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ISSUE 9, 2023 [www.supermarket.co.za](http://www.supermarket.co.za)

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Stokvels  
Forging  
partnerships

Commercial refrigeration

Local & global trends,  
insights & innovations

SA Cold &  
Alcoholic Beverages

Key trends  
& opportunities





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## FEATURES



Image courtesy of Simon Berger, Pexels

### Commercial refrigeration

Local & global trends, insights & innovations. Keeping abreast of international innovations, adapting these to local conditions, and recognising the need to meet global environmental standards even before they are introduced in South Africa are just some of the ways local refrigeration solutions experts are ensuring their customers keep cool under pressure.



Image by <https://wellingtonwines.com/>

### SA's Cold & Alcoholic Beverage market

Lockdowns and slow-downs have had a lasting effect on consumer

confidence and have also changed consumer behaviour in many ways. Persistent load shedding in South Africa has had a devastating effect on the beverages market, from production to storage and distribution. However, many companies have found innovative ways to mitigate this impact, and even use the crisis to their advantage.

# Contents

Cover image courtesy of <https://freor.com/>

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### The significance of stokvels

Stokvels are deeply rooted and trusted in communities. By understanding and catering to stokvel members' specific needs and preferences, retailers can gain a competitive edge in a dynamic market. However, far too many

retailers in the country are not exposed to stokvels and simply don't consider the possibilities and opportunities forging partnerships with them.



Image: <https://brandthechange.org/>

## COLUMNS

### Delight your customers

What are the advantages of doing the opposite of everyone else? Aki Kalliatakis points out that we live in a really noisy and overwhelming world – and seemingly just about every product is a commodity – so one way to get attention is through differentiating your business from the pack.

## STOREWATCH

### Waitrose ... the British brand

Waitrose has earned a global reputation, with superior quality products at affordable prices – its model stands out for consistency and considerable attention on private labels. Waitrose, with a turnover of around 7 billion pounds (R168 billion) has a market share in the UK that remains below 5%. What stands out most is the involvement of the employees within the company.

## NEWS

### Fintech solutions for cash management

South African retailers are looking towards financial technology companies (fintechs) to enable them to gain better visibility into cash flow, improve liquidity, and automate business processes.

### Positive retail: Adapting & thriving

As we ease into Spring, the retail pendulum is shifting as an optimistic breeze starts blowing in South Africa.

### Engage shoppers in forest protection

The Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) is holding its annual Forest Week from 23–29 September 2023.

### SAPRO Recycled Plastic Product Awards

Sani-touch was a finalist for its plastic bird feeders made from recycled plastic waste.

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# From Prep to Prosperity

## Retailers gear up for an intense three-month sprint!



Helen Maister

As the retail industry prepares for an active three months, it's essential to maintain focus and keep your energy levels up. This edition holds the key to three vital subjects that will greatly influence your success. To begin, we delve into the world of refrigeration.

It's more than just keeping items cool ... it's an intricate dance of keeping them fresh. From the crunch of fresh fruits and vegetables to the tender texture of dairy and meat, every degree of temperature plays a crucial role.

Shifting our attention to chilled and alcoholic beverages, we uncover an indispensable aspect of any joyful gathering. Whether it's the effervescence of beers or the nuanced richness of wines, or under-



Image by <https://wellingtonwines.com/>

standing how to properly store and present them can elevate the entire experience.

We examine the dynamic tapestry of Stokvel, a uniquely South African tradition that extends far beyond warm-hearted community connections. It is a substantial facet of the retail industry that

retailers must recognise and approach with a sense of gravity. At its core, Stokvel embodies the spirit of mutual financial support, offering a powerful economic force that binds communities and drives commerce. Through shared purpose, individuals join forces to uplift one another, creating a robust network that influences the economic landscape in profound ways.

These articles serve as signposts, providing you with practical advice and strategic insights for this bustling season. With the right knowledge and thoughtful planning, you'll not only navigate through the whirlwind of activity but also seize the abundant opportunities that await you. Remember, we're here to support you every step of the way. Embrace these insights and forge ahead with confidence! Your success in these upcoming months is our collective goal.

*Helen Maister*

Helen Maister



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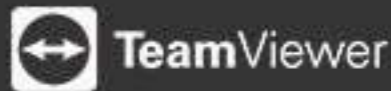
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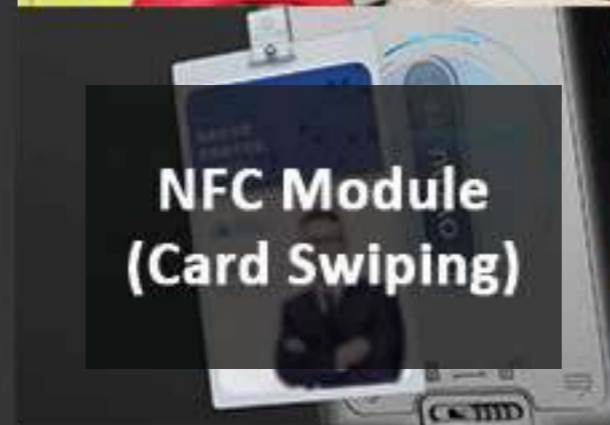
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# Do the opposite of everyone else

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

Aki Kalliatakis  
aki@leadershiplaunchpad.co.za



Image courtesy of <https://brandthechange.org/>



“Mimicking the herd invites regression to the mean.”  
Charlie Munger

Image courtesy of [www.fondsprofessionell.de/](http://www.fondsprofessionell.de/)

Just before Black Friday, they asked customers to do exactly the opposite of what any clothing retailer would want them to do. They showed a photo of their jacket and said ...  
**“Don't buy this jacket.”**



“Wear it until it wears out.” The fashion industry has always felt like a perpetual case of the Emperor's New Clothes – we need it because they tell us we need it.

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

Picture this ... It's late October, and you open your daily newspaper, get onto your news feed, or open your emails, and you are bombarded with hundreds of advertisements from thousands of brands desperate to sell you something. Everyone screams out their offer and tries to persuade you to buy from them because you will never get a deal like this again.

And then suddenly you pause with a bewildered look on your face. What caught your eye? One of the craziest – and most successful advertising campaigns was launched in 2011 by responsible clothing brand, Patagonia.

That would certainly grab your attention, right? And it also did for millions of consumers around the world. Most people were intrigued and stopped to actually read the commercial, discovering that – true to their values of reducing the environmental impact on the world – they discouraged customers from the frenzied buying that everyone else was encouraging. Since the first day when founder Yvon Chouinard, an American rock climber, environmentalist,

philanthropist and outdoor industry businessman started the company, it's been famous for its commitment to protecting the environment and that they understood that fast fashion and consumerism had a huge impact on the natural

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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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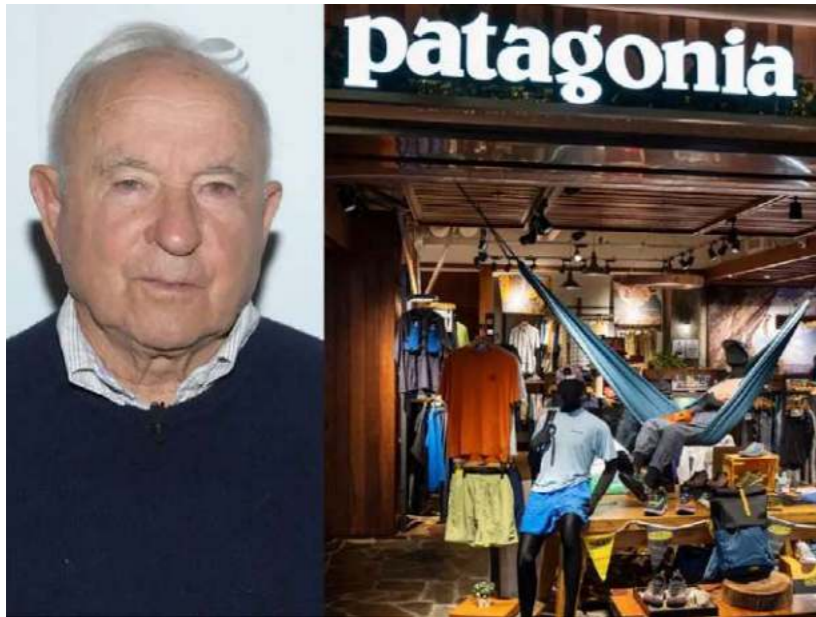
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world. The company encouraged people to recycle, reuse and repair clothes.



Patagonia founder Yvon Chouinard has had a frugal lifestyle since his early days as a climber and surfer. [www.businessinsider.com](http://www.businessinsider.com)

Although he was extremely wealthy, Chouinard gave up his billionaire status after giving the company to a trust and a nonprofit in September 2022.

The campaign has become an iconic marketing success and it strengthened the positioning of Patagonia as a company that prioritises its value through action, not platitudes. Just about every person who saw that advertisement in October 2011 (and every October since then), has completely forgotten all the ads they saw on that Black Friday, but surprisingly remembered Patagonia's and told it to their all their connections. And ironically, even though the headline said, "Don't buy," Patagonia's sales rocketed by around 30%.



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

How can we explain this situation? For a start, one needs to remember that for every trend that we see in the world, there is equally a counter-trend that is supported by other consumers and groups. But in the case of Patagonia, their bold campaign became a real problem for their competitors – because, when our attention is attracted to something that's so conspicuous, be it a product, a quirky characteristic, or an event, we tend to ignore the less prominent but more relevant ones.

### Brand Salience

The degree to which your brand is thought of or noticed. Strong brands have high Brand Salience and weak brands have little or none.

In terms of behavioural psychology, the principle that applied is often called "the tyranny of the salient." Salience is when something unusual jumps out at you – and becomes more noticeable – because it's different. It doesn't fit in with the pattern we expect. It's when you see a bowl of green apples with one red one inside. It's when

“ The fast fashion industry has become one of the most wasteful consumer industries in the world. ” <https://brandthechange.org/>



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



you go to a party and everyone is wearing the same colours, except one rebel. It's when a highly unpredictable and unexpected events occur. We all logically know that you are more than 1 200 times safer flying in a 'plane than driving, but people are more afraid of flying than driving because 'plane crashes are more salient.



In business it's sometimes called the 'black swan event'. Often they are negative (like the market crash of 2008, or Covid), but sometimes they are also very positive for the business. Some famous examples of disruptors who took unconventional and unexpected approaches are Tesla, Airbnb, UBER, Netflix and Warby Parker (which sells spectacles online).

So how can you take advantage of the salience bias? Here are some thoughts ...

- If you take this thinking one step further, can you solve hidden problems and frustrations that customers have? In marketing we like to use the term 'unmet needs and wants', and they are usually obvious. (Indeed, your competitors probably chase these as well as you do, and for customers they are safe and comfortable – but not inspiring.) So, what can you do to reverse this? Can



### Black Swan

An unpredictable event that is beyond what is normally expected of a situation and has potentially severe consequences.  
[www.investopedia.com/Michela Buttignol](http://www.investopedia.com/Michela Buttignol)

you fulfil 'un-needs' or needs that customers themselves cannot express, or that are hidden? Many of the examples above are exactly that – we didn't know we needed them until they were there and now, like air fryers, we ask, "How did I ever do without this before?" There's no going back.

- But there are also obvious problems that exist in plain sight. One of my favourite adverts ever was for Volkswagen. It showed some really horrible freezing weather and a snowplough in the background. The byline was, "Have you ever wondered how the snowplough driver drives to the snowplough?" Incredibly powerful insight. (Of course, VW really messed this up later in the USA by refusing for decades to include cupholders in their vehicles. If you know anything about Americans, it's that they love to eat and drink in their cars. If you know anything about Germans, it's that their cars are temples of technology, and they would never allow anyone to eat inside theirs. Talk about not being in touch with your customers – and it cost them terribly in terms of market share.)

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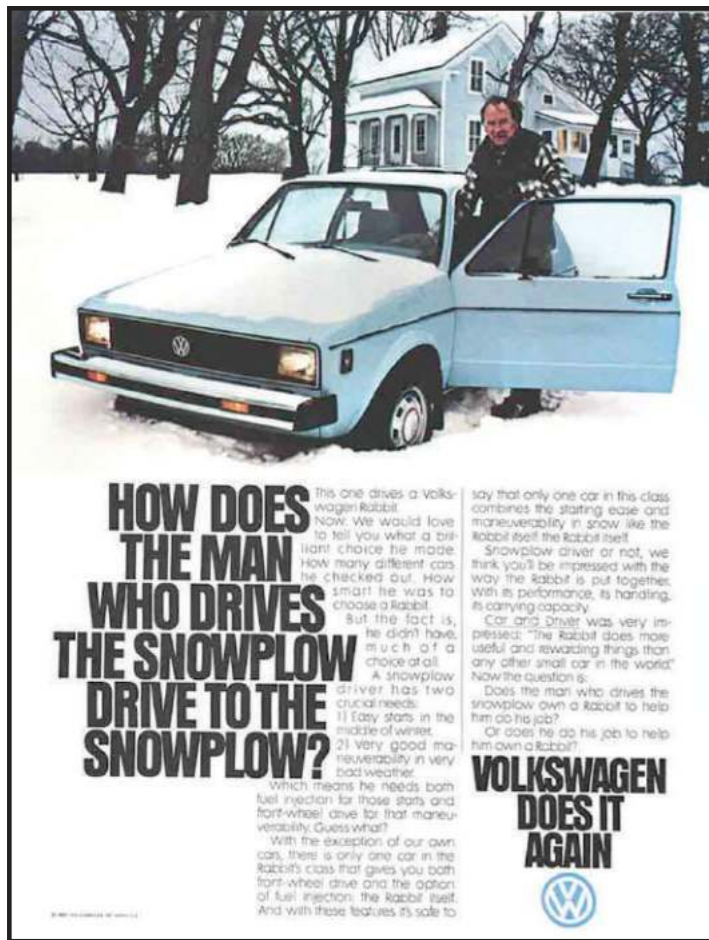


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- What can you do to be different, to buck the trends, especially with Black Friday and the Christmas celebrations coming up? But don't look only at your products and pricing. What else impacts on your customers' experiences?

