

SUPERMARKET & RETAILER

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Business knowledge for smart retailers
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**Sanitisation,
hygiene and
infection control**

**Aki Kalliatakis –
Are you exasperated
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Ice cold energy

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Has the dust settled?



Helen Maister

We are still establishing our new way of being. If you are still under the delusion that it will be business as usual as soon as lockdown is lifted, well... just well. *Supermarket & Retailer* is here to support you through the process of change with in-depth articles that are

designed to bring new insights, ideas and practical advice to you, the leaders and supplier of supermarket retail. Diving deeper, let's see what another information packed issue of *Supermarket & Retailer* can offer you:

Are you checking in on your customers? What is their new life like? How have their priorities changed? These are just a handful of questions that Aki Kalliatakis is asking. Are you?

From supermarket chains to independently owned stores and even small spaza shops, **refrigeration** is arguably the biggest user of energy, and also the biggest load shedding headache. Energy efficiency and cost-savings are crucial in this sector, but how does a store go about achieving concrete savings in the current climate?

Solar or generator? With electricity prices rising and load shedding a reality for the foreseeable future, alternative power sources are gaining traction. Solar energy has seen slow but steady growth, particularly in South Africa. Clean and reliable, its major drawback has always been the cost associated with installing a solar

system. As the technology develops and becomes more popular, the cost is dropping, but depending on your store's power needs and the size of your system, you could be looking at paying a pretty penny for the system. There are ways around the hefty sum without the capex. Find out more in the 'Ice cold' refrigeration issue.

Now, more than ever before, sanitisation, hygiene and infection control have become a part of our everyday lives. Public and business spaces have borne the brunt of government regulations and controls as they remain the most likely place for infection to spread. The Covid-19 pandemic is here to stay, for a while at least. As a novel virus, it presents an ever-changing and dynamic landscape that requires agile responses and protocols. It may feel like a big ask, but putting in place the appropriate systems and processes is the responsible – and legally required – thing to do.

In it for the long haul – **Sanitisation and infection control** at a much higher level than before the pandemic are going to be part and parcel of retail life for many months to come. We discuss sanitisers, trolley hygiene, in-store sanitisation, chlorine tablets for in-store spraying, point of sale and points of contact, mask guidelines, procedures for keeping staff and customers' safe, access control and so much more

Forest-based materials such cellulose-based plastics and films, as well as cellulose pulp (an integral part of viscose production) can also lead to deforestation or poor forestry practices: a threat not only to the world's

forests, but also to business and brand reputation. Through responsible procurement, the **Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) certification system** can help to secure a long-term source of timber, paper and other forest-based products from responsibly managed forests.

Employees returning to work from the Covid-19 lockdown will need to show reasonable justification if they halt work on the basis that they are exposed to the virus. **Legal provisions allowing employees to withdraw from a hazardous working situation** could, in the context of Covid-19, be open to abuse by unprincipled employees or trade unions. Kenneth Coster, Partner at Webber Wentzel, gives us practical legal advice.

One of the most common challenges that organisations encounter in **virtual meetings** is that people often multi-task. The results of this can be embarrassing, like the co-worker that forgot to mute the conference call and started a conversation with their spouse. Nicholas Bell writes about boosting engagement and collaboration in this virtual space.

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A special thanks to Colcab for supplying us with our cover pic.

Blessings and blessings

Helen Maister

Helen Maister



Are you exasperated by Covid-19 excess?

Are you re-thinking what is really important to you, and questioning some of your values?



Aki Kalliatakis

Delight your customers

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I don't know about you, but quite frankly I'm sick of reading, hearing and watching all the stuff about the Covid-19 crisis, lockdown, WFH, (or 'work from home') and how we all have to adjust to 'the new normal'. I'm bored with the unsolicited advice on how to lead during a crisis, what to do to adapt to the change in the world, how I should be learning new skills – online, of course – and how to take advantage of the crisis to make money.

I've had enough of the countless emails I get from desperate companies who want to sell me their stuff. And, of course, we've had our fair share of political stupidity from various leaders across the world. I miss the bush terribly, and as a home-schooling father, I have developed an incredible respect for teachers.

I'm not naïve or in denial – I know there are some real dangers in this epidemic, and at 63-years old I am very much in the risk-group. Indeed, my own grandfather lost three of his seven siblings in 1918 – not in the First World War (they all survived that okay), but because of the Spanish 'flu pandemic.

I'm not suggesting that you become reckless in your approach and do silly things. I'm completely in agreement with our President and the seemingly harsh measures taken to protect us. We have certainly lost many of our basic human rights, and I do fear that this will continue even after the crisis is over. But it's almost as if people have re-thought what is really important to them, and questioned some of their values.

For example, I have been an openly loyal fan of the company that produces my mobile phone. I've been fussy about 'this' feature and 'that' ability (most of which I may use once a year), but now that my income has tightened up, I've questioned whether my needs are vain, petty and frivolous.

There has been a lot that is positive, not least of which is the chance to reconnect with my family.



I love the amazingly creative funny jokes and videos I get on my WhatsApps – to the point where my 'phone memory can't handle anymore. Humour is one of the powerful ways in which we deal with these types of calamities. And, at my last count, I have collected more than 900 examples of companies that have done something positive and innovative, and sometimes just plain fun, to make lives easier for their customers and the communities in which they operate. Yes, that's 900 examples, and one of my favourites is a company in Japan that designed the 'WFH Jammies', a top which in the bottom half is just a comfortable sweatshirt, but the top half looks like a formal, appropriate, professional work shirt for Zoom calls! I'd love to order a pair for me.

So, there's been a lot of change, but what I'd like to focus on in this month's column is what has **NOT** changed in the world of customers and marketing. Getting back your lost customers and their purchases after Covid-19 is no doubt going to be just about every business's key strategy.

“ Our customers will have changed, and this will reflect in their new buying behaviour. Sometimes it will not appear rational. ”

For example, we have one restaurant in our neighbourhood where, after years and years of loyalty, we stopped going because we were tired of the same old food on the same old menu.



The owner is someone we really liked, but we just needed some variety. A couple of years ago he helped my son raise some funds for a charity, and we felt obligated to return the favour. We just didn't get round to it.

When all the restaurants closed, I immediately sent him a message saying that as soon as he opened again, we'd be first in line to support him. And that's how it worked out. Since lockdown restrictions were eased, we have ordered take-out meals four times. Our relationship with him – and

our need to help him through his hard times – was more important than our trivial food tastes.

So what do you need to be able to do? I have a few thoughts:

- For decades I've been talking about "living a day in the life of your customer." Now that they are different, you cannot afford to make assumptions. So it's almost like you have just been divorced and you have to start a new relationship getting to know them.



- What is their new life like? How have their priorities changed? How loyal do they feel towards your business? What are the things that trouble them and keep them awake at night – and how can you help? These are just a handful of questions, but you're going to need a lot more detail.
- Probably critical to your own success, is to clearly define what drives 'value' in their lives. What has become more important to them about the way a business treats them? This can range from simple thoughts like creating convenience and simplicity, to an in-depth insight into how they make their buying decisions, particularly which emotions play a role. You can only achieve this by sitting with them, knee-to-knee, jaw-to-jaw, talking in detail about these drivers. Also watch out for the clues they give you.

- And at an even deeper level, but one which may be the most crucial factor for your success, how are you going to uncover their unmet desires and needs? What is their number one non-negotiable priority? Did you notice how I started off this column? I began by saying how sick and tired I am of Covid. It may not be politically correct, but I know that it's certainly what many of my friends and colleagues are feeling now. Your job is to be able to tap into how your customers are feeling right now – even at the risk of being controversial and attracting the haters – and to respond appropriately.

