proposals covers mandatory black-and-white warning labels on packaging of foods high in added sugar, salt and unhealthy fats. These warning labels are based on a nutrient profiling model backed by extensive scientific research. The regulations go even further, restricting food companies from marketing of food and drink deemed unhealthy to children.

In the article, Sulcas says that experts consider the proposed regulations to be a major improvement on the current regulation, R146 from 2010, which stipulates only basic labelling requirements, though many food producers have taken it upon themselves to get closer to international best practice and offer more detailed nutrition information on labels than the law requires.

The draft regulations have their fair share of both supporters and detractors, and the Department of Health (DoH) was still busy collating all of the comments received at the time Sulcas' article was published. There is a lot of work left to be done, but the DoH is buoyed by the success of several other countries, including Ecuador and Peru, who have seen positive consumer behaviour changes since they introduced food warning labels.

Only time will tell what form the regulations will take if and when they are ultimately passed into law, but retailers and food companies should take note now of the growing consumer demand for transparency. Now more than ever, shoppers are educating themselves on their food choices and health is top of mind for many. By adopting smarter, more transparent labelling practices now, manufacturers, suppliers and retailers can get ahead of the upcoming changes while also building consumer trust and brand loyalty.

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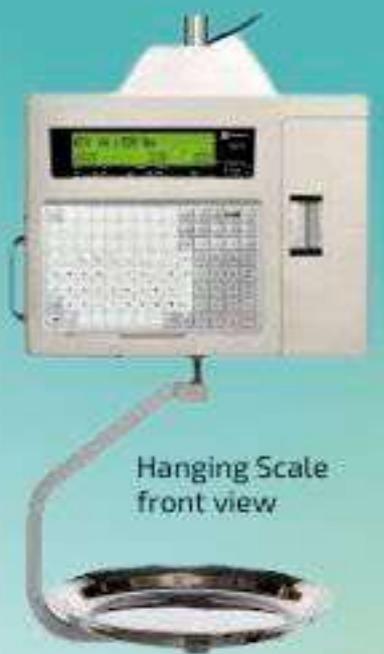


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Packaging plays a critical role in the sustainability and eco-credentials of packaged food items. Single-use plastic and non-biodegradable packaging are highly damaging to the environment and bodies of water. Recyclable, biodegradable options or packaging made from recycled material are far better options.  
Source: [www.linkedin.com/pulse](http://www.linkedin.com/pulse)



Woolworths started its rollout of a recyclable polypropylene bag in September 2022 for its ever-popular rotisserie chicken, "which means that on an annual basis over 11,5 million bags are now not doomed to go to landfill and can rather be recycled." Meanwhile, Woolworths and WWF South Africa celebrated 15 years of partnership for a sustainable future in September 2023.  
Source: [www.woolworthsholdings.co.za/](http://www.woolworthsholdings.co.za/)

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## Human-sustainable packaging

Specialist packaging manufacturer Polyoak Packaging has taken a strong stance on sustainability by investing heavily into research, data analysis, and innovation. What they have learned has changed the way they view sustainable packaging, giving them a more humanity-centric approach to what they see as a complex and nuanced situation.

For Michelle Penlington, Polyoak's National Executive for Marketing and Sustainability, the target may be net zero by 2050, but the ultimate goal is ensuring sustainability on a global level. She says ...

“The end game is to ensure that conditions on Earth remain conducive for humankind to thrive. The debate needs to move from ‘sustainable packaging’ to ‘human sustainable packaging’.”

“Whilst a bamboo toothbrush at R100 may be exciting, in reality it is neither affordable nor accessible to the majority of people. The human element needs to

be at the centre of any sustainable packaging initiatives or innovations, in the same way that our Sustainable Development Goals are.”

Polyoak requires their sustainable packaging to have a low carbon footprint, a light water footprint, and be fit for purpose.

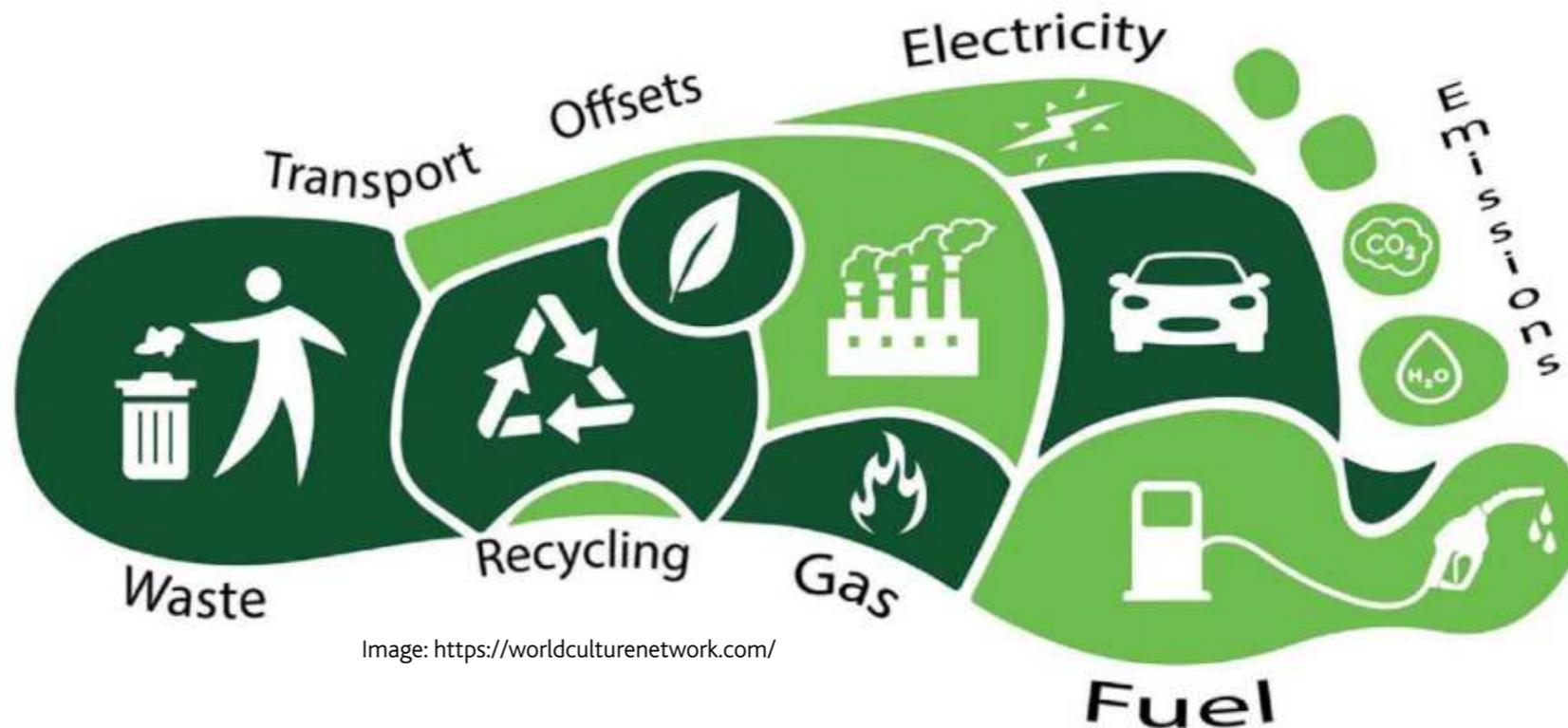


Image: <https://worldculturenetwork.com/>

Penlington explains, “Ideally, it must have a low carbon footprint to minimise carbon emissions into the atmosphere.”

“The processing of some packaging materials, such as tin and glass, are extremely heat and energy intensive. They also tend to be heavier, which generates higher transport carbon emissions. This is a problem in a country such as SA, which is the 13th biggest carbon emitter globally.”

“Not only must ‘human sustainable packaging’ be manufactured using the most energy-efficient processes and technology, but wherever possible, electricity should be sourced from clean sources such as solar. Energy/carbon intensity of packaging is of key importance, and a simple reason why plastics such as PET, HPDE and PP are effective in delivering ‘human sustainable packaging’.”

## Food safety, food wastage and sustainable packaging

“Ultimately, any packaging must protect food safety and prevent wastage,” says Penlington. “Globally, 30% of all food is wasted. Campaigns for ‘plastic-free’ vegetables serve to reinforce the misinformed narrative that plastic is the enemy, while exposing consumers to the more invisible enemy, food waste. Adding a plastic wrapper with refrigeration can extend the shelf life of green beans from 7 to 18 days! That’s ‘human sustainable packaging’. The carbon emissions and wasted resources (the water, land use, energy to harvest, pack, transport and so on) caused by food waste is 10 times greater than that of the packaging that could have prevented the wastage. What this industry needs are brave marketeers informed by science to make responsible, not populist, packaging decisions, that are truly sustainable.”

Image: <https://greenzla.com/>



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IP67	5.7-inch Touch Screen
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### Optional Accessories



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Image: <https://consolidatedlabel.com/>

### Barcode and label printing

Zebra Technologies has a profound understanding of what South African retailers need, as well as the unique challenges they face. One of those is mobility. Local retailers need to be flexible and mobile when it comes to barcode and label printing. The introduction of barcodes streamlined transactions and improved the speed, convenience,

and security of inventory tracking. They paved the way for further innovations such as QR codes, radio frequency identification (RFID), fixed industrial scanning and machine vision, ushering in a new era of digitisation and automation.

