

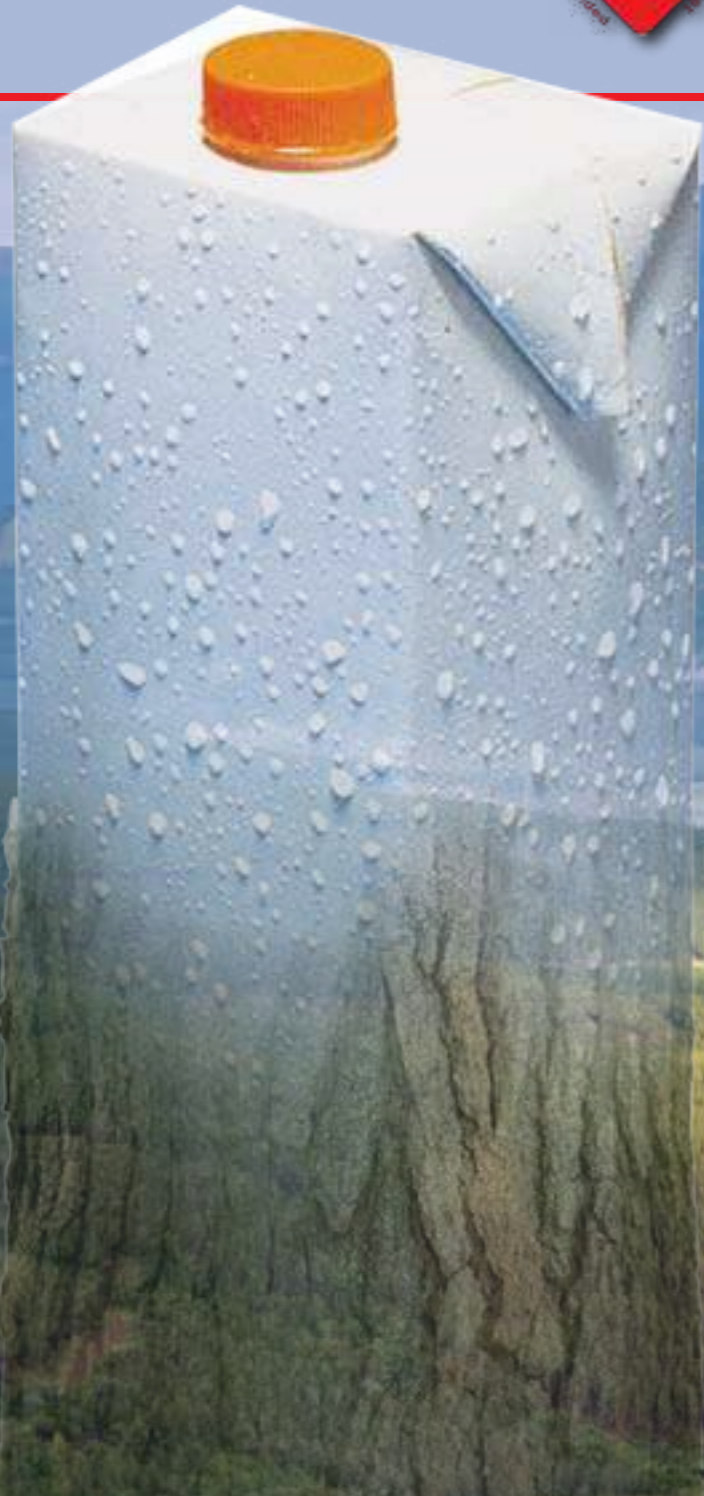
SUPERMARKET & RETAILER



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Packaging, labels & scales ...
How technology, sustainability and
consumer demand is driving innovation

Kasi Kos ... Informal sector fast food
Food production safety

Contents



Cover photo by courtesy of Forestry South Africa

FEATURES

Packaging, labels & scales

Ann-Baker Keulemans writes how technology, sustainability and consumer demand is driving innovation and the integral role these 'back end workers' play in transferring

critical information about products and brands to shoppers. Scales play a vital role in stock control and a streamlined shopping experience.

Kasi Kos: Informal sector fast food



GG Alcock points out that the informal out-of-home food economy is invisible to the formal world and its shoppers, but it's all around us, like a mist drifting by our car windows, hanging around on street corners, covering the townships.



Building a buyers persona with psychographics

Keletso Nkabiti says that psychographics, which measure customers' attitudes and interests rather than 'objective' demographic criteria, can provide deep insight that complements what we learn from demographics. The data helps us create extremely personalised messages and content.

COLUMNS

Delight your customers



In Aki Kalliatakis' regular column, his take off point is a bizarre story about 11 people in China who were arrested for hugging on the street. Because of Covid-19,

we have to practice social distancing, but friendly faces would be great right now. It leads him to say how we need to deliberately choose joy and laughter and warmth rather than pessimism and despair. Choose to go for more, rather than less. Choose more enthusiasm and passion, not less.

NEWS



Food safety

South Africa's standards of food safety for the food production industry have evolved to a point that most of the steps required to safeguard consumer safety are in place.

Workplace vaccines

Mandatory vaccinations may speed up the process whereby herd immunity is achieved. But can an employer force employees to get vaccinated?

Vaccine resistance

A survey of the feelings of 3 000 South Africans jobbers whose income derives from temporary, part-time work toward the rollout of Covid-19 vaccines.



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Re-Energising, Re-Imagining, Restoring



Helen Maister

Do you remember what 2019 was like? We were tumbling head first into total economic ruin. We had been downgraded to junk status. GDP was growing at a whopping 8%. There was violent crime, xenophobia, load shedding.

Covid put a peg in the mayhem, during 2020 and certainly 2021, corruption is being brought to light, and people were brought to task.

There is an urgency in people and in the country to get going, to do the things that need to be done to make a success of what they have. There is a bustle in the air, you can see the people of South Africa hustling, doing, creating.

Entrepreneurship is the name of the game as many people have lost their jobs. This is making us Saffas tough. We're not protected by government. We don't get cushy grants. If you don't do, you won't succeed.

The informal economy is pumping. It's a tough gig, but there are people making it in this world. GG Alcock has written a fantastic article on *Kasi-Kos* and about the people who service this industry. I can almost taste it...

“ The informal out-of-home food economy is invisible to the formal world and its shoppers, but it's all around us, like a mist drifting by our car windows, hanging around on street corners, covering the townships. The mist, though, carries a million delicious flavours ... the spicy curry aroma of *sishebo* stews, frying of *vetkoek* and 'slap' chips, and grainy smells of steaming sorghum porridge, fresh baked *dombolo* pot breads, fried chicken legs and braaied heads of cattle and sizzling *shisanyama* braais, and so many more that the nose is confused, but your mouth waters anyway. ”

Have you noticed when you accidentally make physical contact with a stranger, you go into 'freeze'?

The slightest touch can make your head spin with all the 'what ifs' as you rummage around for your sanitiser.

Hugs and touch release endorphins which make you happy. Aki Kalliatakis discusses other ways of feeling happy that aren't reliant on touch. Being conscious of how you nurture your happiness is key for motivation and hope. Your mood sets the tone of your outcomes.

'Packaging, scales and labels are not the highly visible components of a store that entice shoppers through the door, but these industrious 'back end workers' play an integral role in the shopping experience and are extremely important across the entire retail and wholesale spectrum. Packaging and labelling transfer critical information about products and brands – and by implication your store – to shoppers, while scales play a vital role in stock control and a streamlined shopping experience.

Helen Maister

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Arrested for hugging

Aki Kalliatakis

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In this series of Supermarket & Retailer's articles, we share stories of what some organisations and managers have done to motivate and inspire their teams. We give you practical ideas of what you can do to create the most amazing, customer-driven company in the world.

Every Valentine's Day, I always remember a bizarre story that caught my eye in the news a few years back. Police in Nanjing, China arrested eleven people on the street – for hugging. It seems that these individuals had decided that it would be a good idea to put up some signs and offer a free hug to anybody that wanted one.

Now, I must admit that for me, as a bewildered 63-year old male trying to make sense of a world filled with stress, anger and hate, going around and hugging other people sounds like a brilliant idea. I know it sounds very 'Hippy Sixties', but I can tell you that it's a great alternative to what I see going on in the world today, especially in the world of



customers and employees. Wherever I go today I encounter alienation, apathy, unfriendliness, coldness and even hostility that fills me with despair. If ever I was to be arrested, I would love it to be for hugging.

Yes I know it's Covid-19 and we have to practice social distancing, but even a friendly face would be great right now. Why is it that the world

has become such a cruel place? Is it fear? Is it uninspired leaders that have betrayed us? Is it because the attitude of: 'Every man for himself' has permeated the world? That's what the pundits and experts have us believe. It seems that we are so scared of the horrible world that we have become increasingly more isolated from one another.

It seems that we are so scared of the horrible world that we have become increasingly more isolated from one another. Some say that we fear making ourselves vulnerable to rejection.

Or perhaps we feel it is somehow beneath us to love and to seek love from others. Or maybe it is because most of our leaders – political, business, religious, sports, and others – are poor examples of caring for others. Maybe as members of the human race we are just following our basic instincts to survive.

I truly believe that we need to challenge the apathy and indifference, and to replace it with more hugging – or even air-hugging for now.

Yes, there is ugliness and pain in the world, but equally so there is also beauty and wonder and joy. The world is not such a terrible place, after all, and the only hope that we have as a human race is to love each other, rather than hate, to reach out and serve, rather than be indifferent.