So let's just get on with it. Human beings like your customers and your staff are still going to remain basically the same irrational, emotional, illogical creatures that they have always been for thousands of years, and the closer your understanding of what drives these, the easier it will be for you to get them on your side again. Use this opportunity to bring out the best in you and your team, and don't allow it to bring out the worst. Bring some sunshine to the lives of people around you. **SR**



Ice cold energy

From supermarket chains to independently owned stores and even small spaza shops, refrigeration is arguably the biggest user of energy, and also the biggest load shedding headache

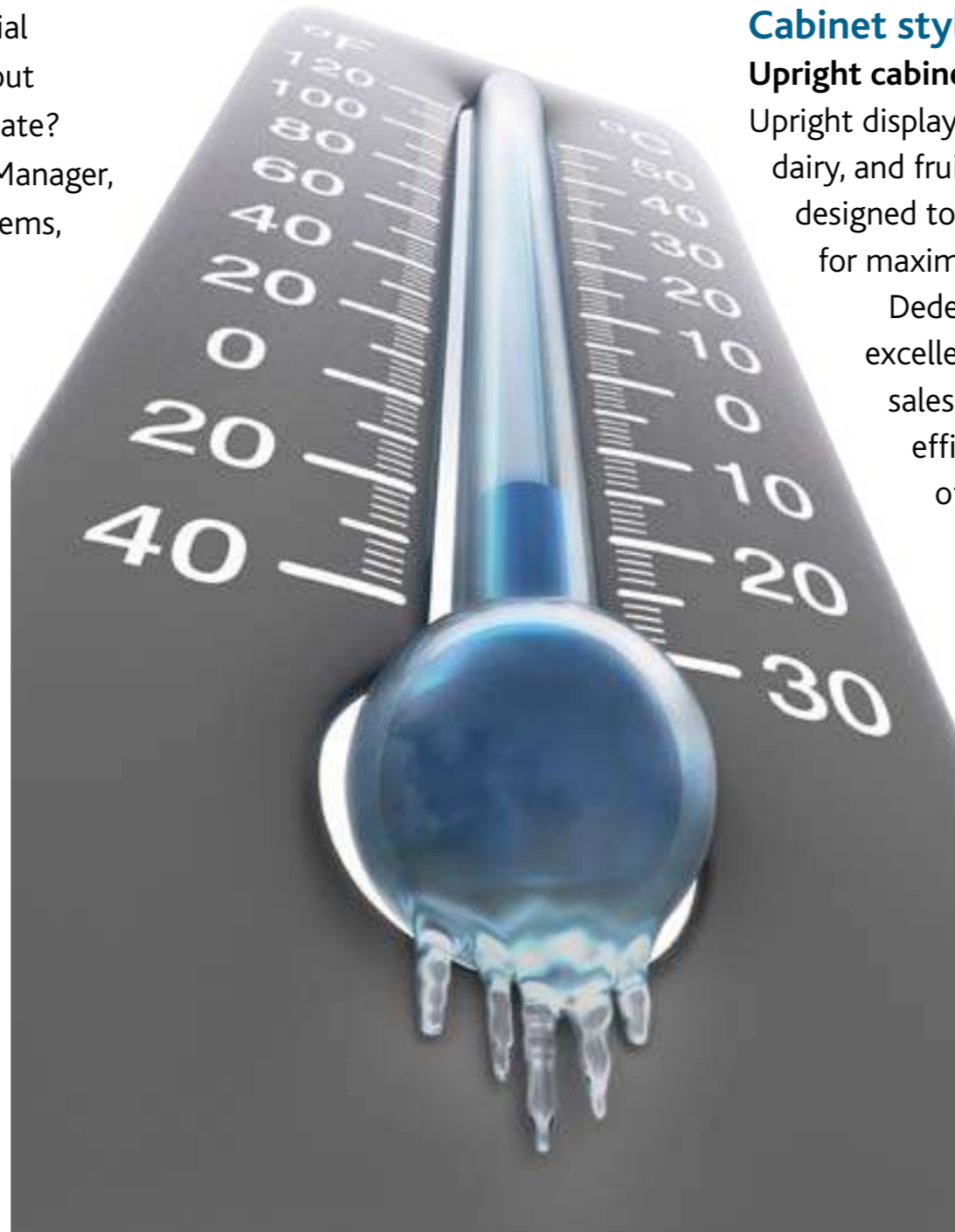
Energy efficiency and cost-savings are crucial in this sector, but how does a store go about achieving concrete savings in the current climate? Wayne Dedekind, SPAR Group Development Manager, is something of an expert in refrigeration systems, and here he shares his in-depth knowledge and years of experience in the industry.

“Refrigeration can be very technical and controversial, as there is no single solution for all. It is largely a matter of what shoe fits best”

Wayne Dedekind
Spar Group Development Manager

“As far as the various refrigeration systems are concerned: simplex, multiplex, water-loop, self-contained and so on, each can be efficient in the correct application, and grossly inefficient in the wrong application.”

So, without further ado, let's delve into the fascinating – and challenging – inner workings of store refrigeration.



Cabinet styles

Upright cabinets

Upright display cabinets are commonly used in the butchery, dairy, and fruit and vegetable sections of supermarkets, designed to provide high product visibility, while allowing for maximum use of the available floor area.

Dedekind says, “Although these cabinets provide excellent product display, contributing to increased sales and impulse purchases, they are not very efficient from an energy consumption point of view, due to the cascade cooling effect.”

As these are usually open-faced, around 30% of the refrigerated air will cascade or ‘spill’ from the cabinet, causing a cold aisle effect. He explains...

“The total percentage of spilt air will differ, depending on the cabinet manufacturer and age, as well as the ambient conditions within the store.”

These can include drafts from entrance doors, air-conditioner vents, and in-store traffic flow.

This has resulted in a move towards placing doors on upright cabinets.





Emerson ZX condensing unit for refrigeration applications

The ZX range is designed on three factors demanded by industry users:

Intelligent Store Solutions: Most innovative approach to enterprise facility management. Emerson's Intelligent Store™ architecture integrates hardware and services to provide Cold Chain Businesses a single view into their entire network of facilities and understanding what facilities actually cost to operate and maintain.

The Intelligent Application architecture transforms data from application equipment and control into actionable insights. Designed to deliver value in both new and existing refrigerated applications:

- Make better decisions on recourse investments for maximum impact
- Receive accurate feedback and service customised to meet customer specific needs
- Reduce operational costs and boost profitability

Energy efficiency: Utilizing Copeland™ scroll compressor technology, variable speed fan motor, large capacity condenser coil and advanced control algorithms, energy consumption is significantly reduced. End-users can save more than 20% on annual energy costs compared to using competitor units.

Reliability: Combining the proven reliability of Copeland™ scroll compressors with an advanced electronic control system and diagnostics, equipment reliability is greatly enhanced. Fault code alerts and fault code retrieval capabilities provide information to help improve speed and accuracy of system diagnostics. Integrated electronic controls provide protection against over-current, overheating, incorrect phase rotation, compressor cycling, high pressure resets and low pressure cut-outs. It can also send out a warning message to the operator when there is 'liquid flood back', which can prevent critical damage to the unit.

- Intelligent Application Control → Better decision-making
- Highest efficiency → Lower energy bills
- Reliability → Lower maintenance cost

In 2009, Metraclark introduced the first Emerson ZX Condensing Unit into the South African market, which is now considered to be the first choice for cold chain businesses. Metraclark offers the complete ZX condensing units range from Emerson, designed for medium and low temperature applications with options for digital modulation of capacities.

ZX Platform Refrigeration Condensing Unit offers capacities between 2HP and 20HP, for both Medium and Low temperature applications, with Digital capacity modulation offered across the range.



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Dedekind explains: "In stores that have converted to doored cabinets, we have seen improvements of up to 30% in cabinet energy efficiencies, while the improved temperature stability of the cabinets has also reduced the cabinet defrost cycle requirements. This in turn has had a positive effect on the shelf life of the display product."

Island freezers

Island or chest style freezers use a large amount of floor area for the quantity of product variants they display, but they are able to be packed deeper than shelved upright freezers, making them excellent for stores that require large quantities of product to be displayed due to a higher volume of shoppers.

These types of freezer units are also preferred by lower LSM shoppers and SME (small to medium enterprise) markets due to their deeper freeze effect. Upright cabinets lose more cold air if they are opened and closed more frequently than chest units, meaning the product may only be in the -8°C to -10°C range. Cold air can't rise to escape out of an island or chest cabinet and products are therefore kept closer to the -18°C to -21°C range.

Dedekind says, "The most efficient island freezers are those with glass closed tops, and we are seeing a massive drive towards the R290 self-contained units currently being imported into South Africa. These units use small DC compressors, and combined with the performance of R290 (propane) as a refrigerant, they are incredibly energy efficient."