“The process of attaching barcodes to products for retail associate convenience has become even more efficient,” explains Neil Gouveia, Zebra Technologies, Director for Africa. “They can still utilise multi-plane fixed grocery scanners to read barcodes. However, equipping them with mobile devices has been instrumental in helping key staff stay informed about product availability, process purchases, handle returns from anywhere in the store, and ensure strict hygiene measures through dedicated devices. Mobile barcode scanners and printers have undeniably boosted employee

productivity and accuracy by enabling on-the-spot printing of barcode labels and tags, providing a comprehensive portable solution while enhancing the customer experience and interaction.”

Gouveia also notes that retailers are increasingly focused on connectivity by equipping their staff with devices to have access to real time data. This enables them to perform their tasks more efficiently and use the data in real time to react quicker to customers at the point of interaction.

In a nutshell, these handy devices are helping retailers to maintain customer satisfaction, minimise losses, and safeguard revenue. By integrating customised solutions that make use of the latest technology and developments, retailers are able to monitor and maintain stock levels more accurately, while also improving the shelf-life and quality of their produce.

Image: [www.bobst.com](http://www.bobst.com)



[www.latentview.com](http://www.latentview.com)



By engaging with industry experts and integrating sustainability in business-savvy ways, retailers and wholesalers can reap real rewards, ensure that they see

a return on investment, and also enable consumers to reduce, re-use and recycle.



Image courtesy of [www.zebra.com/](http://www.zebra.com/)



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#### **Banking:**

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#### **Hospitality:**

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## Innovating for the future

● Simplicity is key. Mono-material, single-component source closures are a good example. Closures comprising various different components, such as wads, liners, and collar shrinkwraps can be replaced by Polyoak's one-piece, tamper-evident snap-on fliptop closure. This eliminates a number of completely separate material and waste streams related to each individual component.



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Visuals:  
www.cosmeticsbusiness.com/



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Visual: www.newfoodmagazine.com

future, say, "There is no bad material, just inappropriate application."

This was the inspiration for Polyoak's new 38mm Headstand Sauce Cap. Traditional sauce closures have a silicon seal that sucks the sauce back after use to prevent mess. While silicon is a useful material, including it in a closure made from polypropylene (PP) is problematic because the silicon component cannot be recycled in the PP waste stream as it will contaminate the recycling of the caps. Polyoak's new closure delivers the same functional 'sucking back' benefit, but without the silicon seal.

● Another example is Polyoak's Polyshield™ barrier tub. Ambient foodstuffs have a longer shelf life and require no refrigeration, unlike fresh products. This significantly reduces its global warming potential as it has a lower carbon footprint, mainly related to refrigeration. Traditionally this was only possible in glass and tin, which are energy and heat intensive, and heavy and inefficient

● WRAP, a UK-based climate action NGO working around the globe to tackle the causes of the climate crisis and give the planet a sustainable



Plain drum

Plasma treated drum

to transport. Polyoak's Polyshield tub is made from lightweight polypropylene (PP) and nests compactly for efficient storage and transportation. The process of injection moulding these tubs is more energy and water efficient, resulting in cost savings. This makes it an affordable option for consumers.

The Polyshield Tub is suitable for high pressure processing (HPP) and Hot Fill food processing of a wide range of foodstuffs including fruit, vegetables, fish, meat and sauces. These mono-material tubs are widely recycled in South Africa, resulting in an effective circular packaging solution for ambient, long life food products. **SR**

**Sources:**

- <https://greenbusinessbureau.com/green-practices/products/packaging/8-eco-friendly-packaging-alternatives-for-your-business-shipping-needs/#ecofriendlypackaging1>
- <https://fastercapital.com/content/FMCG-Industry-Trends--Embracing-Sustainability-and-Eco-Friendly-Practices.html>



**Ann Baker-Keulemans** writes on topics related to business, lifestyle, technology, and health, with extensive knowledge on the SA retail and wholesale landscape. Contact [annbk@wilkinsross.co.za](mailto:annbk@wilkinsross.co.za) | [www.wilkinsrossglobal.com](http://www.wilkinsrossglobal.com)



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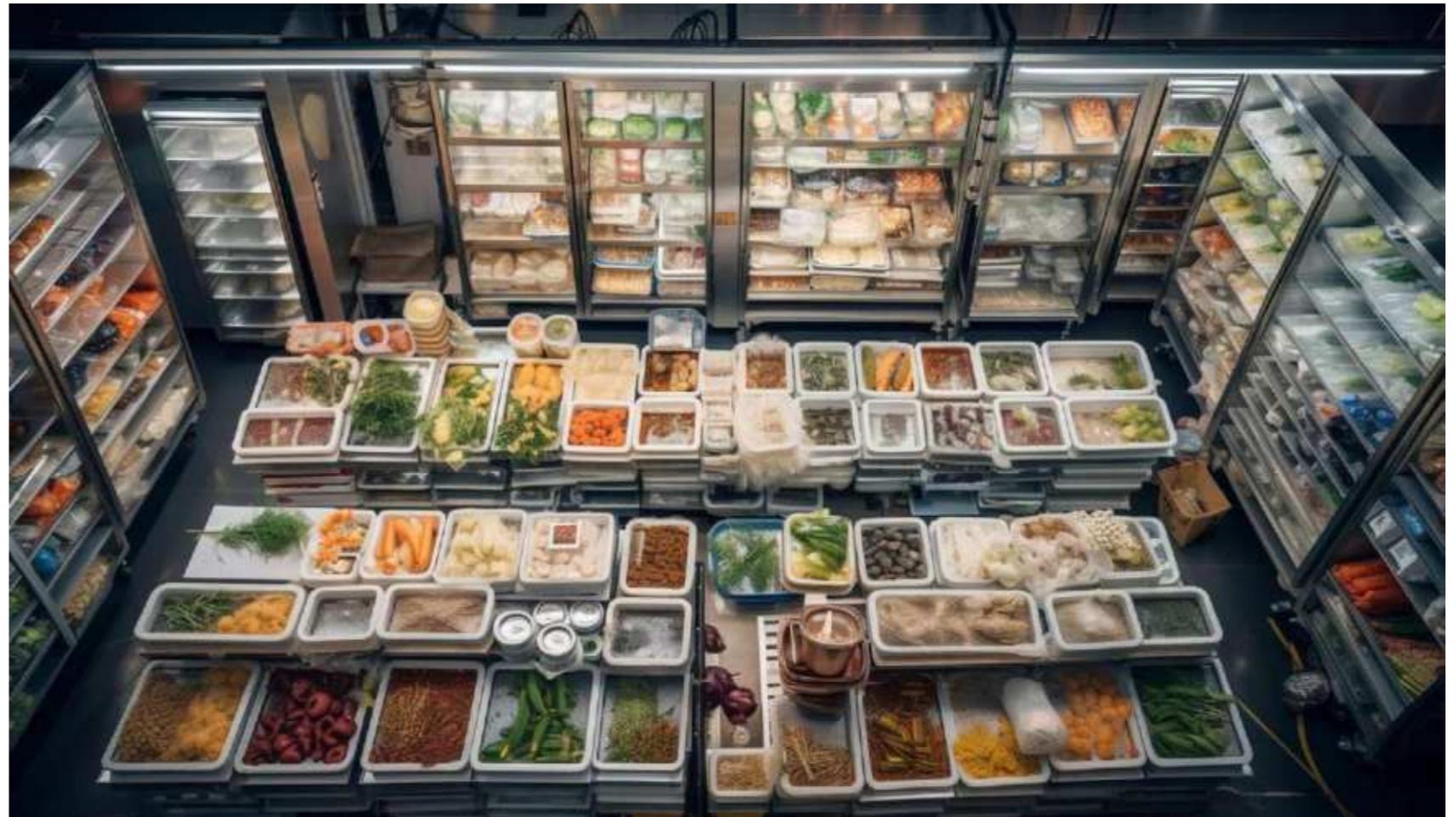
# Quality, freshness & convenience rule in the Canned, Bottled, Chilled & Frozen aisles

Convenience is king. This is an undeniable fact, but in a market that is demanding sustainable solutions while consumers face higher food prices, inflation and a challenging economic environment, the Canned, Bottled, Chilled, and Frozen Foods categories have an important role to play.



## Canned foods: Reliability, longevity, and something for everyone

Canned foods remain a pantry staple for South African consumers. Easy to store, shelf stable, nutritious, and often of high quality, they're a reliable and relatively cost-effective food solution. With its long shelf life, canned food reduces food wastage, while the cans themselves can be recycled and are economically efficient. However, canned foods also have high-end appeal, giving more adventurous and less cost-conscious consumers a way to access life's little food luxuries such as artichoke hearts, salmon, crab meat, mussels,



Freepik\_image by vecstock

oysters, anchovy fillets, condensed milk, coconut milk and coconut cream and olives. Canned foods also cater for healthy, nutritious eating, with canned beans, lentils, chickpeas, tuna, pilchards, sardines, canned tomatoes, and canned vegetables leading the way.

