

SUPERMARKET & RETAILER



Business knowledge for smart retailers

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PROFIT FROM MARKET FIRST INFORMATION

Refrigeration insights ...

**The technology
driving sustainable,
efficient refrigeration**

Money matters

**Transforming retail finance and
insurance with technology**

Storewatch

**ICA Gruppen & mass
distribution in Sweden**

Butchery & braai ...

**Come what may,
South Africans will braai.**





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FEATURES

Refrigeration insights

We take a comprehensive look at the technology driving sustainable, efficient refrigeration. When dealing with space or design constraints, being able to make refrigeration work for you rather than forcing your layout to work for your refrigeration will optimise your trading and back of house areas.



<https://logistics.muratec.net/products/cold/>

Cold chain automation

The lack of interest in monotonous, labour-intensive and even dangerous work, has put pressure on minimum wages for those jobs. Technology and growing connectivity is supporting faster and more complex flows of goods, services and supplies. Evolving trends of artificial intelligence and

automation are integral in the strategy, planning and movement of goods in the cold chain.



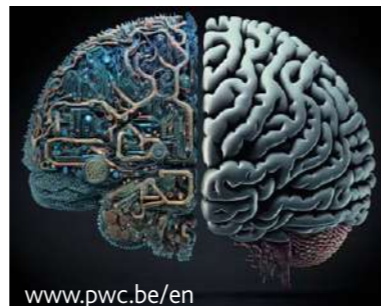
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Butchery & braai

South Africans are a resilient bunch. No matter how bad things get economically, politically or globally, we always seem to find the time to put aside our worries and light up a braai. We dive into the data about buying habits and preferences, and what retailers could do to make their customers' braai lives easier, creative, tasty and affordable.

Finance, insurance & related technology

We look at some trends shaping retail finance and insurance, and specifically at the related technologies available for retailers and wholesalers to capitalise on their business operations.



www.pwc.be/en

The survival of stationery

As the world of stationery is evolving into a dynamic fusion of innovation, artistic expression and sustainability, we ask ... Is digital becoming more prominent, and how much longer will there be a market for 'good ol' stationery?

Keep it simple

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STOREWATCH

ICA Gruppen, Sweden

Promotions, private labels, local focus and organic food are the four pillars on which the best Swedish retailer relies.



COLUMNS

Delight your customers

Aki Kalliatakis theme is that your business and your products are one of many in the grocery or retail market, and you can either make some astronomically expensive improvements to your offer and stand out, or you can change the way that your customers see what you have to offer.



<https://www.bhg.com/>

NEWS

CGA by NIQ beverage research

South African consumers lead global trend in prioritising value over price in beverage choices.

NIQ: FMCG & tech durables

The data reveals that South African consumers spent R303 Billion on fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG) through traditional and modern trade channels during the first half of the year.



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Hot trends and cool solutions ... Retail's journey from braai culture to blockchain



Helen Maister



In this issue, we explore the dynamic landscape of retail through the lens of innovation and tradition. As sustainability becomes a key focus, the refrigeration industry is making strides with cutting-edge solutions from South African refrigeration leaders. Their advancements in flexible cold storage, predictive maintenance, and energy-saving technologies promise to revolutionise how retailers manage their operations while staying environmentally responsible.

Meanwhile, the cherished South African tradition of the braai persists, even amid economic and political uncertainties. Recent trends reveal a drop



in hosting costs and a rising interest in organic meats and convenient meal kits. Retailers are responding with enhanced butchery equipment and diverse, pre-marinated offerings, ensuring that the braai culture not only endures but flourishes.



The realm of retail finance and insurance is also evolving, driven by fintech innovations that streamline operations and enhance capital access. Mobile payments, digital lending platforms, and blockchain technologies are reshaping financial management, while InsurTech offers customised insurance solutions to meet modern demands. These advancements empower retailers to optimise their financial strategies and elevate customer experiences.



Finally, the stationery market continues to thrive, fueled by growth in education and a persistent demand for traditional products. Despite the digital shift, stationery remains a staple for its creative and practical benefits. Trends toward sustainability and online shopping highlight the sector's adaptability and enduring relevance.

Join us as we delve into these transformative trends and their impact on the retail industry, offering insights and strategies to navigate this ever-evolving market.

Helen Maister
Helen Maister



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Kia's class-leading workhorses get down to business

For South African businesses in search of reliable and efficient light commercial vehicles (LCVs), the K2500 and K2700 bakkies (the K2 Series) from Kia present a compelling case for themselves.

These two models have been designed to meet the exacting demands of retail operations and offer a range of features that set them apart in the competitive workhorse market.

Exceptional warranty and service

One of the most notable aspects of the K2 Series is the exceptional warranty and service offering. Both models are backed by a comprehensive 5-year/ Unlimited km warranty, providing customers with peace of mind and reducing the long-term costs associated with vehicle maintenance and repairs.

This warranty period is the best in the industry, providing retailers and wholesalers with the peace of mind to operate their vehicles without the constant worry of unexpected repair costs. Furthermore, Kia provides a 3-year/60,000km service plan and three years of unlimited roadside assistance, thus further enhancing the value proposition.

Model variants

In terms of model variants, no direct competitor comes close to Kia. The K2700 is available in three distinct model variants: drop-side, tipper, and chassis-cab.

Likewise, the K2500 is available in a number of variants, including a closed van (achieved by installing a canopy available through the accessories department) and a dropside option. The dropside configuration is particularly beneficial for retailers and wholesalers, as it allows for easier loading and unloading of stock.

This versatility is essential for businesses that require the ability to adapt their vehicles for different tasks, for example the transportation of goods to stores and equipment for store fit-outs.



K2700 ... heavier loads in a single trip saves fuel & time.

The ability to customise K-Series bakkies with a range of accessories allows owners to tailor their vehicle to meet their specific requirements.



The additional permissible weight, in conjunction with the spacious 4.73 m² load area (2,810 mm long, 1,630 mm wide), offers unparalleled flexibility in terms of the types and quantities of cargo that can be transported.

K2500: Enhanced performance

The K2500 has a slightly lower payload, but still offers a competitive one ton capacity, making it an excellent choice for businesses with lighter load requirements. The K2500 is equipped with a turbocharged 2.5-litre diesel engine that produces 96 kW and 255 Nm of torque, offering enhanced performance for businesses that require additional power for their operations.

The K2500 is an ideal choice for small or medium-sized businesses that may not require the full capacity of the K2700, but still require a reliable and powerful vehicle for deliveries.

Fuel efficiency

Another benefit of the Kia K-Series for everyone is the vehicle's fuel efficiency. The naturally aspirated K2700 is designed to deliver optimum fuel economy, which is a key consideration for any business looking to manage operating costs effectively.

Lower fuel consumption results in reduced running costs, enabling businesses to allocate resources more efficiently. This ensures that businesses can maintain profitability even when fuel prices fluctuate.

Comfort reduces driver fatigue

Both models prioritise occupant comfort in order to combat driver fatigue during long delivery routes. The seats are equipped with additional cushioning in the backrest and bottom of the driver's seat, while the central backrest can be folded down to provide drink holders and a flat surface for delivery documents.

The K2700 also features a spacious 11-litre cubbyhole with further additional storage capacity. The model-range can be considered a mobile office in itself, thereby enhancing productivity and convenience. The straightforward layout of controls and instruments optimises the driving experience, enabling drivers to focus on the task at hand without distraction.

Furthermore, the K2700 is fitted with a range of practical comfort features, including power steering and electric windows. The vehicle is equipped with a reinforced gate hinge and a full-size spare wheel, ensuring operational reliability even in challenging conditions.

Safety

While the K Series is designed primarily for utility, it also incorporates essential safety features such as front disc brakes, crumple zones and side impact protection.

The K2700 features three-point ELR seat belts, which allow free movement of the occupant while secured, but lock in place during sudden deceleration or a crash.

The right choice

By selecting the K-Series, retailers are choosing the most competitive transport solution available in the new, sub-1.5-ton LCV market.

With the additional benefits of comfort and practicality, the Kia K2500 and K2700 are two class-leading workhorse bakkies.

Both are perfect for businesses requiring reliable, productive and efficient vehicles with market-leading characteristics.



Movement that inspires

Book a test drive



The Red Velvet Strategy

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

By Aki Kalliatakis

The world of business is full of metaphors, analogies and stories relating to ...

- various animals (The Dolphin Strategy and Snakes in Suits)
- military events (Defensive Marketing Strategies, Keeping your Gunpowder Dry, The Cola Wars case study)
- mountains, oceans, sports and leadership lessons from athletes and coaches
- and even nature (Explore-exploit Strategy & Lessons from Bees and Ants).

<https://www.bhg.com/>



The Red Velvet Strategy

This isn't just about getting to know your customer. It's also about understanding category conventions, behavioural scripts, customer expectations, and visual codes in order to break them. And it can turn a commodity product into a premium experience.

So here's a new one for you from the tasty culinary arts ... **The Red Velvet Strategy.**

Red velvet cake is delicate, soft, and creamy, and just so deliciously decadent. But it also has this mysterious bright red colour which contrasts so beautifully with the snow-white icing.

It turns out that red velvet cake is just good ol' chocolate cake, but it's now incredibly popular.

When I first tried it, it was rumoured that the red came from beetroots, and that fitted in nicely with the idea of including carrots in your cake. But it's only red food colouring and normal buttercream or cream cheese filling. Nothing more, nothing less. It's just a renovated cake with a new paint job.

But that is not how people perceive it. People see it as exotic, celebratory, indulgent, fluffy, tangy, and more. We use it in everyday language by saying things like "red velvet therapy," and "there's no problem that a slice of red velvet can't solve."

And that's this month's theme. Your business and your products are one of many in the grocery or retail market, and you can either make some astronomically expensive improvements to your offer and stand out, or you can change the way that your customers see what you have to offer.



I'm not suggesting that changing your product and packaging isn't viable. Who can forget Sony selling their waterproof headphones in a bottle of water? That had a huge impact.



Another example: Monteith's is a New Zealand brewery that makes traditional apple cider from natural apples, not concentrates like their rivals do. It had a unique packaging strategy to emphasise the freshness and authenticity of its product, by including a twig in each bottle to symbolise the cider's origin and freshness. For most customers this created a direct connection between the drink and the apple trees from which it was made.

But, back to changing the way customers see your business and products. In previous columns I've mentioned a few examples, such as how UBER isn't a new strategy but, by showing the progress of your taxi, they changed the way we ordered taxis on the phone – by simply taking away the uncertainty. Energy drinks are the same. They are seen as boosters to body and mind when you drink them and grow wings.



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An airfryer is just a tiny, tightly sealed oven, but it has created a tribe of dedicated fans who rave about it and share stories and recipes.

So what can you do to give a fresh coat of paint to your brand? The prerequisite is that you have to get a bit innovative, and that does require a little bit of risk.

What does your brand or business represent? What do you believe in that nobody else has taken advantage of?

www.behance.net/gallery



Years ago, a Namibian brewery came up with a tag line that no chemicals were used in their beer. The truth is that no chemicals are used in all beers, but they now occupied that positioning. There are hundreds of similar examples, from cars, to computers and devices, to cigarettes, and even to professionals like doctors and vets. What do you specialise in?

Any decent and simple basic psychological research into your customers' perceptions will help you understand why they choose you ... or your rivals. Most of it is perceptual.

And sometimes it's just because of the way you communicate your values, beliefs, and principles. If a company has a policy of using disabled or special needs people to do work, I'll choose them any time over their rivals. If they sponsor a school in need, I do the same. If they deal well with a crisis without first calling in the lawyers, they get my support.

If they are a challenger and a rebel, and fight 'the system' by doing the opposite, I'm there. The Patagonia company had a campaign that actually said to customers, "Don't buy this jacket." Why? They wanted to make a point to promote environmental sustainability. The ad highlighted the environmental impact of consumerism and urged people to buy less and buy responsibly. The counterintuitive campaign strengthened the brand's reputation as a leader in sustainable business practices ... and they sold many more jackets too.



The over-the-top 450 room Waldorf Hotel opened just prior to the Panic of 1893, a major depression caused by railroad over-expansion and a run on the gold supply. Built on the site of William Waldorf Astor's Fifth Avenue home, the hotel cost \$400 million.

Unlike other hotels at the time, its owners intended for The Waldorf to become more than a temporary residence for travellers. Instead they created a place where young New Yorkers with money went to be entertained and seen in public. By design, it allowed its rich patrons to indulge in social climbing as a spectator sport. <https://heidicohen.com/>



Velvet rope strategy

This means trying to create 'loyal customers' out of an existing user base by creating exclusivity with services or product offerings. Returning customers are your biggest evangelists and contribute to a significant portion of your profits.

<https://baycolonyantiques.com>

And in this age of AI and digital everything, there is a tremendous gain to be made from focusing on the most basic human wants for human warmth and feeling wanted. The first insurance company or bank that refuses to use chat bots and AI will get my monthly money.



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above: I said 'special needs' rather than the hurtful epithets we used to use in the old days for people with mental disabilities.

Although I still hate them for it, someone in Eskom stopped calling them 'power failures', but instead call it 'load shedding' – and now we also have 'water shedding'.

Apple are particularly good at this. They don't talk about their pixels and screens, but rather discuss a 'retina display'. Another one: video calls are 'Face Time'. And AI is 'Apple Intelligence'.

On the subject of language, you can also make complicated things seem simple. What the heck does "cloud based computing and storage" mean?

I have no idea, but one global company's advert uses this tagline: "No nightmares before Christmas ... Protect your store and your digital marketing with automatic data backups. So you don't need to do it."

If you're drooling for some cake now, by all means go and spoil yourself. But while you savour it, think about how the red velvet strategy can apply to your business too. **SR**



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

And what about the language that you use? I know that sometimes this gets a bit crazy, but it usually works. I just did it in the paragraph

SUPERMARKET & RETAILER

Business knowledge for smart retailers

Who are we?

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

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A comprehensive look at the technology driving sustainable, efficient refrigeration

As technology advances and commercial solutions improve, staying abreast of what's new in the refrigeration industry is less about staying ahead of your competitors and more about creating a better business for the future.

Some of South Africa's leading refrigeration manufacturers and suppliers share their insights and take a closer look at technology shaping the commercial refrigeration landscape. As temperatures rise across the globe, keeping your cool has never been more efficient or sustainable.

Bespoke solutions

Flexibility is one of the most important aspects of any customised solution. The most sustainable solutions are usually the ones that are fit for purpose. When you are dealing with space or design constraints, being able to make your refrigeration work for you rather than forcing your layout to work for your refrigeration will enable you to optimise your trading and back of house areas.

Supplier of cold storage and refrigeration solutions ArcticStore's bespoke doors and openings are innovative and useful. They offer a range of alternative door types and door locations that include full side opening, the option for multiple single doors in the side, end doors, and electric sliding doors. Bob Sherriffs, ArcticStore Director, says ...



www.petitforestier.com/

When you are dealing with space or design constraints, being able to make your refrigeration work for you rather than forcing your layout to work for your refrigeration will enable you to optimise your trading and back of house areas.



Bob Sherriffs

“As a result of varying cold room workplace legislation in different countries, we often need to incorporate internal door openings and even emergency escape hatches.”

Multifunctionality is another attractive aspect of bespoke solutions. Dual temperature zones offer the useful functionality of chilled and freezer zones within the same storage container, designed to meet your specific requirements. This solution is achieved using a secondary internal refrigeration plant that circulates chilled air and that utilises a thermal break to stop cold transfer. Alternative solutions include separate external doors and movable dividing walls with vents and fans.

Multifunction and integrated systems

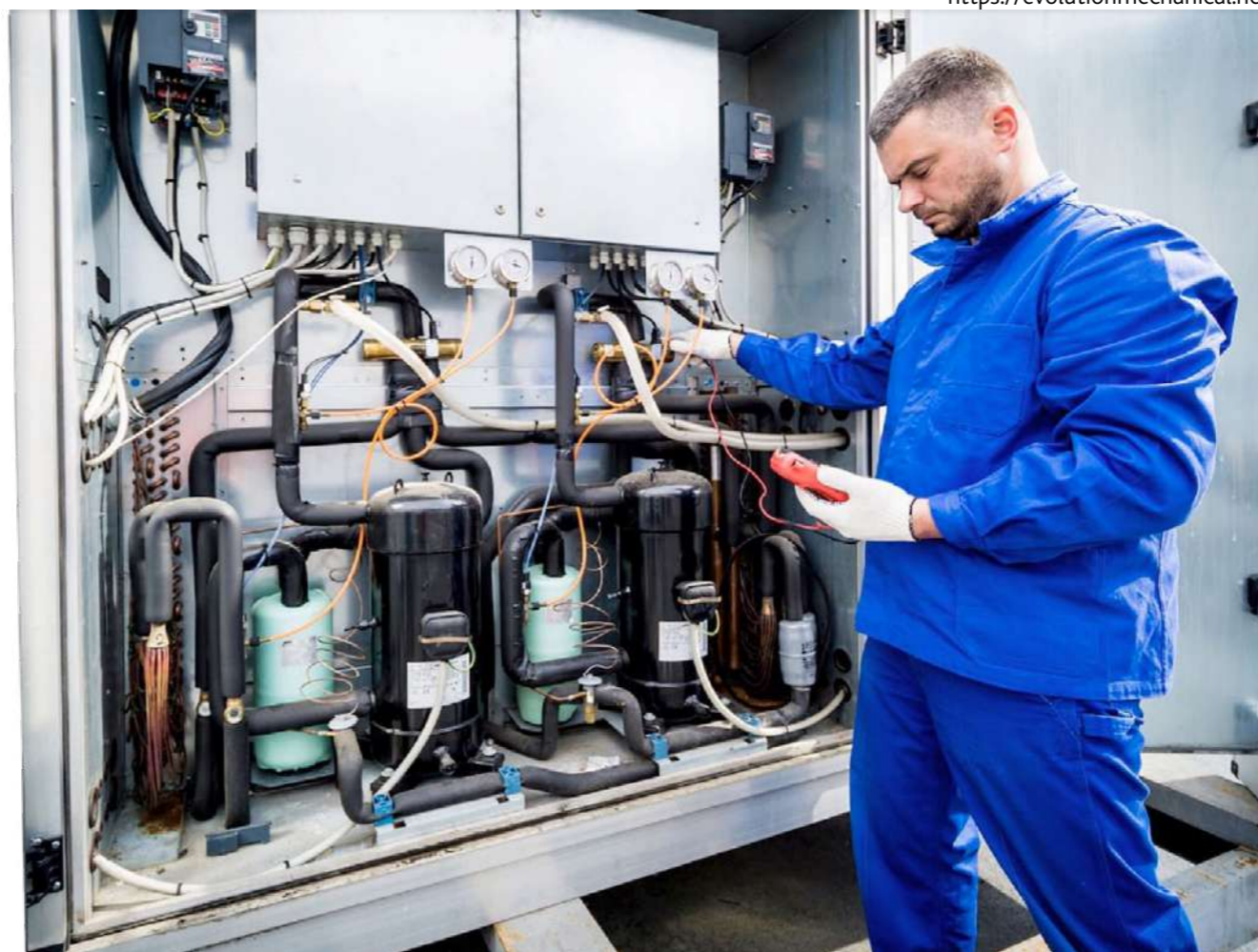
The more you can get out of your refrigeration system, the more value it will have. "Retailers are increasingly looking for refrigeration solutions that offer multifunctionality and can integrate seamlessly into their broader operations," explains Sherriffs. "This includes units that can switch between different temperature ranges, or systems that integrate with retail management software for more streamlined operations. ArcticStore and SuperStore units are designed with this versatility in mind, offering solutions that can be tailored to the specific needs of retailers."

