

1. Corporate Governance, Strategy and Risk Management

- Franchising versus Self-Owned Retail Businesses in South Africa, Africa and BRICS Countries
- Franchising Opportunities within Chain Store Operations
- Complex business licensing and labour laws
- Consumer Protection Act implications
- Complexity of Dairy and Liquor licensing requirements.
- Business Ethics in the W&R sector
- Water and energy policies, for agricultural / food production & retailing.
- The whole spectrum of W&R policies and people
- Line management competence and policy interpretation
- Trade secrets in W&R
- Structures to involve all stakeholders in governance decision making
- W&R Competition: fair/ unfair practices?
- Regulatory Framework and W&R Policy loopholes;
- "Do we need to do things differently, in SA Retailing?"
- Corporate W&R Sustainability: governance and strategic management
- Rigid Labour laws; and Red Tape for SMME/ Informal Retailers
- Cyber threat risk mitigation, by external syndicates
- Risk Management for sustainable retailing
- Changes in legislation, allowing fuel producers to retail fuel for their own account.
- Corporate Governance: Implications of the King III report for wholesale and retail business.
- Effectiveness of Chain Store Retail operations managers with discretionary freedom versus Retail operations managers under rigid chain policies and procedures.
- Strategies to convert informal trade to formal trade in the SA retail sector.
- Diversification strategies for the township / informal retailer.
- Category management options for the township / informal retailer.

Summary of Research topics in the Wholesale and Retail sector

- Current trends and models of management communication in the SA Wholesale and Retail Sector.
- Retailer engagement with the NGO sector in South Africa.
- The impact of the new Liquor Legislation on relevant retail business policies and practices.
- Investigation of retail business entrepreneurship opportunities for the youth, in South Africa.
- 'Who is Who' in the SA Retail industry; and Why?
- "Customer Centricity" in W&R strategy , policy & processes;
- W&R Business sustainability factors?
- Characteristics of rural/urban retail survival and success?
- Opportunities for Wholesale and Retail vertical integration in SA

2. Human Resources: Talent Management, Employment Equity, Skills Development & Labour Relations

- Dynamic & flexible training solutions: how can the W&R SETA support the sector in this regard (e.g. Role of e-learning and other more flexible means of knowledge development, with particular reference to accredited programmes?)
Creating cost-effective processes within the current legislation to facilitate this is currently very difficult for employers.
- There is virtually no interaction between the current large role-players who direct development in the W&R SETA and the smaller businesses of the Sector who have to rely on intermittent contact through SETA Regional Offices alone.
- Transparency in all SETA related communications, especially in terms of applications for Discretionary Grants.
- Using the SETA levy and recoupment processes to drive development to support succession planning (linked to EE) in the Wholesale and Retail sector e.g. Role of the W&RSETA in supporting the industry in succession planning throughout the pipeline, and not just for current projects.
- Solutions to bridging talent gaps in the W&R industry (e.g. Buying/ planning and leadership / management skills)
- Role of E-Learning in W&R SETA accredited programmes, versus registered

Summary of Research topics in the Wholesale and Retail sector

assessment.

- Relevance of W&R SETA curricula to real W&R business needs?
- Models to make Retailing an employer of choice for school and varsity leavers (Retail & Wholesale is currently still relatively unknown, in terms of the many career opportunities it offers)
- Strategic Training Needs of SA Retail Managers.
- Identification of Scarce and Critical Skills in SA Retail.
- Job Creation Strategies in SA Retail Business.
- Appropriate Skills Training for SMME Retailers in SA.
- Retail staff training must give a fair chance to the staff to learn the day to day running of such a business. What does burn me with regards the training that we have had over the last three years is that there is no practical role play training and even the theory is not geared up to the food retail industry. We need to start looking at this!
- Human Resource Management issues in SA Retailing: Employment Equity, Skills Development, Talent Management, Labour Relations, Transformation.
- Integrated W&R Talent Management, career progress and skills retention
- Accuracy of skills demand versus supply numbers.
- 'Talent Incubator': a 'Casual Pool' for developing W&R sector skills.
- Youth Employment: this is a very important national challenge for SA retailers
- Relationship between Youth Employability, Work Integrated Learning & Job Creation in SA Retailing.
- Professionalising the W&R Sector.
- Clarify SETA process, to agree/consult for meaningful Sector Skills Planning.
- Labour Relations complexity and costs in the W&R sector.
- Commitment, productivity, service standards for retail business sustainability.
- Models of optimising productivity in a unionised W&R environment.
- Productivity and Compliance with UIF and Labour legislation.
- Conflict management and fair management practices in W&R.
- Employment ratios and benefits must be equitable (i.e. Permanent/part-time /casual staff ratios).

