

# SUPERMARKET & RETAILER



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Business knowledge for smart retailers  
ISSUE 9, 2021 [www.supermarket.co.za](http://www.supermarket.co.za)

## Refrigeration insights ... a vast range of choices

Innovative and exciting  
hot & cold beverages

OTC and sanitary  
products



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## FEATURES



### Refrigeration insights

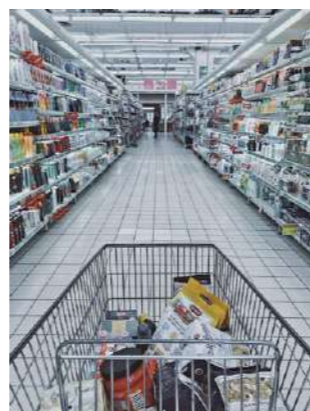
Ann Baker-Keulemans delves into the key considerations of store refrigeration. The need for increasing energy efficiency and decreasing costs, including cabinet styles, preventative maintenance, refrigeration audits, and door and closure types.



### Hot & cold beverages

Jeanne-Riette Martins discusses the innovative and exciting categories of hot & cold beverages – trends, insights and keeping it sustainable in 2021. The pandemic and working from home is driving growth in coffee consumption, and speciality teas is seeing good growth.

### OTC & sanitary products insights



Ann Baker-Keulemans looks inside the medicine & first aid cabinet. The over the counter (OTC) category in South Africa is impressive. The size of this category puts much pressure on pricing, margins, and range – the choice to keep your business profitable and the end consumer happy.

## COLUMNS

### Delight your customers

Aki Kalliatakis discusses the advantages of free samples. People love a freebie, and there is even a sense of obligation to repay the favour – by buying more. It creates loyalty.

## NEWS

### Petcare market

The secret life of pets exposed. Since the start of the pandemic, there has been an unprecedented rise in pet ownership.



This is no time for retailers to roll over as increased product innovation, customisation, affordable pricing (especially on pet food) raises the stakes around the world.

### Physical vs on-line

Finding the balance between physical store visits and on-line shopping. Consumer purchasing patterns have become far more complicated.

### Plant-based dairy

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### Etailer report

The 2021 South African Digital Customer Experience Report. Ecommerce market size could increase by 100% to 5,6% of total retail pie if glitches are fixed.

### Technology

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# The lowdown on refrigeration suppliers in South Africa



Helen Maister

**E**fficiency, beautiful design and services is the name of the game in retail refrigeration. In this issue we showcase the leading refrigeration suppliers in South Africa. At a glance you will be able to gain insight into their offering to make the best decision for your supermarket, wholesaler or convenience store.

Whether it is an upright or island self-contained units, glass or acrylic door retrofit, bespoke build, turnkey, refrigeration audits, multidecks, display cases, monitoring systems, miniplex system and of course the most important in these times ... what system will save you the most in energy? All these questions will be answered.

The Hot Beverages category is alive with opportunities ... coffee, tea, hot chocolate, speciality hot drinks, herbal teas, green teas, fruity infusions, exotic imports, and brand favourites. South Africa is a nation of tea and coffee drinkers. There have been some interesting developments in the last 18 months, with the pandemic and working from home driving growth in coffee consumption, and speciality teas seeing good growth.



Waters, carbonated beverages, soft drinks, juices, and energy drinks make their mark on the cold beverages sector all year round, but these drinks really come into play during the hot summer months in South Africa. With a massive range on offer, constant innovations, and the consumer's willingness to experiment, Cold Beverages is one of the big player categories for all retailers.

The category has undergone some dramatic changes over the past 18 months. Lockdowns saw a reduction in

the number of shoppers visiting their local convenience store to pick up their cold beverages on-the-go. Added to this, the economic hardship that has occurred as a ripple effect from the pandemic has caused considerable changes in shopper behaviour and perceived product value. Many consumers have been more mindful of their spending.

The over the counter (OTC) category in South Africa is impressive, to say the least. South African consumers know they can restock at one of the big supermarkets or hypers, with in-store pharmacies like Checkers and Shoprite Medirite, Pharmacy at Spar and Pick n Pay's retail pharmacies (acquired by Clicks in May 2021), specialist stores like Clicks and Dis-chem, and pharmacy chains like Alpha Pharm, M-Kem, and Link, not to mention the independents like Springbok Pharmacy, and independent wholesale and retail outlets, all contributing to the vast array on offer. The choice reflects the size of this category and also puts much pressure on pricing, margins, and range choice to keep your business profitable and the end consumer happy.

*Helen Maister*

**Helen Maister**



# What happened to the free samples?

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.

Like any typical husband, I feel duty bound to go shopping with the family, but to be honest, I really hate it. So I've developed a few tricks that help me get through it. For example, if there are magazines on display, I'm the guy you see paging through them endlessly. Or I'll find an interesting employee, and get into a conversation with them. I know that's not what you want me to do, but I'm too old for this lark.

One of the things that made the shopping experience a lot more bearable, however, was that occasionally there would be free samples of Belgian waffles or delicious new chilli sausages. The smells would attract you from afar, even from other aisles, and I was usually there for more than just one little titbit. If I played my cards right, I could



fill up quite nicely, and not have to pay for coffee and cake afterwards. (And, forgive my 'maleness', but the added benefit of these was that inevitably companies hired beautiful, vibrant, young models for the promotions.)

So, in my opinion, free samples were arguably the best part of grocery shopping, and they worked incredibly well.

For a relatively small investment, these tiny gifts create a lot of value for your customers. It's the principle of reciprocity at work again. People love

People love a freebie, and there is even a sense of obligation to repay the favour – by buying more. It creates loyalty and positiveness.

a freebie, and there is even a sense of obligation to repay the favour – by buying more. It creates loyalty and positiveness.

The statistics bear this out. Although my figures come from American

and European research, I'm willing to stake my reputation that the same holds true in our country.

For example, the makers of a leading brand of canned 'luncheon meat' found that by doing a special relaunch of their product at 650 stores, sales increased by a whopping 656% in one week, and overall sales by 10% that year. And Marsh supermarkets in the UK found that giving customers a chance to sample products increased sales by up to 20 times!



But there are also other benefits...

- In the case of luncheon meat, the relaunch revitalised a product that had been around for decades.
- Free samples allow customers who are loyal to a competitive brand to try something new – without the risk.
- If you are launching a new product, then free samples allow first-time buyers to try something new, and depending on what research you look at 85% tried something they would never have considered if it was just packed on the shelves.
- In the same Marsh study cited above, a follow-up survey showed that people who tried the free samples were 11% more likely to buy again six months later.

There's also evidence that the opposite is true. When lockdown happened, apart from the fact that many customers' shopping habits changed completely (with less regular shopping trips, more home deliveries and 'pick up and go', and the inconvenience of face masks, coupled with the fear of getting ill), free samples disappeared. For example ...

“ One supplier of hot Mexican sauces stated that sales dropped by 30% after the pandemic stopped samples at the supermarkets. ”

It's logistically just too hard to set up and conduct free samples, so both manufacturers and supermarkets have to reconsider this valuable ritual.



So what can you do as an alternative? How can you achieve the same effect and benefits, but without the hassle of the traditional model? Clearly, new and innovative techniques are desirable.

If the principle is to create positive feelings about your brand, and also to allow customers to feel that they are getting something for nothing, then you could, for example...

- Provide small free samples that are clearly securely packaged for hygiene reasons. This may not be possible for all products, especially those that need some preparation or cooking. But you could do a lot with those packages of mini-chocolates, or one serving of cheese.

- Distribute these where customers now shop. If you do lots of home deliveries or online ordering 'pick-up-and-go', could you include a free sample with every delivery?

- Promote your products in non-traditional partnerships. People are starting to go more regularly to restaurants, pubs (or eat in the company canteen), they stay at hotels, fly on airlines and attend special events. Perhaps you could team up with them to co-promote. (As an aside, we had a family wedding recently – after an 18 month postponement, and imagine what it would have been like if a company had offered to sponsor the costs. Or maybe I'm just too stingy!)



- Another alternative is to include free samples with restaurant deliveries done by the two big delivery companies in South Africa. Clearly, it is prohibitively expensive to hire a courier company to deliver samples to your customers, but there may be some middle ground.
- One major chain of butcheries in the pork industry has a ready-to-eat food kiosk at every

branch. When a product needs to be promoted, they offer customers a discount on the product that has been prepared. It's a great incentive to try something new.

- With lockdown, there also seems to be more businesses that do home cooking for harried people, and I've even seen a meal-kit service in Johannesburg. Tie in with them to give your free sample, or even better, get them to include it in the recipes.
- Don't forget that customers also love feeling positive about you giving back to your community. By stating this on your free sample, "Every bottle bought means we donate a bottle to a needy child."

So the world has become a lot more complicated recently, but the many benefits of free sampling are just too big to ignore. They can get customers on your side, give them an incentive to try something new, and give your rivals a bit of a go. When you combine these with traditional promotional events like contests, it may make your business unstoppable. **SR**



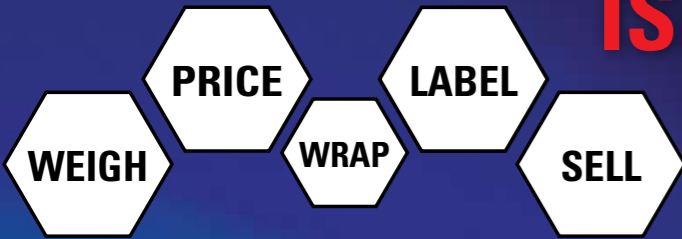
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# Refrigeration insights

## A vast range of choices

Store refrigeration is an ongoing topic, with critical issues like equipment choices, energy saving, maximising cabinet and plant efficiency, and alternative energy supply relevant all year round. Key considerations for increasing energy efficiency and decreasing energy costs include cabinet styles, preventative maintenance, refrigeration audits, and door and closure types.

Let's take a look at some of the refrigeration solutions and services available to South Africa retailers and wholesalers.

### Emerson commercial and residential solutions

Emerson is a global industry leader offering a complete range of automation and commercial solutions. They pride themselves on offering a total farm to fork retail and food refrigeration solution. Their strength lies in their experience and a wealth of technical skills and know-how – even the sales team have technical backgrounds and often make on-site repairs when calling on customers.

### Automation solutions

Automating your system can reduce down time, particularly for events such as load shedding that take place after hours, and also reduces the



potential for human error. Automated systems are an exceptionally useful way of monitoring your energy consumption and quickly identifying any problem areas. Emerson offers a complete and varied range of automation solutions, from temperature and electricity usage monitoring to control management and lighting.

### Refrigeration audits

A refrigeration audit will analyse total energy consumption over a certain period, how a system is installed, how efficiently it runs, and what sort of maintenance has been undertaken. It also evaluates how a refrigeration system has been performing, assuming that it is being monitored and recorded.







# We see

access to fresh food being the global norm rather than the exception.

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This will show if efficiency is decreasing and energy consumption is increasing, identify areas of concern, and indicate where improvements could be made.

## Retrofit

Improper installation and a lack of preventative maintenance are two of the biggest culprits when it comes to decreased efficiency.

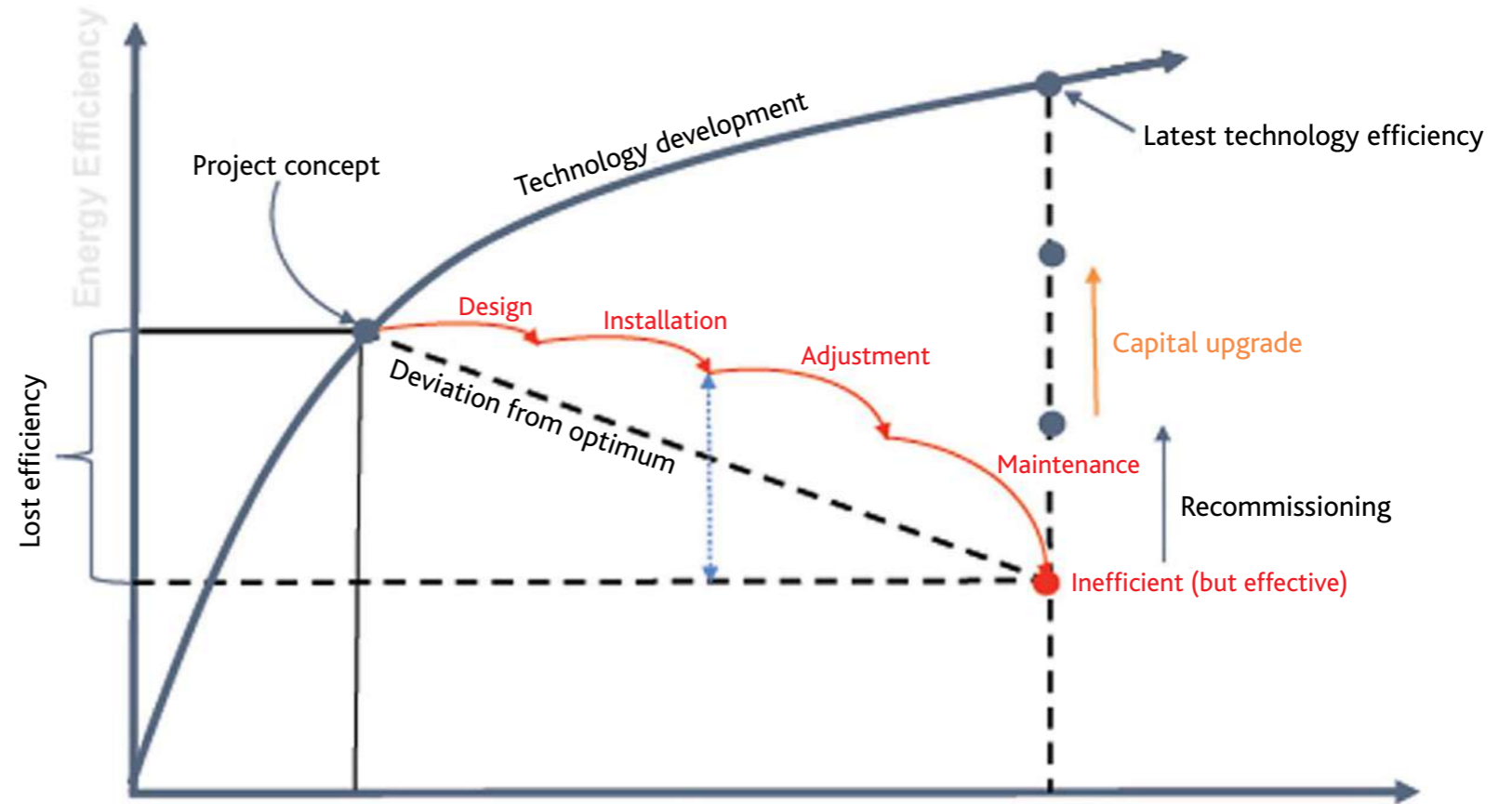
A system that is effective but not efficient does the job it was designed to do, but it takes a lot more energy to achieve those results than it should. This type of decline can happen quickly, and the effect can be seen on energy consumption within twelve months. Overall refrigeration energy efficiency can plummet by up to 30% in two years.