Taking innovative design a step further, ArcticStore's SuperStore solution is a unique concept that allows users to connect refrigerated containers together like building blocks to form a single open plan cold store. Sherriffs says, "With interchangeable side and back walls that allow for seamless expansion of the cold storage facility to suit specific needs, South African retailers can optimise working capital."

Preventative and predictive maintenance

Making an investment in preventative and predictive maintenance is vital for long-term refrigeration sustainability. These measures include frequent check-ups and the utilisation of advanced sensors and IoT technology to continuously track system functioning.

These technologies have the capability to identify potential issues before they escalate, resulting in reduced downtime, prolonged equipment longevity,



and sustained peak efficiency. This is where technology truly proves its worth.

Through the use of data analytics and machine learning, predictive maintenance can anticipate and prevent potential failures and maintenance requirements. This proactive method not only increases reliability but also decreases the environmental consequences caused by unforeseen repairs and part replacements.

"Best Practices: Best-in-class industrial players prioritise assets, establish partnerships, invest in model improvements and integrate PdM (predictive maintenance) into their digital maintenance ecosystem." Says McKinsey and Co.

Investing in preventative and predictive maintenance is crucial for sustainable refrigeration. These practices involve regular inspections and the use of advanced sensors and IoT technology to monitor system performance in real time.

Innovative technology for maximum efficiency

When it comes to monitoring commercial refrigeration, Eurocool, a trusted local HVAC and refrigeration wholesaler, chose the Danfoss AK-CC55 Connect wireless tool as a standout solution. An industry first, it is a frontline tool for predictive and preventative maintenance, troubleshooting, and monitoring. Wireless connection to the AK-CC55 Connect service app on a smartphone or tablet supported by iOS or Android operating systems allows for configuration and testing in a user-friendly, intuitive way.



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Real Savings, Real Results

Switching to Mobius isn't just about going green – it's also about financial savings. Clients have reported up to a 60% reduction in total vehicle fuel consumption, with payback periods as short as 2 years. Additionally, businesses could qualify for a tax rebate on 125% of the capital value of the units, making the investment even more rewarding.

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We have proven reliability with over 100,000 hours of operational time across South Africa's toughest conditions. The company's real-time telematics system provides over 100 critical data points, allowing fleet managers to monitor key metrics via an easy-to-use portal.



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Downtime concerns are mitigated with Mobius's non-invasive design. The system is engineered to work independently from a vehicle's operations. The diesel engine in the Thermo-King unit serves as a backup, providing assurance that cargo will remain cool under all circumstances.

The Solar Electric refrigeration unit is compatible with the full range of Thermo-King refrigeration units. Its modular design allows components like batteries and electronic parts to be swapped out as needed, keeping maintenance costs low.

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Mobius Energy is dedicated to assisting clients to decarbonise their fleets. Businesses interested in making the switch can contact

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software that leverages GSM technology, allows customers to monitor and manage their refrigeration units from anywhere, providing real-time access to critical information such as temperature, humidity, energy, system performance and alarm alerts. This technology enhances operational efficiency by enabling instant alerts for any anomalies, ensuring that issues are addressed before they escalate.”

The advancement of monitoring and control plays a crucial role in contemporary

Real-time operating conditions can be monitored without interrupting the system, which is a must for today’s retailers and wholesalers already battling disrupted power supplies and consumers with little to no patience for delays or interrupted shopping experiences.

When paired with the Danfoss AK-CC 550 Service, a complete refrigeration appliance control that offers ultimate flexibility and adaptability, the Danfoss AK-CC55 Connect wireless tool ensures maximum efficiency and sustainability. With the ability to optimise energy usage, it certainly makes retail or wholesale refrigeration a little easier to manage.

Sherriffs says that ArcticStore has also embraced innovative design and state-of-the-art technology for their remote monitoring solution. “One of the most significant advancements in refrigeration technology is the integration of remote monitoring systems. ArcticStore Smart Arctic, our proprietary



refrigeration solutions. With the need for sustainability, better systems for monitoring and control are essential.

The use of remote monitoring and automated control allows retailers to adjust their refrigeration settings efficiently, ensuring consistent temperatures and minimising energy consumption. These technologies aid in meeting food safety regulations by maintaining accurate temperature control.

Sustainability in refrigeration systems for local retailers

Sustainability is becoming more and more crucial, due to the pressing demand for energy efficiency, decreased emissions, and better management throughout the system’s lifespan. It is imperative for local retailers to understand the wide range of advantages and technologies associated with sustainable refrigeration systems when contemplating investments.

The value of investing in sustainable refrigeration solutions

Investing in sustainable refrigeration systems can bring a range of advantages for local retailers. Not only do reduced energy costs have a positive impact on the bottom line, but also improved reliability and longer equipment lifespans can minimise operational disruptions and replacement expenses. Showcasing a dedication to sustainability has the potential to bolster brand reputation, attract environmentally conscious customers, and make one eligible for green certifications and incentives.

Options, such as energy-efficient technologies and environmentally-friendly refrigerants, along with advanced maintenance and monitoring systems are viable solutions. These investments present retailers with both economic and environmental benefits, in line with the larger goal of reducing emissions and promoting responsible resource consumption.



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Energy savings and reduced emissions

An essential concept is promoting both energy efficiency and decreased emissions. Sustainable refrigeration systems offer a significant benefit in terms of potential energy savings. With advancements in technology, modern refrigeration units are now built to be highly energy-efficient, utilising features like variable speed compressors and improved insulation.

These enhancements can result in significant decreases in energy usage, ultimately cutting operational expenses and reducing carbon footprints. Sustainable refrigeration options often utilise environmentally friendly refrigerants with lower Global Warming Potential (GWP), leading to a shift away from conventional refrigerants such as R22, which is chlorodifluoromethane or Freon-22, it is a refrigerant that has been phased out due to its harmful impact on the ozone layer.

The newest refrigeration technology, known as distributed water-loop systems, is being implemented worldwide to reduce energy consumption. Instead of relying on large compressors, each equipment section in supermarkets is connected to its own smaller compressor that only operates when necessary. As a result, the energy demands are significantly lowered compared to traditional refrigeration systems.

The compressors are cooled by a commonly used cooling line, which utilises a liquid cooling agent for heat transfer. The liquid is then transported to an external cooling tower and once cooled, it circulates back to the different compressors. This method of cooling minimises the energy consumption of the compressors during operation.

Top 3 insights from ArcticStore

Bob Sherriffs, Director, ArcticStore

Flexible and scalable cold storage solutions

Why buy it if you can rent? The South African retail sector is marked by fluctuating demand, especially during peak seasons. ArcticStore offers rental units for flexible and scalable refrigeration solutions that allow retailers to expand or contract their storage capacity as required through seasonal or geographic demand, without locking working capital into expensive permanent infrastructure. This adaptability is crucial for managing seasonal inventory efficiently and cost-effectively. Leading UK retailer Tesco utilises ArcticStore refrigerated containers for seasonal and geographic demand.

Energy efficiency as a competitive advantage

If you can measure it, you can manage it. With rising energy costs and a growing emphasis on sustainability, energy efficiency in refrigeration is no longer optional – it's a competitive necessity. It is vital that retailers are empowered to track energy usage and cost per kWh. ArcticStore units are equipped with advanced refrigeration systems, such as the Thermo-King Magnum Plus, that operate using significantly lower energy than older units, with up to 65% savings on previous generation models. This not only reduces operational costs but also supports retailers' sustainability goals.

Enhancing cold chain integrity

Maintaining cold chain integrity is critical in the retail and FMCG sectors, particularly for perishables. For ArcticStore, it's as much about peace of mind as it is about cost and value. We offer robust, tried and tested technology with national support available 24/7. Our cold chain solutions are maintained by precise live telematic temperature control and insulation, ensuring that products remain within optimal temperature ranges from storage to point of sale. This reduces spoilage, minimises food waste, enhances product quality, and directly impacts consumer satisfaction and brand loyalty.

We'll keep it cool for Braai Day with our Close the Case Glass Doors



Our Insulated Glass Doors revolutionize energy efficiency, setting the standard for supermarkets and retailers. Renowned for their quality and durability, they are the top choice for chiller and freezer applications, engineered for optimal performance in high-traffic environments.





Insulation for commercial refrigeration

In commercial refrigeration, insulation is a vital component that is all too often overlooked. Whether worn or damaged insulation is being ignored, or cheaper but less efficient options are being chosen to cut costs, the effect is the same: reduced efficiency and less sustainability. What feels like a small problem can have a serious impact on your business over time. Added to this is the need for retailers and wholesalers to invest in environmentally friendly solutions as local and international legislation catches up with the science behind climate change.

As is often the case, need is the driver and motivation for innovative thinking. Capitalising on this, local and international manufacturers and supplier, use CFC-free polyurethane insulation in their commercial refrigerators.

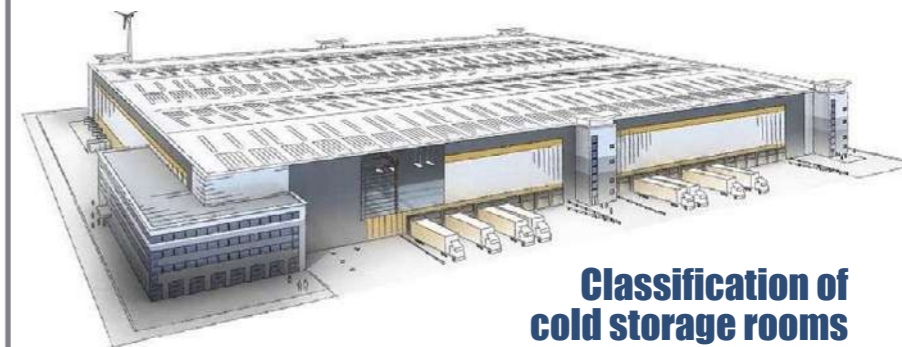
Effectively reducing the amount of energy each refrigerator expends to keep its contents cold, the right kind of insulation can make a significant difference to running costs.

Polyurethane insulation is robust, effective in confined spaces, affordable and lightweight, effective as an air sealant, and also fire resistant. The insulation also eliminates thermal bridging and minimizes moisture buildup. All of these

feature's help minimise heating and cooling costs, creating a cost-effective working environment.

Premium equipment can impact environmental and business sustainability. Under normal wear and tear, durability of more than 25 years for polyurethane used for insulation of refrigerators can be achieved. Polyurethane insulation reduces food waste and extends the life of perishable goods.

Rigid polyurethane foams maintain the inside temperature of the refrigerator, and thus reduce the consumed energy and provide high efficiency, thanks to their insulation capability due to their low thermal conductivity. With refrigerators and freezers consuming the largest amount of electricity costs in commercial applications (on average 40%), energy-efficient refrigerators will save a lot of money.



Classification of cold storage rooms

Cold storage is usually divided into three types based on target room temperature: high temperature, medium & low temperature and ultra-low temperature. Different products require different room temperatures.

High temperature cold storage

The high-temperature cold storage is what we call the refrigerated and fresh-keeping cold storage, the temperature is usually above 0°C, mostly used to store fruits and vegetables, eggs, medicinal materials, wood preservation, dryness, etc. The temperature is usually around 0°C, and the air cooler is used for air cooling.

Medium and low temperature cold storage

The medium and low temperature cold storage is the high temperature freezing cold storage, with the temperature usually within -18. It is mainly used to store meat, water products and products suitable for this temperature scale.

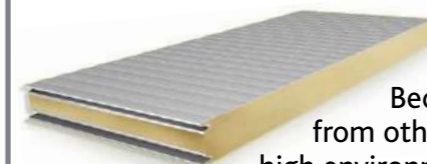
Low temperature cold storage

Low-temperature cold storage, usually the storage temperature is about -20°C to 30°C, and the food is frozen by air coolers or special freezing equipment.

Ultra-low temperature cold storage

Ultra-low temperature cold storage, cold storage $\leq -30^{\circ}\text{C}$, is mainly used for quick-frozen food, industrial experiments, medical and other special uses. Compared with the above three types, the applications on the market need to be slightly smaller.

Medium-temperature cold storage usually uses 100mm thick cold storage board, and low-temperature storage and frozen storage usually use 120mm or 150mm thick storage board. The foaming density of cold storage board is 38KG-40KG/cubic meter per cubic meter according to national standards.



The selection of cold storage boards is very important. Because cold storage is different from other warehouses, cold storage has high environmental requirements such as temperature and humidity. Therefore, when choosing the cold storage panels, attention should be paid to the raw materials and heat preservation strength of the board. Choosing the right board can protect the cold storage very well.

www.coldmax.com/info/classification-of-cold-storage-room-51273671.html

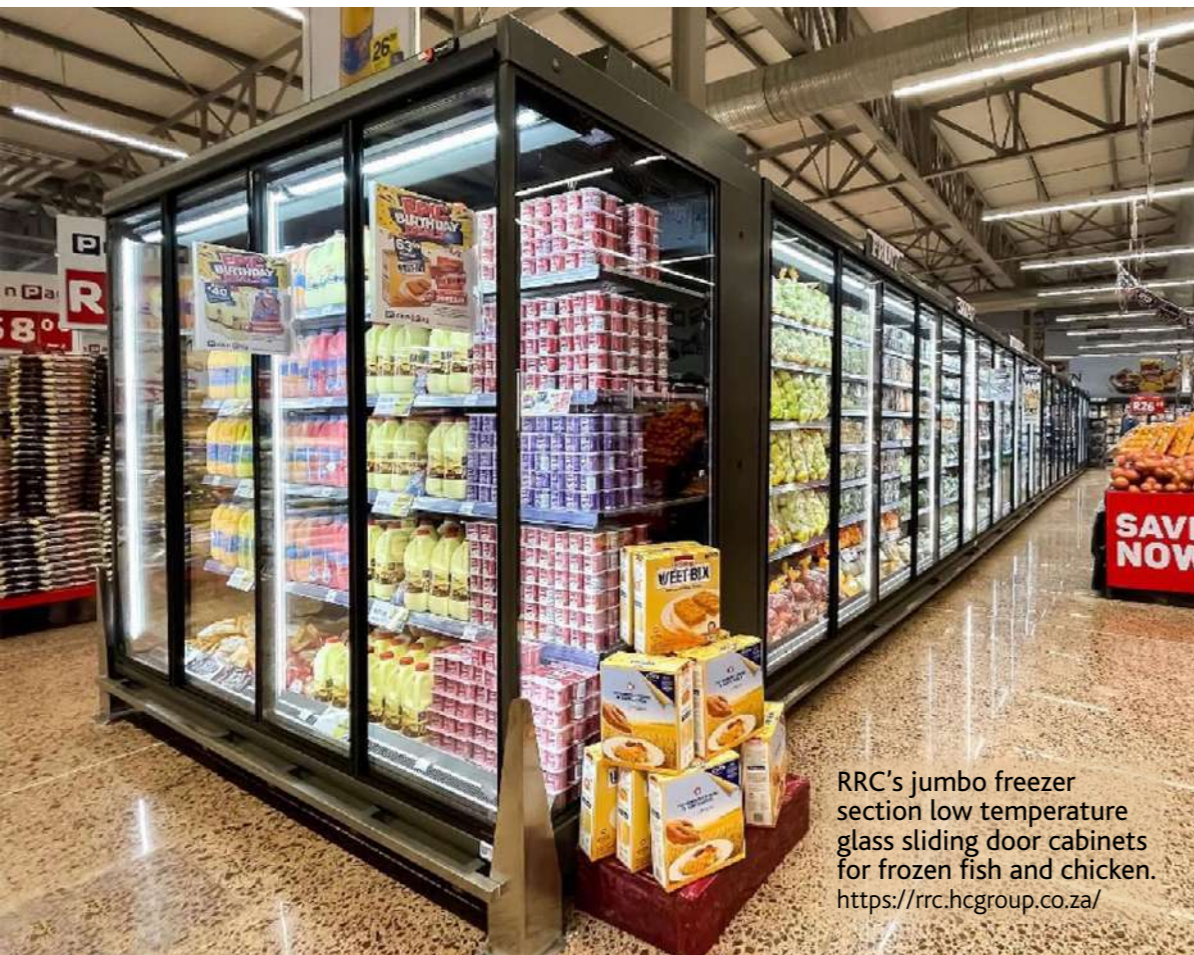


Closed display cases for maximum energy efficiency

The refrigeration industry has long understood the value of closing the refrigeration display case. Open refrigerator and chiller systems are visually appealing and create a sense of accessibility for shoppers – just reach in and grab what you want! The reality is, however, that these systems can and do impact energy consumption and can contribute to food spoilage and waste. In a country where load shedding is a reality, and the power supply is uncertain and unstable, open display cases are an undeniable risk.

Manage your sustainability

The sustainability of commercial refrigeration systems relies on a complex set of factors – from the age of the refrigeration unit, the frequency of preventative maintenance, the level of effective monitoring of the system, refrigerants being used, and the inclusion of smart technologies for monitoring and control.



RRC's jumbo freezer section low temperature glass sliding door cabinets for frozen fish and chicken. <https://rrc.hcgroup.co.za/>



Going vertical is the answer for many companies looking to increase storage capacity and implement automation, while maintaining smaller building footprints, temperature-controlled facilities for food processing, distribution and automation. New vertical cold storage facilities typically range from 23m to 41m. They often have special considerations during the design and construction phase, including power requirements, the types of refrigeration and racking systems used, and structural slab and foundation needs. Photo & caption: www.foodengineeringmag.com/

Analyse your existing commercial refrigeration solutions, as older, units should be replaced with newer, eco-friendly models that offer increased efficiency and effectiveness, benefiting you and the environment. Of further importance is to continue preventative maintenance, keeping commercial refrigeration solutions in optimum condition. Faulty gaskets, improper compressors and leaky pipes lead to inefficiency, increased energy cost, and production of harmful gases.