Some canned foods have seen significant price increases this year, such as canned beans (+17%) and canned pilchards (+11%), according to an article

in Business Tech, but cans still offer consumers affordability and they have the advantage of minimising food waste.

The Global Canned Food market is anticipated to rise at a considerable rate between 2023 and 2031. In South Africa, the market remains under pressure. RFG (Rhodes Food Group), which owns the Rhodes and Gold Dish canned brands, overcame challenging trading conditions to increase revenue

Serves: 4 (2 buns per person)  
Preparation time: 20 minutes  
Cooking time: 20 minutes

## COUNTY FAIR, chicken nuggets

### Ingredients:

#### Chicken:

16 chicken nuggets  
Pickled Cucumber:  
1 cup water  
1/3 cup vinegar  
(apple cider or white)  
3 tbsp sugar  
Spicy Mayonnaise:  
1/2 cup mayonnaise  
1 tsp Sriracha sauce

#### Bao & Filling:

8 frozen bao buns  
small handful of radish  
10g coriander

#### Equipment:

Vegetable or basket steamer  
and cocktail sticks



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## CHICKEN NUGGET BAO BUNS, PICKLED CUMBER, RADISH, SPICY MAYONNAISE AND CORIANDER

### Method:

#### Chicken:

Cook chicken nuggets according to the instructions on the packet.

#### Pickled Cucumber:

Peel cucumber into ribbons. De-gorge the ribbons by placing them into a colander over a bowl with a generous sprinkle of salt to draw out the water from the cucumber. Leave for 15 mins. In a small bowl add the water, vinegar, sugar, and salt. Stir to combine and until the sugar has dissolved. Add the cucumber (All the cucumbers should be covered in the brine). Let the mixture rest in the fridge until you are ready to eat.

#### Spicy mayonnaise:

Mix the mayonnaise ingredients in a bowl and side aside until serving.

#### Bao & Filling:

Cut out little squares of grease proof paper to go under the bao bun. Steam the Bao buns in a vegetable steamer on the hob, by adding a little water to the base pan, then placing the bao buns on the steaming rack above with a fitted lid. Steam for approx. 7mins. Finely slice the radish and pick the leaves whole from the coriander stalk. Assemble the buns by adding mayonnaise to the bottom bun then topping with pickled cucumber ribbon, chicken nuggets and reddish. Using a cocktail stick spear the top of the bun with a folded pickled cucumber ribbon.



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Image courtesy of Rhodes Food Group

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## Chilled and frozen foods are on a growth trajectory

Frozen food is in a global growth phase, and South Africa is no exception. Product innovation is adding energy and interest to the category, and the promise of convenience has always been one of the big attractions of the frozen aisles. Meanwhile chilled foods – including meat, chicken and fish, pizza, cakes and pies, oven-ready meals, desserts, yoghurts, cheese, and sandwiches – continue to grow. Chilled foods are practical and can be easily prepared and answer the need for convenience like no other.

Frozen meals, pre-prepared sides, ready-to-eat dishes, and child-friendly meals are time- and effort-savers, and retailers and wholesalers are also investing in own-label ranges that cater to these needs. As food technology improves, so too does the quality, lifespan, and ease-of-use of chilled and frozen products.



says the report, “regressed further to -8,9% over the 3-month period to end March 2023.”

Own brand/private label also competes heavily in the canned food, with leading retailers and independent groups offering private label alternatives. Increased promotional and marketing activity, 2-for-one specials, EDLP and brand campaigns will help to keep canned foods top of mind for cash-strapped consumers, as will reiterating their many benefits on a consistent basis. Canned goods remain staples in South Africa for several reasons, longevity and food safety among them. The other is their pest-resistance. In a country where the majority of consumers are dealing with pests including insects and rodents, which pose a significant risk to their food security, canned goods are a safe and reliable option.

In addition, canned goods have no reliance on an unstable electricity grid and can safely withstand recurring and frequent load shedding without impacting food quality or safety. This is a level of security that drives the purchase decisions of many consumers.

by 10.0% in the 11 months to August 2023, however “volumes in the canned fruit and vegetable categories remain under pressure from weak consumer demand, high raw material and packaging costs as well as the competitive environment.”

Tiger Brands reported an “increasingly tough consumer environment with accelerating volume declines and a clear shift towards essentials in its interim results presentation dated 23 May 2023 (TB Results Presentation\_H1F23\_F.pdf), with a volume decline of 3,2% for their canned foods category over the 12-month period, which,



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### Convenience and innovation drive frozen foods

When it comes to frozen foods, the category is fast. From single-source ingredients to complete meals, individual portions, family-size servings, and bulk catering options right through to baby food, it's a massive and highly competitive market. In fact, a report for Future Market Insights states that, "The frozen food market share is on the cusp of significant expansion, exhibiting a projected value of US\$335 342 million (R6 304 010 million) in 2023.

This growth has largely been attributed to convenience, and increased consumer demand for ready-to-eat or easy-to-prepare meals and foods. The shelf-life and versatility of frozen foods, as well as an increase in options that meet different dietary requirements, such as plant-based or gluten-free, for example, have helped drive this category.

The frozen ready meal market also continues to expand, with various market researchers forecasting a CAGR growth of 4.24%. Covering several key product types, including fruits and vegetables, potatoes, ready meals, meat, fish and seafood, and soups, there is much scope for product development and expanded product lines.

Image courtesy of [www.packagingnews.co.uk/](http://www.packagingnews.co.uk/)



Image courtesy of [www.oetker.co.za](http://www.oetker.co.za)



### Frozen pizza becomes a South African favourite

The frozen pizza category has been embraced by South African shoppers. The Dr. Oetker brand is recognised as an industry leader in this market and judging by their recent acquisition of German-based frozen snack maker Galileo, they are confident that the frozen pizza market is going to continue growing.

Germany's Bundeskartellamt (The Federal Cartel Office is an independent competition authority whose task is to protect competition in Germany) recently cleared the takeover.

In a press release, Andreas Mundt, President of the Bundeskartellamt, says, "The market for frozen pizza is very concentrated. Dr. Oetker is the market leader, and by acquiring Galileo, it takes over an important manufacturer of private label products. We are clearing the takeover based on extensive investigations and we looked into the case from all conceivable angles." The investigations lead the Bundeskartellamt to determine that ...

“ The market has become very dynamic over the last few years. New competitors are putting pressure on established brands. Frozen pizzas from brand manufacturers are increasingly available at food discount stores and sales generated through special offers are gaining in importance. ”

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**Chilled and frozen foods face a uniquely South African challenge**

Of course, the chilled and frozen categories are faced with a challenge in the form of load shedding. Any disruption to the cold chain can be devastating, impacting food quality and safety, and resulting in wastage and product loss, and potential consumer complaints. Being prepared means having alternative energy backups in place, training staff on appropriate actions, and safeguarding the cold chain.

Estelle Howcroft, National Sales Coordinator at Avolands, says, "We keep our frozen stock between -18 and -25 degrees Celsius. Obviously, our cold chain management is of utmost importance, so our management process includes rigorous quality checks at each stage of the supply chain, from

the orchards to our packaging facilities, to ensure only the best avocados are selected."

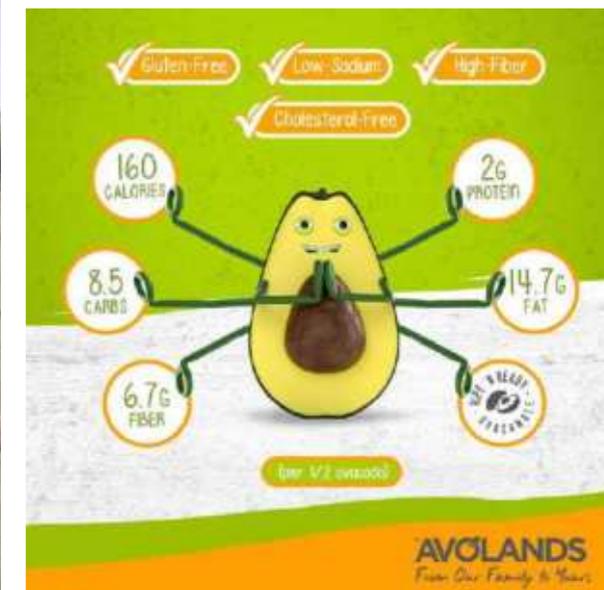
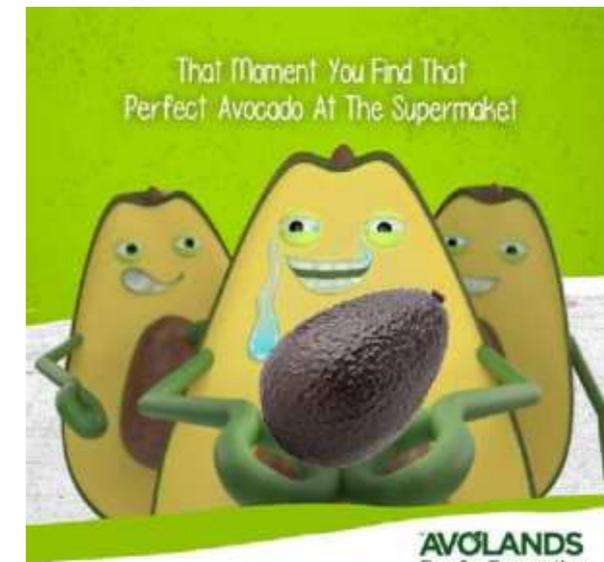
Avolands' avocado-based mayo, which combines the richness of avocados with the texture of traditional mayonnaise offers an innovative alternative. In addition, they will also be introducing frozen avocado that is pre-sliced and ready to use.

