

SA hosts world's most influential retail brand CEOs

By [Gareth Ackerman](#)

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CEOs from the world's most influential consumer and retail brands will gather at the Cape Town International Convention Centre on June 15-17 for the 60th Consumer Goods Forum Global Summit - the first of its kind on the African continent.



Picture: [The Times](#)

More than 800 delegates from more than 365 companies in 40 countries are expected to attend and discuss disruption and opportunity in the consumer goods sector.

There has never been a more exciting time to be in retail. Rapid developments in technology, economic and demographic pressures, disruption in all areas of business, and ever-evolving consumer tastes and habits have helped to make retailers more innovative, faster to change, and more diverse in their offerings and their route to market.

Consumers have become more demanding, and more active in their expectations. More than ever, they want to know that the goods and services they buy meet the standards they expect in terms of safety, sustainability, and ethical compliance.

The key to successful retail is to remain local. But global learning has never been more important. Retailers, customers, and stakeholders face common challenges across countries and continents, such as food safety, health and wellness, and sustainability.

The Consumer Goods Forum is the only nonprofit organisation that serves members from both the manufacturing and retail sectors globally, and works to formulate and implement strategies and initiatives to make a real and positive difference.

The forum fosters collaborative engagement on noncompetitive issues, such as product safety, environmental and social sustainability, health and wellness, end-to-end supply chain management, and technology.

In May, it published a Marketing Communications to Children Implementation Guide to advise the industry on meeting its commitment to stop targeted marketing communications to children by 2018. The forum's global membership committed to stop marketing to children under the age of 12 food and beverage products that do not fulfil specific nutrition criteria based on scientific evidence or national and international dietary guidelines.

The forum passed a resolution on forced labour in 2016, and in 2015, accepted a binding commitment at the UN Paris Climate Summit to achieve zero net deforestation by 2020 and to start phasing out HFC refrigerants.

Its Global Food Safety Initiative is providing thought leadership and guidance on food safety management systems along the supply chain. This work is accomplished through collaboration among the world's leading food safety experts from retail, manufacturing, and food service companies, as well as international organisations, governments, academia and service providers to the global food industry.

Perhaps, the largest disruption in the retail sector has been the growth of the internet, as well as social media.

While internet grocery retailing remains relatively small as a percentage of total spend, consumers increasingly expect a seamless offering, from physical stores to online sales.

Pick n Pay is the largest online grocery retailer in SA and grew online sales 38% in the past year.

As customers' lives have become more complex and the demand for convenience has grown, retailers have had to become more flexible, and offer a multichannel offer to customers. Pick n Pay has a growing multiformat and multichannel business. We also have a new click-and-collect service.

The Consumer Goods Forum has chosen SA for its global summit for the first time. I am excited by this choice.

Since democracy in 1994, the country has become the third-largest retail market in the southern hemisphere.

SA is the gateway to the African continent, and the summit's presence sends a strong signal: emerging economies are providing new avenues for growth in the retail business.

With a growing middle class, the consumer base is expanding rapidly, making the African continent a land of incredible opportunity for our industry.

As much as we have learned over the years by attending this international event in different parts of the world, we are confident that delegates will leave with great learnings from the Cape Town summit, with a better understanding of the new, changing retail frontier.

Source: Business Day

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Ackerman is chairman of Pick n Pay Stores, co-chair of the Consumer Goods Forum and co-chair of the Consumer Goods Council of SA.

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