SUPERMARKET & RETAILER

PROFIT FROM MARKET FIRST INFORMATION

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Image by Ziehefzie, www.canva.com

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EDITORIAL

In suspense: Awaiting our future destination

As a nation, we hold our collective breath, wondering where we will land. No matter how you view it, we are in a state of transition. Our elections are

Helen Maister

just around the corner, scheduled for May 29, 2024 – only two days from now. Anticipation hangs thick in the air, and everyone is maneuvering for a better position. Many believe that almost anything would be preferable to an ANC/EFF coalition. With hope in our hearts, we hold our breath and cast our votes for a brighter future.

Cool insights – Spotlight on sustainable retail & wholesale refrigeration

For FMCG retailers and wholesalers, refrigeration is a predominant topic in business discussions. In-store refrigeration is vital – it ensures food safety and shelf life, affects accessibility and display, and is an integral part of the customer experience. It is also a complex and overarching category covering hardware, display units, freezers and coolers, cooling systems, data collection (IoT), maintenance, lighting, and case technology.

In addition to this, as refrigeration costs soar and the impact of commercial refrigeration on the environment draws closer scrutiny, sustainability as become a watchword for the industry.

But just how can retailers and wholesalers move into the future? With such a massive category, just knowing where to start can be a stumbling block. Happily, this intriguing topic blends innovation and technology with common sense, practical

Back of house systems, equipment, solutions & innovations for FMCG retailers & wholesalers

Unseen by the consumer, your back of house (BOH) can make or break the retail or wholesale experience. Like the cogs in a machine, BOH employees, processes, systems and solutions must work seamlessly and tirelessly to shape the front of house proceedings as an essential part of your overall offering.

What makes your kitchen and food preparation BOH work is a combination of zealous organisation, adaptability, knowledge, and experience. From delivery and receiving through stockrooms and cold storage; your kitchen areas; service departments including bakery, butchery, fresh produce and deli, to cleaning, maintenance, health and safety – ensuring your BOH myriad moving parts run efficiently, smoothly and at optimum productivity means focusing on the finer details while also keeping an eye on the bigger picture.

Cash Handling & Security – Is automation the answer?

While it may seem curious for some to still be talking about cash in retail in 2024, the truth is that cash remains the only universal payment method for all South Africans, even though it's no longer the dominant payment method it once was.

According to research by the Boston Consulting Group, 86% of South Africans report using cash regularly, and 95% of people withdraw cash from ATMs at least once a month, highlighting cash's continued presence in our economy. Which begs the question: what can retailers and wholesalers do to make cash handling both seamless and secure at a time when cash-related crime is still one of the biggest scourges for South African law enforcement?

Transforming learning – Education 4.0 for the Fourth Industrial Revolution and beyond

Not so long ago, education was a simple affair: a classroom, an educator, perhaps a chalkboard, and, if you were lucky, a projector. It's remarkable how far we've come since then, with technology transforming the learning landscape beyond recognition.

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DELIGHT YOUR CUSTOMERS

Illustration: www.deviantart.com/

How behavioural economics and 'being human' affects your business.

Of dentists & petrol stations

Aki Kalliatakis
aki@leadershiplaunchpad.co.za

Never-ever underestimate people's capacity to change. Ricardo Semler, CEO of Mexican cement company, CeMex, made this lovely statement ...

Ricardo Semler

> "If only minds were as easy to change as machines. I'll wager that it's easier to invent a new generation of microchips than to get a generation of middle managers to alter the routes they drive to work every day."

Let's pretend you are a dentist with a practice that includes many families and children. You know that kids are often terrified of visiting you. Will you do the almost mandatory 'lollipops in a jar' to calm them down? And would that be a good idea given the fact that you don't really want kids to see sweets as a reward? Or would you seek some other innovative solution, perhaps to entertain or distract them while they are so scared?

One dentist, let's call her doctor M.,
asked this question ...

What are the things that really make kids laugh?

Sure enough she and her team came up with some excellent ideas. When it came to boys, it was either anything to do with electronics and anything to do with... Farting! [Yes, I know.]

So she bought a few whoopee cushions, and even some little electronic devices with a speaker and a big red button that when pressed makes farting noises. And she cracks jokes about it all of the time.

When she gives boys any treatment, she says, "And you can expect that this is going to give you some epic farts. She also created a really small 'Kids Zone' which doesn't consist of some old, frayed children's books, but is more like a small video arcade, and represents something similar to similar zones in family restaurants.

Now if you have just spent a small fortune and sacrificed seven years of your life to become a dentist, there is a good chance that you will follow traditional processes and strategies for healing your patients – and there is probably also a little bit of academic snobbery ingrained in you. "This is really beneath me as a dentist to respond to this kind of tactic," you'd probably say to yourself.

And you'd be completely wrong. All you need to know you is that Dr. M. is booked months in advance and is doing so well that she now works with (employs) a whole bunch of other dentists just to keep up with the demand. Moms are delighted because they don't need to wring blood from stone to persuade their children to visit the dentist and kids don't feel that fear that they used to when they visit the 'Kids Zone'.

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Yep, it's as I thought, you need braces ...six sets in fact.

Illustration: https://hotcore.info/

Now let's pretend again ...

You are planning to open a new petrol station where you live. What would you do to make sure it succeeds? There are probably dozens of tactics that you would come up with like decent branding, great service, or an attractive shop.

But I'm willing to bet that in your top five priorities will be the location of your business ...

> "Traditionally, all new petrol stations were built on really busy roads, and they had to be really visible to loads and loads of people. If customers couldn't find you easily, you couldn't sell them petrol and then you'd be out of business."

Illustration: Eric Lopatka, Birds Tattoo.

So in some ways, just like peacocks and their magnificent feathers, petrol stations had to be conspicuous, recognisable and obvious. And, just like peacocks, this attractiveness came at rather a heavy price. Expensive real estate, tons of huge branding logos, signage and symbols, and powerful lighting to shine on everything. That's how these businesses evolved – and succeeded – over the past few decades.

But something has changed in the world of cars and travelling – and that is your SatNav system. Identifying petrol stations even in an unknown neighbourhood has just become really easy.

By the way, I predict that as electric cars become more and more popular, the idea of charging stations on main roads will become completely irrelevant.

Can you see how this has all sorts of other implications too? For example, the petrol station owners need to talk to all the various app developers and make sure that they are very visible on the maps.

But they also have to change customers' perceptions by stating the benefits of visiting a petrol station that may be a little off the main route.

This is something that may not be as difficult as it sounds. When you take a long trip on a main highway, you are probably going to turn off the highway to fill up anyway. Why shouldn't this also be so in cities?

Visibility in today's world isn't just physical visibility – it's also digital visibility. And that's why working with customers' perceptions are so important. Whether you are a dentist that wants to make her practice more popular and less stressful, or a petrol station operator who needs to make a profit, you simply can't keep doing the same things that we've always done.

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As one anonymous inspirational writer put it ...

If you always do what you've always done, you will always get what you've always got.

Just in case you misunderstand me, I'm not one who thinks that change is always a good thing. I'm not a proponent of, "If it ain't broke, fix it anyway." And this is particularly true when finance executives want to save money by using technology to replace people.

For example, on a recent trip to the UK, I saw those self-help checkout tills where customers can scan their own groceries, pack them and pay. Apart from the obvious reasons this wouldn't work in South Africa,

I also observed another really silly thing ... as you scan your item, you put it onto a little shelf right next to the scanner/till. Once that's full – and it only takes a handful of items to fill up the shelf – there's nowhere to put any additional items you want, so you abandon the extras and get on with completing the transaction. In other words, they are actively discouraging customers from buying more than just a few items.

But, technology apart, what else has changed in your world – and more importantly in your customers' world – that you need to review right now, and change before your business becomes irrelevant? **SR**

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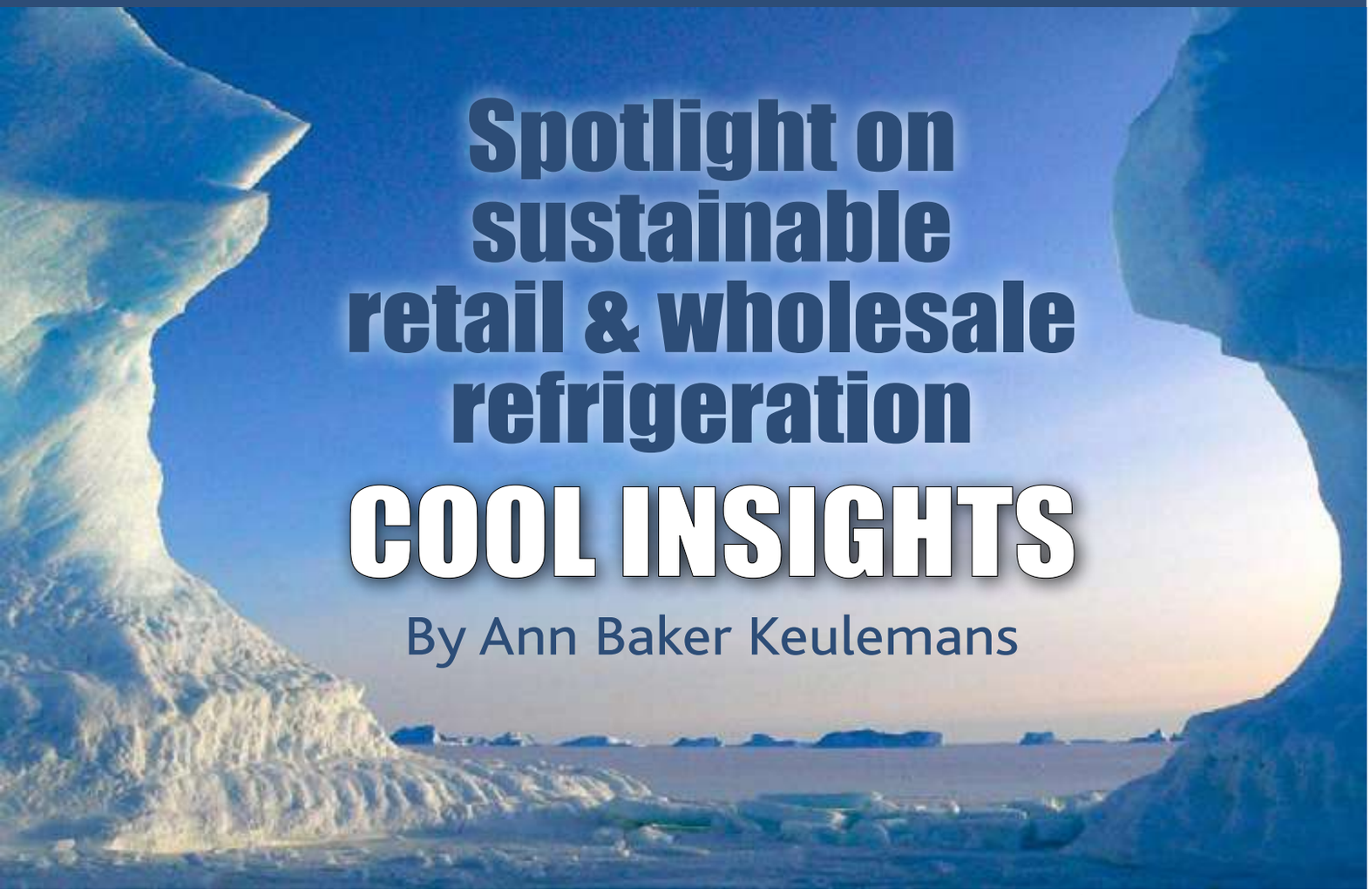

Spotlight on sustainable retail & wholesale refrigeration

COOL INSIGHTS

By Ann Baker Keulemans

Image by MemoryCatcher from Pixabay, www.canva.com

For FMCG retailers and wholesalers, refrigeration is a predominant topic in business discussions. In-store refrigeration is vital – it ensures food safety and shelf life, affects accessibility and display, and is an integral part of the customer experience. It is also a complex and overarching category covering hardware, display units, freezers and coolers, cooling systems, data collection (IoT), maintenance, lighting, and case technology.

In addition to this, as refrigeration costs soar and the impact of commercial refrigeration on the environment draws closer scrutiny, sustainability has become a watchword for the industry. But just how can retailers and wholesalers move into the future? With such a massive category, just knowing where to start can be a stumbling block. Happily, this intriguing topic blends innovation and technology with common sense, practical progression, and smart business decisions.

Plug in, play on: Sustainability and energy efficiency for in-store refrigeration

Multilayer Trading 867 has an ethos of sustainability, responsibility, and energy efficiency. As importers of specialised self-contained commercial supermarket refrigeration solutions, they have ensured that their solutions are green. They say, "In a globalised world of constant change, we believe it is important to act sustainably and with a view to the future. It is our duty to set standards which the following generations can build upon – concerning environmental aspects as well as the ability to finance our future."

The company specialises in plug-in solutions that, thanks to the complete integration of all the refrigeration components, require no additional installation costs. It's a convenient solution that significantly reduces the cost of developing or refurbishing a refrigeration system.

The company's commitment to continued research and development has resulted in several innovations that improve sustainability in terms of both performance and longevity, as well as environmentally friendly applications. Variable speed compressors avoid peak loads and help reduce running costs, and propane R290, a natural refrigerant, is eco-friendly while also improving the efficiency of the cabinet. Semi-automatic defrost means that any excessive build-up of ice in a cabinet, which can increase energy use and would typically require labour for defrosting, can be avoided.

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Monitoring and predictive maintenance for in-store refrigeration

Integrating a monitoring system into your refrigeration solution is invaluable. With the advancements in technology and the addition of machine learning and artificial intelligence (AI), monitoring your system has become easy and seamless. However, monitoring energy consumption, temperature, and efficiency is just the tip of the iceberg. Many systems can monitor everything, through to the amount of stock within the refrigerator, chiller, or freezer, and even track stock as it moves in or out of the unit.

The importance here is the monitoring of energy usage, fluctuations in temperature, and any changes to the efficiency of the system. By leveraging data collection and analysis with machine learning and AI, retailers and wholesalers can move beyond reactive and even preventative maintenance that runs on a schedule, and into predictive maintenance, based on real-time conditions. The positive impact this sort of monitoring and maintenance has on efficiency and sustainability cannot be overlooked.

Detailed monitoring systems such as those provided by Multilayer Trading, which uses the Carel Boss system, offers real-time monitoring of the refrigeration's parameters, aids the troubleshooting process, issues immediate alerts when problems occur, and decreases downtime.

The supermarket Super Brugsen in Augustenborg on Als, Southern Denmark, recycles 95 percent of the excess heat generated from the refrigeration system. www.danfoss.com/

Explore the benefits of waste heat recovery for your refrigeration solution

Sustainable commercial refrigeration practices go far beyond cooling. Modern waste heat recovery systems allow retailers and wholesalers to repurpose excess heat generated during the refrigeration process and use it for operations such as heating.

The benefits of waste heat recovery are many, says the Australian Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water.

"In chillers, heat from the refrigeration process is expelled via air-cooled condensers or cooling towers.

Modern chillers, in particular those using ammonia or CO_2 refrigerant offer significant potential to recover wasted heat at useful temperature levels (greater than 50°C). This recovered heat can be used to offset the consumption of other operations, such as heating water."

Waste heat recovery is a valuable energy source, can improve your bottom line and reduce carbon emissions while improving your sustainability rating. Multilayer Trading is just one of the green-minded manufacturers advancing sustainable solutions by investing in this type of technology. They say ...

> "With the implementation of a waste heat system, all previous preconceptions of self-contained refrigeration are changed, resulting in an achievable solution that is environmentally friendly and energy-efficient, no matter what the store environment is."

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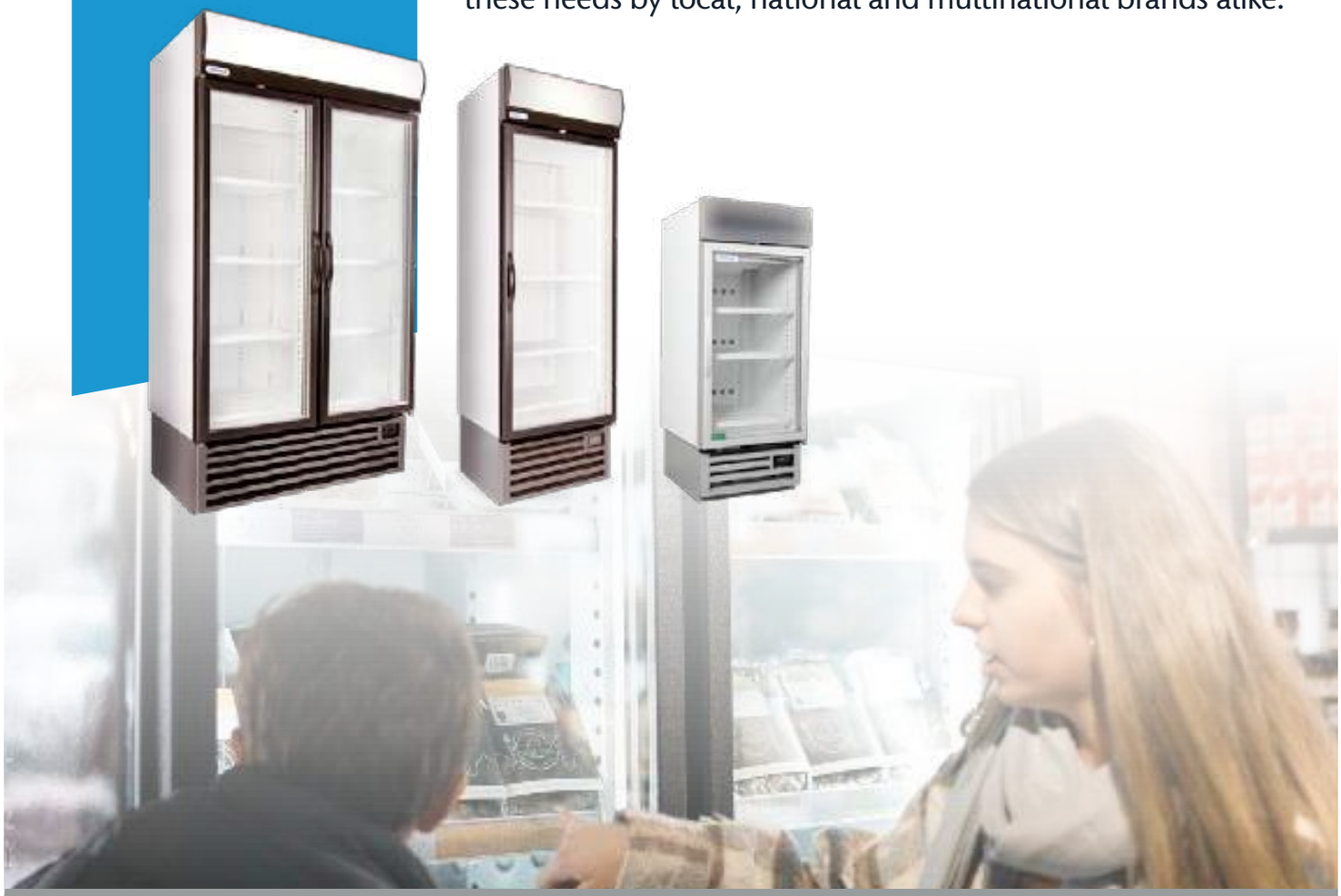

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Natural refrigerants, as the name suggests, are naturally occurring substances that are used as coolants in different refrigeration systems like freezers, air conditioning systems, HVAC systems. Ammonia, carbon dioxide, propane, and isobutane are some of the most commonly used natural refrigerants.
Allied Market Research. Linkedin

Future proofing in-store refrigeration with natural refrigerants

One thing is clear – when it comes to refrigerants, it's time to go natural. Thomas Trevisan, writing for Natural Refrigerants Cooling & Heating Marketplace, says, "The European Union's revised F-gas Regulation, which mandates a complete phase-out of the consumption of HFCs across the bloc by 2050, as well as specific phase-out dates for the use of HFCs and HFOs in some heating and cooling equipment, has been published in the Official Journal of the EU and will be legally enforceable as of March 11 [2024]."

