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Business knowledge for smart retailers
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Delight your customers

**What can ants teach us
about innovation?**

In-store bakeries

**... Turn
your dough
into cash**

Snacks & treats

**... Sweet or salty,
everyone loves them**



Image courtesy of Klaus Nielsen, Pexels

In-store bakeries

There is an opportunity to turn your dough into cash, as in-store bakeries are as popular as ever. However, it can also be one of the trickiest departments or stores to manage, with multiple factors including wastage, hygiene, skills, cost management, packaging, quality, competition and changing consumer tastes all playing a role in its success.



Image: Kyle Roxas, Pexels

Snacks & treats

Sweet and savoury snacks and treats occupy a massive space in the consumer mindset. From impulse buys through to being an absolute

Contents

staple, snacks and treats are part of everyday life for everyone. However, while there are many opportunities in this category and all its related sub-categories, there are also challenges. Staying relevant and the correct range selection is key.

Image courtesy of MD Jerry, Unsplash



COLUMNS

Delight your customers

Aki Kalliatakis asks, "What can ants teach us about innovation?" as we are not the logical rational human beings that we think we are. Perhaps the two biggest drivers of our decisions and behaviour are our past habits and imitating others.

NEWS

Retail trends 2023

The general consensus is that innovation, flexibility and agility are in the driver's seat this year. It's about finding the balance in delivering value vs profitability as well as sourcing locally, bedding

down omnichannel strategies and sharpening pencils to prepare for the 'Amazon Effect'.

Technology

Technology innovation is key to success in the highly competitive retail world. Learning how to work with start-ups is a must-have capability for retailers wishing to create smart ecosystems.

Skills development

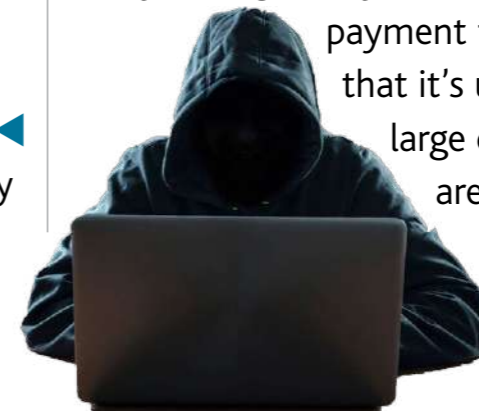
The Engen Computer School has capped another 70 graduates from South Durban whose basic computer skills qualification boosts their chances of finding employment.

Healthy living

Pick n Pay removes over 3 500 tonnes of salt and sugar from private label foods over five years.

Fraud trends every CFO should know

Businesses are taking the threat of payment fraud a lot more seriously than they did even two years ago. They're acknowledging that the



payment fraud risk is there and that it's ubiquitous – not only large corporations and banks are being targeted anymore.



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Eiiiishhkom ... What a shit show!



Helen Maister

We have had load shedding for 15 years now. No end in sight. Government has no political will to put a stop to this. No accountability. No payment of funds due by municipalities. No clean audits, if there are audits at all. And the people are suffering. Oh how they are suffering.

Cape Town has been given an exemption from treasury to buy back electricity from homes and business. Yes! Yes! Yes! Freaking fantastic.

But what about the rest of the country? Same should apply. Where is the legal action been taken against the powers that be? This should be the norm. Side step the asswipes that are bringing us to our knees. The corruption, fraud and sabotage.

We have something in abundance, sunshine. More about that in our March issue on Energy Savvy and how to keep the lights on.

ARRRRRRRRGH – rant over for now.
We have a great issue for you.

Turn your dough into cash

In-store bakeries are as popular as ever

There's no greater feast for the senses than a well-stocked in-store or standalone bakery filled with melt-in-the-mouth treats, decadent delights, the softest rolls, and the freshest bread. It can also be one of the trickiest departments or stores to manage, with multiple factors including wastage, hygiene, skills, cost management, packaging, quality, competition and changing consumer tastes all playing a role in its success.

Finding the right mix of household staples, impulse buys, innovative products, and convenience offerings is essential.



Image courtesy of Juhi Sharma, Pexels

Snacks & Treats

Sweet or salty, everyone loves them

Sweet and savoury snacks and treats occupy a massive space in the consumer mind-set. From impulse buys through to being an absolute staple, snacks and treats are part of everyday life for everyone. However, while there are many opportunities in this category and all its related sub-categories, there are also challenges. Staying relevant and the correct range selection is key. Manufacturers and retailers have to stay relevant to the evolving needs of their customers and constantly adapt to the changing tastes of consumers.

Helen Maister

Helen Maister



A particular big name store in a neighbourhood not far from me has chosen to shut down during load shedding. What they are also shedding is employees, 22 so far. 22 families are affected by one store who couldn't keep the lights on during load shedding. 22 more families, hungry. 22 families who may turn to crime to feed themselves. What the actual f**k.

What can ants teach us about innovation?

Aki Kalliatakis

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

If you are buying a new car, you can choose between one of two options for the seats – cloth or leather. Leather is more expensive and probably less environmentally friendly – so the logical choice, the one which adds more economic value is cloth. Simple choice. Except, of course, 'Value' is completely subjective. Cloth seats are just not 'cool' but, more importantly, if you have young children, you will choose leather nine out of ten times. Why? If you've ever had a child vomit on your car seats, you quickly discover the benefits of leather.

We really don't need to go into depth about the complexity of human psychology, but perhaps the two biggest drivers of our decisions and behaviour are our past habits and imitating others. If you look back in human evolution around 100 000 years ago, whenever we've been in doubt, we've essentially defaulted to these. If I saw a tasty caterpillar and was not sure if I should eat it, I'd either do what I've done before (which is to eat it because last time I didn't get sick) or, if it's a first time, I'll watch what everybody else does and copy them. If we



Image courtesy of MD Jerry, Unsplash

do whatever others do, at least it won't be a disaster. That's how our mental models get built.

If you decide to put solar panels on your roof, you will probably hesitate until you see some of your neighbours doing the same. If you're deciding on a new school for your kids, you'll probably ask other people like yourself. It's not a perfect way to choose, but at least we won't feel worried about disaster striking.

“ We are not the logical rational human beings that we think we are. Perhaps the two biggest drivers of our decisions and behaviour are our past habits and imitating others. ”

And in the modern world, we do the same. It may be more sophisticated than caterpillars or poisonous seafood, but the past three years have permanently changed how we view video conferences (Zoom) and owning your own car (Uber), for example.

And, unlike accounting, IT and engineering, a lot of these motivations and decision-making actions are not measurable in real terms. Indeed, most of what we can categorise as psychology is not measurable – but it very powerfully drives our buying decisions. And, as an aside, there's probably no current credible market research that will help us uncover these, because most people don't really know their unconscious needs and desires, or they try to fool us in order to impress us.

Forward thinking supply chains

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For example, a few years back we did some research for a chocolate and sweet manufacturer to find out what kids favourite confectionery was. We discovered that different ages answered our questions completely differently.

For 5- to 8-year-olds one particular sweet was particularly popular (let's call it Sweet A), but then from 9- to 11-year olds we found that this same sweet was really "just for little kids." In fact, offered a choice, the older kids said they preferred the competitor's product (Sweet B). All very well and good, until ...

“ ... at the end of these sessions we gave each child an empty sack and took them to a room where there was a feast of sweets that they could fill their bags with. And the true lesson came right at the end – it didn't matter!

No matter what the age, most kids chose Sweet A anyway, even though they said they preferred B. Actions speak louder than words indeed! ”

By the way, we replicated a similar study with women and handbag preferences, and the bags they said they liked were not the bags they selected as their gift at the end. And, just in case you think that men are not susceptible, we saw similar results in two separate studies, one with electronic devices and another with sports equipment.

Image courtesy of Antoni Shkraba, Pexels



Am I suggesting that you ignore your customers' feedback and communication – and throw up your hands in despair because you have no idea what to believe? Of course not. I'm also not suggesting that you make assumptions about human behaviour that haven't been tested, especially when we have some traditional conventional models that everyone accepts, but which just don't always work. Take pricing, for example. We all accept that if you lower prices, then people will buy more. That's

exactly what economists tell us. But as countless examples – like caffeine-fuelled energy drinks, expensive chicken take-away joints, and coffee pods attest (not to mention leather car seats) – you are possibly leaving money on the table if you ignore these illogical motivations.

But, what I am suggesting is that you observe and consider the less rational and more emotional or psychological factors. For example, let's take the perfect classic – queues at checkout. There are many strategies you can use to make the wait for customers shorter, but most of the scientific ideas will cost you a lot of money. You could build more till points, hire more staff, or install automated systems. All perfectly rational and logical solutions.