We live in a really noisy and overwhelming world – and seemingly just about every product is a commodity – so the only way to get attention is through differentiating your business from the pack. There are dozens of possibilities, and you can probably think of plenty of innovative ideas that will have an impact, make you unforgettable, and help you to distinguish your business from all of the others.

It doesn't have to cost you anything. If you focus only on the shiny traits and features, you'll definitely go off-track. A Ferrari is impressive ... until you find out that it costs a fortune to store it, to insure it and to maintain it. And, while it may impress some people, it is also looked upon with disdain by others, so the owner loses credibility.

Customer value is created in the human mind, not in the factory and definitely not in spreadsheets. But it does require a bit of courage to try something new. **SR**



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### Who are we?

A trusted source of retail information for over 65 years, our magazine informs and empowers retail business owners to grow whilst tackling current industry topics.

### How can we help you?

We connect FMCG brands, and Equipment and Service suppliers to retail decision makers around South Africa. Elevate your brand with our wide variety of digital offerings.

# Cool customer

## Local & global trends, insights & innovations in commercial refrigeration

**W**hen it comes to refrigeration, local retailers and wholesalers can rest assured that South African manufacturers and resellers are at the top of their game. Keeping abreast of international innovations, adapting these to local conditions, and recognising the need to meet global environmental standards even before they are introduced in South Africa are just some of the ways local refrigeration solutions experts are ensuring their customers keep cool under pressure.

Staycold International Sales Director Sebastian Hills, and Scott Messenger, Sales and Marketing Director at Concord Retail Solutions, share some valuable insights into the local market, touching on trends, innovations, and new tech that will impact the South African refrigeration industry.

**Background and context:** Staycold units are manufactured locally, to exacting specifications, and energy efficiency as well as a reduced environmental impact are a core company philosophy. Concord Retail Solutions specialises in local and imported products that are designed to international standards, coupled with the latest trends and advancement in technology. Both companies are committed to improving energy efficiency and sustainability in the commercial refrigeration sector.



Image courtesy of Simon Berger, Pexels

### Innovations and new tech

**Q: What innovations and new developments have occurred in the local and global refrigeration industry over the last few years?**

The recent move to HC (hydrocarbon) refrigerant gas solutions has been a significant innovation in the world of refrigeration. The gas itself is far more

environmentally friendly than its predecessor, but the components that need to be used within the unit are also substantially more efficient than previous components, making for a far superior product. Hills says, "The fan motors are a major point – as HC gas is flammable, the use of old tech shaded pole fans has now been replaced

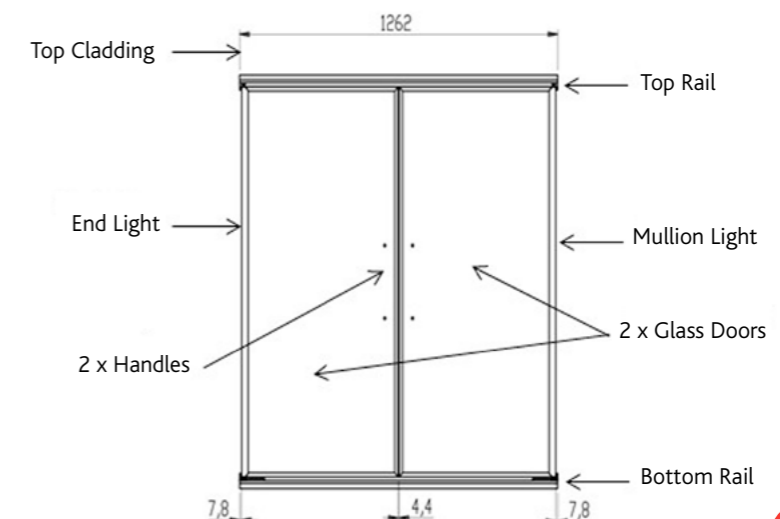
## Close The Case

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

- Reduced energy consumption.
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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:

- Heated Door and Architrave
- 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.

#### Lights (LED)

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.



by sparkless EC (electronically commutated) fans which offer significant energy savings (up to 70%) compared to shaded pole fans.” An EC motor combines the best of both AC and DC voltages.

Hills says that overall, making a cabinet as efficient as possible is key to reducing its consumption, and as the cornerstone of refrigeration is the removal of heat, technology that prevents that heat from entering the cabinet in the first place is as much of a priority as the mechanics of how that heat is removed by an efficient heat pump.

“This is where factors such as good insulation – such as environmentally friendly blowing agents like EcoMate in the polyurethane mixture – comes into play. Equally as important in a display cooler is the glass itself, as up to 80% of the heat ingress into a display cooler is via the glass door. This is why we use Low-E (low thermal emissivity) glass as standard in our units. Similar to the technology used on visors used by astronauts, the Low-E coating reflects away some of the heat radiation that would normally travel through the glass into the case.”

For Concord’s Messenger, their imported European-made Fricon self-contained freezers represent a groundbreaking stride in redefining energy-efficient products. He says, “These freezers herald a new era of sustainable refrigeration. Their energy efficiency, synergy with solar power, potential for energy and cost savings, user-friendly operation, and adaptability for retrofitting underscore their position as pioneers in the field.”

Image courtesy of  
www.facilitiesnet.com/



Image courtesy of www.aescontrols.co.uk/

**Q: We’ve seen global companies talk a lot about energy management. How does that affect the local market?**

Energy management is another area that has seen impressive improvements and new developments in terms of technology, software, and hardware. Hills says, “Control of the refrigeration system, as well as the functionality of the machine itself, is achieved using an EMD (Energy Management Device). We use the Danfoss ERC112d EMDs in our units, and these offer full digital control of the

refrigeration system, as well as the lighting and fans, with clever functionality that reduces each unit’s use of energy during off peak times with its ECO mode function. This function engages automatically and can save up to 30% electricity consumption over a 24-hour period.” He adds, “We recently introduced a telemetry device that plugs directly into the EMD and allows for remote monitoring of the key condition and usage elements of the fridge via a web portal. This also enables owners of large fleets of units to better

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monitor their usage and condition and implement behavioural changes that will make their use more efficient and cost effective.”

Hills agrees, saying customers can benefit greatly from product ranges that are available with these features. “Refrigeration cases that are powerful, reliable, durable, fit for purpose, and energy efficient provide the optimum value.”

## Solar conversions

### Q: Is solar energy a viable option for local retailers and wholesalers?

The impact of load shedding on commercial refrigeration cannot be underestimated. A compromised cold chain affects not only product quality and customer satisfaction, but it can also be a significant health and safety concern. Uninterrupted refrigeration and freezer systems are crucial in the FMCG retail and wholesale sector.

“The use of solar in conjunction with refrigeration is an area that is being developed at the moment,” explains Hills. “Currently the power requirement of larger commercial units, such as 2m uprights, both single and double door, is too great to be practically used with a DC heat pump system. As such, we are working with component manufacturers to develop this technology as an affordable viable option to the current AC-powered units. Of course, a typical solar and AC inverter-run system is possible, and ultimately the more efficient the unit being run by such a system, the smaller the solar/inverter system requirement becomes.”

Images courtesy of <https://mag.ebmpapst.com/>

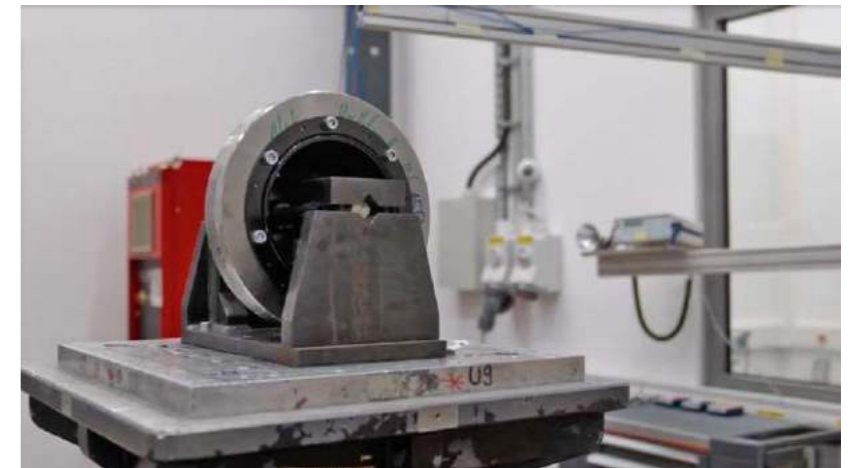


Innovative drive technology has to transform today's technological trends, market demands and specific user requirements into new, highly efficient quality products. Elements like mechatronics, electronics and software have to be precisely integrated, be optimised to specific sectors and fulfil economic and ecological demands.

## Energy and cost savings

### Q: How can retailers and wholesalers maximise energy and cost savings?

Reducing energy consumption, as both a cost-saving and an environmental impact exercise, has been a key goal of the refrigeration and retail/wholesale industries for quite some time. And the effects are becoming apparent. Messenger says, “While the initial investment in energy-efficient appliances might appear higher, it ultimately offers a solid return on investment. We have seen that the energy savings accrued over the lifespan of this



Rough transportation by truck, aircraft, or ship can reduce the service life of fans before they are ever used at the customer's premises. ebm-papst tests these kinds of shock and vibration loads in their Hollenbach testing centre to prevent this from happening.

equipment outweighs the initial cost, making them a prudent choice for forward-thinking businesses.”

Hills agrees. He says, “Over the past 10 to 15 years, we have seen the energy requirements of a typical double door display cooler drop from an average consumption of ~10kWh/24hrs to as low as ~3kWh/24hrs. This significant reduction shows the advancements that have taken place over time, and once you start to factor in the escalating costs of electricity, the benefits of buying the most efficient systems becomes very affordable over the lifetime of a unit.”



# 40 years anniversary AHT Cooling Systems

For 40 years, AHT, with its headquarters in Austria, has stood for quality at the highest level. With its green refrigerant R290, AHT became the pioneer of an entire industry. Building on this legacy, Multilayer Trading has championed AHT's innovation in Africa for over a decade. By successfully introducing the green refrigerant to the continent, Multilayer Trading has not only upheld AHT's pioneering spirit but has also emerged as the market leader in plug-in green commercial refrigeration in Africa.



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“For example, at R3.00 per kWh, a unit that costs R24 000 to buy and consumes 3kWh/24hrs compared to a cheaper, less efficient unit for R18 000 that consumes 5kWh/24hrs, means your ROI is realised in less than three years. Over the lifespan of the unit, which is realistically about seven years or so, the savings amount to about R10 000 – and that’s at current energy costs! Once you factor in energy inflation, which is at double digit percentages currently, the savings are even more significant.”

## Ease of use

**Q: Is the new technology all it’s cracked up to be, or are retailers and wholesalers just creating a rod for their own backs by employing increasingly complex solutions?**

All too often, as technology advances, so too does its complexity. This should not be the case with refrigeration, and advancements in technology or energy savings should not increase the burden of use on the store. Hills explains, “A typical purchaser of a display cooler does not wish to spend time out of their day ensuring that they can realise its benefits. It is for this reason that the efficiency features such as those we incorporate into our units can be maximised either automatically via the EMD or are built into the system and design of the cooler. This leaves the user to carry on with running their business while benefiting from not just perfectly displayed, cold products, but also the savings on their energy bill, with no extra time or energy spent on complex operations.”

Image courtesy of www.gea.com/



To anchor circularity in GEA’s product portfolio, their engineers are tasked with guiding mantra to “Design for Sustainability.” This means designing products to enable retrofits and maintenance for maximum lifetime and minimum total cost of ownership. Their goal... modular and configurable solutions that reduce resource consumption and increase productivity.

Concord Retail Solutions shares the belief that sophistication should not automatically lead to complexity. The use of intuitive interfaces and accessible, uncomplicated controls provides user-friendly operation. In addition to this, an innovative auto-defrost function eliminates the need for manual intervention. Messenger says, “You can forget battling icy build-up with a rubber mallet every week. The auto-defrost function maintains an optimal cooling performance and removes the need for routine manual defrosting. This streamlines operations and boosts energy efficiency, as a frost-free interior keeps the appliance running smoothly, consuming less energy.”

## Feasibility for use in retrofitting

**Q: How easy is it to retrofit existing units?**

In a perfect world, retailers would be replacing their refrigeration systems at end of life with new, top-shelf solutions. The reality, however, is that this is not always financially feasible. “Circularity has become a major focal area for our business,” says Hills. “We are always developing concepts and design changes with retrofit ability in mind. Even with one of our 10- to 15-year-old models, you could quite easily retrofit elements such as the fan motors, glass doors, and even the EMD.”

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These items would be a simple like-for-like replacement of the older items within the unit. We are also working on ideas that will allow older units to benefit from future technological advancements in the energy space.”

## Global trends

South African retailers can look to their international counterparts for a glimpse at what could soon be impacting stores locally. From environmental legislation and energy-efficient practices, to how store design should change to meet evolving consumer needs, local stores need to be ahead of the game to future-proof their businesses.

### The rise of sustainability legislation

Energy efficiency, eco-friendly refrigerants, and reducing GHG (greenhouse gas) emissions remain at the top of the agenda for countries across the globe. We can expect to see the tightening up of existing legislation dealing with these issues, and new legislation being introduced. While most new commercial refrigeration and freezer units meet recognised standards, older units will need to be replaced in the near future.

In addition to this, refrigerators still using hydrofluorocarbon (HFC) refrigerants will need to be replaced, as these contribute heavily to GHG emissions. We can expect to see lower GWP (global warming potential) standards being introduced in legislation, or compliance with existing legislation becoming better enforced. In the same breath, energy-efficient systems are crucial for business success as they provide profitable solutions and align with eco-friendly business models.

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



GEA's emphasis is on the use of reliable, energy-efficient design, natural refrigerants and innovative energy-reuse systems.