“ Island or chest style freezers use a large amount of floor area for the amount of product variants they display, but they are able to be packed deeper than shelved upright freezers ”



High-low display cabinets

Combination or high-low display cabinets combine a vertical cabinet with an island cabinet. These are useful in small stores where space is at a premium, as they allow for vertical product displays, as well as bulkier product storage in the bin below. According to Dedekind, the closed door gives them good energy efficiency, and although they are mainly used for frozen products, they are also suitable for chilled products. Although often more expensive than upright or island units, their functionality and effective use of the sales floor area make them especially useful for small-footprint stores.

Low and deli display cabinets

Low and deli display cabinets are mainly used to merchandise open cooked foods, processed meats, unpackaged cheese, and confectionery products. These units are designed with a customer-facing curved or flat glass barrier, allowing full visibility of the product without the potential for contact contamination. Energy efficiency depends largely on the manufacturer of the cabinet, but they do offer comparable efficiencies to most upright display cabinets. Dedekind explains that for the display of fresh unpackaged meat, cheese or ready to eat products, these are highly recommended.



Dalucon Refrigeration Products SA (Pty) Ltd, are manufacturers of high pressure polyurethane injected insulated panels, using the best European machine capabilities. Dalucon has the biggest PU insulated panel facility available in South Africa, boasting the longest PU machine, capable of manufacturing panels up to 16.5 metres long, with no joints. Panel thickness ranges from 40mm to 200mm, servicing various industry requirements. Dalucon's four high volume machines are capable of making (in excess of) 100 000m² per month.

Dalucon polyurethane injected insulation gives the best long-term thermal performance, energy conservation and safety



Dalucon products:

- Cold and freezer rooms
- Cold and freezer room doors & shelving
- Insulated containers & modular buildings
- Refrigerated truck bodies and trailers
- Insulated panels for:
 - Growing Rooms
 - Large warehouse buildings
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Our core focus is on excellence and delivery time.
We ensure a high quality product by implementing quality manufacturing procedures, thereby setting a benchmark for all of our products which competitors find hard to match.

Open... or closed?

Closed cabinets are undeniably more energy efficient, a fact which has been accepted globally. At the recent Euroshop Expo in Dusseldorf, of the nearly 300 refrigeration companies displaying more than 1 000 cabinets, only 17 cabinets were doorless. In addition to energy efficiency, closed doors increase the shelf-life of fresh produce, due to improved temperature stability. This results in a reduced need for defrost cycles to remove ice from the refrigerator coils, and a more stable temperature inside the cabinet during these cycles.

Doors can account for up to 50% of the cost of a cabinet and are sometimes seen as a barrier between customer and product.

Dedekind, however, points out that...

“ Customers are becoming much more tolerant of the inconvenience of opening a door, especially now that everyone seems to be equally focused on saving electricity. ”

The latest frameless acrylic or glass doors provide a far less inhibited view of the product, but these doors are only a solution for chilled products, as frozen doors do require a more substantial airtight seal that incorporates a frame.

Stuart Riley, Sales Director, Glacier Door Systems, says glass doors done right can offer guaranteed energy savings, and a variety of other benefits, including superior insulation and heating options for high humidity environments.



“New technology also enables glass panels to be customised to fit existing cabinets, or tailored to suit each store’s specific environment,” he says.

Refrigerants

Environmentally speaking, natural refrigerants such as CO₂ are gaining popularity, with the latest systems providing a safer, cleaner alternative, as well as energy efficiency. These systems can be expensive to install though, even if they are the environmentally sound option.

“With the use of the energy efficient self-contained R290 freezers, we are definitely seeing a slow transition to natural refrigerants,” says Dedekind. “Currently, we choose between R404a, trans-critical CO₂ and subcritical CO₂ systems, depending on retailer’s budget, ambient conditions in the store, and level of maintenance service available in the area.”

The challenge of consistent power

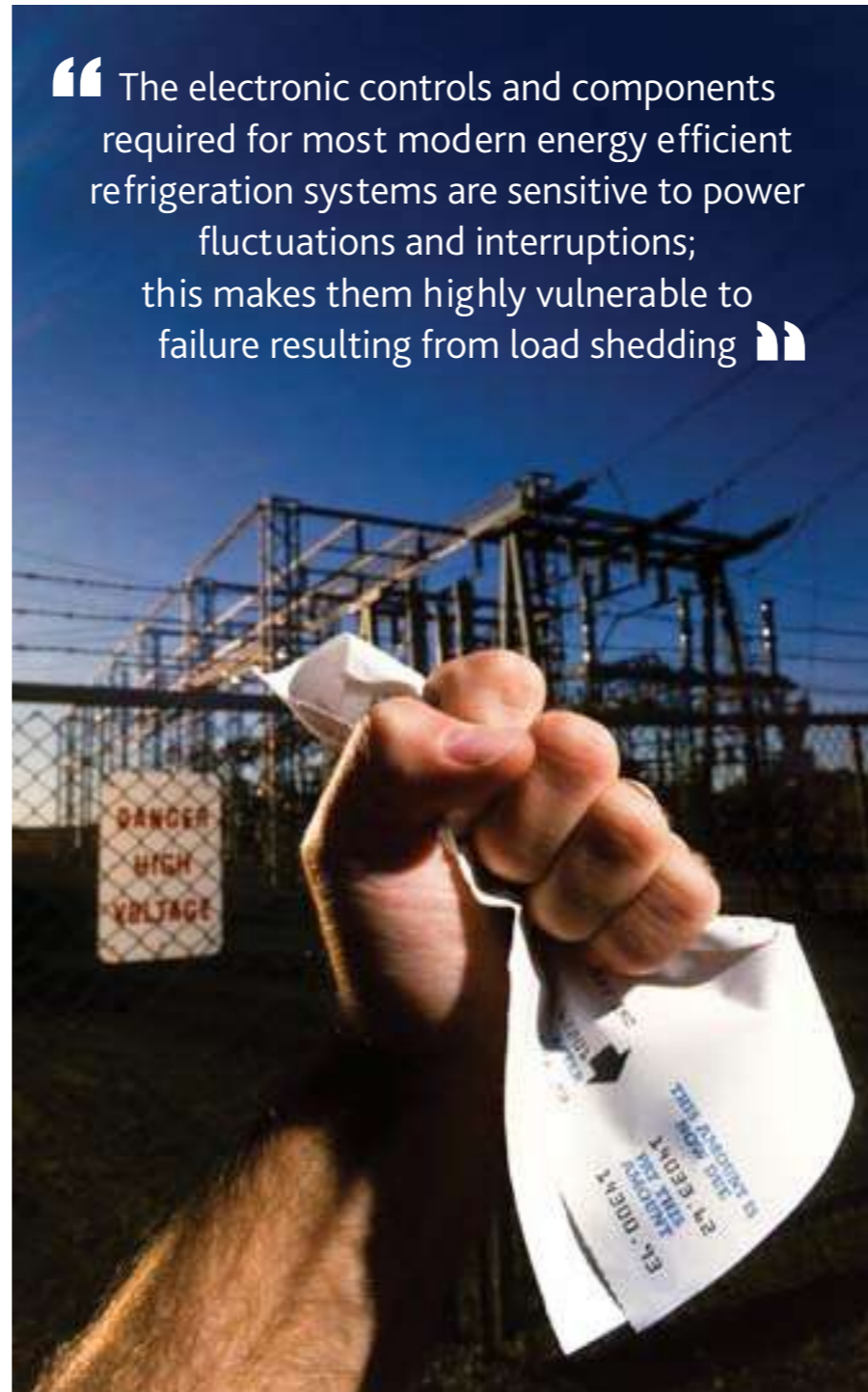
“Refrigeration is a great concern during load shedding, along with the general quality of our municipal electricity supplies, especially with the more advanced refrigeration systems we are using in the majority of our stores,” says Dedekind.

“The electronic controls and components required for most modern energy efficient refrigeration systems are sensitive to power fluctuations and interruptions; this makes them highly vulnerable to failure resulting from load shedding. As a result, most of our installations require some sort of surge or start up protection to ensure they do not

experience too much instability in the current they are receiving.”