But what if instead you tried to change your customers' perceptions about queues and the wait? For example, what if you gave them a real-time estimate of how long the wait will be? People prefer waiting for 10 minutes if they know that the wait will be 10 minutes, rather than not knowing if it will be five minutes. **Certainty.**

What if you used your loyalty system to give regular or high-spending customers a chance to use special fast-track tills? Boost their sense of importance. Status. And, by the way, wouldn't it drive you crazy if you saw that customers who are buying 10 items or less are rewarded for not spending by shorter queues? **Fairness.**

Or, maybe you can get one or two staff members to just be nice to waiting customers – by greeting them and starting conversations or paying compliments. **Relationships and relatedness.**

There's a great model developed by cognitive scientist David Rock in which he proposes five main drivers that the brain uses to make us behave in certain ways to minimise threats and maximise rewards. He called it the SCARF Model and it is defined by the following ...

- Status** – our relative importance to others.
- Certainty** – our ability to predict the future.
- Autonomy** – our sense of control over events.
- Relatedness** – how safe we feel with others.
- Fairness** – how fair we perceive the exchanges between people to be.

It would be a great place for you to start looking for the subtle opportunities that you can create

in order to persuade customers to support your business, and to become even more loyal to you.

Will you get it right all of the time? Definitely not, but to be in the game, to get lucky, you have to be like an ant colony. If you've ever watched ants, they all seem to be moving in both directions – a straight line one behind the other, occasionally bumping into each other and 'sniffing' in the face of the other ant. But, if you look carefully at the whole colony, you will also see a whole bunch of other ants, maybe 10 to 20 percent of the group, just seem to be wandering around aimlessly.

These 'lazy' ants are vital, because they are the ones that innovatively seek new sources of food and, once in a while, they hit the jackpot

– and teach the rest of the colony where to find food. They've been doing it very successfully for millions of years. A lot longer than we clever humans have been around.

The boldest innovations and solutions can often be found by looking at things as though you've never seen them before. **SR**



Aki Kalliatakis is the managing partner of The Leadership LaunchPad, a company dedicated to helping clients become more customer driven. He can be contacted at +27 (0) 83 379 3466, or via the website at www.leadershiplaunchpad.co.za

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Turn your dough into cash

In-store bakeries are as popular as ever

Image courtesy of Klaus Nielsen, Pexels

There's no greater feast for the senses than a well-stocked in-store or standalone bakery filled with melt-in-the-mouth treats, decadent delights, the softest rolls, and the freshest bread. It can also be one of the trickiest departments or stores to manage, with multiple factors including wastage, hygiene, skills, cost management, packaging, quality, competition and changing consumer tastes all playing a role in its success.

Finding the right mix of household staples, impulse buys, innovative products, and convenience offerings is essential.

In terms of consumer demand, the desire for healthier alternatives from the bakery is on the rise globally. For those that can afford it, baked goods with added health benefits and reduced amounts of fat, sugar, preservatives, and overly processed ingredients are a must, while 'special' requirements are also becoming mainstream, with gluten-free, nut-free, dairy-free (including eggs) are on the rise. However, these trends clearly do not run across all in-store bakeries, and it is essential for retailers and store owners to understand their shopper base and what they want or would be willing to try.



cereals sector. Flexible packaging is the most used pack material and Johannesburg emerged as the largest bakery and cereals market.”

A challenging environment

Rising costs and an erratic power supply are necessitating the implementation of alternative energy sources in all bakeries. A successful in-store bakery has to be

A growing market

According to globaldata.com ...

“Bread and rolls combined are the largest category in the Bread and Cereals segment, and cookies is forecast to register the fastest value growth in the market.”

“Hypermarkets and supermarkets are the largest distribution channel in the South African bakery and

an income-generating profit centre and it is therefore imperative for it to continue to operate during outages and loadshedding.

Baking requires a significant amount of energy and can account for a significant portion of a store's electricity consumption. In a country where the electricity supply is frequently interrupted and costs continue to soar, energy efficiency in the bakery is vital.



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Save energy in your bakery

Recently the Mail and Guardian (mg.co.za) reported that, "The National Energy Regulator of South Africa (Nersa) granted Eskom an 18.65% tariff hike to help it cover its debt. This is less than the 32% that the utility had asked for 2022-23, but Eskom will get a further 12.74% in April 2024. This is a 33.7% increase from 2020, according to energy expert Chris Yelland." This significant increase will put even greater strain on bakeries already struggling to turn a profit amidst soaring raw material and production costs, supply chain constraints, and the worsening economy.

Maximising efficiency, minimising waste

The good news is, while bakeries tend to use a lot of power, they do present a number of ways in which energy savings and streamlining can be achieved. According to World Bakers (www.worldbakers.com), Plant Engineering (www.plantengineering.com), and British Baker (bakeryinfo.co.uk), there are several key areas to consider when looking to maximise energy efficiency.

Fit for purpose – Ann Wells, commercial director at Brook Food & Bakery Equipment, explains it perfectly for British Baker when she says, "Each oven is capable of baking, but each one is [also] developed to give the maximum in baking specific products." Choosing the right oven for your needs is the first step in maximising efficiency and minimising wasted energy. For example, Wells explains, electric deck ovens allow different types of products to be baked at the same time using differentiated management of the temperatures between the different decks, or even of the same deck. Rack ovens are better for small to medium products with a thin crust. The loading and unloading system allows for fast, continuous production.

startupguys.net/list-of-equipment-supplies-required-for-small-bakery-business/



Baking different products together – Certain bakery products naturally fall into similar categories, with similar production and baking needs. These can be grouped together to avoid wasting time as well as energy use. Pay particular attention to products that can be baked at the same heat.



7 ways to build your bakery

- Implement strict ingredient control through the entire supply chain, including measurement and storage.
- Install the best equipment to reduce wastage and prep time and to improve quality. A sub-optimal bakery increases expenses and lowers profit.
- The bakery (front and back) should be 5-star clean at all times.
- Product promotion is essential. Let your customers know about your bakery range.
- Ask your customers for feedback. Train your staff to engage with shoppers at the counter. Ask them for product suggestions and what they would like to see in the display.
- Combine the traditional with the innovative, for example, cereal bread.
- Stay abreast of technological developments that will allow your bakery to switch to sustainable packaging.



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Using the falling heat method – Start with the products that need the greatest temperatures and work your way down. If you incorporate new equipment that offers rapid element heating, you can increase that efficiency significantly while avoiding lengthy pre-heat times that cut into your non-load shedding hours.

Smart controllers – The technology driving these controllers has developed to such an extent that almost every oven or electrical function can be pre-set or pre-programmed. Some controllers can also be used as monitoring devices.

Monitoring and temperature profiles – Like most equipment that requires electricity, monitoring that energy usage, as well as the overall functionality of the equipment, is an important diagnostic and preventative maintenance tool. Temperature profiles can alert your bakery staff to hot or cold spots in the ovens, which indicate a problem and can affect production quality. Identifying small problems quickly is important.

Maintenance and repairs – Keeping your equipment in good running order is essential for maintaining efficiency. From replacing worn seals and broken elements to ensuring your gear boxes and drives are clean, oiled, and running smoothly, fixing or preventing problems is the best way to avoid a costly disaster.

Upgrade if necessary – Unfortunately, like most equipment, increased age does mean decreased efficiency. With all the maintenance and care in

the world, equipment that is 20 to 30 years old (or more) will no longer be capable of functioning at maximum efficiency. Upgrading to newer equipment is a necessity. The upside to this is that you can choose equipment that is fit for purpose, does exactly what you need, and that has been designed to be as energy efficient as possible. Despite the initial outlay, this is an investment that makes good business sense.

Image courtesy of Pixabay, Pexels



Alternative power sources – An alternative uninterrupted power source is a vital piece of equipment for bakeries where most of the products rely on consistent heat to rise. Eskom's load shedding schedules are wont to change at a moment's notice and can go from stage 2 to stage 6 in the blink of an eye. Add to this an ageing infrastructure which simply cannot cope with the frequent power surges and constant on/off, and your chances of being off for ten or more hours a day are worryingly high. An interrupted bake is a waste, a loss, and an economic blow. This is

why investing in an alternative power source and a high-quality UPS system is so essential. Discuss your bakery power needs with your equipment supplier and your alternative power solutions provider. Include your hot displays for warm products – consumers don't want cold, soggy cheese puffs and congealing pies!

Image courtesy of Mohamed Hassouna, Unsplash



What people want – how to attract and retain customers even in the toughest of times

Local and international trends and innovations in the bakery category can help guide the way for retailers looking to tailor their offering to the different consumer groups frequenting the bakery section: those simply trying to feed their families, those struggling to make the best and healthiest choices possible on a budget, and those who still have some discretionary income and who want to either enjoy premium baked goods or whose health and lifestyle choices equate to a pricier product. Then there's planned purchases and impulse buying – which is a big driver at the hard-to-resist baked goods counters.