Of course, being a South African company means they have to deal with load shedding, as she adds, "When load shedding or power disruptions occur, our facilities are equipped with backup generators. These generators kick in seamlessly to maintain the required temperature and conditions in our storage

units. Our staff are also trained to respond effectively to unexpected power interruptions, activating backup systems and implementing emergency protocols to prevent any compromise in the cold chain."



<https://avolands.co.za/>





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## Bottled goods continue to grow



Image courtesy of <https://oliveoil.co.za/>

### CASE STUDY

#### Olive oil continues to make its mark in SA

Frans Ferreira, a Marketing and Key Accounts Consultant at Wilsons Foods, has seen first-hand how the bottled goods category is growing. For example, olive oil has seen something of a renaissance in South Africa, only this time it's about so much more than salads. Health-conscious consumers are turning to oil alternatives that are 'better for you', gourmards are experimenting with flavoured oils, and artisanal producers are making their mark in terms of market share and international acclaim.

Ferreira explains how convenience and shelf-life are driving growth in this category. He says, "Glass bottled Edible Oil products have been gaining traction for quite some time in South Africa, primarily due to their long shelf-life and the convenience they offer. Consumers are increasingly drawn to products that promise durability and ease



choices. Glass bottles are especially favourable for olive oil, ensuring protection against quality degrading factors like oxidation. This shift is reflective of a larger trend towards eco-friendliness and convenience, which resonates well with today's fast-paced consumer lifestyle."

Whilst healthier options are a purchase driver, many consumers remain somewhat unsure of the differences between cold-pressed, extra virgin, and blended oils (to name a few). Educating consumers is a highly effective way for stores and brands to engage with the shopper base,



of use. The market's growth is further supported by a push towards sustainable packaging, aligning with a global shift to environmentally conscious



Images courtesy of <https://willowcreek.co.za/>

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build relationships, and establish a relationship based on trust and communication.

“When it comes to choosing between extra virgin olive oil, and blends, there’s a tight balance consumers weigh between cost and health benefits,” explains Ferriera. “Extra virgin olive oil is lauded for its purity and higher concentration of health-supporting nutrients, but it is not within everyone’s budget, especially at the moment due to the international olive oil shortage.”

This shortage is due to extreme weather conditions adversely affecting European crops for the second year running. The Guardian (Sarah Butler, Sam Jones, and Helena Smith; 28 September 2023) reported that ...

“ Global production is expected to fall to 2.4 million tonnes according to the International Olive Council, less than last year’s harvest and well short of global demand of about 3 million tonnes, after drought and heatwaves of more than 40 degrees hit production in Spain. ”

The olive producing industries in Spain, Greece, Italy, Portugal, Turkey, and Morocco have all been affected. “This is where our canola and olive oil blends come into play,” says Ferreira.

“They offer a more cost-effective option while still delivering some of the health advantages associated with olive oil. It’s a practical choice for health- and budget-conscious consumers, with Canola being rich in Vitamin E & K, O and Omega 3.”

The good news for retailers and consumers is that South Africa’s olive oil industry is blossoming. “In South Africa, the emphasis on locally grown and sustainable produce is significant,” says Ferriera, “particularly as consumers increasingly value the traceability and environmental impact of their food choices. While this trend includes frozen produce, for olive oil, it underscores the premium quality and sustainability that South African olive oils offer. South African olive oils are recognised for their exceptional quality on international platforms, with many local producers committed to organic farming and sustainable practices. By choosing South African olive oil, consumers not only enjoy a product that rivals the best in the world, but also support a market that prioritises environmental stewardship and local economy.”

Image courtesy of Ron Lach, Pexels



Image courtesy of www.tigerbrands.com/

### Trends to watch across the board

#### Sustainability, recyclable and eco-friendly packaging options

Wilson’s Foods Frans Ferreira says, “With a strong push for eco-friendly options, producers are increasingly turning to recyclable and sustainable packaging solutions. This shift is about catering to the eco-conscious consumer who values sustainability from farm to kitchen. By adopting recyclable materials, such as locally produced glass bottles and recyclable boxes, every bit helps. South African brands can enhance their appeal and marketability while contributing positively to the environment.”

#### A culinary adventure

Across the FMCG industry, the demand for innovation and product development is growing. Consumers want more variety, more choice, and more excitement. Despite the demand for convenience, they also expect their food to be interesting.



Speaking from an olive oil perspective, Ferreira sees this sense of adventure continues to grow in consumers. He says, “The future of olive oil is as rich and diverse as the range of products on offer from South African producers. With consumers becoming more adventurous in their culinary exploits, the demand for a variety of flavours and high-quality oils is on the rise. Expect to see a continued influence of international flavours and fusion cuisines, with flavoured edible oils at the heart of innovation — whether that means oils infused with exotic herbs or balsamics that bring a world of taste to local tables.

“We have noticed an uptake on the Spicy Peri oil again, which we expect to continue into 2024, accompanied by a Coconut Flavoured oil we’re launching in this month. Consumers are more daring than ever with flavours, and to be honest, we love it!”

### Products for children

Products aimed specifically at children are a growing market, despite increasing limitations on marketing, as well as stringent labelling laws regarding nutritional contents and less desirable ingredients such as sugar, salt, and fats.

From interesting shapes and colours that are aesthetically appealing, to flavour combinations and ingredients that are suited to less mature palates, convenience foods are ripe for innovation with this target market in mind. Now more than ever before, children’s preferences are being taken into consideration when making purchase decisions.

### Chilled and frozen baby and toddler meals

This is a market that has expanded significantly over the last few years. Caregivers are looking for convenient meal options that are nutritious and tasty. From weaning stages onwards, shoppers expect high quality products that answer their needs. This includes an exciting and varied array of fresh and organic ingredients that will encourage adventurous eating as children get older, while also satisfying more sensitive palates.

Chilled products can offer immediate gratification – often a must when dealing with young children and therefore a go-to for caregivers, whereas a solid frozen range offers product longevity and at-home convenience. Keeping in mind the rise of food intolerances, especially amongst young children, retailers would be wise to stock products that cater for a wide variety of dietary restrictions. **SR**



Image courtesy of <https://drpraegers.com>



Image courtesy of <https://drpraegers.com>

#### Sources:

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## Effective solutions to reduce the cost of in-store refrigeration

### Polyurethane Injected Panels

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- Polyurethane injected panels for superior insulation and adhesion.
- High-impact PVC interlock profiles on all edges provides totally sealed insulation and a perfect vapour barrier.
- Tongue and Groove panel options available.
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- Optional skin finish in Stainless Steel – Grades AISI 304 AIS 403.

## Cold & Freezer Rooms



### Floors – Fabricated and Concrete

#### Fabricated Floors

- The inside floor finish is 1.5mm Aluminium tread plate glued and screwed to a marine ply base.
- Galvanised plate options available in lieu of the Aluminium Chequer Plate finish.

#### Concrete Floor

- Concrete floors are used for flush or step-up entry and in permanent structures. Usually a recess of 150–170mm is used to accommodate the foam slab insulation and the concrete screed.



### Meat Rails

- Hot Dipped Galvanised system.
- Support structure integrated into insulated panels.
- Optional free-standing continuous galvanised system with bends and switch gear.

### Aluminium Chequer Plate

- Installed as an option to protect panels from scratches and light impact damage.
- 1.5mm and 2.0mm thick options.
- Standard height 1 250mm AFFL.



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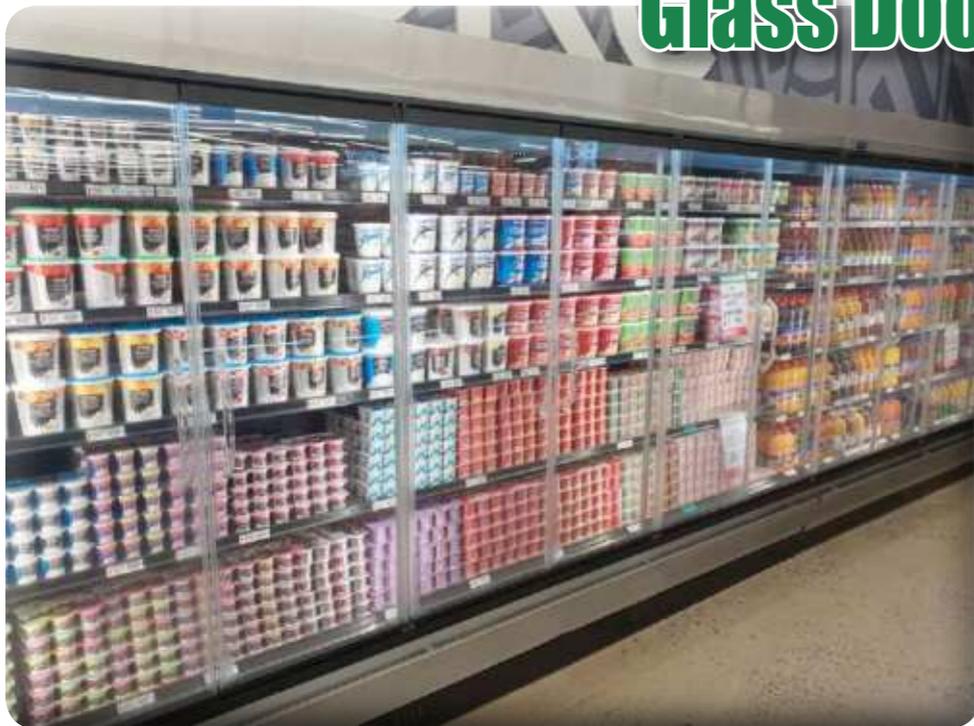


Environment  
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## Benefits of Airshield Glass Doors

- Reduce Energy consumption.
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- Optimal Product temperature.
- Glass doors have an option of Mullion lights. Quoted separate.
- Handles included.
- Up to 40% energy saving.
- Solution for new cabinets or retrofitted on existing cabinets.
- Doors are spring loaded.
- Less cold air spillage – warmer aisles.