Generators are, Dedekind admits, a must for stores to keep their fridges running. Currently UPS and solar solutions that are of sufficient quality to provide enough stable power are simply too expensive.

“The electronic controls and components required for most modern energy efficient refrigeration systems are sensitive to power fluctuations and interruptions; this makes them highly vulnerable to failure resulting from load shedding”



He explains, “An average SUPERSPAR store would use 4 500kWh of electricity per day; roughly half of that would be for refrigeration. With good solar systems providing around four times their design yield (i.e. a 100kWp system would provide around 400kWh of electricity per day), a store would need at least a 550kWp system to run its refrigeration. A system this size would require around 2 500m² of solar panels, and a massive number of storage batteries if it is required to run off-grid for extended periods. This could cost upwards of R25 million and would have an ROI of more than 18 years. In comparison, a 500kVA generator would cost around R650 000, leaving around R24 million over for diesel.”

Install – or refurbish?

Energy – both supply and cost – informs the answer to this question. In terms of efficiency, the latest technology and developments in systems and equipment mean that cost-savings will almost always outweigh capital investment.

It is for this reason that Dedekind says, “I am always first to advise replacing rather than refurbishing.” He goes on to add: “A modern system would save up to 50% of a store’s refrigeration running costs, or roughly 25% of the store’s total electricity expenditure. In most cases, our stores have electricity bills in excess of R200 000

CASE CLOSED

Energy Saving Solutions

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

Air Shield Glass Doors

Features and Benefits

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

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



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

The value benefit

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

You can trust a Glacier door



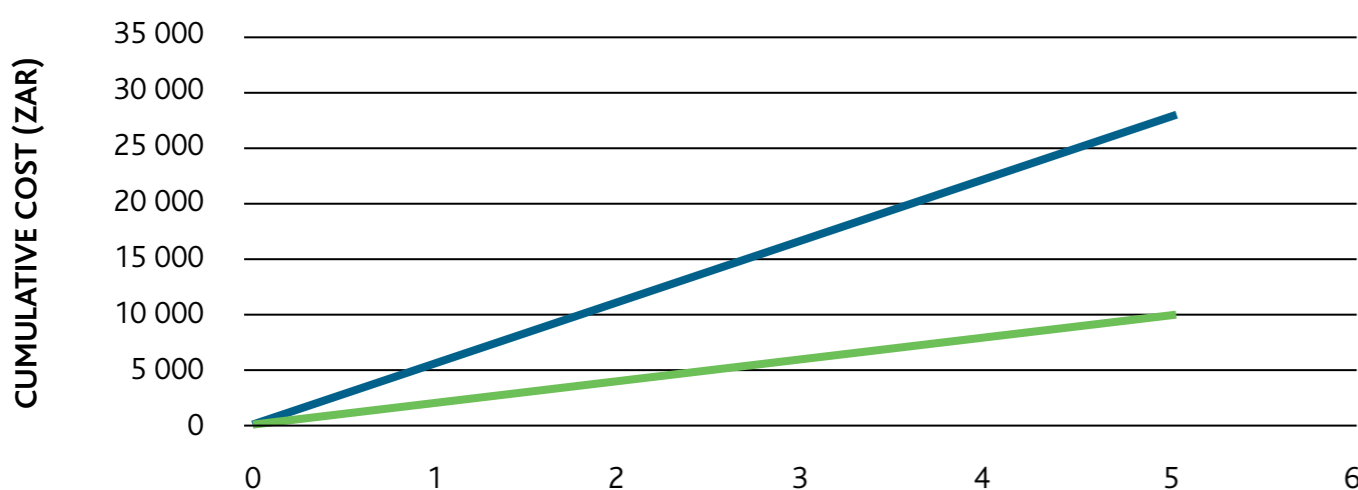
CASE CLOSED

Energy Saving Solutions

Eco Leaf Freezer Doors

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

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



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

a month, meaning they could save R50 000 a month or more by installing new energy efficient systems and cabinetry. The advantage is that the savings continue for the lifetime of the system, well after the ROI has been achieved.”

In the event that investing in a new system is just not possible, Daniel De Beer, regional manager for Sub-Saharan Africa, Emerson Commercial & Residential Solutions, says, “The cheapest energy saving solution is recommissioning, followed by everyday solutions such as floating head pressure control, floating suction pressure control, suction pressure regulation, and electronics (valves and smart controls).” He goes on to add: “It’s essential to invest in a reliable leak detection system (something that can offer you accuracy down to 3 PPM). This way, you can mitigate any potential leaks and damage to the environment. A site analysis carried out by a reputable service provider will enable retailers to reduce energy consumption.”

De Beer also believes that proactive and regular monitoring and maintenance are vital for creating energy savings. Many small issues go unnoticed for long periods of time because they don’t necessarily shut the system down, leaving the store with an “effective but inefficient” system. For example, a blocked condenser in winter may only start affecting the system overall (causing it to trip) once the weather warms up and the ambient temperature increases, meaning the system can no longer cope. This can be a costly exercise in terms of repairs, but also for energy consumption.

CHOOSING THE RIGHT SYSTEM

Spar’s Dedekind shares his basic formula for working out what sort of refrigeration system a store would need. “Determine the quantity of refrigeration required. In stores requiring a small amount of refrigeration – perhaps 7 metres of upright display cabinets, a 10-door beverage chiller, some deli display cabinets and a back-up cold room (forecourt-type store) – I would look at a modern simplex type system that runs a variable speed compressor with electronic expansion.”

When it comes to display freezers, his recommendation for almost every store, outside of large SUPERSPAR stores, would be self-contained R290 units. “If we think of each individual fridge/cold room as a single application, the basic guidelines would be as follows:

- < 10 applications = simplex or miniplex
- 10 to 15 applications = closed water-loop self-contained
- 15 to 25 applications = closed water-loop self-contained or multiplex
- >25 applications = multiplex

With open upright cabinets, Dedekind never recommends self-contained units, unless they use a water-loop system.

“This is because the warm discharge air from the cabinet condenser unit increases the temperature of the store, placing additional strain on the air-conditioning system. The approximate energy discharge from an open upright cabinet is 12 000Btu per meter of cabinet, at a discharge temperature of up to 60°C or higher, meaning a 12-foot display cabinet would discharge over 40 000Btu of warm air into the store, enough to raise the temperature of a 1 000m² store by 1°C every hour. With 10 of these in a store, this is quite a rise in temperature. The additional load on the air-conditioning would negate any energy savings on the refrigeration.”

A heat reclamation system can reduce this effect, but these systems cost money to install and require pump systems to circulate water or glycol through the exchangers, again negating the energy savings from the cabinets. Cabinet choice is also largely dependent on the customer profile. Higher LSM areas will use more deli display cabinets and chilled product displays, while lower LSM sectors may require a greater amount of island freezer allocation, with serve-over display cabinets being almost always confined to hot food sections.



ALLOCATING REFRIGERATION SPACE



There is no 'right' formula here. Cabinet style and stock will usually depend on customer demographics – for instance, a store in a business centre will have different customer needs to a store in a family-oriented neighbourhood. From a practical point of view, refrigeration cabinets tend to be placed around the perimeter of a store, mostly because this simplifies installation and piping, although of course it is often necessary to place refrigeration units in other areas as well.

“The best way to determine what sort of cabinetry a store will need, and how much space is necessary for chilled and frozen product, is to understand your customer profile, track their preferences and expenditure, and monitor your product lines,” says Dedekind.

Knowing your system's baseline energy consumption, and monitoring your store's consumption consistently, is a simple way of identifying small issues and rectifying them before they become bigger, costlier problems.

“There have been a marked number of improvements and developments in equipment and technology over the past 12 years,” says De Beer.

These include compressor designs (e.g. transition from semi-hermetic to scroll technology); the use of modulating suction pressure; floating condensing pressure control; the adoption of electronic valve technology; the efficiency of fans, evaporator coils and condensers; heat reclaim from condensers; adaptive or smart defrosting; more efficient or natural refrigerants; doors on refrigerated cabinets; and the adoption of LED lights. “Any systems that have not yet been updated are effective but no longer efficient, and if brought up to standard in every area, can achieve energy savings of up to 40%,” explains De Beer.