Causes for this decline can include poor or inexpert installation, adjustments needed to systems that haven't been specifically designed for your space and business, and infrequent or improper maintenance. Recommissioning or retrofitting an existing system is a solution that can often reap significant savings.

## New tech

Intelligent cold chain management, that follows produce from the moment it leaves the farm, ensures that fresh produce remains at a stable temperature throughout its journey to the customer's plate. Consistent temperatures mean a safer food product, as well as longer shelf life.

## The relationship between system efficiency and effectiveness



Source: Emerson Commercial and Residential Solutions

Refrigeration systems can lose as much as 30% efficiency within the first two years of operation – monitoring is critical

## AHT Multilayer Trading

Multilayer Trading has a full range of supermarket refrigeration solutions, with a focus on energy-efficient, eco-friendly, and self-contained units. These units have been extensively tested, both at the design stage and through years of on-site learnings and experience.

## Cabinet styles

Multilayer Trading offers three different turnkey solutions for retail stores: plug in, hybrid and remote.

Plug in – This is a what is known in the industry as self-contained refrigeration. These highly energy efficient units are manufactured with compressors fitted into each unit, so there is no need for any external compressors. The unit is fully flexible and can be moved to anywhere in the store, without the need for copper pipes or trenches. The savings on installation, labour, and building materials is extensive.



**We Cool**

**You Sell**

**Hybrid** – This is unique to the market and only offered by Multilayer Trading. The hybrid feature is utilised by Multilayer’s Multideck system. These units can be fitted to either a water-cooled system or run using condensing fans, resulting in greatly reduced refrigeration downtime.

**Remote** – Much like a conventional case, these units can be fitted into an existing system. The choice of many stores, remote systems run off a central condensing unit that pipes refrigerant to individual fixed location cabinets. The pipes and wiring for these units must be channelled in, which can limit manoeuvrability once installed.

### New tech

An in-house monitoring system is connected to each refrigeration unit. If a fault is noted, it can be resolved electronically or logged to the 24-hour helpdesk, which then advises a technical team on the problem, ensuring they are prepared to speedily repair the fault in-store.

### Colcab

Colcab is an innovative manufacturer of refrigerated display cases and cabinets and is one of the leaders in the South Africa’s refrigeration industry.

### Cabinets

Over the years, cabinet design has improved dramatically, and new generation cabinets can be up to 30% more efficient than older units. Colcab



Colcab Spar Century City

offers both conceptual design and retrofit solutions, aimed at significantly decreasing energy costs and increasing energy efficiency.

### Doors and closures

Close-the-case technology uses high-quality materials to close any type of case, chest, or cabinet. Closing the case can result in energy savings of 30% to 60%, depending on the age of the cabinets, the store design, and what sort of doors are used. Colcab are the masters of retrofit and can, achieve a storewide close-the-case solution in one night, resulting in zero downtime for an undisturbed shopper experience, depending on store size and accessibility.

Closing the case makes financial sense – adding

doors or sliding closures to refrigerated display cabinets and freezers results in energy cost savings, stable temperatures, better product quality, and a longer shelf life. It also reduces the spill over of chilled air into shopping aisles, which makes for a more comfortable shopper experience.

Colcab’s trademarked DoubleCOOL acrylic doors are lightweight, realising the double benefit of providing a reduced barrier to product for the consumer and making the doors easy to fit and retrofit. Acrylic is a sturdy material that doesn’t break into shards if it is broken, which is a safer option when it comes to food display. Acrylic doors have exceptional clarity, which provides excellent product visibility. Eco Leaf acrylic doors can be up to 64% more efficient than standard doors.





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QUALITY DISPLAY SOLUTIONS



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- Preserves temperature during power failures
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## RETROFIT

Colcab offers tailor-made retrofit solutions. Please contact De Wet Solomon on 084 368 5048 for retrofit enquiries.

Legal disclaimer: The above information is believed to be correct but does not intend to be all-inclusive and shall be used only as a guide. Colcab (Pty) Ltd shall not be held liable for any damage resulting from handling the above product.

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### Retrofit

Colcab offers new and retrofit options, which can be undertaken together with a full cabinet refurbishment that includes modernised cladding and lights for a fresh, modern look and feel.

### Refrigeration systems

Aqualoop, a trademarked design, is an ultra-efficient waterloop refrigeration system. However much like a Miniplex system, it requires increased installation, set-up, and maintenance skills from all the technicians involved and, as such, may be better suited to more urban areas. Any system, whether it uses water, CO<sub>2</sub>, R290 Propane, or freon gases, must be “fit for purpose” in order to work efficiently. It is also possible to improve the efficiency of any freon or natural gas system with the addition of new technology, as well as modern compressors and controls.

### New tech

Colcab are currently engaged in testing an app-based system monitoring solution, so watch out for exciting new developments.

## Solo Aircon & Refrigeration

Solo provides a full refrigeration service, including repair work, maintenance, and installation of refrigeration and air conditioning units, as well as cold and freezer rooms. This long-standing company is a refrigeration industry leader in the Lowveld with a strong focus on energy-efficiency, system optimisation, and customer relations.



This new Hybrid Box is saving Solo Aircon’s clients thousands of Rand each month on their electricity consumption.

### Cabinets

Solo are suppliers of Colcab cabinets and cases, which are designed with energy efficiency in mind and make full use of the latest design elements. These units can be installed with acrylic doors or sliders for additional energy savings.

### Refrigeration audits

Solo undertakes full audits for their customers and will continue to monitor energy usage after installation in order to determine a store’s needs, as well as pinpoint problem areas. Not only does this enable them to provide an accounting of total energy and cost savings, it also allows them to pinpoint and resolve any problems quickly and efficiently.

“The system has been designed with loadshedding in mind and can handle an uncertain power supply, automatically powering down and idling during power cuts.”

### New tech

Solo produces a Hybrid Box system that can result in energy savings of up to 20%-25% per store. By incorporating a store’s air conditioning into the system and rerouting the existing pipes, an even greater energy saving can be realised.

As air conditioning units can use between 250 and 300 amps, this is a significant reduction in energy use and can boost overall savings up to 32%. The system has been designed with loadshedding in mind and can handle an uncertain power supply, automatically powering down and idling during power cuts. It is monitored remotely, with all events automatically logged with Solo’s call centre to ensure prompt action is taken if necessary.

# Save Energy Save Money

**Our Hybrid Sub-cooling System is the most cost effective and efficient energy system for supermarkets in South Africa**

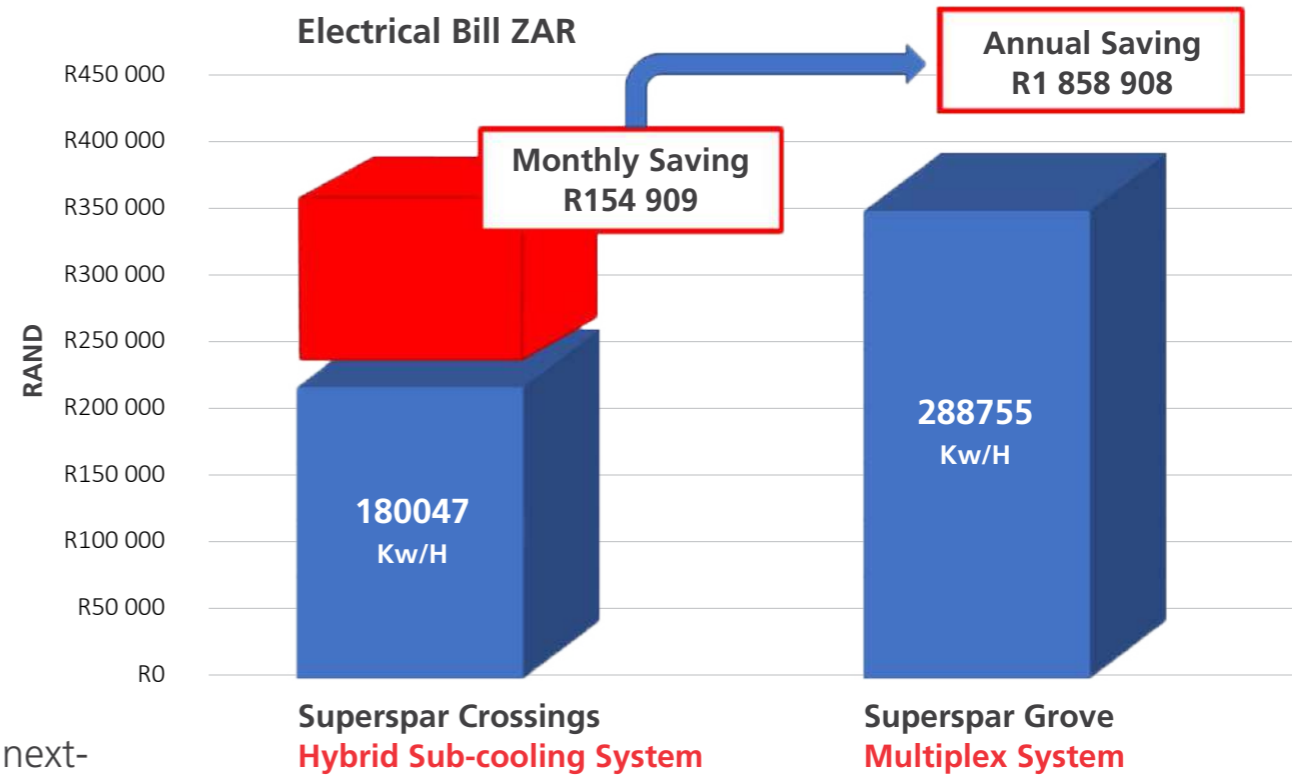
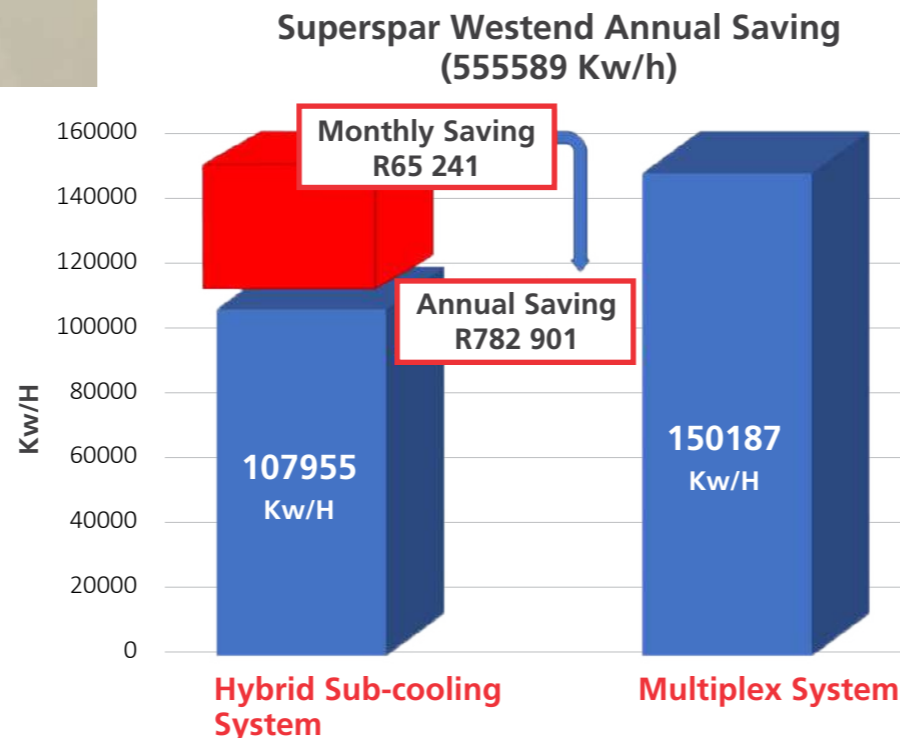


High-tech refrigeration systems, with features like multiplex compressor racks and electronic expansion valves, save many South African retailers millions of Rands annually.

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## Blizzard Systems

Founded in 2018, Blizzard Systems was formed by a team of four. With a collective 120 years of experience in the manufacturing industry, Blizzard provides a fully modernised, energy reducing, turnkey refrigerated display solution.