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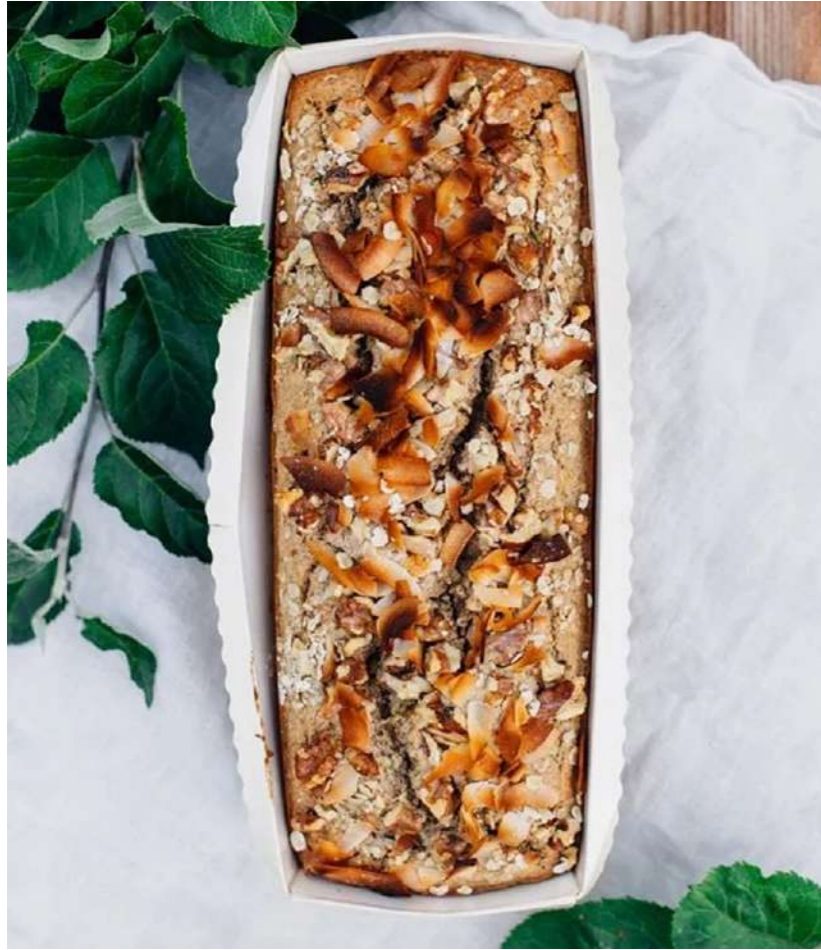


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Vegan cinnamon banana bread_greatist.com/
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Healthy baked goods

There is a rising pressure for healthier high-quality baked goods at a global level. Driven by increasingly health-conscious consumers, as well as the rise in food intolerances, there is a growing demand for products that are free from gluten, wheat, nuts, eggs, and dairy, or that are low-sugar, low-fat, vegan, keto, and banting friendly. Added seed and ancient grain breads, and those with added nutrients such as vitamins, iron, and calcium, are also popular. Bread may be a staple, but for certain consumers, that staple has a whole new range of requirements and expectations, including taste and quality.

Heat-and-eat, frozen bakery lines, speciality cakes

Occasion bakes, heat-and-eat, and frozen products for at-home entertaining are big sellers for many in-store bakeries. Spanning traditional local favourites and comfort foods, these offerings also include ready-made speciality and character cakes, made-to-order offerings, and even catering platters. Variable packaging size is key for frozen and heat-and-eat products for at-home consumption for the family as well as bigger events and gatherings. In this offering it is important to cater for your adult consumers and those smaller, often even more demanding back-seat shoppers – children.



Image by Dawn from Pixabay

Innovative offerings and international trends

- New York-style bagels and pretzels, German stollen and lebkuchen at Christmas, Greek shortbreads at Easter, palmiers and pasteis de nata for tea, South Africans have an international palate

when it comes to baked goods. Take advantage of this willingness to experiment and introduce spicy baked goods with tastes from Africa to round out your offering.

- In terms of innovation, consumers love a twist to their baked goods, be it salty or spicy, unusual flavour combinations, or exotic ingredients.
- Sourdough is seeing an upsurge in interest and is finding its way into other products such as sourdough croissants, bagels and muffins.
- Artisanal and handcrafted goods are still popular and growing.

Vegan fudge brownie



- Plant-based offerings are also having a moment. Vegan apple muffins, vegan fudge brownies, vegan cinnamon banana bread, gluten-free banana zucchini bread, vegan chocolate chip cookies – there are many vegan options that taste as good as non-vegan that will introduce another layer to your bakery offer. Have a look at this site for some great ideas: <https://greatist.com/eat/easy-vegan-baked-goods-recipes#9>



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The South African spin: tried and trusted favourites

There is still a massive market in this country for the traditional South African favourites. Scones, muffins, pastries, doughnuts, iced buns, carrot cake, milk tart, koeksisters, peppermint crisp tart – tried, tested and loved, it seems there will always be a market for these bakery stalwarts. Bakeries that put an innovative spin on traditional favourites will capture the imagination of their shoppers.

Artisanal bakes, international flavours, and innovative trends are purchase drivers to be considered when retailers plan their in-store offerings.

Almost every major supplier of bread in South Africa offers a 'premium' loaf. Premium breads



Image courtesy of Erick Mufasa, Pexels

vary in terms of crumb, slice thickness, ingredient quality, fortification with added vitamins and other minerals, and even packaging. When it comes to artisanal bakes, that premiumisation starts to include aspects such as sprouted grains,

diverse flavour profiles, added protein, and pricier ingredients including seeds and nuts.

For some consumer segments, smaller sizes are also a growing trend as consumers begin to introduce mindful eating into their wellness plan – all treats have their place, including baked delicacies, however portion control is key. For others, size matters. Value = quantity + quality, especially for those with big families on a tight budget or when catering for larger groups of people.

Sustainable and eco-friendly packaging continue to be a growing concern amongst consumers. Clearly labelled, clean packaging with easy to read and informative labels are a must for your bakery.

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Using environmentally friendly and sustainable materials is as important as ensuring your packaging can be recycled or biodegraded, causing minimal environmental impact. Make it your mission to eliminate all non-recyclable packaging from your bakery.

Image courtesy of Lisa Fotios, Pexels



Merchandising and bakery displays

Merchandising, displays, and lighting have a significant impact on purchase decisions. The bakery is a place of household staples that make it onto the shopping list every week, a destination

for speciality bakes and celebratory goods, and the best kind of impulse buys – the ones where something looks just too tempting to pass up.

Image courtesy of Saw Company, Pexels



Bakery displays

Displaying that merchandise to its best advantage is one part technology and one part art that includes choosing the right display units, using energy-efficient 'natural' lighting, and creating the most appetising display possible. Customers who don't like what they see, or who can't see what they like, won't make a purchase. And when it comes to occasion bakes and impulse buys, they certainly shop with their eyes first.

Value for money at the bakery

For many South Africans, the last few years have brought about economic hardship. For those desperate to simply feed themselves and their family, the most cost-effective option will always

win. Late last year Business Insider (businessinsider.co.za) reported that the South African consumer price index for the bread and cereals segment

increased by a massive 17.8% over a year. The cheapest 700g loaf of brown bread that the journalist could find for comparison cost R16.49. That's a significant cost for a household staple, and many consumers will make purchase decisions based on the cost of these staples.

Analyse your bakery sales data for the best solutions

Knowing what your customers want and being able to communicate specials in a timeous and targeted fashion, requires the right technology in the right hands.

Collecting, analysing, and utilising customer and sales data is an important part of efficient and effective merchandising. Partnering with the right solutions provider in this regard is important, as poor communication will cost businesses in terms of sales and footfall. With the right solutions in place, your in-store bakery can remain a place of delight for shoppers and a source of profit for the store. **SR**



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 | www.wilkinsrossglobal.com

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Insulated Structures
Efficiency At Work

Effective solutions to reduce the cost of in-store refrigeration

Polyurethane Injected Panels

- Standard panels: Outer and inner skin of frost white Chromodek, also available in black finish.
- 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.
- Easily erected.
- 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.