Future trends and new regulations

In 2018, South Africa agreed to ratify the Kigali agreement, binding the country to the phasing out of greenhouse refrigerants, and by 2024 new HCFC installations will be banned. All new systems will

need to run on natural refrigerants such as R290 (propane), R600a (iso-butane), R744 (CO₂) and R717 (ammonia).

R290 and R600a are highly flammable, so their volumes are currently limited to 150 grams of refrigerant per system. Approval has been granted to increase the limit to 500 grams, but this is still to be sanctioned. These gases are therefore limited to self-contained or small simplex plant systems for now.

Ammonia is highly toxic to humans and although it is technically and environmentally a safe gas, it is unlikely to be used in supermarket environments, due to the danger it poses to humans.



“CO₂ is leading the way as the cleanest, safest, and most easily available option, and the advancements in this technology have seen massive improvements in both costs and efficiencies.”

The latest trans-critical ejector systems show efficiencies 18% better than any previous HCFC plant, according to Dedekind.



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Say yes to solar

With electricity prices rising and load shedding a reality for the foreseeable future, alternative power sources are gaining traction. Solar energy has seen slow but steady growth, particularly in South Africa. Clean and reliable, its major drawback has always been the cost associated with installing a solar system. As the technology develops and becomes more popular, the cost is dropping,

but depending on your store's power needs and the size of your system, you could be looking at paying R5 million, R10 million, or even upwards of R25 million. You also need space, whether it be a nice flat roof or a large carpark, to accommodate the solar panels.

Adding to that, most solar systems are grid-tied, meaning they need the power grid to be up in order to run in parallel with it, and will not run

during load shedding. The batteries that can store solar power and keep your system running are still prohibitively expensive for smaller businesses.

Alternative solar options

That said, solar can still be the answer to your power needs. You can avoid the need for a hefty capex outlay and instead pay only for the (cheaper) power produced by the system.

Rent-to-own or a power purchase agreement are both viable options. Tim Frankish, Managing Director of the SolarSaver Group, says...

"Solar electricity under a fully-funded rent-to-own contract or PPA can be anywhere from 25% to 50% cheaper than grid power during the day [in South Africa]."

This means retail centres can, depending on their electricity use and the size of their system, save anywhere from R50 000 to R100 000 on their monthly electricity bill. In the retail space, SolarSaver usually deals directly with landlords and retail centre owners, but they also count several privately owned Spar and Pick n Pay franchises and OK Foods stores amongst their clients.

Frankish says that landlords are usually amenable to installing a solar system, when they realise they and their tenants can benefit from cheaper electricity without having to pay for solar installation. "With this type of arrangement, your solar provider should maintain and repair the system, clean the panels regularly, and keep stock of parts for repair on-hand to avoid lengthy delays."



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Sensible solar choices

Frankish says that you should build a system that delivers only what you need – the business rates for feeding power back into the grid are not great, if applicable (some municipalities do not allow it or simply do not pay for it at all). Look for a system that is managed and monitored by engineers 24 hours a day, and make sure you receive a report on power usage and cost-savings every month. Your service provider should also be able to advise on power usage, how best to manage the system, and where to make changes that will be of the most benefit. Frankish adds that, “Supermarkets run seven days a week, which means none of the power generated on the

weekend is going to waste. Solar is also obviously a daytime power source. In terms of refrigeration, this is another benefit, as your refrigeration power draw rises as the day gets warmer, and as shoppers open and close refrigerator doors.”

Constant and reliable power is a growing demand, and that means adding batteries that can run your system even when the grid power is down. There are also rental options available, says Frankish, and these can be cheaper than running a diesel generator. Frankish says their off-grid rental systems can achieve an effective electricity cost of R2.50/kWh to R3.00/kWh, while diesel generator costs routinely average between R4/kWh and R5/kWh.

Case studies

- The Vallyland Centre in Fish Hoek, Cape Town, has SPAR as its major tenant and power user, and SolarSaver installed a 250kW system there in October 2018. This is a relatively small system that has saved the centre over R250 000 in aggregate electricity costs.
- Tiffany’s SuperSpar in Salt Rock, KZN, was commissioned in May 2020. The site has a 350kW system that is forecast to achieve average savings in excess of R30 000 per month, despite the poor solar yields achievable at the coast relative to inland.

The future of solar

“Solar is cheaper, cleaner, secure, and not subject to big annual price increases,” says Frankish.

“Solar energy makes sense, particularly in the current economic climate. While it’s a struggle to control revenue currently, you can at least use solar to help control your operating costs to a certain degree.”

Tim Frankish
Managing Director, SolarSaver Group

Current regulations permit users to install a solar system with a capacity of up to 1MW without requiring an energy generation license from NERSA (National Energy Regulator of South Africa). There is a push to increase this limit to 10MW, but it is anybody’s guess when or even if this will come to fruition.

Focus on the priorities

In the current climate, energy savings are critical in terms of both cost and resources. With recent developments in equipment and technology, achieving cost and usage efficiencies may take some effort, but they are more than achievable. Industry experts agree that continual monitoring and maintenance are key, along with making the right decisions in terms of cabinetry, refrigerants, and cooling systems. With solar making inroads into the South African market, there are now even more options for supermarkets and retailers looking to make effective and lasting changes to their energy consumption. **SR**

In it for the long haul

Now more than ever before, sanitisation, hygiene and infection control have become a part of our everyday lives. Public and business spaces have borne the brunt of government regulations and controls as they remain the most likely place for infection to spread. The Covid-19 pandemic is here to stay, for a while at least. As a novel virus, it presents an ever-changing and dynamic landscape that requires agile responses and protocols. It may feel like a big ask, but putting in place the appropriate systems and processes is the responsible – and legally required – thing to do.

Infection control

Sanitisers

Recently, questions have arisen over the safety and efficacy of hand sanitisers. You can't enter a store without using them, and new brands are popping up everywhere. So, what's the truth behind the sanitiser?

Annette Devenish, marketing manager at Sani-touch (Infection Protection Products), says, "Medical personnel have been using high alcohol hand sanitisers for many years, very safely. They sanitise every 20 minutes. But it can dry out your skin, and in the fight against Covid-19, soap and water is still your best bet." This is because the coronavirus is protected by a fatty bilayer – washing with soap and water for 20 seconds



dissolves the fatty layer and renders the virus inactive. Devenish says, "We have always used ethanol over isopropyl alcohol (IPA), as it's a more sustainable alcohol that is plant-derived, whereas IPA is chemically derived."

The ideal hand sanitisers are gels that contain a humectant, glycerol or skin softener that prevent the skin from drying out. "The problem with a gel sanitiser is that it needs to be rubbed into the

skin until it is dry and not sticky, and often the user doesn't do this, especially if it's a small child who will rub it off their hands, instead of rubbing it in. In my opinion, if you're going to be using hand sanitisers on children, you should try to find an ethanol-based one. A spray sanitiser doesn't provide protection for as long as a gel, but a fine mist spray will cover a large part of your hands quickly," says Devenish.

How effective are wipes?

Scientists tend to agree that pre-moistened wipes are more effective than a spray-and-wipe solution. They also agree that detergent disinfectant wipes provide the right combination of detergent to dissolve the virus' fatty layer, and disinfectant to render it inactive.

Devenish says, "Wipes physically remove dirt bacteria and any micro-organisms, including viruses, that may be present on a surface. These germs get trapped into the fibres of the wipes, allowing the fluid to coat them, deactivate them and destroy them."

Microbiologist Charles Gerba, also known as 'Dr Germ', recommends disinfectant wipes for cleaning other surfaces, too. With spray-and-wipe products, consumers often wipe the product up before it can do its job. But in studies done in people's homes, they are more likely to let a surface air-dry after swabbing it with a disinfectant wipe, giving the disinfecting compounds time to work.

Trolley hygiene

When it comes to trolley sanitising, Devenish says, "Trolley wipes are manufactured with a tried and tested detergent disinfectant solution. The wipe, used correctly, will allow the detergent to clean the trolley handle by picking up the dirt, bacteria, and viruses found on the surface. The disinfectant and the alcohol in the wipe will not only sanitise the surface of the trolley handle, but will allow any germs trapped inside the wipe to have sufficient contact time to be destroyed."