Lifecycle sustainability

Sustainability in refrigeration extends to the entire lifecycle of the equipment. By using durable, high-quality materials and components, the equipment has a longer lifespan, reducing the need for frequent replacements and minimising environmental consequences.

Recycling programmes at the end of the unit's life also aid in waste reduction and supporting a circular economy. **SR**



Ann Baker-Keulemans writes on topics related to business, lifestyle, technology, and health, with extensive knowledge on the SA retail and wholesale landscape. Contact annbk@wilkinsross.co.za | www.wilkinsrossglobal.com

Sustainability
Meets Style



Hydrocarbon Range now available in black

Experience the efficiency of Staycold International's hydrocarbon refrigerant cabinets, now enhanced with a sleek, black carbon finish.



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Trust The Experience

Automation in the cold chain

<https://logistics.muratec.net/>

Rapid progression of technology is enabling a far different picture when it comes to the way industries are now able to function.

Automation has, for a long time, been considered a sore topic when it comes to employment, or more importantly, the loss of employment, though endless studies have shown this is not the case. In the endless cycle of rising costs, it becomes imperative to find solutions to mitigate the expenses in producing goods and their movement along the supply chain.

As the new generation of employees move in, it's becoming more evident that there is a lack of interest in monotonous work or labour-intensive work and even dangerous work, putting pressure on input costs, which is inevitably transferred onto the consumers.

A good example heard of recently is that in the UK, large global distributors are paying nearly double minimum wage to anyone that can "lift and move up to 25 kilograms of goods," as they desperately seek employees to fulfil orders, according to coldlinkafrica.co.za. Meaning that the goods will come at a premium to clients – that are already subject to increasing prices for any sort of quality product.

Automation has been initiated as a means to support consistency, improve outputs in many sectors, as well as to ease certain stressful tasks for workers.



The aim today is for total coordination of low-temperature warehouses – from equipment that can be used in the refrigeration and cold storage environments to three temperature zoning and traffic line design. Great efficiency is found with high-density storage variations, such as AS/RS for double-reach and hybrid storage of high-low packages, and moving racks linked with automated forklift type AGVs.

The process began with pallet trolleys and lifts that were primarily used to load goods onto trains.

Fast-forward to current era means the impact of globalisation, development of computer technologies and growing connectivity have led to the term "supply chain management" which refers to strategy, planning and execution of the movement of goods or logistics collectively.

Looking to the future then, it is inevitable that technology will continue to support faster and more complex flows of goods, services and supplies. Moreover, evolving and emerging trends of

connectivity, artificial intelligence, and automation will become a prominent element of businesses in the cold chain too.

As an FYI, fresh and frozen produce, as well as new agricultural methods such as vertical farming will also increase, as the world's population expands exponentially. By 2050 forecasts are in excess of a 20% increase to just under 10-billion people over current numbers. 25 years is a short timeframe to plan and scale everything from the field to the fork for such changes, particularly in Africa, that is known for very slow progress.



Effective solutions to reduce the cost of in-store refrigeration

Polyurethane Injected Panels

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

Cold & Freezer Rooms



Floors – Fabricated and Concrete

Fabricated Floors

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

Concrete Floor

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

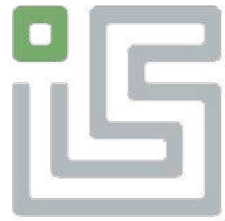


Meat Rails

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

Aluminium Chequer Plate

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



Insulated Structures
Efficiency At Work



Up to 40%
Energy Saving



New or Retrofit
Existing cases

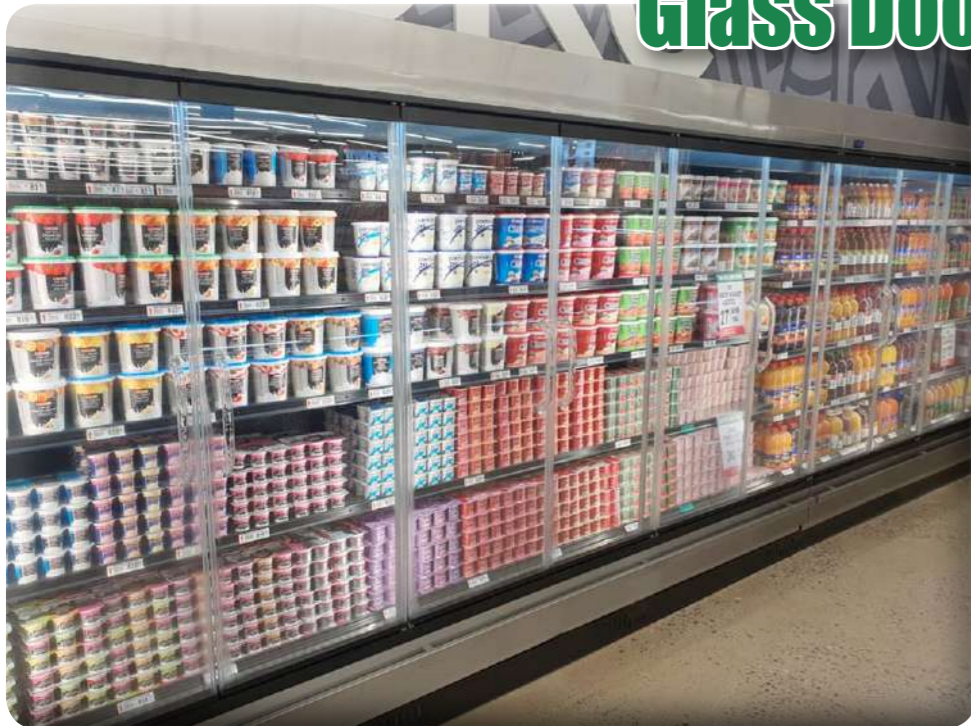


Environment
Respect

Benefits of Airshield Glass Doors

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

Airshield Glass Doors



Ways to save

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

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

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



Standard Airshield Glass Doors with a Black Frame.
Heated Hybrid also available in this design.
Heated Hybrid Glass Doors are fitted with a heater to reduce condensation on the doors in Coastal areas.
Heated Hybrid is fitted with soft closers.

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



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Automated transportation & sorting vehicle – the rail-guided carriage system transports heavy-duty pallets at high speed.

Continuous evolution requires continuous innovation, modern solutions and technology to enable such innovation. Covid also meant a total shift in thinking, consumption, and planning.

In terms of the growth of automation around the world, the reported market value for the sector in 2021 was nearly USD192-billion and over the next eight years, the projected value will be worth approximately USD400-billion. The demand is growing significant.

Adopting automation

In the cold chain, turnaround or handling time has become of utmost importance in quality and delivery. Automation has therefore risen as a critical element nowadays in meeting these demands.

Operators throughout the chain, face an increasingly complex decision when selecting the automation solutions that are right for their application. This can be from as early as harvesting technology, sorting lines, the choice of handling equipment, and even the newly termed 'darkstores', which are becoming more popular. Woolworths rollout being a good example.

Engaging a specialised professional consulting service is a starting point where client's particular needs are discussed and understood as each facility varies in product, volumes, size and location.

A professional provider can engage in detail for each facility – one solution may not work for all systems and locations.

A few pointers to look at ...

- Understand the particular site and operations
- Identify process improvements
- Consider different warehouse management systems, designs and automation
- Provide appropriate material handling and related equipment
- View all maintenance and service aspects of automation
- Establish protocols on risk and safety management aspects
- Compile necessary safety training and facility systems.

Consider such things as how a system is designed and installed, and the ability to effectively handle product and services with minimal intervention. With many intricate moving parts, a system's ability to continuously monitor components maximises efficient utilisation.

Automation essentially fulfils the functions for more efficient harvesting, sorting, packing and picking, rapid storage and retrieval times and safety.

Some elements of facility automation can come in a variety of solutions specific to each step in the chain. Some examples ...

- Conveyor and carousel technology
- Harvesting
- Produce sorting
- Packaging solutions
- Automated vehicles
- Processing and slaughter
- Chilling and freezing line solutions
- Pallet or carton handling
- Storage and retrieval (various racking systems/ mobiles/shuttles/moles/cranes/stackers)

COLD STORAGE SOLUTIONS

KEEPING FOOD & BEVERAGE CHILLED YEAR-ROUND



FROM

-40°C

(-40°F)

TO

+45°C

(+113°F)

Brand-new fleet ensures reliability and performance

Flat floor + ramps as standard for easy loading

-40°C cold storage performance in 50°C ambient

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Improved insulation provides massive energy savings when compared to older reefers



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In the cold chain, turnaround or handling time has become of utmost importance in quality and delivery. Automation has risen as a critical element in meeting these demands.

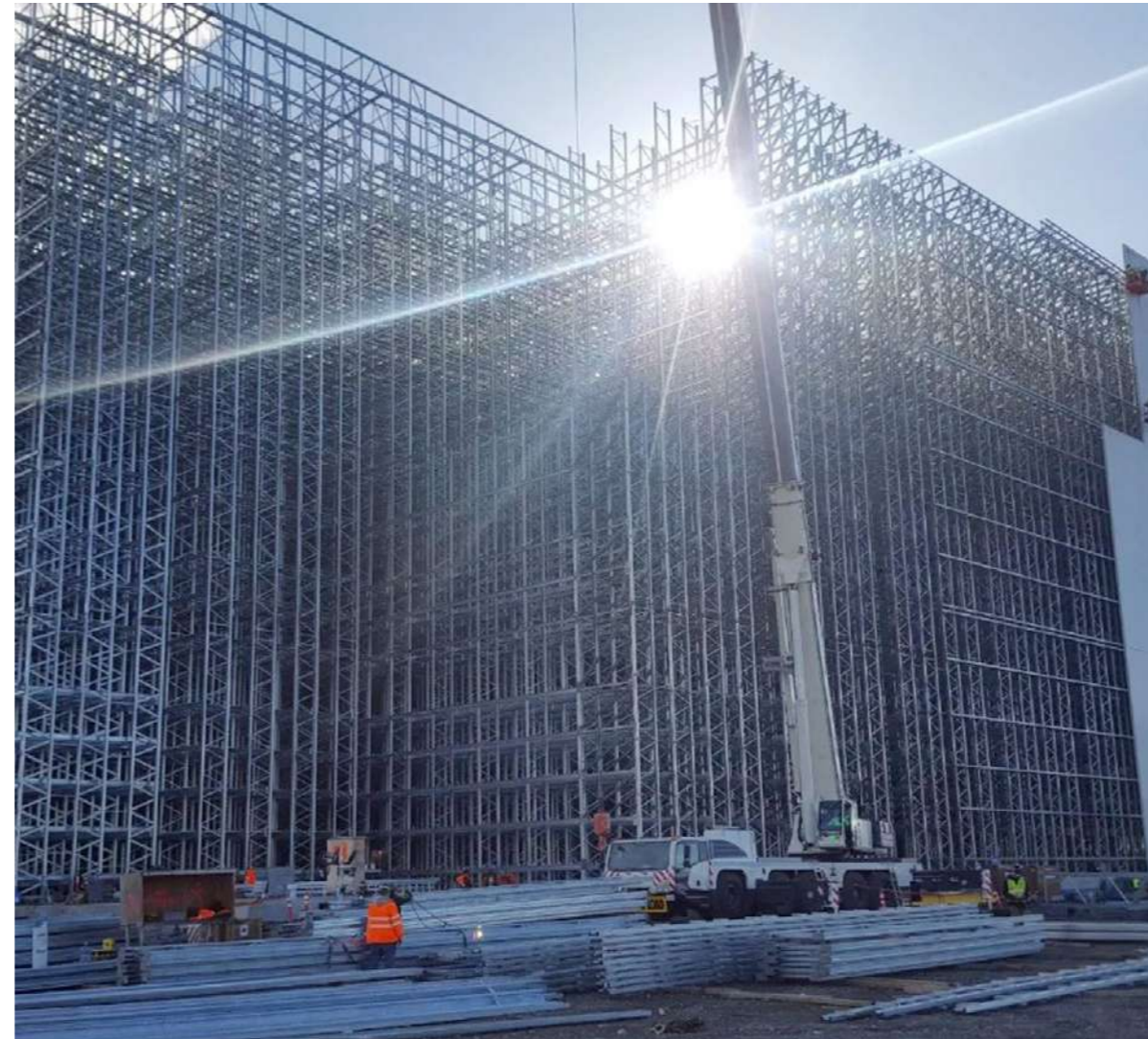
Levels of automation

The concept of automation is often mistaken because people often think of robots running around taking over jobs and society. Automation is, according to International Society of Automation, "the creation and application of technology to monitor and control the production and delivery of products and services." While also controlling outcomes more precisely and generating data sets.

Basic automation systems use appropriate machinery and equipment, as well as certain vehicles to reduce human involvement on repetitive tasks. Advanced systems, take advantage of numerous technologies and include the use of some robotics and many times, artificial intelligence.

Combined order automation would rely on software, machine learning, robotics and data analytics to automate tasks and procedures.

Mechanised warehouse automation uses technology, equipment and systems to assist workers with tasks and procedures.



Building the warehouse of the future. The art of forecasting the future is all about simultaneously recognising patterns in the present and thinking about how these changes will impact the future so that they can be actively engaged in building what happens next. There is a need to examine emerging trends and create opportunities to collaborate and plan ahead with those in other fields. Companies must develop new capabilities by combining an entrepreneurial spirit and creative perspectives with logic to keep a step ahead every day. www.youtube.com/@NewCold-global

Advanced automation combines systems and technologies that can entirely replace labour-intensive human workflows.

Automation technology types

Workflows and processes that can be streamlined to operate efficiently and scale correctly to changing demand. The higher the turnaround the greater the benefits in cutting down on human errors.

Drones and robots. As one of the most advanced automation systems in the world currently, is the use of drones and robots which has seen significant growth in numerous fields. In the world of harvesting, these technologies can more effectively work through orchards, sort on site, reduce damage to produce and also determine optimal picking times based on for example sugar content of the fruit, or specific set colouration. Down to the detail of reading when a plant needs water, setting off sprinklers.

Mobile devices, including smartphones and tablets, barcode scanners, and GPS technology, which is critical for a WMS.

Goods-to-person fulfilment increases efficiency and reduces congestion, these include conveyors, carousels and various lift systems. GTP systems can double or triple the speed of picking and packing.

Automated storage and retrieval systems (AS/RS) are a form of GTP fulfilment technology that includes automated systems and equipment like material-carrying vehicles, tote shuttles and mini-loaders to store and retrieve materials or products.

Is your ventilation system dirty?

CONCEPT CLEAN AFRICA is highly specialised in solving indoor air quality problems due to an ever-demanding need to minimise elevated levels of circulating dust and bacterial contaminants present in HVAC systems.

CONCEPT CLEAN AFRICA provides customers with the following specialised cleaning services ...

- HVAC duct cleaning & sanitation services (Using an EPA registered sanitiser / biocide)
- Indoor air quality management services
- Deep cleaning to kitchen extraction systems
- Fire & flood restoration services
- High-level structural cleaning services.

CONCEPT CLEAN AFRICA are the trusted name in air duct and HVAC cleaning because we utilise industry-leading methods, advanced technology, and effective techniques.

Our team of highly trained and motivated staff has the knowledge and insight to tackle even the most stubborn build-up. They have the training and tools necessary to not only get the job done right, but to provide results that last. Our technicians are ready to help you save energy and money while protecting your health.

We carefully inspect the property before creating a customised cleaning plan including recommended actions and next steps.



Internally insulated ductwork before & after cleaning.



Non-insulated ductwork before & after cleaning.

CONCEPT CLEAN AFRICA specialises in the deep cleaning of all extraction systems, kitchen cooking equipment, walls, floors and ceilings.

Our expert deep cleaning service is a sure way to remove all potentially harmful burned on carbon and fat deposits from kitchen cooking and extraction equipment which can cause kitchen fires and pest infestations.

By using our deep cleaning equipment and services, you will not only be eliminating potentially dangerous dirt and bacteria, but also extend the life and efficiency of expensive equipment.



Contact us today for
a **FREE** no-obligation duct inspection,
site visit & detailed quotation.

Concept Clean Africa

Quality Cleaning • Quality Service • Excellence

Contact: Chris Greenwood

Tel: 086 000 7115 | (011) 418 1860

Fax: 086 512 2999

Cell: 082 886 5691

Email: info@conceptcleanafrica.co.za

Web: www.conceptcleanafrica.co.za



Automatic guided vehicles (AGVs), a mechanised automation which uses magnetic strips, wires or sensors to navigate a fixed path through a warehouse. AGVs are generally limited to large, simple operations environments designed with an appropriate navigation layout. Not all complex warehouses can use this system.

Autonomous mobile robots (AMRs) more flexible than AGVs, AMRs use GPS systems and AI to move around effectively where there is more human traffic. AMRs can identify information on packages to assist with sorting and inventory checks.

Pick-to-light uses mobile barcode scanning devices and light displays to direct warehouse pickers where to place or pick up selected items. They can dramatically reduce searching time and human error in fast paced and high-volume situations.

Voice picking and tasking, utilises speech recognition software and mobile headsets, which eliminates the need for handheld devices like RF scanners.

Automated sortation systems, a conveyor-type system and diverting them to a warehouse location using RFID, barcode scanners and sensors, a system used in to complete, picking, packing and shipping. Sorting systems can also extract any sub-standard quality product at source to ensure only the unspoilt goods get past the initial stages before handling even starts.

AI and internet of things (IoT). The next step, not scary, just a reality. Artificial intelligence and IoT both provide data and analyse to make advanced predictions that weren't previously possible.

Augmented reality (AR) technology involves using a camera to capture a real environment, such as an aisle in a warehouse, and then overlay instructions or information on that environment, on a mobile device. AR smart glasses are available to go 'free hands', which can be used even for training lift truck operators to making safe deliveries. It may sound like science fiction to some, but it is a reality. VR technology is not just a game.

Where does WMS fit in?

WMS (warehouse management system) is a set of policies and processes which organises a manufacturing facility, warehouse or distribution centre, becoming the most commonly automated facilities in South Africa. A WMS tracks all materials and goods as they come in and go out of a facility.

A WMS understands 'where everything is' to reduce any latency, processing costs and human errors that could affect profitability.

Many WMS integrate with transportation management and logistics software, incorporating multiple systems, creating bills of lading, picking lists, and invoices for shipments automatically, as well as sending out automatic shipment notifications.