### Aggressive maintenance

As one of the major expenses for retailers and wholesalers, from initial purchase and installation, energy usage, maintenance, and repairs, refrigeration should be top of the list for cost-saving measures. This includes pre-emptive maintenance and constant, ongoing monitoring. Local and international manufacturers are urging retailers and wholesalers to include aggressive maintenance as part of the refrigeration solution. This means quarterly, monthly, and even daily inspections and maintenance to ensure efficiency and lifespan are maintained. An aggressive maintenance regime should also include proper and focused cleaning. By implementing this process, stores can reduce product loss due to system failure, as well as avoid downtime due

to costly repairs, energy costs, and also lower greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions.

### Predictive maintenance

Energy management and monitoring systems as well as systems using IOT (Internet of Things) in order to monitor and analyse cooling and refrigeration systems will help to optimise your investment. Technologies for predictive maintenance include predictive analytics such as ultrasound technology, infrared analysis, vibration analysis, laser-shaft alignment, and AI. The ability to gather, understand, and use data-driven solutions is crucial, so expect new and developing technologies and equipment to become increasingly important to your operations.

Predictive maintenance enables retailers to avoid refrigeration failure by identifying possible problem areas before they impact efficiency or functionality.

## New shopping habits require adaptable spaces – and refrigeration

According to City (<https://www.cityfm.us/>), an international facilities management company established in Scotland in 1985 and now based in the US, we can expect to see store design continue to change and adapt to evolving consumer needs and expectations, particularly when it comes to convenience shopping. 'Click and collect', also known as BOPIS (buy online pickup in-store) to continue to drive a significant portion of the retail market, accounting for over 40 percent of US grocery ecommerce sales by 2026.

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

Additionally, grocers are seeing higher demand for hot grab-and-go meals, as well as healthier to-go options for the increasingly wellness-minded consumer. As a result, grocery facilities management leaders should expect to oversee more post-pandemic building retrofits, and there will be more importance than ever placed on the management of refrigeration and other food and beverage equipment designed to keep ready-to-go meals and groceries waiting for pick up safe and easily accessible for shoppers.

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



## Convenience as a purchase driver

No longer the sole province of middle to upper LSM households and time-strapped mothers attempting to feed their families, convenience foods are increasingly in demand across LSMs, age groups, and shopper categories. In-store refrigeration needs to reflect this, as many convenience foods fall into the chilled or frozen category. Things to consider are:

- Space – to enable a sufficient range of options
- Display – to effectively attract shoppers
- Ease of access – convenience purchases need to be easy to locate, easy to access, and easy to use.

FMCG products requiring self-service cooling or refrigeration solutions are predicted to grow significantly over the next few years.

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### Innovation in the cold chain

Globally, but particularly in Europe and North America, refrigerated transport is increasingly utilising electric or solar-powered solutions. The rise of online shopping has also increased the need for on-the-go refrigeration solutions that are effective, affordable, and sustainable. Continuous cold chain monitoring is imperative for food safety, product longevity, and customer satisfaction.

### Refurbished refrigerator and freezer units

This global trend is yet to gain significant traction locally, but as manufacturing costs continue to soar, it is possible that local entrepreneurs will be inspired. New, top-of-the-range energy-efficient and sustainable equipment is an expense not many smaller or independent retailers can comfortably afford. Refurbished units that provide high-quality and high efficiency are becoming more popular with international retailers looking to upgrade their refrigeration systems without having to pay for a brand-new product. Currently there seems to be a wide variety of refurbished solutions on offer, including glass sliding door coolers, glass door merchandiser refrigerators, floral coolers, novelty coolers and freezers, and ice cream display freezers.



Image courtesy of Milwaukee Area Technical College

## Pioneering sustainability

Concord's Messenger says, "In the era of conscious consumerism and sustainable living, the spotlight is firmly fixed on energy-efficient solutions that not only meet our needs as businesses and consumers, but also nurture the planet. Innovation and eco-consciousness are reshaping the landscape

of refrigeration technology." Redefining energy-efficient products is, Messenger believes, the only sustainable way forward. Cutting-edge technology that drastically reduces energy consumption while ensuring optimal cooling performance. It not only translates into a reduced environmental impact but also heralds substantial savings on energy bills for both businesses and households."

Messenger says, "Technology that amalgamates energy-efficient components and intelligent design results in remarkable energy savings, translating to substantial cost reductions over time. This dual benefit not only resonates with environmentally conscious consumers but also bolsters the bottom line of businesses, allowing them to allocate resources more strategically."

"In addition, the feasibility of replacing conventional units with energy-efficient solutions not only aligns with global environmental goals but also sets

Image courtesy of www.hauser.com/



the stage for practical solutions in sectors where energy consumption is high. Embracing innovation is not just a step towards a better tomorrow; it's an investment in a future where innovation meets responsibility." **SR**

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**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)





**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



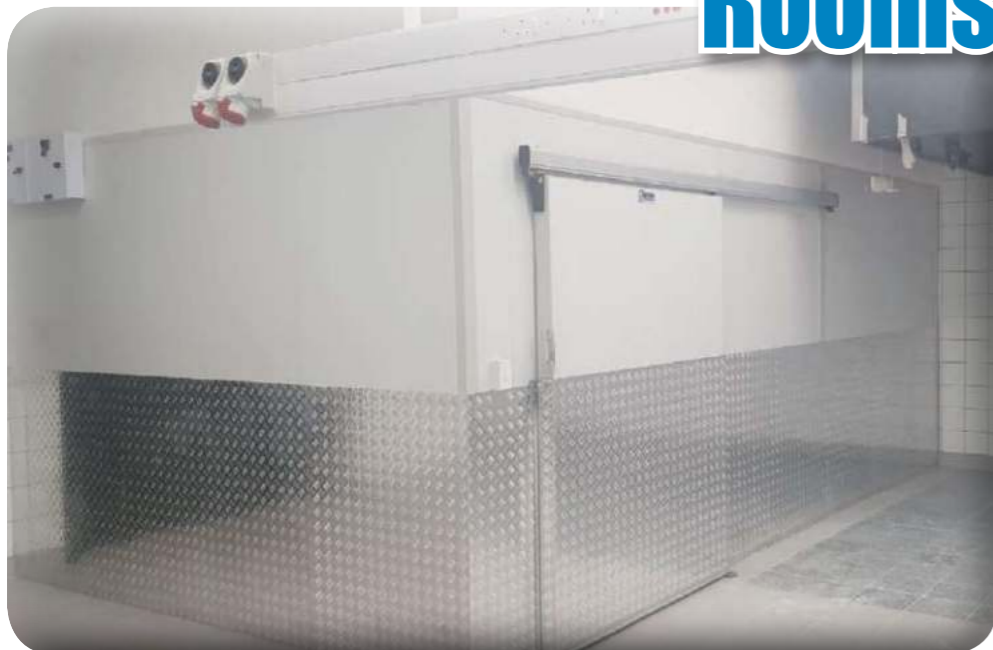
### Floors – Fabricated and Concrete

#### 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

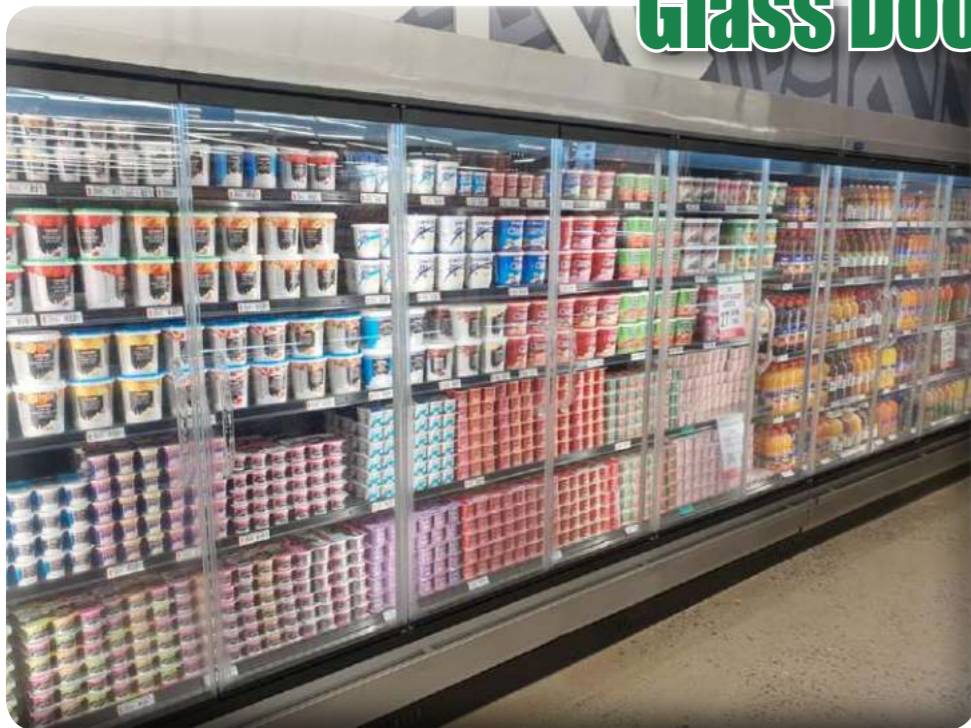


Environment  
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## Benefits of Airshield Glass Doors

- 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.  
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# Cheers to choice!

## Key trends and opportunities in the SA Cold and Alcoholic Beverage market

South Africa's beverages industry is burgeoning. Having survived the prospect of stalled production – and even temporary prohibition in the case of alcohol sales – the good times are back in a big way.

But the lockdowns and slowdowns have had a lasting effect on consumer confidence and have also changed consumer behaviour in many ways. Economic uncertainty continues due to the Rand exchange rate, interest rate increases, high unemployment, significant price increases on grocery items and the fear of recession.

On top of all these challenges, the impact of persistent load shedding in South Africa has had a visible and lasting effect on the beverages market, from production to storage and distribution. Thankfully, many companies have found innovative ways to mitigate this impact, and even use the crisis to their advantage.

The good news is that there has been some internal stabilising, with South Africa's consumer confidence improving in the third quarter of 2023, according to an article from Reuters.

Lockdowns also impacted how consumers shop, with online sales of alcohol exploding, making touch-and-feel sales less prominent, and virtual branding more important. Many consumers, especially younger generations, are also increasingly looking for healthier alternatives, with alcohol in some instances no longer as big a draw card as it was for previous generations.



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

### Cold beverages

One of the standout trends in the cold beverages market, especially the carbonated soft drinks (CSD) portion of the market, is the shift away from sugary drinks towards healthier alternatives. For example, according to Insight Survey's South African Carbonated Soft Drinks Industry Landscape Report 2023, reduced and low sugar

carbonates have seen a CAGR (Compound Annual Growth Rate) of 9.4% between 2017 and 2022 compared to regular carbonated drinks.

Greig Jansen, founder and CEO of PURA Beverages, says the trend towards healthier cold beverage alternatives is being driven by a surprising section of the market: teenagers and young adults.

# Introducing the SD1140 Carbon Edition

Staycold International are now offering a variation to their range - the SD1140 Carbon Edition. Using the ever popular SD1140 double sliding door cooler as its chassis, the high-performance unit is finished all in black.

The new black look has a more exclusive, premier feel to it. Ideal for high profile locations, it will certainly make your products stand out whilst keeping them perfectly chilled at the same time.

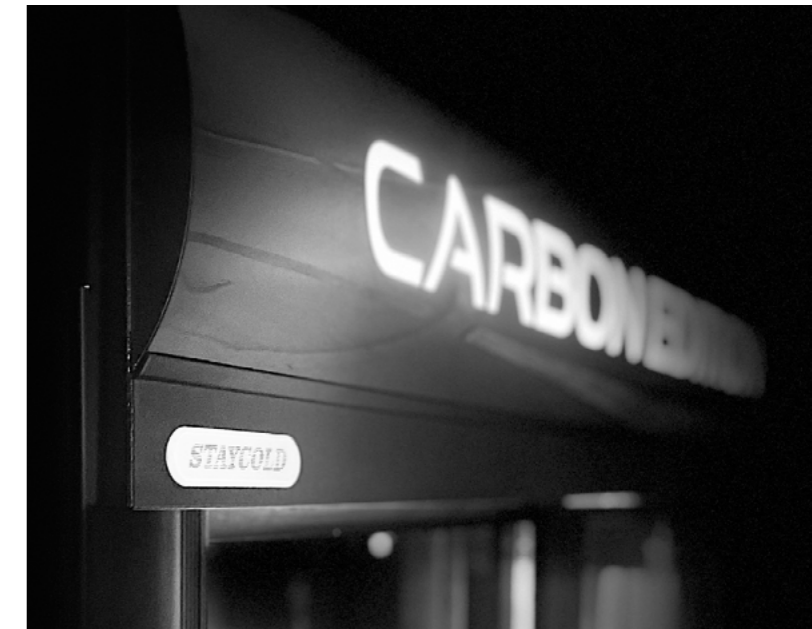
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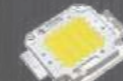
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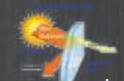
### LED Lighting

Illuminating the interior of the unit for maximum visibility.



### EcoMate Foam

Water based insulation foam that is non-flammable and has zero ODP.



### Low-E Glass Door

Improved glass insulation lowers running costs and reduces condensation.



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“The most noticeable shift is in the level of awareness in teens when it comes to assessing and scrutinising what is in the beverages and snacks they consume,” says Jansen. He says ...



“Teenagers in particular are more aware of what is in products, they’re doing research and educating themselves on how to read and understand labels, and they are moving toward more health-conscious decisions and habits.”

**Greig Jansen, founder and CEO of PURA Beverages**

“This has led to an increased focus on health and wellbeing, scrutiny of ultra-processed ingredients, and the knock-on increase in the number of articles and research available regarding the consequences these products have on health concerns and sugar overload.”

Jansen adds that the highly processed, refined or ‘liquid sugar’ ingredients that are in many soda and energy drink options on the market are now under the microscope, with natural sugar alternatives rapidly increasing in popularity.

