

Wholesale & Retail LEADERSHIP CHAIR

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Wholesale and retail sector alignment with the NDP

South Africa's wholesale and retail sector is well aligned with the objectives of the National Development Plan (NDP) in some areas, but there are concerns about whether some of the NDP objectives are compatible with other areas.

Researchers Dr Bill Sewell, Petrus Venter and Professor Roger Mason of the Wholesale & Retail Leadership Chair of the Cape Peninsula University of Technology found that the sector embraced elements of the NDP where strategies were aligned with their own, but many were considered government's responsibility.

The researchers used a mixed methods research methodology, including a literature review, sector stakeholder questionnaires and semi-structured consultation and dialogue. The sample included over 100 wholesale and retail enterprises, sector associations, unions, government agencies and service providers who rated the alignment of retail organisations with 13 NDP strategy themes and critical success factors.

The 'Top Five' themes most highly aligned with the NDP were nation building and social cohesion; fighting corruption; economy and employment; South Africa in the region and the world; and healthcare for all.

The 'Bottom Five' are those elements considered government's responsibility - economic infrastructure; building safer communities; inclusive rural economy; building a capable and developmental state and social protection.

The study suggests retailers in the sector can make sustainable profits through community visibility, sales promotion and staff productivity. Several executives said their strategies do include commitment to 'Brand South Africa,' social investment and skills development.

The findings provide a potential agenda for engagement with government, including discussion of regulatory inhibitors, and the researchers recommended that mandated leaders of trade associations convene a Retail Strategy Forum to review the NDP and define necessary changes.

For more information contact:

Professor Roger Mason

Wholesale & Retail Leadership Chair

Tel: 021 460 3040

Fax: 086 680 9632

Email: wrlcmedia@cput.ac.za



RETAIL BUSINESS MANAGEMENT DEPARTMENT Business Faculty

Postal address PO Box 652 Cape Town 8000 South Africa
Physical address Room 2.2, Commerce Building, c/o Keizersgracht & Tennant Street, Zonnebloem
Tel 021 464 7260 **Fax** 086 680 9632 **Email** info@wrlc.org.za www.wrlc.org.za