There are two types of WMS, firstly an integrated WMS, which allows one to identify high turnaround products but low profit margins, as well as low volume movers with high profitability.

The second, a standalone WMS, primarily serves the function of warehouse management. Though it may have limited functionality, such as inventory

or accounting, it is tailored to specific functions.

A WMS on-premises or cloud-based solutions is up to the operation. An on-premises WMS would be responsible for hosting and maintaining both the hardware and software, which can have a large upfront cost, while allowing complete control. Cloud based allows more freedom and outsourcing advantages.

And then, the challenges of automation

Automation at any level is still a growing challenge, still in its infancy in South Africa, we may be a bit behind, but we are certainly up to the game in adopting the full potential of automation technologies. Significant capital investment is required to get up and running and scarce expertise to establish and maintain the system doesn't make it any easier.

To remain competitive is a major factor for businesses that want to remain competitive both locally and for the international markets. To grow along with automation is a 'non brainer' to keep up with operational efficiency.



Technology will take us to higher heights. It is not a scary ride, but an exhilarating ride. SR

Serves: 6
Preparation time: 15 minutes
Cooking time: 50 minutes

GOLDI, COUNTY FAIR, FESTIVE or MOUNTAIN VALLEY CHICKEN PIECES

INGREDIENTS

Chicken:

6 chicken pieces
160g butter
5ml paprika
5ml onion powder (optional)
5ml garlic powder
salt

Chunky chakalaka:

15ml oil
2 onions, chopped
15ml medium curry powder
10ml cayenne pepper
60ml tomato sauce
1 tin chopped tomato
4 carrots, chopped
3 peppers (yellow, green, and red)
a handful of cherry tomatoes
1 tin baked beans
salt

BUTTER-BASTED CHICKEN WITH CHAKALAKA AND ROOSTERBROOD

Nothing beats easy-to-prepare braai chicken. It gives you more time to spend with your guests!

Method:

Chicken

Mix the butter with the spices. Smear half the spice butter over the chicken. Braai the chicken for 35 minutes, turning and basting with the remaining butter.

For the chunky chakalaka:

Heat oil in a pan over medium heat (or over the coals). Fry the onion, curry, and cayenne for 2 minutes. Stir in the tomato sauce, tomatoes, carrots, and peppers. Simmer for 15 minutes. When the carrots are tender, add the cherry tomatoes and baked beans. Season.

For the roosterbrood:

Mix the flour, salt, sugar, and yeast together. Add the butter into the flour mixture, rubbing it with your fingertips until the mixture resembles crumbs. Add water to the dry ingredients to form a soft dough. Place aside, cover, and allow to rise for 1 hour. Knead the dough again and shape into 12 balls. Place the dough aside for 10 minutes. Flatten the balls slightly and sprinkle with a little flour. Cook over a low fire for 10 minutes on each side. Tap the bread with your fingers. When it makes a hollow sound, it's ready to serve.

Tasty & Delicious

Ideal for a family meal

Great South African Chicken Every Day!



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Serves: 8
Preparation time: 1 hour
Cooking time: 45 minutes

Tasty & Delicious

Ideal for a family meal

GOLDI, COUNTY FAIR, FESTIVE or MOUNTAIN VALLEY CHICKEN PIECES

INGREDIENTS

Chicken:

About 10-12 chicken pieces
(fresh or defrosted frozen pieces)
2 red peppers sliced into large piece
2 onions peeled and chopped into large chunks
½ cup (125 ml) oil
1 tsp (5 ml) paprika
2 tsp (10 ml) cayenne pepper
1 ½ (7.5 ml) tsp salt
4 cloves garlic peeled or 2 tsp (10 ml) crushed garlic
2 Tbsp (30 ml) chilli flakes

Zest and juice of 1 lemon
1/2 tsp (2.5 ml) dried rosemary
¼ cup (60 ml) red grape vinegar

For the crispy potatoes:

800g-1kg small potatoes, peeled
3 Tbsp (45 ml) - 3 cups vegetable oil
(depending on how you cook the potatoes)
Salt to taste

PERI PERI CHICKEN PIECES WITH CRISPY POTATOES

Perfect for a braai!

Method:

Chicken

Toss the peppers and onions in half the oil and either char on the braai or roast in the oven at 200°C for 20 minutes or until slightly blackened. Then blend all the ingredients together until you have a paste - or use a pestle and mortar to make a paste.

Marinate the chicken pieces in half of the peri-peri paste for at least 30 minutes or overnight. Cook over medium to low coals until the chicken is cooked.

Heat the reserved paste in a separate small pot and cook for 5 minutes or until heated through - serve with the chicken.

To make the crispy potatoes, peel small potatoes and parboil in just enough water to cover until soft. Strain. Either deep fry the potatoes in hot vegetable oil or coat in 3 Tbsp oil and bake in the oven at 200°C for 20-30 minutes or the air fryer at 200°C for 20 minutes.

Season well with salt. Serve.

Great South African Chicken Every Day!



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Come what may, we will braai

The good news for consumers is that the cost of our favourite pastime is coming down. Despite inflation being unhinged since the dark days of the Covid lockdowns, the most recent data from the Pietermaritzburg Equity Justice and Dignity (PMGEJD) group shows that the cost of inviting friends over for boerie rolls decreased by 1.2% in July, and by 2.2% year-on-year.

But there's so much more than cost when it comes to the art and craft of the braai. Let's take a deeper dive into what the data tells us about consumer buying habits and preferences, and what supermarkets, hypermarkets and wholesalers could be doing to make their customers' braai lives easier, creative and tasty, and even more affordable.

Trends shaping meat demand

Organic produce. While there is a growing demand for organic and ethically sourced meat in South Africa, organic, free-range and 'free trade' meat remains the purview of the wealthier demographics. According to Food Stuff South Africa, "demand for organic meat remains very low as it is generally very expensive and thus unaffordable for the bulk of the country's population." Even though awareness of the benefits of organic meat is increasing, partly because of growing public knowledge of farming practices and the risks associated with chemically produced animal feed, the bottom line is that ethically sourced and free-range



www.flickr.com/photos/ewebber/3169251122

meat is expensive, and not getting any cheaper.

Organic farms are significantly more costly to run. In some instances the animals are eating for up to double the amount of time. Natural fertilisers and organic animal feed are far more expensive than synthetic, chemical and GMO (genetically modified organisms) materials. Organic farms require more generous space allowances per animal, for example, chickens must be able to stretch both wings at the same time. The increased costs associated with organic farming are passed onto the retailer and the consumer.



Sheep grazing helps to control weeds and encourages white clover. www.teagasc.ie/

South Africans are a resilient bunch ...

No matter how bad things get economically, politically or globally, we always seem to find the time to put aside our worries and light up a braai.

Quality meat for Braai Day with our Insulated Panels



Our modular injected polyurethane insulated panel division makes use of the latest high-pressure technology with eco-friendly chemicals to ensure that our customers get the best insulation and value whilst caring for the environment. Adaptable to unique customer needs, we offer panels in various thicknesses to suit any application.



Premium products. Butcheries and meat suppliers in South Africa are responding to the shift towards organic, free-range, grass-fed and ethically sourced meat by offering a wider range of options, often highlighted as premium products. This trend aligns with the global movement towards more responsible meat consumption.

Latest flavours. South Africans aren't shy to look abroad and take inspiration from what's trending globally when it comes to spicing up our braais. With social media as the great leveller, we only need to take a quick look at what some of our counterparts are eating to know that it's not too different from what South Africans are trying out in their own kitchens.

However, traditional flavours are still very popular with South African consumers. According to Innovative Market Insights, smoked is the number one flavour for meat products, with chilli a close second. Then come the usual flavours: barbecue, spices and cheese, with flavours like garlic and black pepper also on the menu. Seasonings and spices infused with cumin, coriander, mustard seeds, peppercorns and turmeric are also among the latest popular flavours

Of course, going by trends alone isn't going to work for everyone, especially in a country where tastes are as diverse as fire lighting techniques. In-store demos and KYC (Know Your Customer) surveys will give supermarkets, hypermarkets, independent butcheries and wholesalers insights into their customers preferences, enabling stores to cater to their specific tastes.



Marinades, of course, can contain anything that goes well with a food. The ingredients of the marinade penetrate the meat, keeping it juicy and flavourful. The oil transfers moisture and aromas to the meat. The sour part makes it soft. Aromatics give flavour and aroma.

When marinating meat, always use clean glass utensils and low temperatures to avoid any alteration or contamination – meats can contain bacteria which can be transmitted to the marinade.

Do not use metal utensils or aluminum foil, because they can give food a metallic flavour.

Photo & caption: <https://koutsioftis.gr/en/beef-tips/>

Convenience is always king. Covid made everyone an expert at home cooking, but just because the crisis is over doesn't mean consumer habits have suddenly changed. Last year, the Specialty Food Association set up a Trendspotter Panel to help supermarkets and retailers get a better sense of how their customers are cooking; it turns out that the customer's appetite for convenience hasn't abated. Accordingly, people still want restaurant-quality food at home, but without the hassle of having to make it themselves, and so "will look at brands that have shortcuts in cooking these meals." These include meal kits, ready-to-cook and eat kits, as seen in brands such as UCook and FitFood4u.

Tech up. To meet the demands of these trends, butchers and meat suppliers are investing in advanced equipment that enhances efficiency and

product quality. Innovations such as temperature-controlled preparation areas, high-precision cutting machines, and sophisticated weighing systems are becoming standard in modern butcheries. These technologies help reduce food wastage, maintain hygiene, and ensure consistency in product offerings, which are critical factors for building consumer trust and loyalty.

In summary, the trends in free-range and organic produce, innovative marinades, and convenience-orientated products are not only reshaping consumer expectations but also driving significant changes in how meat is produced, processed, and marketed in South Africa. Supermarkets, suppliers and butchers who adapt to these trends by incorporating sustainability, innovation, and convenience into their operations are the ones most likely to thrive.

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Best practices for better butcheries

To optimise product supply, selection, and variety, butchers and retailers should adopt a range of best practices that align with the current market trends and consumer demands. These practices ensure that offerings are both appealing to customers and operationally efficient.

- Forward-thinking supermarkets, wholesalers and hypers can look to implement **data-driven inventory management technology** to help with demand forecasting. Using advanced **data analytics** to predict customer demand based on historical sales data, seasonal trends and market research helps to maintain optimal stock levels, minimise wastage, and ensure that popular items are always available.
- Adopt a **just-in-time (JIT)** inventory system where products are ordered and received only as needed, based on accurate demand forecasting. This reduces storage costs and the risk of perishable meat and meat products going unsold.
- Offer a **broad selection of meats**, including traditional favourites and more exotic or niche products that cater to diverse consumer preferences. This includes a mix of free-range, organic, and conventionally farmed meats to appeal to different segments of the market.
- With that done, introduce **seasonal or limited-edition products** to create a sense of urgency and exclusivity. These could include special marinades, unique cuts, or festive braai packs that capitalise on seasonal consumer behaviour.



By implementing these best practices, wholesalers, butcheries, supermarkets and hypermarkets can effectively optimise their product supply, selection, and variety, aligning their operations with consumer demand and market trends. This approach improves customer satisfaction and enhances operational efficiency and profitability.

- **Build strong relationships** with reliable suppliers who can provide high-quality products consistently. Establishing partnerships with local farmers and producers can also ensure a steady supply of fresh, sustainable, and locally sourced meat, which is increasingly important to consumers.
- Ensure robust **cold chain logistics** to maintain the freshness and safety of perishable goods from supplier to store. This includes investing in high-quality refrigeration systems and monitoring equipment to prevent spoilage and extend the shelf life of products. This goes hand-in-hand with optimising logistics by sourcing products locally where possible, reducing transportation time and costs, and enhancing the freshness of products.
- Use high-quality **eco-friendly packaging** that not only preserves the product but also appeals to environmentally conscious consumers. Packaging that highlights the ethical and sustainable attributes of the product can further enhance its appeal.
- **Stay ahead** of market trends by regularly introducing new products and discontinuing underperforming ones. This keeps the selection fresh and exciting for customers, encouraging repeat visits. Establish systems for gathering customer feedback on product selection and quality and use this feedback to continuously refine and improve your meat and meat products ranges, ensuring that it meets customer needs and preferences.



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Browsing fresh tree leaves and small branches have many nutritional benefits for livestock. They are good sources of protein, vitamins and minerals. Photo & caption: <https://agricology.co.uk/>

What are the differences between organic and non-organic meat?

- Organic livestock and the meat produced from these animals are subject to strict processes involving animal welfare, animal feed and how the meat is processed.
- Organic livestock is raised without the use of routine antibiotics. Animals raised for mass production on factory farms where they live in close proximity may pass diseases to one another, and for this reason they are given antibiotics. When the farm is not overcrowded, the need for antibiotics decreases or is eliminated.
- Growth hormones are given to livestock for faster maturation and production. In organic meat, the animals are raised without growth hormones, which means they mature at a slower, more natural pace. Growth hormones and antibiotics pass through the animal and can be transmitted into the ground, which affects groundwater.
- No livestock feed additives or artificial fertilisers may be used in the raising of organic livestock.
- Organic meat contains no preservatives and chemicals, which are used to increase the shelf-life of regular meat.

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 - (CONSOLIDATED DOCUMENT R.946 of 27 March 1992, R.988 of 25 July 1997 AND R.471 of 22 April 2016)
- Processed Meat Products
 - (R.1283 of 04 October 2019)
- Certain Raw Processed Meat Products
 - (R.2410 of 26 August 2022)

- ✓ Verify Labeling Requirements
- ✓ Verify Compositional Standards
- ✓ Recipe Verification



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Get Educated





Cooking beef to the right temperature is important both for food safety and achieving the desired taste. By using a meat thermometer and understanding the various internal temperature ranges, you can ensure that your beef meat is not only delicious, but also safe to eat.

Rare (45°C / 113°F). This is the ideal internal temperature for those who enjoy rare beef. The beef will be red in the centre and slightly warm. It's essential to note that cooking beef to this temperature may not eliminate all harmful bacteria, so it's highly important to source your meat from a trusted supplier.

Medium-Rare (55°C / 131°F). This internal temperature results in a warm, red centre with a slightly firmer texture than rare beef. For many, this is considered the perfect level of doneness, as it maintains the meat's juiciness while being tender and flavourful.

Medium (60°C / 140°F). Here, the meat will be pink in the centre and warmer than medium-rare, resulting in a firmer texture without the meat being too dry.

Medium-Well (65°C / 149°F). The meat will have only a hint of pink in the centre and will be more firm, but also less juicy than medium or medium-rare beef. This more cooked texture, will still retain some moisture and tenderness in the meat.

Well-Done (71°C / 160°F and above). At this stage, the meat will be brown throughout, with no pink remaining. Although well-done beef can be quite dry and tough, some individuals prefer this level for personal preference or dietary reasons.

Let beef rest after cooking: Regardless of your preferred level of doneness, it's important to let the beef rest after removing it from the heat source, to enrich the flavour and juiciness. While resting, the temperature of the meat continues to rise slightly, further destroying any harmful microbes. Additionally, resting allows the juices to redistribute within the meat, resulting in a more flavourful and tender dish.

By using a meat thermometer and following these guidelines, you can prepare delicious but, most importantly, safe beef dishes that cater to individual preferences.

Photo & caption: <https://koutsoftis.gr/en/beef-tips/>

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Braai brainstorm

Supermarkets and wholesalers can enhance their butchery and braai offerings by integrating new equipment, products, and innovative ideas that align with current consumer trends. Here are some specific recommendations:

Buy advanced butchery equipment. Investing in high-precision meat cutting machines can ensure uniformity in product size and quality, which is crucial for maintaining consistency, especially in pre-packaged items.

Vacuum tumblers accelerate the marination process by evenly distributing flavours throughout the meat in a shorter time. This equipment can be particularly useful for creating pre-marinated, ready-to-cook products, which are popular among time-conscious consumers.

Implementing **advanced refrigeration systems** with smart temperature monitoring can help maintain the freshness and safety of perishable products. These systems can automatically adjust to temperature changes, reducing the risk of spoilage and ensuring compliance with food safety standards.

Mix it up with new products. Consider offering a range of plant-based meat alternatives like plant-based sausages, burgers, and even meat-like cuts that cater to vegetarians, vegans, and flexitarians.

Develop or source **unique marinades** and spice rubs that cater to diverse flavour preferences – such as Asian, Middle Eastern, and African spice blends – which can attract customers looking for something new. Offering these as standalone products or as part of a pre-marinated meat package adds convenience and variety.

<https://koutsioftis.gr/en/beef-tips/>



Pre-prepared braai packs include a variety of meats, sides, and condiments, curated to offer a complete braai experience. These packs can be tailored to different occasions (family gatherings, gourmet experiences) and can include unique items like marinated vegetables or special sauces.

Innovate your shop space with in-store braai demonstrations and events. Hosting in-store braai demonstrations where chefs or butchers showcase cooking techniques and new products can engage customers and encourage them to try new offerings.

You can also offer **custom butchery services**, such as preparing custom cuts and preparation services. Customers can request specific sizes or marination levels, which can enhance the shopping experience. This service can be complemented by providing expert advice on cooking techniques and flavour pairings.

“ In your butchery, offer custom cuts and preparation services. Customers can request specific sizes or marination levels. This service can be complemented by providing expert advice on cooking techniques and flavour pairings. ”

Get online. Expanding e-commerce options with a focus on butchery and braai products allows customers to conveniently order their meat and braai essentials online. Offering same-day delivery, click-and-collect services, or subscription boxes can add value, especially for time-strapped consumers.

Consider introducing **apps or digital platforms** where customers can browse recipes, get tips from your butchery team, and order custom cuts, which can enhance customer interaction and loyalty. These tools can also gather data on consumer preferences to further refine product offerings.

By incorporating these advanced equipment options, innovative products, and creative ideas, supermarkets and wholesalers can significantly enhance their butchery and braai offerings, stay ahead of market trends, and meet evolving consumer expectations.



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Catering for consumers

Now that we've explored some of the trends and best practices for butcheries, supermarkets and wholesalers, let's take a look at the braai from a consumer's perspective. Several value-adds could significantly enhance your customers' shopping experience for meat and braai products:

Convenience options. Offering pre-marinated, ready-to-cook meats and complete braai packs can save consumers time and effort. These products allow shoppers to enjoy the authentic braai experience with minimal preparation, which is particularly appealing to busy individuals or to those new to braai culture.

Providing meal kits that include everything needed for a braai – from meat and marinades to side dishes and condiments – adds value by simplifying the shopping process. This can also be an attractive option for customers wanting to try something new or hosting guests.