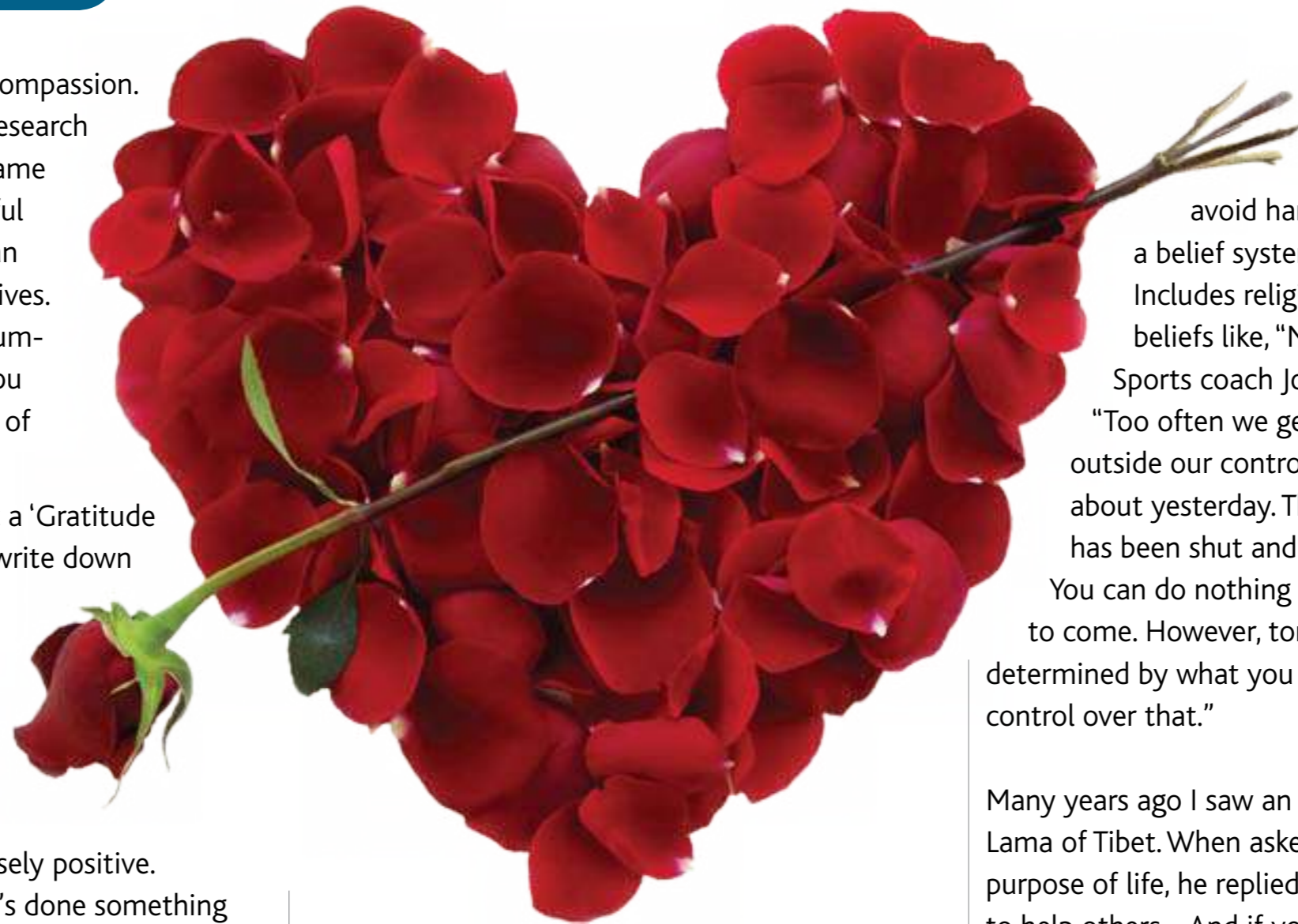
Hugs release endorphins which are essential to our sense of well-being. But they also make us feel



more human and encourage compassion.

A lot of recently published research on the science of happiness came to a number of really wonderful conclusions about what we can do to become happier in our lives. An article in Time magazine summarised this exquisitely. Do you want to be happier? Try some of the following:

- **Count your blessings:** Start a 'Gratitude Journal' in which you weekly write down three to five things for which you are grateful, from the mundane, to the magnificent.
- **Practice random and systematic acts of kindness:** To both friends and strangers. The consequences are immensely positive. Pay it forward when someone's done something nice for you.
- **Savour life's little joys:** Play close attention to momentary pleasures and wonders. Look back at you 'mental photographs' of happier times, but there's more than enough beauty and kindness in the world to love life. (Don't expect the news to publish this.)
- **Thank a mentor:** If there's someone that you owe a debt of gratitude for their guidance – no matter how many years ago they were there for you – don't wait to express your appreciation, in person if possible.



- **Learn to forgive, and to let go of anger and resentment:** Write a letter of forgiveness, even if you never post it, and get back your peace of mind. The burden is just too great to carry.
- **Invest time and energy in friends and family:** Strong personal relationships are more important than where you live, how much you earn, your job, and even your health.
- **Take care of your body:** Get plenty of rest, exercise, stretching, smiling and laughing, and practice these daily.

- **Develop strategies for coping with stress and hardships:** You can't

avoid hard times, but you can have a belief system that helps you to cope. Includes religious faith, but also secular beliefs like, "Nothing lasts forever."

Sports coach John Wooden wrote:

"Too often we get distracted by what is outside our control. You can't do anything about yesterday. The door to the past has been shut and the key thrown away.

You can do nothing about tomorrow. It is yet to come. However, tomorrow is in large part determined by what you do today. You have control over that."

Many years ago I saw an interview with the Dalai Lama of Tibet. When asked about what is the purpose of life, he replied: "The purpose of life is to help others... And if you can't help them, would you at least not hurt them?"

Azar Jamine, CEO of Econometrix, expressed it similarly: "Business needs to wake up to the fact that just making money is an empty goal without contributing to the betterment of life of your fellow human beings." I couldn't agree more: In the world of business, every day we are given a magical and poignant opportunity – no, a privilege – to make a difference for our colleagues and our customers.

Hugging is a very important part of my life, and I feel very sorry for people who are unable

to experience it regularly. I remember once bumping into my brother at a shopping centre somewhere, and, in our usual fashion, we gave each other a big bear hug. A woman was walking past at the time, wheeling a trolley. She took one look at us, was absolutely disgusted, and said: "Bloody queers!" So this is what the world has become: two brothers showing some affection to each other are accused of being 'queer'. She was the queer and strange one, not me.

Your colleagues and customers' memories of your kindness & helpfulness will extend well beyond the end of this uncertain new economy. So stand up and make your statement – If there's something that needs to be done, do it now. Choose joy and



laughter and warmth rather than pessimism and despair. Choose to go for more, rather than less. Choose more enthusiasm and passion, not less. Choose to appreciate all of the wonderful things

around us, and to not dwell on the ugliness.

Above all, choose friendship and service rather than indifference.

And as for the Nanjing huggers, what happened to them? Well, they were all released about an hour later with a warning to not arrange a gathering again without permission, and to stop doing these crazy and depraved things that corrupted society. As my New York friend says, "Go figure." **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 (011) 640 3958, or via the website at www.leadershiplaunchpad.co.za




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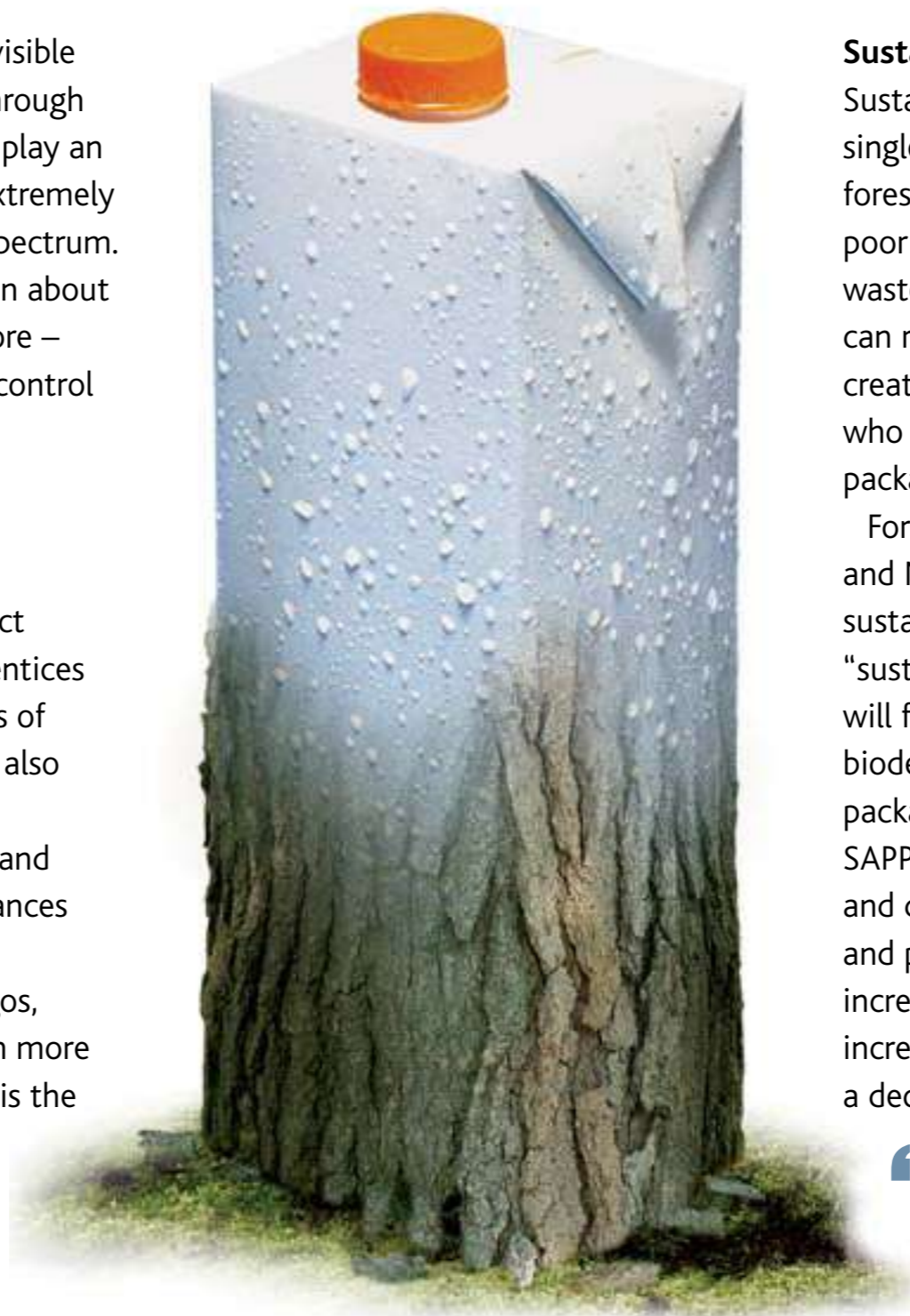
How technology, sustainability and consumer demand is driving innovation

Packaging, scales and labels are not the highly visible components of a store that entice shoppers through the door, but these industrious 'back end workers' play an integral role in the shopping experience and are extremely important across the entire retail and wholesale spectrum. Packaging and labelling transfer critical information about products and brands – and by implication your store – to shoppers, while scales play a vital role in stock control and a streamlined shopping experience.

Pack a punch with sustainable packaging

Consider packaging your in-store salesperson, direct marketer, and all-around Most Valuable Player. It entices and informs consumers and is one of the first lines of communication between brand and customer. It's also usually the first thing a consumer sees when they start their shop. It is visually alluring, informative, and protective, and of course is essential in many instances for food hygiene.

From design and production to branding and logos, packaging deserves careful consideration. But even more important, given the current environmental crisis, is the question of sustainable, renewable, and recyclable packing material, as more and more consumers are demanding sustainable packaging options.



Sustainable packaging

Sustainable packaging takes many forms, and yet single-use plastics still abound. Unsustainable forestry practices can ruin entire eco-systems, poor production practices can result in excessive waste and pollution, and overwhelmed landfills can render compostable packaging irrelevant. This creates something of a challenge for producers who are looking to source affordable, effective packaging that meets all their requirements.

Fortunately, companies such as SAPPI, EcoPack, and Nature Pack are invested in producing sustainable packaging options (just Google "sustainable packaging South Africa" and you will find a comprehensive and cheering list of biodegradable, eco-friendly and zero waste packaging and shopping alternatives). In fact, SAPPI has global commitments to the research and development of this type of packaging and production processes. And, of course, with increased demand comes increased competition, increased investment, increased supply, and a decrease in prices. Which begs the question ...