Space Engineering Services says, "Traditional systems using HFO/HFC refrigerant blends are no longer a viable option for the long term. In 2020, HFCs with Global Warming Potentials (GWP) greater than 2 500 will be banned in new systems. Further F-gas bans will occur between 2022 and 2025, and in 2030, all HFCs (even those considered 'greener') will exceed GWP and carbon restrictions. The answer is to use natural refrigerants."

Natural refrigerants don't deplete the ozone, have a much lower impact on the environment than traditional refrigerants, and will ensure that your business remains compliant as well as accountable in the long term. They're also notably more cost-effective and sustainable, safer, keep equipment running efficiently, and are unlikely to be affected by unpredictable price rises.

In a recent blog that focused on the impact on the environment of commercial refrigeration, UK-based Ancaster Food Equipment says ...

> "Refrigerants are the lifeblood of commercial refrigeration systems, enabling the cooling process that keeps perishable goods at safe temperatures. However, the environmental impact of these substances can be profound."

"Traditional refrigerants, such as chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs) and hydrochlorofluorocarbons (HCFCs), have been phased out under international agreements due to their high ozone-depleting potential.

"Their successors, hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs), while not harmful to the ozone layer, are potent greenhouse gases with a global warming potential thousands of times greater than carbon dioxide (CO_2). The release of these gases into the atmosphere, whether through leaks, servicing, or disposal of refrigeration equipment, contributes significantly to global warming.

> “The move towards more environmentally friendly refrigerants is a key focus in reducing the impact of commercial refrigeration. Natural refrigerants, such as CO_2, ammonia (NH3), and hydrocarbons (propane and isobutane), are gaining popularity due to their lower environmental impact.”

“These substances have significantly lower global warming potential and do not deplete the ozone layer.” While the challenges of transitioning to greener gases are not insignificant – system compatibility, safety when dealing with flammable refrigerants, and of course the cost of transitioning – the benefits are significant. It’s also an essential step towards sustainability, one that several major local retailers and wholesalers have already recognised.

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Why sustainability makes good business sense

Ancaster Food Equipment says, "For businesses that rely heavily on refrigeration – such as those in the food, beverage, and pharmaceutical industries – the push towards greener practices is not just about regulatory compliance or environmental stewardship; it also aligns with strategic business advantages." The company lists the benefits ...

- Reduced operating costs and lower energy consumption
- Improved brand image and customer loyalty as sustainability efforts resonate strongly with environmentally conscious consumers
- Enhanced regulatory compliance
- Increased energy efficiency and sustainability
- Competitive advantage in the market

When to retrofit and when to invest in a new refrigeration system

An inescapable fact of embracing sustainability is that your old system will, eventually, have to go. But whether you bite the bullet and invest in an entirely new system or ease your way into the future with some savvy retrofits, is up to you and your budget.

Rafael Leitão, Head of Marketing at Portugal-based refrigeration giant, FRICON, says, "When deciding whether to retrofit an existing system or install a new one, there are several considerations. For many, retrofitting is seen as a quicker and more economical way to extend the life of refrigeration equipment and get the most out of their investment. Choosing this approach can provide some immediate benefits.

"On the other hand, investing in a new system can provide a number of more significant benefits. In general, new equipment incorporates components that increase energy efficiency, have a positive impact on operating costs, have a more modern design, and can provide a short- to medium-term return on investment.

"A new system also tends to be more reliable and have a longer service life than an older system. This means less downtime due to failures and repairs, which can have a positive impact on operations. Newer systems can also be customised and configured to meet the specific needs of the business, providing greater flexibility and a better in-store experience.

"Finally, a new refrigeration system may offer technological features such as remote control and integration with management systems, which can further improve management and operational efficiency and simplify maintenance. Although the initial investment may be higher, the short- to medium-term benefits of a new refrigeration system usually out-weigh the additional cost."

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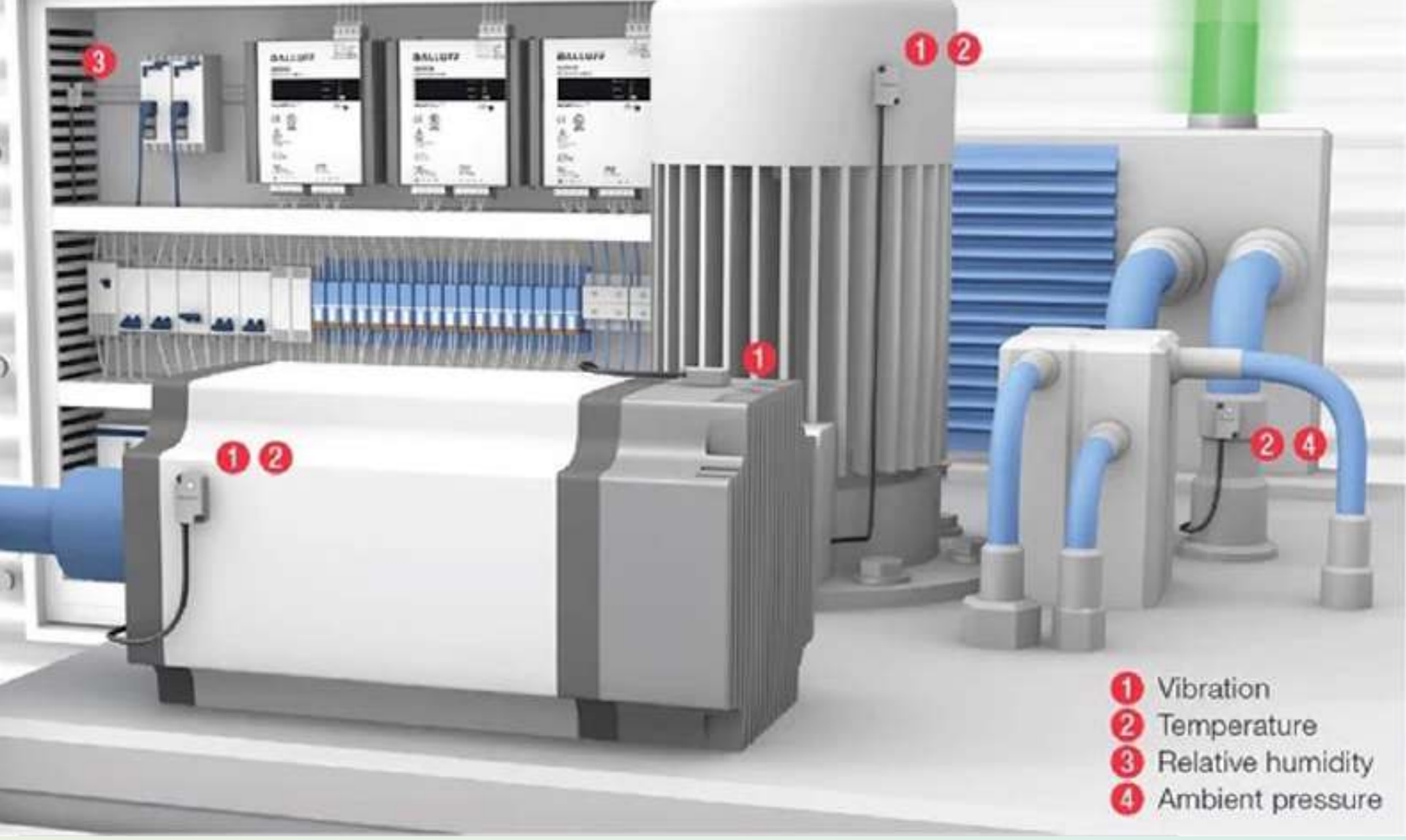

Vibration. Temperature. Relative humidity. Ambient pressure.
https://blog.innovatingautomation.asia/

Three indicators that it's time for a refrigeration upgrade www.fricon.pt/

In the dynamic food retail landscape, staying ahead of the curve is key to ensuring the best results. Refrigeration solutions play an important role in this, and recognising the signs that a system needs to be updated is critical to maintaining operational excellence and avoiding potential disruptions.

1. Energy consumption

Energy efficiency is as much about ensuring the lowest operating costs as it is about meeting energy standards and corporate sustainability goals. If your current system is consuming more energy than it should or is hindering your ability to meet your energy goals, it's time to consider replacing it. The latest systems incorporate technologies that significantly reduce energy consumption.

2. Maintenance costs

Rising maintenance and repair costs indicate that the system is becoming less reliable and more prone to breakdowns, impacting business operations. The cost of maintenance and associated constraints can sometimes outweigh the cost of purchasing a new, modern system with a warranty.

3. Performance and technology issues

Fluctuations in temperature or voltage in refrigeration equipment can be two further signs that your system is worn out and in need of replacement. It is critical to keep the equipment operating at optimal levels consistently to maintain the integrity of the food inside.

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- Bespoke Glass products

key benefits

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Innovation as the driver of sustainability in in-store refrigeration

Adapting to current challenges, looking to the future and presenting innovative solutions are essential qualities for a refrigeration service provider, says Leitão.

One such example is FRICON, as they continually adapt to market needs, which can be seen in the launch of their UPD FV Vertical Display Cabinet in 2023, during the largest international retail trade fair, EuroShop in Germany.

Leitão explains, "This new model [already available in three versions (140, 210 and 250), demonstrates our commitment to technological progress." Benefits include quick and easy installation, low maintenance, high performance and low energy consumption.

Lowering reliance on energy-intensive systems

Phase Change Material (PCM) coolers use materials that absorb and release thermal energy during the process of melting and solidifying at specific temperatures. These coolers are highly efficient in thermal energy storage, making them useful for maintaining desired temperature conditions over extended periods. PCMs can be integrated into building materials like walls or ceilings, or used in standalone cooling systems. This technology is especially advantageous in balancing energy loads, reducing peak time energy demands, and enhancing overall energy efficiency in cooling systems. https://be-cis.com/renewable-energy-cooling-innovations/

Absorption cooling technology employs a heat source, often from renewable energies like solar power or industrial waste heat, to drive a thermochemical absorption process for cooling. This method is particularly suitable for large-scale applications such as commercial buildings and industrial plants. Absorption cooling provides a greener alternative to conventional cooling methods, significantly lowering reliance on energy-intensive systems. It signifies a notable progression in sustainable energy use, especially in contexts requiring extensive cooling capacities.
https://be-cis.com/renewable-energy-cooling-innovations/

Water-cooled exchangers

Green cooling solutions, including hydrocarbon, CO_2, or heat recovery-based systems, are integral to sustainability. As energy costs have a monthly impact on operating costs, investing in efficient solutions and systems can significantly reduce these costs, and increase competitiveness.

One such solution is a waterloop system, such as FRICON's condensing refrigeration system [launched in its supermarket range] that uses water-cooled exchangers instead of an air-cooled condenser, resulting in benefits such as reduced heat emission to the store, reduced need for air conditioning, reuse of heat-to-heat sanitary water systems and reduced overall energy consumption,"says Leitão.

"At FRICON, we strongly believe that R290 and plug-in based solutions are the answer to maintaining a healthy and flexible business in food retailing."

The future of cooling

There are many new innovations in cooling technologies that are aimed at achieving environmental sustainability, according to BECIS, a leading Energy as a Service (EaaS) provider. Some are still in their early stages, but significant research and development is being invested into efficient, cost-effective alternatives to conventional and new cooling systems.

One of these is electrocaloric refrigeration, an innovative cooling technology that uses what is called the electrocaloric effect, where certain materials change temperature in response to an applied electric field.

"This technology is gaining attention for its potential to create highly efficient and environmentally friendly cooling systems. Unlike traditional cooling methods, electrocaloric refrigeration does not rely on refrigerants and can be more energy efficient. It's particularly promising for small-scale applications like electronics cooling, offering a compact and noiseless solution. The development of this technology could lead to significant advancements in the way we approach refrigeration in various sectors," says BECIS in their blog '*12 Innovations for Cooling Solutions in Renewable Energy Systems*'.

Another cooling innovation, according to Physics World, is "a new refrigeration method called 'ionocaloric cooling' that could one day replace traditional systems based on vapour compression, reducing the need for gases that harm the Earth's atmosphere and contribute to climate change.

"The method, developed by researchers Drew Lilley and Ravi Prasher at the Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory in the US, takes advantage of the ways that energy is stored or released when a material changes phase."

Very simply put, it works by adding 'salt' (iodine and sodium, mixed with ethylene carbonate) to a solid, which makes the solid use its own heat to turn to liquid.

Still in the research phase, these not-so-futuristic methods of cooling are considered environmentally benign and may have the potential to offer alternative, effective, sustainable, and environmentally friendly solutions. It's a good indication of just how far innovation will take the future of sustainable refrigeration. 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 | www.wilkinsrossglobal.com

R.O.C.S BMS

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In the competitive realm of cost-saving solutions, maintaining control over your environment is paramount. Inan industry where operational efficiency and cost management are crucial, ROCS stands out with its innovative Building Management System (BMS), designed to empower savings and ensure robust control. Through a combination of technical expertise and practical field experience, ROCS guarantees substantial savings for retailers, enhancing their Return on Investment (ROI) through meticulous site audits and strategic management.

The fundamental premise of effective cost and asset management is measurement. Without precise monitoring and control, achieving optimal efficiency becomes a challenging task. ROCS addresses this by providing comprehensive solutions that enable businesses to take charge of their savings actively. By leveraging our advanced BMS, retailers can oversee and manage their mechanical, electrical, and electromechanical systems with precision, leading to significant cost reductions and operational improvements.

What is BMS?

A Building Management System (BMS) is a sophisticated control system used to monitor and manage a facility's mechanical, electrical, and electromechanical services. This includes everything from lighting and HVAC systems to security and energy management systems. In the retail sector, the ability to control and monitor various store areas is crucial for maintaining efficiency and reducing costs.

What we Control and Monitor

In the retail environment, ROCS' BMS extends its control and monitoring capabilities to key areas of the store, including refrigeration, bakery, butchery, Home Meal Replacement (HMR), air conditioners, and generators. Each of these areas represents significant operational costs and, therefore, substantial opportunities for savings. By ensuring that these systems operate efficiently and only, when necessary, our BMS helps retailers minimise waste and maximise their resources.

What do we wish to achieve?

The primary goal of ROCS is to drive savings through intelligent management of energy consumption and resource usage. Specifically, we aim to reduce costs related to KVA (kilovolt-amperes), KW (kilowatts), and diesel. Our system enables retailers to manage their energy load during peak hours, schedule equipment startup and shutdowns effectively, and maintain optimal energy usage levels. By setting a maximum KVA and systematically reducing it through a prioritised shutdown list, we help businesses achieve significant energy savings.

Key benefits

The benefits of implementing ROCS' BMS are multifaceted and substantial. Foremost among them is the potential for immense savings on energy costs. By optimising energy usage and reducing waste, retailers can lower their operational expenses significantly. Furthermore, the system's remote controllability means that store managers can monitor and adjust their systems from anywhere, ensuring constant control and responsiveness.

Another critical benefit is the enhanced reliability and performance of essential store systems. By monitoring and maintaining equipment such as refrigeration units and air conditioners, our BMS helps prevent costly breakdowns and ensures that these systems operate at peak efficiency. This not only saves money on repairs and replacements but also minimises downtime, which can be particularly costly in a retail environment.

In conclusion, ROCS' Building Management System offers a comprehensive solution for retailers seeking to take control of their operational costs and improve their ROI. By leveraging advanced monitoring and control technologies, we provide a platform for significant energy savings and enhanced system reliability.

With ROCS, businesses can achieve greater efficiency, reduce their environmental impact, and ensure the optimal performance of their critical infrastructure. Choose ROCS and take charge of your savings today, empowering your business with the tools needed for long-term success and sustainability.

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What is BMS?

A building management system (BMS) is a control system that can be used to monitor and manage the mechanical, electrical and electromechanical services in a facility.

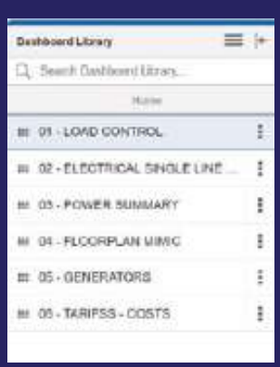
What we control and monitor

In the realm of retail we control and monitor areas of the store such as: Refrigeration, Bakery, Butchery, HMR, Air conditioners, Generators.

What do we wish to achieve

- Savings via saving on KVA, KW and DIesel usage
- Mangage KW by managing load in peak hours and scheduling start up and shut downs.
- Manage KVA by having a set point maximum KVA and shutting down systematically via a priority list to reduce KVA when set point is reached.

Main benefits are immense savings and remote controllability.



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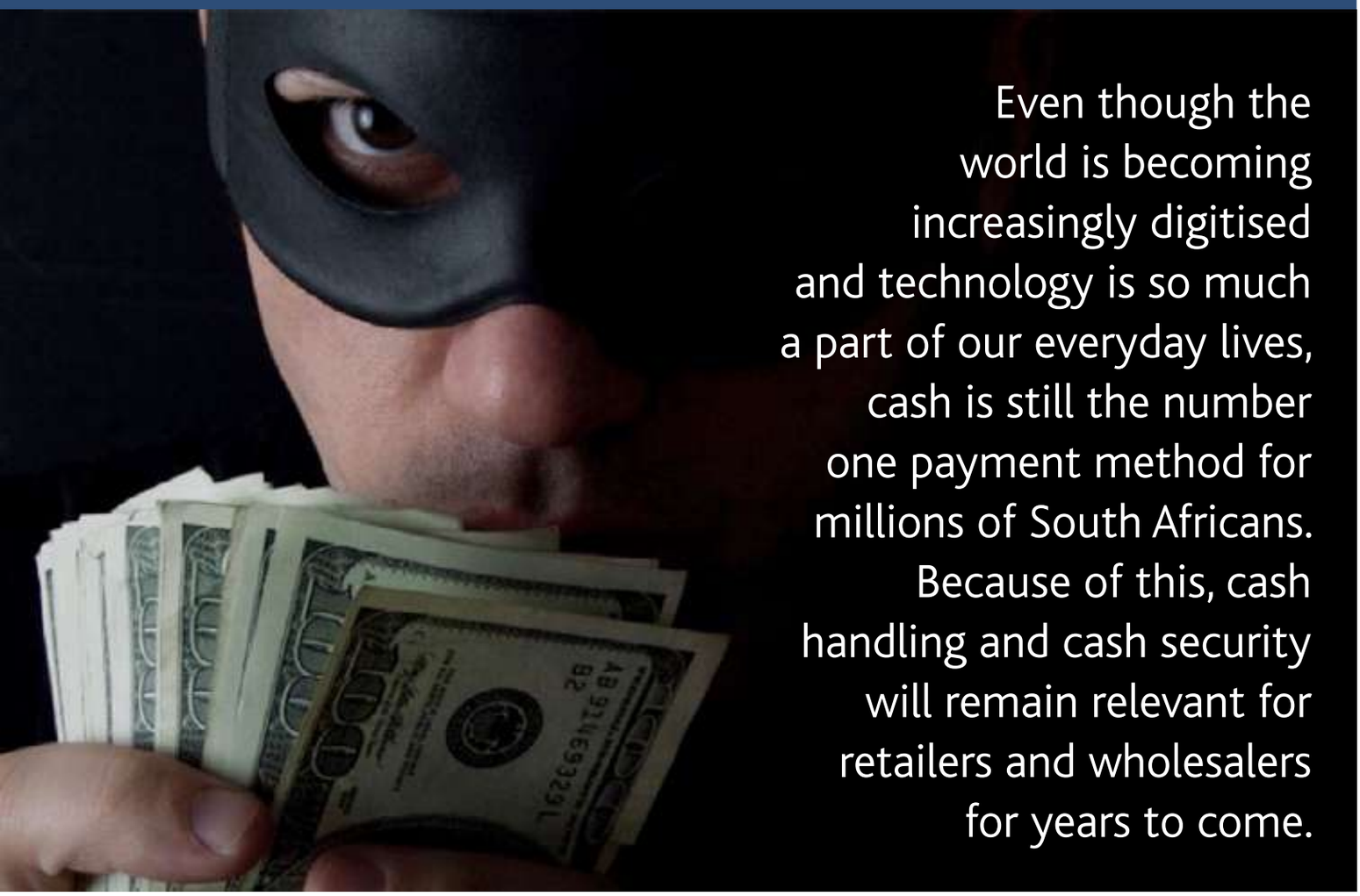

Even though the world is becoming increasingly digitised and technology is so much a part of our everyday lives, cash is still the number one payment method for millions of South Africans. Because of this, cash handling and cash security will remain relevant for retailers and wholesalers for years to come.