Transparency. Providing clear and detailed labeling that includes information about the sourcing, quality, and ethical standards of the meat forms part of the legislative requirements of packaging. It also builds trust and loyalty in your store, and your meat products. This transparency is particularly important for free-range and organic products.

Meal prep information. Offering recipe cards or digital links to recipes that pair with the purchased products can inspire customers and make their cooking experience more enjoyable. This can be done through in-store displays, QR codes on

packaging, or integrated into online shopping platforms.

Packaging sustainability & eco-friendly options. Consumers are increasingly concerned about sustainability. Offering meat products in eco-friendly or recyclable packaging can differentiate a retailer and appeal to environmentally conscious shoppers.

Ethical sourcing. Highlighting products that are ethically sourced, such as free-range, organic, or locally farmed meats, can meet the requirements of consumers who prioritise animal welfare and sustainability.

Digital integration and support. Expanding online shopping options, including same-day delivery and click-and-collect services, can add significant convenience for customers. This is particularly valuable for those with busy lifestyles or who prefer to avoid in-store shopping. Braai Day Specials will always generate interest among South African consumers.

Customised shopping. Implementing digital platforms where customers can customise their online or in-store butchery orders, receive personalised recommendations, or access cooking tips for specific cuts of meat adds an individual touch to the shopping experience. This can be particularly appealing to tech-savvy consumers.

By incorporating these value-adds, in-store butcheries and meat departments can create a more engaging, convenient, and satisfying shopping experience for consumers, ultimately driving customer loyalty and boosting sales.

The braai nation stands firm

South Africa is a braai nation second to none. Business – including FMCG retail and wholesale – may have been warily watching the events of the last elections unfold, wondering which way consumer sentiment would turn. Meanwhile, (extra)ordinary South Africans were busy doing what they do best: making plans while making friends around the fire.

If the past tells us anything, it's that the clouds on the horizon are swept away by the smoke from the many braais around our nation. With an improving economy, some savvy investment to create a top-quality in-store butchery, and a close connection with their communities, retailers and wholesalers should have every faith that come what may, South Africa will braai. **SR**



Take care to apply faithful quality systems to make sure that the products that arrive on your plate are absolutely safe to consume!
<https://koutsioftis.gr/en/beef-tips/>

Sources:

www.freddyhirsch.co.za/ | www.tmporganics.com.au/
<https://agricology.co.uk/> | www.teagasc.ie/





CONSUMER GOODS & SERVICES OMBUD

Fairplay between consumer & supplier

ENSURING FAIR PLAY BETWEEN SUPPLIERS AND CONSUMERS

WHO WE ARE

The Consumer Goods and Services Ombud (CGSO) is an impartial, independent dispute resolution scheme established under the Consumer Protection Act (CPA) of 2008, The CGSO is an independent body created to enforce the Consumer Goods and Services Industry Code of Conduct, which aims to protect consumer rights, promote fair business practices, and resolve disputes between consumers and suppliers.



Queen Munyai - CEO

OUR MISSION

The CGSO's mandate, bolstered by the Consumer Goods and Services Industry Code of Conduct, compels all qualifying businesses to register with the Ombud and contribute to its funding. This ensures the sustainability of the service, which is provided free to consumers. As of 2024 February, the CGSO has grown to include over 1,835 participants, representing more than 26,872 outlets across the country. However, this is still far from the total number of eligible businesses in the sector.

Recognizing the importance of fair contribution, the CGSO has recently taken a firmer stance against non-compliant businesses. "For years, we focused on advocacy and awareness to encourage companies to join the Ombud scheme," says CEO Queen Munyai. "However, with many businesses still failing to comply, we have now partnered with MRT Recoveries to ensure that delinquent suppliers are held accountable."

This partnership marks a significant shift in the CGSO's strategy. Suppliers who continue to ignore their obligations will face legal action, including the recovery of outstanding fees. This crackdown is not just about enforcing the law; it's about ensuring a level playing field for all businesses and protecting consumers from unscrupulous operators.

The CGSO's approach sends a clear message: compliance is not optional. The Ombud is committed to upholding consumer protection and will use all available tools to ensure businesses contribute fairly. It's about maintaining marketplace integrity and ensuring consumer trust.

WHAT ARE THE COSTS INVOLVED?



Companies are registered with the CGSO at the group level; thus, the number of registered participants excludes subsidiaries and individual outlets as these are deemed compliant if the head office has registered. The fee structure is based on annual turnover as follows:

| CGSO GROUP | TURNOVER RANGE | ANNUAL FEE | ONCE OFF JOINING FEE @ 30% OF THE ANNUAL PARTICIPATION FEE |
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| G2 | Above R1bn to R3bn | R 90 000 | R 27 000 |
| G3 | Above R500m to R1bn | R 35 000 | R 10 500 |
| G4 | Above R100m to R500m | R 5 500 | R 1 650 |
| G5 | R50m to R100m | R 3 500 | R 1 050 |
| G6 | R1m to R50m | R 1 680 | R504 |
| G7 | R1 to R1m | No Cost | No Cost |

REGISTRATION IS QUICK AND EASY

To register with the CGSO, simply [click here](#). Alternatively, suppliers can submit their [Participant Application Form](#) to bongiwem@cgso.org.za. You can also call us at +27 (0)11 781 2607 and a CGSO Business Development Officer will take you through the registration process. For more information, please visit the CGSO website: www.cgso.org.za

We look forward to welcoming you as an accredited participant of the CGSO.



Transforming retail finance and insurance with technology

Technology is very much front of mind when it comes to finance and insurance for retailers

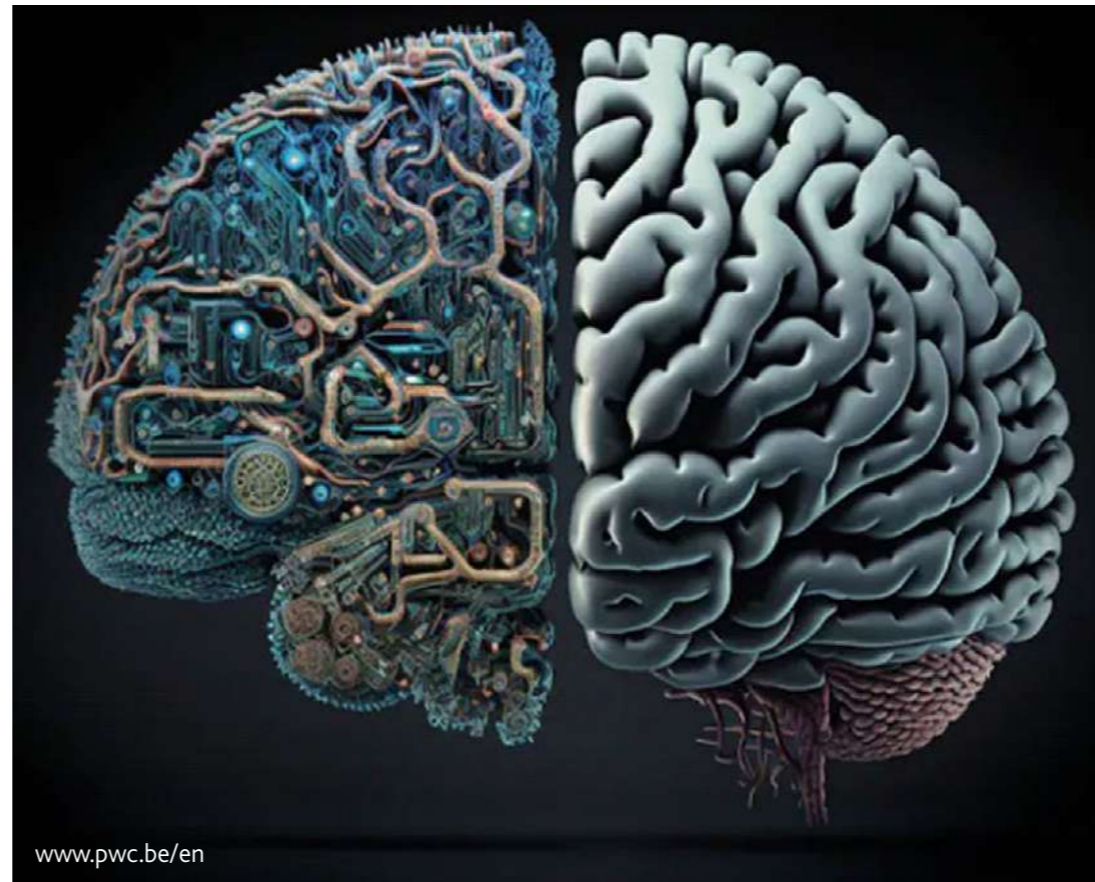
To capitalise on modern financial solutions takes more than just business savvy – retailers and wholesalers need to be tech-savvy, too. Thankfully, as technology advances, it's also becoming easier and more accessible to stores, especially those who have had a less than warm relationship with technology in the past.

Not only that, but consumers have also become more confident with technology, and so the interplay between the technology solutions that retailers and wholesalers adopt for their business finance on the back end is often seamlessly integrated with popular consumer applications on the front-end. If structured properly, this can have knock-on benefits for the entire operation from till point to back office.

In this feature, we'll take a look at some trends shaping retail finance and insurance, and specifically at the related technologies available for retailers and wholesalers to capitalise on their business operations.

Digital transformation in retail

According to Huge Connect, the year 2023 "laid the groundwork for the digital transformation in South African retail." With consumer confidence at an all-time low following the Covid pandemic, coupled



www.pwc.be/en

with declining household expenditure, retailers and wholesalers had to confront changes in consumer shopping patterns, highly constrained budgets and much higher demand for online buying, and adapt their operations to meet the 'new normal'.

To meet and exceed the new expectations of a changed landscape, many retailers and some wholesalers are transforming their operations, both financially, and using technology-based solutions to do so.



Sumay Dippenaar,

General Manager Marketing for retail finance solutions provider

Capital Connect,

says the retail finance sector is being redefined by digital transformation.

"We have seen the rise of a new class of client-centric fintech companies that work closely with businesses to offer seamless, tech-fuelled solutions that address their pain points in areas such as business financing and payment acceptance," says Dippenaar.

“ For example, they offer solutions that auto-manage cashflow for stock purchases and enable retailers to manage cash and cashless payments in one ecosystem to support customer choice.

They also offer easier access to instant growth capital for retailers via an app. ”

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What is digital transformation?

Digital transformation is the integration of digital technology into all areas of a business, fundamentally changing how you operate and deliver value to customers. It's also a cultural change that requires organizations to continually challenge the status quo, experiment, and get comfortable with failure. <https://enterpriseproject.com/>

Connecting retailers to cash

Today's financial technology solutions are designed to connect retailers to cash, capital, card and prepaid value-added products and services. As digital transformation accelerates, fintech companies are developing more sophisticated mobile payment platforms, contactless payment solutions, and digital wallets.

The 2024 State of Small Business Report from Xero found that 26% of small businesses report that access to funding is a barrier. New transformative technologies are therefore designed to offer seamless, secure, and fast transactions, catering to the increasing consumer demand for convenience and the need for retailers to process payments efficiently.

Fast fintech funding, which allows small and medium sized retailers to effectively manage their cash flow, presents a significant opportunity for business to grow and it grants speedy access to necessary funds.

For a small or medium business (SMB) retailer,

waiting weeks for a traditional lender to approve and pay out a loan when an opportunity arises is not feasible. The solution is to offer local retailers speedy and cost-effective funding, ensuring they never miss a chance to expand their businesses.



This level of 'opportunity capital' enables an SMB retailer to move the needle and boost profits by ...

- Acting quickly to make a bulk purchase of goods at a discounted rate, such as a time-limited price offer from a wholesaler or manufacturer.
- Stocking up in good time for a seasonal event like Easter, Black Friday, festive season, or back-to-school.
- Diversifying products or services or adding in-store profit centres such as bakeries, fish shops, cheese bars, and delicatessens.
- Giving a store a facelift with new fittings and décor to increase foot traffic.

Fintech companies are also developing digital lending platforms that allow retailers to access credit more easily and quickly. These platforms often use alternative data to assess credit-worthiness, making it easier for smaller or newer retailers to

obtain the financing they need to grow.

Retailers want to be able to apply for an unsecured business loan within minutes, simply by using an app available on iOS or Android. Innovative use of technology that makes this possible is therefore at the heart of any commercial finance business's success.

Fintech leaders are utilising analytics and data modelling to promptly assess and approve loans, enabling clients to obtain the necessary funds for innovation, outpacing their rivals, and ultimately thriving in a tough market. Algorithms and model-based lending refer to the use of sophisticated mathematical models and algorithms to assess creditworthiness, determine lending risk, and make decisions about granting loans in a matter of minutes. Access to rich, online data sources enables the lender to assess whether a retailer is a sound borrower without the usual requirement for audited financial statements and prolonged processing.



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Connect to cash within minutes, using technology

Examples of how leading fintech companies in the retail sector use technology to quickly connect their clients to cash include:

A modern cash vault is a hardened device with proven technology for safe and efficient daily cash handling. Once the retailer deposits their cash into the cash vault, the funds are guaranteed in their bank account – same day, with an immediate risk transfer. An Instant Access facility enables retailers to access the cash in real-time, whenever they need it.

SuperWallets are becoming a game-changer for retailers in the formal market. Once a retailer deposits cash into the retail cash vault, the funds reflect in real-time in the merchant's SuperWallet. They can cash funds out to their bank account instantly or use it to pay over 450 pre-loaded suppliers without having to pay a cash deposit fee, saving them time and money.

A wide range of payments options is important for retailers to offer customers, including cash, card, and digital wallets. There has been an increase in scan-to-pay, contactless card and tap-to-phone adoption since the pandemic.

Fintech payments companies also offer a wide range of card and digital payments acceptance solutions – including phone-based apps for smaller retailers, value-added services (VAS) terminals, and devices that enable merchants to sell virtual products like airtime, as well as accept card payments.

Mobile technology is one of the keys to this new fintech world.

A leading fintech provider will offer retailers a mobile app that enables the retailer to easily transact in real-time, view and manage the cash in their retail cash vault or ATM recycler, or even borrow millions of rands in working capital without red tape or needing to go through a drawn-out and complicated credit process.



Image by Jaydeep Joshi from Pixabay

Advanced and alternative payment methods

Some of the key tech enablers in retail today are the various integrated payment solutions that allow retailers to manage multiple payment methods, ranging from traditional credit/debit cards to digital wallets and even cryptocurrencies. This integration not only streamlines the checkout process but also provides retailers with valuable data on customer preferences and spending habits.

As first reported in News24, (4 Sept 2023, compiled by William Brederode), Pick n Pay is one of the few retailers currently pioneering Bitcoin payments in-store. Customers who want to pay for groceries, municipal bills, electricity, airtime, or other services or goods at Pick n Pay using Bitcoin can now do so through the Luno or VALR app by scanning a QR code.

According to ITWeb (13 June 2024, Simnikiwe Mzekandaba, IT in government editor), Pick n Pay's cryptocurrency payment option has become so popular, it recently hit the R1m threshold per month, and the trend shows no signs of abating.

The article quotes Deven Moodley, Pick n Pay's head of value-added services, financial services and mobile division, as saying that crypto was previously something only computer boffins knew about, but Pick n Pay has paved the way for its customers to be early adopters by using their digital currency as a method of everyday payment.



HARNESSING TECHNOLOGY FOR SMARTER SUPPLY CHAINS

In an increasingly interconnected and competitive world, staying ahead of the curve with innovative technology solutions will be key to sustaining growth and achieving long-term success. Traditional supply chains, often characterized by linear processes and manual workflows, struggle to keep up with the dynamic demands of modern business, therefore leveraging technology is no longer an option but a necessity for building smarter, more resilient supply chains. Our courses designed to equip you with the knowledge and skills needed to foster personal and professional growth, empowering your business with expertise to thrive forward with innovative, technology-driven solutions.

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“Crypto payments, which continue to grow month on month, fit into our Ways2Pay strategy of giving more customers mechanisms to pay in our stores,” he says. “This is part of Pick n Pay’s journey to an economy that is less dependent on cash, and one that drives financial inclusion, which is a priority for the company.”

Similarly, blockchain technology is increasingly being offered as a solution for secure and transparent financial retail transactions.

A blockchain is a database that maintains growing records of data. It consists of a set of protected ‘information blocks’ that are chained sequentially to one another. The purpose of the blockchain is to share information amongst users that access it via an application.

Access may be unrestricted (‘permissionless’) or restricted (‘permissioned’). Once information is recorded on the blockchain, it is considered immutable because it is so strongly protected.

Blockchain originated with Bitcoin and is now used for many other applications. Fintech companies are leveraging blockchain to provide retailers with tamper-proof records of transactions and assets, which is particularly useful in preventing fraud and ensuring data integrity.

Retailers are using blockchain for organising, securing and sharing data, and to provide innovative solutions to engage consumers and build trust in products and brands.



<https://www.hulkapps.com/>

CHOOSING A FINTECH PARTNER

In terms of best practice, what should retailers be looking for from a finance and insurance technology partner?

One-stop-shop. Retailers can simplify operations by partnering with a fintech company that offers a complete suite of cash, card and prepaid value-added products and services.

Vertical industry insight. A partner that focuses on verticals such as retail will be able to offer more customised solutions that are designed to address specific industry pain points.

No red tape. Leading fintech companies remove friction from the business relationship. The waiting time for a loan application to be approved is considerably shorter, and no audited financials should be required. For example, Capital Connect uses the data they have about merchant transactions on their card payment machines and

cash vaults to grant funding in just 24 hours – up to 50% of the applicant’s average monthly cash and card turnover with a maximum up to R5m.

Digital convenience. Retailers should be able to manage most aspects of their relationship with their provider online or via an app.

Affordable and flexible. Today’s fintech solutions are flexible to accommodate a retailer’s cash flow requirements, so retailers can choose a short-term loan repayment period that suits their pocket. Automated cash vaults allow the retailer to repay their loans with small daily deductions straight from cash deposited into their onsite vault (or the fintech lender may debit directly from the bank account, depending on the terms of the loan. Small daily instalments help to manage cash flow and provide an option that is less strenuous than large debit orders at the end of the month.

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Insurance innovations

Business finance is not the only focus of innovative technology solutions. Fintech companies are starting to offer InsurTech platforms that provide tailored insurance solutions for retailers and their customers.

“ These platforms often use big data and AI to offer personalised insurance products, such as cyber insurance or business interruption coverage, which are specifically designed for the retail sector. ”

According to insurance news, research and skills development experts Cover, major retailers are at the forefront of this transformative trend ...