Summary of Research topics in the Wholesale and Retail sector

- Continuous up-skilling of W&R supervisory / management skills.
- Leadership skills training for shop stewards and Union officials;
- Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) for senior Union officials to undertake FET and HEI vocational education.
- Need to involve labour unions in W&R company EE Committees.
- Why do foreigners (e.g. Somali and Pakistani retailers) succeed better than SA informal retailers?
- Workplace Integrated Learning and skills development practices in W&R.
- "Thinking Middle Management", to ensure W&R "Process Excellence"
- Retail career promotion: image and aspirations.
- Developing a people and profit driven culture vs. only profit.
- "Retail is not sexy"; Career Marketing is needed, to build for the future.
- Holding people accountable for their Key Performance Indicators.
- Key-man retention incentives and staff share schemes in the W&R sector.
- Employee engagement and staff retention is an ongoing problem, in retail.
- The high level of unemployment in South Africa shields the industry from many cost cutting initiatives that could be introduced, to impact on the manner that fuel is delivered to the retail consumer.
- The influence of leadership styles and management practices on productivity, in SA wholesale and retail trade.
- Employee motivation, morale, job satisfaction and stress in SA retail businesses.
- Implications of lack of management knowledge and skill in retail businesses.
- Flexi time employment practices in the SA retail sector.
- Evaluation of management development programmes in the SA wholesale and retail industry.
- W&R Staff development and training impact on employee retention.
- Leadership profile of an effective SA Retail Manager.
- Research into current in-house training that retailers are providing.
- The effectiveness of implementing an Employment Equity policy in the SA retail workplace.

Summary of Research topics in the Wholesale and Retail sector

- Linguistic variety amongst first year retail students; and how this impacts on throughput rates.
- Use of technology (laptops, smart phones, blackboard, etc.) by students; and the impact these have on student throughput rates and results.
- The potential effect of the proposed provisions in the Labour Relations Amendment Bill regarding labour brokering on SA retailers.
- Appropriate Skills Training for Informal / SMME Retailers.
- Identification of Scarce and Critical Skills in Retail.
- Rigid SA Labour Laws for cost-effective retailing (compare China/SA policies and costs).
- Permanent retail employment, rather than casualisation.
- Employability is essential for sustainable job creation, especially youth.
- Increasing levels of labour costs, above inflation, without commensurate increase in productivity levels.
- Job Creation Strategies in Retail Businesses.
- W&R job creation & sustainability.
- Entrepreneurial Development – Needs to be developed further, a culture needs to be created for school leavers.
- Job creation and Employability (Youth Unemployment & Development). This is a major national challenge that needs urgent and coordinated responses to address.
- Skills Development / ELearning: This will greatly assist with our ability to deliver quality product, resulting in improved business and profitability, which in turn improves our ability to reduce poverty by employing more people.
- Labour Relations – Unreasonable staff expectations.
- Key Performance Indicators and productivity in successful SA wholesale and retail organisations.
- Labour productivity and stability.
- Talent Management, Employment Equity – shortage of skills that want to work in rural areas. Wholesale predominately male orientated – difficulty to have women accepted into the sector.
- Talent Management & Employment Equity;