“ Blizzard designs, manufactures, and installs a turnkey glass door display system, including lighting, shelving solutions, and automated systems for walk through entrances. ”

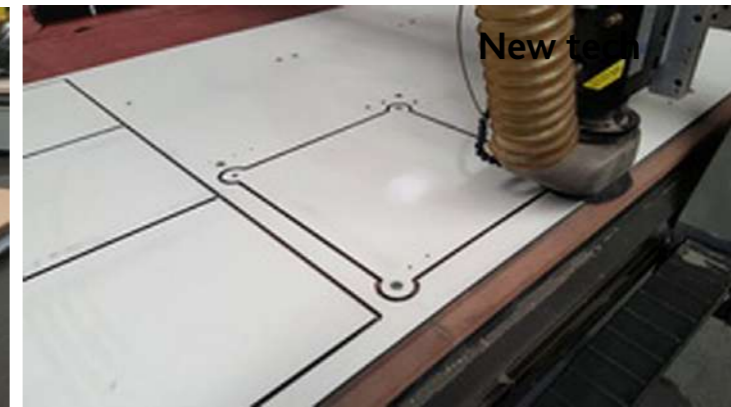
Their focus is on achieving maximum energy efficiency, and they are constantly innovating to realise that goal.

### Energy efficiency

Instead of several individual cold room or freezer spaces, investing in one big room with several glass-framed doors can have a big impact on reducing refrigeration energy and associated costs. The Blizzard system uses an energy efficient design complemented by thermal break technology within the door, mullion, and architrave. Double glazed Thermopane glass provides excellent insulation and increases the system’s energy efficiency even further.

### Automated door systems

Automated door systems for walk through entrances are included in Blizzard’s production capabilities. Available for bi-parting or single sliding doors, the system utilises no-touch or beam sensors and



Images courtesy of Safety Composites

is ideal for access control. Providing additional expertise and knowledge sharing, sister company Safety Composites has been in door automation for the last eight years, providing pneumatic or electrical door system options for the railway sector. Blizzard also has a longstanding relationship

with GEZE South Africa – a German-based company with decades of experience in building automation.

All installations use only original GEZE parts, and with Blizzard’s technicians having considerable experience in the field, they do their own system commissioning.

Each of Blizzard’s custom designed wiring harnesses are made to reduce electrical installation time, as well as to accommodate the layout of the store and the positioning of the doors. All frames and harnesses are fitted with male/

female connectors that are clearly marked, which simply clip together after positioning, creating a ‘plug and play’ system. Blizzard is currently the only supplier of the ‘Ezi’ electrical hinge with no visible wires and the ‘Ezi’ torque adjuster for the easy adjustment and tensioning of doors.



# Energy efficient glass display systems

## FOR COLD ROOM OR FREEZER APPLICATION

**B**lizzard Systems was formed in 2018 by a team of four people with over 120 years of combined experience within the manufacturing industry. With modernised production techniques, our goal was to develop a glass door display system for the cold room industry, with our main focus being energy reduction technologies. We quickly realised the complexity of the project and that further development had to be done, to offer our customers a turnkey solution for their display requirements. From there we developed our own lighting, shelving solutions and automated systems for walk through entrances.

In 2019 we did our first installation and we have grown in leaps and bounds since then. We moved our production facilities to a new 1 500m<sup>2</sup> factory and are now 16 employees. We've upgraded some of our machinery, we've erected a showroom at our facilities, installed a test cabinet where all our production items are tested, and where training on our products get offered. We've perfected our current design and can proudly say that we've now supplied over 100 stores with our current display systems. However, we are constantly looking to improve and innovate on our quality, production line, and energy efficiency.



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Black Silver

CUSTOM COLOURS AVAILABLE  
UPON SPECIAL REQUEST



**Superb product illumination**

**Easy to install**  
**Various customisation options**  
**Available in various standard sizes**



**Various shelving and accessories available**

Since inception, we worked closely with refrigeration contractors and panel builders. This is where we noticed how much time typically gets spent on an installation and specifically on the electrical connections, especially when working in bigger stores. That's when we introduced our wiring harness to simplify the install. Each electrical harness is custom made to accommodate the layout/ positioning of the doors instore.

All frames and harness are fitted with male/female connectors that are clearly marked, which simply clip together after positioning. Creating our 'plug and play' system.

Our automated door systems for walk through entrances seamlessly slotted into our production capabilities. Our sister company Safety Composites has been in door automation for the last eight years providing door systems for the railway sector in pneumatic or electrical options. We have a longstanding relationship with GEZE South Africa – the German-based company has decades of experience in building automation. All our installations are done using only original GEZE parts, and with our own experience in the field, we do our own commissioning of the systems.

As Blizzard Systems, our vision is to offer our customers turnkey solutions which are fully customisable, quality products that will reduce installation time and energy consumption and, most importantly, on time deliveries. We are continuously striving towards innovating and becoming the leaders in the market when it comes to energy efficiency.



## Door Automation & Viewing Windows

For all walk-through entrances with a range of customisable options & accessories.

All installations are done using **GEZE** original parts.



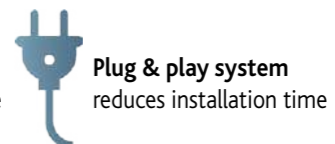
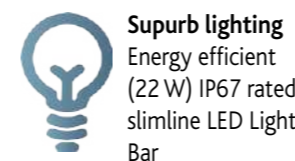
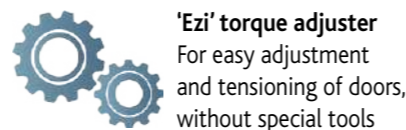
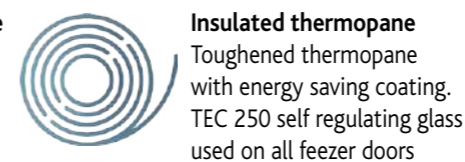
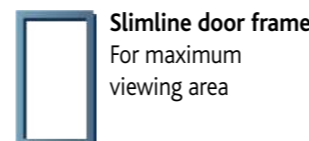
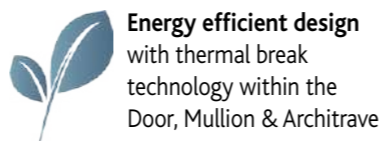
## Cold Room Sliding Door Systems

Compact design using 'food safe' materials (304 Stainless Steel and UHMDPE) to ensure cleanliness and practicality.



Various options to accommodate various opening widths

\*Closing canopies and doors are made to suit, as optional extras\*



After sales service  
Installation and/or training available



011 824-2149  
[www.blizzardsystems.co.za](http://www.blizzardsystems.co.za)  
[sales@blizzardsystems.co.za](mailto:sales@blizzardsystems.co.za)

## Glacier Door Systems

Glacier provides specialist products primarily to the refrigeration industry. These include glass doors and complementary shelving, modular injected polyurethane panels as well as glass processing and toughening. Glacier is innovation driven and offers a range of energy efficient products and retrofit options designed to save energy in an ever-increasing energy cost environment. Their products offering is supported by technical expertise and backed up by an experienced and dedicated team.



Glacier top sliders for island and chest freezers



Glacier standard Air Shield doors

### Doors and closures

Close the case is vital for energy savings, reducing cold air spillage, maintaining a stable cabinet temperature, and improving product quality and shelf-life. With Glacier, any case can be closed, from doors on upright refrigerated display cabinets right through to top sliders on jumbo and island freezers and even low meat displays.

Glacier's Air Shield glass door is a high-quality energy efficient new and retrofit solution for refrigerated supermarket display cases. Air Shield doors can be fitted to any existing open refrigeration case.

These doors are double glazed glass with Argon gas fill for superior insulation and come with a heating option for high-humidity environments. They are fitted with a speed-adjustable hydraulic hinge for a positive close seal saving up to 40% on energy consumption.

Eco Leaf doors guarantee energy-savings in an energy-heavy environment and can be retrofitted to existing glass door freezers. Eco Leaf freezer doors are designed as a 'swop-out', energy-saving replacement glass door utilising 220V technology that eliminates the need for voltage-reducing capacitors.

### Retrofit

Glacier offers several superior glass options for customers looking to close the case, either as part of a new design or as a retrofit. adding an optional 'facelift' to a retrofit that can modernise the look and feel of a store.

“LED lighting can also be added at the time of fitting or retrofitting, and this saves energy while also enhancing the look of the product within, thus improving the shopper's experience.”



# 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.

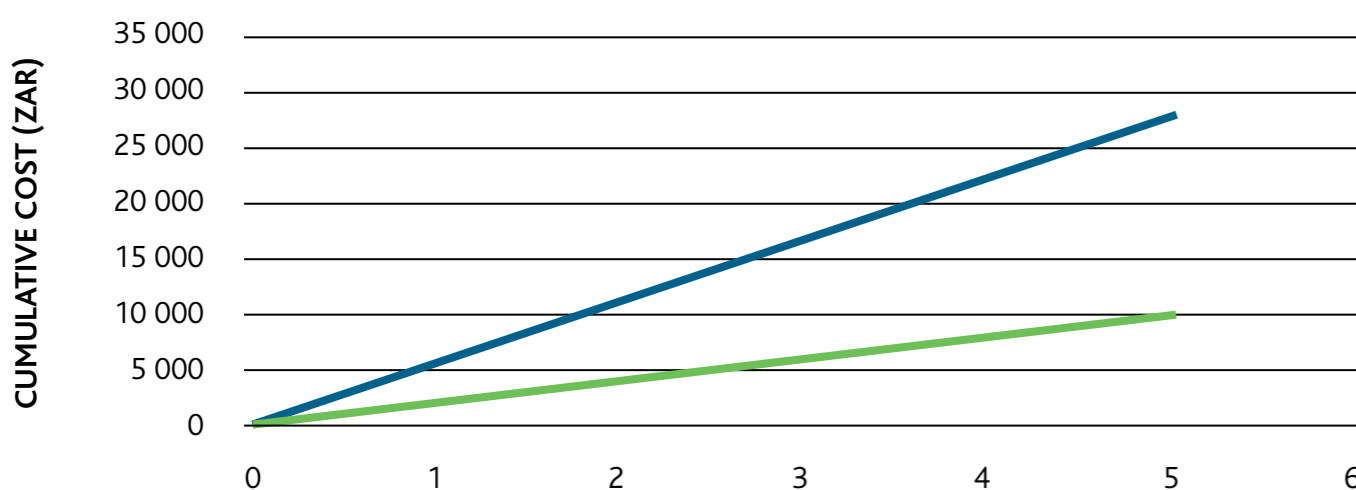
**You can trust a Glacier door**



### 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

## SCM REF Africa

### Refrigeration audits

The core focus at SCM REF Africa is to offer the best, most efficient system for each specific project. The first step is to determine what type of system is needed, which is generally dependent on the required refrigeration capacity and the customer's preference. A fine balance between the number of compressors, cooling capacity, refrigerant type and budget is considered when a system is specified.

### Refrigeration systems

With the phasing out of HFC refrigerants and the drive towards a more sustainable and environmentally friendly cold chain, the use of CO<sub>2</sub> as a natural refrigerant is a growing trend and is seen as a future proof refrigerant.

An important factor to consider is the total life cycle cost of the plant versus initial capital cost. This is the reason SCM Ref Africa only uses premium branded products to ensure the maximum life cycle of the plant. To ensure the lowest operating costs, there are various energy saving options available.

The first form of energy-saving to consider is that of compressor capacity control. Capacity control allows the system to operate at the exact capacity required and prevents unnecessary starting and stopping of compressors, which is a major factor in power consumption. This is offered either by means of a variable speed drive (VSD) or by a capacity or start unloader (mechanical or digital).



The second form of energy-saving to consider is to have some form of condensing capacity control. This is either done by fitting a fan speed controller or by fitting EC (electronically commutated) fans to the condenser.

The third form of energy-saving to consider is to fit electronic expansion valves (EEV's) to the evaporators and cabinets. When EEV's are fitted, it allows for an increase in evaporating temperature and the reduction in condensing temperature. These two factors have a big effect in reducing the running power consumption of the system, as the system will modulate according to the required cooling capacities, as well as adapt to the varying condensing temperatures throughout the day.

SCM Ref Africa is committed to the goal of maximised sustainability through the offering of refrigeration systems with the lowest environmental impact. To achieve this, with the backing of their sister company SCM FRIGO, they can offer highly efficient and eco-friendly CO<sub>2</sub> transcritical booster systems. The range is offered with all energy saving measures in place, with heat recovery system (for water heating), parallel compressors with VSD, as well as an Ejector system to handle higher ambient conditions.

While the initial capital outlay and installation costs may be higher than that of a HFC system, the reduced power consumption of the system will narrow this gap over time, while still being a green future alternative.

# Environmentally Energy Efficient Future Proof Refrigeration Systems

**CUBO<sub>2</sub>**  
SMART

**BOOSTER BOOSTER** INDUSTRIAL  
SMKT



CUBO2 Smart is a compact, plug & cool, high efficiency CO2 transcritical condensing unit equipped with a brushless DC variable speed compressor with an advanced control system.



The MWT SMKT & MWT Industrial BOOSTER product lines are high efficiency CO2 transcritical systems that can be configured as MT only or booster MT/LT.

The modular design allows for superb customization as well as system optimization for control, configuration and layout. This makes the MWT SMKT/Industrial range the best option for supermarket & industrial applications.



SCM Ref Africa, distributed through Metraclark supplied Natcool with a MWT SMKT BOOSTER CO2 transcritical system for Pick n' Pay in Randfontein.