“ The seamless integration of insurance policies into existing products and services is allowing retail groups to branch out into new revenue streams and enhance value for their customers. ”

Also known as embedded insurance, or the real-time bundling of insurance with a purchase or at the point of sale, this concept was first popularised by cellular providers offering built-in insurance options with their devices, which are generally competitive with similar services offered by specialised insurers. That it's taken off in South African retail circles is not surprising. Deloitte expects the embedded insurance market alone will reach US\$700b globally by 2030.

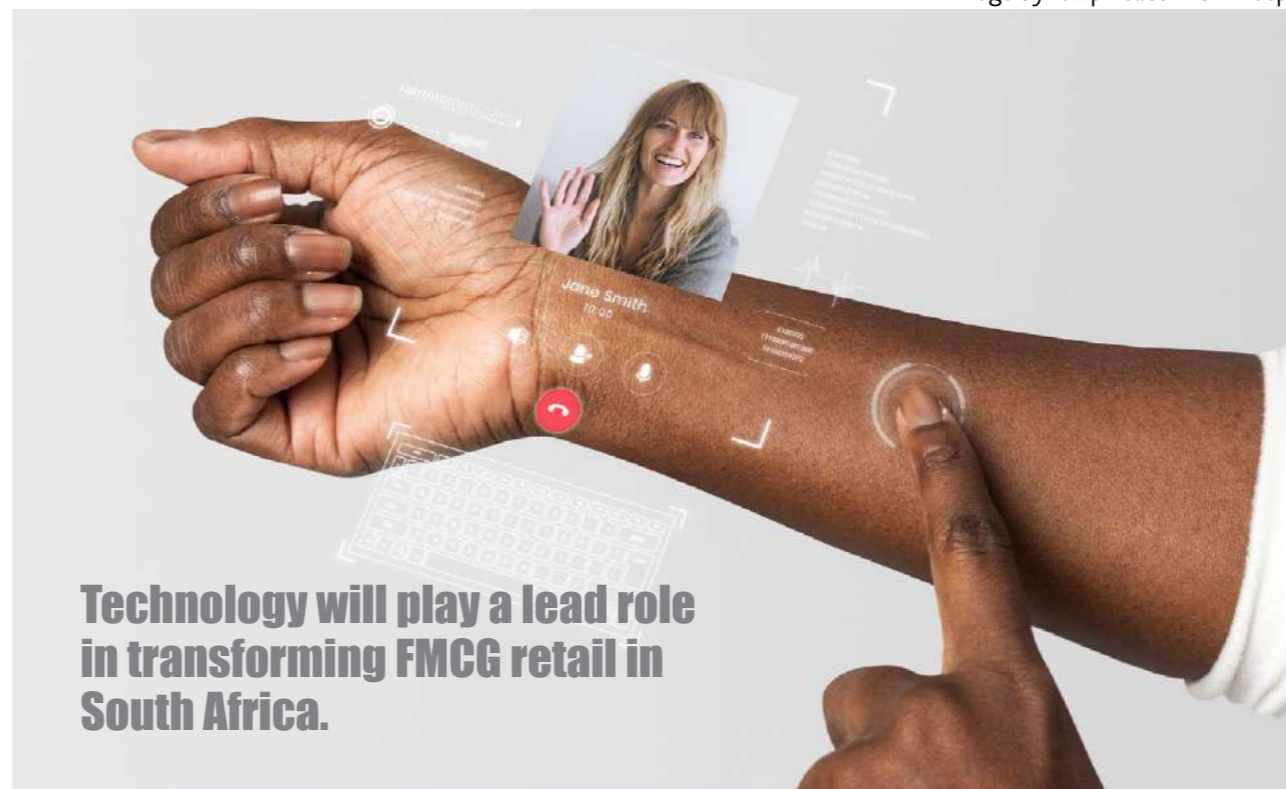


Image by rawpixel.com on Freepik

As artificial intelligence and machine learning become more sophisticated, fintechs will also be able to offer more tailored financing products for retailers that use real-time data to unlock even faster access to capital.

Technology leads the way in retail finance and insurance solutions

Looking ahead, financial technology companies are working towards even more tailored solutions for different segments of the retail market. Take for instance lending options designed to meet the ever-changing requirements of retail industries characterised by rapid stock turnover, narrow profit margins, and ongoing issues with cash flow. As fintech advancements continue to evolve, there will also be opportunities for customised financing solutions that leverage real-time information through artificial intelligence and machine learning, enabling retailers to obtain quick access to capital.

Whether the required solution is a basic financial package for a back office, an advanced and integrated solution for financial payments, data analytics to customise the shopping experience, online app

development and online shopping, or a value-add differentiator like embedded insurance solutions at the pay points, technology will, without doubt, play a lead role in transforming FMCG retail in South Africa. **SR**

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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). Contact Wilkins Ross Communications (www.wilkinsrossglobal.com) or guy@wilkinsross.co.za.

Women's Month

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Julia Baker

The survival of stationery

As the world of stationery is continually evolving into a dynamic

fusion of innovation, artistic expression and sustainability, it begs the question ... Is digital becoming more prominent, and how much longer will there be a market for 'good ol' stationery?

The South African stationery market is projected to grow at a CAGR of 3.4% during 2023–2029, with a market valued at more than USD1.25 billion in 2022.

As the economy grows and consumer confidence continues to increase since Covid-19, there is fortunately still an inclination for spending on stationery products both for personal and professional use, according to actualmarketresearch.com.

Independently, the government 2030 Plan for Basic Education aims to uplift the education sector, ensuring rising spend on basic and higher education, this is expected to contribute to the Stationery Market Growth in South Africa in the coming years. Because of this concerted push to further education, the growth in enrolment is projected to reach 13.4 million by 2030 which is a 1.2 million increase from 2021," according to 6Wresearch.

Over and above statistics, Jaydean Spangenberg from Butterfly Stationery, who has a fine under-



Giuseppe J. Ramos, www.canva.com

standing of the stationery world, when asked if she finds continued growth in stationery says, "Absolutely, stationery is a big staple in South African homes, be it the avid collector or school requirement, there's a big place for it. Most sales are families with school going children and students, and office essentials are fast movers too."



Mervin Govindan

Freedom Stationery is in agreement, "Traditional materials are still the medium of choice as modern-faced platforms pose electricity and connectivity challenges. Also associated with high costs for students, is the device costs that come with going digital and maintaining these mediums," says Mervin Govindan, National Sales Manager.

Back-to-school target market

Millions of people every year, from toddlers to university students, are either skipping with joy or being reluctantly dragged back to school, either way, stationery is a necessity that can't be avoided. Quality and quantity brand staples are a must for "learners of all ages and demographics, trying to

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save money whilst still having the value, the basket and trend factor in place,” Govindan has found.

For many, back-to-school can be stressful, the costs are not always easy to carry but for many, “It is exciting, because let’s be honest who doesn’t love new stationery, young or old, we all have love for it. Students want that fancy new pencil case that embodies their new style and people returning to work for the most part. It’s a whole new year, it’s a whole new me, there’s nothing better than new stationery that embodies this, am I right! The clean new book covers, the new smell of paper or pencil cases, something about it sparks joy and creativity and learning,” says Spangenberg who’s trendy, bright and practical back-to-school supplies are a firm favourite with scholars.

The trick is to tap into the back-to-school market by following upcoming and current trends, worldwide and locally.

Digital integration

The move toward digital technology is revolutionising the way we work and learn. In some cases, it is causing debate specifically within schools, as it has been known to have significant negative implications for memory retention, creativity, personalisation and critical thinking.

Many parents would want to improve their child’s hand-eye coordination as well as creativity and imagination, rather than destroy their eyes with a small screen. The choice then goes toward colouring and activity books.



Cats: Carol Ain. <https://in.pinterest.com>
Pencil: Opening Gate, www.canva.com

The science:

Research suggests that the physical act of writing, compared to typing, activates different regions of the brain, enhancing memory and comprehension. When it comes to education, writing can facilitate a deeper understanding of a subject and longer retention of knowledge. Professionally, writing enhances clarity of thought, problem solving, and is mentally therapeutic. Doodling, free form writing and sketching fosters creative thinking and boosts imagination.

People are starting to feel ‘digital saturation’ and are looking for a more rounded lifestyle by limiting their amount of digital consumption, leading to more use of analogue stationery. Digital has become a huge part of society, but it has not replaced the need for stationery essentials.

Going digital

Not all is lost with the move toward digital, even with the increase in remote work and learning, consumers still need essentials for home organisation, like planners, desk organisers and storage solutions to create efficient and productive workspaces.

Paper-based products are still expected to hold the highest market share in South Africa’s stationery market due to the continued demand from the education, business and government sectors.

Paper is still mostly used for official letters, forms, reports and memos, along with exam sheets, question papers and assessments in educational institutions.

Stay ahead of the game

There is an inevitable mad rush before the school gates open for consumers to buy all the necessary school supplies needed, so being prepared in advance of the rush is paramount.

Retailers can take advantage of parents doing top-ups at new school terms like Parrot Products

which have a back-to-school discount campaign in July to ‘refresh and refocus’ students after a cold winter.



Clever Art, www.canva.com

The National Retail Federation (NRF) has a few tips to keep you ahead of the stationery game ...

- keep track of client's previous buys to choose your next bestsellers
- ensure a well-stocked inventory
- keep abreast of rising retail trends
- simplify the shopping experience by creating shopping guides and online buying
- announce promotions early, customers are happy to wait a few weeks for specials.

Not to stress, though, there is always last-minute shopping as almost half of parents have not received their school stationery list.

Trends written on the wall

There's something comforting about having a document on hand; a notebook, a handy pocket file or a sticky note, rather than electronic items where there is always a worry about the computer crashing, being hacked or stolen, the list goes on and on. What are the trends that are keeping the stationery market steaming ahead?

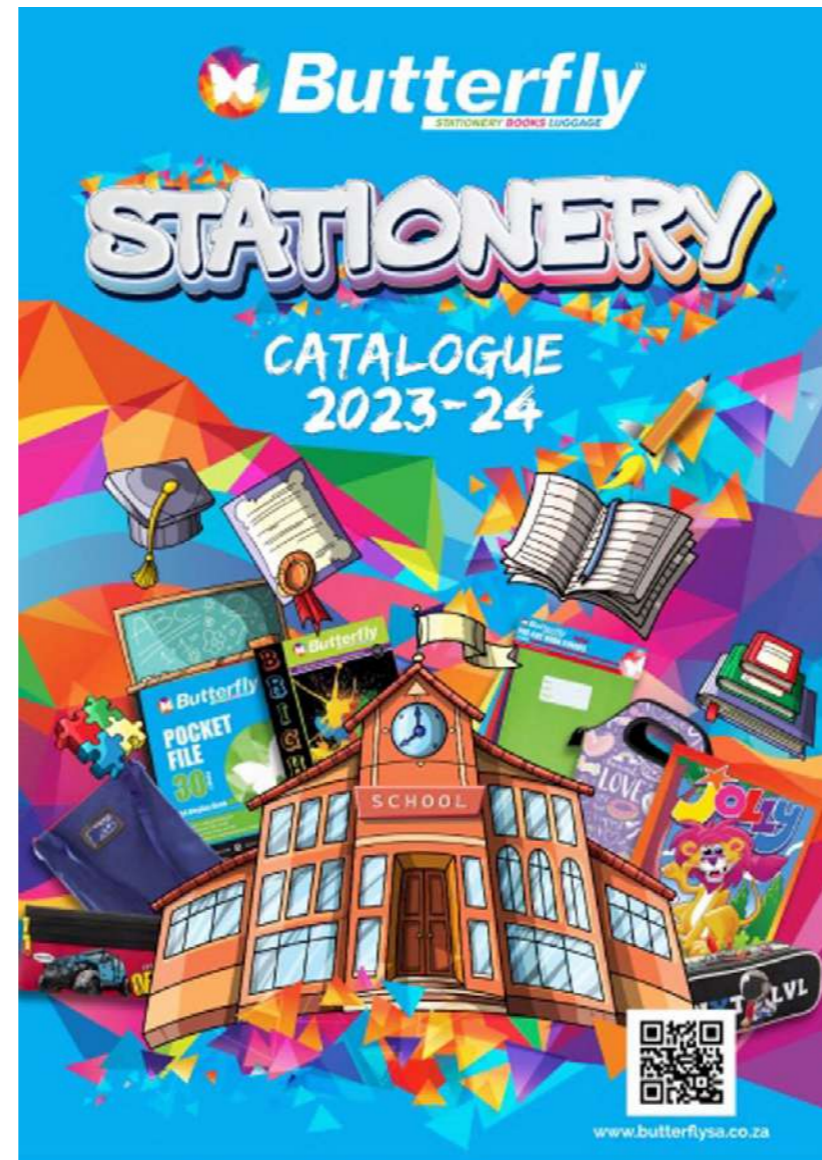
Stokvels

Stokvels are seen as a disciplined savings measure through a group setting to reach specific savings goals, which is quickly becoming a way of life for many in South Africa. Not only do they help with a financial boost when needed most, but also provide an opportunity to strengthen community relationships.

Zodumo Mncwango, a teacher in Johannesburg, benefits from Stokvel to pay for back-to-school

expenses. She says, "As a mother, I am never found wanting or left without any options when it comes to buying stationery and all the back-to-school needs. It gives me peace of mind because, rest assured, whatever my daughter needs, I am going to afford it come January."

Retailers make use of stokvels by offering deals tailored to maximise the collective buying power of stokvel groups that come in various forms, such as exclusive discounts, bulk-buy promotions, special pricing and loyalty rewards.



Back-to-school impact

Back-to-school season is one of the busiest seasons for retailers – it is the second biggest event on the retailer calendar, after the December holiday and festive season.

Govindan relates, "in terms of transactions assessed, one could safely say two-thirds of all stationery related business is transacted in this period," leaving a healthy one-third throughout the rest of the year for office essentials and mid-year term school top-ups.

Mass produced stationery is still the leader for back-to-school, it remains popular due to its affordability and accessibility, catering to a wide market, especially for everyday use. These products are typically more budget-friendly and readily available, making them suitable for families and students.

Online shopping

We all know how Covid-19 changed the world, and it is not going to slip backwards any time soon. Leading e-commerce platforms are becoming the norm in the larger cities and towns and is constantly progressing. It's allowing customers to browse through a larger range of stationery products, allowing price comparisons and convenient delivery, saving time and money. It also makes life much easier for consumers to shop around for the prices that suit their budget.

More than just the major stores like Pick n Pay, Shoprite Checkers, Waltons, Makro and Takealot are utilising online shopping.

Independent companies like Stateman Stationery, Office Gear and Stationery Net are adding to the ease of shopping online. It pays for any retailer to provide online shopping for consumer to price shop around and enjoy the ease of delivery.

Greeting cards

When asking people if they still buy greeting cards, the general consensus was a simple 'no', or very occasionally, as sending a digital card is becoming more common.

With that said, UK based Card Factory paid £2.5 million in April last year to acquire SA Greetings, the leading greeting card publisher and card retailing group in South Africa, well known for their Cardies stores, who supply to over 6 500 stores in South Africa.



Darcy Willson-Rymer

Darcy Willson-Rymer, Card Factory's CEO says, "We will closely collaborate to further enhance and develop opportunities for SA Greetings businesses." That is positive news for the greeting card industry and it is not going anywhere soon.

Sustainability

Sustainable stationery is the harmonious fusion of sophistication and accountability. Environmentally aware customers have a growing desire for high-end stationery that not only showcases elegant designs, but also reflects their commitment to sustainability. With options such as recycled paper



ARTamonovy Studio, www.canva.com

featuring refined touches and plant-derived inks, the blending of lavishness and eco-friendliness has a niche position in stationery.

Currently, the negative side to eco-friendly product is that it tends to come with a higher price tag, which is not within the realm for those who are tightening every aspect of their back-to-school stationery budgets. With time, there is hope that eco-friendly technology and machinery will improve soon, so that this trend can start tilting in the other direction.

Go bespoke

Personalised stationery has become a platform for showcasing distinct identities and creating lasting bonds. Why settle for a generic notebook when you can have one that is tailored to your liking? They also make fantastic gifts for colleagues and clients.



Bridget Richardson

Bespoke or personalised stationery is popular for gifting. Bridget Richardson felt a gap in the industry 15 years ago and created Love Letter Stationery, "While hunting for a very special personal gift, it became clear there was

a gap in the market for bespoke stationery and original paper products that have a personal touch." Their goal is to produce products that are fun and original to the South African market.

"When I started out there were no businesses offering bespoke stationery – we now sell more and more personalised stationery each year." Sales are exceptionally busy toward the end of the year and "January and February are also quite busy due to the start of school."

'Unique' is what most of Richardsons clients are looking for, "My corporate clients usually purchase gifts for either internal or client-facing events, when they want to gift something a bit unique, and not the normal kind of corporate gift." Notebooks are proving to be the most popular, from personalised moleskine to pencil and notebook sets.



Though not to rival traditional back-to-school stationery, bespoke stationery is a growing and expressive stationery trend.

Branding

One trend that will never lose popularity is branding, specifically through the use of logos and company names. This day and age is flooded with marketing, so branding is a huge focus anywhere for companies aware of the importance of marketing and branding.



Fun back-to-school

Long gone are the boring brown paper book covers and plastic wrapped books. The new trend is colour, bright, playful, creative and fun – anything from a fluffy pen to a race car lunch box, back-to-school is fun. Yokico, a new chain store in South Africa, is

jumping on that trend and is selling popular, bright and playful school items and stationery.

A firm favourite for trendy stationery are the sequined and glittery, goofy, fun and colourful pencil cases. Added to shopping lists are bright book covers, pocket files and trendy lunch sets, where bold and vibrant colours take centre stage.

When work and study is done, after hours and after school still draws in the crowds when it comes to keeping busy and creative. Crazy Store, which is spread nationwide, is keeping ahead with stationery items like novelty pens, 'colour your own bag', activity and colouring books, plush animal cover notebooks, foam and sand glitter and a range of quality art supplies for adults and scholars alike.

There can never be too many colours and patterns in life or in stationery. Stationery is fun!



<https://sageclinic.org>

Stationery – Good for the soul

Stationery isn't just about pens and paper, and work and school. Through art people can achieve improved mental and physical well-being, releasing endorphins and serotonin. The act of creating with various forms of stationery can be incredibly therapeutic, allowing individuals to express their emotions and thoughts in a tangible form. Physically, art has been known to alleviate pain and assist children cope with pain in child cancer patients, according to Michigan State University.

Next time you pick up your favourite pen or coloured pencils, remember that you're not just making pretty (hopefully) pictures – you're also nurturing your mind and body through art therapy disguised as stationery fun!