“We continue to see an increasing demand for more natural flavours and lower sugar alternatives, with a particular move away from artificial sweeteners and ingredients like aspartame,” he says.

“Instead, many South Africans – and many international markets – are looking for more real, all-natural flavours and alternatives that use natural ingredients, moving away from overly sugared and overly flavoured beverage options.”

This change in consumer preferences seems partly as a consequence of the World Health Organisation’s assessment on the potential carcinogenic consequences of some sweeteners, as recently reported by Fortune Magazine.

## Form follows function

The shift away from sugar isn’t the whole story, as the move towards natural rather than processed and artificial sweeteners suggests. It has also led to an uptick in the ‘functional beverage’ category, cold beverages that go beyond refreshment with additional health-based ingredients.

FMCG’s Guru Report on ‘The Future of Naturalness’ suggests the global functional beverage market will be worth upwards of \$208.7 billion by 2027. More importantly, it points at consumers’ willingness to not only seek out healthier beverage alternatives, but also pay more for them, as the basis for its forecast.

This global trend is mirrored in South Africa, with research by McKinsey & Company highlighting that South African consumers continue to prioritise their health, wellness and wellbeing, as they focus on quality over quantity across the board.

PURA’s Jansen says that with this consumer shift guided research and development, PURA has developed a new electrolyte hydration alternative that offers a natural, healthier way for consumers to hydrate.”

He goes on to highlight how sugar substitutes are generally split into two ingredient grounds – natural and artificial sweeteners.



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

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“Sugar provides the body with calories that are either absorbed as fat or utilised by the body for energy,” says Jansen. “Natural sugars – usually derived from plant sources – are considered to be better from a nutritional standpoint, whereas artificial ingredients provide little to no nutritional value.”

This trend has also resulted in a spike in natural alternatives that, as reported by healthline.com, encourage consumers looking to avoid processed ingredients to question the contents of the food and beverages that they ingest and remove unnecessary artificial compounds in their diets. As such, Jansen expects consumers to continue moving away from refined sugars and cut down their intake, switching to options found in nature like Stevia and monk fruit sweetener.

Jansen also notes that consumers are looking to support and engage with brands that have a conscience. “This could be environmentally focused, community-driven, or just generally focused on well-being. We know that consumers continue to look to purpose-driven brands that align with their personal values, which includes interrogating what the brands stand for, and to

feel that they are supporting responsible brands that drive change in the world and everything they do,” he says.

“This has also led to calls for sustainable packaging, for-good societal initiatives, and scrutiny of brand business practices, all of which are important shifts for retailers and manufacturers to look out for in the coming months and years.”

## Four effective strategies for cold beverage sales

### Building a win-win relationship between retailers/wholesalers and manufacturers

When stores and suppliers work collaboratively, the result is a win-win for all. These back-to-basics insights from a beverage manufacturer are easy to align with the goals and objectives of any store. Suppliers and manufacturers that understand the strategies of their retail/wholesale customers will reap the rewards. Ultimately, most brands and stores want the same thing – to sell products, forge customer loyalty, build a winning reputation, increase sales, provide a solution, be appealing to their target audience and offer an experience that keeps the consumer coming back.

- 1. Make sure your cold beverage products are easily available in the stores that you service.** Ensuring your cold beverage products are readily accessible to consumers is key. Out of stocks remain one of the main reasons consumers move to another store or ecommerce site.
- 2. Create a brand story and tell people about your product.** Sell a solution that consumers are looking for – meeting their direct need and what your product delivers. Make yours a product or brand that retailers and wholesalers want to stock.
- 3. Make sure your packaging (for retailers – shelf displays and signage) stands out and is easy for the consumer to understand.** Invest in distinctive and eye-catching packaging, as appealing designs capture consumer attention and set your product apart from competitors, potentially boosting sales through increased visibility and perceived value.
- 4. Make sure that your product is placed in a space that makes sense.** Always ensure that your product is merchandised in the space where consumers expect to find them. For example, beverages offering health benefits may perform better in the health foods department, rather than with the carbonated soft drinks.

Image by [www.schweppes.com/](http://www.schweppes.com/)



### Energy Drinks

Energy drinks abound in the cold beverages market, with established brands and new entrants building this popular category. According to [www.glanbianutritionals.com](http://www.glanbianutritionals.com), energy drinks are evolving to meet the needs of a broader consumer base than teenagers and young adults through flavour innovations, cleaner formulations with less sugar and more natural ingredients. Functional health is also gaining momentum, with energy drinks adding ingredients such as zinc, iodine, selenium and protein.



Image by [www.monsterenergy.com/](http://www.monsterenergy.com/)

### Flavour profiles 2023

Currently, cold beverage flavours in vogue are citrus, including orange, grapefruit, lime and berries. Switch Energy Drinks have just released a new orange and bubblegum flavour while Coca-Cola has released Schweppes Mixer in grapefruit flavour. Strawberry, cherry, apple, fig and chilli flavours are also finding favour amongst consumers. Citrus with spices such as cardamom, ginger and turmeric, or lime/lemon with ginger, cucumber or honey, and sweet/sour/spicy combinations give beverage manufacturers the opportunity to be stand out in a highly competitive market.



Image by <https://drinkprime.com/>

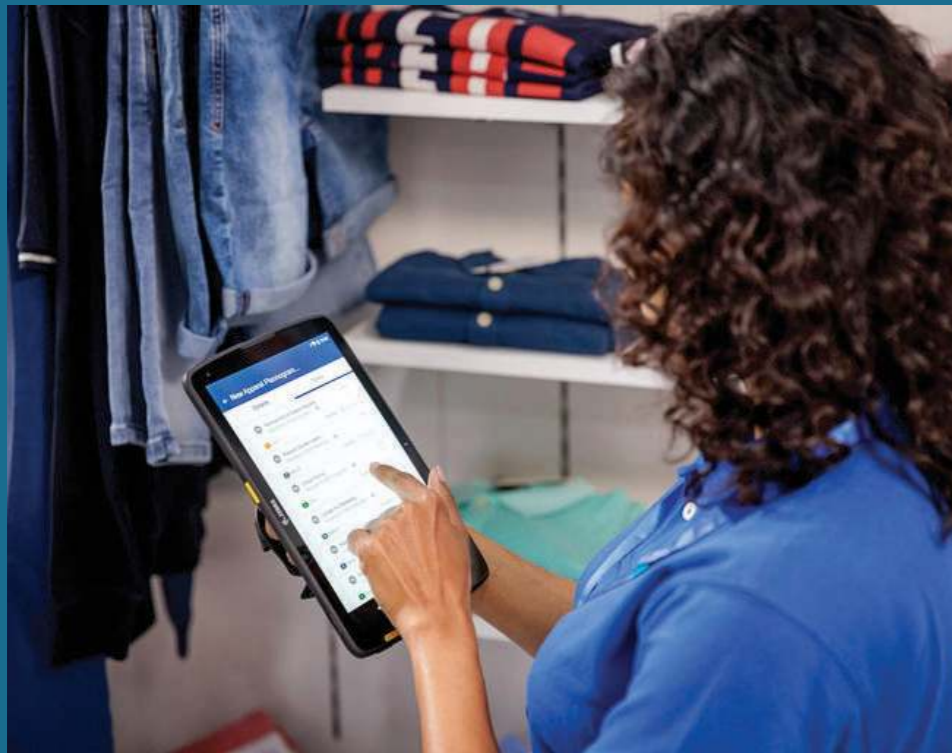
### Marketing strategies for market disruption

Prime Hydration LLC (part of Congo Brands, also the manufacturer of energy drink 3D) demonstrated the power of social media, influencer marketing, perceived exclusivity, status and 'limited' availability when the brand was launched in April 2023. As the hype increased and availability decreased, the price point shot up, with consumers paying between R350 and R800 for 500ml. It was an elaborate and highly successful campaign but with the price point now around a much more realistic R39.99-R45.99 it will be interesting to watch how the brand performs in the medium-to long term.



## From Zero to Hero: Transform Operations with Task Management

Equip your teams with a task management system that enhances efficiency and simplifies work processes, enabling them to accomplish more with ease. Provide the upcoming generation of colleagues with the user interface necessary for optimising communication and swiftly executing tasks with efficiency.



Task Management enhances and optimises on-site implementation and correspondence by offering a comprehensive, up-to-the-minute, prioritised outlook of tasks awaiting completion at your branch premises. This empowers associates to concentrate on the most critical projects.

## Simplify work for on-site associates

- Equip managers and associates with a unified, mobile-centric perspective of tasks, notifications, and essential data.
- Simplify communication with on-site colleagues by offering a centralised platform for accessing all assignments.
- Guarantee that managers and associates are consistently present where and when needed, engaged in pertinent tasks to optimise customer interaction.
- Deliver timely notifications to on-site team members, along with actionable instructions to promptly resolve unexpected matters.

## Enable Intelligent Task Management Processes



01

Prioritise the most impactful corporate-generated and real time system-generated tasks.

02

Optimise workflows to intelligently direct tasks evenly and equitably across available associates.

03

Improve field management's live-of-sight into store-level execution, giving the ability to manage by exception.





With 15 members and a loan of £10 000, the Wellington Co-operative Winery Limited was founded on 26 February 1906. The cellar was built on a slope in order to use gravitation to move the must or grape juice from the winepress to the fermentation tanks. The shareholders provided firewood for the boiler before they started to use coal for this purpose. The cellar originally produced wine, sweet wine, brandy and jam from the must. Image courtesy of <https://wellingtonwines.com/>

## Alcoholic beverages

The shift towards healthier alternatives isn't limited to the cold (non-alcoholic) beverage market. The alcoholic beverages market has also seen a marked shift towards healthier options – not just less sweetened, but also fewer alcoholic beverages – notably in the younger adult demographic.

The so-called NoLo (non-alcoholic/low alcohol) market is being driven by the creatively-named 'sober curious' movement, a category defined by consumers wanting a different drink experience to the usual alcoholic fare, especially at social gatherings.

The two most prominent trends that seem to be shaping the post-pandemic alcoholic beverage market are affordability and branding, and the two

go hand-in-hand. Cash strapped South Africans are already pushed to the limit, with the compound effects of load shedding (and the mitigation thereof) adding to the pressure on disposal income and discretionary purchases like alcohol.



Xania van der Merwe

Xania van der Merwe, Consumer Specialist at the Great Big Wine Survey and a trainer at wine.co.za's DTC Academy, says that apart from affordability, consumers are concerned about their consumption levels when it comes to alcoholic drinks.

“ In a recent survey that we ran, consumers indicated that any reluctance on their part to drink alcoholic beverages, particularly wine, stems primarily from a fear of over drinking and 'getting drunk too quickly' ”

Xania van der Merwe



Image by <https://wellingtonwines.com/>

“That said, alongside water, wine is still South Africa's go-to beverage when it comes to social occasions and dining, preferred over every other type of alcoholic, low-alcohol and non-alcoholic beverage for all but public events and casual time at home,” she says. “The picture changes, however, when the sample data is focused on younger consumers (18–24), where water, carbonated and non-carbonated soft drinks, and occasionally beers and ciders, are preferred to wine.”



## A premium proposition

An interesting trend in the alcoholic beverages market closely follows the brand premiumisation we've seen in other retail categories, especially where well-known, storied and luxury brands proliferate. The trend is driven by younger affluent consumers, and the changing behaviours of work-from-home consumers. However, unlike the premiumisation in the cold beverages industry related to the rise of healthy and functional beverage alternatives, alcohol beverage premiumisation is more brand-specific, with premium 'luxury' brands dominating the sales charts.

This is understandable in many ways, especially where products like wines are often married to the stories of their origins. Younger consumers are becoming more attuned to these differences, and are increasingly valuing brands with legacy and history over mass-produced alternatives.

"Premiumisation dovetails with other socially conscious trends like sustainability, especially among younger consumers," says Van der Merwe. "Only 11% of our research sample indicated that they are not willing to pay more for wines which are ethically produced, for example, while 42% indicated that they will, and 47% indicated that they might," she says. "My takeaway from the current research suggests that consumers are looking to 'drink better, not more', and so retailers should be focused on increasing the quality of alcohol they stock, as opposed to the quantity. It also follows that in-store education of staff is vital to make it work."



## Four effective strategies for alcoholic beverage sales

Image by <https://wellingtonwines.com/>

- 1. Competitions to drive sales.** Hosting engaging contests and competitions can boost sales by creating excitement and encouraging customers to make purchases for a chance to win prizes or special discounts, driving higher engagement and foot traffic to your alcoholic beverage department.
- 2. Sign up your customers to receive SMS marketing with daily/weekly promotions.** Encouraging customers to opt in for SMS marketing allows you to directly reach them with timely promotions and special offers, keeping your brand top-of-mind and driving repeat purchases.
- 3. When it comes to wine, well trained staff who can provide support on the floor is always a win.** Knowledgeable and trained staff members enhance the customer experience by offering guidance, recommendations, and information about the wines, which can lead to increased customer satisfaction and higher sales.
- 4. Use of technology to assist consumers.** Leveraging technology like QR codes and virtual wine info sessions enhances consumers' understanding of the products, making it easier for them to make informed choices and potentially increasing sales. Additionally, using visuals like Winelands images on screens can create an immersive and enticing atmosphere, encouraging patrons to explore and make purchases.

## The dark side

And so we get to the elephant in the proverbial room: load shedding. While the impact of load shedding on the transport and point of sale of cold beverages can be mitigated to some degree, the impact seems to be far greater for alcoholic beverage makers, and specifically wine producers.

Wellington Wines' Yvonne Blom says wineries need reliable electricity to run machinery, manage temperature, and assure quality.

"For wine producers like us, power interruptions can delay production, damage output, and raise operational expenses," says Blom. "Power outages can also delay product delivery to merchants and customers via delivery trucks and refrigerated storage facilities, and also impair temperature control systems, which harms temperature-sensitive products like wine."

PURA's Jansen takes a more pragmatic approach: "Load shedding impacts all businesses in South Africa, with many looking for ways to mitigate against the negative consequences that it brings," he says. "As a community-driven brand with our consumer at the heart of what we do, we work hard on line cost, and to find ways to not let extra operational costs bleed over into increased prices on shelves."