The system supplied is a high efficiency 6 compressor MWT indoor Booster LT/MT unit.  
(3xMT+1xIT+ 2xLT)



### Danfoss puts inverters to the test

Recent European studies by refrigeration specialists Danfoss estimated that the use of inverter technology could potentially lead to an energy saving of approximately 30% when compared to fixed speed technology. Danfoss South Africa recently put their estimations to the test by testing energy savings for fixed scroll versus inverter scroll technology.

Alistair Bell, Technical Support Engineer at Danfoss South Africa says "There is no question that energy efficiency is swiftly becoming a key concern within the refrigeration and air-conditioning sector at a global level. In addition, power supply constraints in some parts of the world, such as South Africa, are putting an added emphasis on expanding HVAC-R (heating, ventilation, air-conditioning and refrigeration) infrastructure using the same power supply.

Danfoss South Africa set up a practical experimental site in South

Optyma model	OP-MPVEO68	OP-MPPM044
CODE	114X7043	114X4334
Technology	Fixed speed	Variable speed
Acc kWh (5 Feb 2021 – 4 April 2021)	1 703.3 kWh	1 193.4 kWh
Daily average kWh	19.35 kWh	13.56 kWh
Actual annual extrapolated kWh	6 813.2 kWh	4 773.6 kWh
WCSF	3.05	2.83
Full size consumption	20 780.3 kWh	13 509.3 kWh
Capital cost factor	1	2

The Danfoss South Africa experiment showed concrete results regarding electricity consumption

Africa to examine the theoretical and practical results comparing fixed scroll and inverter scroll technologies.

The results proved that inverter scroll compressor technology does indeed offer a significant saving compared to fixed



**GSP V Slicer**



**S111 Combo Tenderiser**



**VS12 F Steak Slicer**



**GSP HD Semi-Auto**





speed scroll technology or similar. The results showed that:

For every unit (electricity consumption/cost) consumed or spent on the fixed speed unit, an equivalent 0.7 units are consumed or spent on the inverter unit.

The findings go on to state: "Factors that were not incorporated, but would significantly contribute to a further saving, include peak load demand during peak electricity periods, where one would pay for the highest peak load demand. Typically, this happens when fixed speed compressors start up and the amperage spikes for split seconds. This influence is neutralised using inverter technology, further reducing consumption due to actively adapting to cooling demand by speeding the compressor up and down, thereby varying the demand load. This is but one factor that could further increase direct electricity savings."

It was also noted that "Based on the results of this study, it is clear that when using basic technology, a saving could be realised by merely changing one element of the cycle. Further savings could therefore be reached by potentially changing the following:

- Thermostatic expansion to electronically controlled expansion (Danfoss MSS technology specifically).
- Implementing smart defrost cycles, including defrost on demand.
- Pulsing of fans during the off cycle.

With the inclusion of these additional features



The Danfoss Optyma fixed speed unit

(normally already incorporated in the evaporator controller), a saving of approximately 40% can easily be realised, when comparing traditional technologies."

#### Sources:

[www.emerson.com/en-us/commercial-residential-solutions](http://www.emerson.com/en-us/commercial-residential-solutions)  
[www.multilayertrading.com](http://www.multilayertrading.com) | [www.colcab.co.za](http://www.colcab.co.za)  
[www.soloaircon.co.za](http://www.soloaircon.co.za) | [www.glacierdoors.co.za](http://www.glacierdoors.co.za)  
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**Ann Baker-Keulemans**, a highly experienced business and consumer journalist, is 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. [ann@wilkinsross.co.za](mailto:ann@wilkinsross.co.za)  
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A beverage cold room was fitted with a fixed speed inverter as part of an experiment to compare fixed scroll and inverter scroll technologies.

#### Shop around for the best option for your store

From custom designs and new installations to retrofitting existing systems, preventative maintenance, and refrigeration audits, there is an industry-wide focus on energy and cost savings, efficiency, and sustainability. Being energy-smart is vital to business survival as the cost of electricity soars with irregular interruptions. New technology and innovation in everything from refrigeration systems and controllers to cabinets manufacture and closures means that savvy store owners and managers have a wide variety of options available when it comes to picking the best refrigeration solution for their needs. **SR**



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-  Staycold International (Pty) Ltd

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completes your self-contained  
refrigeration requirements*



*STAYCOLD are about to launch a new  
product development that will meet a  
market requirement and complement our  
range of energy efficient beverage coolers  
ideally suited to the retail environment.*



*Trust the Experience*

# The innovative and exciting categories of hot & cold beverages

## Trends, insights and keeping it sustainable in 2021

### Hot beverages

The Hot Beverages category is alive with opportunities: coffee, tea, hot chocolate, speciality hot drinks, herbal teas, green teas, fruity infusions, exotic imports, and brand favourites. South Africa is a nation of tea and coffee drinkers. There have been some interesting developments in the last 18 months, with the pandemic and working from home driving growth in coffee consumption, and speciality teas seeing good growth.



Being more home-bound seems to have led to a significant increase in consumers looking to recreate their favourite café-style hot beverages at home – and consequently stocking up on items such as speciality teabags, ground coffee, coffee pods and hot chocolate. While the foodservice industry suffered the harsh effects of lockdown at its various levels, retailers have been well placed to grow their hot beverages sub-categories category by ensuring that they provide a wide selection, and in many instances an on-the-go hot beverage offering.



will make premium coffee more accessible and bring the Starbucks experience to thousands of consumers through its increased retail footprint.”

“As Checkers continues to grow and expand its fresh offering, the partnership with Starbucks is another testament to its determination to offer an improved, world-class shopping experience.”

With regards to buying for the home, Stats SA reported in 2020 that South Africans typically spend 5,6% of their household expenditure on coffee, although this varies according to LSM Instant coffee is an important category in coffee and continues to show strong

growth in retail. Tea expenditure is tied for the lead in hot beverages, also accounting for 5,6% of the average household spend.

Statistics also show that rooibos tea drinkers had to pay substantially more to fill their teapots as the rooibos industry recovers from a four-year drought, which placed a constraint on market supplies. The demand for this uniquely South African product is consistently high. Daily Maverick reports that up to 12 000 metric tonnes of rooibos is produced annually in South Africa, and the industry employs thousands of people. Approximately 4 500 to 5 000 tonnes of rooibos are consumed by South Africans, while the balance of the tea is exported to over 30 countries across the globe.

In-store coffee stations and retail partnerships with branded coffee shops have gained in popularity, as retailers have seized the chance to increase in-store spending. Customers are encouraged to make impulse purchases by pairing hot drink-to-go items with food-to-go items. A good example is the Checkers partnership with Starbucks, which saw the opening of two coffee outlets at the chain’s FreshX supermarkets in Rosebank and Stellenbosch in December 2020.

The success of this offering has prompted Checkers to plan a revamp of at least a third of its stores to the new look and concept. Willem Hunlun, Chief Operating Officer, Checkers, explains “The Checkers FreshX collaboration with Starbucks



# Sparkling fruit water for healthy sugar-free hydration

While the demand for sugar-laden soft drinks has been in steady decline over the past few years, the opposite has been true for the sparkling water category. As consumers seek healthier water alternatives, A1 Fruit Water – a premium natural sparkling fruit water with zero-calories – has rapidly begun to steal market share on SA shelves since launching in Q3 of 2020.

Globally, brands in the sparkling water category are experiencing strong growth and South Africa is on the same course, due to the rise of health-conscious consumers in the country. According to *beveragedaily.com*, consumers do not only want to drink products low in sugar, but they are looking for ingredients with health benefits.

Research from The International Food Information Council Foundation's (IFIC) 2020 Food & Health Survey, showed that nearly 1 in 10 consumers (9%) follow a clean-eating diet and 74% are cleaning up their beverage selection by limiting and avoiding sugars in the diet. Through A1 Fruit Water's own market research from a sample of 1 000 South Africans, it was found that 9 out of 10 say they are happy to pay for sugar-free, preservative-free and 0 calorie drinks.

Last year, A1 Fruit Water officially launched in the country, with their range of natural sparkling waters, infused with real African fruit. The natural sparkling fruit water range comes in three flavours; Mandarin, Lemon, and Grapefruit.



A1 Fruit Water is the only offering on South African shelves that can hold a claim to have zero calories, zero sugar, zero sweetener, is preservative free and Vegan accredited. The natural fruit infusion and flavours found in A1 Fruit Water are captured as a by-product during the fruit concentrate manufacturing process.

"Our target market is a group of highly conscious and discerning drinkers who care about what they put in their bodies and how their brands of choice impact the world around them. We're meeting their need for healthy hydration, from a mindful brand who cares about the sustainability and future of Africa." says Jan Strydom, Operations Manager at ONE54 South Africa.

A1 Fruit Water works with farming partners who are located in the sub-tropical mango and citrus producing region of Hoedspruit in the north of the country through purchasing the by-product from the fruit concentrate manufacturing process and thus push the supply and demand for fruit produce in the area.

"Health, local supply chains, e-commerce and sustainability are areas that are rapidly

evolving around the globe and A1 Fruit Water captures these trends in a locally made, guilt free sparkling water for the South African market, that can be sold through traditional and disruptive channels," concludes Strydom.

A1 Fruit Water has national ambitions, but has launched with a focus on the Western Cape and Gauteng Provinces with products on shelves at Pick n Pay, Spar, other independent retailers, as well as online at Takealot.



For more information on **A1 Fruit Water** visit [www.a1fruitwater.com](http://www.a1fruitwater.com)



## Bringing the coffee roastery experience to retail

Insight from Kobus Wiese – Wiesenhof Coffee

**W**iesenhof Coffee was born in 1994 when Kobus Wiese and his wife Belinda saw the potential for opening a small coffee shop at the East Rand Mall in Boksburg. The essential values that they started with were providing excellent service, personal attention, quality food and a welcoming atmosphere. The standout offering would be exceptional coffee products and, Wiese says, “We roasted the green beans and made the blends on site, and in view of our customers from day one. Soon, people started buying our coffee for their homes and enquiries came in from businesses and offices, so we decided to franchise with the Wiesenhof Coffee Roastery.”

The roastery supplies their own branded coffee shops, being the Wiesenhof and Café Dulce franchises. Their products are also widely used in the hospitality and travel industries, with clients such as British Airways and Airlink, various hotels, guesthouses, and other coffee shops. Wiesenhof’s gourmet coffee is also available to businesses and the public and have become a feature on retail shelves.

Wiese believes that the key to their success has been their passion – for what they do, and their quality, “Quality is vital, and we believe we have the best quality product. Starting from the choice of beans, the quality control throughout the process and of course training of our staff. We strive to pass the same passion that we have



Image courtesy of Wiesenhof Coffee Roastery

Wiesenhof Coffee Roastery produces a range of gourmet coffee blends. The company uses only pure Arabica coffee beans, which is their choice for the best quality product.

on to our baristas, waiters, franchisees, managers and at every touch point to ensure that it flows through to the client when the product is served.”

Over the last 18 months or so, Wiese has observed that retail has had the advantage of accessibility to consumers, with coffee drinkers working from home or taking their favourite brand of coffee to the office. Amid the economic hardship, he says that it has been heartening to see entrepreneurs and businesses turn towards each other and create mutual opportunities.

“When I go and meet with people, they are happy to put my product on the shelf and to market the brand – and of course it’s a two-way street, I do it in partnership with them. Shelf space is money to the retailer, so it’s important for us to be involved and get the products moving. By showing that we’re serious about our product we secure loyalty from the retailer, and we keep the customers coming back. We’ve had a great experience in retail,” Kobus Wiese, Founder, Wiesenhof Coffee.

Wiese helps to market the Wiesenhof coffees by spending time in stores himself, doing ‘wet demo’s’ during which customers can taste the different coffee blends. Nine out of ten times, Wiese says, the customer buys the products that they taste, and they also ask questions and engage in conversation, which creates a long-term benefit.

With regards to the factors that influence the shopper’s buying decisions, he notes that there will always be the individuals who buy based on price alone and that every person buys what

# Staycold introduces a cost saving digital solution

Staycold International have just introduced their latest technology development that allows their customers to monitor, track and interact with their refrigeration assets remotely. This through a collaboration with Digital Twin and their recently developed Marconi device. The Marconi enables full virtual visibility of an asset, allowing for better asset management and maintenance of units, as well as the added benefit of being an innovative sales driver. This will help clients, especially those with a large fleet of assets in multiple locations, have the ability to proactively manage their fleet of units and ultimately bring the total cost of ownership (TCO) down.

Through Digital Twin's cloud-based portal and technology, asset owners can now, from anywhere, at any time, interact remotely with their assets. They will have the ability for example to confirm a unit's location, turn lights on and off, adjust the temperature or change the ECO management strategy. They will also be able to monitor the unit's refrigeration system's condition and react proactively before time, if the need arises, to send out technicians. This drastically reduces emergency call out costs when a unit goes down.

Lena le Roux, Staycold's Managing Director is upbeat with this new solution on offer and commented: "This is a great addition especially for our corporate and bottler clients, to manage their assets more effectively and easily, by a simple



Staycold's Digital Twin cloud-based IoT solution, allowing for remote interaction.

click of a button. They can also set up notifications via alarms say on their phone, to warn if the condensers are showing signs of getting blocked for example. An alarm is sent and remedial action can be taken. Real time actions such as this also stop the unit drawing too much electricity, so there is an environment spin off as well as a TCO saving."

The benefits of this new solution are believed to be multiple and address key pillars for asset owners. These include raw asset management i.e. the console shows at any time where assets are, key indicator diagnosis to see the condition they are in for timeous reaction, easier maintenance

and lastly as a sales driver. The device gives the ability to monitor key sales indicators like door opening, product temperatures etc and the ability to compare this information with other assets in the fleet nearby. This enables companies to maximise asset placement locations and ultimately product sales.