“ Why is so much unrecyclable and unsustainable packaging still in use? ”





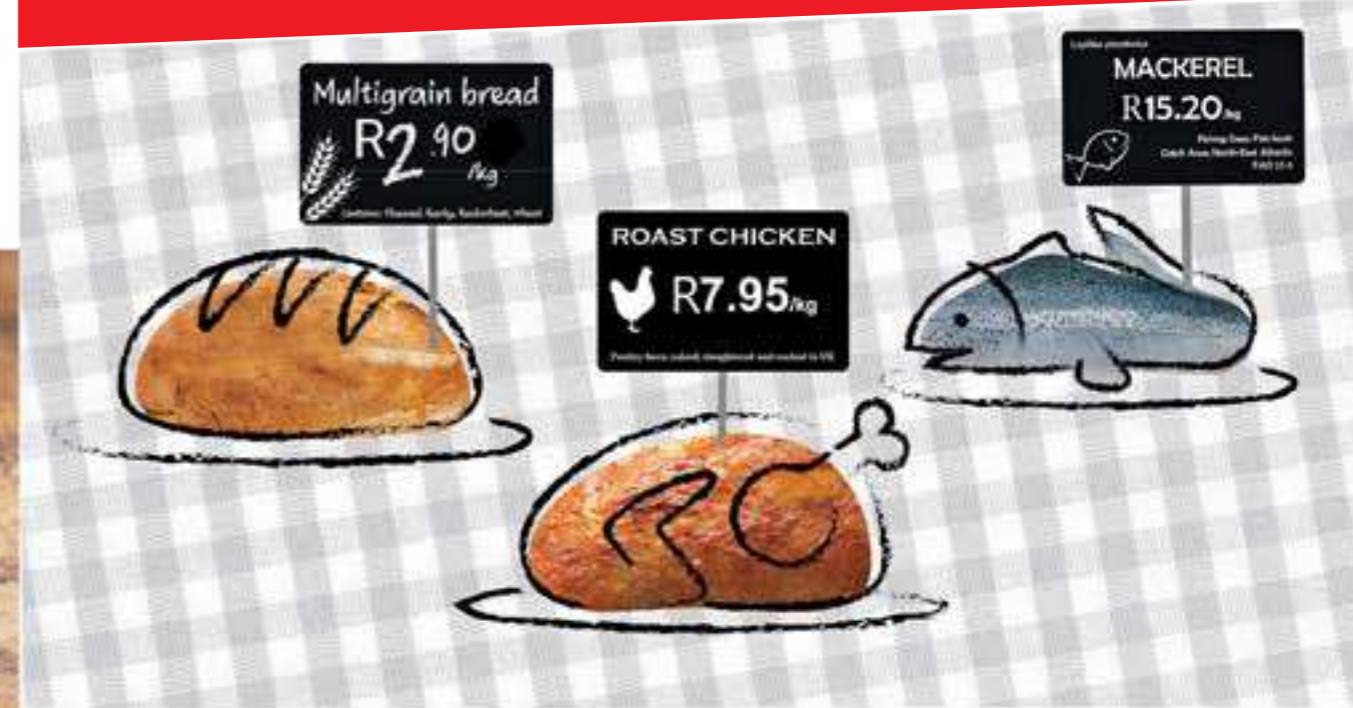
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FRONT OF THE CARD FOR YOUR CUSTOMERS



Product name
 Price
 Image or logo
 Allergens

BACK OF THE CARD FOR YOUR STAFF



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 Other information
 Sales tip



e Time Saving and Flexible

e Hygienic and Durable

e A Stronger Brand Image

e Easy to Read

e Food Compliant



Globally there is a trend towards legislation that reduces and even bans single use plastics, and which supports and further develops the use of sustainable and eco-friendly packaging. Kenya is reportedly the country with the strictest single-use plastic ban in the world, with Rwanda a close second. Several African countries have taken steps to reduce and ban plastic waste, yet legislation does not always support these bans, and policing them can be difficult. South Africa only has a ban on thin plastics, the cost of a plastic shopping bag is a paltry 25c, and in practice our plastic problem seems to be as big as ever. It is up to producers, retailers, and consumers to make a committed and concerted effort to change this unpleasant reality by investing in sustainable packaging, shopping bags, and zero waste shopping policies.

Viable alternatives

Glass (as long as it is recyclable), aluminium, and sustainably sourced and produced paper or board are the top choices for environmentally conscious packaging.



Here is where labelling can be crucial, as consumers rely on visuals such as the recycle symbol, the Forest Stewardship

Council (FSC) label for sustainable packaging from responsible forestry, and other such logos to make informed decisions regarding their packaging choices.

Plastic made from recycled material is a more sustainable option, but consumers are beginning to learn that plastic is not infinitely recyclable and the dangers of microplastics are real and increasing. This means that taking easy steps in the short term may end up being costlier than committing to more dramatic change from the start.

Plastic shopping bags are being phased out in upper LSM stores but are worryingly common for lower LSM consumers who rely on cheap packaging to transport goods, sometimes long distances, but are then left without the resources to participate in recycling initiatives. This disparity is something that needs to be addressed by retailers, producers, and government alike.

Biodegradable viscose can be used for tamper proof seals, caps, and lids, as well as shrink wrap packaging.



Tamper evident packaging

Source: www.foodanddrinktechnology.com

SUSTAINABLE TAGS



Source: www.news.com.au

Sustainable bread tags offer a viable alternative to plastic versions.

Bread products manufacturer Tip Top Bakeries, a subsidiary of multinational food group Associated British Foods, recently launched recyclable bread tags that are estimated to eventually remove 400 million plastic tags from the Australian market.

The rollout started in South Australia in November 2020 and the company says the change will remove 11 million plastic tags from South Australia by the end of 2021.

The cardboard bread tags are made from industrial and consumer waste and according to Tip Top, are as durable as plastic tags. No extra cost will be passed onto retailers. Tip Top intends to move to more sustainable packaging for all its products.

Trends, fads and favourites

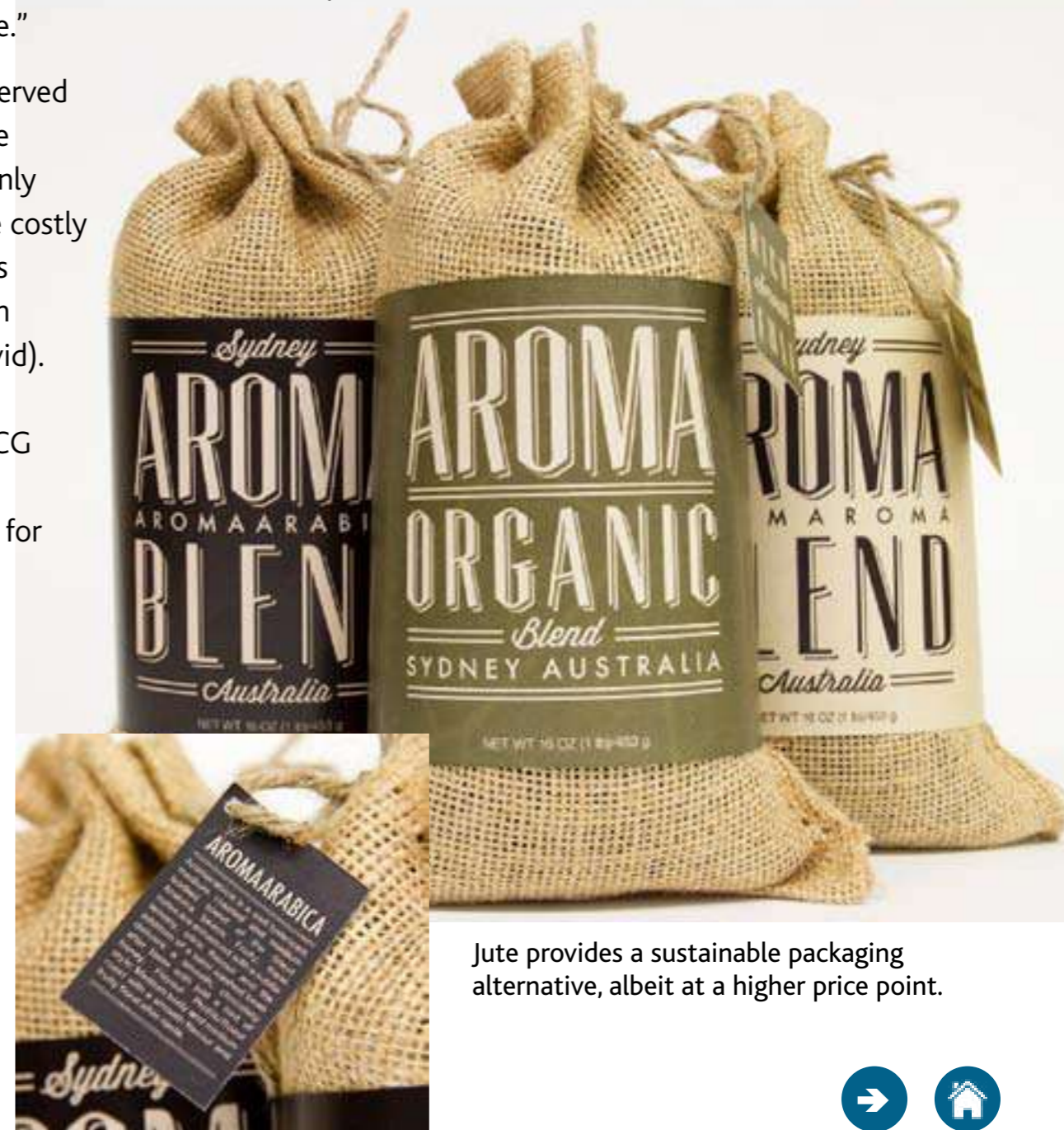
- **Corn Starch Packaging.** According to Enviromall, corn starch packaging products are on the rise. “A new material called Poly-Lactic Acid (PLA) enables biodegradable materials to be fashioned into materials that have the transparency and other properties of clear plastics. There are still some drawbacks, for example, a low heat tolerance, but this material is still suitable for all of the uses you would normally put plastic to.” Made from corn starch and other basic sugars, the cost of producing this type of plastic was previously prohibitive. However, that has recently changed, as the cost of producing PLA has now fallen below that of regular plastics. “PLA packaging biodegrades at between 30 and 90 days once exposed to composting conditions, making it 100% environmentally friendly. The major disadvantage, as mentioned above, is that it is unable to tolerate temperatures in excess of 40°C, and it is also unsuitable for very cold temperatures found in industrial freezers. This is less of a limitation than it would appear, as clear plastics have not traditionally been used in these conditions either.”

- **Tamper proof packaging** is already in use for things like medication and easily contaminated foodstuffs. It has seen an increase in demand globally, with the advent of Covid-19. Nervous consumers want to be assured of the safety of their foodstuffs, and producers want to avoid possible contamination. According to a 2020 article in F&D Technology magazine entitled *Viscose Closures*

reports unprecedented demand for tamper evidence packaging solutions, “Whilst tamper evidence has been mandatory in several sectors, current trends suggest this is becoming more consumer led. Previously, regulators have taken the lead when it comes to driving product safety, however, this is changing. The current situation has given engaged consumers a heightened desire to guarantee product security through the protection that tamper evidence seals provide.”