## Airshield Glass Doors



## Ways to save

With energy cost rising and food retailers looking to improve the shopping experience environment for customers, Insulated Structures has developed an effective solution to reduce the cost of in-store refrigeration while enhancing the customer experience.

Insulated Structures doors are easy to retrofit on in-store cabinets to reduce the energy required to keep chilled foods at the correct temperature.

Meanwhile, customers are able to clearly see and access the products on offer. Reduced energy requirements means smaller refrigeration plant selection for new stores. These savings will off-set the initial cost of the doors. Up to 40% reduction in refrigeration requirement has been achieved.



Standard Airshield Glass Doors with a Black Frame.  
Heated Hybrid also available in this design.  
Heated Hybrid Glass Doors are fitted with a heater to reduce condensation on the doors in Coastal areas.  
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Premium Airshield Glass Doors.  
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# How to nail your DIY & hardware sales

According to Statista ([www.statista.com/outlook/cmo/diy-hardware-store/south-africa](http://www.statista.com/outlook/cmo/diy-hardware-store/south-africa)), South Africa's DIY and hardware store market will be valued at US\$5.68 billion (approximately R105 billion) in 2023. "Despite global supply chain issues and a raging pandemic, key players in the DIY and Hardware Store market experienced double-digit year-over-year growth [2019 vs 2020]. These numbers were the result of Covid-19 restrictions, which required many people to stay home and provided them with the opportunity to carry out home improvement activities," says Statista's Analyst Opinion.

DIY and home improvement retailers reported slower growth rates in the 4th quarter of 2021. Sales are returning or have returned to pre-pandemic levels.

An article in IOL written by Sipehele Dlodla published on 16 March 2023 (*Retail sales volumes kick off 2023 on a sour note* ([iol.co.za](http://iol.co.za))) says, "The hardware, paint and glass category has seen nearly two years of consecutive monthly declines after enjoying significant growth due to the boom in DIY projects during the hard lockdown. Hardware material sales were down 4.8% in January 2023, compared to January 2022."

As sales return to pre-pandemic norms, says Statista, steady growth between 2023 and 2027 is predicted due to the growing demand for housing and continued interest in home renovations.



Image courtesy of Ono Kosuki, Pexels

## How to build a successful DIY & hardware offering

Product range, staff training and expert advice are three of the keys to success in DIY and Hardware, while online sales offer many opportunities to grow an existing customer base as well as reach new customers.

Within the broad categories of Hardware & Building Materials, Bathroom Hardware, Floor Coverings, Heating & Cooling, Lawn & Garden, Paint, Wallpaper and Supplies, and Tools and Machines, what should your product range look like, and what factors determine which products you stock?

## Prioritising DIY and hardware SKUs

Stores with hardware sections have an excellent opportunity to provide their customers with an array of products that cater to their unique DIY and home improvement needs.

A core hardware range will include SKUs required to complete basic DIY tasks, including items such as screws, nails, hinges, brackets, and hand tools. It also includes items such as adhesives, paint, and sealants. Of course, the range will also depend on available shelf and storage space.

**Paint and adhesives** are some of the most common and sought-after products for DIY projects. Customers will need a variety of paints, brushes, rollers, glues, putties and tape for basic repairs, maintenance, and upkeep projects. This is likely going to be the bulkier part of your hardware inventory, so floor or shelf space permitting, stock a variety of paint colours, finishes, application tools and adhesive types to meet the needs of your different customers.



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Retail Shelving



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In-rack  
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Freezer  
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**Hand tools** like hammers, screwdrivers, and wrenches are widely used, and essential for many DIY projects. Hand tools are also part of the range, including both basic and specialised tools.

**Power tools** are generally the domain of larger specialist hardware stores, but it still makes sense to stock a limited range of power tools for casual DIY projects. Customers are often willing to spend more money on high-quality power tools that will last them a long time, so if you have the shelf real-estate, stock what you can supply and support.

**Building materials** are not as common in the supermarket retail space, but wholesalers with trading floor, shelving and warehouse capacity can cater for customers who require materials like cement, lumber, drywall, and insulation for larger DIY projects.

To increase sales, it is important to prioritise the hardware products your customers want most. Being selective about what you stock and how it's displayed will factor into how fast it sells. This comes back to careful analysis of sales figures and a clear understanding of who is shopping at your store.

## DIY & hardware supply and demand

**Geographic location** and shopper demographics play a significant role in determining what products will sell well in a particular location.

Geographic location is an excellent indicator of the types of DIY projects your customers are likely to undertake. For example, supermarkets located in rural areas may have customers who are more likely to engage in outdoor DIY projects such as building a fence, or a garden shed. Supermarkets located in urban areas, on the other hand, may have customers who undertake indoor DIY projects such as painting and decorating. A store located in an area with many homeowners may want to stock a larger selection of DIY hardware products than a store located in an area with many renters.

Make use of the expertise and knowledge of your DIY Hardware suppliers to assist with ranging and merchandising.

Mark Bell, National Sales and Marketing Manager for South African DIY and industrial adhesives manufacturer Pratley, says ...



Mark Bell

“When we train our reps, we teach them that building lasting relationships with smaller retail outlets means avoiding overstocking at all costs.”



Pratley one-shot Super Glue can be stored in a handbag

“In our case, it can be as simple as advising retailers not to buy 100 units of superglue that has a 12-month shelf life if you're only moving 10 units a month,” says Bell. “That sort of advice wins you loyalty, because you're looking after the interests of your customers first.”

**Shopper demographics** also influence the range of products that should be offered in your hardware section. Different age groups may have different needs when it comes to DIY hardware products. Older shoppers may be more interested in products that are easy to use and require less physical exertion, while younger shoppers may be more interested in trendy or innovative products. Certain products may also be more appealing to one gender over another. Power tools may be more popular among male shoppers, while decorating



Knowing your target audience and what they look for in a DIY hardware range will assist stores in their range choice in a category overflowing with SKUs.



# Satellite Offers Less Disruptions and More Sales

Hambisa Supermarket found an easy solution to a frustrating and business crippling problem. They installed the Twoobii Smart Satellite Service for a trusted internet connection, providing very reliable Point-of-Sale Trading, Voice-over-Internet calls and business services.

Given that the Hambisa store is based in the mountainous region of Xhoro (Elliotdate) in the Eastern Cape, their remote and geographically challenging position made it difficult to get a reliable cellular internet connection. The unstable LTE connectivity crippled their Point-Of-Sales transactions and the poor-quality Voice-over-Internet phone services hindered their stock ordering and general business processes.

Fortunately, by its very nature, the Twoobii satellite connection is easy to install and can reach any location, plus it is not affected by load shedding, tower disruptions, cable theft or regional network failures. The Twoobii service is provided to Hambisa by Huge Connect, a Twoobii channel partner that offers the additional voice value add service, for a simple 'turn-key and end-to-end' solution.

*"Twoobii is being used as their primary internet connectivity solution, offering almost zero downtime (99.95% uptime) and serves as a failover solution for their VPN (Virtual Private Network) to access the site remotely for accounting and business management purposes. A perfect solution for a remote business that needs to be online!"*, explains Duncan Mager, Key Account Manager Eastern Cape for Huge Connect.



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supplies have the potential to be more popular among female shoppers. A word of caution on this: stereotyping shoppers should be done with great circumspection. If you aren't sure about the DIY and hardware needs of your customers, a professional customer survey can shed light on what they are looking for.

In an online blog DIY and home renovation trends – what 2023 holds in store for us, Orlando Luis, CEO of independent South African hardware retailer Brights Hardware, said that 2023 would see more South Africans embracing DIY, and in particular women, who are tapping into the societal move towards increasing self-resilience and reliance. On the company's online blog), Luis says ...