Insulated Structures
Efficiency At Work



Up to 40%
Energy Saving



New or Retrofit
Existing cases

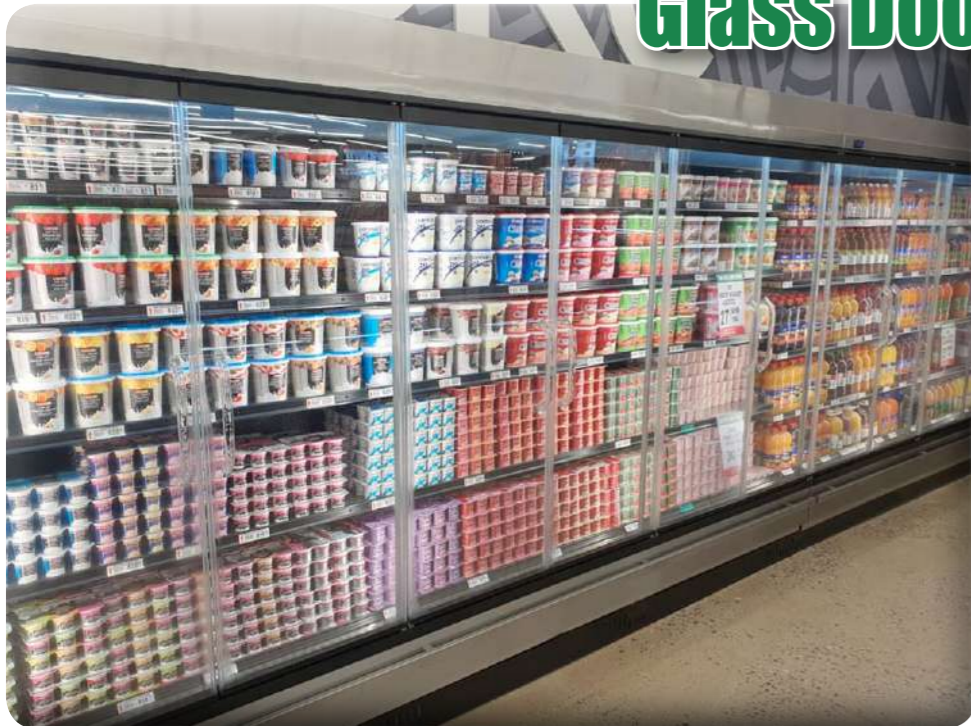


Environment
Respect

Benefits of Airshield Glass Doors

- Reduce Energy consumption.
- Extend Product shelf life.
- Double Glazed Argon filled void for better insulation.
- 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.
Heated Hybrid is fitted with soft closers.

Premium Airshield Glass Doors.
Frameless Door with Argon Gas filled for better insulation.



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Snacks & Treats

Sweet or salty, everyone loves them

Image courtesy of Kyle Roxas, Pexels



Sweet and savoury snacks and treats occupy a massive space in the consumer mindset. From impulse buys through to being an absolute staple, snacks and treats are part of everyday life for everyone.

However, while there are many opportunities in this category and all its related sub-categories, there are also challenges. Staying relevant and the correct range selection is key. Manufacturers and retailers have to stay relevant to the evolving needs of their customers and constantly adapt to the changing tastes of consumers.

Speed at the checkout and multiple purchase points

Whatever your range and the extent of your offering, remember to create multiple point of purchase points throughout the store. The snack aisle can be overwhelming for casual browsers and those looking to shop quickly.

Targeted shoppers with a purpose may also tend to ignore whatever is not on their list. By creating different purchase points, you constantly remind consumers of their need or desire to snack, and you often increase your chances of alerting them to a new product launch or special by isolating it from the crowd.

Your snack categories should include salty snacks such as nuts, chips, popcorn, pretzels and other nibbly bits; sweet snacks such as chocolates, sweets, and biscuits; meaty snacks including salami sticks, biltong, and droewors; dairy snacks such as cheese wedges, cheese slices, drinking yoghurt, dairy-based smoothies, small tubs of yoghurt, and baked cheese twists; healthy snacks such as raw nuts, dried fruit

(with sulphur- and sugar-free options) fresh vegetables and dips; trail mixes (nuts and seeds have seen a big surge of interest); energy boosting or mood balancing products; and niche snacks that include Banting, low-carb, low-calorie, high-protein, low-sugar, vegan, and gluten-free options.

The current market

Last year, www.MarketResearch.com reported moderate value growth in the savoury snacks category. This was driven by increasing retail prices, as retail volumes declined. Production costs and delays, increasing

energy and fuel costs, and constrained consumers buying less has led to a sharp increase in product prices. That said, the report also identified some growth areas, saying "Local demand for peanuts and biltong is set to continue to drive volume growth in nuts, seeds, trail mixes and meat snacks, despite rising unit prices." It also predicted that niche categories were expected to see moderate




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CHICKEN BURGER PITA BREADS

WITH TZATZIKI, ROCKET, RED ONION
AND CHERRY TOMATOES



Ingredients

COUNTY FAIR CHICKEN BURGERS:

8 chicken burgers

TZATZIKI:

1/2 cup Greek yoghurt
1/4 cucumber, grated
10g mint, finely chopped
1/4 cup lemon juice
Salt and pepper

PITA BREAD:

4 large pita breads
1/2 bag fresh rocket
1/2 punnet of cherry tomatoes, chopped
90g pickled red onion

Method

Cook chicken burgers according to the packaging instructions.

To make the tzatziki, mix the cucumber, mint and yoghurt. Season with lemon juice, salt and pepper.

Place the pitas in a grill pan and char on both sides. Remove them from the pan and cut each in half to form a pocket for the burger.

Fill the pita pockets with the chicken burgers, tzatziki, rocket, red onions and tomatoes.






Trendy Tip

Our recipe for chicken burger pitas with tzatziki, rocket and cherry tomatoes makes for an easy mid-week family meal.



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volume growth, indicating a rising interest amongst consumers in unusual, exotic, and innovative snacks.

MarketResearch.com also reported that there had been a noticeable decline in volume sales of plain biscuits in 2022. The report stated ...

“ Unit prices have been rising in the country, driven by inflation.

Global wheat shortages as a result of the war in Ukraine are also increasing the price of flour, which is used as a raw ingredient in most products in this category. ”

There’s no denying it’s a tough market currently, but smart category management can ensure that retailers come out tops.

Snacks and treats for every occasion

- Social snacking, impulse purchasing, snacks at home and at work – everyone does it, from health-conscious consumers to those who need a regular snack to meet their dietary or health management requirements.
- Snacks and treats play many roles in our lives, used for gifting and rewards, energy boosters and pick-me-ups, meal replacements and comforters.
- Mindful, purposeful snacking is also here to stay. However, nobody wants protein balls for Halloween – consumers will choose their snack preferences to suit the occasion. Ensure your merchandising covers the major holidays and occasions, from Eid and Hanukkah through to Diwali, Easter, Christmas and Halloween.

Image courtesy of Valeria Boltneva, Pexels



- South Africans also enjoy a variety of outdoor activities, from braaing and alfresco dining to sports events, as well as communal viewings of international sporting fixtures – and snacks and treats play a big part here. Savoury snacks, either served as a precursor to the main meal or as the main event themselves, tend to be salty and meaty. Savoury dairy, vegetarian, and baked snacks are also popular. Crisps are invariably served with a variety of dips, and finger foods such as frikkadels, samoosas, spring rolls, and chipolatas are firm favourites.

- Snacks and treats to replace a meal is not new but has become much more prevalent. Millennials (born 1981–1996) and Generation Z (born 1997–2012) are snackers of note, and Gen Z consumers are particularly fond of all day grazing instead of eating at set mealtimes. Gen Z are also extremely focused on the environment and sustainability. If your store is located near a university, secondary school or start-out apartments, your snacks and treats range should take this into consideration (packaging, ingredients, ethical sourcing).
- Consumers who are strapped for time, or who have run out of inspiration in the kitchen, rely on a multitude of snacks and treats to meet their nutritional needs. This can include everything from the ever-popular pie, cooldrink, and a chocolate combo deal, to protein bars, biltong, and trail mix.
- Smoothies and drinking yoghurts are a popular snack choice as they are quick and easy, and often have a number of health benefits such as probiotics, added vitamins, iron, and protein, as well as fresh flavours.

Labelling and marketing for snacks and treats

Clean labels refer to labels that are clear and easy to read, and which list all the ingredients in a product. Many consumers want these ingredients to be healthy and free of chemicals, certain artificial ingredients and additives, as well as too much salt, sugar, trans fats, cholesterol, and so on. More consumers are also actively avoiding environmentally unfriendly or unsustainable

ingredients. In addition to clean labels, attractive, easily identifiable, and recyclable packaging can make or break the success of a snack or treat. New packaging trends do suggest a move towards simpler, more elegant designs, however this is certainly not the case for all products and those targeted specifically at children tend to be bright and exciting for 'pester power'.

When it comes to marketing, new products that are clearly marked as such will attract shopper attention. Some shoppers will automatically try a product labelled 'new', and actively seek these out. Clearly indicated promotions and special offers always drive sales and are helpful for time-poor consumers who are rushing and who may miss these deals. Additionally, marketing products based on attributes like new or exotic flavours and health benefits can help entice consumers and drive purchases.

Snacks and treats for at-home entertaining

During the pandemic years people developed an interest in at-home entertaining. Although restaurants have opened without restrictions and dining out is again popular, the at-home experience can often be more affordable – particularly if alcohol consumption is involved – and it can be specifically tailored in a way some restaurant experiences cannot.

Upscaled snacks include gourmet and premium products, as well as those that introduce international flavours and products, including speciality crackers with grains, flavours of spice



or citrus; nuts with chilli and citrus flavours, and luxury savoury cracker packs. Merchandise these with dip options and complementary products. Consumers have a growing interest in Asian-inspired food, less common European offerings, and niche flavours from America.