So, apart from these fun bits, the demand for practical writing instruments and stationery will continue to rise as the emphasis on education and literacy continues to grow. **SR**

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South African consumers lead global trend in prioritising value over price in beverage choices

In a landscape where economic pressures weigh heavily on household budgets, South African consumers are setting a global precedent in their approach to value, particularly when it comes to their beverage choices. According to the latest findings from CGA by NIQ, a remarkable 51% of South African consumers now prioritise value over price in their drink selections, significantly outpacing the global average of 38%.

However, value for money doesn't necessarily mean cheap with only 14% saying they think value means a cheap option, while half (50%) say it means a good deal and 42% equate it with something that is worth its cost.

CGA by NIQ Client Solutions Manager Abhi Sehgal reports, "This shift underscores a growing demand for products that strike the perfect balance between affordability and quality, pushing suppliers and venues to deliver more than just low-cost options. As inflation continues to impact spending, the emphasis on true value has become more critical than ever in the On Premise sector, signalling a clear preference for quality that is worth every rand spent."

Demand for quality

So while spending is under pressure for many consumers, others remain happy to spend freely in the On Premise, as long as the quality is right. Two in five (41%) say high quality is more important



to them than it was a year ago – and again, this is well above the REACH global average (32%).

When asked about their purchase plans with a fixed amount of money, two thirds (65%) would buy just one or two premium or luxury drinks – far more than the 11% who would select four or five lower quality ones. This indicates a clear trend for drinking fewer but better drinks.

Growing interest in health

South Africans also over-index against the rest of the world for their interest in health. Well over a third (38%) of them say health has increased

in importance to them in the last 12 months, against the global average of 27%. While this is leading many consumers to reduce their alcohol intake, it is also opening up opportunities for no and low alcohol alternatives. However, these options are often perceived to offer less value for money than alcoholic drinks, so suppliers need to prove they are worth the price.

Domestic preferences

Around the world, 24% of consumers think it's more important than a year ago that their drinks are from their own country. However, this number is much higher in South Africa at 35%. This indicates that suppliers and venues need to prioritise domestic brands and local heritage, while also catering for those who want to try new and interesting options from overseas.

Earlier visits

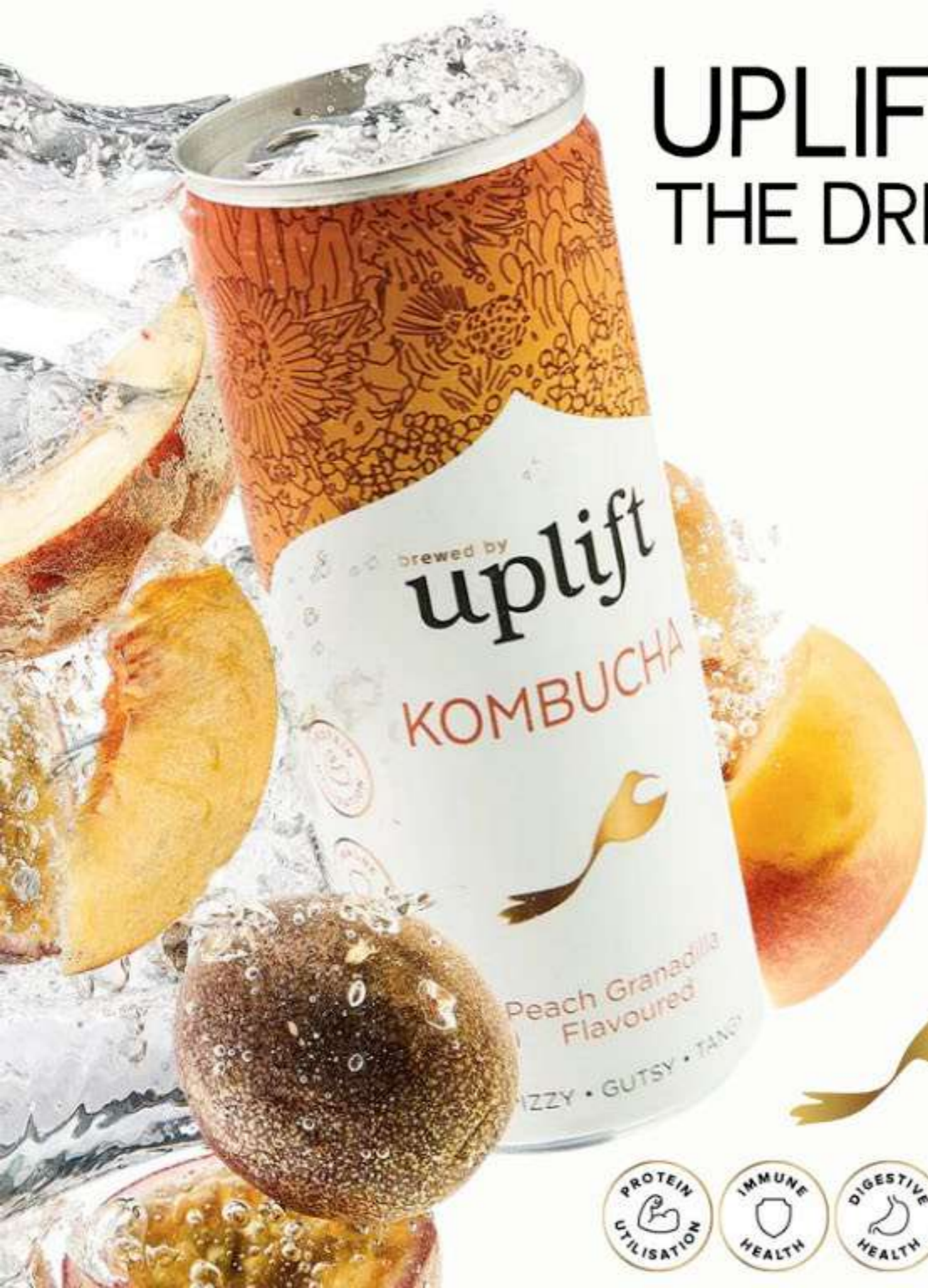
There has been a global shift towards earlier visits to pubs, bars and restaurants, and 33% of South Africans are going out to eat earlier than they were a year ago. This is six percentage points more than the REACH average – and mid-range spenders and Gen Z are both even more likely to do so.

This has significant implications for people's drinking choices, and atmosphere, time-limited promotions and outdoor seating are three of the key considerations for appealing to lunchtime and afternoon guests. **SR**



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Promotions, private labels, local focus and organic food are the four pillars on which the best Swedish retailer relies.

With about 10 million inhabitants, an annual per capita income of \$55 300 (*source: CIA World Factbook Archive*) and a marked political autonomy dating back to 1523, Sweden is the third largest state of the European Union (450 295 km², behind France and Spain).

The Swedish per capita income levels overshadow all major European countries, namely Germany (\$54 000), France (\$45 900), Spain (\$40 000) and Italy (\$44 300). Even though the other European countries are larger in terms of size and population, the Swedish economy, modern and efficient, has yielded better results for its citizens.

This spending power bodes well for retail groups such as ICA Gruppen.

The Swedish model, with its producers, consumers and retailers

Peace and neutrality, together with a balance between 'capitalism' and a 'welfare state', has led Sweden to be in the top 20 world economic powers, taking advantage of widespread wellbeing and an excellent distribution model.

In Sweden, the cold climate does not facilitate agricultural production, so the Swedes have to import about 30% of 'fresh' products – mainly fruit



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The harsh Swedish climate does not favour agriculture in general. Swedish fresh meat production is, however, a strong national industry.

and vegetables. The country is self-sufficient only in the production of eggs and meat.

The main European exporters of food products to Sweden are Holland, Denmark, Germany and Norway. Italy also exports wines, fruit and vegetables, olive oil, pasta, cured meat, preserves in oil and peeled tomatoes.

Swedes are used to traveling abroad and have developed a taste for the varied product ranges of other countries, counteracting the basic Swedish cuisine which is based on potatoes, game and fish. Quality comes first rather than price, as the average income means they can afford the best from around Europe and the world.

Swedish consumers have developed a taste for health and wellbeing and are very inclined towards healthy and balanced diets. Organic product ranges sold in Sweden have reached an astonishing Euros 1,4 billion per annum.

The plague of alcoholism is major negative in Sweden. For this reason, not only are outlets Government-owned, but also heavy taxes are applied to discourage alcohol abuse. However, the high-income levels do not deter Swedes from indulging in their favourite tipples.



The excellent meat service counter at ICA Kvantum. www.linkedin.com/ <https://simplywall.st/>



Display of peppers in a fruit and vegetables department.

www.linkedin.com/



The fish service counter at ICA Kvantum.



Growing basil on site. For ICA MAXI Högskolan, the major draw of adding a hydroponic container farm to their operations is to have it directly on site where shoppers see the farm as they walk in to a store, and the farmers can deliver on foot. www.freightfarms.com/

Supermarkets groups

85% of food distribution in Sweden is controlled by three major brands: Axfood, Coop and ICA.

ICA, based in the town of Solna, was founded in 1938. It is an important player that, apart from food distribution, covers the areas of banking, real estate and pharmaceutical sectors.

ICA Sweden manages a grocery retail business in cooperation with independent ICA retailers. The retailers own and manage their stores, but have agreements with ICA Sweden in areas such as purchasing, logistics, market communication and store development. ICA Sweden also includes ICA Special, which is responsible for sales of non-food items at Maxi ICA Stormarknad stores.

Rimi Baltic manages grocery retail business via 308 wholly owned stores in Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania. Store formats include Rimi Hyper, Rimi Super, Rimi Mini and Rimi Express. Rimi Baltic also includes the properties owned by the Group in the three Baltic countries.

Apotek Hjärtat (the pharmaceutical distribution channel of the group) is the largest actor in the Swedish pharmacy market, with 390 pharmacies. It is also a part owner of the digital healthcare company Min Doktor.

ICA Real Estate's mission is to satisfy the Group's future need of logistics and store properties at attractive locations in Sweden. The real estate company is an active buyer and seller of properties and both develops shopping centres from scratch and buys strategic properties with existing ICA stores.



<https://www.esmmagazine.com/>

Thinking Green with RIMI stores in Lithuania.

Since 2014, all newly built and refurbished RIMI supermarkets have placed CO₂ cooling systems that increase energy efficiency and reduce the negative impact of the climate.

In the 2020s, the Financial Times reported that ICA Gruppen, which owns RIMI Baltic, became the environment friendliest supermarket chain in Europe. RIMI reduced CO₂ emissions by 50% and minimised power consumption per m² by 34%. RIMI accomplished these exceptional results by installing environmentally friendly refrigeration equipment and purchasing green energy.

By 2030 they plan to reach zero greenhouse gas emissions and produce green energy themselves. <https://freor.com/>

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ICA's greatest direct climate impact is from their retail stores, not from the transport of goods. Focused work is underway to reduce energy consumption and switch to renewable energy sources. www.icagruppen.se/



Digital signage. MAXI ICA revamped its flagship store, Stormarknad Universitetet in the city of Orebro, with a major focus on retail digital signage via PPDS displays. The store boasts a video wall about 15.8m wide and 1.8m high. Designed with sustainability in mind, the video wall is estimated to be up to 20% more energy-efficient than comparable models. It presides over a pick-and-mix centre while being visible throughout the store. The project also involved replacing almost all paper-based signage, making messaging more timely and easy to update. www.retailcustomerexperience.com/

ICA Bank and ICA Insurance (part of ICA Bank's operations) offer a full range of financial services and insurance in Sweden. The goal is to increase customer loyalty to ICA and to reduce transaction costs for ICA stores and ICA Gruppen.

Nina Jönsson, CEO of Ica Gruppen, summarised the recent trend of the company ...



Nina Jönsson

“ The year 2023 was largely characterised by high inflation, increase in interest rates, recession and conflicts all over the world. For ICA Gruppen, the food sector has mostly been impacted by all this. Changes in demand and greater general attention to prices have led to painful challenges and remarkable pressures, both for independent retailers of ICA and for Rimi Baltic. ”

In 2023, sales reached 147 645 million Swedish kronor, approximately 12.7 billion Euros (R250 billion), with an operating margin of 4.3%.

The increase in food prices, combined with high interest rates, has frustrated consumers with tight spending budgets and has inevitably increased the demand for lower-priced and discounted items.



www.linkedin.com/

ICA Kvantum's dairy section features an excellent deli island where cheeses are merchandised alongside crackers and chutneys.



www.linkedin.com/

ICA Kvantum's department devoted to organics, 'free from' and healthier items, including a very good pick 'n mix style fixture for nuts, grains and dried fruits. Tea and coffee is also located nearby, complete with a coffee grinding machine that shoppers can use to grind their choice of coffee beans.



Local focus, private labels and environmental sustainability

The group's focus over the last financial year has been to support the local farming community and to promote the increased use of fresh produce as a healthy eating habit for its customers.

A special relationship has been developed with the Federation of Swedish Farmers. This process has benefited the farming community, the retail stores and the community at large.

Another development within the group has seen the expansion of its private label product range, as higher inflation levels have guided the shopping habits of its consumer base towards better value for money products. A **Low sale price** promotional strategy has also helped in boosting sales.

All of these strategies have been also applied to Rimi Baltic outlets with the same success levels.

ICA Gruppen's activities have also contributed to strengthening local communities, providing food, medicines and health care – even operating as agencies for postal services. In Sweden, at the end of 2023, ICA outlets were present in over 286 municipalities out of 290 countrywide, and Apotek Hjärtat in 169 locations.

In Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, Rimi Baltic has carried out its activities through 308 stores.

ICA is also involved in numerous sponsorship and fundraising activities at head office and local level, with concrete commitments in sports clubs, and significant impact in cultural and social events.

A new development for ICA stores in Sweden is the opening of 53 'unmanned stores' with no



ICA e-commerce warehouse, Arendal, Gothenburg.

This purpose-built 17 200m² highly automated warehouse for groceries bought online will increase delivery capacity in the Västra Götaland region*, with deliveries made seven days a week. Customers will buy through British Ocado's e-commerce platform with customisations created uniquely for ICA and all of Sweden's ICA retailers. Among other features, the system will remember what customers usually buy, how often, and what 'others like them' buy. Customers will have a personalised shopping experience to feel at home in their local online store. www.icagruppen.se

* Västra Götaland is a county situated in the southwest of Sweden. It is the second most populous county in Sweden with 1.7 million inhabitants.



ICA deliveries with Ocado Smart Platform.

The Platform is tailored to reflect ICA's cooperative business model, with individual store owners leveraging the platform to bring their unique offerings to their customers online. Each independent ICA retailer has their own dedicated webshop which takes account of their autonomy in setting their product range, pricing and marketing strategies, and so retaining complete control of their online customer and business data.



ICA Pronto fossil-free deliveries. A pilot project at ICAX (ICA's innovation hub) has the aim to test different types of solutions to provide customers with food in a fast and environmentally friendly way. In cooperation with Bzzt's renewable electricity vehicles, reducing the emissions from transport is a central part of ICA's work towards net zero. Bzzt offers fast delivery times, which is important for customers. The service, which means home delivery from 30 minutes in the inner city, is easily booked via the ICA Pronto app.



ICA's cooperation with Volvo electrified Trucks.

Several ICA stores in western and southern Skåne will receive their deliveries from ICA's warehouse in Helsingborg in cooperation with Volvo Trucks. The truck that is being put into operation is a pre-series truck that is not yet manufactured in series production, making it extra valuable to evaluate the electric truck for both ICA and Volvo.

ICA has a clear ambition for fossil freedom, great need for efficiency and quality in transportation, influence on the transport industry and an ambition to drive development.

Delivery by boat.

ICA now offer food deliveries by boat between June 14 and August 19 in selected postcodes of the Stockholm archipelago.



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staff present, which are open 24 hours a day to ensure accessibility and service to a very demanding population. Some of these stores are adjacent to existing shops, while others are in autonomous locations. Most of them are in poorly populated areas or in small towns, which makes them accessible and convenient in areas where it is difficult to find suitably trained personnel. Customers have access to these stores by using ICA Togo and Bankid mobile phone apps. More of these stores are planned for the future.

Innovation, local focus, freshness, organic products and private label are all factors that make ICA Sweden a successful model.



4 types of ICA stores.

In the mid-1990s, there was ICA Maxi and the low-price concept Rimi and discussions began about Kvantum, the residential area store Supermarket and the neighbourhood or country store Nära. Then, ICA's leadership started to think on how to sort the country's more than 2 000 ICA stores, which were

divided by geography – depending on where in Sweden the store was located – north, south, east or west. Svante Nilsson, a group manager at the time, suggested that the stores should be supported based on their profiles ...

- ICA Nära is located near the customer's home or workplace.
- ICA Supermarket is available in city centres or city locations.
- ICA Kvantum are larger stores on the outskirts of a dense town.
- ICA Maxi Supermarket is the largest of the ICA stores – besides food, they have a range of clothes, shoes, home textiles and household appliances.



Fruit counters have ribbed sides and perforated metal shelving.



A new look. Swedish studio Westblom Krasse Arkitektkontor and design agency Snask revamped a 2 200m² ICA Stop supermarket in Täby, outside Stockholm, adding pastel hues and materials such as terrazzo and wood to "turn shopping into an experience." The design was intended as a facelift for the store, which had been given many smaller additions over the years without an overall design direction. The redesign refreshed its interior by creating multiple themed stations. To create clean sightlines inside the shop, rounded shapes were used throughout the interior. Fruit counters have ribbed sides and perforated metal shelving. Materials not usually associated with supermarkets were used for the interior, including lacquered wood, stainless steel and terrazzo (used for the tabletops in the restaurant section). Counters were wrapped in thick medium-density fibreboard (MDF) and fortified with steel rods to protect them against 'rogue shopping carts', while the fruit and vegetable shelves were constructed from perforated lacquered metal. Images & information: www.dezeen.com/



A pink juice bar welcomes visitors inside Täby's ICA Stop



Terrazzo was used for the tabletops in the restaurant.



Cliff wall. At @icamaxivarmdo, ICA retailer Pelle Paulsson has invested high in presenting really good offers to customers, quickly and easily. The goods on the cliff wall are discounted by at least 25 percent and vary depending on what the store manages to find. This is in response to customers' increased demand for goods at a better price, going down the margins for these items so that customers can find really good deals. This has meant that they sell very well and have received a lot of positive feedback – from both customers and suppliers. A win-win-situation.



The cheeses are flying.

At least if you live in the archipelago outside Norrtälje. Whoever lives in that region has recently been able to test getting their groceries home with drone delivery. The project is financed by Vinnova and powered by ICAX together with @riseweden, the drone company @norrtaljekommun. and @aeritdrones.



3 kinds of coffee.