The stock situation

Demand for sanitising products has far outstripped supply, and there is uncertainty surrounding ethanal and IPA supplies, which has worsened this issue considerably. This means a host of new companies are popping up, making and selling sanitisers or supplying ethanol or IPA of undetermined quality and origin, at vastly inflated prices.

Always look for a full list of ingredients, as well as clearly visible SABS marks on the packaging, as these refer to the actual authenticity, quality checks and tests for that specific product.

Devenish explains that "ISO accreditations refer to the quality management system of a business, so a company can claim SABS ISO certification on a 'new' product that may look authentic, but it doesn't say anything about the quality of the actual product." Adding to that, the quality systems could be relevant to the company being a gifting company, so it really says nothing about the quality of, in this instance, the sanitisation product.

"Always ask for the MSDS (Material Safety Data Sheet) and make sure they are 16-point MSDS. Also ask for lab test reports, even if they are not Covid tests (these are not available in SA), as lab tests will show the efficacy of the product. Make sure the labels on the product follow the SA Labelling Act with ingredients listed, as well as warnings and precautions and full company details."

According to the WHO (World Health Organisation) and the CDC (Centre for Disease Control)...

“ An IPA content of 70%,
or an ethanol content of 80%,
is sufficient to render
the coronavirus inactive ”

Make sure that the sanitiser you purchase for store use or to sell in your store guarantees this percentage.

In-store sanitisation

Chlorine tablets for in-store spraying

Devenish says, "Actirite D contains a detergent and a disinfectant, so the detergent helps to break down the outer layers of the Covid virus, while the chlorine (NaDcc, which is also known as sodium dichloroisocyanurate) – will then deactivate it. NaDcc has been used in the disinfection of drinking water for over 100 years. It can be used safely in food preparation areas, washrooms, bathrooms, reception areas, sluice rooms and more.



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NaDcc has three times the antibacterial killing properties of a normal liquid bleach. When used for spraying or in food preparation, it is advisable to use concentrations below 200ppms. Stores can use chlorine tablets themselves, as long as they make sure that it is mixed correctly and in the right concentrations. Keep in mind that most disinfectants work better with longer contact times.”

Fogging in the event of a confirmed infection

Fogging is mainly suggested in the event that a staff member or customer is identified as having Covid-19 and therefore potentially infecting areas of the store. Fogging uses specialised chemicals that are contained in droplets tiny enough to reach even the smallest nooks and crannies, and provide wide coverage of surfaces. Additional cleaning of high touch surfaces may be required.

Due to the nature of the chemicals used, appropriate PPEs (personal protective equipment) and RPEs (respiratory protective equipment), such as hazmat (hazardous materials) gear and respirators must be used, and the procedure must take place when the store is empty.

An on-site inspection by a trained technician will determine what needs to be done, and the job must be carried out by professionals. Local companies such as turtlejar.co.za, envirotechpest.co.za, and www.rentokil.co.za provide Covid-19-specific fogging, deep cleaning and disinfecting options. Ensure that any products used in a retail store are SABS HACCP approved to be food-safe,



as well as non-toxic, non-corrosive, non-staining and odour-free.

The CDC (www.cdc.gov) recommends waiting 24 hours before you initiate a cleaning procedure, and if you cannot wait 24 hours, then wait as long as possible before initiating a cleaning procedure. If the site has been closed for seven (7) days or longer since the sick person was last there, regular cleaning and disinfecting is sufficient.

Points of sale and points of contact

High-touch areas should be frequently cleaned using an alcohol-based disinfectant (70% or more) and a microfibre cloth (which should be washed in hot water), or a disinfectant/detergent wipe after each customer or use. The CDC has also suggested installing wipeable covers for electronics where possible.

Ultraviolet (UV) radiation can be used to sanitise

high-touch areas, as UV light – in particular, UV-C light – is highly effective in killing germs and viruses. The applications are potentially vast and UV-C light is already being used in some hospitals and airports, air and water filtration systems, but this is always under strict supervision and the units are always provided and installed by qualified technicians. For instance, in the recent surgery ward outbreak of Covid-19 at Netcare Hospital Sunninghill, Johannesburg, UV robots were part of the hospital's arsenal used to clean and disinfect the operating theatres.

For example, UV surface disinfection systems are chemical free and effective against viruses. A high quality system will use superior quality lamps only, which contain the lowest amount of mercury and have a lamp life of $\pm 9\ 000$ hours. Each lamp is enclosed in a UV transmitting plastic security sleeve, preventing any glass or mercury splintering onto working areas should breakage occur. Sani UV-C handheld devices that are currently used for bedding and touch surfaces could be used on high-touch surfaces in a store.

At this stage, UV point of sale units are not particularly common, so there is a cost consideration and also training would be required for the staff members who would be tasked with using them. However, this is a technology to watch.

Shields

Shields should be installed wherever customers and staff come into close contact, such as tills and



service counters, as this can add an extra layer of protection. Sneeze guards or desk shields can be made from Perspex, acrylic or even plastic.

These barriers must be in place for cashiers, and in any environment where staff members need to work within 2 metres of each other, such as back-office areas.

Masks

The South African government, following the advice of the WHO, has made the use of masks mandatory when in public spaces, to help prevent the spread of the disease.

“Masks provide a barrier to the water drops (from when we speak, breath, cough, or sneeze) that carry the virus.

They are not a 100% effective barrier and also don't prevent aerosols, the tiniest drops, from travelling, which is why social distancing is also still in force. ”

The only truly effective mask would be a medical respirator such as an N95 mask, but as these are in short supply, the South African government has requested that medical-grade masks be left for use by healthcare personnel. There are guidelines in place for fabric masks (these can be found on the government websites for the Department of Health and the Department of Trade and Industry – you can find the downloadable PDF here: <http://www.health.gov.za/index.php/component/phocadownload/category/631>).



Mask guidelines

- Masks must fit well and be comfortable, especially for store staff who will be wearing them for extended periods of time. Usually the best fit is provided by inverted v-masks. Masks should not be too tight, too small, or too loose. Beards can also interfere with the effective fit of a mask, so adjust them accordingly. The most comfortable head fastening differs from person to person, so allow staff to choose between head elastics, ear loops or ties. Masks must cover the nose and the mouth; wearing your mask just under your nose renders it useless. Either 2- or 3-ply masks may be used, but 3-ply masks or masks with a middle filter layer are considered more effective.

- In essence, 2 layers are sufficient, although a 3-layer system that incorporates a non-woven or similar filter layer between the outer and inner fabric layer is better. The inner layer should be soft and non-irritating. Water-repellent fabrics should not be used, as these do not absorb water droplets. The fabric should not wet easily or accumulate a lot of water. It must be a breathable fabric, and synthetic fibres are recommended due to their quick-drying properties. The outer layer should be of a woven, warp-knitted, non-woven fabric that does not allow liquids to move through it. Water-repellent qualities are a bonus here, but fabrics should not restrict normal breathing.
- Staff wearing cloth masks covering mouth and nose must be given time and space to take a break safely.
- Face shields provide an alternative to masks, but also take some getting used to. If you require staff to wear these full-time, ensure that you choose a brand with a comfortable and adjustable headpiece. Too flimsy a plastic will tear easily and require frequent replacement. Face shields provide eye protection, which cloth masks do not. This is important, as the eyes are one of the entry points for the virus.
- Staff with glasses should be provided with glasses-friendly cloth masks (with a nosepiece). There are also face shield options designed for wearing with glasses (usually a foam piece at the headband that holds the shield further away from the face).

The National Institute of Communicable diseases (www.nicd.ac.za) has the following guidelines that must be shared with your staff:

- In line with the protocol that says avoid touching your face with your hands, the outside of a face mask should never be touched when wearing them – fidgeting with the mask repeatedly is strongly discouraged.
- Do not lower the face mask when speaking, coughing, or sneezing.
- The inner side of the face mask should not be touched with hands.
- Face masks should cover your nose and mouth entirely.
- When removing a mask, first wash or sanitise your hands. Remove mask. Place in safe bin for washing. Sanitise hands again.
- Wash fabric face masks with soap and water and iron when dry.

Quality control

Thermometers and other equipment should meet the required ISO/IEC, SANS, DKD and SIT standards and guidelines, and these must be either on the packaging, or easily available from the supplier. Keep in mind that a temperature check is by no means a failsafe, as asymptomatic spreaders may not show any symptoms at all, including fever, cough, or shortness of breath.