Summary of Research topics in the Wholesale and Retail sector

- Need for more effective analysis of skills supply and demand for "The Retail Store of the Future"
- How to get retail staff motivated and more disciplined.
- 3. Finance: Access, Viability & Sustainability**
- Access to Finance by SMME Retailers and Informal Traders.
- Financial Performance Indicators for various Retail Businesses.
- Financing Mix for Small Township Retailers to ensure Sustainability.
- Rising Cost Trends of Retailers SMME / Rural areas 'survivalist' financial management challenges and processes.
- Access to development finance, for Informal / SMME traders.
- Budgeting and Control; Cash flow management.
- SMME retailers /Small Suppliers: both need financial support and tools.
- Effectiveness of our outsourced ABSA credit card joint venture?
- Return on investment criteria in W&R?
- SMME and other entrepreneurs struggle with start-up finance.
- Viability Studies (financial implications for potential new W&R Projects)
- Financial governance aspects of 'Franchise/Own store' decisions.
- Credit granting, Lay-by and Cash Sales options: financial /sales choices?
- Rising cost trends of SA wholesalers and retailers.
- Debt covenant compliance practices and models for retailers.
- Predictive financial modeling of business failure within a retail context.
- Financial management best practices for emerging township retailers.
- Revolving credit as mechanism to support spaza shop / informal trader development.
- Effective Capital budgeting practices for retailers.
- Effective management of introducing credit, by traditional cash retailers.
- Investigating the cash conversion cycle and variables at selected retailers.
- Development and modelling of board games to enhance the financial literacy of retail staff.
- Review of financial risks in SA retail businesses.
- Access to Finance by SMME Retailers and Informal Traders.

Summary of Research topics in the Wholesale and Retail sector

- Financial Performance Indicators for various types of Retail Businesses.
 - Financing Mix for Small Township Retailers to ensure Sustainability.
 - Financial assistance aimed at improving our industry, and assessment, and if needed, introduction of best practices which would improve our existing practices within our industry resulting in a positive outcome for our industry as a whole.
 - The high levels of unemployment in South Africa shields the industry from many cost cutting initiatives that could be introduced, to impact in the manner that fuel is retailed to the consumer.
 - Cash Flow and Growth Finance.
 - Prompt Payment by and building relations with Big Business & Government.
 - As an importer, exchange rate fluctuations are beyond our control and continuous cost reductions are being sought as increased product prices cannot always be passed onto the consumer.
 - Granting of reckless credit in breach of the National Credit Act 34 of 2005 due to salesmen chasing commission, credit bureaus not updating adverse listing timeously thereby distorting the affordability/creditworthiness of the consumer.
 - Access to finance – how to lower the barriers to entry for the fuel industry, specifically funding, as well as accessing funding for other retail operations e.g. convenience store diversifications.
 - Financial viability and sustainability – benchmarks for feasibility of service stations to confirm or update research being done for the department of energy on benchmark service stations. Also benchmarks for other parts of the business e.g. shop, car wash, diversifications.
 - Slowing pace of dealer margin increases – profitability levelling out and decreasing.
- 4. Marketing, Sales Promotion and Public/ Stakeholder relations**
- The Potential and Risks of Social Media as a Retail Marketing Strategy.
 - Private Labelling options for Retailers.
 - Customer Satisfaction and Service in Retailing.
 - Impact of the Consumer Protection Act on the Retail Supply Chain Community.

Summary of Research topics in the Wholesale and Retail sector

- Satisfaction with Community Engagement of Franchise versus Chain Store.
- Analysis of the whole W&R value chain.
- 'Proudly South African' strategies in SA wholesale and retail.
- Packaging: how important for Retail market profile and sales?
- Need deeper government / industry understanding of goals and consequences of marketing laws, e.g. liquor and hardware marketing.
- 'Ubuntu' projects, for community co-operation and visibility.
- How do we strengthen our community relations, as a retailer?
- People Skills & Community Communication.
- Transparency in W&R public relations and sales promotion.
- Retail Implications of discovery of new reliable and cost effective power sources, to replace dependence on fossil fuel.
- Retail businesses involvement in communities.
- Cost-effectiveness of loyalty programmes; including spending patterns.
- Retailing strategies of "Green" products.
- New international competitors in the SA retail sector.
- Loyalty card applications for smaller independent retailers.
- Financial and insurance services offered by FMCG retailers.
- Utilising loyalty card systems information to increase sales & client retention.
- The influence of inflation on the buying behaviour of FMCG consumers.
- Consumer perceptions regarding buying meat from retailers.
- Consumer Perceptions regarding service quality at SA retailers.
- The effectiveness of mobile marketing of SA retailers.
- Investigation into the effectiveness of demand forecasts, as a tool to assist retailers in planning store operations and marketing.
- Retail businesses involvement and image in communities.
- Stakeholder relations priorities and strategies of retail businesses.
- Image implications of FMCG Retailers as authorised financial service providers.
- The intricate nature and relationship of the community image of a retailer and the impact that communication has on this relationship.
- Private Labeling Options for Retailers.