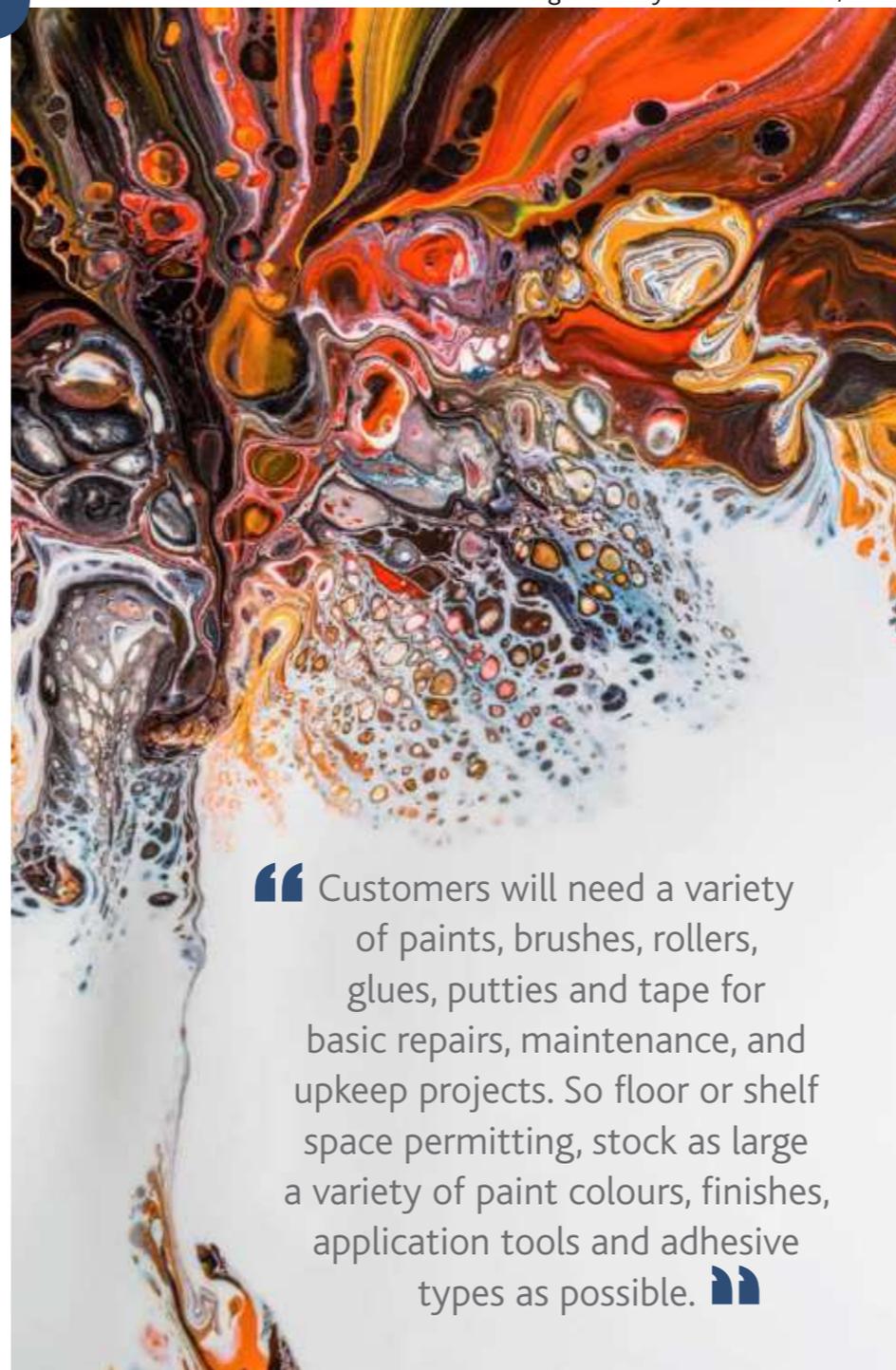


Orlando Luis

“The DIY movement allows people to save money, get the job done quickly without waiting for a contractor, and provides a wonderful sense of accomplishment at a job self-done.”

“Brights Hardware even has a special ladies-only rewards card for female customers, something Luis considers “a growing trend in 2023.”

The income level of shoppers also impacts their DIY and hardware purchasing habits. For example, shoppers with higher incomes may be more likely to purchase higher-end power tools, while shoppers with lower incomes may be more interested in affordable, basic products.



“Customers will need a variety of paints, brushes, rollers, glues, putties and tape for basic repairs, maintenance, and upkeep projects. So floor or shelf space permitting, stock as large a variety of paint colours, finishes, application tools and adhesive types as possible.”

“As manufacturers we can't feel the market for retailers, but we can and should point them in the right direction when it comes to stocking advice,” says Pratley's Mark Bell.

“In my opinion, supermarket and retail owners should ‘walk before they run’ when it comes to stocking hardware products, and since they know



Louis Greef

In an article published on [www.b2bcentral.co.za](http://www.b2bcentral.co.za), Louis Greef, managing director Elite Star Trading Africa says ...

“Lower-income consumers have been hard hit by inflation, reduced real income, increased unemployment and the increased cost of borrowing.”

According to the article, Greef says the hardware market is challenging for smaller independent hardware retailers, but it can be managed through price points, products and successful ranging.

their customers and regional trends better than most, they should also take the lead on deciding which products to prioritise for their stores.”

### DIY and hardware staff training

DIY is a people-driven pursuit, so expert advice at the point of decision-making is a must. Heads of departments and floor staff should be trained in every aspect of DIY and hardware merchandising, product use and customer service. As any shopper who's ever needed in-store advice on hardware

items and suitable products for a DIY project will tell you, the success and reputation of a store is significantly influenced by having well-trained staff that can offer guidance and support.

A well-trained, knowledgeable team can offer expert advice on where to find a particular item on the shelf, which products to choose, how to use them, and the best techniques to achieve the desired results.

With their expertise, your staff can provide crucial support and informed decisions to customers. This will build trust and confidence that your team understands your Hardware category and your product range.

Ongoing staff training ensures that employees are up to date with the latest product developments and trends, very important as the DIY hardware industry is constantly evolving, with new products and techniques emerging regularly.

In addition, staff training can improve employee job satisfaction and retention rates. When employees feel confident and knowledgeable about their work, they are more likely to feel valued and satisfied with their jobs.

“Staff turnover on the shop floor can be very high, especially in these turbulent and challenging economic times,” says Bell. As such ...

“Training has to be a continuous process, for the store and their customers, and for suppliers because the shop staff are the salesmen and women that continue to sell our products when we are not there.”

## Home improvement, hardware and DIY trends

It's not enough to have a great range, or to train your staff on the mix of products you stock. Other factors have recently come into play in South Africa – and globally – that have sway on hardware sales.

**Online buying and DIY advice.** The Covid-19 pandemic has caused a significant shift in consumer behaviour across various industries. One of the most notable changes has been in the way people buy groceries and home improvement supplies.

Image courtesy of Antoni Shkraba, Pexels



In Retail Brief Africa: 2022 highlights and trends to watch in 2023, Cédric Sennepin, CEO at DIY hardware giant Leroy Merlin is quoted as saying that ...



Cédric Sennepin

“The digital space will continue to dictate (sales) trends. The combination of bricks and mortar stores, online stores and other practices will continue to change the global buying practices.”

Online blogs, social channels, how-to DIY videos and product guidance are part of the online mix, with retailers and wholesalers now providing much more than just DIY, home improvement and hardware products.

### Customer experience and satisfaction.

According to a report from Ecommerce.co.za (10 trends and projections for online shopping in SA), “the single most critical factor in the success of online retail activities is customer experience and customer satisfaction. In a recent Vectra survey, no less than 75% of respondents regarded it as highly significant, with another 23% seeing it as somewhat important, giving it a 98% importance rating.”

**Power outages.** The power crisis is another trend that currently weighs heavily on the South African retail psyche. Hardest hit is consumer confidence, which negatively affects buying power, which negatively affects hardware sales.



Image courtesy of Sdonyi Gábor, Pexels



But every crisis has a silver lining, and the influx of power-saving and solar-powered products opens up numerous opportunities for savvy hardware retailers to help their shoppers through loadshedding. Solar lighting, sensor lighting, rechargeable lightbulbs and power banks are just some of the products consumers are buying *en masse*, along with larger products like generators and inverters that can tentpole a hardware department, even in smaller stores.

**Gardening and outdoor.** The increased interest in gardening and outdoor living is almost an offshoot of the pandemic and power crises. There has been a surge in interest in gardening and outdoor living and supermarkets and wholesalers will do well to respond to this trend by expanding their range of gardening tools, equipment, and outdoor equipment supplies.

## DIY and hardware: an evolving category with traditional staples well entrenched

Supermarkets, hypers and wholesalers with hardware DIY sections, as well as the large-format specialised stores, have all had to adapt to changing trends by expanding and adjusting their ranges, growing their online DIY hardware presence, providing expert assistance, offering delivery and curbside collection, and bringing in special deals and promotions in a highly competitive space. The message consumers want to hear is, 'We are your trusted DIY hardware partner' and in this instance, actions



definitely speak louder than words. **SR**

Guy Lerner, writer and photographer, has worked in South Africa and Australia. He writes across diverse topics in business, technology, and retail. Guy holds a B.Sc. Honours degree from the University of Witwatersrand. Contact Wilkins Ross Communications ([www.wilkinsrossglobal.com](http://www.wilkinsrossglobal.com)) or [guy@wilkinsross.co.za](mailto:guy@wilkinsross.co.za).