Smaller portions, including bite-size and minis, are popular both from a mindful eating perspective and as part of tasting platters and at-home international experiences. There's something very appealing about mini snacks, such as mini burger sliders, samosas or pancakes. For those who can afford it, paying for quality and presentation is more than acceptable and these consumers will choose products that reflect both quality and care in terms of ingredients and production, packaging, and presentation.

Snacks and treats in a healthy lifestyle

Back in 2021 Ipsos (www.ipsos.com) noted that, "It is the sweet-toothed 25- 34-year-olds driving the growth" of the snacks category. This should come as no surprise. Consumer behaviour analyses over the last few years has pointed to the fact that consumers are beginning to look at mindful eating as a way of including their

favourite sweets, treats, and delicacies in their diets, without sacrificing their health. Instead of abstaining from all the fun things they used to enjoy, they now include them as part of a well thought out eating plan. Smaller portions, less frequent consumption, and guilt-free enjoyment are all part of this process that aims to make eating a physically and mentally healthy undertaking. We snack because we like it, and because it makes us happy. The trick for good health is to indulge mindfully.

Smaller snacks and packs

Stocking grown up snacks and treats in smaller sizes makes sense from both an affordability and a health/mindful snacking perspective. Aim for a good range of decadent or premium sweet treats and truly healthy snack options that offer great

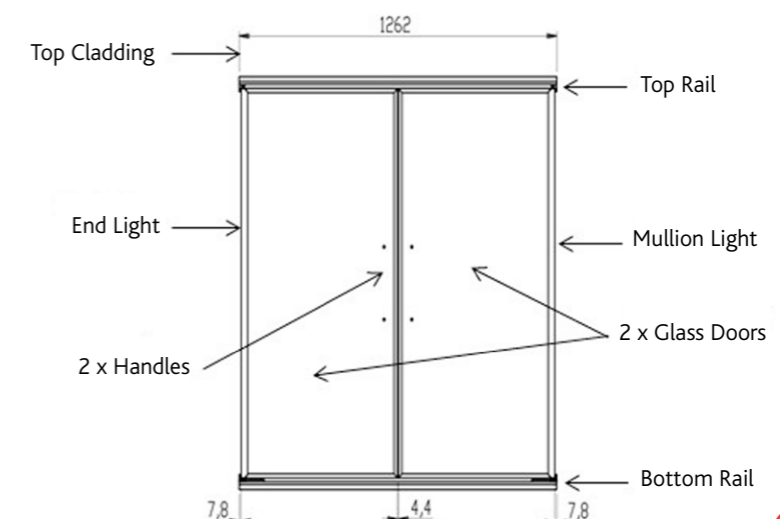
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Designed as a retrofit solution for existing Supermarket display cases, the Glacier Air Shield Glass Doors offer up to a 40% energy saving in an ever-increasing energy cost environment as well as improved cabinet temperatures and product benefits.



Features and Benefits

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- Heated option on our Standard Airshield Doors to suit coastal conditions.
- Integrated (full length) handle option.



Infinity / Infinity Integrate Glass Doors

The new Infinity Glass Door is designed with edge-to-edge glass and screen print border. This door offers increased visibility and a more modernised look and feel. Glacier has also launched their new Integrated Glass Door which incorporates a full length profiled handle.

Low Temp Eco Leaf (Energy Saving) Doors Aluminium Frames:

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- Natural 15 micron anodized or black textured powder coating (Coating to SABS standards).

Glass

- Safety toughened 4mm glass inside and outside standard on all doors. (Toughened to SABS standards).
- All Glass Doors are Argon Gas filled for superior insulation.
- Low temperature doors are fitted with a heated front glass and a clear rear glass, both safety toughened.

Normal Temp Doors Aluminium Frames:

- Door and heated Architrave
- Natural 15 micron anodized or black textured powder coating (Coating to SABS standards)
- There is a thermal break on the inside of the door frame.
- All architraves are fitted with anti-sweat heaters.

Glass

- Safety toughened 4mm glass inside and outside standard on all doors. (Toughened to SABS standards)
- All Glass Doors are Argon Gas filled for superior insulation.
- Normal temperature doors are fitted with Low emission front glass and a clear rear glass, both safety toughened.

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Energy Saving LED 22W, 6000K, LED Light fitted on the inside of the architrave in a closed polycarbonate light diffuser.

Lights (LED)

Energy Saving LED 22W, 6000K, LED Light fitted on the inside of the architrave in a closed polycarbonate light diffuser.



nutritional benefits as well as extras such as mood or immune boosting ingredients and added protein, minerals, or even vitamins. Bite-size bars fall into this segment and offer consumers a treat without overdoing it.

Global trends in snacks and treats

World Bakers (www.worldbakers.com) listed several upcoming trends for the European and American markets:

- **Seasonal bars.** Capitalising on seasonal flavours keeps things fresh and interesting, such as gingerbread and warmer spicier flavours for winter, and citrus and berry flavours for summer. And pumpkin pie- or birthday cake-flavoured protein bars may just catch on in the South African market!
- **Prebiotic bars for gut health.** Improving and maintaining gut health can attract consumers looking for healthier alternatives.
- **Sweet and salty combos.** Apparently Americans are really enjoying sweet and salty combination



when it comes to their snacks. Then again, some people put Smarties in their popcorn, so this could be more than a passing fad. According to www.bakingbusiness.com, Mars has a Sweet n Salty pretzel range that includes a Chocolate Fudge Pretzel

and a Caramel Pretzel, while British confectionery and snack firm Pladis Global's Flipz brand launched Flipz Clusterz at the 2022 Sweets and Snacks expo in Chicago. The product combines chocolate clusters with salted pretzel pieces and caramel in a sweet and salty flavour fest.

Vegan is growing. Vegan or plant-based snack options are growing. As consumer interest develops, so too does the R&D into new, innovative flavours and ingredients. TH Foods launched its Crunchmaster crackers at the 2022 Sweets and Snacks expo, which combine the savoury flavours of avocado toast into one vegan snack.



Limited edition international flavours. Pickle or mustard flavoured crisps, anyone? They're a Swiss favourite, and while the SA market might be smaller, limited editions often spur impulse purchases. Walkers Food in the UK launched two limited flavours to celebrate the late Queen's Platinum Jubilee in 2022, Spit-roast Pork & Apple Sauce and Baked Cheese & Sweet Honey, "which were launched in what Sensations calls its 'poshest-ever' marketing campaign."

Micro snacks. These frozen snacks that you can pop in the microwave (or airfryer) are pub- and restaurant-inspired food at more affordable prices. South Africa does a good line in mini pizzas, but there is a whole world of frozen snacks and desserts to be investigated and on which retailers and wholesalers can capitalise.

Gluten-free, sugar-free biscuit ranges. Niche and speciality diets are becoming more common, and snack and treat manufacturers are responding accordingly.

New twists to old favourites. Mint and Snickerdoodle are two new Oreo flavours that have recently launched in response to consumers looking for new flavours and experiences.



Non- high-fat-sugar-salt (HFSS) snacks. Mondelez UK announced last year that it is launching eight new non-HFSS products. The company says these are aimed at consumers who are choosing to snack mindfully and manage their overall diet.



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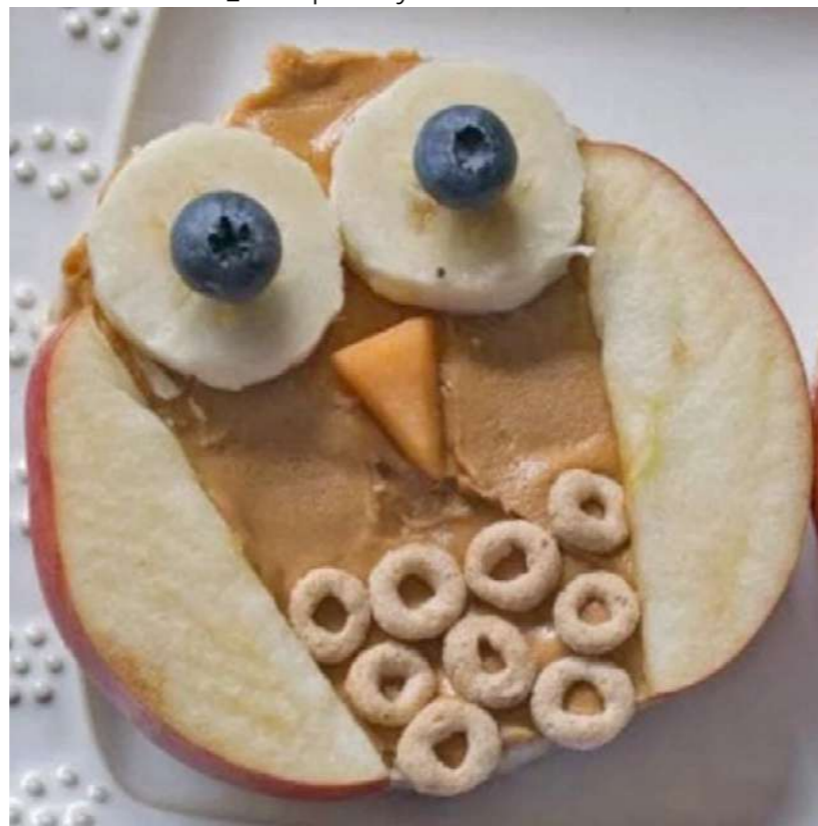
Back to School

As every parent or caregiver knows, this is a sub-category that offers so much scope. There is a fine line between healthy snacks to keep children fed, energised, alert, and healthy, and those tasty treats that make sports days fun and aftercare bearable. Firm favourites on the tasty treats side include mini chocolate bars, fruit-flavoured chewy sweets, sour candies and chews, soft gummies, marshmallows, and lollipops. It is important to remember that within this category, age plays a big role. Younger children may be allowed to eat sweet treats and snacks, but their needs will differ to those of older children. Softer, easier to eat sweets that don't pose a choking hazard and allergy-free treats are important to consider when managing your range.