Digital Twin's MD Richard Creighton commented: "We are proud to offer this affordable and complete IoT solution that is reverse compatible with any recently manufactured (since 2014) Staycold unit as well as new units. It is a simple plug and play connection and the data costs are fixed, no matter where the units are globally. This is the next level for clients to view their Staycold differently."

Staycold were also motivated to collaborate with Digital Twin, as they are also a South African company. This is aligned to their buy local mindset to help boost the South Africa economy during these times. **SR**

Staycold has been manufacturing self-contained commercial fridges and freezers from their factory in Parys, in South Africa for 40 years. They pride themselves in making reliable, durable energy efficient fridges and freezers which are more cost-effective over the unit's lifetime.



Contact Staycold on +27 (56) 819 8097, [info@staycold.co.za](mailto:info@staycold.co.za) or Digital Twin on +27 (11) 958 2529 or [info@digitaltwin.digital](mailto:info@digitaltwin.digital).



their budget allows. More often than not, he says, it's a combination of factors, and price isn't everything. For example ...

“If you prefer good quality boerewors you will walk away from cheap versions because you can't compromise on the quality of the meat in real boerewors. The same applies to good coffee, whisky, or wine.”

“The combination of quality, price and brand loyalty plays a major role, and these could be in various ratios, but it's very important that quality is never set aside,” says Wiese.

Product development and innovation is a priority at Wiesenhof Coffee and Wiese believes that consumers are also willing to experiment with new flavours and varieties. This could vary depending on seasonal preferences, time of day or simply a matter of personal palate. He attributes the worldwide popularity of coffee to the enjoyment of experimentation – coffee being the second largest trading commodity after oil. This popularity grows continuously as consumers become more curious and informed.

In late 2020, Wiesenhof Coffee launched their own range of coffee capsules as demand for this format of coffee increased, mainly due to the convenience factor. The range's packaging features a new look and feel, in line with their revamped coffee shops. Wiese says these product developments are incredibly personal to them, with blend names such as Wiespresso and DemRoux, a combination of their children's names. These new additions to their gourmet blends have received excellent feedback from the market.



Image courtesy of EnaMarinkovic, Pexels

### Wellness and nature

Consumers have placed an increased importance on health and wellness, and this is a further driver of growth, with interest in food and drinks as part of a healthy lifestyle driving sales. Healthier products like decaf, fruit and herbals, speciality teas and even functional teas with added vitamins bring home the message of their good-for-you properties.

Sustainability has also come significantly more into focus over the past few years, especially in food and beverages, and the pandemic has resulted in many consumers reconnecting with food and nature. Shoppers now take a greater interest in holistic health and are more aware of what they put into their bodies and send out into the environment. Consumers in the know are more likely to buy sustainable products and when a retailer satisfies a customer's active search for environmentally friendly products, it automatically boosts sales and stimulates the growth of this still niche but growing trend.

### HOT TIPS FOR RETAILERS



- Offer a mix of pack sizes to match different shopper missions. Smaller packs on introduction will give new shoppers confidence to purchase unfamiliar items and are also great for top-ups and convenience shopping. Conversely, with many households now choosing to shop less frequently, known brands in larger pack sizes like 80s and 160s are becoming essential to stock.
- Stock the big-name brands that are traditionally popular with your customers but do make room for new entrants and allow those smaller brands to be involved in the in-store marketing of their products.
- Niche hot beverages like fruity, herbal, and green tea and decaf tea and coffee present strong growth opportunities for customers who are ever more health focused. In line with this, milk alternatives for tea and coffee such as almond milk, oat milk and rice milk also form part of a growing market for which retailers should cater.







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Image courtesy of Any Lane, Pexels

## Cold beverages

Waters, carbonated beverages, soft drinks, juices, and energy drinks make their mark on the cold beverages sector all year round, but these drinks really come into play during the hot summer months in South Africa. With a massive range on offer, constant innovations, and the consumer's willingness to experiment, Cold Beverages is one of the big player categories for all retailers.

The category has undergone some dramatic changes over the past 18 months. Lockdowns saw a reduction in the number of shoppers visiting their local convenience store to pick up their cold beverages on-the-go. Added to this, the economic hardship that has occurred as a ripple effect from the pandemic has caused considerable changes in shopper behaviour and perceived product value. Many consumers have been more mindful of their spending.

As we start to see a little normality, we can expect to see impulse buys being key in the summer. With people looking forward to socialising and being out and about again, especially outside in the warmer months, a rise in on-the-go sales is also likely.

This may mark a return to pre-pandemic buying patterns as shoppers make more regular visits to shops, making impulse purchases of single items. Energy drinks are traditionally strong within the impulse sector and retailers should be sure to keep a range of chilled and ready to capitalise on the opportunity for on-the-go purchases.

Bottled water saw on-the-go consumption largely shifted to take-home shopping, resulting in a notable growth in larger 1.5-litre and multi-pack products. With flexi-working arrangements and increased working from home, it is forecast that a good proportion of this market is set to remain for the foreseeable future. Again, increasingly warm weather and easing of lockdown restrictions should result in increased demand for on-the-go bottled water to quench thirst. Retailers can never

go wrong with adequate stocks of 500ml and 750ml sports-cap bottles, which are always leading performers.

### Thirst for sustainability

As eco-focused consumers opt for more sustainable options across all areas of their lives, cold beverages, and bottled water in particular, have led the way in the fight against plastic. When retailers stock bottled water made from greener packaging, consumers are made to feel that they are making the most conscious choice available to them – even in their impulse purchases. Labels featuring recycling and bottles that are recyclable or made from recycled plastic prompt, clear sustainability messaging in the Cold Beverage category, and gives consumers a way forward in the fight against environmental degradation.



Image from Business Insider SA

Ready to drink chilled coffees and teas are popular in summer months, with appealing flavours like caramel, latte and vanilla from well-known brands driving sales for retailers.





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# Innovation in the soft drinks market

Brand insight from PURA Beverage Company

**P**URA Beverage Company is a South African start-up in the soft drinks category that is now four years old. Based on consumer insights, they produce 'healthier beverages that do not compromise on taste and are sold at an everyday price point.'

Tristan Werner, Head of Marketing, PURA, explains that the Covid-19 pandemic has amplified the need for healthier, more innovative, and more easily accessible beverage options for consumers who have also become more discerning. Considering this, he says ...

“The low, no sugar movement is very strong globally and gaining momentum. The move away from colourants and towards natural ingredients also continues to grow, with more consumers seeking out beverages with potential functional benefits.”

“All our products share the same intrinsics; low sugar, no colourants, preservative-free and with natural flavours.”

In terms of price points, Werner says in today's economy, shoppers are generally more cost-conscious. “Price point should always be a consideration when entering a new product into the retail arena.”

“Quality needs to be a given, and consistent quality even more so. It should form the one of the pillars of a brand's offering. If we look into the past,



Sales of sugar free drinks have been trending upward since the introduction of sugar tax and it's here to stay as consumers increasingly try to live a healthier lifestyle.

(Stock image from Photo Images)

when economies have struggled, consumers have gravitated to products that deliver consistently on a strong brand promise,” says Werner.

A combination of price, quality and brand loyalty are therefore necessary to deliver growth and influence the consumer's buying decisions. Ultimately, it is important for producers to follow through on with clear communication of the related value offerings to the consumer.

As part of the brand's philosophy, having a positive social and environmental impact is a priority at PURA. Werner says they have found that consumers are looking to support businesses that are environmentally conscious and actively contribute towards sustainability.

PET (polyethylene terephthalate) bottle recycling is critical and beverage companies internationally are exploring solutions to more sustainable

packaging, including bottles made from paper and PET bottles made from plant matter. “Ultimately, these solutions need to be economically viable, practical and good for the environment. We support PETCO, which is an organisation that offers job creation as well as helping to clean up the environment, keeping beaches and the ocean clean. Our aluminium cans are made from 25% recycled aluminium, with the target of reaching 65% recycled aluminium by 2026. Our PURA kids' range is also environmentally friendly, with a paper straw and packaging that is 100% recyclable,” says Werner. **SR**



Image: PURA Beverage Company

PURA Beverage Company's soda cans and bottles are 100% recyclable and feature designs that convey a fun, easy and healthier lifestyle.



**Jeanne-Riëtte Martins** is a multi-specialist writer with a degree in Industrial Psychology. Influenced by her background in human resources and industrial relations, she writes on issues that impact businesses from SMMEs to corporates across various industries. Her writing repertoire includes B2B and B2C content for print and digital platforms. She is also an award-winning blogger for some of South Africa's largest food and family lifestyle brands. [jeanne@wilkinsross.co.za](mailto:jeanne@wilkinsross.co.za)



# OTC and sanitary products insights

## OTC: Inside the medicine & first aid cabinet

The over the counter (OTC) category in South Africa is impressive, to say the least. South African consumers know they can restock at one of the big supermarkets or hypers, with instore pharmacies like Checkers and Shoprite Medirite, Pharmacy at Spar and Pick n Pay's retail pharmacies (acquired by Clicks in May 2021), specialist stores like Clicks and Dis-chem, and pharmacy chains like Alpha Pharm, M-Kem, and Link, not to mention the independents like Springbok Pharmacy, and independent wholesale and retail outlets, all contributing to the vast array on offer. The choice reflects the size of this category and also puts much pressure on pricing, margins, and range choice to keep your business profitable and the end consumer happy.

### Rules and regulations

OTC products are regulated by the South African Health Products Regulatory Authority (SAHPRA), and their website ([www.sahpra.org.za](http://www.sahpra.org.za)) provides a detailed list of registered medications, as well as health and safety alerts. They also state how medications may be marketed to the public, and these rules are very strict. Schedules 0 and 1 may be advertised to the public (as long as no outrageous claims are made), but schedule 2



Ready Made, Pexels

medications may not be advertised to the public. OTC and front-of-store medications are considered to be those medications scheduled 2 or below (S0, S1, S2). Schedule 0 medications may be sold in supermarkets and retailers, but several big

supermarket chains have opened in-store pharmacies, giving consumers the option to buy schedule 1 and 2 medications in-store from the on-site pharmacist. For the purposes of this article, we will use OTC to refer to S0, S1, and S2 products.

### What to stock

For big retailers with a large consumer footprint, it makes sense to carry several brands from each of the OTC categories. Some customers will be price-sensitive, whilst others will remain loyal to a specific brand. These OTC categories include cough, cold and allergy; digestive and intestinal ailments; pain and injury; and topical disorders (this includes dermal, ophthalmic, and so on). These are the medications that treat our most common ailments, and several well-known brands also produce paediatric versions. Although SAHPRA regulations are considered quite strict at an international level, South Africans are still able to keep their first aid boxes topped up with OTC medications for the whole family (in other words, not having to get a script first). However, the brands they choose to buy are highly dependent on their LSM group/income and price sensitivity. there is also a growing number of traditional and complementary OTC medications making their way onto the market, and in many cases, these are preferred by older or more rurally based consumers.





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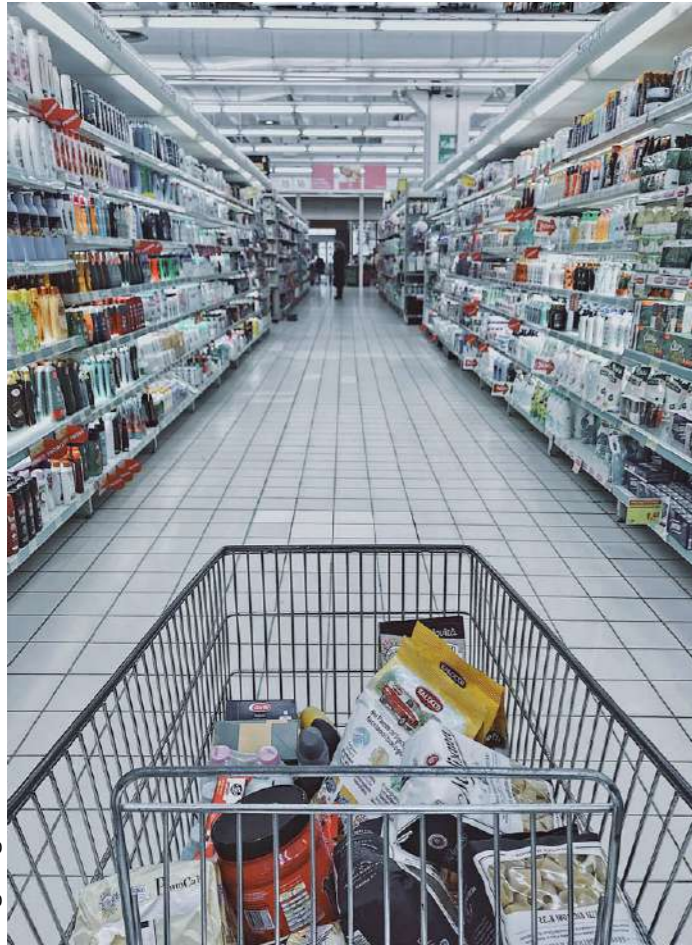
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### OTC growth trends

The OTC market continues to grow, both locally and internationally, and local medical aids are actively moving towards supporting a more OTC-centric approach. South Africa has also recently allowed clinic sisters who pass a written exam to prescribe and dispense higher scheduled medication without needing to consult a doctor.