According to the Department of Health guidelines, thermometers must be of the digital contactless infrared variety, but no specific WHO standards have been tabled at this point.

Visors or face shields should meet the following standards: EU PPE Regulation 2016/425, EN 166, ANSI/ISEA Z87.1 or equivalent. You can find these guidelines at www.health.gov.za.

Systems and procedures for keeping staff and customers safe

Systems and procedures for sanitisation and infection control should be based on science, not guesswork.

The Department of Trade and Industry, the WHO and the CDC are all good resources for finding those guidelines that best meet your store's requirements. This list is by no means exhaustive but it does cover some of the most basic guidelines:

- **Access for customers and staff.** This entails keeping track of, and, if necessary, controlling numbers, and ensuring hand-hygiene.
- **Temperature checks.** This is mandatory for all staff for recording and, in the event of a confirmed case, contact tracing.
- **Regular cleaning protocols** mean cleaning staff will no longer only be coming in at night or in the early morning, but all through the day.
- **High touch areas** such as handles, till points and admin office spaces must be frequently cleaned and disinfected. This also refers to the disinfecting of baskets and trolleys before and after every use.
- **Hand washing by staff** must be mandated – specify set times and actions that require hand washing.

- **Social distancing** must be implemented for staff (within all areas of the store and also while on breaks). Staff should be trained on how to maintain social distance with shoppers. Floor guides for queues should be used.
- **Adequate signage** regarding the compulsory use of masks and social distancing should be displayed for customers and staff to see. Customers should know that they will be refused entry if they fail to wear a mask.
- **Compliance.** All staff should be compliant with regards to cloth masks or face shields and gloves where necessary.
- **Quick response.** If a staff member shows signs of infection (dry cough, fever, shortness of breath, a tight chest, loss of sense of smell or taste), a process must be put in place to ensure
 - the staff member can self-quarantine for 14 days
 - other staff members are monitored
 - areas where the staff member had contact are thoroughly cleaned.
- **Confirmed infections.** If there is a confirmed infection, your store will probably need to be closed and fogged. Self-isolation will also need to be implemented by staff who came into contact with the infected person and there will be a process of contact tracing.

Social distancing

Global guidelines suggest 6ft or 2m is adequate for people in a regular social setting. This can be hard to manage, particularly in smaller stores

where floor space is at a premium. Unfortunately, you may need to rely on your customers to practice social distancing for themselves, although management of queues should be available if necessary (and don't just leave this to regular staff, a manager should be available to back them up if needed). Education is key, but monitoring by managers and senior staff is essential – store shutdowns due to staff infection are costly, and impact sales, revenue and also reputation – customer trust can be damaged if infections happen repeatedly.

Access control

Store entrances and exits

Having a staff member (usually security) welcoming customers while also ensuring masks are used, hand sanitiser is applied and trolleys or baskets are sanitised, is the easiest way to ensure compliance. It can also set the tone for customers, so ensure your access control team is trained, understands the need for these precautions, is professional, and able to welcome customers cheerily. Stores, particularly popular stores or those with smaller layouts, must control the number of shoppers within a store in order to help maintain social distancing. According to the Covid-19 portal <https://sacoronavirus.co.za/faqs/>, 2 metres should be maintained when out in public, but there is also reference to 1 metre as the minimum. Most stores are following the 1.5 metre guideline – one customer per 1.5 metres. This can still, however, go very wrong.

If you are using separate entrances and exits, there must be clear communication regarding the number of shoppers entering and exiting – this will require multiple staff members coordinating and communicating with one another. There's nothing more frustrating for a shopper in a queue to see the person responsible for entrances being distracted and missing the load of shoppers who exited across the way. Queues must be clearly marked and arranged. Access cards or pegs are easier to use, but must be sanitised after each use (a bucket to drop pegs into that can then be sprayed with sanitiser is quick and effective).

If your staff (instead of professional security services) are controlling entrances and exits, they must undergo complete training – a quick five-minute brief doesn't cut it. Your store should also have protocols in place that enable access staff to manage confrontational shoppers, or those who refuse to follow the rules. Rules for entry should be clearly displayed on the exterior of the store.

Automatic hand washing and hand sanitising stations

A foot-controlled sanitiser dispenser for customers – in theory – does away with the need for a dedicated staff member spraying hands. However, the question then becomes one of compliance, as you still need to ensure that shoppers are using the system. Even with a foot-controlled sanitiser, it is advisable to have staff monitor usage.

Due to the potentially harsh nature of high-alcohol hand sanitisers, and the fact that washing



for 20 seconds with soap and water is still the most effective form of hand sanitisation, staff should have access to hand washing stations. If the store cannot provide enough of these to accommodate social distancing, or cannot provide sufficient stations, a mobile unit is an alternative option. Mobile automatic handwashing stations can be rented or bought. "At around 13kg empty and measuring 100cm x 45cm x 50cm, these units can easily be moved and positioned according to a store's needs," says Godfrey Sono, director, Mo-Wash. "Units that are solar or battery-run won't impact on your energy usage, and those that use refillable water and storage tanks also do not require plumbing." These stations can use any form of soap – liquid or bar – and have sensors that automatically initiate a 10-second wash (therefore two full washes meet the requisite 20 seconds). The battery is also long-lasting and may only need to be replaced after a year.

Key learnings

This is a dynamic and constantly evolving situation. We are still learning about this virus, how it is transmitted, how long it can survive on surfaces in real-world conditions, and how best to treat and manage it. Information will change as we learn more, so don't become complacent and make sure you stay on top of new developments (the Department of Health, the WHO and the CDC are good resources for verified scientific data).

Check your store protocols on a regular basis, evaluate and adjust where necessary. Most scientists currently seem to agree that this virus will be with us in some form for quite some time, so sanitisation, hygiene and infection control measures should be viewed as long-term, and part of corporate culture and continued staff training. It is also vital to keep your staff informed of up-to-date developments, not only because education is key to managing and controlling this virus, but because knowledge is a good way to reduce fear and uncertainty.

Devenish says, "In the past, cleaning and sanitisation have been done before and after production or at the beginning and end of a shift, but Covid-19 has taught us that in between and regular consistent cleaning is so important.

Contact times are also key. Ideally, you should first clean off dirt and grime with soap and water, followed by sanitising surfaces with a disinfectant – leave these to dry for maximum contact time and don't wash them off. To save time and labour, a one-step approach with a detergent disinfectant is a good way to go."



Coronavirus myths

Can the virus spread through food items?

The Coronavirus is spread from person-to-person through respiratory droplets. Currently, there is no evidence to support transmission of Covid-19 associated with food.

Before preparing or eating food, it is important to always rinse the food with water and wash your hands with soap and water for 20 seconds for general food safety. However, it is critical to keep all food preparation surfaces and equipment clean and sanitised at all times.

International protocols to watch

The US and the UK have introduced several systems that could work here, including limiting

the handling of produce by customers, allowing the return of goods, but with specific protocols in place (Health and Safety regulations in the UK suggest separate holding areas for returned goods, as well as disinfection options depending on the product), the rotation of high-touch products, and one-way systems in store aisles, with clear directions.

What to do as lockdown levels change

- Regularly reinforce compliancy to protocols to your staff. As lockdown levels lift, many people are becoming complacent about hygiene protocols – watch out for changing attitudes in your employees and ensure they are still following best practice. Complacency is going to be an ongoing challenge, as many of these systems and procedures are tedious, masks are uncomfortable and hand sanitiser is not kind to the skin.
- Together with frequent handwashing, masks and social distancing remain are still the best forms of defence, and remain compulsory for all retailers. Ensure your staff comply, even when out of sight of customers.

- Weekly or even more regular meetings where you address staff concerns, attitudes and challenges they face, will ensure you keep abreast of what's happening on your shop floor.
- Don't assume the virus will go away. Be wary of assuming it 'isn't that bad', as you have no way of knowing which of your customers are suffering from high-risk comorbidities.
- The initial lockdown frenzy has abated, but your best practice protocols must not.
- Clear communication with staff and customers is essential and should be an ongoing process, as non-compliance can result in fines, infection, and the closure of the store for disinfecting.