Summary of Research topics in the Wholesale and Retail sector

- Customer Satisfaction on Services in Retailing.
- The Potential and Risks of Social Media as a Retail Marketing Strategy.
- Building a loyal customer base.
- A happy and prosperous community means good business opportunities.
- Dealing with customer complaints in compliance with the consumer rights entrenched in the Consumer Protection Act 68 of 2008.
- Market positioning – to establish our brand as the preferred brand.
- Marketing – understanding the impact of consumer and community on profits and acceptance within the region where trading.
- Market positioning/brand differentiation – in a competitive environment, the consumer is spoilt for choice therefore brands create both a reputation and loyalty which is key.

5. Safety, Security, Waste Management & Loss Control

- Shrinkage and Loss Control in Retail Businesses.
- Outsourcing Models of Housekeeping and Security Functions for Retail Business.
- Food safety and ageing policy/ security processes (from farms through to in-store expiry dates).
- Waste management; especially food / heavy machinery.
- Loss control: retail root causes and required disciplines.
- "Green Policies" understanding and environmental knowledge.
- Packaging standards and recycling in SA wholesale & retail.
- W&R SETA Safety & Security Unit Standards need to be upgraded.
- Safety & Security risks in SA retail businesses.
- Waste removal practices in FMCG retail operations.
- Customer theft prevention policies and practices in SA retail businesses.
- Security and Shrinkage are a major problem and system/policy loop holes continually have to be closed at high cost.
- Shrinkage and loss control systems – inventory management and limiting mark-downs/wastage will have dramatic effect on margins if efficient.

6. Branch Operations Management, Systems and Technology

- Technology Trends for Retail Managers.
- Dashboard Business Intelligence for Retailers.
- 'Customer Centricity': how do SA retailers define, enhance, implement and support?
- Customer Service Levels: setting and measuring retail branch standards.
- Systems to support branch operations management and trend analysis.
- E-retail infrastructure and skills needed?
- How to combat external fraud and cloned cards in retailing.
- Rural/ urban segmentation and implications for systems & technology.
- IT Skills - broaden the operational skills pool, into all retail chain branches.
- Retail operations: understanding and implementing chain policies and processes.
- Stock management technology.
- Work study methodology for W&R viability & sustainability.
- Knowledge management, at all levels in the group.
- Does retail store infrastructure support modern shifts in the use of technology? e.g. e-learning implementation.
- The use and impact of software systems (e.g. SAP/ERP) within retail supply chains.
- Scanning systems for retail businesses.
- Evaluation of MIS in retailers to deliver effective business intelligence.
- Use of information systems at various levels of management in retail.
- The use of SAP systems in retail business functions.
- Design and use of Retail Point of sale systems.
- Use of systems in retail store layout and design.
- Stock control/receiving/dispatch & merchandise systems in SA wholesale & retail.
- Management of Dead Stock; effective W&R policies and systems.

Summary of Research topics in the Wholesale and Retail sector

- Retail Operations management – to ensure effective branch operations management.
- Operational W&R Efficiencies, within Legislative requirements.
- Managing Social Media and Digital Technologies needs a new role – located between Marketing and IT: Chief Digital Officers.

7. Development Projects and New Ventures

- Local Supplier development; for fair trade and job creation.
- Sustainable and mutually beneficial W&R development strategies.
- Innovation in retail marketing concepts, trading patterns and product design.
- Cost-effective Co-operatives / Voluntary partnerships for Informal Traders.
- Define Core strengths needed in a new retail venture?
- Need for research skills locally, re consumer needs & preferences.
- Specialist niches in SA Wholesale and Retail?
- Broad-based Black Economic Empowerment in the W&R sector.
- How to improve stock turn: in-store innovation & foresight.
- Enterprise Development (Suppliers): Retailer policies & guidelines.
- Enterprise Development – what are the opportunities, models and projects currently focused on by SA W&R businesses?