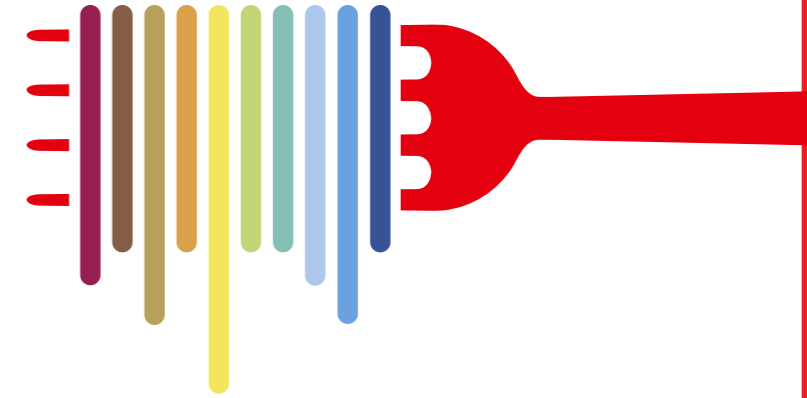
During the Covid pandemic, a trip to the doctor's rooms became a nervous experience and increasing numbers of patients chose to take their aches, pains, and minor ailments

to clinics and local pharmacists instead. This has opened up the market of S1 and S2 medications as more consumers learn to place their trust in their pharmacist and save themselves the cost of a visit to the doctor.

### Online entry

Due to the Covid pandemic and subsequent lockdowns, retailers and speciality stores have had to embrace the online trend. For shoppers anxious about Covid-19 risk, as well as those in isolation or quarantine, ordering medications either online or via phone, and then receiving them via delivery or drive-through collection, has increased exponentially.

For schedule 0 products, online retailers such as Takealot offer a large range of well-known brands as well as niche products, and incentivise consumers with bulk discounts, free delivery, or two-for-one deals. The ability to add S0 products to your online grocery basket is about safety, convenience, and keeping consumers happy.



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**Change is coming**

The scheduling of South African medications is in constant flux as SAHPRA actively monitors, evaluates, and inspects health products. According to Business Insider South Africa, SAHPRA is looking at up-scheduling medications that contain codeine.

This means that products that are currently available without prescription, such as Benylin Cough Syrup, Nurofen Plus, Pynstop and so on, would need a prescription going forward. Industry insiders are arguing in favour of stricter OTC controls and smaller pack sizes as an alternative safety measure.

As always, retailers and manufacturers will need to be agile and respond quickly to changing legislation and consumer demand.



Anna Shvets,Pexels

**Sanitary & feminine hygiene products**



**Girls rule the world**

Sanitary and feminine hygiene products are a critical category that every supermarket and retailer should be carrying. From sanitary and maternity pads to everyday liners, applicator and non-applicator tampons, intimate washes, deodorisers, and lubricants, as well as alternative menstrual products, these products are required and needed. And these customers are often the same people who are doing the grocery shopping, so to avoid irritating and even losing them, carrying at least a small range of pads and tampons is a must.

Menstrual cycles can be regular and easy to predict, or wildly irregular and impossible to predict – this means consumers can be driven to a store simply to purchase a sanitary product.

**Pink tax**

As a developing country, there are some serious challenges faced by a large portion of the market, namely in terms of cost. Lil-lets marketing manager Keryn Brien says, "Lil-lets has a wide range of products to meet consumer product, preference, lifestyle and budget requirements. Our 'Essentials' sub-range offers affordable, quality products for budget-conscious consumers. We have also invested heavily in building a manufacturing plant in SA, as part of our commitment to driving affordability for our consumers. Local

production and contributing to economic growth and employment in SA, while improving accessibility of sanitary products, are all core to our brand purpose. Being comfortable while on your period is key, so we don't compromise on quality when it comes to our cost-friendly options."

**Period poverty**

For women and girls who simply cannot afford these basic necessities, businesses engaging in social responsibility drives can provide much-needed relief.

For example, Dis-chem runs an almost-constant donation drive that allows consumers to purchase and donate sanitary products at the point of sale. Brien says, "It has been so encouraging to see how retailers have come to the rescue as our country





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starts to recover from the effects of lockdown. Many retailers have driven their CSI strategy to donate and rebuild communities, and we are proud to have played a role, especially in keeping girls in school through the Dis-chem Million Comforts drive, and the other initiatives we support.”



### Brand loyalty

When it comes to sanitary products, consumers tend to fall into either the brand-loyal category or the price-sensitive category, although there is more room for brand experimentation with pads and liners as these are seen as being less intimate than tampons.

“Over the years we have seen that certain formats have driven a greater level of brand loyalty,” says Brien. “Tampons are a brand loyal format and consumers tend to stick to the product they feel most comfortable with. Pads and panty-liners have less loyal consumers and this is mainly driven by the low-risk to trial a new product. Consumers typically have a repertoire of brands that they choose from, and brands that are known and trusted make their way into consumer’s homes.”



Sora Shimazaki,Pexels

### Product innovation

Apart from the move towards more organic ingredients, and improvements in overnight product absorption and comfort, the market doesn’t particularly allow for much innovation. Brien explains, “The best and most successful type of innovation is based on true consumer insight. Innovation has really been limited to day/night offerings, length, size, and product ingredients. This has not enabled true category growth. The category size and space allocation in store has also made it challenging to highlight innovation in store.”

Marketing of products aimed at teens and pregnant consumers has increased as brands take note of the different needs associated with these specific markets. Smaller, more compact pack sizes and discreet containers are another innovation

aimed at women on the go, including schoolgirls, who need to carry a supply of pads or tampons with them.

As the interest in personal hygiene has increased over the years, so too has the product offering for consumers looking to clean safely and stay fresher for longer. Feminine hygiene products tend to cater either for those looking for pretty scents, or those needing pH-balanced unscented delicate products. Personal lubricants would fall into this category, with the same restrictions regarding scented/flavoured products vs unscented/unflavoured products.

### Market growth

Although the market itself may not be expecting to see intense growth in terms of purchases, the category is expected to remain strong. “We estimate the market to be valued at R2.2 billion with inflation growth year on year,” says Brien. “South Africa is still suffering the devastating impact of Covid and the recent unrest, so we anticipate category growth will be staggered as employment and consumer budgets have been hardest hit. “We should continue to see growth in affordable formats.”

Brien says as a brand they will continue to support communities through education and the fight for equality and accessibility. We have seen a rise in the call for convenience and we anticipate a growth in convenience channels, and an increase in consumers seeking value offerings in the form of price, promotions, and value incentives.”





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**Trends to embrace**

Breaking the social taboo has been a long time coming. Shockwaves were felt the first time a television advert for sanitary products showed red blood – up until then, blue fluids were typically used to represent period blood. Many cultures still view a menstruating woman as somehow 'unclean', when this is an entirely natural process and should be treated as such. As marketers and retailers there is an unspoken obligation to support the rights of menstruating consumers and open the dialogue about this natural cycle as much as possible.

Unashamed, fact-driven marketing and advertising is imperative, as is the open display of sanitary and feminine hygiene products in-store. Young girls and women should feel as confident buying their pads as any other item, and so should husbands, brothers, dads, and boyfriends. This is driven by in-store employee education, attitudes, and marketing.

Organic and eco-friendly products are a growing trend internationally. Locally, this growth is confined to certain consumer segments who require products that align with their personal values and environmental beliefs. Brien says, "We've invested in research and product development to bring new solutions to the market, including organic tampons and pads. Our organic pads are certified organic, 100% cotton, and feature a biodegradable corn-starch-based pad-backing and wrapper. While this segment is currently small, we do believe it will see significant growth in coming years and we're committed to



bringing some exciting innovations to this space that benefit both consumers and the environment."

Alternatives to traditional products, such as menstrual cups and washable pads or period panties, are also making their way into the market, although these seem mostly confined to speciality and online stores for the meantime.

"There's no doubt that there's a need for cost-effective, reusable products in the market – especially when it comes to addressing period poverty," says Brien. "But while reusable pads and cups are often framed as the silver-bullet solution in this space, we have to remember that they're only effective when there is access to clean water and sanitation services, otherwise they can become a health risk. At Lil-lets we're conscious of it still being very much based on each person's circumstances and we are all about offering choice."

And whilst environmentally conscious mid- to upper LSM consumers are entering this market, the impact has yet to be felt on traditional sales.

Brien says, "We are seeing more niche, affluent consumers who are environmentally conscious look to solutions like menstrual cups and they are often using them together with other products. This is still a relatively small segment, but certainly a growing niche. As the leader in the tampon market, we have introduced menstrual cups to our range. These cups are based on best body fit and will enable tampon users to transition into this type of format if they wish to."

While sanitary and related products are part of a retailer's range and repertoire, the most important aspect is for all girls and women, regardless of their circumstances, are able to experience what the government has described as sanitary dignity – the preservation and maintenance of their self-esteem and well-being, especially during menstruation. Together with trust, the brands that are taking this into account are those building the strongest ties with the end consumer. **SR**

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**Ann Baker-Keulemans**, a highly experienced business and consumer journalist, is 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.

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# The secret life of pets exposed

## ASIA-PACIFIC & THE WORLD

Since the start of the pandemic, an unprecedented rise in pet ownership has been reported. With dogged determination, a total of 3.2 million households in the UK acquired a pet with young people the main drivers of this trend. While global markets for pet care is estimated at US\$179.4 billion for 2020, projected to reach a revised size of US\$255.4 billion by 2027.

According to the National Bureau of Statistics, Asia-Pacific is one of the fastest growing markets and is forecast to reach US\$23 billion by 2027. Robust economic growth in this market and rising household incomes are expected to increase consumer spending and could position Asia as the world's hub for pet foods, products, and services. This is no time for retailers to roll over as increased product innovation, customisation, affordable pricing especially on pet food, raises the stakes around the world.

A recent global pet care growth and trends forecast by [www.360marketupdates.com](http://www.360marketupdates.com), reported key shifts driving global markets that include a demand for more transparency in pet care product ingredients; a growing inclination to safeguard pets from sickness and injury; specially designed products, and requests for affordable eco-friendly pet accessories. Humanising pet care has become



a highly competitive landscape with major players in Asia-Pacific markets such as Nestle Purina, Mars Inc and Blue Buffalo Pet Products Inc tapping into a consumer base that is driven by customer loyalty and the habitual eating pattern of pets.

Owners are increasingly treating their loyal companions like family members as reported in a recent article on [www.robeco.com](http://www.robeco.com).

There has been a global increase in pet ownership since Covid-19. With this increase, comes an increase in pet owners need for variety when it comes to food, snacks and toys for their pets.

88% of US pet owners say they consider their pet – be it a dog, cat, fish, or snake, to be a member of their family. Over 54% said they buy seasonal holiday gifts for their beloved animal, while 44% said they celebrate their birthday. With the three main pet care categories being food and treats, representing approximately 40% of the total market; veterinary care representing about 30% and lastly other products and services including grooming, medication, and training –

retailers are afforded an attractive tailwind for the industry at large.

Modern pet owners are crazy about the pet-loving lifestyle. In a recent Ips News article, pets are typically welcomed into the home for mental and therapeutic reasons in particular the influence they have on social, and intellectual development of children. Asia-Pacific is showing encouraging growth



in terms of adoption of pets as well as the revenue generated for pet care products with pet food found to hold the most dominant position.

China is the stand-out leader amongst countries in the Asia-Pacific region for potential growth as reported by [www.peak-recruit.com](http://www.peak-recruit.com). Chinese pet owners are projected to spend around US\$6.125 billion by 2022, resulting in the Chinese and US pet food markets swapping places. As pet populations across the world continue to expand, the Asia-Pacific region alongside Latin America, looks likely to lead the world's sales growth for all pet food.

IPS News reports that the trend for owning small pets is on the increase worldwide. Due to increased urbanisation and smaller living spaces, small pets take up less space and require less attention. Advancements in mobile tech are seen in the booming of the global pet care market with products becoming easily available.

“Entrepreneurs, retailers, and brand owners are not simply launching variations of existing products. Instead they are creating entirely new categories. I've seen pet wipes advertised for when one's precious Pomeranian does his business (I'll pass on that one thanks); cat toothpaste; a self-cleaning litterbox and perhaps the fastest-growing category, CBD products for dogs (up 7400% over the last five years). It's time to fetch that ball and play catch as pet health and wellness is clearly on a roll, pushed by the pandemic and the need to focus on gentler, nurturing moments and pets tick that box,” says Mike Smollan, Chief Growth and Innovation Officer, Smollan.



Where do opportunities lie for retailers, manufacturers, and brand owners in the Asia-Pacific region?

The service sector where the days of pets living in a kennel outside, are long gone as today's pets are far more likely to sleep alongside their owners or have a luxury bed. Pet care products including grooming, fashion, and toys, along with products designed to cater for health and well-being continue to emerge and will offer retailers entry points to tap into or reimagine new products and services.

Organic pet care options have become increasingly popular as owners want the best possible quality of life for their pets. Adarsh Raj, Consumer Analyst at GlobalData noted the shift from lower-end to mid-range pet food among



APAC pet parents saying that retailers and manufacturers should pay close attention to these developments and add related products to their existing portfolios to bolster revenue. Pet retail has moved online and is enjoying success as the ecommerce balloon continues to expand unabated with an increase of shopping transactions using smartphones.

Ice cream for pets, frozen yoghurt, non-alcoholic beverages, luxury pet hotels and even spa treatments continue to push the envelope that has gained even more traction as the pandemic has opened up pet potential on an exponential scale. **SR**

“It's time to fetch that ball and play catch as pet health and wellness is clearly on a roll, pushed by the pandemic and the need to focus on gentler, nurturing moments and pets tick that box.”

Mike Smollan, Chief Growth and Innovation Officer, Smollan

# Shifting patterns & switched on retail

## Finding the balance between physical store visits and on-line shopping keeps retailers on their toes

Consumer purchasing patterns have become far more complicated over the past 18 months with a plethora of devices and more points of sale as retailers constantly rework strategies that have changed with shoppers needs and desires. Finding the balance between physical store visits and on-line shopping, keeping up to speed with the latest trends, and with seasonal sales already creating a buzz – retailers have to be on their toes to keep pace.