Whatever the answer and approach, it seems beverage makers are taking a similar route to retailers: mitigate where you can, work around what you can't. In true South African fashion, it seems local businesses are 'making a plan', and making sure that temporary load shedding doesn't get in the way of a long-established industry with enough challenges – and opportunities – of its own.

## Closing thoughts

With so many quality brands offering a range of products to suit every taste, age group and budget, the local beverages industry is in good shape – as good as it's been for many years. Future prospects are equally bright, with R&D being invested into the development and sale of healthier alternatives, driven both by government initiatives and consumer demand.



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

Whether your customers prefer a glass of good red wine after a long day's work, sparkling water, or a boost of naturally sweetened soda, never before have the choices been so broad and plentiful. As a retailer, your shelves are literally your oyster. With the right strategies for stocking up your displays and fridges, here's a toast to making this festive season – going into 2024 – the biggest one yet. **SR**

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**Guy Lerner**, a highly experienced writer and photographer, writes across diverse topics in business, technology, and retail – working with multinational companies in South Africa and Australia. Guy holds a B.Sc. Honours degree from the University of Witwatersrand. Contact Wilkins Ross Communications ([www.wilkinsrossglobal.com](http://www.wilkinsrossglobal.com)) or email [communications@wilkinsross.co.za](mailto:communications@wilkinsross.co.za).





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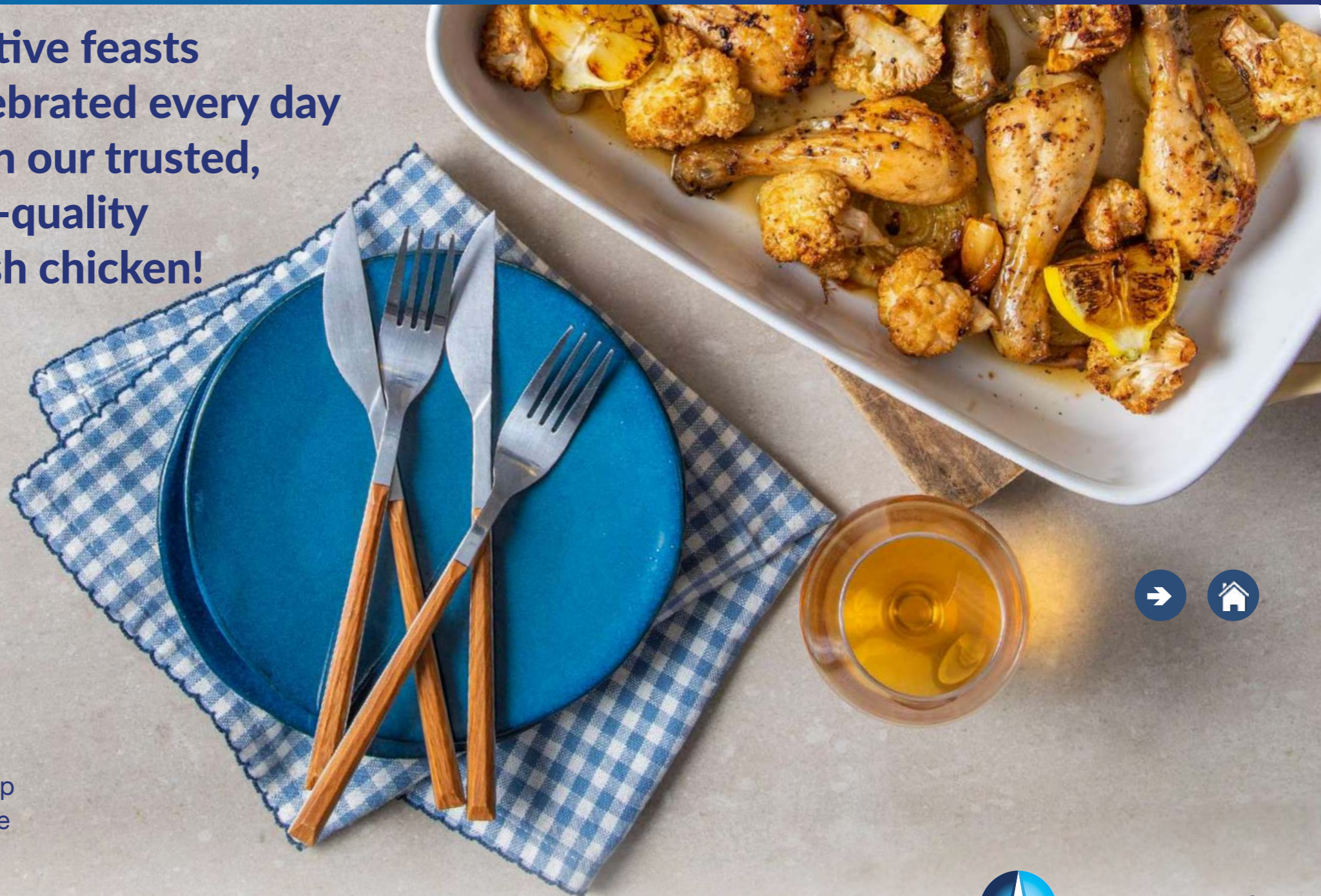
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# Forging partnerships amidst the changing consumer landscape



Image courtesy of [www.stellenboschbusiness.ac.za/](http://www.stellenboschbusiness.ac.za/)

Retailers are increasingly recognising the value of stokvels as a significant customer segment. As consumer preferences shift, retailers are advised to increase collaboration and integrate more closely with these informal savings clubs.

Stokvels are deeply rooted in communities and trusted by their members, offering a unique opportunity for retailers to tap into a loyal customer base. By understanding and catering to stokvel members' specific needs and preferences, retailers can gain a competitive edge in a dynamic market, says Busisiwe Skenjana, founder and CEO of the Stokvel Academy.

"Far too many retailers in the country are not exposed to stokvels and therefore simply don't consider the possibility and opportunity they offer," she says.



“Stokvels play a pivotal role in both social and economic spheres, with their cultural emphasis on saving being a cornerstone. However, their significance extends beyond finances; they are the cohesive force that binds communities through thick and thin.”

**Busisiwe Skenjana**  
founder and CEO of the Stokvel Academy.

Stokvels, explains Skenjana, are designed to support one another, functioning as tightly-knit organisations with which everyone is familiar. The essence lies in their community-oriented nature, drawing members from the interconnected fabric of neighbours, colleagues, church companions and cohabitants. These groups often emerge from smaller, more intimate circles comprising individuals who share a deep and mutual familiarity.

“They are deeply entrenched within communities. If one thinks of retailers, regardless of size, they are committed to serving these communities at their core. Understanding a stokvel implies a stronger connection to the community in which your business operates.”



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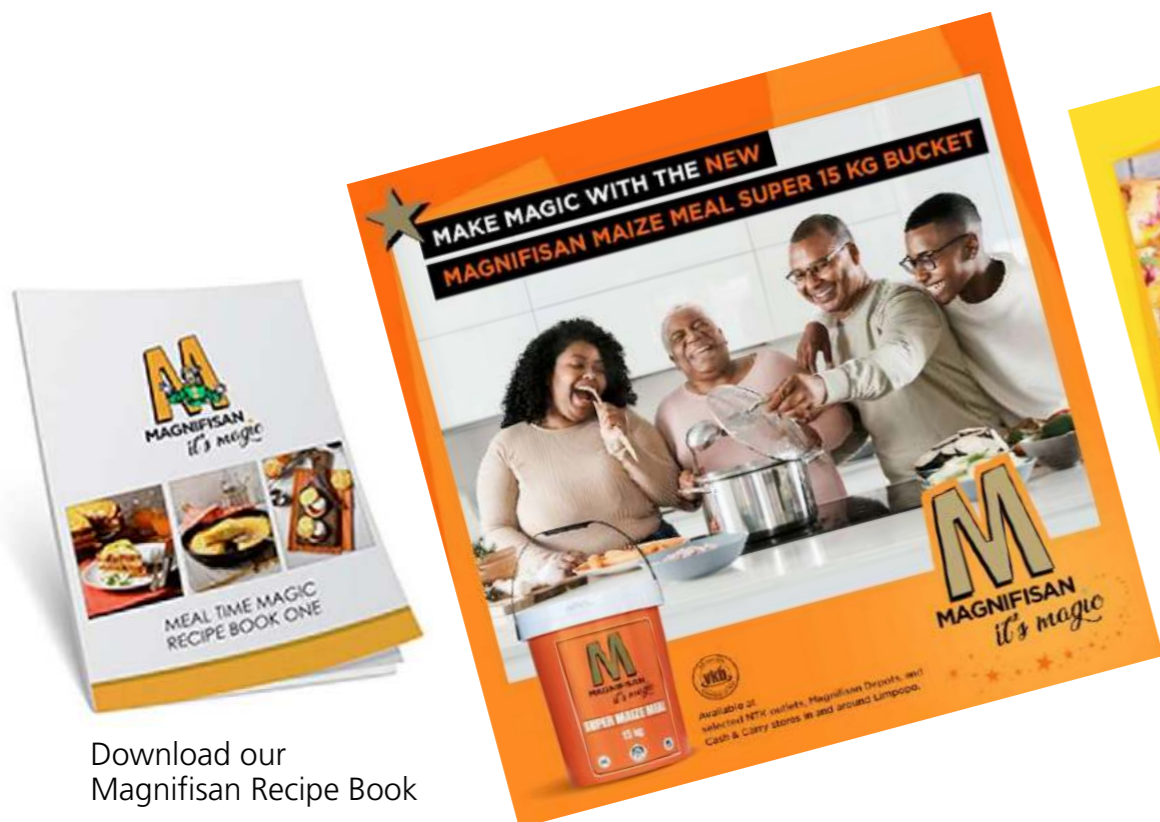
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## Enhancing community engagement

In a world where financial stability and responsible spending are paramount, stokvels have emerged as powerful agents of change, bringing a slew of benefits beyond their members. These community-based savings clubs have proven to be more than just a way to save money; they are drivers of economic stability, financial education, and local empowerment, says Lehlohonolo Ndawo, co-founder and Managing Director of the Digital Stokvel Platform.



“Retailers need to recognise that engaging with stokvels is not just about selling products or services, but becoming an integral part of the stokvel community. By embracing the community and social aspects, retailers can build trust, loyalty and a positive reputation within the sector, benefiting from strong and lasting relationships with these influential groups.”

**Lehlohonolo Ndawo, co-founder and Managing Director of the Digital Stokvel Platform**



**Palesa Lengolo**

Palesa Lengolo, an author and stokvel expert, highlights the importance of community, saying that stokvels often prioritise buying locally produced goods, which can help boost demand for products and support the growth of local industries. “Stokvels by nature are close-knit groups, and members’ purchasing decisions can be influenced by social factors such as status, peer pressure, or even shared values.”



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

By tapping into this community connectivity, retailers can strategically leverage these dynamics to their advantage, enabling the creation of highly personalised marketing strategies.

“The synergy between stokvels and retailers is evident. Stokvels represent a sizable, close-knit customer base with strong buying power. Retailers establishing strategic partnerships with stokvels can access valuable insights into local markets, adapt their product offerings, and enhance their overall customer experience,” says Skenjana.

## A boon for local economies and retailers

Stokvels operate on a simple, yet potent, principle – members pool their financial resources to meet specific objectives, often involving buying goods and services. This collaborative approach, characterised by regular contributions, translates into a considerable

uptick in local consumer spending. Lengolo says ...

“Regular stokvel contributions can provide a predictable source of income for retailers, helping them plan and manage their inventory more effectively.”

As a result, retailers actively engaging in this market sector can experience a surge in sales, as the heightened purchasing power of stokvel members invigorates a local economy.



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“One of the key features of stokvels is their ability to leverage collective resources to make bulk purchases,” says Ndawo. With a penchant for local enterprises, the deliberate choices made by stokvels make them a driving force of entrepreneurship. Stokvels exemplify how community-driven economics can flourish, by opting to buy from neighbourhood shops and boutique establishments.

According to Ndawo, the collective savings and financial stability stokvels offer their members can have broader economic benefits.

As community-driven savings clubs, Stokvels play a vital role in fostering financial inclusion and empowerment. Their impact is closely intertwined with the retail sector, creating a symbiotic relationship that benefits both stokvel members and retailers.

“When individuals have access to financial resources and are less financially stressed, it can contribute to overall economic stability.” Ndawo continues ...

“These clubs offer a platform where individuals can pool their resources. This includes people typically excluded from traditional banking services. The collective approach allows people with limited financial means to participate in savings and investment activities they might otherwise miss out on.”

For retailers, this translates to a straightforward increase in sales, driving business growth and profitability.



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

## Managing expectations and challenges

Retailers, particularly in the grocery sector, overlook the significance of stokvels – despite the substantial sums flowing into these collective savings groups. While some retailers have established robust customer care programmes and communication channels to cater to individual shoppers, the same level of attention needs to be more conspicuously present regarding stokvels. This discrepancy raises questions about why stores continue to pour considerable funds into specific stores when their loyalty is not reciprocated with tailored services.

Skenjana says one of the significant challenges, particularly in rural areas, is the tendency of

stokvels to save their funds directly at the store, rather than in traditional banks. This practice can create a sense of financial entanglement, where members feel almost obliged to continue shopping at the same store throughout the year, unable to exercise flexibility in their choices. This can be particularly constraining come year-end, when stokvels are compelled to make bulk purchases from their designated store.

For her, it is critical that retailers elevate their game, especially those seeking to tap into the stokvel market. This involves actively listening to stokvels, comprehending their unique needs, and enhancing customer relations tailored to these collective savings groups. “Retailers may not fully understand the dynamics of stokvels, including their savings goals, decision-making processes, and purchasing patterns,” explains Ndawo. “Stokvels, on the other hand, find it challenging to communicate their unique needs and preferences effectively to retailers.”