8. Procurement, Supply Chain and Distribution Logistics

- Development of Local Suppliers versus Import of Products.
- Productivity & cost-effectiveness of W&R supply chain.
- Promotion of Local sourcing; Local supplier/quality standards.
- High Costs of Transport and Logistics for SA wholesalers and retailers.
- Ensuring In-stock retail availability is essential, but can be costly.
- Preferential Procurement policies from local / black suppliers.
- Transparency in retail procurement and merchandise labelling.
- International Trade Logistics: W&R costs and corruption.
- Factors in SA retailer decisions regarding use of warehouses or distribution centres.

Summary of Research topics in the Wholesale and Retail sector

- Collaborative purchasing and distribution strategies for the small independent retailer.
- Assortment optimisation models for SA retail businesses.
- Space allocation and product placement decisions in retailing.
- Purchasing strategies in SA retail businesses.
- Merchandising strategies of FMCG retail businesses in SA.
- E-Commerce and its impact on the global retail supply chain.
- Shortage of W&R Buying & Planning skills.
- "Complexity of the Retail Supply Chain".
- Are SA retailers strongly in favour of Fairtrade procurement?
- Fairtrade policies and strategies.
- Enterprise Development. Local Retail Development and Diversification/ Innovation – all emerging and unique areas of operation within SA and customer differentiators.
- Supplier Development: This will allow our preferred suppliers to deliver us quality products which in turn will improve our business and lead to reduced unemployment.
- Capacity Building of the SMMEs in the light of the BBBEE legislative requirement on Enterprise Development.
- Supply chain reliability for SA wholesalers and retailers.
- Supply Chain & Distribution Logistics – as a growing business the Critical success factor is how to get best produce to customer most effectively.
- Merchandising – competitive and sustainable supply chain optimisation.
- Logistics and Supply Chain Cost-effectiveness?
- Supply chain and distribution management: costs and quality.
- W&R Supply chain and distribution logistics – efficiencies through logistics lead to margin expansion as well as availability – this is vital to remain current and competitive.

9. Formal / Informal W&R Challenges & Opportunities

- Two parallel retail economies, in SA: how best to integrate?

Summary of Research topics in the Wholesale and Retail sector

- Opportunities for formal / informal buying power collaboration.
- How to bridge the formal/informal W&R gaps?
- SMME & Spazas interactions: need to build collaboration.
- Incorporate informal trader facilities into formal shopping centres/ malls.
- Capacity Building of SMMEs.
- Public/Private Partnerships, to develop informal traders.
- Foreign traders in SA: why are they successful?
- Corporate Retailers/wholesalers support to informal traders / spaza shops, in South Africa.
- Impact of Chinese Retailers on SA Rural Retailers.
- Xenophobia attacks on foreign retailers in SA local communities
- Formal/Informal sector interactions.

10. In-Store Production and Quality Assurance

- In-store Production Processes in Retail.
- Quality Assurance of In-store Retail Production.
- Need consistent, high standards of Product Quality.
- In store Production Processes: Scarce skills are a challenge.
- Cost effectiveness of in store production, versus outsourcing?
- Dairy and bread quality standards & retail food hygiene.
- Food safety, for in-store deli and fresh produce.
- Retail goods which are durable & free from defects.
- Service excellence and production control: In-store Compliance Processes.
- Merchandising and Space Management (Shelf optimisation).
- Comparison of cost benefits and risk analysis of in-store production by major retailers in South Africa.
- Application of HACCP and ISO standards for in-store retail production.
- Quality specifications by SA retailers for production processes in outsourced supplier manufacturing.
- Quality Assurance of In-Store Retail Production.