## Massmart launches revamped Builders' website

Following the launch last year of new Game and Makro eCommerce websites, and a Makro shopping App, Massmart has, in partnership with Walmart's Global Technology Team in Bangalore, now also launched a revamped website for its Builders brand.

The new Builders website offers customers a quicker and more intuitive online experience resulting from new features that significantly improve the customer journey from sign-up and log-in, to product search, recommendations, and checkout. Practical enhancements have included reducing the number of steps to checkout and also giving customers the option to add Builders' white glove service that includes delivery, installation and expert advice to their cart at the click of a button.



Commenting about the enhancements, Paris Philippou, Vice President for eCommerce at Builders says, "Each new feature was tested for usability on our live website by a sample of regular online customers. The benefit of this approach is that we were able to evolve and customise the features to ensure the best possible end result for our customers. Through this approach, we have seen improvements such as a reduction in payment errors and a higher conversion rate across our customer base."

Online customer feedback since the site was relaunched has been excellent, which is demonstrated by increased user traffic and sales.

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By Hippo Zourides

## Incentivising the team

The disparity of pay between directors and the labour force has filled many newspaper and trade magazine columns. We suspect that if the same exercise was conducted in the retail food industry, the results could be staggering.

Has the time come for business owners in the retail food industry to share the cake more fairly with the workforce? Analyse your business and decide whether the 'team' is as important as you, as the owner or investor and whether they should be incentivised to produce more for your business.

Shoprite reported in its 2023 integrated report that CEO Pieter Engelbrecht earned a total remuneration package of R64.66 million. According to a report compiled by Just Share, a Cape Town based advocacy group that has historically lobbied company boards to disclose the wage discrepancies between executives and their lowest-paid workers, this was 1 081 times more than the company's internal minimum wage, with other large companies listed on the Johannesburg Stock Exchange (JSE) also having large pay disparities between employees and executives. Shoprite's own internal minimum wage is the lowest on the list, coming at R58,700 – if the employee works 45 hours per week for all 52 weeks of the year.

According to [businesslive.co.za](http://businesslive.co.za), Woolworths CEO Roy Bagattini, an outspoken proponent of a 'living

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## Why should you incentivise?

Traditionally in South Africa, employees have been accustomed to receiving a 13th cheque (sometimes less), where applicable, and this is normally paid in December of every year to assist with the purchase of both seasonal gifts and the 'back to school' burden that afflicts many families.

wage' for store employees, earned R122.4m in the 2023 financial year, more than three times what he earned in the previous year, as his long-term share options vested.

So we refer to the differential between what an owner/investor may take home as compared with the average of his/her workforce. The general reaction to this poser is the fact that the risk and hard work of an entrepreneur should be rewarded handsomely by the final results of the business, especially in times when the results are not as expected. This may be true, but it is also true that one has to look at ways of incentivising the rest of the team to assist the owner/manager achieve his/her objectives.

Unfortunately over the years, this process has become a habit and an expectation by the employees with no direct influence on their productivity and no linkage to profit or loss, spectacular performance or indifferent productivity.

The way to plan for a new approach to motivating one's workers would be to do away with the annual bonus (NB. Consult a labour expert to see if the current employment contracts can be amended) and implement a 'balanced score card' incentive scheme, that not only rewards the management and supervisory levels in your store, but also the total labour force. If you are starting a new business, here is a basic plan to consider.



**Define the rules of the game**

A good starting point will be to define the various levels of incentive available to various levels of grades or positions in your team. Start with the departmental managers, then define the level of supervisors and finally break down the total store in sections, such as the butchery, bakery, delicatessen/HMR/coffee shop (if applicable), fresh produce, perishables, groceries, general merchandise, front line and storage/receiving.

A balanced score card must then be developed for each section of the store.

Define the measurement parameters for each section as they differ considerably. Service departments would typically cover areas such as sales, profitability, waste, growth and control of expenses, while the storage/receiving area would look at number of cases handled, store room tidiness, control of damages, shrinkage and so on. The front line would include items such as customer count, compliments and complaints, items handled per hour/day/week and so on.

**Who should be incentivised and when?**

The ultimate aim should be to incentivise the whole store, but one could start with the managers and supervisors, especially if the change from annual bonus to regular incentive is considered. The balance of the staff could be left for last in this process.

It makes sense that the heads of department should be taken on this journey and one way to keep the interest going is to make the incentive

quarterly, where everyone looks at monthly results but have three months in which to achieve the targeted incentive.

**Examples of an incentive scheme**

For the sake of an example, let us take a butchery manager and his performance. His balanced score card could consist of the following areas:

**Sales** – grow sales for the same period last year by 15%

**Profitability** – achieve an average gross profit for the department of 26%

**Expenses** – maintain a ratio of packaging to sales to no more than xx% and a salary ratio to sales of no more than yy%

**Promotions** – ensure a minimum of 6 items on promotion at all times

Every one of the above aspects could be rated differently based on the weighting of each portion. For example, out of a possible 100 points, sales could be weighted at 50, profitability at 25, expenses at 15 and promotions at 10. Below is an example of a balanced score card for a 3 month period and its outcome ...



The store could have a policy that any rating below the 100 benchmark would not accrue a performance bonus for the manager or a partial bonus, or a special prize.

Each department would have a balanced scorecard to suit its area of emphasis.

AREAS	Weight	Budget	Actual	Rating	Comments
SALES	50	R 1 200 000	R 1 260 000	52,50	Sales were 5% higher than budget (50 X 1.05)
PROFIT	25	26%	24%	21,16	The margin achieved was 92% of budget (25 x .92)
EXPENSES	15	12%	12%	15,00	Expenses were spot on
PROMOTION	10	96 items	86 items	9,00	10 items less than budgeted were promoted
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100</b>			<b>97,66</b>	

In this example, the extra sales redeemed the lack of performance in margin and promotional activity.



<https://plannersweb.com>

with the department manager and later on with the whole staff complement. Incentives can be primarily of a financial nature but can also include tickets to the rugby or soccer or to an overseas visiting artist and trips away for the person and their partner. The sky is the limit but the preparation and week to week management of an incentive are vital.

### How public should the incentive be?

Many independents guard their sales and profit figures very closely to their hearts for many reasons but primarily because they are loathe in sharing the information with staff.

If that is the case, then consider using an Index system to show them their performance. In the above example, the budget of R1 200 000 sales

for the month can be indexed as 100 and the resulting sales of R1 320 000 would reflect as an index of 110. There is no harm in putting up a bar chart in the butchery showing the two index figures monthly (budget vs. actual) to keep the staff informed of their achievement.

The same can be done on the other measurable criteria, so when the time comes to include the whole team in the incentive scheme, they are all well informed without disclosing the financial details of each target.

Incentives work. However, they must be well considered before implementation and the people to be incentivised must be taken into the journey with openness transparency and honesty. **SR**

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Measurable and realistic targets should be set. When scoring areas such as tidiness or customer complaints and compliments, specific checklists must be developed to avoid individual preferences from clouding one's judgement. In some cases, external mystery shoppers can be brought in to rate a service or tidiness of a store or department. The result of such external input must be shared with the relevant incentivised employee.

### How much to incentivise?

This question can only be answered by the store owner/investor. But here is a suggestion: if you had already budgeted for a 13th cheque, what stops you from giving away a 14th cheque for excellent performance or a 15th cheque for exceptional results that will increase your bottom line exponentially?

Decide on the value of this investment (that is what it is, an investment in growth and a better bottom line) and break it down into the quarterly targets discussed previously to be shared firstly



[www.shareforce.net/](http://www.shareforce.net/)

# Igniting Collaborative Category Management in SA's retail sector



## Article 2

By Bernhardt van der Merwe  
DataOrbis Head  
Category Management.

My previous article in issue 10 of *Supermarket & Retailer* revealed the barriers to the uptake of Collaborative Category Management (CM). I will now outline how these criticisms can be addressed to unveil a gem of a system capable of delivering significant benefits to retailers including lower inventory, enhanced sales, and greater shopper satisfaction.

### Open Communication.

Open communication is important both in initiating and sustaining successful category management collaboration. From the outset it enables suppliers and retailers to align their objectives, identify opportunities plus gaps, decide on resource allocation, and agree on key performance indicators.

This forthright approach reduces risk and sets the stage for effective action. As the collaboration continues, open communication is crucial to success through regular evaluation against metrics and timely adjustments to strategy, where necessary. This provides a platform for



resolving conflict and adapting to changing market conditions. Moreover, it keeps all stakeholders engaged and accountable, whilst also fostering a sense of trust – important for long-term partnership success. In essence, open communication serves as the lynchpin for initiating and maintaining collaborative efforts, ensuring alignment, adaptability, and mutual trust throughout the relationship.

### Complexity? Technology to the rescue.

The application of technology to tackle perceived complexity or time consumption issues, is one of the best ways to address this. Specialised software can automate various aspects of the process, from data gathering to strategy implementation. Utilising advanced assortment, space planning and data analytics tools not only makes the process quicker but also more accurate. The seamless

### The 73% Funnel

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Caption: [www.blackflowercontentwriting.services](http://www.blackflowercontentwriting.services)



integration of these solutions with Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) systems, along with the synchronisation of diverse data sets, leads to enhanced productivity, streamlined tasks, and data-rich feeds which in turn support collaborative decision making and execution efforts.