Since trust forms the core of the stokvel concept, it is self-evident that there is an imperative need for enhanced confidence and transparency in servicing the stokvel sector. Lengolo underscores this point, “Retailers must consistently exhibit transparency in their pricing and transactions to earn the trust of stokvel members.”

Skenjana emphasises that retailers must recognise the distinctiveness of the stokvel sector and that it cannot be approached like a regular customer base. Retailers should also acknowledge the substantial buying power and value that stokvels bring,

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which necessitates more significant attention to crafting special packages.

“It’s quite common for stokvels to anticipate discounts and special pricing arrangements,” continues Skenjana. “However, the reality is that the grocery retail sector, despite receiving significant contributions from stokvels, often falls short in delivering tangible benefits to its members. Stokvel members, in this context, don’t feel like valued customers. Only a handful of retailers have dedicated customer care programmes tailored to stokvels. There’s a need for more focus on developing this sector.”

Another significant hurdle, as pointed out by Lengolo, is effective communication. This challenge becomes particularly pronounced when dealing with informal stokvels that lack standardised processes, making it essential for retailers to find innovative ways to connect with and serve this diverse group effectively.

Ndawo recognises the difficulty that retailers encounter when catering to the unique requirements of the stokvel sector. This challenge mainly revolves around delivering the desired discounts while safeguarding their profit margins or adapting payment terms to fit a sector that traditionally adheres to strict contribution schedules.

“To overcome the challenges, it is critical that the retail sector at large educate itself. Retailers must take the time to understand how stokvels operate, their values, and their goals. This knowledge will enable them to tailor their offerings and engagement strategies.”



Seven Colours Communications returns with the annual Stokvelex expo targeted at the Stokvel community from 27–29 October 2023 at Jack Botes Hall, Polokwane. Stokvel remains one of the most popular savings vehicles for ordinary South Africans. With seven successful shows under its belt across three provinces, this year’s showcase promises an even bigger, elevated experience, backed by reputable partners. <https://limpopochronicle.co.za/>

Another essential requirement is for offerings to be customised for the stokvel sector, says Skenjana. “Products, services, and pricing must be customised and aligned with stokvel preferences and goals.”

Both Ndawo and Skenjana emphasise the importance of trust. “Building trust is paramount,” says Ndawo. “Retailers can achieve this by consistently delivering on promises, offering quality products and services and maintaining transparent pricing practices.”

### Collaboration and integration lead the way forward

As the retail industry navigates the complexities of a rapidly changing landscape, the alignment between stokvels and retailers is becoming increasingly crucial. By fostering collaboration, integration, and community engagement, both parties stand to benefit from a resilient and prosperous partnership.

“Stokvels are far from static entities; they exhibit a dynamic nature, constantly evolving to meet

the shifting demands of their members,” remarks Skenjana. “There’s a noticeable surge in interest across various stokvel types, and retailers must remain vigilant in keeping up with these changing trends.”

Furthermore, the digital age, coupled with the burgeoning prominence of e-commerce, is exerting a notable influence on the stokvel-retail dynamic, notes Ndawo, even though

this transformation is still in its early stages.

“Digital platforms are simplifying the process of stokvel coordination and facilitating bulk purchases,” Ndawo observes. “We anticipate a growing number of stokvels embracing these digital platforms as we move forward.”

Says Lengolo, “Looking ahead, the pivotal factors to focus on are collaboration and integration. It’s imperative to recognise that stokvels, as a customer segment, hold undeniable significance within the South African retail landscape and cannot be overlooked.” **SR**



**Catherine Larkin** is a communication and marketing professional, specialising in Logistics, Transport and Supply Chain. Her company, CVLC Communication, is a corporate public relations, communication, marketing and events consultancy. Its services range from full secretariat support, project management and administration, strategy development, stakeholder engagement, through to event organisation, media, social media and publicity.



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# Sani-touch's bird feeder is a finalist at SAPRO Best Recycled Plastic Product Awards

South Africa generates 50 million tonnes of waste annually. Only a third of that waste is recycled, with the balance disposed of in landfill sites and in the environment. Diverting a greater proportion of waste from landfill has become a national priority with a number of organisations focused on helping to drive a shift to a circular economy.

The South African Plastics Recycling Organisation (SAPRO) acknowledges products that are made from recycled materials through the SAPRO Best Recycled Plastic Product Awards. The awards recognise innovation and progress made in the plastic recycling industry and encourage brand owners, retailers, converters and industrial designers to consider recycled plastics as a material of choice.

Sani-touch, manufacturers of sanitising products and detergent disinfectants including Saniwipe trolley wipes, was a finalist at this year's SAPRO Awards in the Household, leisure and consumer category for its plastic bird feeders made from recycled plastic waste. Entries are judged on a number of criteria including life expectancy, sustainability, product consistency and the wow factor.

The company is no stranger to the recycling phenomenon. In 2021, Sani-touch, in partnership with retailer Shoprite Checkers, announced an ambitious plan to collect used Saniwipe trolley



Image courtesy of www.plasticsinfo.co.za/



Bird Feeder made from recycled Saniwipes and other low grade plastics.

wipes, as well as the buckets the wipes are supplied in, and send them to various recycling plants for processing.

Sani-touch Marketing Director Annette Devenish explains that prior to 2020, most recyclers would not have considered accepting a low-grade flimsy plastic product such as a wipe into their recycling processes. However, after Sani-touch implemented product changes, that changed. "It took a great deal of cajoling and perseverance, but the effort was well worth it," she reveals, adding that almost

all of these used wipes are now finding another extended life in the form of a jungle gym, picnic table, bench or a bird feeder.

Sani-touch partnered with Katlehong entrepreneur Hudson Diphofa to repurpose the recycled plastic into outdoor products. Diphofa, who was retrenched in 2020 during the Covid-19 pandemic, established Structural Poly Plastics & Projects but initially struggled to find regular customers until he was approached by Sani-touch. His latest product – The Bird Feeder by Hudson – is packed flat to enable easy nationwide distribution.





# BIRD FEEDER

by Hudson



*Sustainability in a circular economy*

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By buying this Bird Feeder, you support a local small business.

You also help to complete an environmentally sustainable circular system.

This Bird feeder once was a **Saniwipes**<sup>®</sup> protecting you from bugs and bacteria lurking on your shopping trolley. Collected and sorted by **Shoprite Checkers** store staff, it is then recycled, re-purposed by Structural Poly.

**Hudson Diphofa** started his business after being retrenched in 2020. He now manufactures quality outdoor products such as benches, jungle gyms, tables and other products, extending the life of plastics otherwise too low in quality to re-purpose.

*Thank you for being part of this journey. For more products made by Hudson visit, <https://structuralpoly.com>*

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**Finalist**  
**SAPRO Best Recycled Plastic Product Awards 2023**

Single use plastics – and plastic in general – often gets a bad wrap, she points out. The reality, however, is that plastic is an incredible invention providing fit for purpose products which have become essential to our everyday lives. Plastic products are just as useful in industry with pallets made from recycled plastics outlasting regular wooden pallets by a significant margin.



Images courtesy of www.plasticsinfo.co.za/



recycling, but about finding end products with consumer appeal, creating a demand for these products, educating consumers and encouraging responsible purchasing practices.

“Ultimately, it’s about everybody playing their part in the plastic recycling and circular economy. Businesses need to consider switching to plastic pallets rather than wooden pallets while consumers need to be encouraged to purchase items made from recycled

plastic rather than an alternative. The only way we can ensure that our landfill sites become free of plastic is if we can grow the demand for recycled plastic products,” she concludes. **SR**

“That being said, we all need to use plastic responsibly and it is incumbent on all of us to find innovative ways to keep plastic products out of land fill.” The solution, she says, is not only in

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By Antonello VILARDI,  
adapted by Hippo Zourides

“ The British brand has earned a global reputation, with superior quality products at affordable prices – its model stands out for consistency and considerable attention on private labels. ”

# Waitrose Well-being at the centre!

Waitrose's market share in the UK remains below 5% (4.6% to be precise), far below that of giants such as Tesco (27.1%) or Sainsbury's (14.8%). The data analysis company Kantar Group has recently defined these percentages, which includes Waitrose, the supermarket chain based in Bracknell (in Berkshire), founded in 1904, controlled by the John Lewis Partnership Group, with a turnover of around 7 billion pounds (£168 billion).

## The workforce operates with pride

Beyond its size, in a landscape complicated by inflation and the consumer crisis in the United Kingdom, what stands out most is the involvement of the employees within the company.

They consider themselves 'owners', as they like to call themselves 'partners,' and aspire to share knowledge and passion for 'quality food' when approaching their customers. In institutional communications, this message is also highlighted ...

“ Welcome to Waitrose. Here, we're more than employees – we're owners. That's why we're called partners. And that's why we all go above and beyond to share our knowledge and passion for quality food with people who matter most – you, our customers. ”



Entrance to Waitrose at the Stratford City Shopping Centre.



Waitrose & Partners, more commonly known as Waitrose, in the sign that stands out on its shops, with its green characters.



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Waitrose is effectively controlled by the John Lewis Partnership, which is an employee-owned company.

However it is worth remembering that many chains in Europe, while accentuating their products, prices, services and operating methodologies, also reinforce the overall importance of people.

There is a sort of 'personal matter', which exists and tries to reinvigorate the business, encouraging an ethical depth, which does not seem dissimilar from certain advertising announcements in, say, Italy, such as those of Conad ('people beyond things') or 'you are Coop' (Coop Italia).

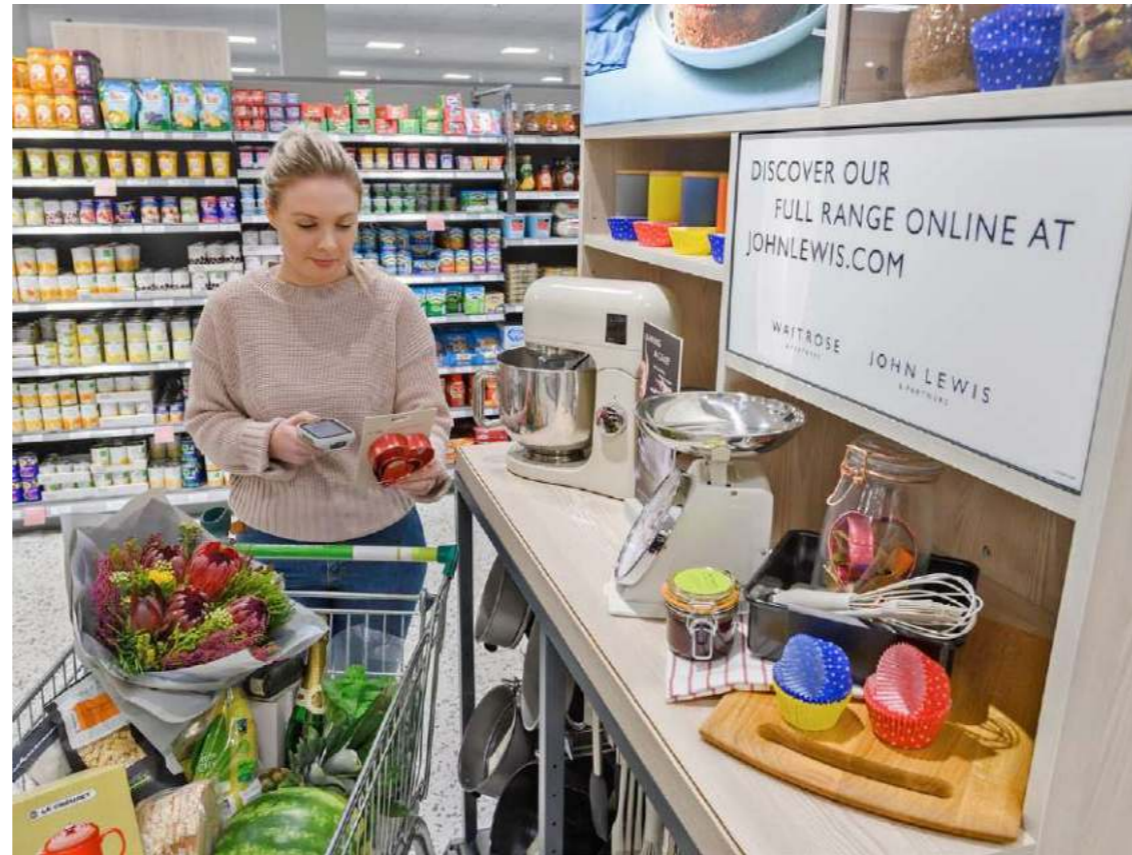
In all countries in truth, certain ideal forms, do not disregard the importance of 'people' – that is, those who surpass objects and processes, who transcend 'products', 'services' and 'methodologies' assembled to serve.

We speak more and more often of a 'customer-centric approach', we perfect ourselves in approaching customers by making the essence of the products stand out.

Waitrose, on this crucial point, has built a precise identity, now recognised and appreciated, ready to stand out even at an international level.

**What people living in the UK think about Waitrose**

Consumers use Waitrose to do selected shopping as they don't go there to do the weekly fillup – in essence, they buy those quality and organic products that are not easily found at Tesco or Sainsbury's.



Customer, carrying out a 'self scanning' operation (ScanPayGo, which can be carried out with the use of the 'my Waitrose' loyalty card).



Checkout station connected to the 'ScanPayGo' self-scanning system.

Waitrose, aspiring to offer better product assortment, has higher prices than the competition and prefers to consolidate relationships with 'wealthy' customers. It is probably no coincidence that one often finds Waitrose outlets in the wealthiest areas.

The brand makes space available for 'niche products', such as a typical Canadian organic honey or Spanish biscuits such as those of Ines Rosales (in 1910, she began to prepare and sell cakes together with other women and, over a hundred years later, she has left a business based on traditional recipes, very attentive to the quality of the ingredients).



**ScanPayGo:** Area used for picking up equipment for shopping with the 'self scanning' method (if in possession of a loyalty card) ... an activity that simplifies time, reduces queues, increases productivity and contains costs.