When it comes to healthier snacks, fruit rolls spring to mind. An increasing number of consumers are looking for low or sugar-free options while also taking into consideration salt content, fat content, the preservatives used, and the type of sweetener, as well as colourants and other artificial ingredients and additives. Multicoloured fruit pieces made from fruit pulp, flavourings and colourants are certainly no longer acceptable to many health-conscious consumers (despite how much their children might enjoy these products).

Children are being exposed to international and exotic flavours from a much younger age and many have a tolerance or even a preference for spicy, flavourful products with bold, interesting, or unique flavour profiles. Sweet, salty, and sour remain choices for children of any age, and interesting fruit

Owl rice cake snacks_www.oprahdaily.com/life/food



flavours such as Marvellous Gummy Watermelon Flavoured Slices offer nice alternatives.

Pack size is a purchase driver in the Back to School Snacks & Treats segment. Individually wrapped small portions that can be packed in a lunch box or backpack and that can be consumed in one sitting are ideal. Often, bulk buying these individual products makes economic sense. In some instances, however, individually wrapped items can work out far costlier than bigger sizes simply due to the cost of producing and manufacturing that packaging. In this case, cross-marketing opportunities with items such as plastic containers, small Ziplock snack pouches, and even wax paper wrap are a good idea.

Convenience, nutrition, and price are the driving factors of back-to-school purchases. Take note of local public and private school dates and plan

your sales and specials accordingly. Remember to start your sales events early enough to catch bulk buyers and extend them long enough to suit those shoppers who rush in last minute.

In summary: Snacks and treats are alive and well

Despite the higher cost of living, more pressure on grocery budgets, and increased retail prices, snacking is alive and well. The 2022 State of Snacking Report from Mondelez International shows that snacking remains preferred over regular meals and are seen by consumers as 'affordable and necessary indulgences'. Convenience, portability, health, and nutrition are driving innovation, while self-reward, meal replacement, social engagement and comfort are four of the primary reasons for snacking. With its capacity to evolve and grow to meet the needs of consumers, snacks and treats offer excellent opportunities for retailers and wholesalers. **SR**

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Retail trends 2023



Mike Smollan
Chief Growth and
Innovation Officer
Smollan

“Chatting to industry experts at the end of last year at the GIBS SA Retail Industry Conference – the general consensus was that innovation, flexibility and agility are in the driver’s seat this year. It’s about finding the balance in delivering value vs profitability as well as sourcing locally, bedding down omnichannel strategies and sharpening pencils to prepare for the ‘Amazon Effect’. Building meaningful customer relationships is a chart topper which includes amping up the shopping experience as well as finding the sweet spot in the split between instore and online,” said Mike Smollan, Chief Growth and Innovation Officer, Smollan.

2022 was indeed a transformative year in retail cementing the belief that ecommerce and omnichannel are the future (www.intelligence.com). That said, as we look ahead amidst the pressures of rising inflation and supply chain disruption, market players must figure out new and exciting ways to allow consumers to browse, buy and save – to meet them wherever, whenever, and however they prefer to shop.

From a global perspective the economic outlook for 2023 looks rocky, as reported in a recent Forbes article, with the retail industry traditionally being

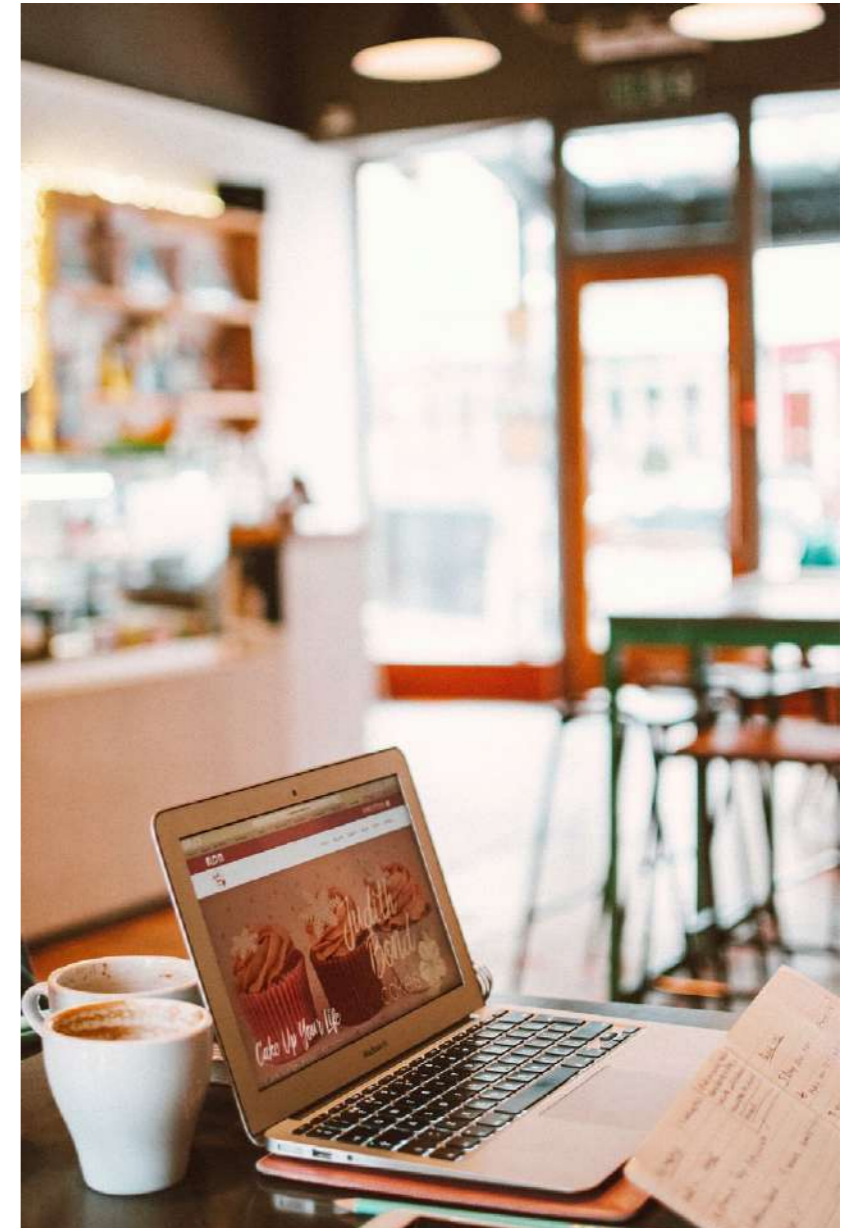
Top five trends tips

www.intelligence.com

- Social commerce will take the front seat as influencer marketing becomes one of the more sought-after marketing channels.
- Personalised experiences will go a long way as this is no longer considered to be ‘the cherry on the top’ of a shopping experience but instead, a vital component.
- Reviews and ratings will gain importance as seen in a recent LinkedIn poll, that found 41% of respondents specifying that consumer reviews and ratings are the most important factor when making purchases online.
- The circular economy will gain momentum stemming from today’s socially conscious customer psyche, valuing increased sustainability efforts from brands.
- Private Label brands will continue to grow offering on-trend, affordable, competitive options.

among the first to feel the bumps in the road. Closer to home, by 2025 the value of ecommerce transactions in SA is expected to reach R225bn as reported by IOL with the market itself estimated to reach R400bn the same year. www.mastercardservices.com monitoring the sweeping

Image courtesy of Lisa Fotios, Pexels



shifts to digital channels in Africa, attributed growth in this sector to South Africa’s ecommerce market becoming noticeable stronger each year. While in the bigger picture sub-Saharan context, Kenya leads the charge around mobile commerce.

Zeyad Davids, Africa Risk Advisory at Deloitte was reported in BizCommunity as saying that retailers





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and brands must lean into emerging consumer trends in 2023 to decouple business progress from economic constraints. He touched on the following key considerations –

- The importance of the buying power of Gen Z within the next ten years, particularly in Africa which has the youngest population in the world.