- **Jute packaging,** usually reserved for shopping bags, is a durable and sustainable option. The only problem here is that it can be costly to produce and for consumers to purchase, and hard to clean (a problem in the time of Covid). Whilst jute may or may not become ‘mainstream’ for FMCG products, its use for reusable shopping bags and packaging for fresh produce is here to stay.

- **Zero waste shopping** is a growing trend, but it may fall prey to the pandemic as the need for food hygiene and safety wars with excessive packaging and plastic waste. In a perfect world, however, shopping using your own reusable or recyclable packaging helps reduce food waste as you buy only what you need, reduces excess packaging, and reduces the carbon footprints of producers, retailers and consumers.



Jute provides a sustainable packaging alternative, albeit at a higher price point.

Source: <https://cargocollective.com>



Up to 40% energy saving with our Close the Case Glass Doors

Ways to save

With energy costs rising and food retailers looking to improve the shopping 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 offset the cost of the doors. Up to 40% reduction in refrigeration requirement has been achieved.

Benefits

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Aspects

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Private labels versus manufacturer brands – is there a difference?

Private label packaging can be identical to that of manufacturer brands, or it can be far simpler. By choosing uncomplicated designs, and environmentally friendly production practices and materials, private labels can reduce costs and entice environmentally aware consumers. Ultimately the difference is up to the retailers offering private label products, as they consider whether the cost of choosing sustainable packaging is outweighed by consumer demand, their own CSI initiatives, and their commitment to environmentally friendly practices.



All-important product labelling

The information contained within a product label is, to some extent, mandated by government regulations. The principles of good labelling require an easy to identify product name, brand, product image, and weight. Country of origin and price are also good to have and can sway the buying decision. So, what does this mean for manufacturers and retailers?

Labels – part and parcel of the purchase decision

Labels are the most direct way of conveying product information to consumers. They also convey brand recognition, brand loyalty, and brand trust. When a consumer looks at a product label, they (consciously or subconsciously) ask and

Nutrition labelling



Voluntary

Countries that provide state-sponsored guidelines to be followed voluntarily. Nutrition labelling is not mandatory, unless a health or nutrition claim is made, or unless the food is for special dietary uses

- Gulf Cooperation Council countries • Japan
- Kenya • Mauritius • Nigeria • Philippines • Singapore
- South Africa • Thailand • Turkey • Venezuela

Mandatory

Countries where nutrition labelling is mandatory, even in the absence of a nutrition or health claim

- Argentina • Australia • Brazil • Canada • Chile • China
- Columbia • Ecuador • European Union member states
- Hong Kong • India • Indonesia • Israel • Malaysia
- Mexico • New Zealand • Paraguay • South Korea
- Taiwan • United States • Uruguay

answer several questions. Is this a product I need or want, can I trust this brand, is the label easy to understand, and is the information on it reliable? When a consumer looks at a label, they decide whether to buy that product or not – making labels almost as important as the product itself.

Labels can differ wildly in terms of colour, design, and content, yet they also share certain basic principles ...

- **Product and brand name.** This tells the consumer what they are buying, and from who.
- **Product image.** This should tell the consumer exactly what it is they are purchasing., Guidelines are in place to limit misleading visuals, to ensure a reliable image whilst also being attractive to potential consumers.
- **Product information.** Where it is made or grown, is it local? Does it come from a company or country with values that I support? What can it be used for? What ingredients and allergens does it contain? Certain ingredients, such as sugar, may be labelled in several different ways, which confuses consumers and may ultimately lead to loss of brand trust.
- **Nutritional information.** This is typically given in table or graphic form per 100g and per single serving and includes kilojoules (energy), as well as composition in terms of fats, carbohydrates, sugars, fibre, protein and so on. These can be hard to read and understand but are important tools for consumers looking to make healthier food choices.
- **Packaging materials.** What materials are used? Are they recycled? Are they recyclable? As consumers become more environmentally conscious, and legislation becomes tougher on single-use plastics and other non-recyclable materials, this labelling is becoming increasingly important. Products that consistently use unsustainable packaging may well lose customers. However, certain recycling symbols can be very confusing, leading consumers to sort recycling



incorrectly or give up on it entirely. Again, clear communication with consumers that allows them to make informed decisions is crucial.

- **Other information** that may be included in various forms of labelling include the always-appealing 'New', 'Improved', 'Limited', or 'Sale' messaging.

Labelling legislation in SA

South African legislation pertaining to labelling falls under three departments, but should be considered as an organic whole, which can lead to some confusion and misunderstanding. As there is no single regulatory authority overseeing labelling

of foodstuffs, knowing where to turn for questions on compliance can also be problematic. The most up-to-date regulations, R146 (Labelling and Advertising of Foodstuffs), were passed in March 2010 and are currently being reviewed.

According to the Food Advisory Consumer Service (FACS), "The most relevant laws with respect to the marketing and advertising of foods to consumers is the Consumer Protection Act, The Foodstuffs, Cosmetics and Disinfectants Act (Foodstuffs Act), the Agricultural Products Standards Act, and the National Health Act, as well as the Regulations that fall under each Act." In short, consumers have "the right to information provided in plain and easily understood language, the right to safe and good quality goods, and the right to fair and responsible marketing."

Mandatory information includes date marking, and nutritional information (where claims such as 'high fibre' or 'low sodium' are made on the packaging), although certain foods are exempt. In addition, certain statements and claims are either prohibited or must adhere to the guidelines in regulation R146 (Labelling and Advertising of Foodstuffs). Allergens must also be declared in keeping with regulation R146.

Change is afoot

Whilst South Africa currently follows a voluntary nutritional labelling policy for certain foodstuffs, there is a move towards clearer and more reliable labelling, increased standards, and clarification of some terms and regulations. In September 2020,



control policy (ACP), and rules on quantitative ingredient declarations (QUID). There are also much stricter regulations with regards to nutritional and health claims that may be made on labels, as well as guidelines that must be followed in order to legally carry these claims.

Whilst there is no provisional date set for these proposals to be implemented, it would be worth keeping an eye on the department of Health's website (health.gov.za). Labelling related queries may be sent to Ms Antoinette Booyzen, Antoinette.Booyzen@health.gov.za, and Ms Anna Godzwana, Anna.Godzwana@health.gov.za.

comparing standards quite a daunting task. There is, however, a definite trend towards more informative labelling.



To combat obesity, poor nutrition, and other food-based health problems, there is a global move towards mandatory nutrition labelling, regardless of what claims have been made. This includes easy-to-understand graphics and tables that are placed front-of-pack to help consumers make healthier and more informed choices.

Globally the food labelling trend is towards clear and easy-to-understand nutritional information and reliable labelling (no false or questionable claims), allowing consumers to make informed and (hopefully) healthy decisions.

In-store, electronic shelf labels (ESLs) use a variety of technologies (from Bluetooth to cloud-based systems), making them accessible to most retailers. As they can be linked to purchasing and reporting systems, changes in price can be easily managed and monitored, with the added benefit of restricted access, allowing only certain employees to make changes.

the Department of Health held a CGCSA (FSI) Food Labelling and Advertising Workshop focussing on changes and amendments to food labelling and advertising regulations (R146).

These include changes to what may and may not be included on a label (misleading terms and markings/pictures), nutritional tables, accredited lab testing to support nutritional labels, and the inclusion of additives, preservatives, sweeteners, antioxidants, and colourants on labels.

The proposals also cover the classification of carbohydrates, allergen risk analysis and allergen



International labelling trends

Labelling legislation is specific to every country and although there is a global standard of sorts, it is voluntary and may be adapted to suit various legislative needs, which makes

The technology of scales

From back of house food preparation to in-store butcheries, delis, bakeries and fresh produce aisles, the scale is king. Far from just weighing produce, today's scales weigh, wrap, provide labels and barcodes, and even link to a store's automation system.

But with advanced technology comes a price tag, meaning stores and retail chains must weigh the cost of high-end technology with the benefit to be had from reduced shrinkage and wastage, and increased accuracy and efficiency.

Ahead of the pack

Technology develops at a rapid pace and that of the retail space is no different. With automated systems that link everything from supply and back-of-house food preparation, to self-service and point of sale systems, electronic shelf labels (ESL) and fully digitised and automated weighing, labelling, and barcoding systems, keeping track of stock and sales easily and accurately has never been easier. The benefits of these advanced systems are clear: A reduction in human error, reduced wastage, accurate reporting, easily updated prices, and fast, automated weighing, labelling, and packing that streamlines processes and saves on time.

Scales at checkouts are commonplace in many stores and serve a dual purpose – they reduce potential waiting time for customers and, with the inclusion of camera technology, can also monitor potential shrinkage in the case of accidentally or



intentionally mislabelled produce. The downside is that customers don't always know what they will be paying at the till, and this should be considered in terms of consumer needs, the number of products this affects, and the store's willingness to have self-service scales in certain produce areas. For some retailers, having scales linked to their point of sale (POS) systems allows them to accurately verify the weight of certain products, thus eliminating potential pricing mistakes and reducing shrinkage.

Self-service technology

Many countries have embraced self-service scales with technological advancements in self-service technology (SST), self-service counters (SSC) and scanners.

Apart from job loss (critical to countries with high unemployment and low skills), the greatest challenges with this type of technology are upkeep and maintenance, and consumer know-how. Who hasn't spent fruitless minutes searching a store for a working price scanner, only to end up asking the cashier at the till? And unless you are familiar with the technology, SSCs can be confusing, frustrating,

and anything but easy-to-use. This could be negated by large touchscreens with clear graphics – but it's a cost outlay that could deter retailers. Shrinkage, whether accidental or from theft, is also a consideration that should be taken seriously, particularly in these worsening economic times.

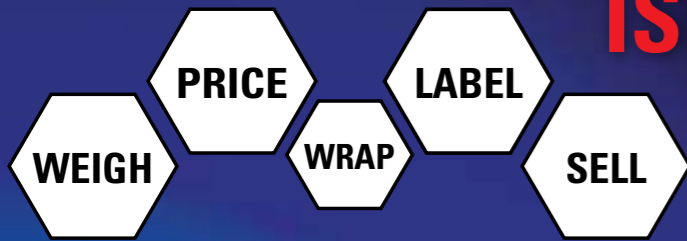
An integrated approach: Some observations

New technology has replaced laser and inkjet printing, resulting in better quality barcodes. Thanks to technological advancements, designing, creating, and printing your own barcodes is cheaper and easier than ever.

According to a leading South Africa packaging, labels and scales company, suppliers and servicers of automated weighing, labelling, wrapping, printing, and related consumables, "There are many

Automatic weigh/wrap/label machine that can wrap an 80 tray perfectly every time.

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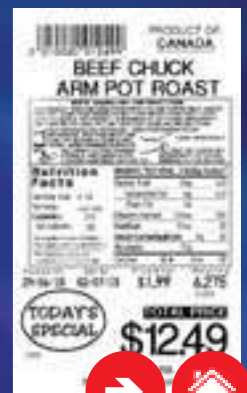
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different factors that go into choosing the right retail label printing solution for your business. Print quality, printing frequency and barcoding requirements, as well as total cost of ownership and ease of use, all come into play.