11. Premises and Asset Management

- Optimal Tenant Mix Models for Shopping Centres.
- Rent or Build? in Rural / Urban contexts.
- "How do you continue growing, when there is a supermarket on every corner?"
- Equipment control & maintenance: costs, skills and availability.
- W&R Property management: rent or buy?
- Optimal tenant mix models for SA shopping centres.
- Differentiated rental models for a varied tenant mix within SA shopping centres.
- Consumer perceptions regarding entertainment in SA shopping centres.
- Retail tenant satisfaction in SA shopping centres.
- Implications of the high cost of rental for smaller retailers in shopping centres in South Africa.
- The management of temporary tenants in a retail shopping centre.
- Cost-benefits of SA retailing in shopping centres versus stand alone / street retailing.

12. Non-store, Catalogue & On-line Wholesale & Retail Trading

- E-Retailing / E-Tailing / E-Commerce in SA Retail.
- Pricing strategy for on-line / catalogue retailing?
- Door to door/ house parties in SA township communities.
- E-retailing: challenges of technology access and skills needs.
- Supply chain/delivery policies and processes, for non-store retailing.
- E-Tailing: How? What needs to be done? Bandwidth; Volumes to cost- justify?
- How important is personal interaction & the human touch, in SA retailing?
- 'Virtual Stores': how to market them?
- 'Fit for purpose' retailing trading strategies in SA: one size does not fit all communities.

13 Characteristics of the South African International Retailer

13.1 Africa

- Risks of Business Ventures into Africa.

Summary of Research topics in the Wholesale and Retail sector

- International Retail Development: market opportunities and legal hurdles, in Africa.
- The limitations on cross border trade due to the bureaucratic requirements of moving stock between African countries are huge limitations to the SA retail business.
- Various Tax, duties, surtax and customs requirements; especially for mid-size Retailers.
- As we expand into Africa, many factors become critical in understanding the local market, e.g. Increasing levels of labour costs, above inflation, without commensurate increase in productivity levels.
- Understanding cultural and legal dynamics in various countries across Africa.
- Assessment of local consumer product knowledge, in various countries.
- Multi-national branding strategy, across the African continent.
- Africa is very topical at the moment, with the majority of SA retailers looking to enter this space due to the potential based on demographics and the emerging middle class. The question remains as to the ease with which this can be done; and whether it is a fit for all categories of retailers. More information is needed on the African shopper (country specific), the relevant trade laws and brand awareness.
- In certain African countries, the more westernised brands (USA brands for example) are demanded – in depth consumer investigations would identify SA retailing opportunities versus potential failures.
- Risks of Retail Business Ventures into Africa.
- No name brands are being forced on African consumers as the balance of power lies with the SA retailers (comment made by an SA wholesaler).
- Understanding the legal and statutory environment in the SADC and other African countries.
- As with entering Africa, entering emerging markets would be that much easier if there was more information on the consumer base, the expected development and potential scale. It is very important to get country/area specific data as it varies so significantly.

13.2 BRICS Countries

- Retail Opportunities as a result of the BRICS Agreement.
- Innovation, Procurement, Supply Chain, Distribution & Logistics: We could possibly use BRICS experience to introduce best practices into our W&R industry, resulting in improvements.
- Procurement, supply chain know-how; we can learn these, for BRICS partnerships and to enter new markets.
- Market selection, procurement, supply chain, distribution logistics – to enter correct BRICS markets and reach targeted consumers, to ensure sustainability.
- Development finance is needed, to help SA retailers to establish and make a mark on the world stage.
- Danger of Dumping: Imports from China?
- Imports from BRICS countries, for example Wellness products from Brazil: Marketing opportunities and import constraints?
- Entering emerging BRICS markets would be that much easier if there was more information on the consumer base, the expected development and potential scale. It is very important to get country/area specific data as it varies so significantly.
- BRICS Innovation / Risk Management: We could use this to introduce best practices into our industry resulting in improvement.
- Retail expansion opportunities as a Result of the BRICS Agreement.
- BRICS Market selection – to enter correct markets to ensure sustainability
- BRICS Procurement, supply chain, distribution and logistics information (this will be important to reach the targeted consumers or business partners).
- Legal requirements for BRICS procurement (cross-border imports/exports).
- Retail Innovation: what can we in SA learn, from BRICS W&R businesses?