These solutions make complicated tasks and data analysis easier. This simplifies collaborative interactions between retailers and suppliers, particularly in the areas of data sharing, co-discovery of new opportunities, and measurement of the effectiveness of mutually agreed-upon tactics.



Image: <https://boardroompro.net/>

## Conflict of interest between retailers and suppliers.

Development of well-defined governance structures is essential to avoid this. The creation of equally representative joint committees accountable for the success of the collaboration and empowered to make binding decisions is a successful strategy. Additionally, clearly defined project charters that outline the roles, responsibilities, and expectations of each party can act as a framework for managing potential conflict.

Image courtesy of <https://merval.fr/>



Remaining focused on the shared primary objective serves as a cohesive force within a team. When everyone is aligned on a central goal, which is – meeting shopper needs while promoting category growth, it creates a common purpose that can help minimise conflicts stemming from differing priorities or objectives.

## Periodic Reviews and Adjustments.

Implementing a system of regular reviews of collaborative efforts can help in making real-time adjustments. This is particularly important to ensure that both parties remain aligned in their objectives and that the strategies employed are yielding the expected outcomes. If the metrics indicate customer satisfaction is waning or ROI is not meeting expectations, timely adjustments can be made.

It is for this reason that clear performance metrics/ key indicators should be decided upon in advance. This provides a quantifiable basis for assessing the efficacy of the collaboration and offers a roadmap for necessary strategic change.

Below are examples of how this can be applied in Collaborative CM:

- **Customer satisfaction:** Measure customer satisfaction through post-purchase surveys. If the score starts to dip, this is a signal to review the product range or merchandising strategies.
- **Inventory turnover rate:** Track how quickly products are sold and replenished. A slow turnover might indicate overstocking or misalignment in product offerings, necessitating a change in inventory strategy.
- **Gross margin return on investment (GMROI):** This reveals how much profit is made for each Rand invested in inventory. A low GMROI may indicate inefficiency in product mix or space allocation, requiring a reassessment of underlying strategies.
- **Gross margin per square meterage:** This can show how effectively the retail space is being

used. If the return per linear space is increasing, it indicates that the product assortment and placement strategies are effective in driving sales and, by extension, category growth.

- **Category growth rate:** Compare the growth rate of your category against other categories in the same sector, against a control group of similar stores where the strategies haven't been implemented, or against market averages. If your category is underperforming, it may indicate a need to pivot or refine.
- **Collaborative CM** drives competitive advantage.

Retailers and suppliers who adopt Collaborative CM are often better positioned to adapt to market changes quickly, giving them a first-mover advantage. In a world where prices and shopper expectations are rising virtually exponentially, improved shopping experiences are shown to lead to enhanced loyalty. This makes it difficult for competitors to lure customers away.

Effective collaboration enhances the ability to identify opportunities plus gaps, engage in joint research initiatives, execute trial implementations, and optimally allocate shared resources towards a common goal. This in turn yields edge over the competition still operating in silos. Moreover, shared insights derived from pooled data can offer a significant advantage over competitors who lack this ability. This enables more targeted and effective strategies.

In terms of driving home brand strength in the market, effective collaboration can amplify

Image courtesy of <https://procureconasia.wbresearch.com/>



marketing and branding initiatives. This establishes both the retailer and the supplier as market leaders in their respective categories.

In conclusion, retailers and suppliers adopting a Collaborative CM approach can turn the

collaboration into a strategic asset. This is achieved because both parties become more invested in each other's success, thereby making it harder for competitors to disrupt this powerful coalition. **SR**



The concept of Category Management or Category Planning originated in the late 1980s. It followed the research of Brian F. Harris, a former professor at the University of Southern California. It delivered a big change in the way retailers and suppliers worked. Instead of competing with each other, it encouraged suppliers to work together with a focus on the consumer when making retail decisions.

For the first time, the range of products offered for sale by a retailer was grouped together with similar or related products based upon the consumer need that they met. These 'product categories' were then managed as a strategic business unit (SBU), and no longer as stand-alone products or brands.

According to Harris, the reasoning behind Category Management is the following ...

- Force consumer focus when making retail decisions.
- Develop a strategy for differentiation and competition.
- Provide a model for collaboration.
- Promote information sharing to help better decision-making.
- Provide greater strategic logic when making tactical decisions.
- Clarify decisions about asset and resource allocation.
- Help further clarify employee responsibilities.

This process allows for better management of the relationship between customers, retailers and suppliers. Ultimately, all three parties moved towards a win-win-win situation. <https://makingbusinessmatter.medium.com/category-management>

# Disruptive technology is driving progress in smart manufacturing



By Mark Wilson,  
CEO, SYSPRO EMEA & APAC

The manufacturing industry is a tough industry, vulnerable to impacts from the economy, geo-political events such as conflict and pandemics, and other stresses that impact the global and local supply chains and markets.

Manufacturers constantly need to seek out a competitive advantage to stay at the forefront of this competitive sector. Smart factories and the integration of disruptive technologies are one way that manufacturers can drive growth, not just for their own companies, but across the sector.

Smart manufacturing leverages recent advances in technology to improve quality, equipment efficiency, reliability and decision making. It is fuelled by data, integrating information from multiple sources to provide a real-time view of business operations.

Disruptive technologies such as Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Internet of Things (IoT), more particularly Industrial IoT (IIoT), are enabling smart manufacturing practices. Importantly, these technologies are growth drivers for the manufacturing industry.



AI is transforming skills in manufacturing. The new AI revolution presents a great opportunity for manufacturers to retain their staff and attract younger employees by providing new skills for the future world of business where the role of AI will play a greater part. Caption & image: <https://za.syspro.com/>

## Technology drives efficiency

Smart manufacturing processes improve the efficiency, quality and sustainability of traditional manufacturing, and allow manufacturers to become more agile and resilient through data-led decision making. And while completely autonomous manufacturing is still a way off from happening,

increasing digitalisation comes with many benefits to manufacturers. AI and manufacturing automation technologies are contributing to decreased operational costs while improving service levels and speed in many areas of manufacturing.

IIoT is connecting intelligent devices across the supply chain, creating interoperability between machines, devices, and sensors and providing a wealth of data points for manufacturers to draw from when looking for insights and analysis of their business operations. IIoT devices help connect the business instead of having siloes of information, which helps drive data-led decision-making that can directly benefit the business.

With IIoT devices providing a multitude of data points throughout the manufacturing process and the supply chain, this data can produce analytics and insights across the broader enterprise that, when applied, can make manufacturing processes run more smoothly. When this stream of real-time data is available for everyone working in the environment, whether it's a manager on the factory

floor, or a business decision-maker, it surfaces anomalies, trends patterns and developments that can be acted on.

## Data brings value through analysis

Data without analysis is not going to bring value to the business. AI is still in the early phases of being integrated into manufacturing and ERP systems, but there is no question that we will see continuous advancements in this space. For manufacturers, AI can already enhance production planning based on real-time data and demand forecasts, while predictive analytics can pre-empt unplanned downtime and maintenance, improve performance and increase machine uptime. AI forecasting algorithms can aid planning and scheduling track things like seasonality and current trends, while this technology can also help manufacturers optimise their production planning and scheduling using real-time data and demand forecasts.

Both AI and IoT are both enablers and drivers of smart manufacturing. Using this technology with an ERP system that provides data insights and analysis from the huge stream of data that IoT devices and sensors are generating, manufacturers can reduce costs, downtime and errors, and manage their inventory more efficiently.

Replacing a manually operated legacy system with increased functionality and analytics will allow best practise material management throughout the company.



Technology is a powerful tool for the metal fabrication industry. By investing in automation and advanced and integrated technologies, companies can reduce costs, improve efficiency, and boost productivity. Caption & image: <https://za.syspro.com/>

Cloud is an enabling technology for smart manufacturing. Cloud-based ERP platforms offer cost-effectiveness, scalability, security, the ability to adopt new technologies, and exploration of new opportunities. Cloud applications enable manufacturers to harness data from IIoT devices in their factories, inventories, and supply chains to define metrics and performance indicators that optimize productivity and enable faster decision-making. Modern ERP systems with mobile tools enable seamless access to full system functionality via mobile devices regardless of location.

## Skills must evolve to keep pace with technology

While it's understandable that people fear that their jobs are under threat from disruptive tech like AI, it can enable innovation and differentiation. Automation and the deployment of disruptive technologies benefits not only the enterprise, but it also frees up workers from mundane manual workloads and repetitive tasks to better use their time and expertise.

However, there is a caveat – manufacturers and distributors now require a workforce that is proficient in data science, automation, and other digital skills and adept at soft skills like collaboration, problem solving, and customer engagement.

Companies must ensure an environment of continuous learning and retraining for employees to keep pace with the skills required to function optimally in a smart factory workplace, putting resources into training programmes for operating, managing and developing the technology to get the most value from both their people and their tech. While this shift will cause many current jobs to change, it will also create numerous new job opportunities.

In a highly competitive environment, manufacturers must look to adopt disruptive technologies to remain competitive. Those who delay adopting disruptive technologies will inevitably fall behind the market, with long-term consequences for profitability and longevity. **SR**