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Some of the headings of the Waitrose Partners benefit programme include:

- Basic pay
- Bonuses (based on the partnership's performance and profits)
- Discounts
- Pension and life assurance
- Holiday and extended leave
- Subsidised meals at work
- Cycle to work
- Support for working families
- Health and overall well-being
- Free time
- Give as you earn
- Travel
- Flexible working
- Equal sharing parenthood
- Parental leave.

The 'customer service' is polite and always available, both in the official reception areas and along the service departments – equally appreciated is the practical impact of digitisation in-store.

**The 'Essential Waitrose' brand**

The product cornerstones of the private label are eight – meat, chicken, fish, milk, eggs, fruit and vegetables, tea and coffee. All are united by clear provenance information and healthy processing methods.

**Beef and lamb** are strictly British and come from farmers who share a clear commitment to animal well-being.



Demos and good advice in a number of sales floor locations adds to the customers' product knowledge and encourages trial and purchase.



The welcome message to Waitrose stands out, with reference to their employees who feel they are 'owners' of the company and who are called 'partners'.



**BBQ PINEAPPLE PAVLOVA**  
Waitrose online recipe ideas ... Mallowy meringue pairs perfectly with charred pineapple and sour passionfruit in this impressive pud, perfect for balmy summer evenings.



Overview of some of the best-selling 'Waitrose Essential' products.



Waitrose Wild Garlic & Herb Lamb Burgers received an award at the @guildofflinefood Great Taste Awards 2023.

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**Chicken (fresh, frozen or prepared)** which comes from animals reared according to carefully prepared and controlled standards.

**Pork (including sausages, bacon and ham)** originates from UK farms, where pigs are born outdoors and have plenty of room to roam.

**Fish (fresh, canned, frozen or sticks)** comes from responsible sources, while fresh fruit and vegetables are grown in an environmentally friendly way.

**Tea and coffee are Fairtrade.** That is, of certified origin, based on the fair payment of farmers and workers.

**Milk** is drawn from cows that have spent more than half of the year in open pastures.

**Eggs** are laid by hens that have been given plenty of room to peck, perch, and move around.

These products have very clear traceability, they spread the name of the brand and its values by being stocked, in addition to supermarkets, at the various Little Waitrose shops on the UK motorway service areas and the **Welcome Break** outlets. The articles are exported to over 50 countries, including destinations as far away from northern Europe as Singapore, Mauritius, Ghana and even at Food Lovers in South Africa.

'Waitrose' branded groceries arrive worldwide as a result of relationships with food and beverage specialists and distributors.



On a hot Bank Holiday weekend, the Waitrose farmer team makes sure the free range pigs keep cool in the heat.



Counter with butcher's service, with reference to the quality of the meat, in respect of animal welfare (Waitrose is the No.1 supermarket for animal welfare).



Packaged cured meats at the self-service perishable line.



**BREAKFAST MUFFIN.** Waitrose online recipe with homemade muffins, peppery sausage, melted mozzarella, vibrant pesto and their No.1 Longstock Gold Free Range Eggs, these breakfast muffins are worth getting up for.



View of part of the fruit and vegetable display.



The green plastic crates, usually used to build mass displays, lend themselves here to keeping the bulk stable in the gradient exposure of the display counter.

The first overseas store was opened in Dubai in 2008. Now there are 14 stores operating under license in Dubai and Abu Dhabi – a home delivery service was even launched in the United Arab Emirates in 2020 through the website [www.waitrose.ae](http://www.waitrose.ae).

The collaboration with Foods of Europe, based in Hampshire, has the aim of exporting Waitrose products to Asian countries (among the most important of which Thailand, Malaysia, Singapore, Hong Kong and the Philippines stand out).

Thanks to the relationship with Caribbean Trading, Waitrose groceries are stocked by Massy's Supermarkets on many distant islands including Barbados and Trinidad.

The relationship (since 1998) with ParknShop, in Hong Kong and in southern China, makes available typical products such as muesli, candies and canned tomatoes to the Chinese market.

In the partnership with Shell, on the other hand, Waitrose follows the environmental commitment and aspires to install 800 recharging points

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**Apples and pears:** Even for fruit (loose or packaged), the green plastic crates lend themselves to containing the product, favouring its gradient visibility.



Display counter dedicated to the variety of potatoes (a very popular food in the United Kingdom).



nisable), to implement a good general presentation (with adequate visual appeal and packaging), to prepare different and innovative features to complete the product range already existing on the network.

Waitrose is the largest retailer to sign up to the Organic Potato Pledge. The supermarket will stop the use of copper-based fungicides on its organic fresh potatoes.

for electric vehicles in the areas surrounding some well-placed stores by 2025.

Attention to regional demand trends is exercised through an appreciation of local producers (small as they are sometimes), local variety and the sense of community their products bring to the shops.

The features of Waitrose have been designed to distinguish them from the competition through aspects such as eco-sustainability, the impeccable quality of the raw materials and the correctness of the production processes. In accordance with this, Waitrose specifies that its suppliers, in order to be able to collaborate, have an ongoing obligation to ensure very high standards of preparation, to use quality ingredients (simple and recog-



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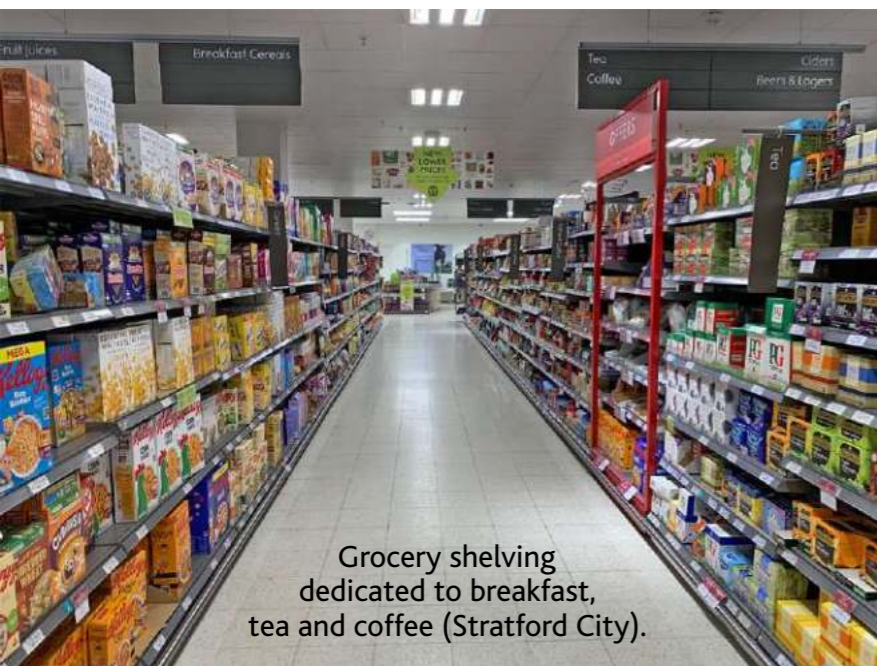
Display of refrigerated products, of Italian origin.



Rich display of foods and beverages of a 'healthy' nature.



Aisle (cleaning aids) dedicated to toilet paper and dishwashing products (Stratford City).



Grocery shelving dedicated to breakfast, tea and coffee (Stratford City).



Display of specialised products, appreciated by Waitrose's target customers, including tofu.



Wine section: In this area, French wines have the greatest visibility, suggesting the prestige that British consumers attribute to them.



Fish market stall (Stratford City).



Area intended for 'sushi' (Stratford City).



Small bread display (Stratford City).



**Animal Welfare App**

Much has been invested in the brand’s image by marketing. Continuous commitments to consistency are undertaken daily in the branches of the network as well as in the operational strategies of the central management.

In particular, what stands out is the way in which technological innovation has been used, not to produce more profit for the immediate future, but to consolidate the simplicity and more reassuring usability of meat.

Corporate marketing has built an identikit on the concept of animal ‘well-being’, which should be continuously improved. Now a pioneering app has even been tested to measure how farm animals feel. This technology, featured in the BBC’s Countryfile, was designed to help understand and recognise how animal behaviour is linked to emotional well-being.

Ultimately, the data will improve their quality of life and raise their standards of well-being.

“Physical health is vital to well-being, but there is a clear consensus in the scientific community that animal well-being is driven by factors such as enjoyment, contentment and positive arousal. They play an equally vital role in ensuring an animal has a good life,” says F. Wemelsfelder, lead scientist and researcher at Rural College Scotland, who developed the app.

The scholar adds that, “It is essential to recognise farm animals as sentient creatures capable of experiencing a series of positive emotions and experiences.”



The Waitrose Duchy Organic brand was founded by King Charles in 1990 when he was HRH The Prince of Wales, and since the very first Duchy Organic Oaten Biscuits were made from wheats and oats organically grown on the Highgrove Estate some 30 years ago, what has been set in motion since then is an incredible story of food and farming that Waitrose is so proud to be part of. Image credit: Ian Jones/PWCF



Aquaculture on the west coast of Scotland. Wrasse Cleaner fish can live in the pens with Waitrose farmed Atlantic Salmon and help keep them healthy.



Sweetcorn season! Waitrose’s long standing supplier, Barfoot Farms, shows us how the harvest is looking ... it’s good!



Waitrose Duchy Organic eggs were the first to be sold in a box made from a mixture of rye grass and recycled paper, using 60% less water and 50% less paper pulp than standard.

So welfare evaluators, who visit around 1 800 Waitrose farms, use the first-of-its-kind app to record how animals express their emotions through behaviours such as being relaxed, tense, playful or anxious.



“It’s a huge development for the industry, as it’s the first time a retailer has explored welfare measures based on the concept of an animal’s freedom to express positive emotions” says James Bailey, executive director of Waitrose. The top manager adds ...

Probably, it is no longer enough to proclaim meticulous attention in the control of the supply chain and spend money to announce (with images, testimonials and posters) how healthy and respectful the products placed on the counters are – everyone does this by now ... the competition, after all, lives on imitation and levels everything (in quality as in prices). Basically, there is no certainty of actual coherence in the publicised processes. To stand out, new, effective, practical ideas are needed, to be progressively consolidated.

How many use technology to experiment with initiatives aimed at achieving truly healthy and environmentally friendly purposes (including animals), guarantors of absolute levels of quality and ethical products? In this question, Waitrose is today ahead of the race.

“ In some countries, farmed animals continue to be considered as food production systems that need to be managed. This is wrong and in order for the UK to maintain its leading position in animal husbandry standards, it is vital that we recognise farm animals as sentient creatures capable of experiencing a range of positive emotions and experiences. ”

The app (launched in February 2021) has already been awarded at the 2021 BBC ‘Food & Farming Awards’, as winner in the ‘Farming for the Future’ category.

Waitrose is also the holder of the European ‘Best Retailer’ award for ‘Compassion in World Farming’, which it has won three times in a row.



Innovative Farmers is a network of farmers, advisors, researchers and businesses working together on finding solutions that work with nature. It is part of the Duchy Future Farming Programme, which Waitrose co-founded with the Soil Association, and is funded by the Prince of Wales’s Charitable Fund.



On David Homer’s farm in Wiltshire, the cows graze on lush, green grass, lying down to chew the cud and, from time to time, lift their tails to help David out with a supply of fertiliser. ‘Back in 2016, David’s cows featured in a television advert for Waitrose, highlighting their grazing promise. “We keep an eye on the weather and the ground conditions, and how much grass is available, but they’re usually outside by the beginning of March,” says David. “They’ll graze through the summer into the autumn, and we won’t bring them indoors until it gets cold and wet, around the first week of November.”



As well as plenty of cows there are also two sunflower paddocks. Not only do these look beautiful but they help to increase biodiversity on the farm and provide a habitat for plenty of nature.

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In fruit and vegetables, a dramatised corner dedicated to flowers (Stratford City).

**Pot plants:** Floral theatre encourages impulse sales.



Sometimes, all it takes is a random act of kindness to bring sunshine to someone's day. With some quick thinking, Tom and Cathy from Waitrose Sandbach were able to stop their flowers from going to waste by hand-delivering them to residents and staff at local care homes. The blooms may have been on their sell-by date but, while they couldn't be sold any more, the beautiful bouquets could still brighten everyone's day!



Waitrose farmers grow a special variety of tomatoes that stay green when they are ripe and sweet.



Harry Hall, with dog Cora, supplies Waitrose with seasonal strawberries, raspberries and blueberries on his LEAF-certified farms.

Several years ago, Hall Hunter farms had trouble pollinating their blueberries because they relied too heavily on a honeybee population that didn't become active until at least the end of May – or later if the weather was cool.

Harry came up with a detailed plan to encourage better natural pollination, including introducing bumblebee colonies that would help pollinate before the honeybees took over. Not only do bumblebees start earlier in the season, they work industriously long days, starting earlier and finishing later than honeybees.

Hives were placed in the middle of blueberry crops, and the volumes of bumblebees were adjusted according to the point in the season and the weather. It has proved to be a natural and mutually beneficial arrangement for both farmer and bees.



The Waitrose Foundation is aimed at improving lives and transforming communities around the world. Since the Foundation was established in 2005, Waitrose, along with its importer, exporter and grower partners have invested to improve lives in farming communities across South Africa, Ghana and Kenya. Key to the success is the proactive involvement of these partners in shaping the activities and direction of the Foundation. Working together can contribute positively towards the future of food and farming, building more resilient supply chains, enabling progressive global development and better lives for people.



Waitrose Foundation celebrates Cami successes at Groep 91 / Kaross Foundation, November 2022. Sharing from their post on Facebook: "Our first ever prize-giving for Cami learners! Jack Malungana, the Cami manager at Vhulakanjhani Primary school, evaluated learners in Gr 3, 4 and 5 to determine those who achieved the highest score and showed the best improvement."



**Hippo Zourides**, serial entrepreneur and corporate leader, has been involved in the food trade for over four decades and consults to corporates, large, medium and small enterprises on a variety of management and restructuring skills, including the latest ESG requirements.