Image by RoyalFive, www.canva.com

Does embracing automated cash handling solutions streamline processes, reduce errors, reduce risk and enhance security?

Cash Handling & Security

Is automation the answer?

By Guy Lerner

While it may seem curious for some to still be talking about cash in retail in 2024, the truth is that cash remains the only universal payment method for all South Africans, even though it's no longer the dominant payment method it once was.

According to research by the Boston Consulting Group, 86% of South Africans report using cash regularly, and 95% of people withdraw cash from ATMs at least once a month, highlighting cash's continued presence in our economy.

Which begs the question: what can retailers and wholesalers do to make cash handling both seamless and secure at a time when cash-related crime is still one of the biggest scourges for South African law enforcement?

Automate, automate, automate

Morné Liebenberg

Morné Liebenberg, Managing Director of cash automation specialist, Clyronex, says that reducing and ultimately eliminating the need for retail staff to handle cash is paramount for the continued safe and efficient use of cash in our stores.

"Automate, automate, automate, that's the message," says Liebenberg.

"Automation means eliminating counting errors and shrinkage, cutting reconciliation of cash takings down to minutes instead of hours, and having real-time visibility of cash at all times," he says. "It also means that the staff resources needed to manage cash can be reduced."

Mark Templemore-Walters

Mark Templemore-Walters, Operations Director at Cash Connect, concurs, saying that "retailers and merchants are embracing automated cash handling solutions to streamline processes, reduce errors, reduce risk, and enhance security. These solutions often include cash vaults, ATM recyclers, and integrated POS systems that automate tasks such as counting, sorting, and depositing cash," he says. "Automated cash handling can deliver a saving of up to 40% in time and money."

These messages are backed up by facts: South African retailers are seeing a clear shift towards increased security and automation in cash handling practices in 2024, driven by a combination of factors such as persistent cash theft and a renewed focus on staff safety.

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Clyronex is a South African distributor and support partner of Glory Global Solutions for the CASHINFINITY™ range of Point of Sale cash management recycling equipment.

Ekurhuleni looted cash in transit van. EMPD, https://www.iol.co.za/

While some statistics show a decrease in overall shoplifting, reports indicate a rise in cash-specific theft, both at tills and during cash-in-transit (CIT) operations.

Image: Ziphozonke Lushaba. www.dispatchlive.co.za

Police minister Bheki Cele

Historically, CIT crime has been one of the biggest challenges for South Africa's law enforcers, with police minister Bheki Cele airing his frustrations to the Sunday Times last year at the "stubborn increase" in cash-in-transit robberies.

Even the encouraging reports of a targeted police operation resulting in 75 CIT-related arrests in the past year don't change the fact that South Africa still faces a significant armed robbery threat, and retailers and wholesalers are prioritising staff safety by minimising the amount of cash readily available on site.

Image: https://clyronex.co.za/

Cash automation options

In response to these persistent concerns, retailers and wholesalers are increasingly implementing automated cash management systems such as cash recyclers and intelligent safes.

Cash recyclers authenticate and sort deposited bills, reducing the need for staff to handle large amounts of cash. Smart safes, on the other hand, limit access and automatically deposit cash into secure vaults, further reducing on-hand cash and deterring theft.

"Most retailers have relied on smart safes in the past, with grocers (41%) and general merchandise (23%) leading the pack in terms of installation numbers in EMEA (Europe, Middle East and Africa)," says Liebenberg. "An independent consulting report from RBR London suggests that 85% of back-office cash automation installations are smart safes."

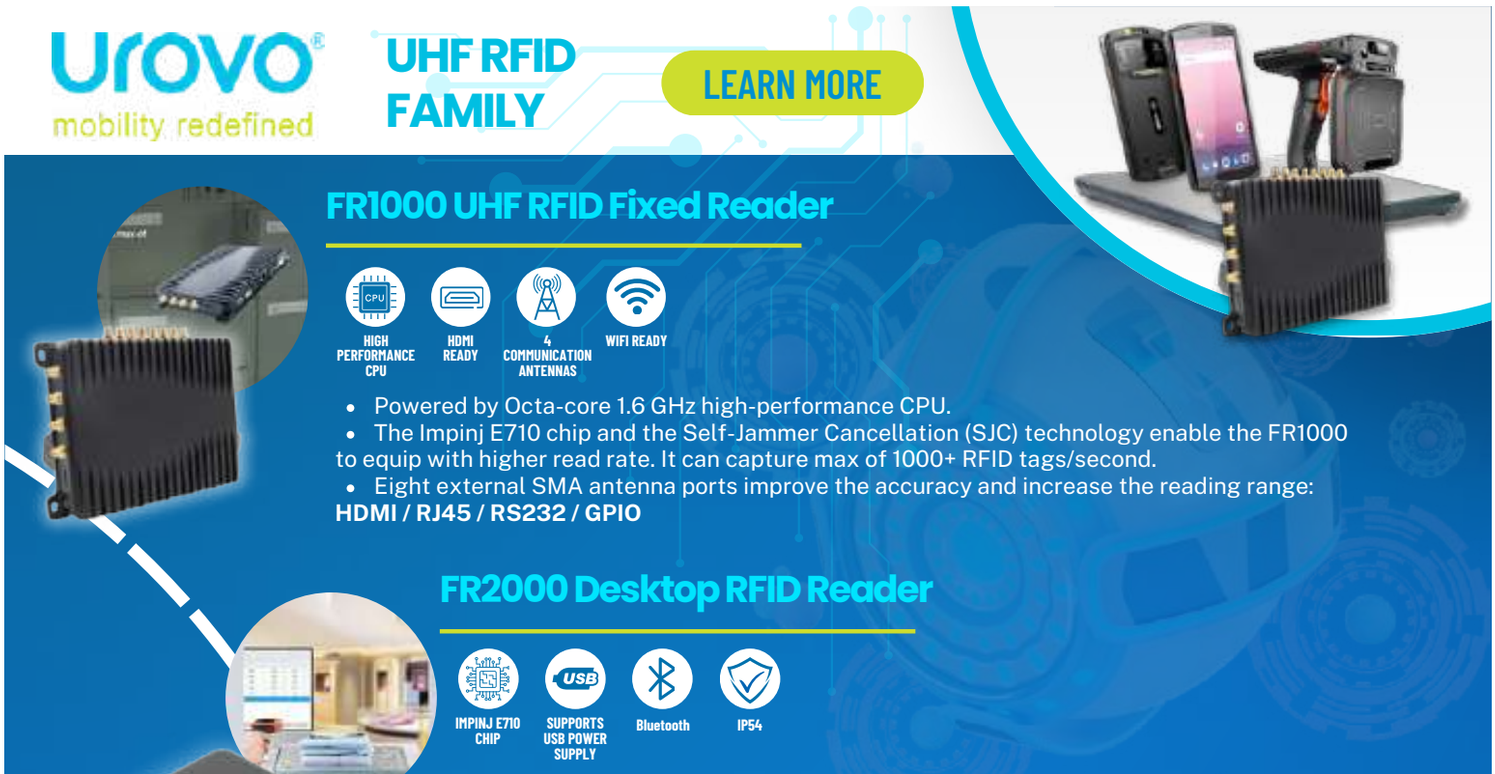
Cash Connect's Templemore-Walters says that retailers are now also offering in-store ATMs to drive revenue growth and offer more customer convenience.

"They can install an ATM recycler to deposit their own cash as well as offer customers the ability to withdraw cash and perform other transactions in-store when doing their monthly shopping, offering them a saving on taxi fees and extra trips to the shop or bank," he says. "Retailers can also boost their revenue by earning rebates from each successful card withdrawal to potentially cover the monthly rental of the device."

Some retailers are taking the additional step of partnering with CIT companies to optimise cash collection schedules. This involves more frequent, smaller collections to minimise the amount of cash on site at any given time. Additionally, CIT companies are investing in advanced security measures for their vehicles and personnel.

The goal for most retailers and wholesalers, however, should ultimately be to reduce the frequency of CIT collections, which is why many stores are increasingly acknowledging the benefits of back-office cash recycling devices rather than smart safes.

"As well as securing and depositing cash, recycling devices enable retailers and wholesalers to automate more cash processes, such as float allocation, to more efficiently manage shift changes and reduce the amount of cash held in store," says Liebenberg. "While this is still a relatively small market in South Africa, it's already helping to reduce the number of CIT pick-ups needed, often by as much as 50%."



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Self checkout with cash recycler. https://retail-optimiser.de/

New cash handling technologies

Beyond the broader trend of cash automation, there are some exciting new technologies emerging that further enhance safety for both vendors and customers.

One example, which we're yet to see deployed at scale in South African retail, is **self-checkout with cash handling**. While self-checkout has been around for a while, integrating cash acceptance into these systems is a recent innovation.

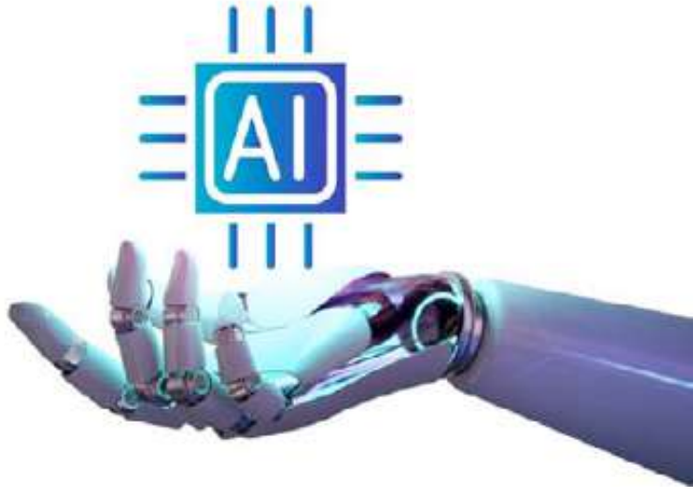
"Point-of-sale cash automation is a great leap forward for both the customer and retailer," explains Liebenberg. "It works with your back-office cash recycler to deliver a more robust and complete cash management system by eliminating errors when dispensing change.

"It also prevents cashiers from having to handle cash, since the cash is deposited directly into the device by the customer, and the customer receives change from the device. Cash can then be transferred in sealed cassettes from the point-of-sale devices directly into the cash recyclers in the back office."

https://planning.net/

Cash-to-card conversion systems are another example of a technology that allow customers to deposit cash and receive the equivalent value on a prepaid debit card. This eliminates the need for customers to carry large amounts of cash and reduces the risk of theft. For vendors, it removes the burden of managing and securing large amounts of physical cash.

AI driven anomaly detection:
A tactical analysis of fortifying banking security.
https://infomaticae.com/



It seems everything is going the way of artificial intelligence these days, and cash handling is no different. **AI-powered anomaly detection systems** analyse cash transactions in real-time. They can, among other things, identify suspicious patterns, like counterfeit bills or attempts to exceed withdrawal limits, and flag them for further investigation, which helps deter fraudulent activity and protects both vendors and customers.

It's important to note that widespread adoption of some of these technologies might take some time due to factors such as cost and infrastructure. However, the trend towards increased cash handling automation with a focus on security is undeniable. As these technologies become more affordable and accessible, we can expect to see them become the norm in South African FMCG retail and wholesale stores.

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Beyond the store

Cash security outside the store is a major consideration for customers using cash handling machines (CHMs). While the machines themselves offer improved security within the store, customers are still vulnerable after they leave with their cash.

"In South Africa, the reduction in CIT store visits is not only a cost saving; it has much wider implications, as the ongoing battle against CIT crime demonstrates," says Liebenberg. "Reducing your environmental impact, taking into consideration the safety of anyone handling and transporting cash, and the safety of the general public, are all equally important for socially responsible retailers."

Having a security guard patrol the ATM area, especially during late hours, can deter robberies and provide a sense of safety for customers. ATMs should be placed in well-lit areas, both inside and outside the store. This discourages criminals who prefer to operate in darkness. Good lighting also allows security cameras to capture clear footage.

Retailers and wholesalers can also play a part by educating their customers, displaying informative signage near ATMs and around the store as a reminder of safety precautions. This can include warnings such as not using ATMs alone at night, being aware of their surroundings, shielding PIN entries, and depositing cash promptly.

Retailers should also consider offering alternative cash management options outside the store, such as secure night deposit boxes or partnerships with CIT companies that offer after-hours cash collection services for businesses.

Image: fotofrog, www.canva.com

Best practices for cash handling

Minimise on-hand cash: This remains a key strategy for deterring theft. Look to implement practices like frequent cash drops or armoured cash collection services to ensure minimal cash remains in the store at any given time. Woolworths is already promoting the idea of cashless stores. Expect more to follow suit if the trend is well-received by shoppers.

Maintain a visible security presence:
This can include security cameras strategically placed throughout the store, clear signage regarding cash handling policies, and having a designated safe location for cash storage. Additionally, consider having a security guard on site during peak hours or when handling large cash deposits.

Embrace cash automation technologies: Technologies such as cash recyclers, smart safes, and self-checkout with cash handling can significantly reduce the amount of cash that your staff need to handle. This minimises discrepancies and the risk of internal theft.

Train your staff:
Well-trained staff are essential for maintaining strong cash handling procedures. Training should cover areas like counterfeit bill detection, proper cash drawer procedures, shift change protocols, and how to respond to suspicious activity.

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The many benefits of automating cash handling

Even though cashless payment systems are on the rise, cash handling machines continue to offer several benefits for South African retailers and wholesalers, especially considering the current landscape.

Banking on the unbanked: As noted, a significant portion of the South African population remains unbanked. CHMs (cash handling machines), particularly cash deposit machines, provide these customers with a secure and convenient way to manage their finances, allowing them

to deposit cash into their accounts without needing a traditional bank account.

https://youverify.co/

Enhanced security: CHMs offer several security features that deter theft and fraud. Cash deposit machines typically use secure vaults and limit access through user authentication. Additionally, some CHMs can detect counterfeit bills, reducing losses for retailers and wholesalers.

Reduced operational costs: While there's an initial investment in acquiring CHMs, the long-term benefits can outweigh the cost. The time saved on manual cash handling translates to reduced labour costs, for example. Additionally, CHMs can minimise discrepancies and cash shrinkage, leading to overall cost savings.

Convenience for specific transactions: Cash remains the preferred method for some transactions, such as making small purchases or paying gratuities. CHMs, particularly ATMs, provide customers with 24/7 access

to cash, which can be especially convenient in areas with limited banking hours.

Improving cash flow management: CHMs can automate many time-consuming tasks associated with cash handling, such as counting, sorting, and verification. This frees up staff time and reduces the risk of human error in manual cash handling processes. Faster processing also means quicker access to deposited funds, improving a retailer's cash flow.

Cash and cashless payments: Each playing their role in South Africa

In a society such as South Africa with vastly different retail habits, it's important to note the roles that cash automation and cash handling technology, cash payments and digital technology play in the economy.

"As we all welcome new methods of payment, with mobile phone apps and digital wallets that give us more choice and convenience as shoppers, the reality is that cash is a universally available payment method that is still used and preferred by large sections of society," says Liebenberg. "For now, and for the foreseeable future, retailers still have to manage and process their in-store cash payments."

By offering both options, stores can cater to a wider customer base and provide a more comprehensive payment experience. As South Africa transitions towards a more digital economy, cash automation can play a crucial role in ensuring a smooth, inclusive – and secure – financial experience for everyone.

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Informal traders in Alexandra.

Photo: Masego Mafata. https://groundup.org.za/

The CASHless landscape in South Africa

Cash remains a relevant payment method in South African stores today, but its importance varies depending on the store's target market and geographic location.

Cash is still king in many poorer and less formal retail and wholesale environments

A significant portion of the South African population remains unbanked, relying solely on cash for transactions. This often results in customers making smaller purchases, where cash remains a convenient and familiar option. Acceptance of digital wallets and contactless payments is also lower in these areas due to limited access to smartphones or internet connectivity.

Cash is declining in affluent and urban areas

Where internet connectivity and smartphone usage are the norm, the increasing popularity of digital wallets and contactless payments offers a faster and more convenient alternative to cash. In these areas customers are more security-conscious, and digital payments offer a more secure way to carry and spend money. Urban and affluent populations are also likely to have a higher smartphone penetration rate, facilitating the adoption of digital payment methods.

However, even in a declining trend, cash remains a crucial payment option for a significant portion of the South African population. Therefore, stores need to find a balance, offering both cash and digital payment options to cater to their diverse customer base.

> “In South Africa alone, approximately 11 million people, or 18% of the population, are still unbanked or under-banked. For them, cash remains the one and only option.”

Morné Liebenberg
Managing Director, Clyronex

> “While low-income and rural consumers use cash for most of their transactions, younger and wealthier consumers also still prefer cash for certain use cases. Ultimately, retailers benefit when they give customers the choice to pay with the method they trust and find the most convenient for their present context.

Mark Templemore-Walters
Operations Director, Cash Connect

Guy Lerner, writer and photographer, writes across diverse topics in business, technology, and retail, including consumer technology, telecommunications software, user experience technology, security, and power systems. He has worked with multinational companies in South Africa and Australia and is currently based in Cape Town. Guy holds a B.Sc. Honours degree from the University of Witwatersrand).

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DAIRY: WORLD MILK DAY

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It's all about the dairy ...

Because we love it!

By Julia Baker – creating engaging and relevant content for Supermarket & Retailer Magazine

There is a good reason why we love dairy. It's not just the topping on your favourite pizza, that stringy addition to your toasted sandwich or the creaminess of macaroni and cheese.

Dairy, including cow, goat and sheep milk contain casein. During digestion this protein releases casomorphins, which is a chemical much like an opioid. These caso-morphins can attach to neuroreceptors in our brains, as a narcotic would, resulting in the release of dopamine, giving a feeling of stress release and has even been likened to addiction.

Cheese's high fat content may also make it easy to crave. Food cravings are triggered by the part of your brain that handles reward. The release of endorphins after eating can be particularly pleasurable, leading you to want more of the same experience.

Some studies even suggest that casomorphins have health benefits, such as anticancer and antioxidant properties – although more research is needed.

This is why dairy reigns supreme and has captured our hearts and taste buds like no other.

Dairy championship

The SA Dairy Championship 2024, regarded as a world class event, have again excelled this year bringing in over 1 000 entries from 78 producers.

"Not only does it underscore the diversity and extensive array of products we manufacture, but it also shines a spotlight on the significant

Breyton Milford

contribution the dairy sector makes to the South African economy," says Breyton Milford, the General Manager of Agri-Expo, who have once again successfully hosted the championships, that have been held since 1834.

The 191st Awards Dinner was held on 25 April in Durbanville, judging both store shelf dairy produce and artisan dairy products.

The number of quality continental dairy products being judged have been steadily increasing over the years due to the increase of demand and the artistic innovation of local cheesemakers. Bringing in a larger variety for consumers.

Woolworths was once again a clear winner by topping the winnings with nine out of the 12 cream awards and scoring the highest average point, being announced the SA Dairy Product of the Year winner with the Mature Gouda (10 months).

Fairview, also a firm favourite in South Africa, won a whopping 11 SA Champion titles and six prestigious Qualité awards, the highest number of Qualité awards this year. While Faircape Dairy won an impressive five Qualité awards.

We have plastic packaging covered.