- Being open to collaborations and partnerships which will allow the industry to swiftly and economically, take advantage of emerging market opportunities e.g., Pick n Pay augmenting its online grocery delivery, within the Mr D Food delivery app.
- Green is becoming the new black as traceability and circularity will become imperative as consumers will expect businesses to be hyper-aware of the environmental and social impact across their value chains.

So too, knocking loudly on our door in Q1 is the launch of Amazon in SA with www.ventureburn.com slicing and dicing how the market should

ready itself, suggesting that businesses should perhaps not focus exclusively on the competitive angle but instead work with Amazon, instead of against them. This could take the form of selling product through their own Amazon-facilitated stores which will make online businesses more competitive as well as prioritising customer service, preparing for unexpected scenarios, getting customers to 'shop local' and improving their supply chain.

"Amazon is going to force the small online business sector to up its game. This isn't a bad thing, as customers are ripe for online shopping and the ecommerce environment holds big potential for our local retailers," said Dov Girnun, Merchant Bank. **SR**



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How retailers can win the innovation game

Technology innovation is key to success in the highly competitive retail world. Learning how to work with start-ups is a must-have capability for retailers wishing to create smart ecosystems.

One of the most burning questions in retail is how to access the best innovations, and successfully use them. Retail's basic premise – selling goods to customers – is quite simple, and the barriers to entry are theoretically rather low. As a result, retailers have been enthusiastic innovators in the perpetual drive to keep abreast of customer demands and stay one step ahead of competitors.

Much of the innovation that occurs in retail revolves around technology. E-commerce, digitalised supply chains, loyalty programmes and stock management systems are some of the areas where innovation continues to help retailers push the boundaries of customer service while improving profitability through streamlining business processes and exploiting the insights contained in their data.

The importance of technology in retail is underlined by escalating spending. Gartner predicted retailers' technology spend to reach \$218.5 billion in 2021, and then continue growing by a further 3% in 2022. The sector's spending on artificial intelligence alone was expected to reach \$7.3 billion by 2022.

Two enduring challenges continue to keep retailers up at night, and thus are a focus of tech-



Image courtesy of Pixabay, Pexels

nological innovation: how to ensure that shelves are always fully stocked (with the right items at the right price), and how to make payments easier and more convenient for customers, be it at a physical point of sale or on an e-commerce site or app.

Innovation related to these areas – and others, of course – is occurring at breakneck speed. For retailers, therefore, the question is how to ensure access to the best innovations and bring

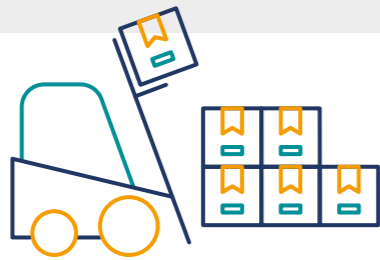
them to commercial viability. A key dynamic here is that it is the larger retailers that typically have the investment clout to finance innovation, while the inventions themselves are typically created by small firms, often start-ups.

It's vital to understand this dynamic because it holds the key to turning a promising technology into a gold-plated competitive advantage.

The challenge is that

there is literally a chasm between the way a large corporate retailer and a start-up operate. For the corporate, it's all about long planning and budgeting cycles, with multiple stakeholders from the board and exco down having to be brought on board; for the start-up, it's all about speed. The latter is typically short of cash and long on ambition, eager to get the solution perfected and working.

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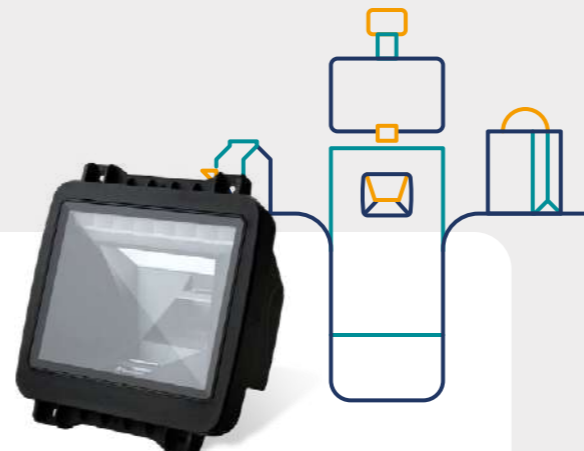
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Both need each other, and both therefore need to understand how to work with the other. For corporates, this is essential in order to access the new ideas and technologies that will keep them ahead of the pack; for the innovator start-ups, it's all about access to the financial resources to keep on developing and testing, along with a route to market.

Making the right choice

In my experience and based on my observations of the industry in South Africa, there are basically two models that corporates use to access the innovation they need, once the appropriate start-up has been identified. The first is simply to acquire the company and its development team. This is the approach followed, for example, by Pick n Pay, which simply bought out Bottles, its online shopping partner.

The second option is to enter into a strategic partnership with the start-up – or to acquire it – but keep it as a separate company, insulated from the slow, bureaucratic processes of the parent. I believe this model offers the best chance of success and offer Checkers X as an example – its back end is powered by Zulzi, which remains a separate company, and its growth has been nothing short of phenomenal. The founder, Vutlharhi 'Donald' Valoyi, has been quoted confirming my essential point: "Big corporations must be more flexible and be open to work with start-ups and allow them freedom to continue to grow."



Image courtesy of Anete Lusina, Pexels

Success factors

Given the inherent and profound cultural differences between them, both parties need to play their part in making the relationship work. Start-ups need to understand the competitive landscape very well – and what their unique value proposition is. Corporates see hundreds of good ideas a month; it's important to stand out.

Start-ups also need to understand that corporates do not buy in a hurry, and that the sales cycle is typically one to three years long.

A major disconnect is that start-ups often imagine that the corporate will provide the cash for them to realise their idea. Nothing could be further from the truth – corporates want something real to buy. However, that doesn't stop a smart start-up from validating its idea with corporates, and then keeping them in the loop as the technology is built. In this way, the start-up builds a relationship that might ultimately result in a sale.

Conversely, corporates need to understand the challenges that start-ups face, and be available to offer comment as needed during the development process. They should make arrangements to be able to close any deal and make the payment rapidly – start-ups do not have the resources for long negotiation and payment cycles.

The important point is that corporates need to establish how to work with start-ups in order to access the innovation they need. To do that, they need to look at the relationship as a strategic one, not a procurement transaction. **SR**

Ajay Lalu, co-founder and director of Consumption Information Real Time (CIRT) and Q-HOP.



Ajay Lalu is a serial entrepreneur who has founded several successful companies including the Black Lite Group. He has showcased CIRT's innovative solutions at the world's largest IoT Conference, IoT Solutions World Congress – Barcelona, 2019. He is a guest lecturer at the Gordon School of Business (GIBS) on digital innovation and strategy. Ajay is greatly involved in initiatives aimed at developing SMMEs and tech start-ups.

Engen Computer School graduates start 2023 with new skills & renewed hope

The Engen Computer School has capped another 70 graduates from South Durban whose basic computer skills qualification boosts their chances of finding employment.

A graduation ceremony took place on 13 December at the Engen sponsored school, which has been transforming lives in South Durban for 13 years and has to date capped 2 670 graduates.

In his speech, proud graduate Ismael Njock thanked Engen for empowering and uplifting the community and opening the doors of employment.

“This has been a once in a lifetime opportunity,” said Njock. “Four months ago, most of us could not operate a computer at all and today we are all computer literate thanks to Engen and Added Academy.”

Course convener and training director, Sheryl Casalis confirmed that five learners secured new jobs before even completing the course thanks to their new computer literacy skills.

Zekethelo Shkosana, Chad Louw and Luyabong Ntyathi secured positions as cashiers which required them to be computer literate.

Pindile Gumede secured a position as a Teacher Assistant at Nselele Primary School and Sindisiwe Ngubelanga secured a Teacher Assistant position at Khalipha Primary School.



Alumni Taeton Fynn managed to secure a learnership in payroll. She said that Excel, Power Point and Outlook skills were exactly the skills she needed for her new role.

Well-known in the local community and frequently boasting a waiting list, Engen Computer School applicants must be unemployed school-leavers who reside in South Durban who are eager to upskill themselves.

Excited by her new role, alumni Taeton Fynn contacted the Engen Computer School to share her story. “I completed my course in 2022 and managed to secure a learnership in payroll. The Engen Computer classes had a huge role to play in my being accepted. Excel, Power Point and Outlook skills were exactly the skills I needed for my new role,” commented Fynn.

“Thanks to the course I was equipped to do my learnership and saw first-hand how important it is to be computer literate in today’s work environment. I cannot thank Engen enough for the help and knowledge they have given me. Without them I would not be in the position I am in now,” she added.

The Engen Computer School offers members of the South Durban community

free introductory-level computer skills training, which covers 8-unit standards of the National Certificate: Information Technology: End User Computing.

Casalis said she was pleased to see how many graduates had found job opportunities over the years or been accepted onto Learnerships as a direct result of their training at the Engen Community Computer School.