**Antonello Vilardi**, professional in managing points of sale at numerous commercial signs, editorial collaborator for specialised magazines, consultant and lecturer in university masters. He has written books on large-scale retail trade.



The Waitrose Foundation-SA congratulates grower partner Auldearn Farm on being 55 years young! Wishing the whole team only the best for the way forward.



An example of how skills training and entrepreneurial education have very positive outcomes, with a sustainable business model, is at Groep 91 Uitvoer in the Letsitele region of the Limpopo Province. This family-owned citrus producer's

Kaross Foundation is responsible for the comprehensive management of social development projects related to their businesses and its community. With regards to creative outlets, it has become designer and producer of world class hand embroidered textiles. An inspiring team of entrepreneurs in action!



In August, a two day training course was held at Goudini Spa, near Rawsonville, presented by Waitrose Foundation CEO, Kobus Visagie. This is a programme rolled out in various regions across Southern Africa, for the benefit of Waitrose grower partners and specifically focused on management skills for line managers. The programme content includes ...

The Line Managers' role in People Management; Line Managers and their Worker Communities; Developing one's own Management Style; Motivation; Productivity; Job Design; Managing the Job Environment of Subordinates; Managing their Job Content; Management by Objective; Job Satisfaction; Performance Management; Management of Underperformance; and Leadership vs Management.

SR





**Steven Heilbron**  
CEO of Capital Connect

## South African retailers embrace fintech solutions to supercharge cash management

The fundamental principles around cash management in retail haven't changed much over the years. Retailers of all shapes and sizes need to securely manage and process cash, card and electronic payments flowing into their business, manage working capital in an efficient manner, and ultimately, leverage their cash flow and borrowed money to run and grow their retail businesses.

But what has changed over the years is that South African retailers today are looking towards financial technology companies (fintechs) to enable them to gain better visibility into cash flow, improve liquidity, and automate business processes, says Steven Heilbron, CEO of Capital Connect, a leading fintech that offers fast and flexible business funding to South African retailers.

He says that in the current environment of slow growth and rising interest rates, retailers are turning to tech-driven solutions to automate cash management and increase business efficiencies. These solutions enable retailers to digitise their cash and get transparency into real-time transactions in their business, equipping them to



move fast in response to business opportunities.

"Cash flow is the life blood of any retail business," says Heilbron. "Retailers that are able to optimise the management of money flowing in and out of their stores have a distinct competitive advantage. Fintech's are transforming this element of retail by empowering merchants with tools that give them levels of control and transparency that were once unheard of."

### **Leveraging fintech tools to enhance cash flow visibility and automate business processes**

One of the distinct trends in retail cash management is the rise of fintech companies that offer a complete suite of cash flow management tools

that stretch from automating cash management through to borrowing money with a swipe and a click on a mobile app. Cash management used to be an arduous manual process with slow transfer of risk—and that's no longer the case.

"Automated, intelligent cash vaults have proven to be a game-changer for retailers. With an automated cash vault, built to SABS Category 4 standards, a retailer can put the bank in their store," says Heilbron. "Once the retailer deposits their cash into

the smart cash vault, funds are guaranteed with an immediate transfer of risk. They can get real-time access to their cash, whilst stored safely in their vault, at the click of a button from an app, whenever they need it."

An automated cash management solution with a robust cash vault or a smart retail ATM recycler can enable a retailer to reduce costs of cash management up to 40%.

These cash handling devices improve accuracy, reduce shrinkage, and minimise the frequency of cash-in-transit (CIT) pickups. But the cash vault or ATM recycler is simply the foundation of a stack of fintech-enabled solutions that completely transform cash management.

## Addressing fragmented solutions

Says Heilbron: "This new generation of fintech providers address the complexity and fragmentation retailers used to face in cash management. Fintechs offer an affordable, integrated portfolio of offerings that allow retailers to shift closer towards the ideal of real-time cash visibility, so that they can be more agile in growing their businesses."

Mobile technology is one of the keys to this new fintech world. A leading provider will offer retailers a mobile app that enables it to easily, transact in real time, or even borrow millions of rands in working capital without the red tape or needing to go through a drawn-out and complicated credit process.

## Real-time transactions and agile responses enabled by digital cash management

Such a cash management software solution generates real-time data that helps retailers optimise cash flow and make timely and informed business decisions. For example, they should be able to see how much they have sold for the day (sales throughput), how their customers paid (cash, debit card, credit card, accounts), when payment will reflect in their bank account, and what their cost of sales is.

With this view, they can determine if a specific day or even a shift was profitable. The more days the store is profitable, the more risk the retailer can take to expand their business, stock other products, or diversify into new areas. Waiting until the end of the month to determine if the retail



“ Retailers that are able to optimise the management of money flowing in and out of their stores have a distinct competitive advantage. ”

business made a profit or a loss is usually too late, and the damage done might be irreparable.

Retailers also have the flexibility to assign cash deposits to different lines of business (such as the in-store coffee shop or the fuel station forecourt), as well as the ability to choose customised settlement options. They can, for example, choose to delay settlement of cash deposits for a smaller fee, or get instantly settlement by paying a small premium.

Another part of a fintech product stack is value-added services, which enable retailers to earn commission by providing customers with services at till-point such as prepaid airtime, data, and electricity; bill payments; Lotto and gaming top-up vouchers as well as money transfers. "Retailers can use cash from the vault to instantly fund their VAS SuperWallet to sell value services. And retailers can also use their SuperWallet to buy stock or pay hundreds of suppliers right away – without having to pay a cash deposit fee," says Heilbron.

## Fintech opening doors for retailers' growth and prosperity

A final and critical piece of the puzzle is click-and-borrow financing, which allows merchants to access business medium sized loans in as little as 24 hours without having to jump through hoops.

They can stock up, take

advantage of bulk purchases at discounted rates or supplier specials, and even create new in-store shopping experiences for their customers – allowing no opportunity to slip between their fingers.

There are online tools retailers can use to choose a capital injection that will suit their pocket. Nifty apps enable retailers to select a loan amount and repayment period so that they can determine if they can afford the instalment. They can also opt to pay in small daily instalments, instead of monthly debit orders, to minimise impact on their cash flow.

Says Heilbron: "Opportunity capital opens doors for retailers, enabling them to grow, thrive and outsmart the competition. We are constantly expanding our set of solutions to help SMEs unleash their potential—whether that is achieved through smart retail cash management, lightning-fast access to working capital or value-added products and services that give their customers that extra edge of convenience." **SR**

# Positive retail

## Adapting & thriving – driving success



**Joanne Gould**  
CEO, Smollan South Africa

It can be a slippery slope – loadshedding, the economy, post-pandemic aftershocks, communities facing hardships and even the chill of winter. However, as we ease into spring the retail pendulum is shifting as an optimistic breeze starts blowing in South Africa (SA).

Joanne Gould CEO, Smollan South Africa plugs in to this renewed energy, highlighting some good news and fresh concepts for this sector.

There are some huge positives in retail from the increased adoption of ecommerce and digital platforms reaching a wider customer base and providing convenience for shoppers. Physical stores expanding their online presence. Consumers becoming more conscious of the environmental impact of their purchases and retailers responding to that. More responsible manufacturing and packaging practices becoming the norm.

We've seen innovations in payment methods. Tech and data analytics are being leveraged and retailers are understanding their customers better. Don't get me wrong – we can go down a rabbit hole of doom and gloom and at times with due cause, but there are some positive shifts happening and that's very encouraging.

Image courtesy of Liza Summer, Pexels



Retail in SA in 2023 is indeed seeing enhanced convenience, sustainability, and personalised experiences for shoppers. Changes that reflect evolving customer preferences and the industry's response to meet these demands. The preference for said convenience combined with fresh competition has pushed some retailers to merge their products into one space. As reported by Mail & Guardian, The Foschini Group (TFG) partnered with Superbalist to develop Bash, their online store where all the TFG-owned brands are conveniently sold in one place.

On the other side of the coin, there are retailers that instead have chosen to nurture their brick-and-mortar experience such as Zara with renovations at their Sandton City and V&A Waterfront stores to give shoppers a more luxurious experience. While 'We Are EGG' opened their "next-generation department store" filling empty spaces left by previous brand giants and instead creating a "high-energy, integrative, experiential shopping experience".



Recently PwC published the first-ever Retailer Sentiment Index for SA, measuring how consumers feel about the country's biggest retail brands such as Woolworths, Spar, Checkers, Shoprite, Food Lover's and the like. Woolworths emerged as the clear winner "lauded for its house brands and high-quality goods." Interestingly when it came to customer service though, all brands saw an overall negative sentiment, indicating that this remains a big point of contention in our retail sector with room for improvement. However, there is light at the end of the tunnel with Spar emerging as the top retailer when it comes to great deals and driving positive sentiment.

Left of centre in terms of future forward, as reported by [www.cointelegraph.com](http://www.cointelegraph.com) saw Pick n Pay accepting Bitcoin payments in more than 2 000 stores nationwide at the start of 2023. Customers can pay for items using cryptocurrency via a smartphone app or by scanning a QR code and accepting the rand conversion rate at the time of payment. Buying airtime, electricity, plane and bus tickets and municipal bills is made simple and convenient at the tills using #BitCoin. According to the stats, Chainanalysis' 2033 Global Crypto Adoption Index, estimated that about 10% to 13% of the SA population holds crypto assets.

Online marketplaces are thriving, the popularity of which continues to increase in SA, with various ecommerce platforms expanding their presence such as Takealot, OneDayOnly and Superbalist. Offering a wide range of products and deals to cater to diverse consumer preferences.

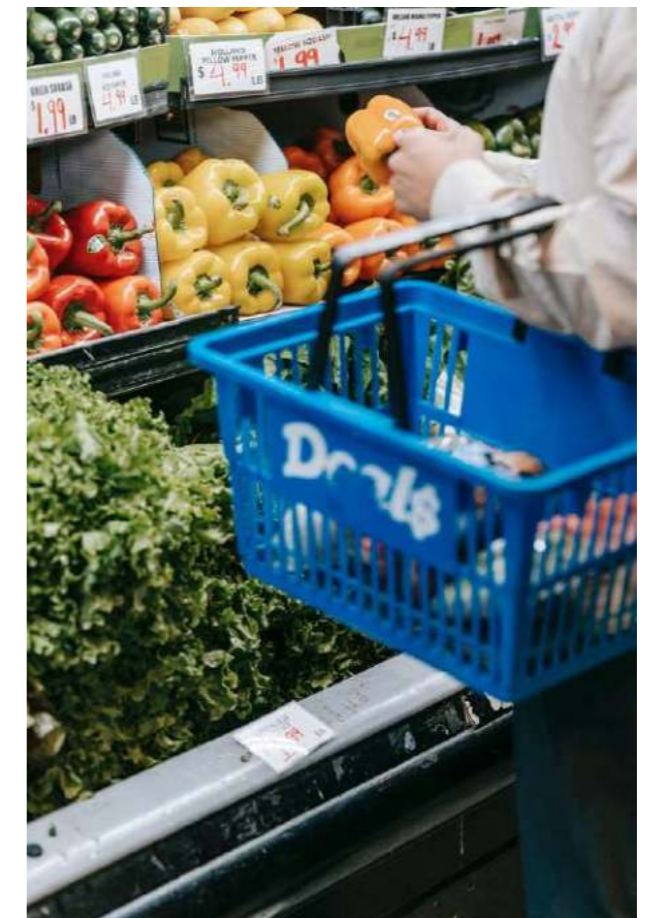
Image courtesy of Amina Filkins, Pexels



So too, sustainable, and eco-friendly stores are making their mark in response to environmental concerns, with several retailers focusing on sustainable practices. From eco-friendly products to a reduction in packaging waste, or newly established recycling programs. Pioneered by the likes of Faithful to Nature and The Refillery

as they prioritise the 'healthy people, healthy planet' ethos. While pop-up shops and temporary retail spaces gain popularity offering unique experiences and limited time offers. Showcasing local artisans, emerging brands, and niche products, keeping the retail experience fresh and relevant.

As we moved past the halfway mark in the year – our focus should be on collaborating, building a customer-centric culture, playing to win, embracing, and integrating technology, personalising experiences, supporting local businesses, integrating online and offline and increasing convenience. Navigating the challenges and shining a light on the positive as we move forward. **SR**



# Global brands partner with FSC to engage shoppers in forest protection

Forest Week is a timely opportunity for businesses, consumers, NGOs and other organisations to come together and drive action towards choosing responsibly sourced products.

The Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) – committed to protecting the world's forests through sustainable forestry – is holding its second annual Forest Week from 23–29 September 2023. This global campaign will see individuals and businesses coming together to help safeguard the world's forests, and those that depend on them, by making positive shopping choices.

This year's theme, Trust the Tree, will shed light on the key role forests play in fighting the climate and biodiversity crises. Forest Week will see daily content across leading social platforms for the seven days of the campaign. This will be complemented by events and special partnerships with organisations dedicated to safeguarding forests worldwide.

Last year, Forest Week 2022 saw more than 1 200 partners from over 40 countries actively participate in the campaign, reaching 42 million consumers worldwide. "FSC Forest Week 2022 demonstrated the collective passion and commitment towards the world's forests," said Trevor Armel, Director of Marketing at FSC International.



"We're very inspired to see so many engaged in making this year's effort bigger than ever, raising awareness about the irrefutable role forests play in the fight for a climate-resilient future."

As consumers increasingly consider the impact of their shopping choices, and favour brands that provide sustainable options, Forest Week is the opportunity to turn consumerism into a force for good. Forests sustain us, and sustainably sourced forest products can help ensure resilient, thriving forests for all, forever. **SR**



For 300 million people, forests provide a home, depending on them for food, fuel, medicine, and their livelihoods. In turn, they make stewardship a part of everything they do. Indigenous groups and local communities manage one-quarter of the world's land. Globally, indigenous land experiences up to 26 per cent less deforestation than non-protected areas.



Learn more about the campaign at [fsc.org/forestweek](https://fsc.org/forestweek)  
For more information on Forest Week, contact [g.busse@fsc.org](mailto:g.busse@fsc.org)  
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