POLYOAK
PACKAGING

Image by Shubham Tiwari | Design Talk, www.canva.com

Why is dairy so beloved?

Dairy is never just plain cheese or milk, and South African palates have not been very imaginative in past years. Now, with outstanding creativity and innovation of our local cheesemakers we are being spoilt for choice with the continuous evolution and creativity of exciting new tastes and textures for consumers to constantly explore.

A great example is a tasty treat from Fairview Cheese Company providing the Woolworths Raspberry Roulade with Pink Peppercorns winning a prestigious Qualité award.

Another great Qualité winner from the SA Dairy Championships SA 2024, is Belnori Boutique Cheesery's St Francis of Ashishi cheese made with half goats' milk and half Jersey milk, a creamy mould ripened cream cheese encased in ash.

Belnori cheese varieties. www.belnori.com/

Another category that did very well is the ice cream category, with Polar Ice Cream winning a Qualité award for their Signature Salted Caramel Ice Cream with Salted Caramel Sauce. And if that doesn't sound decadent enough, they also came out tops with their Polar Premier

Swiss Chocolate Ice Cream and Cannoli Lolly – rolled wafer biscuit filled with vanilla ice cream and capped with chocolate.

Lancewood was also awarded for their Toffee Fudge Flavoured Low Fat Drinking Yoghurt and a Plain Medium Fat Cream Cheese.

As we are introduced to more refined and interesting dairy options, the range for diversity is welcoming and exciting.

Not to be eaten alone

Dairy can transcend into a taste sensation when paired with a particular cracker, wine, preserve or a sprinkled topping.

Oh, and of course, dairy is also best paired with wonderful people! Dairy brings people together, whether shared on a charcuterie board for a get together with friends or melted into gooey, stringy goodness on top of pizza for a movie with the family.

Below are some brilliant ideas for pairing dairy, whether with friends or just for some private indulgence ...

Dairy	Pairing Foods	Drink Choices
Plain Yoghurt	Fruit, muesli, nuts, seeds, honey, coconut, chocolate	Fruit juice, tea, coffee
Plain Ice Cream	Sauces, fruit, sprinkles, wafers, nuts, honey	Hot Chocolate
Soft – cottage cheese, feta, brie, mascarpone, ricotta	Crackers, berries, nuts	Champagne, sweet white wine, red fruity wine, cider
Semi-soft – mozzarella, stilton, provolone, edam, gouda, roquefort	Roasted vegetables, apples, grapes	Chardonnay, merlot, cider, pilsner
Semi-hard – gruyere, cheddar, Emmentaler, Swiss, Monterey Jack	Dark chocolate, nuts, dried fruit,	Pinot noir Syrah, Belgian Ales
Hard – Cheshire, Cantal, Gloucester, Manchengo, Serena	Nuts, honey, olive, fruit, salted meats, vegetables, preserves	Chianti, Pinot Noir, heavy ales and stouts

Manie Libbok

Sustainable and eco friendly

As the world is becoming more conscious of helping slow down the damage we do to the environment, farmers and producers are finding more ways to become sustainable by reducing damage to ecosystems, water systems, biodiversity, reducing greenhouse gasses and pollution.

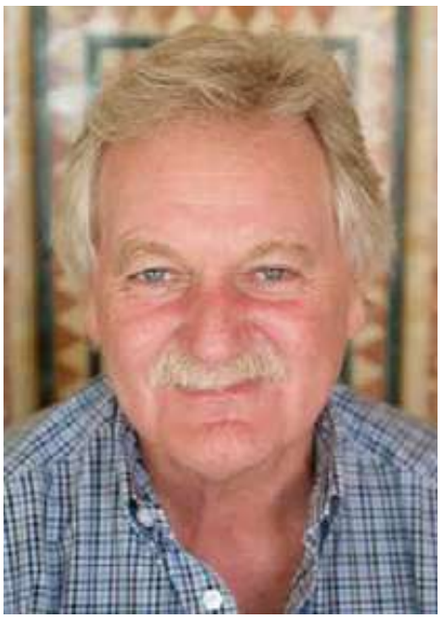
The Milk Producers' Organisation (MPO) is a representative producers organisation focused on serving the primary sector of the South Africa dairy industry. The aim is to support and enable South African dairy farmers to build profitable, sustainable, and competitive businesses.

"We are seeing more and more dairy farmers implementing sustainable farming practices, including ...

- Renewable energy recourses, including the installation of solar and biogas systems.
- Invest in genetics
- Longevity of animals, linking to animal health – dairy farmers try to ensure their cows are happy, healthy, and cared for in order to maximise production.
- Planting of multi-specie pastures in pasture-based systems. This not only enhances soil health and reduces CO_2, but also increases production of milk.
- Water and waste management practices, including irrigation sufficiency and slurry dams."

South Africa may not be as advanced as in the rest of the world, as Europe has strict sustainability practices and in other parts of the world, they even receive sustainability grants.

South African producers are also on a faster track to sustainability due to the shortcomings of Eskom and having no other choice but to invest resources into alternative energy.


Charles Back

As for Fairview, Charles Back, a third-generation owner, expressed, "We combine traditional European recipes with a distinct South African flair, using only the finest sustainably sourced ingredients."

When it comes to farming, Nestlé is another good example of responsible farming. Their ambition is to make their Skimmelkrans dairy farm reach net zero carbon emissions, this should have been achieved in 2023.

The government packaging regulation which came out in 2021, made EPR (extended producer responsibility) mandatory for all producers and imports of packaging.

It is also on the agenda for the government to propose stricter regulations for extended producer responsibility (EPR). These regulations are being taken seriously by South African dairy producers, ensuring sustainable and ecofriendly products.

Polyoak is one such supplier who takes environmental packaging seriously, having a 'circular economy' which is a framework that challenges climate change, biodiversity loss, waste and pollution by manufacturing packaging that is widely recycled.

Polyoak manufactures their dairy bottles using hight density polyethylene plastic which can be recycled into new bottles for personal care and detergent products. Other recycled products are refuse bags, bins, pipes and parts for engineering and mining applications.

Kieno Kammies on CapeTalk with CapeTalk broadcasting from the Fair Cape Dairies farm.

Image: https://en.wikipedia.org/

The iconic Goat Tower, loved by both kids and adults, serving as the cherished home to Fairview's furry mascots since 1981.

VOTE GOAT!

In a move that raised eyebrows and provoked uproar among traditionalists, Fairview Wine and Cheese, under the visionary leadership of Charles Back, announced a groundbreaking strategy to tackle economic challenges head-on. Fairview bid adieu to human labour and welcomed their four-legged friends to take over vineyard duties.

This is done through a concoction of goat pheromones, CBD and methamphetamines with one dedicated worker meticulously rubbing this special solution on the vine tips, transforming them into irresistible delicacies for Fairview's caprine comrades. With a newfound zest, these meth-infused goats work tirelessly, munching away at the summer canopy and winter pruning tasks, day and night.

As with any bold innovation, there are dissenting voices. Workers and unions, particularly the Wine Workers Federation (WWF), up in arms, protested against the replacement of human labour with their bleating buddies. The vineyard gates became a battleground, with picket signs clutched tightly in furious fists and chants of solidarity echoing through the air.

Amidst the protests, Charles Back stands firm, "We understand the concerns of our workers," he declares, "but in these challenging times, we must embrace innovation to survive."

Fairview remains committed to dialogue and progress. They are exploring further avenues to incorporate goat labour in the winery and cheese factory, all in the pursuit of reducing wage bills and embracing a sustainable future.

To inject some fun and frolic into politics, the GOAT Party is here to turn up the bleat and herd this country onto the right track!

www.instagram.com/p/C6yKS3fqwkc/

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Dairy's health benefits & nutritional value

When it comes to dairy, its health benefits and nutritional value might surprise you. While often viewed as a guilty pleasure, dairy offers several nutrients that are good for your body.

Dairy provides important vitamins like vitamin A, D, K and zinc. The conjugated linoleic acid in dairy may ease inflammation and is also known to prevent heart disease.

Athletes and bodybuilders regularly use casein protein powder, finding that the protein has great benefits for bones and muscle. True to that fact, Woodlands Dairy, creators of the award-winning High Protein Recovery (HPR) drink, has announced an exciting partnership with Springbok rugby player Manie Libbok.

Protein carries out chemical reactions, like digestion. It helps tissues and organs change and grow as needed. It protects your body from viruses and bacteria and support your body's movement by providing cell structure.

Registered dietitian Elyse Homan, MS, RD, LD, says ...

Elyse Homan

> Protein is a vital part of any balanced diet. Casein forms a gel-like substance in your stomach," Homan explains. "It releases more slowly than other proteins and takes longer for your body to absorb.

The health benefits of casein include ...

- Gives you all the essential amino acids. Casien is a complete protein and has all nine essential amino acids.
- Reduces muscle breakdown. The slow absorption consistently feeds your cells with amino acids, allowing muscles to recover instead of breaking down.
- Promotes muscle growth. Casein has a high amount of leucine, and amino acid that regulates how your body changes food into energy, which helps build and repair muscles.
- A brilliant source of calcium. Apart from being essential for teeth and bones. Lack of calcium can lead to loss of bone mass and osteoporosis.

When it comes to teeth, dairy is intimately associated with the childhood growth of oral tissues and to their continued integrity through life. Dairy products contribute to maintaining this healthy status and may prevent dental caries (decay of tooth or bone) by the actions of bioactive components genetically encoded in milk composition.

Dairy products and oral health ScienceDirect

Lactose intolerance is real for many people, nowadays stores have a range of dairy free or plant-based dairy for those with specific dietary restrictions like lactose intolerance. This is a great solution for those who are unable to eat dairy products but still love the taste.

Dairy's' saturated fat and salt contents may also cause problems for people who are sensitive to dietary fat or have high blood pressure.

https://hn.linkedin.com/in/jlvargasb/en

Is cheese addictive? healthline.com

Whether you're a fan of creamy Brie, or pungent Blue cheese, a sweet double cream yoghurt, or a flavoured milk, there's a type of dairy out there for everyone to enjoy. So, savour each taste and celebrate the love for dairy in all its delicious forms. Whether you pair it with wine, sprinkle it over salads, or melt it into your favourite dishes – let's raise a toast to this versatile ingredient that brings joy and flavour to every occasion. **SR**

Celebrate the Journey from Farm to Glass with NESTLÉ® NESPRAY® on World Milk Day

As part of the global celebration of World Milk Day, NESTLÉ® NESPRAY® takes pride in championing the farm-to-glass journey of our product, embodying the essence of our commitment to delivering the highest quality milk to our consumers.

World Milk Day, held on June 1, is an initiative of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO). The day is dedicated to recognizing the importance of milk as a global food source and celebrating the hard work of dairy farmers around the world. World Milk Day encourages people to enjoy milk – and to appreciate the hard work that goes into producing it. This year, the spotlight is on dairy as an accessible, affordable, and nutrient-dense food, critical to balanced diets worldwide.

The NESTLÉ® NESPRAY® team is both proud and excited to join in this celebration, as we share the same values and commitment to bringing nutritious and quality milk products to every household. Our story is a testament to the journey of milk, from the hardworking dairy farmers to the nurturing of school-aged children worldwide.

100% of our milk comes from local, sustainable farms – and each farm is regularly audited to make sure they're adhering to our stringent quality and safety standards. These sustainable dairy farms are committed to nurturing both children's futures and the future of our planet.

Once sourced, the fresh milk goes through a meticulous quality check process. The milk is tested for antibiotics and toxins that can contaminate milk. Our state-of-the-art technology ensures that the milk we provide is safe, healthy, and meets the high-quality standards set by NESTLÉ® NESPRAY®.

Our commitment to quality doesn't stop there. We ensure that our milk retains its nutritional value throughout the production process.

The fresh milk is carefully processed and dried to create the milk powder that forms the basis of NESTLÉ® NESPRAY®, locking in some of the essential nutrients needed for children's healthy growth and development.

Finally, it ends its journey in the hands of parents like you – NESTLÉ® NESPRAY® is a source of Iron, Calcium and Vitamins A, C and D. These nutrients supports growing children.

We're very excited about this global movement, and invite you to join us as we recognise the role of milk in our diets. With World Milk Day focusing on the value milk offers in terms of nutrition and development, we're proud to champion what this day stands for.

Let's raise a glass this World Milk Day.

Here's to the dairy farmers.
The quality checkers.
The processors and the packers.

And, of course, to you – the milk-drinkers, and parents of a generation of healthy children.

References:
https://worldmilkday.org/
https://www.nespray.co.za/articles/100-locally-sourced-fresh-milk-their-glass

DAIRY: WORLD MILK DAY continued ...

REDISCOVER DAIRY

Why dairy has a significant place in sustainable diets

Many South African consumers are becoming more aware of the climate change impacts of their food choices and are looking for practical ways to shift towards a more sustainable diet.

> “Although including more vegetables and fruit, whole-grains and legumes in our family meals can be more environmentally friendly, sustainable diets must also be healthy diets and because of their unmatched nutritional quality, animal-based foods such as dairy play a vital role in sustainable diets.”

It’s important to understand what the experts mean when they talk about sustainable diets. Environmental factors are an important consideration, but so are nutritional needs, affordability and whether the diet is culturally acceptable. A sustainable diet must be one that is accessible, affordable as well as good for the planet and people’s well-being.

According to registered dietitian at Rediscover Dairy, Maretha Vermaak ...

> “A healthy diet consists mostly of plant-based foods and includes moderate amounts of eggs, dairy, poultry, fish, and small amounts of red meat. This balance of a variety of foods is really important.”

Maretha Vermaak

"Diets that are predominately or exclusively plant-based may lack several micronutrients, such as vitamin B12, iron, calcium, and zinc, which are essential for the body's functioning and the prevention of nutritional deficiencies. Not only are animal-source foods such as dairy rich in most of these micronutrients, but their bioavailability is also higher compared to plant-sourced foods.

"Another important consideration when it comes to sustainable diets is that consuming a diet that exceeds a person's energy requirements is regarded as an environmental burden. Reducing overconsumption and improving the energy balance of your diet will have both health and environmental benefits. This is relevant in countries such as South Africa where we have such high rates of overweight and obesity."

Because diets are culturally based and geographically influenced, different populations have certain nutritional challenges. For instance, in South Africa calcium intake is low across all age groups, and researchers have attributed this in part to a low consumption of dairy.

Therefore, the South African food-based dietary guidelines encourage the consumption of milk, yoghurt or maas on a daily basis.

Professor Mieke Faber, Extraordinary Professor at North West University explains ...

> The impact of dietary shifts on health and the environment is context-specific due to diverse food systems and discrepancies in food security and nutritional status across and within countries.

Mieke Faber

"In most high-income countries, consumption of animal-source foods should be limited because of high risks of non-communicable diseases (NCDs) and environmental footprints. So, shifts towards a more plant-based diet will simultaneously reduce health risks and environmental impact. However ...

> In many low- and middle-income countries with a high prevalence of nutrient deficiencies and undernutrition such as South Africa, diversifying the diets and increasing the intake of animal-source foods will be needed to supply adequate amounts of essential nutrients, with a consequent increase in environmental impact.

"Under these circumstances, meeting dietary requirements and nutrition targets would be the priority, with a somewhat higher environmental impact as a trade-off."

As you think of ways to make your family's diet more climate friendly and sustainable, you need to take into account healthy balance and nutritional quality as well as consider other factors around food consumption that impact on the environment.

Eating more plant-based foods – experiment with ways to include more vegetable and fruit, legumes, grains, nuts and seeds in your meals. Some ideas include planning meals that use a variety of differently coloured vegetables, adding leafy greens and tomato to your cheese sandwich or spinach and red pepper to an omelette. Try out delicious recipes for meals that are plant-based and boost the nutritional quality by including legumes and dairy.

Limiting highly processed foods – reduce the amounts of nutrient-poor sugary beverages, salty snacks and high fat take-aways that you purchase every month. Instead focus your food budget on food choices that are nutrient-dense such as fresh vegetables, fruit, milk, yoghurt and maas. Cultivate an interest in cooking from scratch, and make preparing healthy meals and lunchboxes a fun, team effort in your home.

Limiting red meat – Smaller portions of beef cuts can be used in meals and legumes such as beans, lentils and chickpeas can be added to bulk up a stew, curry, mince sauce or casserole. It helps to plan fewer red meat-based

meals in a month, opting instead for chicken, fish or vegetarian alternatives.

Reducing your food waste – many consumers don't realise that our collective food waste is a major contributor (around 10%) to global greenhouse gas emissions. So, cutting down our food waste is one of the most effective ways that consumers can lead more climate friendly lives.

This means planning your meals, shopping only for what you need, storing food correctly, freezing surplus food whenever possible, giving away excess food and making sure you use perishable food items such as dairy before their expiry dates.

Recycling, reusing and repurposing food packaging waste – while food packaging has a protective role, it is a major contributor to environmental pollution. Actively reduce your use of single-use plastics and use reusable shopping bags for your food shopping. In addition, set up a family system for recycling, reusing or repurposing your food packaging waste to reduce your household's impact on the environment.

Growing anxiety about the climate crisis is motivating more people to be open to adapting their diets and this presents an opportunity for us to also improve our food choices for better health.

Every shift we make towards climate friendly lifestyles must include our focus on nutritional quality and its impact on our well-being, all within the framework of our food budgets. This means that nutrient-dense, affordable, accessible foods such as dairy will have a long future when it comes to being part of sustainable diets. **SR**

World Milk Day was celebrated on Saturday, 1 June 2024.

This year's theme focuses on the role of dairy in delivering quality nutrition to nourish the world.

Activities and events will be highlighted on social media channels with the hashtags #WorldMilkDay & #EnjoyDairy and will include videos from dairy farmers and producers around the world highlighting the sustainability practices that are in place on today's farms and production facilities.

To find out more about dairy's role on healthy diets, visit https://www.rediscoverdairy.co.za/

The Consumer Education Project (CEP) is an initiative of Milk South Africa (Milk SA).

Milk SA is a voluntary, non-profit company set up to promote the development of the dairy industry. The Project is multidisciplinary as it uses expert knowledge from different disciplines that is communicated to the target audiences through television, social media, digital media, radio and print, focussing on the health and nutritional benefits of dairy.

The Dairy Standard Agency

Where quality and food safety meet

The Dairy Standard Agency (DSA) is a registered non-profit company (NPC) in terms of the Companies Act, 2008 (Act 71 of 2008). Its primary objective is to promote the compliance of milk and other dairy products with quality standards.

A scientific foundation

The DSA is an objective organisation which acts according to scientific information and functions independent of commercial interests that may affect the organisation's actions. Our goal is to serve the industry and, ultimately, the consumer.

The DSA is informed and guided by scientific knowledge in respect of the numerous factors relevant to the quality of unprocessed milk, processed milk and other dairy products. This includes issues such as various legal and other standards, guidance in respect of good production, manufacturing and distribution technologies, and measures to minimise and eliminate problems.

Serving the dairy value chain

The DSA serves many stakeholders in the dairy value chain, including feed manufacturers, milk producers, veterinary practitioners, raw material suppliers, processors, distributors, retailers, and the consumer.

While the DSA's primary goal is to promote the quality of unprocessed milk, processed milk and other dairy products, it also stands to reason that different South African and international legal and voluntary standards (which include numerous goods production and manufacturing standards), the application of the various fields of scientific knowledge, and research regarding the origin and prevention of quality problems, are equally important.

Hence, the DSA currently manages 17 different projects of a statutory and non-statutory nature, of which the statutory projects are funded by Milk South Africa (Milk SA).

Strategic development relating to proactive and reactive approaches, which are covered by these DSA project activities, assists the organisation in remaining relevant and making valuable contributions, especially in terms of the demanding and multi-dimensional tasks of the regulatory environment in which the organisation is directly and indirectly involved in.

DSA Lab Services

The DSA runs a state of the art laboratory, DSA Lab Services, where customers – from milk producers to retailers to government authorities – can have dairy and dairy related products tested for a variety of pathogens, ingredients, composition and authenticity.