Many retail stores and factory facilities have inefficient and overly expensive labelling processes because their needs have changed over time, but their label printers have not. Laser and inkjet document printers are simply unable to keep up with the demands of modern labelling scenarios. It is because of this that it makes sense to invest in a purpose-built retail label printer to provide a more cost-effective and smarter solution for your labelling needs.

These label printers also provide the added benefits of greater convenience and more consistent print quality, as well as superior performance when it comes to barcode printing.”

An integrated retail barcoding system is also a worthwhile investment. These can eliminate potential human error risks, simplify staff training, and provide quick and easy access to data.

Automatic wrappers take less time, use less plastic, take up less space and use less heat (and therefore electricity) than manual wrapping stations, and can weigh, wrap, and label products at once. This means product reaches shelves faster, increasing efficiency and productivity.

Variable length labels allow the same machine (such as a scale) to produce different size labels without having to change paper rolls or print set ups, saving on time and labour and creating a more

efficient labelling process. This is helpful as government regulations require a certain amount of information be provided on labels, but these requirements differ from product to product.



While packaging, labelling, and weighing are all separate processes, it is clear they should also be considered as an integrated whole. As consumer awareness increases and the move away from single-use plastics and unsustainable processes gains momentum, keeping up to date with technological advancements can be costly, but the return on investment makes it well worth considering. **SR**



Ann-Baker Keulemans is a highly experienced business-to-business and business-to-consumer journalist and writer. She has been published in numerous print and online platforms, writing on topics related to business, lifestyle, and health, with extensive knowledge on the SA retail and wholesale landscape. She holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in English Literature (British and Commonwealth) and Media Studies and is a member of the Golden Key Honour Society. Contact Wilkins Ross Communications at annbk@wilkinsross.co.za.



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Kasi Kos

Informal sector fast food

The informal out-of-home food economy is invisible to the formal world and its shoppers but it's all around us, like a mist drifting by our car windows, hanging around on street corners, covering the townships. The mist, though, carries a million delicious flavours, the spicy curry aroma of *sishebo* stews, frying of *vetkoek* and 'slap' chips, and grainy smells of steaming sorghum porridge, fresh baked *dombolo* pot breads, fried chicken legs and braai heads of cattle and sizzling *shisanyama* braais, and so many more that the nose is confused but your mouth waters anyway.

As multitudes walk the streets from 3am till late into the night, fires flicker under *mbawulas*, the white hot braziers glowing under braais and grilled maize. Cardboard knee high shelters protect little Cadac gas stoves from the wind as they heat huge pots of boiling oil, browning bubbling seething *vetkoek* under gazebos perched on old door makeshift tables. Gas stoves stew *sishebos* releasing their fragrant spicy aromas, and a low hiss comes from the steam bread pot, the smell of freshly baked dough rising in the steam.

What I call the *kasi kos*, the township fast food, or the street food industry, is huge with 50 000 informal food takeaways in South Africa selling



everything from the township burger called a *kota* to *vetkoek*, *shisanyamas*, StreetSide buy and braais, and *amaplate* – literally laden plates of stew, salad, cabbage or spinach *morogo* along with maize meal *pap* or *dombolo* pot bread.

StreetSide hawkers, gazebos in taxi ranks, caravans, hole-in-the-wall shacks and food trucks from the grand to the sad offer a range of food where the top outlets can turn over up to R50 000 a day, seven days a week to a mere R500 a day. This is not unique to South Africa and local street food relevant to local cultural dishes and tastes is huge throughout Africa and often preferred as it caters to local flavours and traditional tastes and is culturally relevant.

Food is one of the biggest parts of our African culture and celebrations. Special family days and events always feature traditional food, the food on the street is generally also appropriate to the local cultures. The *kasi kos* offering is generally better adapted to the needs, tastes or lifestyles of their customers. *Kota* shops and corner caravans compete actively with formal takeaways like KFC, Nando's, and McDonalds. A typical popular *kota* outlet in Soweto can sell 2 400 *kotas* a day, peeling 80 bags of potatoes for chips. Every second street has a *kota* outlet and the average *kota* sells at around R15 ... do the maths.

The little electric scooter whizzes silently through the streets of Pretoria, zipping and zigzagging through the crowds on the pavement. Thabo, the



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scooter rider carries a large warmer backpack, and sports a bright blue T-shirt and cap emblazoned with 'Spahlo Paleis, Flavours of Mzansi'. He pulls up to the Department of Education and is waved through the security turnstile by the guards good naturedly asking, "Where are our *spahlos*?" "Next time," shouts Thabo over his shoulder, taking the lift to the third floor where he finds his agent. He unpacks the large warmer backpack, 25 warm *spahlos* each with a sticker describing which type and price. These are *kotas*, named *spahlos* in the north of Gauteng.



The agent shouts out, "Spahlo Paleis," and civil servants leave their desks and rush over to get their lunch handing Thabo their money and digging into the delicious *spahlos*.

The Spahlo Paleis delivers hundreds of *spahlos* throughout Pretoria, to the prosecutors and lawyers at the Supreme Court, Edgar's stores, the department of Public Works and more. Four custom made and branded bicycles, a tuk-tuk three-wheel scooter and the electric scooter run back and forth from 9 am till late delivering orders to 'agents' at each office or store. These agents' WhatsApp orders to one of the seven Spahlo Paleis stores in Pretoria, getting their meal for free as payment.

Thelo Maja is the bubbly 34-year-old founder of this impressive business. Her seven Spahlo Paleis stores sell 6 000 plus *kotas* a day, six days a week.

Another two restaurants sell a range of *kasi kos* meals. Thelo's story is a *kasi* success story, born from a desire for *kasi* food.

Thelo ran a secretarial service on the first floor of an office block in central Pretoria. Every lunchtime Thelo wished she could find kasi food for lunch in town. Not finding it she thought back to her school days when she used to help her *gogo* sell *kasi* food in Mamelodi. "Why not do that now?" She rented the vacant restaurant downstairs and started selling good *kasi* food, *pap*, samp and beans, *sishebos*, *morogo*, *dombolo*, *mogodu*.

Soon her restaurant was buzzing with advocates, director-generals and directors of government departments and other local business people loving her *kasi* food. She opened a budget *kasi* food outlet next door with the same fare but at more



“ Thelo has found her niche away from *ekasi*, and away from the informal markets, it is among city people aching for the food of *ekasi* in the busy first world, food for Afropolitans. ”

affordable price points, this too took off. Then one day some students asked her why didn't she sell *spalho's*?

“I thought why not,” laughs Thelo, but I wanted to make the best *spahlos* in Pretoria, so I travelled around the Gauteng *kasi's* trying every *spahlo* or *kota* people recommended. She pats her waist, “that's why I have this today,” she giggles infectiously. “Then I experimented, and only when I had made the best *spahlos* in South Africa, then I opened Spahlo Paleis.” Spahlo Paleis is a swish modern restaurant, the *spahlos* made on an 'assembly line' reminiscent of Subways, ingredients added according to the order.

I got an email from a young Sowetan start-up. It goes ...

“My name is Kopano Mofokeng. I am the founder of a two-month old registered start-up called Kasi Convenience. We are a distributor with a focus on the township food sector. Our primary activities include sourcing of quality brands and products, warehousing them (in my grandmother's 6m² backroom in Soweto), preparing them for orders, and then delivering them (in my late grandfather's 1989 Nissan 1400 bakkie) to our customers, within one hour after receiving an order on WhatsApp. We mainly sell to businesses that sell *kotas*, plates, and one or two retailers.”



Today, four months later, with a little help and some connections, Kopano has grown his business dramatically. A large meat business took a risk on him and offered him a credit line giving him good prices, and sold him a refrigerated vehicle on terms.

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MANHATTAN - Food Retail

AHT has been the experienced expertise, product and service partner for leading supermarket chains and discounters throughout the world for decades.

The sustainability of our activity is visible in our daily work, our products, and our persistent development efforts. Thinking in a forward-looking manner.



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In a globalized world of constant change, we as innovation leaders think it is important to act sustainably and in view to the future. It is our duty to set standards which the following generations can build upon – about environment aspects as well as the ability to finance our future.



The advantages are obvious: Product safety, lower running costs.

AHT showed a “HERO retro chest” at Euroshop that has been used successfully every day for over 20 years. AHT was already focused on energy efficiency at that time. Since then, the technology for the presentation and storage of refrigerated and frozen goods has been continuously improved through more efficient components and new control strategies. As a result, it is now possible to achieve a daily energy consumption of less than 4kWh even with units that have a net volume of 1000 litres and more.

AHT is making a clear statement in regard to the global climate discussion. The most efficient island freezers are those with the closed glass tops. We are seeing a massive drive towards the R290 self-contained units.

With this update that has been in use since 2019, we emphasize our expertise in energy efficiency. We have once again managed to reduce the energy consumption of the AHT chest freezer fleet by up to 20%. It makes us especially proud that we have achieved these savings and at the same time have also optimized product temperature safety in combination with our new defrosting concept. Thanks to this efficiency, with the update, we have managed to achieve the lowest energy consumption in the industry. By using eco-friendly propane, AHT refrigeration technology lets the environment breathe.



Energy efficiency & Cost savings are critical in every supermarket, but how does a store go about achieving concrete savings in the current climate?

Plug-in for cool sales success

AHT is the inventor of the plug-in installation: the revolutionary Plug & Chill concept makes AHT's refrigerated multideck cabinets and chest freezers the logical choice for supermarkets to buy.

Sustainable cost reduction

Thanks to the complete integration of all the refrigeration components, no additional installation costs are incurred. This ensures that AHT appliances are convenient and reduces the cost of developing and/or refurbishing supermarkets.

1998 to 2020 AHT is continuously expanding our position as a world leader – these principles guide us in everything we think and do!

Kasi Convenience has gone from zero chicken sales in November 2019 to 2.5 tons a week in March 2020. And that's just to 60 outlets. There are broadly five sectors in the South African *kasi kos* sector;

- *Kotas* and burgers, the basic kota selling for R12, which is the quarter loaf of bread, with slap chips, atchar, slice of polony and sauces. Add-ons increase the price, as you add a fried egg, burger patty, Russian, Vienna, cheese slice and so on
- *Amaplati*, sold from restaurants, taverns, gazebos in ranks and caravans on streets or industrial sites. *Amaplati* offerings are a plate of food with a grilled or stewed meat, rice, *dombolo* or *pap*, a veggie and a salad or relish. A typical '*plati*' generally sells for R35–R50 a plate
- *Shisanyama*, often associated with a tavern or events venue, the *shisanyamas* are the braais of the *kasi*, with blade steak, boerewors, chops, chicken along with *dombolo*, *pap* or *putu*, *chakalaka* and generally eaten using your hands
- *Amagwinya / Vetkoek* with ingredients such as polony, fried fish, cheese slice, liver spread, atchar. Vetkoek sell between R1 and R2 each before the additions
- Grilled chicken, generally a whole, half or quarter flatty, most often called chicken dust. Sold for around R80 for a full chicken, chicken dust comes generally with slap chips.