Getting the right mix puts retailers and brands under pressure to seamlessly balance the blend of the in-store experience and the accessibility of ecommerce, bringing customers closer as off-line is on-line and on-line is off-line. So to, as we see a gradual up-tick in seasonal shopping marking the lead up to the holidays with Black Friday and Cyber Monday, at a glance retailers will need to get their supply chains and delivery systems in order; review additional payment options; have a purpose beyond the sale and ensure that a unique, exceptional customer experience is offered.

Take for example the electronics industry that has attracted online sales for quite some time, even before the pandemic shifted peoples shopping habits. As revealed in an article published by www.



datafeedwatch.com electronics is one of the rapidly evolving and highly innovative sectors with £23 billion spent on consumer electronics in 2020, it plays a huge role in the ecommerce sector with 43% of these purchases made on-line. That said, as various waves of the pandemic ebb and flow consumers still want the option to visit a physical store so they can compare different models and test features as opposed to on-line.



According to Mike Smollan, Chief Growth and Innovation Officer, Smollan, "On-line and off-line stores have the same goal – to sell and

make a profit and to attract and retain customers by providing a great experience. The important focus areas for both options should be around data and data analysis, innovation, seamless tech savvy offerings, personalised shopping experiences – a huge one in my book and building relationships with customers and understanding their needs. Dare I say it – these days a store is a store, whether down the street or on your smartphone screen and for





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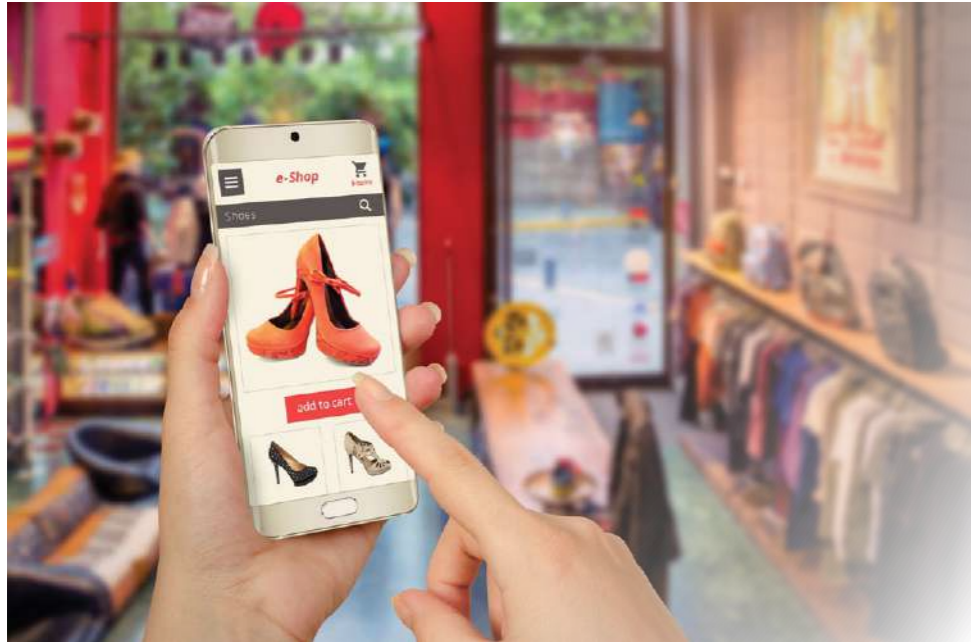
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retailers and brand owners it's all down to finding the sweet spot.”

What does this 'balanced' offering look like? Brick-and-mortar stores where the brand experience is still inherently physical are holding their own as shoppers are more likely to buy products they have seen in person, particularly relevant to big ticket electronic items.

“Customers who pick items in-store tend to buy extra stuff; one-on-one quality customer service increases sales and here's the switch up – physical stores bring greater traffic to a retailer's online store.”

Similarly with on-line, [www.thedrum.com](http://www.thedrum.com) suggests creating the in-store retail experience by adopting a personalised approach rather than blanket messaging; allowing for product discovery by promoting items likely to appeal to an individual (here the use of product bundles can be used very

effectively for seasonal promotions like Black Friday); the use of virtual reality to test out products could be a consideration; convenience offered as a matter of course and instead of trying to replicate the in-store experience, take the opportunity to build brand affinity with shoppers in new ways.

As lockdowns and 'opening up' scenarios prevail around the globe, assumptions based on what happened last year as the likes of Black Friday and Cyber Monday worked off a new playing card, may prove

to be tricky. For example, a survey by shopping rewards app Shopkick, noted that 43% of consumers expect to make the majority of their holiday purchases this year in a physical store, up 9% on last year. With this single raised flag careful planning and research is a given.

As we look back to move forward the stats tell a story. The hottest selling products for Cyber Monday 2020 were Air pods, Vtech toys, HP and Dell computers, and Chromecast (Adobe 2020); visits to physical stores during Black Friday were down 49% (Forbes 2020); 47,4% of shoppers preferred shopping on-line (PYMNTS 2020) with on-line sales reaching \$10.8 billion making it the biggest ecommerce selling day of all time (CNBC 2020).

What under-the-radar shopping movements should retailers be of

aware of this year? According to [www.thewisemarketer.com](http://www.thewisemarketer.com) – delivery could be the new experiential differentiator to fulfil the 'I want it now' expectation for example Amazon's drone fleet winning getting FAA approval; drive-thru shopping may be a thing as customers will likely expect stores, particularly those in malls, to offer complete curb-to-trunk delivery – Wawa is planning its first drive-thru store in the U.S. and the mobile experience must be optimised for a wider audience with retailers ensuring all their digital experiences are personalised for all age groups.

It seems shoppers will require even less convincing to self-indulge this year with holiday sales predicted to reach nearly \$760 billion this season. Consumers want retailers to meet them where, when, and how they shop, whether on-line or off-line as they continue to purchase goods with exceeding purpose and focus. **SR**



# Plant-based dairy market to expand nearly 3x by 2031 end

Insights based on a report on plant-based dairy market

By Fact.MR.

Global sales of plant-based dairy products are expected to grow 11% until 2031 with an estimated market value of US\$ 32 Bn, according to a recently published report by an ESOMAR-certified market research and consulting firm. Increased preference for naturally sourced food products is majorly spurring demand.

With the growing adopting of vegan diet, dairy alternatives market has witnessed a significant growth in recent years. Historically, from 2016 to 2020, consumption of plant-based dairy flourished at a CAGR of around 9%, reaching a valuation of US\$ 11 Bn. Furthermore, rising awareness about the health benefits associated with plant-based foods has boosted the demand for dairy alternative products worldwide.

Developed regions such as North America and Europe will dominate the global plant-based dairy market share, with a combined figure of 53% in 2021. The importance of plant-based dairy was further highlighted with the onset of Covid-19, as consumers increasingly shifted towards consumption of non-animal based food products.



Tangy tofu and cashew ricotta by Molly Patrick

## Key takeaways from the market study:

- The global plant-based dairy market is anticipated to add almost 3x value by 2031
- Almond milk remained the top selling category in 2020, clocking a value of US\$ 6.5 Bn
- 2 out of 5 sales of plant-based dairy products occur via online retail platforms
- By nature, organic plant-based dairy products sales to surge at 13% CAGR
- Sales across the U.S market to compound at a CAGR of over 10% until 2031
- Organic dairy sales in China topped US\$ 1 Bn in 2020, forecast to expand at nearly 14% CAGR

“Cheese alternatives are predicted to be the ‘next frontier’ in plant-based innovation, advancements in ingredient technology are estimated to fire dairy-alternatives market,” comments a research analyst.

## Competitive landscape

Prominent players are embracing innovative approaches such as ground-breaking marketing tactics, technological advances for cancer screening, mergers, and acquisitions.

- In 2016, Key manufacturer Danone SA, the French dairy giant made a move into dairy-free by acquiring WhiteWave Foods, the US manufacturer of the Alpro and Silk plant-based dairy-alternative ranges, for US\$ 12.5 Bn.
- In February 2019, Danone announced it was opening a new building at its facility in DuBois, Pennsylvania, dedicated to plant-based food products including yogurt.
- In December 2019, Danone’s French dairy peer Lactalis announced it was taking its Siggis yogurt brand into the plant-based market.
- In March 2020, Arla announced the launch of a range of chilled, oat-based drinks, to be marketed under a new brand, Jörd, and initially available in Denmark, Sweden and the UK. **SR**



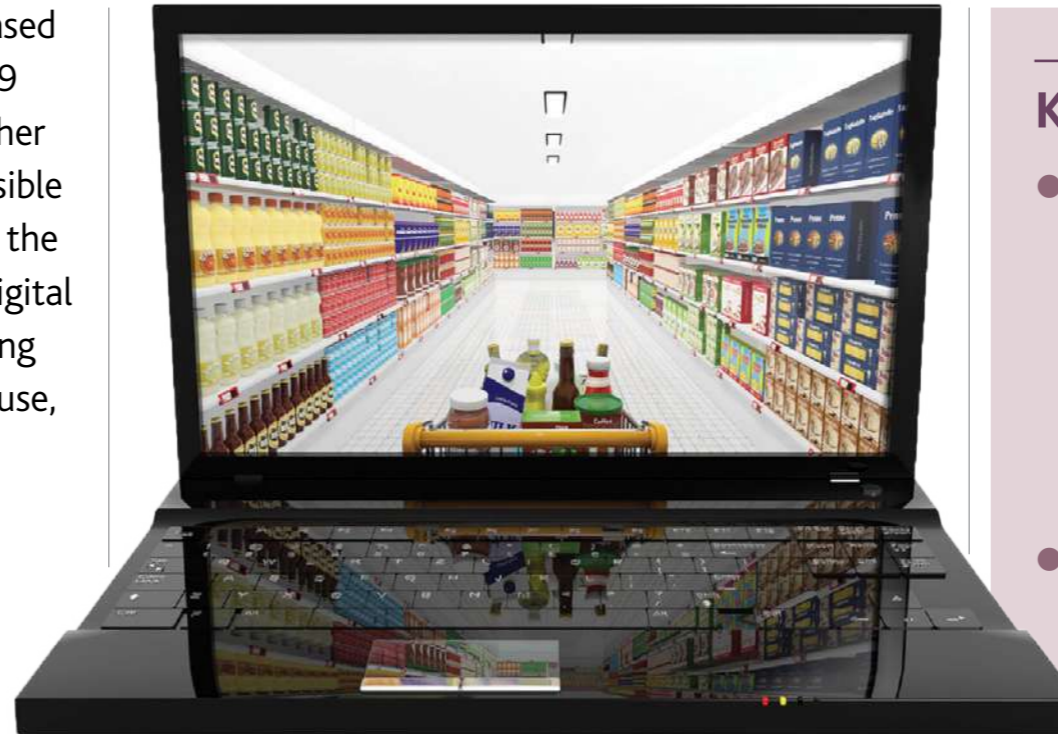
# R30bn left on the table by etailers with poor CX

## Ecommerce market size could increase by 100% to 5,6% of total retail pie if glitches are fixed

South Africa's ecommerce market has increased substantially since the start of the Covid-19 pandemic, but its potential to double by a further 100% to 5,6% of the total retail market is possible if etailers fix issues with their online CX. This is the key finding of the third annual South African Digital Customer Experience Report. CX refers to among other things, etailers' trustworthiness, ease-of-use, security, delivery and after-sales support.

Collectively, these glitches are estimated to cost etailers R11,95bn in lost sales. Coupled with a R20,4bn loss thanks to frequent cart abandonment, the report reveals that over R30bn is being left on the table, which is coincidentally the same R-value as the current ecommerce sector. This is because – according to the Report, which is based on the annual ovatoyou study among 2 000 online South Africans and commissioned by Rogerwilco, CX Professional Julia Ahlfeldt and ovatoyou's Amanda Reekie – a staggering 96% of respondents said they would spend more online if etailers' CX was better.

"The opportunity cost is pretty clear; consumers expect a higher level of experience from brands that they buy online from. This could in part be because they have become used to the CX of an Amazon or



Takealot. These brands have set a high bar and local etailers need to up their online game if they are to convert the huge appetite among consumers for online shopping into Rands and cents," says Charlie Stewart, CEO of Rogerwilco.

Online shopping has seen a sharp increase since the start of the pandemic and is one of the few sectors to find a silver lining. This has democratised its user base as the report reveals that a full 82% of respondents have made an online purchase, with 73% of those with a monthly household

### KEY FINDINGS

- R30-billion is being left on the table by etailers with poor CX (customer experience), meaning the etail market has the potential to double by a further 100% to 5,6%. This as the current ecommerce market value stands co-incidentally at R30bn.
- Why are so many billions, there for the taking, being ignored? Etailers' trustworthiness, ease-of-use, security, delivery and after-sales support are costing etailers dearly, at R11,95bn in lost sales. Coupled with a R20,4bn loss thanks to frequent cart abandonment, this is a R30bn opportunity cost as a whopping 96% of respondents from the 2 000 people sample, said they'd buy more online.

income of less than R10 000 per month shopping online. This entrance of a whole new cohort of shoppers, coupled with an increase in the number of categories people are buying from, takes



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online shopping out of the niche that it was, says Amanda Reekie.

Of significance, 32% said that they've increased the number of online stores that they buy from, 31% have made online shopping a part of their shopping routine while 20% report to be shopping more through social media.

"With improved levels of connectivity and an abundance of online shopping options, there's no good reason why South Africa should lag behind other markets such as the US and UK. Customer experience is well and truly holding it back," says CX Professional Julia Ahlfeldt.