ICA has goods that fit all wallets. David Aronsson at ICA Supermarket Rimbo wants to convey that message to his customers by showing the same kind of item, but in three different price classes, with ICA Basic coffee the cheapest.



Building the ICA Maxi.

The current @icakvantummobilialund is being expanded and converted to Maxi ICA Supermarket Mobilia Lund of about 6 300m², which includes Apotek Hjärtat. The store is expected to be ready in the later part of 2024. The current ICA Kantum will move into adjacent premises during the construction period. The construction will be in three different phases, placed on ICA Quantum's current parking lot, but will include parts of the current ICA Quantum building. The characteristic arch-shaped glued wooden beams in the current store will be preserved and recycled.

The new store will be built according to Environmental Construction Silver and is planned to be certified according to ZeroCO². Solar panels will be installed on the roof to reduce electricity consumption.

ICA Young IT Professionals.

ICA has been welcoming new trainees every fall for four years now. Participants get a trainee job in IT in one of ICA's many companies, with the hope that afterwards they will want to stay and grow with ICA.



Solar roof.

In April this year, ICA retailer Fredrik Gustafsson installed a solar plant of 450m² on the roof of his store ICA Nära Vissefjärda. When the plant had been running for four months, it had produced almost 62 000 kilowatt hours, equivalent to about one third of the store's entire annual consumption.



Classical music experiment.

In the last year, ICAX has been focused on projects to improved public health. To this end, they completed a music experiment in collaboration with @goteborgssymfoniker Gothenburg Konserthus. Customers were offered the chance to settle down in their own red 'music cabin' to listen to a piece of classical music before going into @icafocus in Gothenburg to shop.

Their hypothesis? That relaxation and music contribute to increased well-being and a better store experience.



The store of the future. The ICAX innovation hub asked the super-trendy AI-based image tool Dall-E to get a little insight into what the store of the future will look like. The answer ... space potatoes, dancing bananas and cashier robots.





Processed food. Many think that processed food is something to avoid. But is it really always bad? Technically, all food that has been handled in any way is actually processed. It can be as simple as a peeled and boiled potato, raw or cooked eggs, root vegetables or fruits. Bulgur, quinoa and rice – products that are not compiled with others, despite being actually processed in some form – are also considered unprocessed. Are there processes in food production that are particularly positive for health? Some processes, for example heating, can help the body to absorb nutrients. Despite a loss of vitamin C during the cooking process, tomatoes are high in lycopene that has been shown to lower LDL (bad cholesterol) levels and blood pressure. Consuming cooked tomatoes along with a fat source like avocados or olive oil increases the absorption of its antioxidants. Another example? Vitamin A is more available if carrots are cooked with some oil than if eaten raw. Rapid boiling can cause a series of chemical processes to take place, which ultimately increases the bioavailability of a substance. Germination and fermentation are also examples of processes that make minerals or vitamins available.



Chocolate drink.

This chocolate drink, without added sugar and sweetener, is from ICA's new product series: **Good Snack**. Its made from Swedish milk and is lactose-free.



Locally produced. For over a hundred years, ICA retailers have been buying goods and products directly from local suppliers in their neighbourhood, something that customers want. A living and vital Swedish food production is important, both for ICA and the local communities – as part of Swedish preparedness, but also contributing to a more sustainable world. Some points to note ...

- Sweden has zero tolerance against salmonella.
- Swedish greenhouses are energy efficient.
- Swedish farm animals often receive locally produced food.
- Swedish cows are among the healthiest in the world.



Certified seafood.

ICA is the leader in Sweden's sales of sustainability-labeled seafood. In 2022, they received the Golden Fish award by the Marine Stewardship Council. Rimi is the first grocery chain in the Baltics to become MSC/ASC certified. A large part of ICA Sweden's own seafood products are already marked with MSC/ASC and the ambition is that there will be even more in the future. Consider varying salmon and cod with other sustainability-labeled fish when buying food that comes from the ocean.



More fruits & veges?

ICA Gruppen want to help their customers make better and healthier choices – to eat more green! Through new ways to present goods in store and talk about fruits and vegetables, they hope to reduce the gap between will and action. Researchers call it nudging ... ICA call it "a small puff in the right direction." Some shop experiments were conducted to test out some 'puff' tools. By placing fruits and vegetables in more places in the store, customers were buying more. But 'advertising' for fruits and vegetables in the shopping cart did not have the same effect.

Vegetarian taco meat.

This is made with farm bean protein, rich in fibre and Keyhole marked. The minced 'meat' is dried for a long shelf life. It's easy to prepare – just add water and stir until it becomes crispy and good.



3D printed vego meat is the latest in selected ICA stores. Vegan sales are increasing despite a temporary slump. ICA are also working with more all-Swedish products and sustainable innovations from leftovers in the food system. As more people choose vego, development is promoted and it is beneficial for both health and the climate.





Food Mission store. Stockholm's City Mission has opened its third social food store. The store in Hallunda Centrum is the Food Mission's largest so far at 400m². The Food Mission's concept is based on creating sustainability through job training, resale of food waste and alleviation of food poverty. This store should service 2000 new members and offer 15 places in work training. The store in Hallunda Centrum is expected to reduce food waste with up to 1000 tonnes of products per year, corresponding to a climate footprint of about 1500 tons of CO². ICA have been working intensively to cut food waste in half by 2025, by various ways, both in stores and in their warehouses.



Tulips grown for ICA Theatre.

These tulips are sold for the benefit of the Glada Hudik Theater's work to change the world's way of thinking, seeing and relating to people with variation of function. For every bouquet sold, the ICA Foundation donates SEK 3 to the Fund for a slightly more inclusive society.

ICA
Community outreach



Red Cross assortment.

With this ICA Christmas assortment, each purchased item contributes to the important work the Red Cross does for vulnerable. All part of ICA's community engagement.



Ukraine donation. After the ICA Group donated SEK 10 million to support humanitarian work in and around Ukraine, they received the first reports on what their money went to: among other things, this shelter near the Polish city of Lublin to provide refugees with beds and blankets as well as water and food. A week and a half after the violence in Ukraine broke out, about 300 people, mostly women and children, took refuge here.



Clean up. On a Saturday at the end of April, a total of 132 places in 53 municipalities from Haparanda in the north to Trelleborg in the south are cleaned by thousands of sports youth in collaboration with local ICA merchants. Last year, 91 associations picked up about 18 tons of rubbish from Swedish nature. ICA merchants have historically always supported local sports associations and also had a great commitment to their town.



Apple picking. 9 out of 10 garden apples are never eaten. On a couple of Sundays in August, September and October, youth from local sporting associations will come and pick your apples or you can pick them yourself and drop off at certain ICA stores. For every kilo of apple @rscued donates SEK 1 to the local youth sports and the ICA store gives extra to the team fund.



Collecting bread to give to the vulnerable. In Hedemora, the Red Cross volunteer Gunborg collects bread from the local ICA shop to distribute to the vulnerable. Every single day. ICA's has a 30-year partnership with the Red Cross.



Ukraine trucks. Trucks on the way to Ukraine with 32 tons of food, clothing, blankets and medicine. They took two days from leaving Red Cross Italy to cross the Ukrainian border.



Childhood cancer. ICA Kitchen hosted a baking session with families affected by childhood cancer. Chefs Leif and Isolde helped instruct participants how to make a scrumptious apple pie.



Cucumber greenhouse. Åke Persson helps plant under the watchful eye of Muhammed Adam from @agtira.se. Åke had a hyper-modern greenhouse built, eight metres high, at the entrance to @icamaxiskelleftea. Åke says, "This is the way of producing food of the future. You can't get more locally produced than this. The cucumbers are picked in the morning and sold to consumers in the afternoon, completely without transport."

Greenhouse fish. Cucumber and salmon grown at the shop in Östersund in a 1200m² greenhouse with its own fish farming part. They plan for 10 tons of salmon per year, 85 tons of cucumber, 12 tons of tomatoes and 45000 pots of salad and herbs.

The shop sells about 85 tons of cucumber per year and so will be able to produce that on site, avoiding buying and shipping cucumbers from Spain during the winter.

The salmon to be grown locally is produced by Agtira. The fish is hatched in a plant in Härnösand, the spawn grown and then placed in the plant in Östersund. In the long run, there is the possibility to expand the fish stock to include rainbow salmon and trout. And as an added bonus, the fish does not need to be transported for five to six days!



Grow your own salad.

At ICA Supermarket in Åre, you 'grow your own salad'. Lettuce, parsley and basil are grown in the store, taking about eight weeks from seed to finished salad. The hydroponic crop is harvested each morning and then sold in-store ... and the customer interest is huge.

Greenhouse for vegetables and fish.

Glowing pink ... a greenhouse for vegetables and fish! Together with @icafastigheter and @agtira.se, @icamaxiostersund has built a unique greenhouse to grow vegetables and farm fish. Calculations from Agtira say that the greenhouse has the capacity to grow 80 tons of cucumber and 30 tons of tomatoes per year.

Self-grow fresh spices.

Together with Oh My Greens, ICA have begun to grow spices in a vertical cultivation plant in Söderfors. The spices are grown indoors in a controlled system in unutilised converted industrial premises, with renewable wind power electricity and a recycling optimised water and nutrition system. The mega-farm will be able to supply 2.7 million pots of spices every year.



Towards sustainability



& star shine

Music festival sponsor.

In 2022, ICA became the main 3-year sponsor of the Melody Festival Tour. This popular Swedish event is the largest and most inclusive folk party and campfire.

SR



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



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



FMCG & tech durables sales data for Q2 2024



- FMCG trade grows 3% year-over-year to R303 billion for the first half of 2024
- Technology and Durables market growth stable at 2%
- Promotions are the key to growth in a price-sensitive market

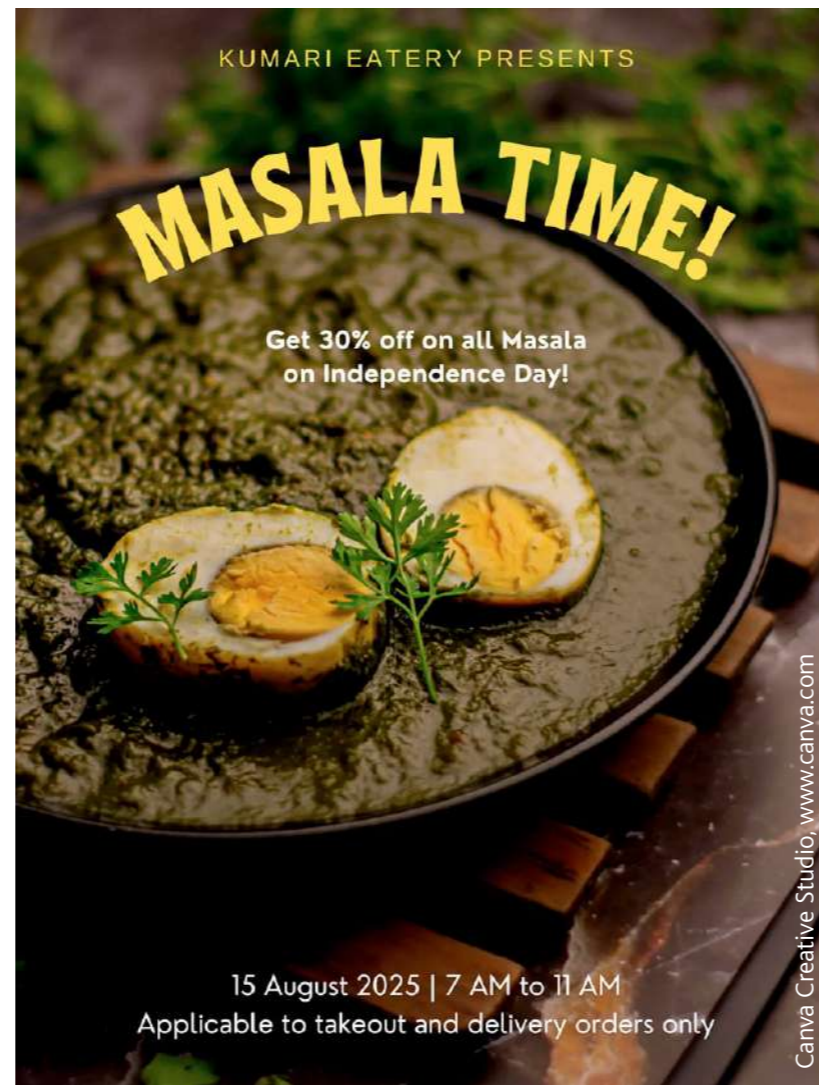
Zak Haeri  NielsenIQ
Managing Director
NIQ South Africa

NIQ South Africa has released its latest State of the Retail Nation¹ analysis for the first six months of 2024. The data reveals that South African consumers spent R303 Billion on fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG) through traditional and modern trade channels during the first half of the year. This represents 3% year-over-year growth, with the gains primarily driven by price increases. Actual sales volumes decreased across most FMCG categories.

Food and Personal & Health Care were the categories that showed the strongest growth at a time when consumers were under significant strain from higher cost of living. Although categories such as Snacks and Alcoholic Beverages registered growth for the first half of 2024, demand began to slow in the second quarter. Against a backdrop of rising prices, retailer and brand promotions are playing a major role in driving which brands consumers decide to spend their money on.

Zak Haeri, Managing Director for NIQ in South Africa says ...

“Our consumer research and market data paint the picture of a challenging landscape for FMCG manufacturers. Half of consumers report that their biggest concern over the next six months is rising food costs. Around a third of consumers, meanwhile, confirmed that their household financial situation has been impacted by the loss of jobs or income.”



“The result is that consumers are looking for relief through lower prices and are increasingly willing to switch brands to get a better deal. In fact, some 41% of South African consumers have changed their shopping behaviour in the past three months to better manage their expenses. Price and store switching are the most common strategies they use to save money on FMCG products.”

Price sensitivity and the impact of promotions

South African shoppers are among the most price-reactive consumers in the markets that NIQ covers. Whereas a 5% price increase for a typical FMCG product results in an average drop in sales of 8.5% in most countries, a similar price hike results in a 10.5% drop in sales in South Africa – 25% higher than the world average.

Conversely, a promotion offering a 20% saving boosts sales by an average of 53% in most countries. But in South Africa, such a deal typically drives a 95% uplift in sales. Around 36% of every rand consumers spend on FMCG in South Africa is spent on promotions, compared to a global average of 34%.

Haeri says, “Despite the evident price sensitivity of the South African consumer, FMCG retailers and brands should note that the overall value proposition remains important, especially in the premium tier. Indeed, our data shows that sales

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of premium products are growing in 10 of the 20 FMCG categories, compared to economy products growing in only nine of the categories.

NIQ data also shows slowing growth for private label brands, which command 21.2% of every rand spent in FMCG trade. This suggests that private label brands may have reached a saturation point and are facing increased competition from branded goods, especially through promotional pricing. "Retailers should carefully evaluate the categories where private labels can still grow and focus on differentiation and quality to compete with established brands," says Haeri.

Retailers should take a balanced approach to the economy and premium segments of the market, with tailored marketing and promotional strategies to maximise basket value. "For the more price-sensitive segments, frequent and well-timed promotions are key. Even small price adjustments can have a substantial impact on sales," says Haeri. "For premium segments, the focus should be on quality, exclusivity, and long-term benefits."

Confidence returns to the Technology & Durables sector

The Technology & Durables (T&D) market grew by 2% in rand terms year-over-year in the second quarter of 2024, continuing the growth trend from the first quarter of the year.² Excluding the struggling cellphone segment, other T&D categories saw over 7% growth in both units and rand value. Large screen televisions (74" and above) showed especially strong growth of around 24%,

potentially buoyed by major sporting events such as the UEFA European Championship and the 2024 Olympics.

"T&D retailers and brands will be encouraged by these green shoots of consumer confidence," says Haeri. "We anticipate stable growth for the T&D market for the rest of the year, with possible tailwinds if we see interest rates start to fall later this year. Online sales growth continued to outperform traditional channels in the second quarter. New entrants such as Amazon and enhanced online offerings from all retailers mean we can expect to see this trend prevail for the second half of the year, particularly during Black Friday month."

Online sales grew nearly 10% year-over-year in the second quarter, with online participation reaching nearly 17%.

Retailers shifted more than 15 000 large screen televisions during the quarter – a rare occurrence outside of major promotional periods such as Black Friday. Fierce competition, driven by retailer and manufacturer promotions and bundle deals, and a decline in average pricing for a 75" television to below R20 000 also helped to ignite this market.

Telecoms sales drag T&D sector down, but appliances bounce back

Telecom devices make up 50% of spending in the T&D market. The mobile phone sector continued to feel pressure from the shift away from 3G to 4G/LTE and 5G devices. Price deflation, partly driven by the growing presence of new Chinese brands in the mid-market and premium segments, contributed to a significant drop in the value of this competitive market.



5G smartphones unit sales increased. However, despite a 7% decline in 5G phone prices, these devices remain 53 times more expensive than basic cellphones.



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Desktops and monitors enjoyed something of a revival, growing faster than the average of the IT products segment.

Major domestic appliances also bounced back with strong growth following declines in 2023. Washing machines and fridges experienced healthy unit sales growth,

although promotional activity eroded average retail prices for both categories. Small domestic appliances showed healthy growth, largely driven by promotions over May, when one of South Africa's major T&D retailers celebrated its anniversary with specials – with competitors responding with deals of their own.

In the laptop market, unit sales in the second quarter remained dominated by devices with Celeron processors, but value growth was driven by models with high-end processors. Average prices in laptops are increasing as consumers upgrade the processing power and screen size of their devices.

Promos move the needle

Haeri says, "South Africans love a good deal. Tech and durables sales in South Africa are dominated by a few key events on the annual retail calendar, including Back to School, Winter Sales, Christmas, and, especially, Black Friday. Our 2023 data shows that the top promotional events accounted for 55% of annual revenue for the product groups we track in South Africa.

"Another noteworthy trend is the way that many categories in the T&D sector are becoming increasingly divided into budget and premium segments. Commoditised, lower-end products account for the bulk of unit sales in markets such as televisions, cellphones and computers. However, robust demand for high-end versions of these products means that the value of the premium segment is growing at a faster rate than the mass market." **SR**

¹ Based on NIQ's comprehensive *Retail Measurement Service (RMS), which is the largest retail (grocery) data source in the country and the only currency used by all of South Africa's major retailers. This benchmark data comprises more than 10000 branded retail outlets (e.g., supermarkets and garage forecourts) and more than 143000 independent stores (eg, spazas and taverns) across South Africa's nine provinces and measures more than 80% of all retail grocery transactions.

² Based on GfK's Market Intelligence and Sales Tracking

Who are we?

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

How can we help you?

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

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