Over and above this informal fast food traders also offer fried fish, cows and sheep's heads, trotters, tripe, breakfast porridge and hard-body chicken all generally prepared in the traditional manner and local tribal recipe.

With over 50 000 fast food sellers and outlets, plus another 40 000 licenced taverns and shebeens that sell food along with alcohol this sector equals the numeric size of the *spaza* sector and possibly exceeds the *spaza* sector in total rand value. It is however often confused with and seen as the same as the *spaza* sector.

“ The growing vibrant *kasi kos* sector turns over in excess of R90 billion a year (food only not including alcohol sales) with 200 000+ people employed in this sector. ”

Interestingly this sector unlike the *spaza* sector is dominated by South African owners and staff, with almost 90% of prepared food traders being South African.

With little formal support or supply, this sector represents untapped opportunities to supply, partner, grow and develop the gastronomic KasiNomic entrepreneurs as a key part of our economy. **SR**



GG Alcock is the author of *Third World Child: White Born Zulu Bred*, *KasiNomics: African Informal Economies and the People Who Inhabit Them*, and *KasiNomic Revolution: The Rise of African Informal Economies* (this article includes excerpts from this book). He is the founder of Minanawe Marketing and is a specialist in informal & Kasi (township) economies, marketing and route to market strategies. Visit www.ggalcock.com

IOT for marketing: Building a buyers persona with psychographics



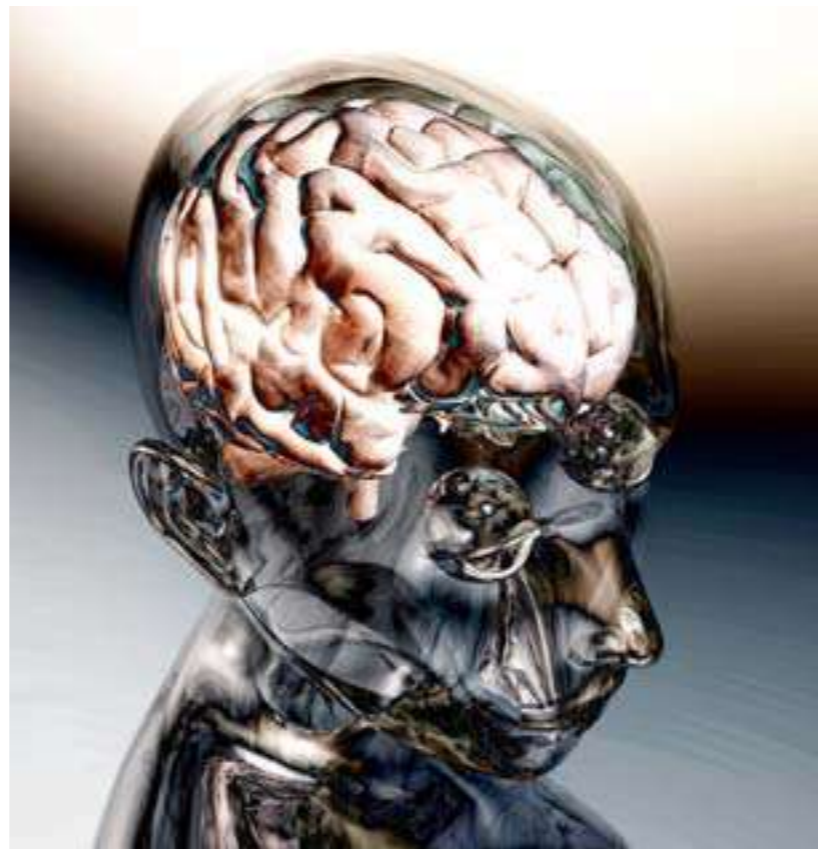
Keletso Nkabiti
Head of Brand Comms
& Strategy
Idea Hive

Marketers are used to thinking and speaking in demographics, since dividing a market up by age, gender, ethnicity, and other broad variables can help to understand the differences and similarities among customers. But psychographics, which measure customers' attitudes and interests rather than 'objective' demographic criteria, can provide deep insight that complements what we learn from demographics.

Psychographic characteristics are important because they provide a much narrower and targeted view of the customer or consumer.

Psychographics move the business closer to the right customers and consumers who are likely to buy their products and services.

Until recently, however, it was a lot harder to get psychographics than demographics, and even if you had psychographic data, it wasn't easy to act on.



The internet has changed the relative importance of demographics and psychographics to marketers by making psychographics more accessible.

Understanding these kinds of psychographic differences, will enable a business to make use of online marketing tools, which will turn your

insights into actionable interventions that was nearly impossible before the heyday of Google, Facebook, and Twitter.

Keletso Nkabiti, Head of strategy from Idea Hive, a renowned digital marketing agency gives us an example, "If you were to apply demographics to a population, you might find there are 500 000 people aged between 24 and 40 years. However, when you overlay this with psychographic characteristics such as the potential customers likelihood to be concerned with their health and appearance, their personality being outgoing and adventurous, and their values in relation to spending time with the family being regarded as important, you might discover that the 500,000 people in this age group has dropped dramatically to 150 000 people".

From a profiling perspective, this filtering process is regarded as a benefit. You are using psychographics characteristics as a tool to target more effectively who you want to attract to purchase your products or services, increasing your opportunity of converting a potential customer or consumer.



“ Psychographics move the business closer to the right customers and consumers who are likely to buy their products and services. ”

It is imperative to accurately understand your Customer persona. Psychographics are the attitudes, interests, personality, values, opinions, and lifestyle of your target market. Psychographics are incredibly valuable for marketing, but they also have use cases in opinion research, prediction, and broader social research.

What’s the big benefit of psychographics for marketing?

Essentially, if you know how people choose and compare products in your category, you know how to structure and prioritise content:

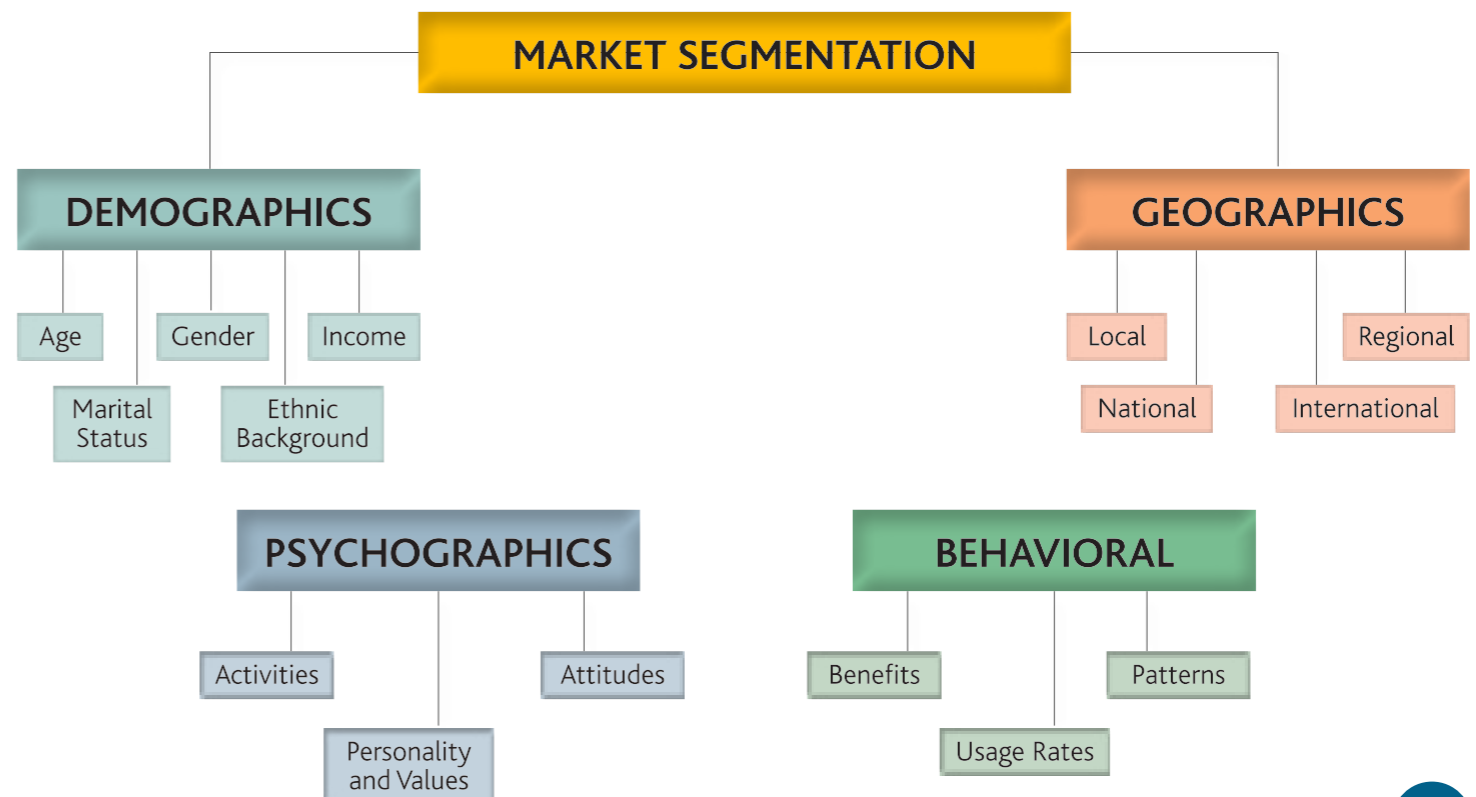
- If you know their deepest held beliefs, you can align your marketing messaging more closely.
- If you know what they don’t care about, you can dismiss those messages and pull them from our site.
- If you know what they read, you know where to reach them.

“Psychographic segmentation provides valuable insights into what encourages a consumer. It gives us a glimpse of the needs, wants and values of users. With this information, marketers can communicate with their target audience more effectively. Psychographic data lets us create extremely personalised messages and content, as well as facilitating smarter keyword targeting”, Nkabiti adds.

The internet has made these kinds of psychographic differences much more apparent and relevant to both consumers and marketers alike. It also makes it easier to find like-minded individuals, so people spend more and more time engaging with people who share their interests and attitudes, even if they’re from a different community or country.

These online clans help to consolidate psychographic differences, and lead people to identify more and more with their communities of interest or value, rather than their geographic or demographic community.

“ Psychographics tell you why people buy. They help you build robust user personas. They help you craft the right message and put it in the right place. They’re less objective and clean, but – for a marketer – they’re super useful. ”



Types of psychographics

Personality

Personality is the psychographic segmentation that identifies the users behind the data. Who they are, how they usually behave, and how they will behave under certain circumstances? Brands usually identify the personality traits of their target customers and create a personality trait most attractive to them.

Status

Social status segmentation is not only about income level, social background but also about where the customers are currently in life. For example, are your customer high schoolers, university students, married, or single? This can be the current customers' social status or social status they ultimately aspire to attain.