The laboratory tests in excess of 2 500 dairy product samples annually for a variety of microbiological, chemical and other properties, including potential adulteration. Raw and pasteurised milk are tested for more than 17 different properties. In terms of dairy products, tests are carried out on UHT milk, condensed milk, evaporated milk, cream, cheese, butter, and fermented products such as yoghurt and buttermilk.

DSA Lab Services uses equipment that meet international standard, and tests adhere to specific standards stipulated by legislation, regulations, and industry norms. The standards of the International Organization for Standardization (ISO), the South African Bureau of Standards (SABS), Codex Alimentarius and the African Organisation for Standardisation (ARSO) are also considered.

The DSA is currently in the process of obtaining the much sought-after South African National Accreditation System (SANAS) accreditation.

At grassroots level

The DSA is also closely involved in the production of safe dairy at the source, namely on farms. Staff pay regular visits to on-farm milking parlours to ensure that hygiene and other standards are adhered to. It also publishes and regularly reviews its Code of Practice for Milk Producers, a guideline document which assist dairy producers (who often also process their own milk) in correctly setting up and managing their dairy enterprises, and meeting the necessary standards for safe and healthy dairy.

The DSA Quality Club represents a grouping of noteworthy and likeminded national and international companies who endorse the DSA's efforts and who play their part in ensuring that quality dairy products reach the end consumer. The current members of the DSA Quality Club are AECI Food & Beverage, Biomérieux, Merieux NutriSciences, Nutrochem, Polyoak Packaging, and Rhine Ruhr.

The DSA, since its inception, has progressed as an organisation that is well-recognised by international industry related establishments, government bodies, the primary and secondary dairy industry, and stakeholders such as national consumer bodies and the retail sector. Getting to know us and our services is worth your while.

For more information, phone 012 665 4250 or email info@dairystandard.co.za.

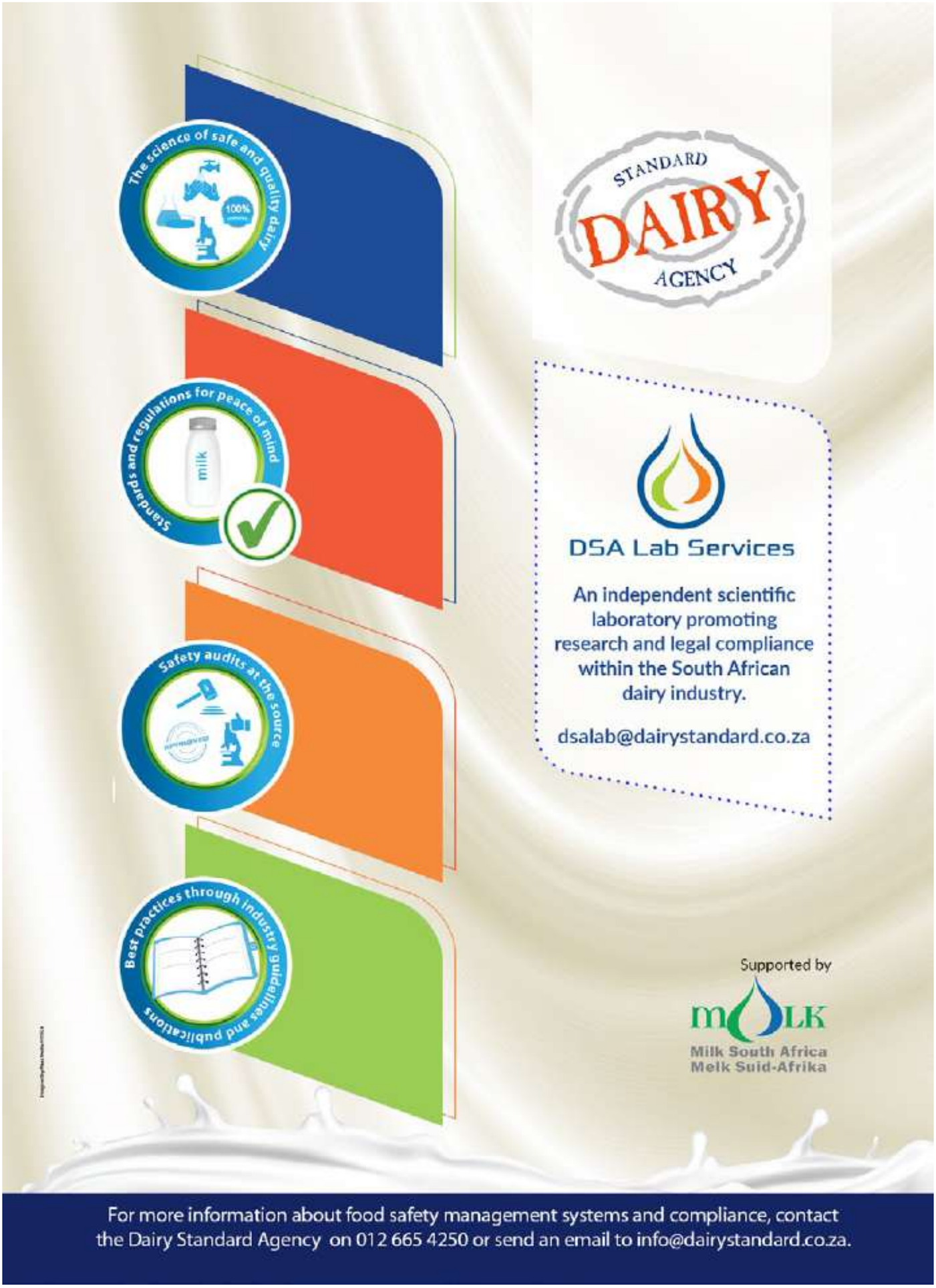

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Image by WangXiNa, www.freepik.com

The internet of things, or IoT, is a network of interrelated devices that connect and exchange data with other IoT devices and the cloud. IoT devices are typically embedded with technology such as sensors and software and can include mechanical and digital machines and consumer objects. Increasingly, organisations in a variety of industries are using IoT to operate more efficiently, deliver enhanced customer service, improve decision-making and increase the value of the business.
https://www.techtarget.com/iotagenda/definition/Internet-of-Things-IoT

Behind the scenes

Back of house systems, equipment, solutions & innovations for FMCG retailers & wholesalers

Ann Baker-Keulemans

Unseen by the consumer, your back of house (BOH) can make or break the retail or wholesale experience. Like the cogs in a machine, BOH employees, processes, systems and solutions must work seamlessly and tirelessly to shape the front of house proceedings as an essential part of your overall offering. What makes your kitchen and food preparation BOH work is a combination of zealous organisation, adaptability, knowledge, and experience.

From delivery and receiving through stockrooms and cold storage; your kitchen areas; service departments including bakery, butchery, fresh produce and deli, to cleaning, maintenance, health and safety – ensuring your BOH myriad moving parts run efficiently, smoothly and at optimum productivity means focusing on the finer details while also keeping an eye on the bigger picture.

For all back of house operations, automation, artificial intelligence (AI), machine learning, and the internet of things (IoT) are making specified tasks easier, simpler, and more efficient. While these technologies and the upskilling of staff take time to implement the long-term benefits are many.

For example, technology innovations in kitchen BOH equipment can help optimise operations by freeing up personnel for more hands-on tasks – and reducing wastage and human error. Keeping your BOH processes up to date with the best possible technology makes good business sense – and ensuring your staff are trained and knowledgeable is as important as taking advantage of technology to help organise and manage your BOH systems and operational requirements.

By geralt
from Pixbay,
www.canva.com

Organising your back of house

A chaotic BOH is bad for business. Mismanaged stock, breakage and wastage, frustrated employees and customers, and wasted time are not conducive to a pleasant or productive work environment. Taking advantage of technology to help organise and manage your BOH is as important as ensuring your BOH staff are trained, knowledgeable, and effective.

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Illustration
www.coforge.com

Inset: Ivy Bell,
www.canva.com

- Your kitchen BOH processes – from tracking deliveries and managing stock – are becoming easier as smart barcodes and RFID (radio frequency identification) labels and tags are the norm. With an integrated system, produce can be tracked from farm or manufacturer to point of sale.

- Using AI and machine learning, wastage and stock shortages can be managed much more efficiently. Although, when it comes to local celebrations, and real-time events such as weather disruptions, direct human intervention may still be necessary.
- Knowledge of products, categories, and departments is essential for stock management and a well-run BOH for your team, so make sure you have the right employees in place. Include effective training in handover processes, chain of command, and how to solve potential problems or navigate a crisis. Communication and education are an integral part of a successful BOH team.

https://itsm.tools

An organised back of house is obviously important for a well-run front of house, and it has a direct impact on customer satisfaction.

In terms of stock control, running out of stock is never a good thing, but being able to locate an item, even if it's at another branch, or being able to deliver stock quickly, can go a long way to fostering a happy relationship with your customers.

Having a shopper wait for a harried employee to search a disorganised stockroom with no success (and no solution) is a waste of time and can quickly damage a store's reputation.

This applies equally to independent stores, franchise model groups and centralised groups – in one instance, a chain store's returns counter was piled high with boxes of stock (some open), the counter was piled high with paperwork and files, and the search in BOH (stockroom) for a click and collect order took an extraordinarily long time, by which time the queue consisted of seven very impatient customers. Back of house disorganisation had in this instance led to front of house problems. And of course, in the age of social media, word of mouth is more powerful than ever, for the good and the bad!

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Product consistency and innovation for service departments

Suppliers of FMCG retailers and wholesalers spend billions on product research and development. They have to; it's a tough market out there and competition is fierce. For speciality service departments such as in-store delis and bakeries, as well as home meal replacements, heat and eat, and ready to eat products, consistency is non-negotiable.

Your back of house food prep staff, kitchen assistants, cooks, bakers, and chefs all want to achieve the best possible results, but they must be able to rely on their ingredients and equipment. R&D in product development is making it easier to achieve consistent good quality, visual appeal, and the best taste and texture.

As your employees are expected to produce these results while keeping wastage to a minimum or even running their department as a profit centre, it cannot be overstated how important it is to keep upgrading your food service departments, and to keep up with the latest in products and ingredients, equipment, technology, and solutions.

Your customers are also expecting more of you – continuous innovation and more choice from your range, as well as better taste, more convenience, improved health benefits, and the allure of a new experience.

On the other hand, as costs rise across the board, improved efficiency, less wastage, and increased sales are crucial to business survival – and success. Relying on the trusted and true must be carefully balanced with moving forward and embracing the future.

Image courtesy of www.repairjerry.com/

CASE STUDY 1:

Bakery back of house

Products that save time, work every time, and are easy to use are another must when it comes to bulk offerings in speciality areas such as the deli, HMR, butchery and bakery. Rich's, a family-owned food company based in Johannesburg, knows what it takes to keep food service customers happy. The business has a presence in over 100 countries, and more than 400 product types, with customers ranging from in-store bakeries and restaurants to convenience stores and industrial clients.

Rich's introduced the first non-dairy whipped topping in 1945, and innovation remains at the core of the business. That need to innovate and create remains unchanged today. As the company's website says, "Our dedicated and highly skilled in-house R&D team ensures we create valuable products that are a catalyst for our customers' success."

Rich's is known for several innovative products from pre-mixes and laminated doughs to icings, toppings, and ready-made goods. Their latest offerings include their pre-glazed freezer-to-oven Speedibake mini-Danish bakery selection, their multipurpose On Top Soft Whip topping – pourable, drinkable ready-to-use cold foam with a natural cream flavour and light texture – and a pre-proved 85g Chocolate Hazelnut Croissant.

What these products offer is quality, reliability and trust, paired with efficiency and convenience. Products such as these make BOH preparation simpler and faster and can help to optimise time and effort.

Get ready to meet the ultimate scales squad!

These ergonomic machines are sleek, modular and just so easy to install and connect with other scales and wrappers. Plus, their Teflon-coated lids help keep those linerless paper adhesives from sticking to all the wrong places.

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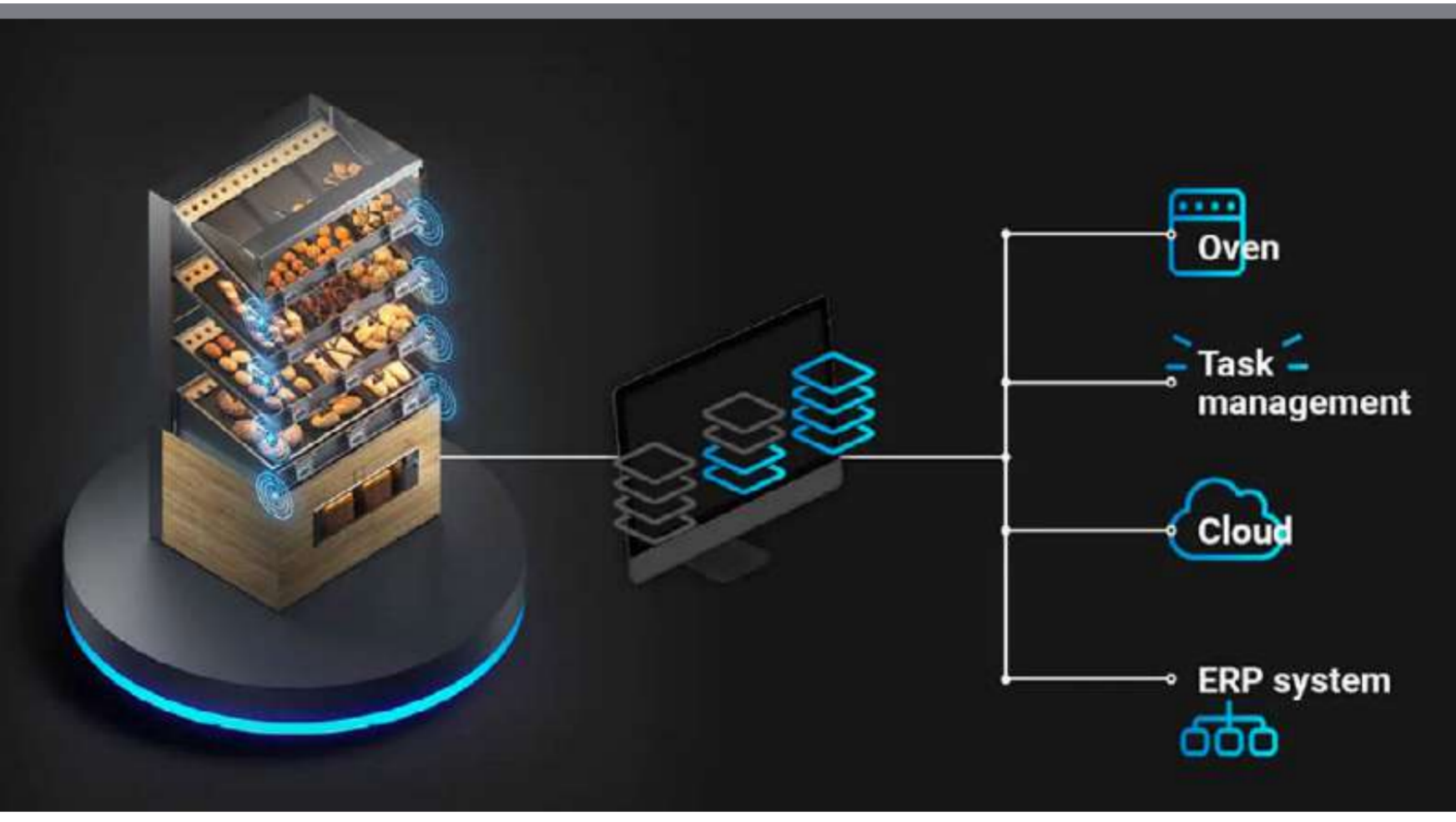

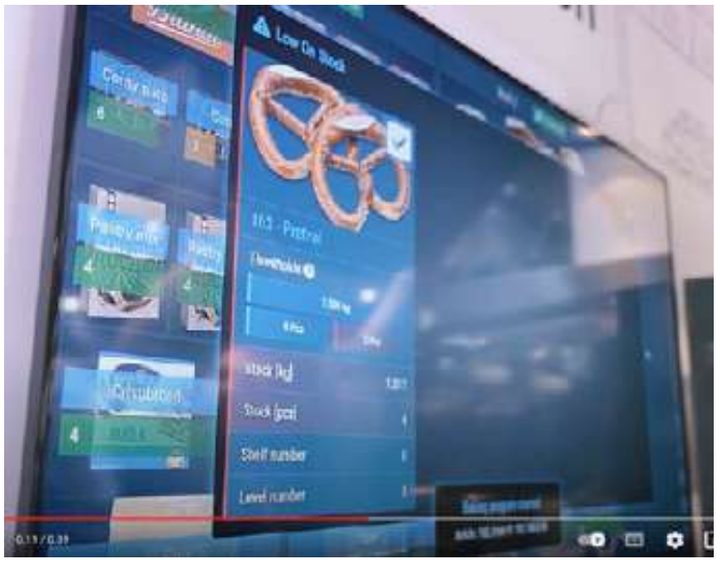

Bizerba's Smart Shelf is designed to reduce waste generated by overproduction. www.bizerba.com/

High tech solutions for a better kitchen experience

On the technology front in back of house, companies are investing in software and technology-enabled equipment to manage their processes and systems.

CASE STUDY 2:
Baking equipment and technology

Recently launched in Europe, industrial weighing and labelling experts Bizerba's Smart Shelf is designed to reduce waste generated by overproduction. This intelligent rack is suited to baked goods, using weight sensors to detect when a product has been removed, while documenting the rack position.

Part of its smart functionality allows it to detect when a product, such as rolls, is running low. It then sends a signal to the automatic baking machine, which activates the appropriate baking programme for a predetermined quantity.

Bizerba uses AI to forecast sales based on recorded data, optimising the baking done over the course of the day. Prices on the racks can be dynamically adjusted and automatically updated by the system, a feature that could be used to sell off surplus stock before closing time instead of having to dispose of it as waste.

Image by www.freepik.com

CASE STUDY 3:
Technology advancements in food labels and scales

Store generated food labels and scales are part of your back of house operations and should be treated as such. For example, Super U, a French supermarket chain, has introduced QR codes on food labels for customers who want to know that their purchases are sustainable. The chain uses Snapchat Stories to instantly share information about where the product came from and whether it was ethically grown, caught, or farmed.

Teraoka is another company that invests heavily in continual innovation and improvement. Their selection of scales, labels, and wrapping systems offers advanced technology, precision, and fit-for-purpose solutions that are geared towards a fully customisable and integrated offering.

Electronic shelf labelling (ESL) offers real-time price updates for a streamlined and efficient shopping and stock management experience, while linerless labels provide a flexible, attractive, and customisable label solution with a lower total cost and reduced environmental impact.

"Bizerba offers hardware and software solutions for weighing, food inspection and labelling, including label material. In addition, there are digitalisation and automation solutions with the Bizerba BRAIN2 industrial software and the smart BRAIN2 apps for a wide range of applications. Bizerba also offers digitalisation and automation solutions with their Bizerba BRAIN2 industrial software and their smart BRAIN2 apps for a wide range of applications."

Integrated systems that weigh, pack, wrap, and/or label are a gamechanger when it comes to minimising waste, increasing efficiencies, and removing human error from the equation. It's all about finding better and faster ways of doing business.

Teraoka says, "We always strive to create new standards for the market. Once they become commonplace, we go further and challenge ourselves to find a new balance."

Designed by iuriimotov / www.freepik.com

Tips for setting up your back of house

- Be compliant. Make sure you comply with all relevant regulations, including health and safety, food safety, and any other legislated or best practice regulations that may be relevant.
- Your equipment, solutions, and systems must be fit for purpose.
- Keep your grocery and premade divisions separate. For maximum efficiency and to prevent any potential problems, as well as ensuring you remain compliant for both of these categories, make sure you keep a clear division between your grocery and premade operations.

https://metro.com/blog/back-of-house-storage-modern-grocery-operations-/

Bring the age of information to your back of house

In an article for Medium.com on *Emerging FMCG Trends in 2024*, business management consultants Strategii At Work says, "The FMCG industry is undergoing a profound transformation, driven by technological advancements and the imperative need for omnichannel strategies. In 2024, these trends are reshaping the landscape of the industry, presenting both challenges and opportunities for brands."