So how can etailers capitalise on this online boom?

For starters they need to address issues of cart abandonment, given 76% said they failed to conclude their purchases (this is up from 71% in the 2019 report).

Over half of those polled (51%) indicated that high shipping fees were to blame, with 32% noting lengthy delivery timelines were a deterrent.

A further third complained that there were too many steps in the purchase process – brands would do well to emulate Amazon's famous one-click checkout – with slow websites and a lack of support being cited as other reasons for cart abandonment. Payment issues – either a complete failure in the processing of the transaction (cited by 26%) or an issue with a discount code (20%) – continue to be significant impediments to closing the sale.

ovatoyou's Reekie believes that given how expensive it is to get feet through the door, or rather



money into R&D and using technology to improve response times. Further, unwieldy infrastructure has prevented many traditional couriers from answering the demand for the rapid delivery that South African consumers expect and want."

As important as the delivery of the purchase is, it was surpassed by the 34% who said unboxing their new purchase was the most memorable aspect of their online shopping experience.

eyes on the page, cart abandonment must come under the spotlight: "Retailers need to examine the functional and emotional reasons why shoppers are not completing their transactions."

When sales are made, etailers need to complete the rest of the online experience offline, and it is here where some of the key moments of truth lie. These are points in the journey where the investment the customer has made – be it time, energy or money – comes to fruition. In fact, a third of respondents spoke to the delivery of their purchase in defining their experience and perception of the brand.

Picup CEO, Antonio Bruni points to Amazon Prime as an example of an organisation getting it right. He says, "Businesses are not investing enough

As a case in point, in recent years unboxing has become one of the most popular video categories on YouTube. "Unboxing is a huge missed opportunity for brands," says Ahlfeldt. "Items haphazardly thrown into a delivery box doesn't say 'we appreciate our customers'."

DHL's Vice President Global Sales Programs, Marketing & Global ecommerce Leendert van Delft believes there is also a need for greater flexibility. "In today's world, agendas can change quickly. People may work from home one day, but be in the office the next – flexibility in the delivery is crucial to tailor to those needs."

Building and maintaining trust is another key focus area for online brands, and, while it is an intangible, it can make or break a sale. The research

points to three factors that build trust. The first is the experience itself. Large stores like Amazon and Takealot have gotten this journey right. Stewart makes the point that good UX as displayed by these two industry behemoths, minimises frustration, reduces second guessing and stops customers switching across to a rival site. "Retailers need to recognise that consumers are becoming more loyal to the experience than they are to the brand."

The second factor is brand resonance. With 32% of respondents claiming that they buy at familiar category and branded stores. Nike, Samsung and Apple were just a few of the names mentioned, as were Clicks and Superbalist. While peer reviews go a long way in establishing trust, customers are also more likely to purchase from a brand that they've seen advertise. This insight must not be lost on startups who must factor the cost of marketing and brand building in when preparing budgets for their online stores.

The third factor of trust is security: 12% of respondents said they wanted online stores to make a clear commitment to keeping their personal information private and secure while 11% expressed the need for a safe environment in which they could transact.

Delivering a slick online experience that's secure and backed up by brand salience is the ultimate goal for all brands believes Sanlam Investments' Ya'eesh Cader. "It's a trinity of factors that build confidence no matter whether you're buying groceries or making a long term financial investment. Attaining all three requires discipline and the ability to unify



a variety of stakeholders across marketing and business."

When it comes to making the all-important purchase a noteworthy 55% based their decisions on social media posts with 54% looking at reviews on the brand's website. Third party review sites like HelloPeter are used by a further 35%. But of note, negative commentary would stop 64% in their tracks and result in a lost sale. Recommendations from family and friends are just as important as reviews (54%), followed closely by promotional information and brand advertising. 21% were persuaded by an influencer.

Should the purchase experience be positive, a full 78% said they'd share it with their friends and family (which is then responsible for 54% of purchase decisions), while 56% would post about great service on social media / online review sites.

A similar number indicated they'd buy more from brands that please them. Conversely, a bad experience is also shared: 52% would tell family and friends and 45% would post on social media while a noteworthy 52% would never use the offending brand again. "We can truly say that customer experience is brand experience," says Ahlfeldt.

In conclusion Stewart says, "South Africa is online. Whether they are shopping for groceries, buying wigs or making investment decisions, over the past 18 months

we have witnessed a sharp uptick in consumers' desire to engage with brands via their phones, televisions, watches, laptops and desktop PCs. While experiences have certainly improved since the first edition of this report, it's clear that friction in the journey has a substantial opportunity cost of R30bn that's impending online spending." **SR**

**2021 South African Digital Customer Experience Report**  
<https://www.cx-report.co.za/>

Three parties commissioned this report:



Charlie Stewart  
Rogerwilco



Amanda Reekie  
ovatoyou



Julia Ahlfeldt  
a CX Professional



# AI in the retail sector: the South African conundrum

Artificial intelligence is being successfully deployed in the global retail sector, but it needs to be used carefully in the South African context, taking into account specific market characteristics



Wendy Tembedza  
Webber Wentzel

Developments in the technology sector have shown how information can be analysed and used to create value for those who can draw insights from it. One of these innovations is the growing deployment of artificial intelligence (AI) in the retail sector.

The potential benefits of using AI in the retail sector cannot be overstated. Globally, retailers have been able to use it to analyse consumer purchasing behaviour to better understand their market and improve their offering to consumers. Whether the same benefits can be realised in the South African retail sector depends on the peculiarities of the South African consumer.

## Data accuracy

To deliver actionable insights, AI needs access to vast amounts of data. This depends on having a high level of connectivity among consumers. Since more than 30% of the South African population does not have access to the internet, it is uncertain whether retailers would be able to use AI to make accurate assessments of purchasing patterns, preferences and



similar aspects of consumer behaviour. Lack of data may also negatively impact a retailer's ability to tap into new or under-served segments of society.

In addition, adopting AI in the retail sector will require large volumes of 'clean' data. The ability to implement insights gained from AI depends on whether the machine learning software has access

to quality data. Incomplete or duplicate data can be wasteful and result in limited returns when used to, for example, roll out a campaign. Bad data can also contain inaccuracies or inconsistencies which can limit the value of the information and could result in decisions being made based on incorrect assumptions.



The South African population is comprised of various social, ethnic and racial groups. In the context of AI, any algorithm used to assess information must have sufficient amounts of clean data for analysis.

The diversity of the population creates a challenge in this regard, as there may not be sufficient data to create informed profiles on consumer habits for a particular type of consumer. The question for a retailer in this context is whether the particular AI tool it intends to deploy can provide the type of data which it can use to gain actionable insights for its business.

“ It is important for retailers deploying AI to ensure that the data used for analytics is free from bias, errors, and other bad components. This should be assessed during the planning phase. ”

Understanding the potential risk and shortfalls of the technology before implementation is central to ensuring a successful and meaningful deployment of AI.

### Take-up challenge

Another factor relevant to the success of any AI deployed in the retail sector is how widely consumers use the various platforms that allow the AI tools to analyse their data.

For example, Alibaba, the world's leading ecommerce retailer, uses AI to facilitate facial



“ Because AI operates on the basis of machine learning, the technology itself is changing at an exponential rate. Delaying the decision to adopt AI technology may mean a retailer will miss an opportunity to properly establish itself as the 'retailer of choice' among consumers. ”

recognition payments. To make this possible, consumers have to agree to their images being processed in this way.

In a similar adoption in South Africa, South African retailers would need to gain the trust of the consumer to allow the use of their image.

“ An AI tool which requires consumers to agree to provide certain information may encounter a stumbling block. ”

### Time to adapt

While AI is not a new technology, its use in the retail sector is fairly recent. In sectors like retail,

where we often see a slower rate of adoption, a 12-, 18- or 24-month AI adoption plan might be too little, too late.

### End goal

Ultimately, the use of AI must be meaningful and add value to a business.

Retailers must ensure that, beyond looking for AI to assist their businesses to increase revenue, the AI tools they use will align their interests with those of the consumer.

A successful deployment of AI requires retailers to ensure that whatever technology they use primarily meets their consumer's needs. **SR**



# Entrepreneurship & franchising to steer the future

“Recognise us... and the role that we can play in rebuilding the economy.”

That was the mantra that echoed amongst the forty speakers at the Franchise Association of South Africa’s virtual conference held last week. Pertunia Sibanyoni, Chairperson of FASA in her opening said, “FASA’s virtual conference could not have come at a more crucial time as the business sector reels from not only the extended pandemic but more recently from the devastating fall-out from the recent riots. Everyone in business – whether directly affected or not – will feel the long-term effects of recent events as businesses try to claw their way back to profitability. FASA felt it was time to bring together all stakeholders to disseminate the challenges and changes and, in the words of John F. Kennedy, “ask not what your country can do for you; ask what you can do for your country.”

Over 40 key speakers amongst them scenario planner Clem Sunter, Gareth Ackerman of Pick n Pay, Chairman of Pick n Pay, Frans van der Colff, fellow of the Henley School of business, franchise stalwart Eric Parker of Franchising Plus, allied associations and franchisors in various sectors spoke with one voice to say to government that if South Africa was to successfully recover from the ravages of the past year and a half, it needed to recognise that entrepreneurship, small business and franchising were the keys to unlocking future growth.



“Going forward, everyone must understand that government cannot provide those much needed jobs.” say Frans van der Colff, fellow at the Henley School of Business. “Neither can big business, which is beholden to its shareholders and on a new path of restructuring to fit into the norms of the 4th Industrial Revolution. What is needed is a mechanism that creates opportunities, especially for young people, with the correct mentorship, education and training. Franchising, which spans every business sector imaginable and has those fundamental structures in place, is the one mechanism that can do just that.”

To this end, speakers were united in calling for an entrepreneurial and franchise white paper, spearheaded by FASA that would bring together government, corporate companies, entrepreneurs and scenario planners to formulate plans to create new businesses that will give opportunities to entrepreneurs to set up viable businesses and create much needed employment.

According to scenario planner Clem Sunter, franchising is the ideal mechanism to do this and FASA the perfect vehicle through which ethical business practices can flourish.

“We need to think outside the box, create an ‘e-stock exchange’ where entrepreneurs can crowd fund for their ventures, bring in the banks to set up accessible small business loans, get big business to dedicate a percentage of their supply chain to small business and ultimately merge the township economy into the mainstream economy. But, underpinning all this is doing this within the framework of ethical business practices. Franchising has all those checks and balances in place to take some of the risk out of people starting businesses.”

Echoing these sentiments were speakers from the four business sectors that were highlighted at the



conference – those from the Restaurant & QSR Sector, Services Sector, FMCG Sector and the Automotive Sector – who all agreed that the future success of their sectors lay very much in their own hands as collectives. This was made even more evident following the horrific riots and looting that, whilst putting into focus the desperate needs of the population, also highlighted the inadequacies and apathy of government to acknowledge and protect the businesses that keep the wheels of the economy turning.

According to Gareth Ackerman, Chairman of Pick n Pay, it took the devastating riots for the government to realise the importance of the value chain created by business which ultimately keeps South Africa productive, moving, fed and functioning. “In the same way that Pick n Pay, through its hundreds of franchised stores, has given opportunities for entrepreneurs to own their own businesses and for small suppliers to feed into the value chain, future growth in the economy must happen in the smaller areas and businesses must invest back into communities. Doing that through the franchise business format, where the basic premise is that if the franchisees are doing well and making money, the franchisor will too – that makes for a win-win formula.”

Tony Da Fonseca, MD of OBC Chicken & Meat, that trades mostly in the township, city centres and tax ranks believes that, “whilst we need to hold our leadership accountable for not protecting businesses in the riots, unfortunately as the business community we have come to realise that the future is in



our own hands. This is especially true in franchising where our owner-operators are entrenched in the fabric of the community they serve. So intertwined is that community relationship that, in many of the riot hot-spots, local communities prevented these stores from being looted.”

The Franchising in Africa conference, sponsored by Absa looked at how the franchising business format remained strong, even through the pandemic and how it could change in line with the new normal that lies ahead. International franchisors and franchise associations shared their future strategies while research done by Afreximbank on the franchise potential in Africa and Lionesses of Africa on the role women can play in business, paved the way forward for franchising to take a leading role on the continent.

Legal experts in franchising and IP laws plugged the holes that the pandemic opened up on the legal front while franchise experts analysed the lessons learnt and the future of franchising. Alternate forms of franchising, such as social and micro franchising,

were discussed as viable solutions to further expand the footprint of franchising.

The banking sector has become more risk averse in these trying times but, at the end of the day, it is in the business of financial lending and whilst looking to mitigate their risks, will also be open to taking risks to either support existing clients or in financing new business opportunities that will definitely emerge post-crisis. Says James Noble, Head: Wholesale, Retail and Franchise for Absa Business Banking, sponsor

of FASA’s Franchising in Africa virtual conference, “As bankers, we have always worked closely with franchise brands, are able to audit their growth and ensure that new franchisees coming into their systems are well-supported and are set up with all the necessary financial supports to be successful. We welcome the initiatives that have come out of this conference and, as Absa, are ready to step up to the plate with funding solutions that can stimulate the growth of the franchise sector.”

To assist franchisors, franchisees and their staff who have suffered over this period, FASA has registered a FASA Social Incentive Non-Profit Company to start a concerted media and social media campaign to appeal for contributions which will then be administered and distributed to the most in need. According to Fred Makgato, CEO of FASA, “this specific franchise social incentive relief fund will appeal to the business community, entrepreneurs, stalwarts of the industry and the public to join hands with us to protect and assist those of us who have been worst affected.” **SR**