Lifestyle

Lifestyle refers to the customers' lifestyle patterns. How do they start and end their day? What do they do on the weekend and how do they spend their free time? With a good understanding of consumer lifestyle and habits, marketers can curate marketing messages that speak at the right time.

Value (Opinion, Attitude & Interest)

Values, perhaps one of the most important psychographic segmentation out there. It examines what your customers believe in, what's their opinion and attitude is on a certain subject and explores their hobbies and interests. What do they



value in life? This could revolve around themes such as religion, politics, gender, environment, cultural issues, arts, and sports.

“Based on the values that customers hold, brands know when to talk about a specific issue, send messages to fuel their customers' interest, and encourage purchase.”

Demographics

Age / Gender

Race

Location

Employment Status

Psychographics

Personality

Values

Attitudes

Interests

Lifestyles

Many companies use multiple buyer personas for each stage of the conversion funnel and incorporating psychographic data into your existing personas is crucial to ensure your campaigns hit the mark. It provides the potential for more personalised messaging, a clearer and more comprehensive profile of your ideal customers for new hires, and ultimately, more effective marketing campaigns overall.

For brands and marketer's, psychographic segmentation is a great tool. There are so many benefits but, in the same sense, there are also difficulties or drawbacks. For one, psychographic data is more difficult to obtain than, say, demographic data. Also, when putting psychographic segmentation into play, guidelines should be set to ensure that the data is not misinterpreted, and is used accurately, securely and for the right purpose. Partnering with a digital specialist that understands how to manifest your psychographics is then critically important.

By accurately utilising the data available to you, understanding your consumers' preferences, interests, values and so on, you will be able to view your customers as unique, individual people and provide the best user experiences possible, increasing your brand affinity, hence, strengthening customer loyalty. [SR](#)

CASE CLOSED

Energy Saving Solutions

Glacier Door Systems has introduced the Air Shield ('Close the Case') Glass Door retrofit solution for refrigerated supermarket display cases, as well as the Eco Leaf Replacement Glass Door for existing glass door freezer rooms and glass door freezer display cabinets. Both solutions guarantee energy-savings in an ever-increasing energy cost environment. Part of the well-established Universal Industries Group, Glacier has 26 years' experience and are acknowledged industry leaders in refrigeration door technology. Innovative and forward-thinking, the company is built on cutting-edge technology, technical expertise and a customer-centric approach.

Air Shield Glass Doors

Features and Benefits

- Double glazed glass doors with Argon gas fill for superior insulation.
- Glass durability and clarity with torsion bar for positive closing.
- Glass door heating option for high humidity environments.
- Glass doors available with hold open brackets and LED lighting options.
- Flex modelling means glass panels are customised to fit existing cabinets and are tailored to suit each store's specific environment.

A quick and easy energy-saving retrofit solution, Air Shield Glass Doors can be fitted to any existing open refrigeration case, saving up to 40% on energy consumption.



Note: The value proposal is based on R1.31 per kWh and 40% energy saving. These are averages based on our experience and can be validated per store.

The value benefit

- High-quality locally manufactured solutions featuring the latest energy-saving technology.
- Demonstrated good pay back periods can be expected.
- Customised solutions to suit your store.
- ISO 9001 accredited factory.
- Safety toughened glass in accordance with SABS/SANS certification.
- Flexible installation timing to offset any customer disruption.
- Financing options available.

You can trust a Glacier door



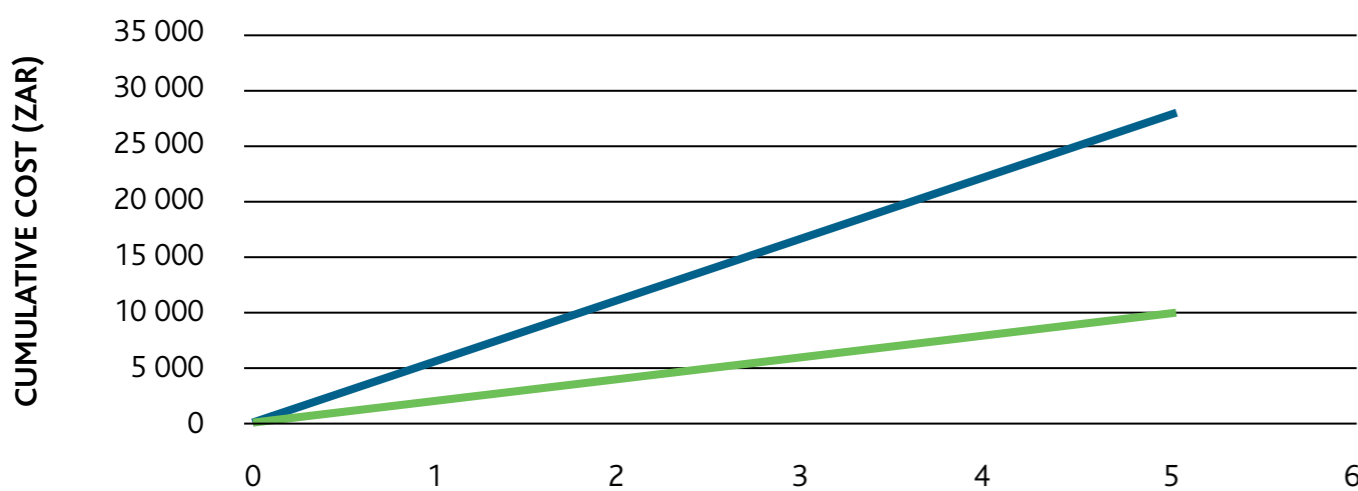
CASE CLOSED

Energy Saving Solutions

Eco Leaf Freezer Doors

Designed as a 'swop-out', energy-saving replacement glass door utilising 220V technology that eliminates the need for voltage-reducing capacitors. This results in an amperage reduction from 1.29A on the standard door to 0.46A (64%) with the replacement Eco Leaf Door.

The Eco Leaf door is 64% more efficient than the standard door. The value proposal is based on R1.31 per kWh and 64% energy saving. These are averages based on our experience and can be validated per store.



	AMPS	VOLTS	WATTS
Glacier Eco Leaf Door	0,46	230	105.8
Glacier Standard Door	1,29	230	296.7

Health & safety measures are particularly important during a pandemic SA already has strong systems in place

For any in-store or retail shop location where food and meat is prepared, there might be general concerns about health and safety measures that should in particular be important during a pandemic, but we make the point that South Africa is in a very strong position already. Outbreaks of other diseases – such as listeriosis a few years ago – means that we already have very strict rules and regulations that have been drawn up, and it is these rules that everyone should be adhering to especially now.

Retail stores generally are high-traffic areas and with the outbreak of Covid-19 for retailers and food producers, food safety remains a concern, especially keeping production lines and preparation areas uncontaminated. With talk of retailers and shopping malls being one of the super spreaders, their other concern is making sure their shop is consumers' first choice and adopting the highest health and safety standards to prevent the risk of contamination is the first step.

“South Africa’s standards of food safety for the food production industry have evolved to a point that most of the steps required to safeguard



consumer safety are in place,” says Emma Corder, Managing Director of industrial cleaning products manufacturer Industroclean.

The Compulsory Specification for Processed Meat Products introduced in 2019 is a direct result of the listeriosis outbreak and is aimed at eliminating further food contamination crises by setting out clear checks and balances for processed meat and manufacturing.

Any shop or butchery, including in-house butcheries in retail stores involved in the manufacturing of processed meat products for sale is regarded as a factory. All consumers want safer meat with high integrity supply chains.

Building trust with consumers starts with understanding their values relating to meat and then aligning industry values to these. The same standards for commercial butcheries and food

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producers should apply to retailers' in-house butcheries

The rails used for transporting and storing meat, walk-in refrigerators, storerooms and cutting areas are all areas within an in-house butchery. With the exception of the walk-in refrigerators and storerooms, these areas are usually within customers' view and should serve as additional incentive for retailers to keep this area clean and hygienic.

The equipment, specifically meat slicers can be the ideal area for food residue to build up and cause bacteria to grow. These bacteria can contaminate foods and cause foodborne illnesses. Meat slicers and cutting boards should be wiped down when switching meats or produce and should be fully cleaned once a day. Wipe down the blade from the centre outward with a soapy cloth. Rinse with hot water and a clean towel then sanitize and allow to air dry.

It is recommended that SANS approved cleaning chemicals for food production are used as they are specifically formulated to dissolve grease, proteins, starch, and other organic compounds.

Other ways to avoid cross contamination in in-house butchery areas are...

- Food processing and handling staff should, at all times wear the necessary uniform such as food service coats, gloves, aprons, hairnets and masks,
- Implement a cleaning schedule for the food preparation space, detailing who cleans where, how they clean and with what they clean.
- Dispose of food waste regularly and correctly.



- Use colour coding to separate different areas, for instance receiving area, storage, process and cutting – the colour of the cleaning equipment must match the areas it can be used in.
- Use only SANS-approved cleaning chemicals.
- Ensure that two the two-step cleaning method is followed: degrease to remove any protein build-up and then disinfect to remove bacteria (or viruses) at a microscopic level.
- Clean display cabinets, refrigerator and storage room doors and preparation and cutting surfaces once a day applying the two-step cleaning method.

The basic principles of a Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point (HACCP) food safety management system should be applied, this requires that manufacturers and food preparation facilities identify potential hazards, where they may occur and how this can be controlled.

They should then set limits that allow these hazards to be controlled at each critical point, and ensure these limits are properly monitored.

Applying the simple steps and covering all the bases outlined in HACCP guidelines for food manufacturing and production should, at the very least, ensure that bacterial infections are avoided.

Hygiene procedures and cleaning schedules are obviously a key part of this process, and a manageable way to ensure the minimum levels of compliance. **SR**

Considering mandatory workplace vaccinations

By Talita Laubscher *partner*
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Bowmans

The notion of mandatory vaccination against Covid-19 has become a talking point for employers globally.

Mandatory vaccinations may potentially speed up the process whereby herd immunity is achieved. But can an employer (as opposed to the State through national legislation, or a court order) force employees to get vaccinated?

This is no simple matter. For one, in law, vaccination is a 'medical treatment', not a 'medical test', and the difference matters. Medical testing is governed by section 7 of the Employment Equity Act, 1998, and is performed to ascertain whether an employee has a medical condition. The Employment Equity Act would come into play in circumstances where the employer requires the employee to get tested for Covid-19. By contrast, South African employment legislation does not specifically regulate when an employee may be required to undergo medical treatment.

In order to answer this question, the starting point is the constitutional right to bodily integrity and control over one's body. The National Health Act, 2003, gives effect to this right and states that medical treatment may not be provided without the user's informed, specific and voluntary consent.



There are certain exceptions to this rule, for example where the failure to treat the individual, or group of people that includes the individual, will result in 'a serious risk to public health', or where a law or court order authorises the provision of a health service.

At this stage, Government has indicated that the COVID-19 vaccine will not be obligatory and there is no law requiring anyone to be vaccinated.

So, employers considering mandatory vaccination are left with the public health risk exception, together with their own obligations to maintain safe, healthy workplaces under the Occupational Health and Safety Act, 2003, to justify their decisions.