AI, automation, and digital transformation are some of the most significant trends predicted to impact wholesalers and retailers globally in the coming years. The article states, "Digitalisation is revolutionising FMCG operations, from manufacturing to supply chain management. Automated processes, smart factories, and digital tools are enhancing efficiency and reducing costs. Real-time data insights are empowering decision-makers, allowing for quicker responses to market demands and ensuring a more agile and adaptive approach to business."

Remaining flexible and up to date, understanding the risk and rewards, ROI and how much value the technology will add to your business is a balancing act that local wholesalers and retailers need to perfect. Keeping an eye on international chains and trends is one of the easiest ways to determine what changes are likely to benefit your business. Given the pace of innovation across the board, those slow off the mark run the risk of falling so far behind, playing catch up will prove to be a mission impossible. Savvy businesses that keep up with the changes will find themselves entering a new and exciting era of retail and wholesale. **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 | www.wilkinsrossglobal.com

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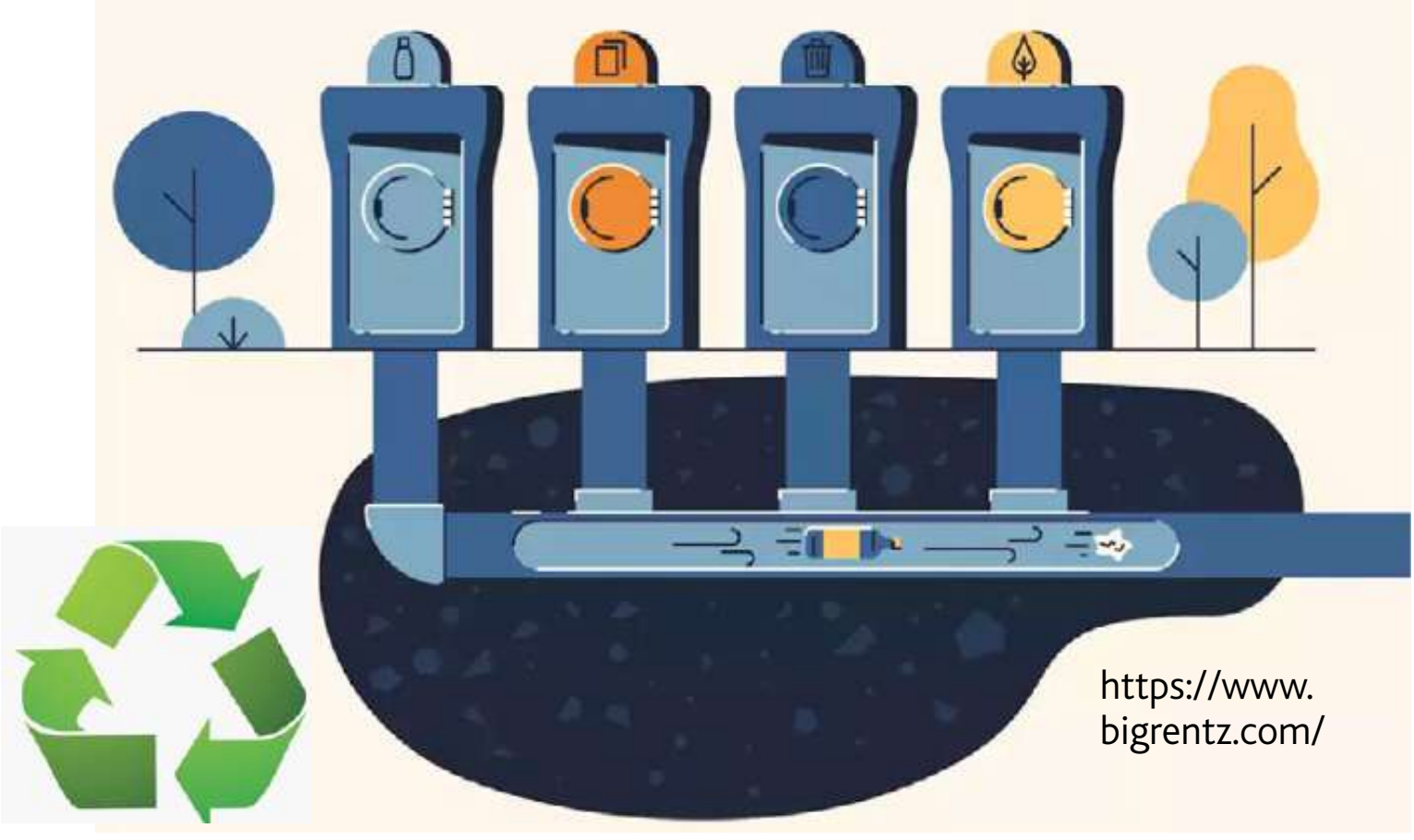

As populations grow in urban areas, so does the need for waste management solutions that can accommodate increasing amounts of trash. Some cities are taking on this challenge by installing pneumatic waste disposal bins that connect to an series of underground pipes. Trash travels through the pipes to a waste collection plant where it can be sorted or hauled away. This system eliminates the need for traditional waste collection, reduces energy costs and increases overall efficiency. https://www.bigrentz.com/

San Francisco diverts about 80% of its waste from landfills every year, and it boasts one of the highest recycling rates in the U.S. The city achieved this in part through its partnership with Recology, a waste collection company. Recology invested $20 million into upgrading its facilities and installed a fleet of sorting robots to quickly and accurately sort recyclables.

These robots perform a series of tasks, including sorting out contaminates, recovering recyclable materials missed by traditional sorters and sorting black plastics that optical sorters can't identify into mixed-plastic bales. This not only ensures that more of San Francisco's materials are properly recycled, but also increases the quality and saleability of plastic bales. https://www.bigrentz.com/

Amsterdam is one of the most eco-conscious cities in the world. As part of its goal to reduce CO_2 emissions by 95% by 2050, the Dutch capital set out to upgrade its public waste collection system with smart technology. In 2014, the city added weighing mechanisms to some of its collection trucks and installed fill-level sensors in public trash bins. It then used the data to create more efficient, cost-effective waste collection schedules.

In 2020, researchers at MIT and AMS Institute unveiled a potential solution to clean up the piles of trash that still line Amsterdam's historic canals. Their concept, Waste Streams, would involve installing floating dumpsters in canals that can be collected and returned by autonomous boats. If the project is successful, the system will eliminate the need for curbside trash pickup in historic districts and provide a more energy-efficient alternative. https://www.bigrentz.com/

Songdo, South Korea was one of the first cities to implement a truck-free waste management system. It achieved this by installing bins connected to a series of underground pneumatic waste pipes that transport trash to a waste processing facility, where waste is automatically sorted and either recycled, buried or burned for energy.

Songdo's system was the first to eliminate the need for collection trucks by connecting every building in the city to the underground pipe system. This not only cut down on carbon emissions but also saved the city money. By 2014, the system only required seven workers to operate. https://www.bigrentz.com/ SR

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Image by Ziehefzie, www.canva.com

Transforming learning

Education 4.0 for the Fourth Industrial Revolution and beyond

By Catherine Larkin

Not so long ago, education was a simple affair: a classroom, an educator, perhaps a chalkboard, and, if you were lucky, a projector. It's remarkable how far we've come since then, with technology transforming the learning landscape beyond recognition.

Juliette Fourie

According to Juliette Fourie, managing director of the training academy Metro Minds, the Fourth Industrial Revolution has transformed industries and significantly impacted education.

"As many are referring to it, Education 4.0 is characterised by personalised learning, independence, and the integration of smart technologies," she explains.

Given the transformative shifts witnessed in businesses and industries globally, driven by advancements in technology facilitating automation, connectivity, and data-driven decision-making, it's evident that education must evolve to impart essential workplace skills.

Integrating artificial intelligence, robotics, and other technologies has increased efficiency, improved customer experiences, and tailor-made solutions. However, with technological advancements come challenges, and one of the biggest challenges of this revolution is aligning new skill sets with jobs of the future.

"There is a need to bridge the gap between traditional education and the rapidly changing demands of the workplace. Lifelong learning and upskilling are essential to adapt to the automation of tasks and processes. Future employees must possess cognitive agility, critical thinking, problem-solving, emotional intelligence, and teamwork skills. Education institutions must focus on knowledge retention and cognitive flexibility, entrepreneurship, and creativity. As work becomes more automated, agility in task and context-switching will become increasingly important."

Dr Kenneth Moodley

Dr Kenneth Moodley, Strategic Partner, Supply Chain Lecturer, and Coach at The Supply Chain Academy – SCA Global, a division of the University of Supply Chain -Africa (USCA), shares the sentiment, saying some of the biggest disruptors which have resulted in supply chain leaders either rethinking their strategy or speeding up implementation has been the rapid development of technology – particularly 4IR, the Internet of Things (IoT), and AI. He told *Supermarket & Retailer* ...

> "There is a realisation that people and technology have to be integrated to maximise benefits and address the volatility in global economics and supply chains such as the Covid pandemic and geopolitical events."

Ansonet van Niekerk

According to Ansonet van Niekerk of Bizzco, a Chartered Institute of Logistics and Transport (CILT) accredited training provider, education has to adapt to changing business requirements. "Automation and e-commerce has drastically changed the retail sector."

> "Automation has streamlined numerous processes to improve the flow, as well as allowing the human workers to focus on other important tasks. E-commence has created easy purchases from anywhere at any time with easy delivery options – this is convenient to consumers and has the ability to widen your target market as a business."

"Training content needs to meet two criteria in Bizzco's view, the first being the requirements set by the accrediting body of the qualification and the other relevance to the market."

From Source to Destination –
Connecting Global Supply Chains

EFFICIENCY IN MOTION

From raw materials sourced in one corner of the world to finished products reaching consumers in another, the journey is a testament to human ingenuity and collaborative effort which extends beyond the boundaries of individual organizations. Efficiency in motion is the cornerstone of successful supply chain management in today's hypercompetitive business environment. In an increasingly interconnected world, global supply chains play a pivotal role in driving economic growth, fostering innovation, and enriching lives. By leveraging data-driven insights, embracing lean principles, integrating technology solutions, digitizing processes, and fostering collaborative partnerships, companies can unlock new levels of efficiency and agility within their supply chains.

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EMBRACING CHANGE: Adapting to the shifting landscape of education

The Covid-19 pandemic, in particular, is a significant catalyst for change. Not only did it disrupt supply chains, leaving them in disarray, but the surge in global e-commerce brought about unprecedented and notably unforeseen transformation.

"There is no denying that the

Michael Henning

pandemic accelerated the adoption of technology and the advancement of online retail for social distancing massively," says Michael Henning, sales manager at Easy Clear.

"The growth of fast fashion retail like that provided by Shein, Temu, Superbalist and Takealot or Amazon and facilitated by last-mile delivery logistics service providers, changed the consumer behaviour patterns irreversibly and created employment opportunities for many, particularly in this country. Look at the proliferation of scooter and bike delivery personnel today – it's hard to miss. "

> "The increasing demand for tighter deadlines and faster delivery expectations is directly linked to the technological advancements enabling retailers to connect with consumers more directly."

Truman Hadebe

Truman Hadebe, CED and Global Business Lead at The Supply Chain Academy – SCA Global, division USCA, says in South Africa, there has been a rapid adoption of e-commerce platforms and Apps that allow retailers such as Spar,

Checkers, Woolworths, Pick 'n Pay and Sibaya Foods to name a few, to deliver, not only a brick and mortar presence, but also online shopping. Sixty60, WooliesDash and Spar2u are now a common phenomenon in the country.

> “It has not only created convenience and good online customer shopping experience, but it has also gradually led to efficiencies in the logistics front of the retail supply chain.”

Image by https://emeritus.org/

Henning explains that IoT, online ordering (Web browsers), same-day delivery, and real-time tracking have made it possible for the retailer – using smart devices and apps – to improve the consumer experience significantly. “It has also placed increased demand on the retailer and subsequently the last mile delivery operator to meet that experience level and the subsequent growing demand."

He says the supply chain, particularly the last mile delivery segment, has been significantly affected by the increasing consumer demand and rapid increase in volumes, which can only be met through technology to cope with steadily increasing volumes.

"Innovative ways to cope with unplanned and real-life inefficiencies (like load shedding and subsequent traffic) mean that operators need to turn to clever algorithms for route planning, AI and merged technology like the IoT and 5G. "

Collaborative computing can converge for predictive planning and distribution of stock to local warehouse or distribution hubs closer to the clients for more efficient delivery and cost savings."

Image courtesy of www.datapine.com/

FOSTERING INNOVATION: Navigating the evolving landscape of supply chain skills development

> “Undoubtedly, a fundamental shift in skills development within the supply chain is imperative for operators to adapt to the evolving landscape, where online shopping rivals the traditional brick-and-mortar experience in popularity.”

Retailers will require fresh skills from their supply chain service providers to maintain competitiveness and stay at the forefront. Innovation is critical to success in this dynamic environment.

“There are probably a myriad of things that one can list that are needed and required for this sector, and they would probably vary by organisation and sector,” says

Moodley. "However, whilst technical skills are important, leadership skills and a systems thinking approach to decision making are vital."

Henning agrees, saying adaptability and forward thinking are also skill sets that are becoming increasingly important.

> "Research conducted by Metro Minds identified three types of skills mismatches in the South African context: demand mismatch, educational supply mismatch and qualification-job mismatch."

Learning more about the skills mismatches in the South African labour market and workforce implies that the workforce's education level must rise for South Africa to be more competitive.

Recognising that the country's skills profile and workforce differ from those of other parts of the world, the challenge is to respond in ways that improve skills to compete in a global economy. Coupled with the high unemployment rate and students needing to complete their secondary and tertiary education, the SETAs are mandated to play a critical role in developing the correct strategies for an improved skilled labour market.

Published by the World Bank (2018), a country scorecard for South Africa has been compared to a global Logistics Performance Index (LPI). The score indicates six dimensions as a benchmark to display the overall LPI index. The scorecard allows comparison to the rest of the world. The index indicates a significant skills gap in the logistics sector.

South Africa was mentioned as one of the countries with skills shortages in supply chain and logistics talent. The critical challenges to developing a competitive logistics sector are encapsulated in how the government should assist with this and adapt to changes around technology, automation, and the impact on the labour market.

Image courtesy of https://equitablegrowth.org/

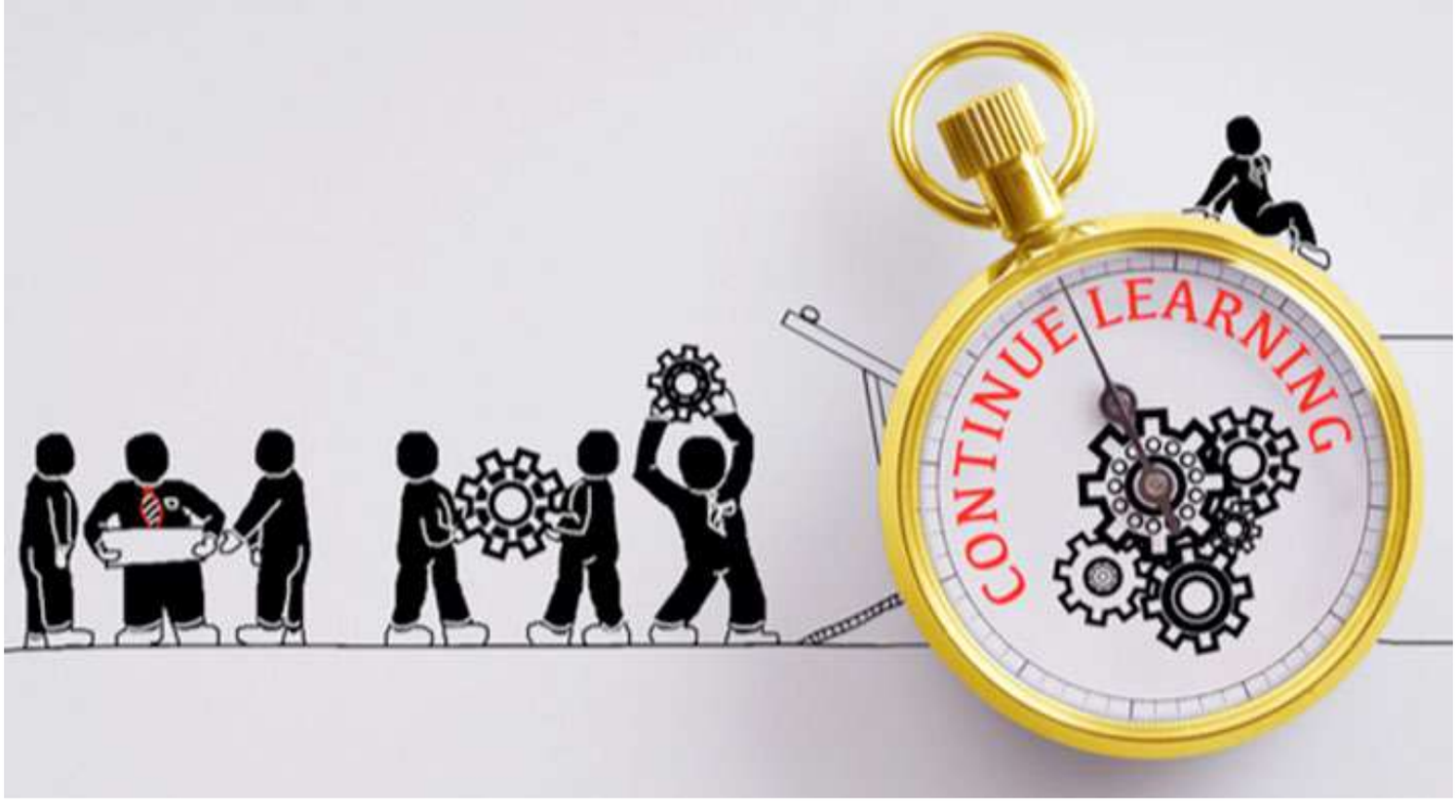
"The skills shortage is linked to the planning of skills development. The intention of addressing any skills shortage is executed inaccurately."

"Instead of following a systems approach in assessing current realities and linking them to a desired outcome, skills shortages are being addressed by short-term fixes. What we receive as demand and what the actual demand is, is not accurate as we do not know if businesses are merely ticking a compliance box or training because of a specific, well-assessed skills shortage or gap in their part of the business. Skills shortages that are completely overlooked are the skills linked to Jobs of the Future," explains Fourie.

"The Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR) is characterised by a fusion of technologies that blurs the lines between digital, physical, and biological spheres. Artificial intelligence, robotics, autonomous vehicles, 3-D printing, nano-technology, quantum computing and the Internet of Things are already around us, reducing transportation and communication costs and improving the global supply chain and logistics.

"Due to the growing transparency and different consumer behaviour, businesses have been forced to design, market, sell and transport goods differently. The shortage of skilled workers is also due to the increasing use of technology and automation within the sector, affecting many jobs at many levels. The workforce needs modern skills like digital literacy, logistics operations, and skilled people to manage customers' operations and service delivery."

Image: https://www.spiceworks.com/



Future jobs are being explored, and there is a growing demand for enterprise skills. Enterprise skills are trans-ferable skills that allow people to navigate complex job functions in different industries. These skills include digital literacy, communication, creativity, teamwork, problem-solving, critical thinking, and financial literacy.

It is estimated that future jobs will demand 70% more of these types of skills than jobs of the past. Skills development will be provided through experiences, immersion, and augmented learning – instead of traditional education practices.

The percentage of jobs that demand critical thinking has increased by 158%, creativity by 65%, presentation skills by 25% and teamwork by 19%. Enterprise skills are becoming just as crucial for job entry as technical skills.