“The Engen Community Computer School training makes a tangible difference to the attitudes of the people who attend the course. Many arrive feeling hopeless and not believing



The Engen Computer School has capped another 70 graduates from South Durban.

that they have the ability to learn how to use a computer;” she added.

The latest batch of graduates, who are all excited to put their newly acquired computer skills into practice, were congratulated by Sykry Hassim, the General Manager of the Engen Refinery. “Our 70 latest graduates all deserve a big round of applause for their effort,” commented Hassim. “At Engen, we believe that continuous community upskilling will ensure resilience and readiness in today’s everchanging and demanding new digital world.”

While matric and age criteria are not prescribed, most students who attend the school are aged from 20 to 40.

“The Engen Computer School has a proud history of giving graduates the knowledge and confidence to go out and seek jobs that would otherwise have been beyond their reach,” continued Hassim.

“As a caring and responsible company, Engen is humbled to play a small role in positively changing lives of community members who reside in an area close to the Engen Refinery.”

As a company, Engen champions nine of the UN’s Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), including SDG 4 – Quality Education, which aims to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all.

Engen is also a long-time supporter of education in Durban through its Engen Maths and Science

Schools (EMSS), which seek to address South Africa’s key skills shortages in the engineering and technical fields, thereby contributing to the economic growth and transformation of the country. In KwaZulu-Natal, the EMSS programme offers additional Maths, Science and English tuition every Saturday to under-privileged learners from grades 10-12 at Fairvale High School, Ganges High School, Hillview High School and Umlazi Commercial High School.

Operating for over 30 years, the EMSSs measure of success is an annual matric class that consistently surpasses the national average of successful learners and learners who matriculate with a bachelor’s pass. **SR**

Pick n Pay removes over 3 500 tonnes of salt and sugar from private label foods over five years

Pick n Pay has taken significant steps to improve the health of South Africans by removing over 3 500 tonnes of salt and sugar from its private label range over the last five years.

Consumers the world over – and South Africans are no exception – are increasingly eating more processed foods, resulting in diets that are low in nutritional quality but high in energy, sugars, salt and fats.

According to the World Health Organization, reducing sugar, salt and fat intake is critical to preventing and controlling non-communicable diseases (NCDs), which are on the rise globally. In South Africa, NCD Countdown 2030 reports that 51.9% of deaths are caused by NCDs, with diabetes, heart disease and stroke being the most common culprits.

In 2017, Pick n Pay set about improving the nutrition credentials of their private label range with a focus on reducing sodium and sugar content. This redevelopment has resulted in over 1 000 tonnes of salt and 2 500 tonnes of sugar being removed from the product range since then. Sugar content has been reduced by over a third in various products, including carbonated beverages, cordials, flavoured waters, cereal bars, instant oats, kids breakfast cereals, bakery products and flavoured yoghurt.



“We want to equip our customers with products and product information to take better control of their health,” says Juliet Fearnhead, Pick n Pay dietitian. “Through this substantial reduction in salt and sugar, we’re proud to have made such a significant impact on the health of our customers by promoting healthier food and choices.”

“So many of our customers are looking for simple and inexpensive health solutions. There is a perception that healthy eating is inaccessible for many. That’s why we’re going the extra mile to make healthy choices more affordable and accessible for all South Africans. Whether it’s through our free health hotline – where customers can get personalised nutritional

guidance – or our on-pack nutrition and Guideline Daily Amount (GDA) labelling, we’re committed to supporting our customers in their healthy aspirations,” says Fearnhead.

Pick n Pay launched its Live Well brand in 2019. It has quickly diversified to meet the growing demand for healthier food. It now caters to various dietary needs such as plant-based, gluten-free, low carb and organic. There are now over 450 Live Well products.

To further promote healthy eating, Pick n Pay has also enriched over 40 lines of its own brand cereals and porridges to help boost the intake of key vitamins and minerals. Additionally, it introduced a range of healthier food options designed specifically for children, with a focus on minimising salt and sugar content and using only natural colourants. The retailer also distributes nutrition education posters and curriculum-aligned worksheets to over 3,300 schools in rural and urban areas throughout South Africa through its Pick n Pay School Club platform.

South Africans can access any of these initiatives by reaching out to the Pick n Pay registered dietitian at healthhotline@pnp.co.za or by visiting www.pnp.co.za/livewell/health-resources which hosts various downloadable health leaflets for managing multiple health conditions. **SR**



Ryan Mer, CEO at eftsure Africa, a Know Your Payee™ (KYP) platform provider.

Fraud trends every CFO should know

PwC's Global Economic Crime and Fraud Survey 2022 revealed that 46% of organisations have experienced fraud, corruption, or other economic crimes in the last 24 months. Ryan Mer, CEO of eftsure Africa, a Know Your Payee™ (KYP) platform provider, gives a rundown of what to look out for.

Fraud protection is no longer optional

It's hard to believe today, but just a few years ago, even large organisations didn't have payment fraud protection in place. One of our clients, a listed company, had an ongoing issue with payment fraud totalling over R3 million in losses in the year prior to adopting eftsure. They haven't lost a cent to payment fraud since.

Businesses are taking the threat of payment fraud a lot more seriously than they did even two years ago. They're acknowledging that the payment fraud risk is there and that it's ubiquitous – not only large corporations and banks are being targeted anymore. They know they have to be protected in some way or another.



It's easier to hack people than to hack machines

Business email compromise (BEC) is a massive problem, even with protection in place.

“ As threat protection becomes more sophisticated, fraudsters are targeting people to circumvent these digital security measures. There are numerous examples of bad actors manipulating various levels of staff. ”

Although it may be tempting to believe only gullible individuals fall for scams, but criminals are often profes-

sional, persuasive and are well-trained in using human weakness, as well as individual and company information to their advantage.

Here's a likely scenario: A client writes an online review of your company. A fraudster sees this and now knows this person or company is your client and that you would expect emails from them.

They create a similar-looking fake email address, paste the client's logo in their email, attach a malicious document, and send it

to your company asking for clarification on the 'attached invoice'.

“ It takes one person on your team to open that attachment without double checking the sender's details, and your company is compromised. This happens so easily when financial teams are under tremendous time pressure. ”

Email security really does help, but personnel training is crucial. Otherwise, it's like having the best security at your house, from beams to alarms to fencing, and letting someone through the gate without checking their credentials.

Manual processes are dangerous

The surprising result of increased digital fraud and BEC is that many companies opt to solve this problem by introducing more manual processes. They're adding another person as a point of contact or another manager to oversee crucial checks.

“ The problem is that it's still a manual process, reliant on a person that can be manipulated, whether unwittingly or not. It's a case of rearranging the deck chairs on the Titanic. Digital threats must instead be fought with digital solutions. ”

Another common mistake is to automate some processes but keep certain steps in that process manual. And 'manual' doesn't necessarily mean physical documents, but can involve adding extra



steps to a process that could easily be automated. Onboarding new suppliers or clients is a great example: Many businesses have a platform for this, but then request certain documents via email.

That's an invitation for an interception, impersonation or malicious attachment. Or they'll take data from the platform and manually perform processes and procedures on it, adding in a human element and the potential for mistakes. That's not only counter-productive from a security perspective, but also a business perspective.

Luckily, we're seeing the pendulum start to swing in the other direction. CFOs and CEOs, the executives responsible for processes, controls, operations and systems in the organisation, are

starting to pay more attention to digitisation and automation. There's a better understanding of these risks and benefits in general. After all, there is a lot of responsibility that sits on the shoulders of those responsible for outgoing payments in an organisation.

“ Onboarding, for example, is one of the first experiences someone will have with your company and should be as seamless and simple as possible. By using a platform that can digitise and automate the process, you can speed up the onboarding journey and collect all documents upfront, saving time for all parties involved. ”

“ A digitised and controlled internal approval process that is automatically part of internal procedures increases business efficiencies and reduces wastage of productive time and energy that should be used to further the company, as manual labour is greatly reduced. ”

Don't just upgrade ... integrate

The next step is to not only automate, but to integrate. Though our solution can be used as a standalone system, we're seeing more clients integrating it into their existing systems.

A Software as a Service (SaaS) provider like eftsure can help enhance processes and limit payment fraud risks by providing an integrated onboarding, verified master data management and payment screening solution that cross-references the payments an organisation is about to release with a database of verified bank account details.

“ This can be integrated into anything from ERP and accounting systems to sales and customer relationship management systems. The platform alerts you to any potentially compromised payment details, at point of payment, allowing you to deal with the problem before the flow of funds has occurred. ”

The CFOs who are ahead of the digitisation curve, or further along in the process, are now looking for more integrated solutions. This cuts down on the number of steps in each process, and the time spent on each step – improving security while improving the bottom line.

Even if they're making these decisions for the sake of efficiency rather than security, it's still a win on both fronts and at the end of the day, which stakeholder, with that huge responsibility of releasing payments on behalf of a company wouldn't want peace of mind before releasing payments? **SR**



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