Factors such as the level of risk, nature of the workplace, the work performed and the availability

and suitability of means to remove or mitigate the risk come into play. An employer's obligations will also need to be balanced against an employee's right to freedom of conscience, religion and belief. Such beliefs must be reasonably accommodated where they form part of the inherent tenets of the particular religion or belief system, unless the means

to accommodate result in unjustifiable hardship to the employer.

Applying the law in practice

Employers who exclude unvaccinated employees from the workplace are effectively forcing them to be vaccinated, undermining the voluntary nature of consent.

However, the extent to which this may be the case will likely depend on the consequences that may arise if the employee is not vaccinated. If the employee simply continues working remotely and is not prejudiced, it may be arguable that the employee retains the ability to decide whether or not to have the vaccine. But, where





the employee cannot work remotely and the employer's policy effectively makes it compulsory to obtain the vaccine to retain one's job, the voluntary consent principle will be violated.

There are circumstances where a mandatory vaccination policy will be permissible, namely if not having the vaccine may create a serious risk to public health.

This could be the case in work environments with large groups of employees, such as call centres, mines and factories. The argument is that

this increases the risk of transmission among the employees, and so too the risk of subsequent transmission in their communities.

Public health risks may also be triggered in workplaces where the public is served in large numbers or may be impacted, such as retail operations, hospitals and food manufacturing operations.

Where there is not a serious risk to public health and there are less intrusive means to ensure a safe working environment (such as physical

distancing, mask wearing, hand sanitising, etc.), these measures should be taken.

Accordingly, when it comes to office-based roles with limited contact with fellow employees or the public, an employer would likely meet its duty under OHSA by implementing the (now) normal health and safety protocols. In these circumstances, the public health risk exception in the National Health Act would not apply.

In many circumstances, it may be more effective (and carry less legal risk) for employers to educate employees on the vaccine and encourage them to be vaccinated, rather than making it a strict requirement for entry into the workplace.

Given the competing rights and potential risks involved, and in the absence of a general law mandating vaccinations, employers will need to tread most carefully when considering making vaccinations compulsory for staff. **SR**



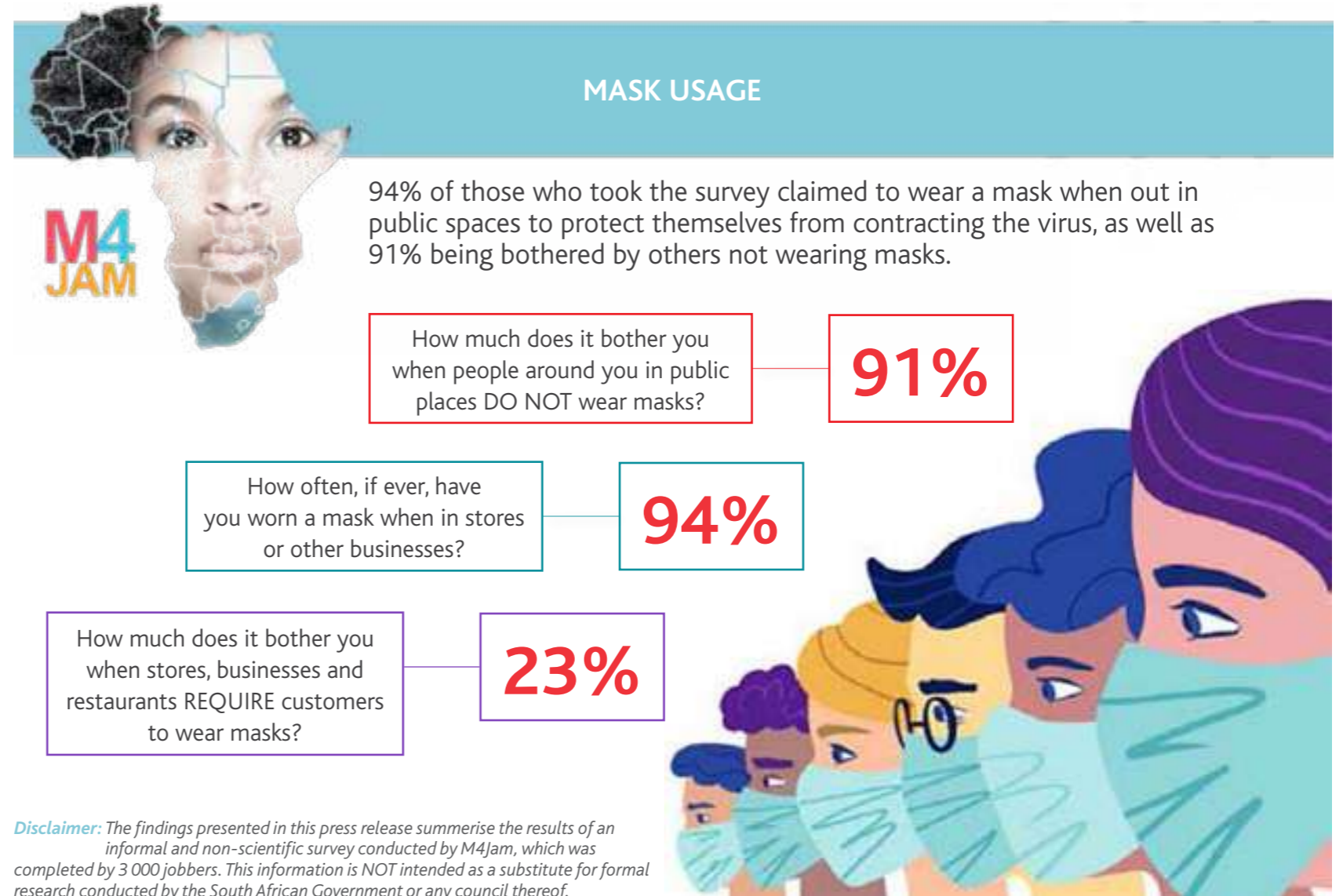
South Africans mistrust the Covid-19 vaccines and Governments ability to deliver

With the arrival of Covid-19 vaccines a real prospect within the next few months, South Africans remain broadly fearful of the ongoing impact of the virus on their livelihoods. Despite the reprieve from lockdown and economic devastation, the rollout of vaccines may offer, a lack of trust in both the vaccines themselves and the government's handling of the rollout is preventing people from seeing light at the end of the tunnel.

Gig technology company, M4Jam, which provides an important platform for struggling South Africans to make an income by performing temporary, part-time work in a time of retrenchments and downscaling, recently surveyed 3 000 of its jobbers about their feelings toward the rollout of Covid-19 vaccines in the country.

The respondents ranged from ages 18 – 64, with an average household income from zero to R12 800 per month. The findings show that the fight against Covid-19 has been made even more difficult through inconsistent and inadequate messaging.

An overwhelming majority of respondents (84%) felt that the worst is yet to come, rather than the arrival of vaccines being a cure-all. Only 9% of respondents believe the treatment of patients with the virus has improved since Covid-19 began



presenting in South Africa. 39% believe that patients with Covid-19 are now actually worse off. 83% said hospitals and medical centres near where they live are struggling to cope with the number of people seeking treatment for the virus.

Though 94% of those who took the survey claimed to wear a mask when out in public spaces to protect themselves from contracting the virus, as well as 91% being bothered by others not wearing masks. When asked if they would take the vaccine

should it become available only 32% would, 58% prefer to wait and see whether it worked for others, and 10% flat-out refuse to take it.

“This shows that although most South Africans are extremely worried about contracting the virus, the fear of the unknown is great enough to prevent widespread acceptance of the vaccine,” says M4Jam CEO Georgie Midgley.

Ranking their concerns about the vaccine, respondents cited the following as the main issues: possible side-effects (68%), lack of trust in the government to ensure the safety and effectiveness of the vaccine (50%), concerns that the vaccines are too new (39%) and fears of actually contracting the virus from the vaccine itself (29%).

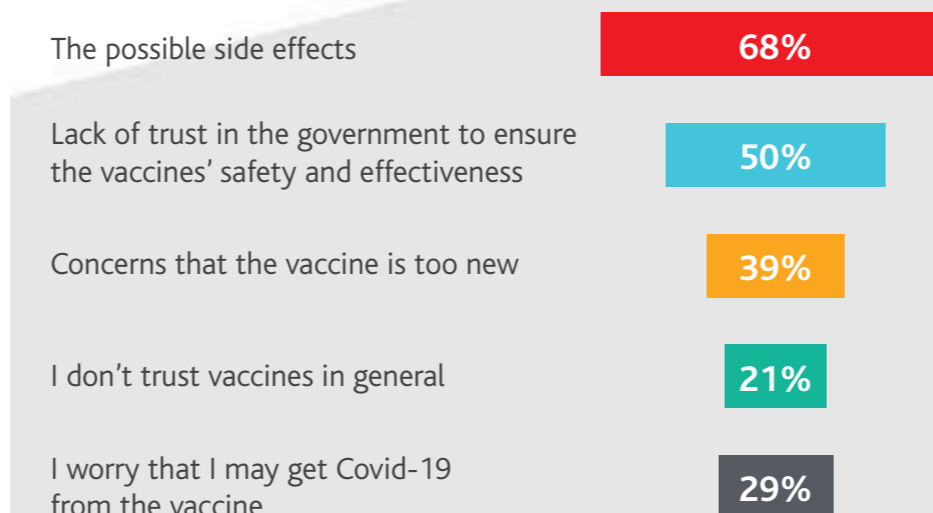
“It is clear that misinformation – or a lack of consistent, accurate messaging about the virus – will impede efforts to reach the government’s herd immunity and vaccination targets. This may prolong the negative impact on our economy, which would be extremely unfortunate. Some responses, such as the beliefs that 5G technology is responsible for causing Covid-19, or that its spread is related to air quality, illustrate the need for an extensive communication campaign,” adds Midgley.

93% of respondents said they would get tested if they detected any symptoms, despite their fears of obtaining a positive result, but 93% also said government should issue the vaccine for free, only 34% said they would be willing to pay for it and 60% felt moving back to Level 5 lockdown would be an appropriate response to slow the spread of the virus.



WHAT ARE YOUR BIGGEST CONCERNS ABOUT TAKING THE COVID-19 VACCINE?

It is clear that misinformation – or a lack of consistent, accurate messaging about the virus will impede efforts to reach the government’s herd immunity and vaccination targets.



Disclaimer: The findings presented in this press release summarise the results of an informal and non-scientific survey conducted by M4Jam, which was completed by 3 000 jobbers. This information is NOT intended as a substitute for formal research conducted by the South African Government or any council thereof.

“Given the clear and obvious devastation to the economy, the country could not sustain such a move and I am surprised to hear so many would rather opt for prolonged lockdown than a properly trialled vaccine. Rather, the best option seems to be communicating both the realistic effectiveness of suitably trialled vaccines and the plan for rollout. To have an effective vaccine available,

only to struggle rolling it out would certainly be a travesty,” says Midgley. **SR**

About M4Jam

M4Jam is a Gig technology company that connects organisations to communities through its mobile platform. The platform enables businesses to quickly and cost-effectively evaluate, activate and optimise new or existing markets, even in the hardest to reach informal communities. M4Jam is a subsidiary of DN Invest.