WORKING TOGETHER TO DEVELOP SKILLS THE RETAIL INDUSTRY NEEDS

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Image: Olivier Le Moal, https://www.regenesys.net/

DRIVING TRANSFORMATION: Shaping training initiatives for industry evolution

Training and skills development, regardless of what sector one operates in, is not an emotional luxury but a necessity. Fourie says most businesses need to go back to the drawing board regarding skills development.

"The Fifth Industrial Revolution (5IR) is the combination of human engagement at the centre of drawing humans, machines, artificial intelligence, and technology, together. The 5IR follows the 4IR, driven by key technology impacting governments, businesses, and society. Humans should be at the front and centre of connecting critical thinking, creativity, and technology."

"When we as educators are asked to train people, it should be driven by the business with purpose, not compliance," says Fourie. It requires training institutions to change their approach fundamentally.

The Supply Chain Academy, says Hadebe, has introduced its Work Integrated Study Program (WISP) for some of its supply chain programs, where students acquire work experience virtually through retail e-commerce platforms and cloud-based ERP systems, amongst other tools utilised, whilst studying. This is all project-based and can be taken to the next level – a year or more, given proper financial backing through collaboration with the industry. Hadebe says ...

> “Most of the traditional (public) institutions, especially in South Africa and probably across Africa, are far behind and are becoming more and more irrelevant to the skills industries need as we continue to see the high level of disconnect from what is taught to Supply Chain graduates and the kind of skills required by industry.”

“We need more industry-centric programmes like the WISP initiative by Supply Chain Academy -SCA Global.”

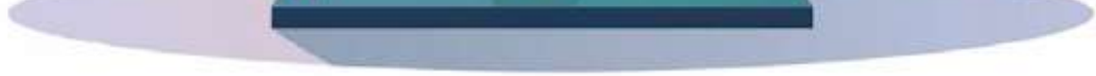
Fourie agrees, saying the business model for educational institutions has very much been affected by the new world we are faced with. “Our new products have expanded and diversified in many ways. At Metro Minds, all our accredited and formalised qualifications and skills programmes are accessed through an online learning platform. This platform is the foundation for all our accredited programmes whereby a student can complete a course fully online or with a blended approach, adding classes to the program.” She says they have changed the classes’ methodology into entirely virtual, hybrid or fully online.

> “Our offerings extend to cater to

> students who can only attend after-hour virtual classes and master class sessions. In other words, instead of your traditional 3-day course, we would run this over a few weeks with shorter engagement.

"The retention of learning improves, and the application of knowledge is easier to transfer into the student's world."

They have also created a system where customers can make their training menu according to their needs and budget. "This way, we become their internal academy for a set few days per month, paid with a flat fee – regardless of the number of students attending."



Graphic courtesy of https://www.iienstitu.com/

The move away from traditional training is underscored by the fact that only some these days want to do formal courses, but somewhat shorter, more impactful courses at a lower cost. "This has seen us develop a non-accredited, fully online platform. The courses range from human skills to technical and life skills. We focus on shorter courses for logistics, supply chain and freight forwarding," says Fourie.

Workplace simulation has also become a huge focus point for either any new industry entrant or existing employees needing continuous development. The simulated courses are convenient and are based on the cognitive flexibility theory of accelerated learning. Five days spent with a simulated course is equivalent to 25 days practical work experience, says Fourie.

According to Hadebe, education institutions must infuse the new concepts of the new world in their delivery of Supply Chain programmes by employing technological tools such as Virtual Reality, Augmented Reality, and gamification, among other tools that could enable them to drive the necessary change required for their Supply Chain programmes and tuition delivery approach to be industry-centric.

Chantell Coetzer

Bizzco's Chantell Coetzer says the focus in the occupational based training space is shifting from being predominantly knowledge based with workplace experience to a more balance training experience of knowledge vs practical vs work experience.

"The programmes are more focused on the individuals actual role within the working environment and practical application of skills. Training content has to evolve over time to ensure the technology component remains relevant and applicable to the industry."

Education institutions need to adapt to the digital economy, which has caused a massive transformation in the workforce and has led to a shift in the role of human resource management.

While machines excel at repetitive tasks, humans possess superior cognitive and sensory skills. As a result, jobs with low qualification requirements and repetitive processes are being replaced by machines, while positions that require decision-making and leadership skills are in higher demand.

The logistics industry has experienced significant workforce transformation due to Industry 4.0. Human resource management and training institutions must redesign development programs, policies, and recruitment strategies to adapt to these changes. The future workplace will require individuals to possess technological understanding, effective communication, creativity, innovation, and high emotional intelligence.

"We need to teach and train differently," says Fourie. "Continuous learning, self-directed learning, and collaboration with peers and colleagues are becoming essential for managing disruptions caused by digital advancements. As Industry 4.0 influences society and the workforce, skills development must incorporate real-life business cases, combining theory and practice.

Image by courtesy of www.iienstitu.com/

> Competencies such as technical knowledge, decision-making skills, emotional

> intelligence, digital literacy, and adaptability are crucial for success in the changing work environment. Mental well-being, stress management, and employee recognition are also emerging as key skills in this era of disruption. ”

The experts agree that education institutions must focus on knowledge retention and cognitive flexibility, entrepreneurship, and creativity. As work becomes more automated, agility in task and context-switching will become increasingly important.

More collaboration between industry and higher education is also necessary, says Hadebe. “This can be done in a variety of ways. One possible way is through retailers sponsoring education programmes and getting involved in the curricula design and delivery approach. This could breach the skills gap from the Supply Chain Graduates over, if done correctly, across the higher education sector and consistently over time,” he says.

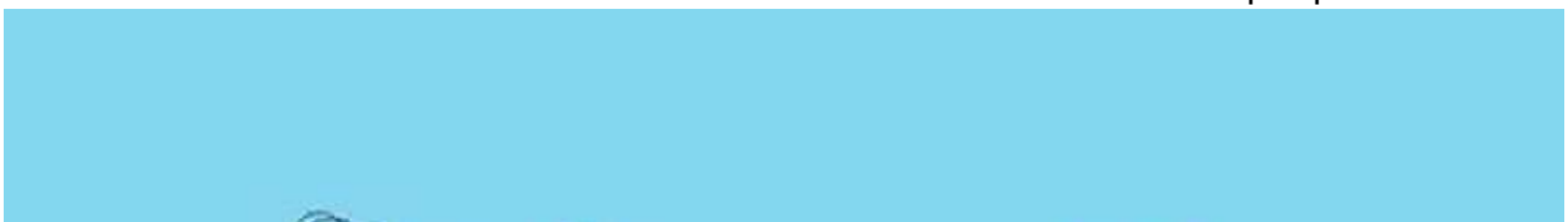
“As the Supply Chain Academy -SCA Global, we have decided to collaborate with SMMEs, which are more accessible and seem to have more appetite for growth and impact on society.” Moodley says that internships are just as important ...

> “ It is a critical partnership as it ensures that students are able to make the linkage between theoretical knowledge and practical application. Yes, education institutions will always strive to include practical laboratory and case study content, but the on-the-job experience is irreplaceable. ”

Says Van Niekerk, “Practical on-the-job training is vital to the success of a candidate. It adds a level of competence that cannot be achieved by studying theory alone. The best way to learn is by doing the actual activity. You can learn something better and faster if you practice it.”

She says Bizzco collaborates with Subject Matter Experts within a field with both academic and practical work place experience to develop training materials that meet the academic requirements as well as the practical application of the theory.

Illustration by courtesy of www.peoplematters.in/



Hadebe says institutions like SCA Global continue to leverage digital contact tuition delivery and eLearning platforms to drive the impact and professional development of supply chain professionals across the globe.

Amid constant change, education must evolve. Digital learning isn't just about new technology; it fundamentally changes how society imparts students knowledge, values, and skills. Ultimately, education needs to become more practical, relevant, and adaptable to meet today's and tomorrow's demands. **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.

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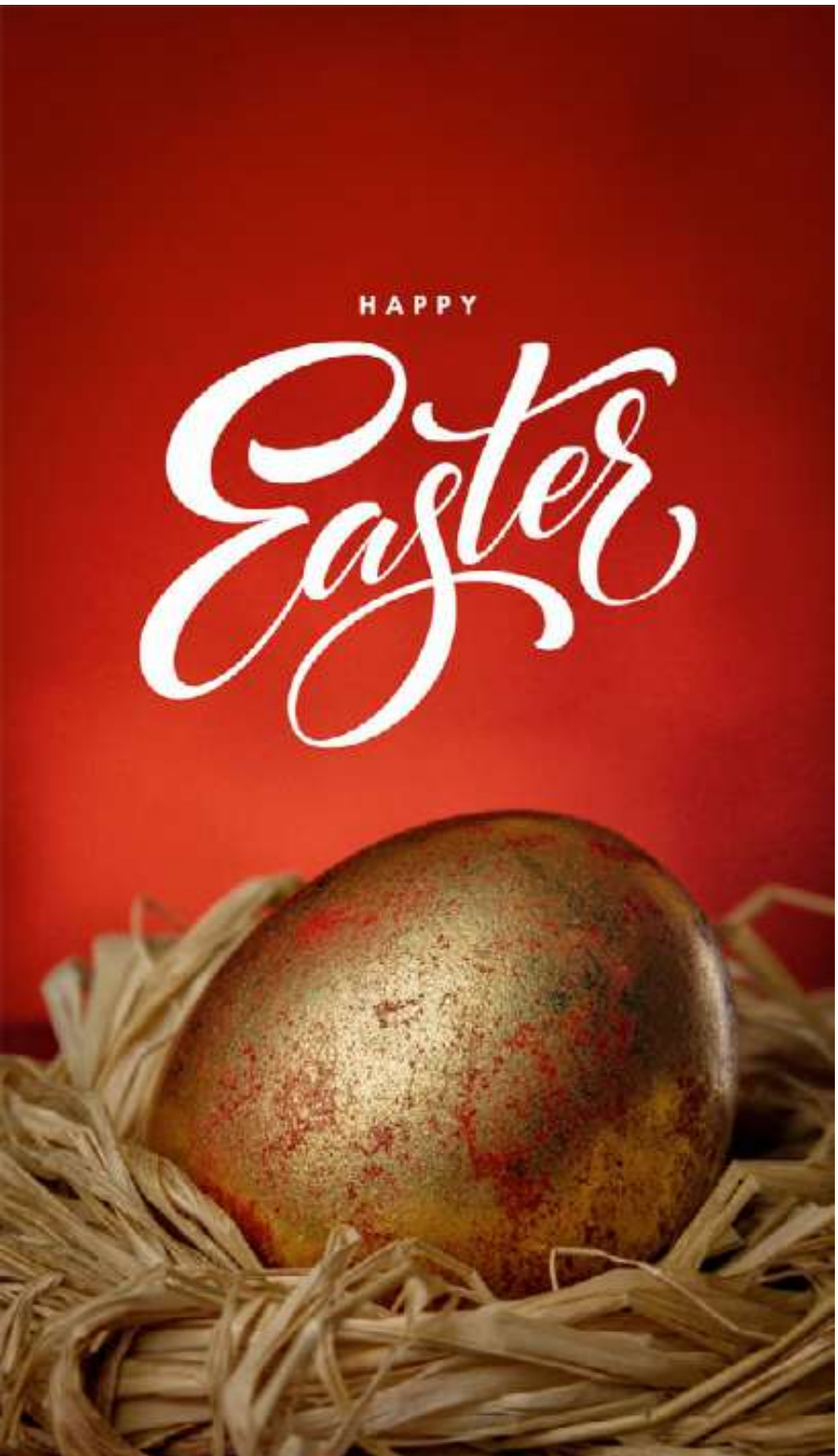
Shrinkflation hits SA's beloved marshmallow Easter eggs



By Dr Dana Braithwaite
research consultant
BMi Research

Chocolate marshmallow eggs have long been a favourite in South African households. They've become part of Easter traditions and are seen as an affordable

Image by yganko, www.canva.com

treat to give to children.

But over the years something has changed with our much-loved marshmallow eggs: the boxes have gotten smaller.

Where did the 48-unit box of eggs go?

Previously, a standard size marshmallow egg box contained 48 units. Over the years manufacturers have introduced boxes with 36, 30 and most recently, 24 units. The 48-unit box now seems to be something of the past.

The reason for this can be found in the pricing of these boxes. In 2024, a 36-unit box of eggs from a well-known brand cost R78.29. In previous years it cost R74.06 (2023), R67.84 (2022), R65.34 (2021) and R59.99 (2020).

That represents an annual average price increase over four years of 7.3% pa. Applying that same increase to the price of a box of 48 units from the same brand, which retailed for R75.19 in 2020, would put the price for this box today at more than R100.

For an average family, in today's economy, a treat that costs more than R100 would be perceived as being unaffordable, and so the 48-unit box has been gradually phased out. The result is that the remaining size boxes are seen as being more affordable. But are they really offering good value?

When you compare the price of 36-unit boxes to

30- and 24-unit boxes, the 36-unit box is the cheapest per egg and the 24-unit box, the most expensive. That makes sense, as when you buy in bulk you save.

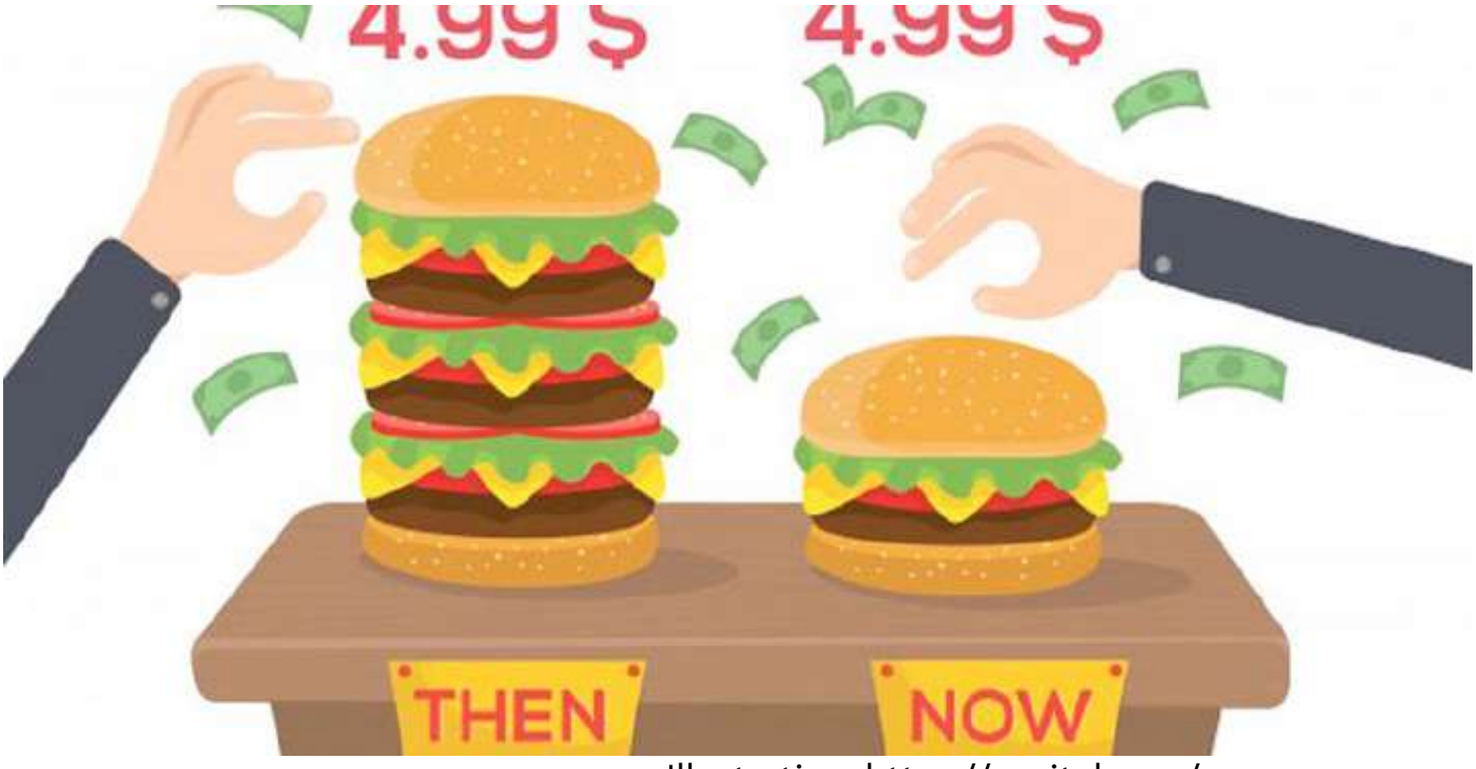


Illustration: https://capital.com/

Smaller pack sizes more visible

However, research conducted by BMi Research during this Easter period showed that the 36-unit boxes were not as visible on shelf this year. They were available in seemingly limited amounts, and consumers had to search for them. The smaller pack sizes of 30 and 24 units were highly visible and readily available.

This tells us that manufacturers are putting most of their marshmallow egg stock into smaller size boxes, which retail at higher prices, and the smaller chunk of their stock into the 36-unit box, which may also be in the process of being phased out.

Consumers might not be aware that the different size boxes carry different price tags, and when comparing them on shelf could easily mistake a cheaper product for offering better value, only to find once home that it actually has fewer units.

Naturally, the price per egg has also changed over the past four years, by an average of 9.2% pa (24-unit box), 5.4% pa (30-unit box) and 7.3% pa (36-unit box). Consumers are currently paying between R2.15 and R3.50 for an individual egg, depending on the box size. These increases are significantly above inflation.

Larger boxes offer greater value

When comparing the boxes based on these per unit prices, the research shows that a 30-unit box is on average 20% more expensive per egg, than a 36-unit box, while the 24-unit box egg is on average 50% more expensive than an egg from a box of 36 eggs.

Once again, this points to the 36-unit box offering the most value, yet its availability in the foreseeable future is questionable. This will leave consumers having to buy smaller boxes of eggs at higher prices.

We could assume that R100 for a box of marshmallow eggs is a psychological price point that manufacturers would want to avoid. This would account for our findings that all the boxes priced during this research were between R74.99 and R79.99.

Poor cocoa harvests in West Africa threaten to leave consumers with a bitter taste. https://www.telegraph.co.uk/business/

Photo: Brett Jordan
https://blog.bham.ac.uk/

Shrinkflation, not high cocoa costs, to blame

This phenomenon reflects the growing trend towards shrinkflation, where manufacturers decrease the size of individual units or product packs to ensure that the price stays at 'comfortable' consumer price points.

The recent global price hikes in the cost of cocoa, the raw material used to produce chocolate, has been cited in the press as a primary reason for the increase in the cost of chocolate bars and countlines this year.

However, while our research did not ascertain whether or not the unit size of individual eggs had changed over the past four years, we did note that the chocolate shell was relatively thin, not comprising much of the total volume.

Reflecting on your own Easter egg family tradition, did you notice the difference in the size of this year's boxes, or in the size of the individual marshmallow eggs? **SR**

https://www.cleveland.com/

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Photo by courtesy of www.hobysgeneral.com/

Valuable basket metrics for category growth

Bernhardt van der Merwe
Head Category Management
DataOrbis

Category Management aims to understand how shoppers make purchasing decisions. Armed with this information retailers can use various tactics to support, enhance or change this behaviour to drive category growth. In a nutshell, the goal is to influence shopper behaviour at shelf level and thus boost sales.

Understanding and revisiting concepts such as Basket: Frequency, Penetration and Weight helps to guide tactical approaches that may change shopper behaviour. Let's break these down in detail.

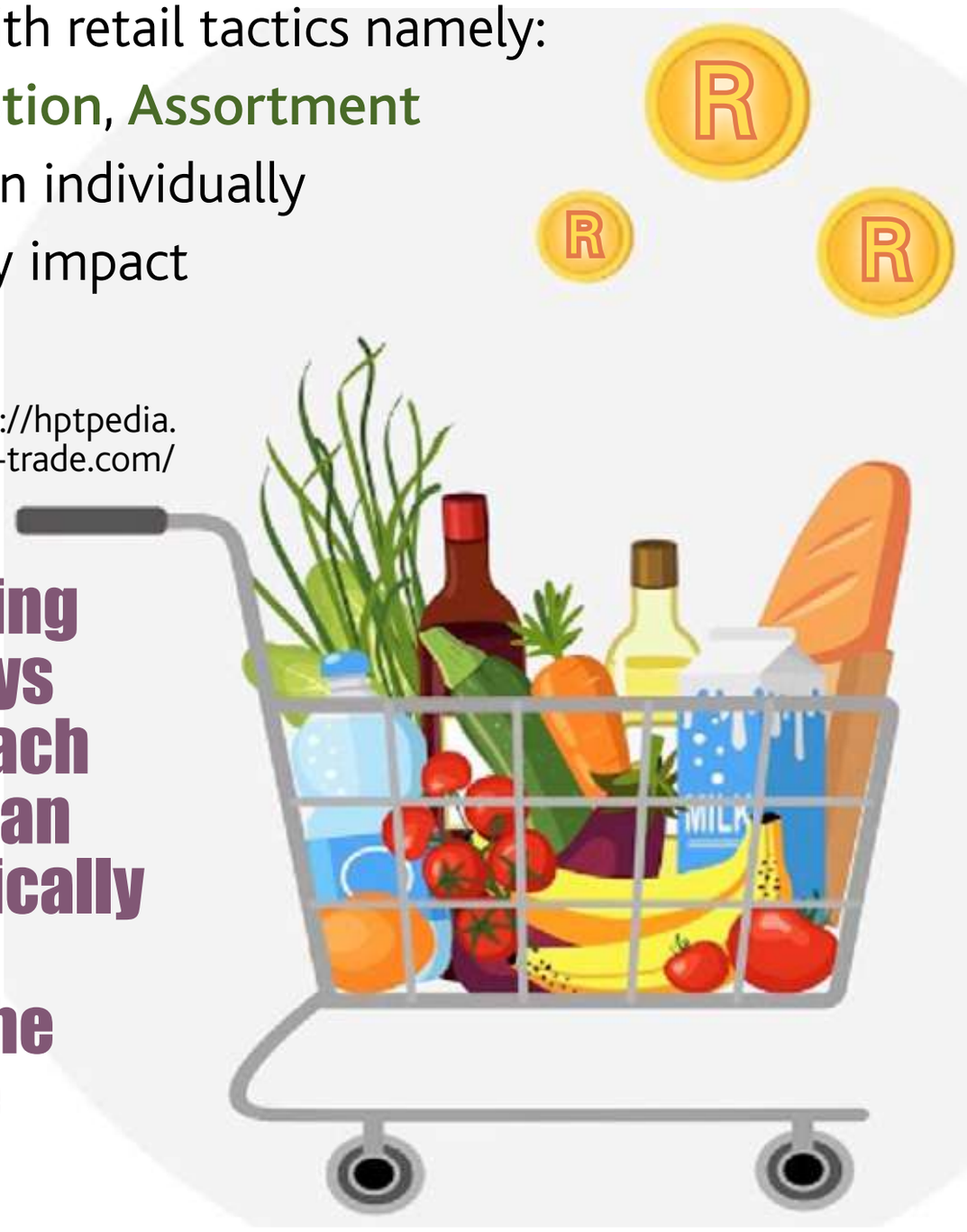
Basket Frequency is an indicator of how often an item, or category, is bought over a given period. For example, a popular brand of cereal, on average, may be purchased once a week – hence this is the buying frequency.

Basket Penetration refers to the percentage of shopping baskets that include a specific item or category. For example, if 100 customers make a purchase on a given day and 20 of those purchase the popular brand of cereals, the Basket Penetration for the latter is said to be 20%.

Basket Weight looks at the quantity, volume, or value of a specific item. Buying two or more of the same item increases basket weight in terms of quantity. Similarly, choosing a larger size, such as buying a 500 gram pack instead of a 250 gram pack, relates to a volume increase. Buying a more expensive variant of the same product (opting for a more premium brand) relates to value increase.

By applying tactics to increase each of these metrics, retailers and category managers can potentially change shopper behaviour at the shelf-front and in doing so drive category growth. The four key levers commonly associated with retail tactics namely: **Price**, **Promotion**, **Assortment** and **Place**, can individually or collectively impact the metrics.

https://hptpedia.
hyper-trade.com/



The following are the ways in which each key lever can be strategically applied to increase the respective metrics ...

Offering more attractive/competitive pricing can increase Basket Frequency and Penetration. Additionally, strategic pricing like volume discounts, for example buy two, get one free, can impact Basket Weight.

Regular promotions at intervals can encourage repeat purchases increasing Basket Frequency.

Promotions supported by in-store displays can increase a product's visibility, and consequently the likelihood of it being selected by the shopper. This drives Basket Penetration. Basket Weight, in turn, can be increased through bundled product offers that lead shoppers to buy more in a single transaction.

https://hptpedia.
hyper-trade.com/

Having a product range comprised of the bestselling items, as well as innovative ones, can keep shoppers 'returning for more' thus increasing Basket Frequency. Again, aligning the assortment with the shoppers' mission can drive Basket Penetration. The depth of the assortment, that is the number of options available including: different brands, flavours, and sizes of a single product group can encourage shoppers to buy more variants,

or bigger sizes – thus increasing Basket Weight.

Effective merchandising and store layout makes it easy for shoppers to navigate, find and choose products – potentially increasing not only Basket Penetration, but also Basket Frequency. In turn, displaying bulk items in key areas can encourage shoppers to buy more on any given shop thereby increasing Basket Weight.

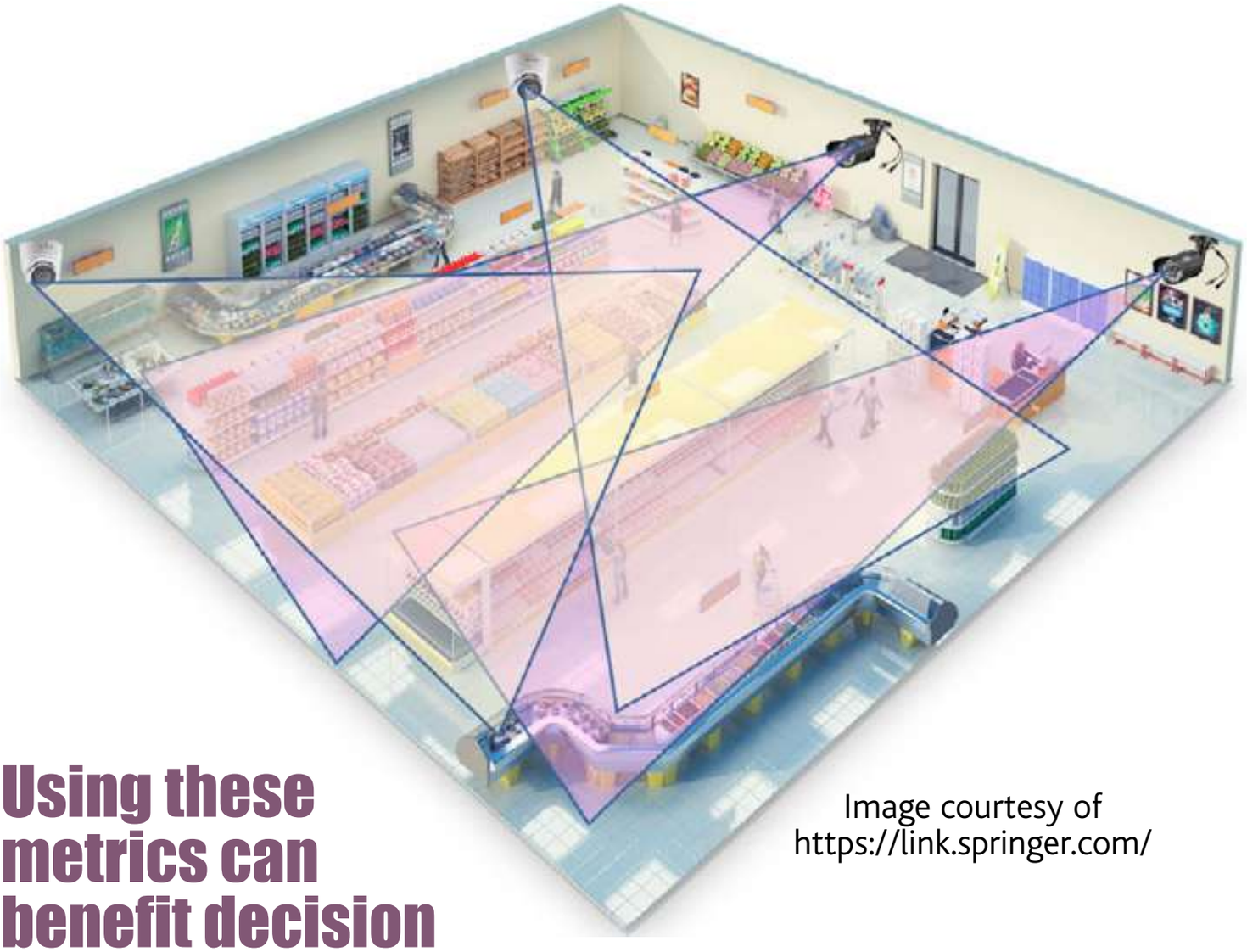


Image courtesy of https://link.springer.com/

Using these metrics can benefit decision making in other ways too

Here are some examples ...

Improve store layout and product placement. Understanding which items frequently appear together in the same basket (via Basket Frequency) can assist with

more informed store layouts, category adjacencies, plus product groupings and contiguity within the category.

Enhanced shopper segmentation. Evaluating the metrics may provide insights into different shopper segments. Basket Penetration, for example, can provide insights linking core shoppers to specific items. With this information, retailers can develop segmented tactics that resonate with these shoppers, boosting purchases and possibly retention.

Tailored promotions. For instance, high margin items with low basket frequency might benefit from promotions that aim to encourage repeat purchases. To do this, retailers can leverage products that already enjoy high sales rates to encourage purchases of higher margin but less sold products. For example, "buy coffee beans and get a discount on premium filters".

Applying tactics that speak to increasing ... Basket Frequency, Penetration and Weight. Retailers can potentially change a shopper's behaviour at shelf-level, thereby, not only positively impacting sales, but also enhanced shopper satisfaction. Ultimately, the careful application of these insights can derive benefits that achieve competitive advantage. **SR**

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https://themediaonline.co.za/

Robots in retail How shelves are doing the talking

“ Jacobs Coffee, recently integrated robotics into their in-store marketing strategy with remarkable results. This innovative approach not only enhanced the shopping experience but also garnered positive feedback from customers, underscoring its effectiveness.

It has become increasingly challenging for companies to produce creative ideas for in-store campaigns and it looks like robots are about to change the game

The retail robot market is anticipated to grow to $55 billion by 20281. It is a market populated by floor cleaners, inventory managers, data analysers, packers, and shelf talkers – all robots designed to either enhance the way retailers operate or catch the eye of the tired customers as they tramp down the aisle. Zara has adopted an AI-driven robot designed to collect products for customers who opted into click-and-collect – it is quick and efficient, saving both the customer and the business time.

At Stop & Shop in the US, Marty – a robot with googly eyes created by Badger Technologies – wanders the shop floor alerting staff to product shortages and spillages. In South Africa, Jacobs implemented the Tokinomo Shelfobot, that sat behind Jacob's coffee products and, when a sensor was triggered, started talking to passing shoppers while suggestively holding a product out for them to see.

Carrefour coffee shelfbot.

This collaboration unfolded across 20 Checkers Stores, owned by Shoprite, the largest retailer in South Africa, spanning an impressive 18-day period from March 20th to April 7th. These are all part of the new age of retail, where customer attention is captured by innovative ideas that change the way they shop, and what they purchase.

As Corina Mihalache, Partner Success Manager from Tokinomo – creators of the campaign explained: "Marketing needs something new, something beyond wobblers, and stickers. Shoppers have developed banner blindness, they don't even see them, and it has become increasingly important to bring products to life."

Retail robots aren't a novelty anymore. They are being used in ingenious ways in stores all over the world, and they're getting results. The retail store B8ta in California saw a 70% increase in footfall after introducing Papper, an AI-enabled robot that helps people pick out merchandise in-store.

Artive-Studio, www.canva.com

For the Jacobs marketing team, adopting a robot saw a marked increase in value sales thanks to its integration across a variety of malls. At the Roodepoort activation, the firm saw a 78.1% value sales change and 32%-unit sales change compared with the same time a year ago; and at the Tokai Hyperactivation, the campaign saw a 61% increase in value sales and a 39.4% increase in unit sales compared to the previous year.

"The organic feedback on digital platforms, especially on LinkedIn where customers have actively shared their in-store experiences and engagement, really reinforces the effectiveness it had on our campaign," says Domaine Rautenbach, senior brand manager for Jacobs.

> "We used the Tokinomo solution to revolutionise our promotional campaigns and enhance shopper engagement in-store and it's something we'd definitely try again in the future. ”

The customer feedback was exactly what any marketing company would want from its investment into a campaign. Levitating coffee, immediate attention-grabbing and, in the Jacobs case, a solid call to action that kept customers engaged – a chance to win a share of R1 million in prizes. As a customer said, "I was impressed by this clever motion-activated gadget."

The use cases for robots in the retail sector are only set to increase as both customers and brands feel the benefits. While a floor cleaning robot isn't as exciting as a robotic arm handing over a jar of coffee, it has its place in the retailer of the future.

Here, robots can be used to gather data-tracking customer routes around stores, for example, and then using the information to optimise product locations and store layouts for improved profit. They can be used to catch customer attention, guide the consumer to a sale, and improve the shopping experience in multiple ways. And, as it evolves, it can be used to do more than just show the coffee – next time, maybe a nice hot cup served by a robotic arm? **SR**

Lutberbel,
www.canva.com

A retail robot was used in a Checkers activation for Jacobs Coffee.

https://htxt.co.za/

Coffee grows on trees. It all starts with the evergreen Coffea plant, and the precious cherries it holds.

Once harvested, the beans are carefully washed, dried, sorted and blended, bringing together the individual character of different varietals. ww.jacobscoffee.co.za/coffee-appreciation/

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Image by mel-nik, www.canva.com

Refreshing 2023 performance by ready-to-drink beverage sector

The ready-to-drink (RTD) cold drink market, including sparkling soft drinks (SSDs), fruit juices and sports drinks, experienced positive volume growth in 2023, with SSD volumes surpassing pre-Covid levels, new research from BMi Research has revealed. Ready-to-drink sports drinks recorded the biggest volume jump, achieving almost double-digit growth, followed by SSDs, which grew at half that rate. Ready-to-drink fruit juices was the slowest performer but still managed volume growth of 3-4%.

Sparkling soft drinks

Sparkling soft drinks dominate the RTD market in terms of size, and in the past year continued to recover well, with the most popular drink flavours driving growth. Promotions and product innovation in this sector were key to volume growth.

"Primary flavours performed well, even as consumer spending remained under pressure. Beyond price benefits offered, the numeric distribution of these brands increased within the top-end retail, and local and traditional retail outlets, attracting new consumers.

"We saw aggressive promotional activities and effective execution, particularly from the larger industry players, to regain market share lost over the last few years," explains Khathu Musingadi, Senior Research Analyst at BMi Research.

Industry feedback showed that consumers also responded favourably to innovative, new packaging in 2023, while the introduction of new flavours – including seasonal flavours – created much hype, attracting users to try new flavours in the market. This was evidenced through one brand's new 500ml can and another's 1 litre PET mixer.

As always, warmer weather conditions during the summer months promoted consistently high consumption of cold beverages. Although most channels performed positively as the overall category grew, bottom-end retail and on-consumption channels experienced a decline in demand, for instance ...

> Garage forecourts, showed limited growth.

Top-end retailers and wholesale channels, meanwhile, experienced the biggest volume growth.

"This may be a result of favourable pricing in the wholesale sector, and some bottom-end retailers purchasing from wholesalers instead of purchasing directly from suppliers. Wholesalers are often more affordable than other channels and offer a wide range of brands and packaging options. The on-consumption channel decline could be a result of the rise in syrup sales for soda fountains to the foodservice industry. Consumers are choosing fountain drinks as they're more affordable than packaged drinks," Musingadi adds.

The SSD category is expected to continue this positive growth, with BMi Research's estimates pegging that at around 3% in 2024, with a sustained annual average of about 2% over the next four years. Larger pack sizes, the mainstay of this category, are expected to drive growth due to their affordability.

Images: www.metro.co.in/product-world/cold-beverages

Ready-to-drink fruit juice

The RTD fruit juice category continued to perform positively in 2023 in both volume and value terms. Hard-hitting pricing and promotional activity by larger industry players was the major driver of the growth recorded, with the innovative packaging and rebranding introduced by certain brands further contributing to the volume increase in this category.

One major brand rebranded and introduced a smaller pack size, while another launched 500ml and 1.5 litre PET bottles.

"Production constraints reported by major industry players within the sparkling juice sub-category negatively affected product availability and thus, product sales of sparkling juice. Although the sub-category declined, the overall category increased, with pure fruit juice, fruit drinks and fruit nectar driving the volume growth," says Musingadi.

All channels showed positive growth last year, however bottom-end retail recorded the lowest growth. This was most likely because this retail sector predominantly services lower income groups that may not be able to afford fruit juice, which is still perceived as expensive compared to other beverages in the market.

The fruit juice category is expected to enjoy a positive outlook in the short to medium term, as producers increase their focus on price and promotions to further boost volume and market share. There could also be a shift in future towards increased nectar products and fruit drinks that cost less to produce compared to pure fruit juice, to encourage sales.

Ready to drink sports drinks

Demand in this category remained consistent in 2023, well supported by effective execution, and assertive pricing and promotional activities. This growth was maintained despite production challenges faced within the industry, which led to a shift in market share between the most prominent industry players.

"Those production challenges plagued major players for most of 2023, but were addressed during the second half of the year, which spurred category growth. Increased activities from these industry players to regain lost share further contributed to the positive performance of this category. The input we received in our research indicated that increased activity from amateur and professional sporting teams and related events was a major driver of sports drink product demand," Musingadi notes.

The outlook for this category is also expected to remain positive in the short to medium term as major brands drive the industry forward through promotions, effective marketing and sports event sponsorships.

It is important to note that this research was conducted amidst constrained economic conditions in South Africa. Inflation remained high at an average of 6% for the year (the South African Reserve Bank has a CPI target of 3-6%), and basic food and beverage items remained expensive, forcing cash-strapped consumers to prioritise which basic food items to purchase just to get to the end of the month.

Although the rate of unemployment has slowed down, it remained high at around 32% last year. This represented lost sales opportunities. Additionally, retail sales declined by 1% from 2022 to 2023, possibly as a result of consumers purchasing less due to the high cost of living, the research team hypothesised.

South Africa experienced the most power cuts in 2023, which also lasted longer hours. This had a negative impact on production and consequently, companies' margins. Although the economy was predicted to show no growth in 2023, it remained resilient and grew by 0.6% – above the projected 'no growth' estimate. **SR**

> "As always, warmer weather conditions during the summer months promoted consistently

https://www.canva.com/p/feliperonchi/

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Insulated Structures

Efficiency At Work

Cold & Freezer Rooms

Polyurethane Injected Panels

- Standard panels: Outer and inner skin of frost white Chromodek, also available in black finish.
- Polyurethane injected panels for superior insulation & adhesion.
- High-impact PVC interlock profiles on all edges provides totally sealed insulation and a perfect vapour barrier.
- Tongue and Groove panel options available.
- Optional skin finish in Stainless Steel – Grades AISI 304 AIS 403.
- Easily erected.

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.

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.

Meat Rails

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

Up to 40%
Energy Saving

New or Retrofit
Existing cases

Environment
Respect

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

Airshield Glass Doors

Benefits

- 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.

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.

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.

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Efficiency At Work

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