In it for the long haul

Sanitisation and infection control at a much higher level than before the pandemic are going to be part and parcel of retail life for many months to come. Related stock items are hard to gauge and control accurately at this point, but by now stores should have an idea of monthly usage of disinfectant wipes, hand sanitisers, cleaning supplies, thermometers and disposable PPEs. Speak to suppliers, ascertain their stock levels, order well in advance and investigate reputable alternative suppliers where necessary. Keep in mind that safe, accredited supplies of ethanol and isopropyl alcohol are currently not guaranteed, so ensure you have an effective and approved detergent disinfectant as an alternative. Don't forget that we are in this for the long haul. There will be challenges along the way, but the more we work together, the better the long-term outlook will be. **SR**

'Unglue' the virus

The coronavirus pandemic has put the humble bar of soap centre stage globally. Despite increased calls for sanitisers, according to both the World Health Organisation (WHO) and health experts around the world, soap is one of the most effective deterrents against the coronavirus.

The reason for this is that the coronavirus – like



The WHO's recommended formulations for a hand rub and surface disinfectant to counter the coronavirus – or Covid-19 – is either 80% ethanol or 70% isopropanol. Lower amounts of ethanol or other types of alcohol are less effective at disrupting the virus. However, most antibacterial products contain alcohol and some soap which together are effective in destroying the coronavirus.

Some retailers have called for the amount of alcohol in trolley wipes, typically found at the entrance of supermarkets, to be increased.

However, it would be impossible for trolley wipes to include 70 to 80% alcohol as they would simply dry out too fast, points out Annette Devenish, marketing director at Infection Protection Products, the manufacturers of Sani-touch products, including Saniwipes.

"Trolley wipes are manufactured with a tried and tested detergent disinfectant solution with a high and potent soap content which renders the coronavirus inactive which means they don't require a higher alcohol content," says Devenish. "In fact, in their current form, and if they are used correctly, they contain more than sufficient disinfectant to remove any bacteria or viruses.

This is due to the fact that the wipes contain sufficient soap to coat the virus, with the inclusion of alcohol as an added deterrent."

Disinfectant and sanitiser manufacturers around the country have been battling to meet increased demand, both as a result of a sporadic supply of alcohol as well as a shortage of other raw materials. **SR**

many viruses – is a self-assembled nanoparticle with a fatty bilayer. Soap dissolves the fat membrane of the virus which renders it inactive which is why health professionals and governments around the world have been so insistent on the need for regularly washing hands with soap.

Water on its own is typically not sufficient to destroy viruses. When soap and water are combined, however, the soap molecules essentially dissolve the 'glue' that holds the virus together.

It is only when soap and water are not an option that health professionals advise using sanitising disinfectants, gels, alcohol-based wipes and other sanitising products containing alcohol.

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1. CSIR:<https://wasteroadmap.co.za/completed-projects/informing-decisions-on-single-use-plastic-carrier-bags/>

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Practical solutions for retailers to embrace sustainable packaging

By Gerard Busse

Marketing Manager South Africa
Forest Stewardship Council (FSC)

In our previous article on sustainable packaging, we explored international sustainability initiatives to strive towards more environmentally friendly packaging options. This was driven by a more discerning and environmentally conscious consumer and responsive retailers which in turn drove decisions by consumer goods manufacturers and their packaging value chains. We also noted the place cardboard, paper and other forestry sourced products in this discussion, and the importance of sourcing from independently verified sustainably managed forestry sources.

Paper and paperboard made with forest-fibres are a popular choice for packaging materials. Paper-based packaging can protect goods, provide product information and be both biodegradable and easily recyclable. Forests can also provide fibre to make cellulose-based plastics and films, as well as cellulose pulp which is an integral part of viscose production. However, forest-based materials such as these can also be the product of deforestation or poor forestry practices: a threat not only to the world's forests but also to business and brand reputation.



Through responsible procurement, the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) certification system can help to secure a long-term source of timber, paper and other forest-based products from

responsibly managed forests. FSC can enable you to demonstrate your commitment to responsible forestry to your customers. As consumers and businesses seek to reduce their impact on the planet, there is growing demand for sustainable products and packaging. FSC can help you meet this demand.

The Forest Stewardship Council has internationally recognised standards promoting the care of the world's forests for future generations. We support this via global forest certification system that awards forest management and chain of custody certificates. In practice, this means that when a product or packaging bears the FSC label, customers are assured that it has been made with forest-based materials from responsible sources. Including the FSC label on packaging is a great way to demonstrate sustainability, alignment to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals and supply chain integrity which are independently verified.

The FSC forest management standards are developed through multi-stakeholder engagement and sets requirements for responsible forest management based on national and international conventions and guidelines. Responsible forest management, as promoted by FSC, maintains and enhances biodiversity and ecological processes. It aims to protect the rights of workers, communities, and Indigenous peoples while respecting the economic viability of forest management operations. By offering credible, simple ways for more people to make ethical



choices, we are helping societies recognise the value of forests for a sustainable future.

Research tells us that certificate holders and consumers see value in certification

- 82% of certificate holders (88% of retailers and non-manufacturers) agree FSC certification helps to create a positive corporate image.
- 71% of certificate holders (88% of retailers and non-manufacturers) agree that FSC helps them to communicate their Corporate Social Responsibility initiatives.
- 78% of certificate holders say 'meeting the demands of current clients' is one of the most important benefits of certification.
- 7/10 consumers feel that sustainability claims should be independently certified. (Global Consumer Insights 2017, conducted by Globe Scan on behalf of FSC International)

Having established the importance of sustainability certification in the eyes of manufacturers, their supply chains, retailers and consumers, how does FSC carry out its certification?

Forest management certification

Our forest management certification is awarded to organisations that manage their forest operations in socially, environmentally and economically responsible ways. As part of the certification process, an organisation's current management undergoes an in-depth review on an annual basis to verify conformity against the applicable



FSC standards. A certificate holder's compliance is checked by independent FSC-accredited certification bodies.

South Africa has an approved National Forest Stewardship Standard for Plantation Forestry, and a Certification Body Adapted Standard for Natural Forest Management certification. FSC has several supporting standards and procedures which aim to bring value for smallholders and low-intensity managed forests.

Chain of custody certification

Chain of custody certification applies to manufacturers, processors and traders of FSC-certified forest products. It ensures that FSC materials and products have been checked at every stage of processing, so customers purchasing products sold with FSC claims can be confident

that they originate from responsibly managed forests. Any company involved in the processing or transformation of FSC-certified products (e.g. manufacturing, repackaging, pack-splitting, relabelling, cutting to size or adding other forest-based components to the product) must be FSC certified in order to apply an FSC label to their products and/ or sell them with an FSC claim.

It is possible for both a product and its packaging to be FSC certified, for example a wooden hairbrush

packed in a cardboard sleeve. Alternatively, it may be that an FSC product is packed in uncertified packaging or vice versa.

In cases such as these it must be made clear to which element the FSC label refers. FSC labels can include a range of product types, including 'wood', 'paper', 'board' and 'packaging'. Products and packaging can carry the FSC label if it is produced using FSC-certified materials under a valid FSC chain of custody certificate.

Who needs FSC chain of custody certification?

Any change of ownership in the supply chain requires FSC chain of custody certification if the receiving organisation wants to make an FSC claim about their products. Organisations that do not take ownership (legal title) of FSC-certified

products (e.g. transport, sales agent) do not normally need chain of custody certification.

Companies that use FSC-certified packaging produced by a certified company do not normally need to hold their own FSC certification. Fillers or packers of products (e.g. a company that encloses a sandwich within an FSC-labelled sandwich pack), who do not transform or label the FSC packaging product, do not need FSC chain of custody certification, unless they are adding forest-based materials.

If an FSC claim for packaging is required by customers, fillers or packers of products may become FSC certified and establish a product group for packaging in order to pass FSC claims through sales and delivery documents.

An FSC-certified organisation may outsource activities within the scope of its certificate to FSC-certified and/or non-FSC-certified contractors provided that all FSC chain of custody requirements are met. An outsourcing agreement must be held with each contractor and the FSC-certified organisation must maintain legal ownership of all materials during outsourcing.

How is the FSC certification communicated to the marketplace?

The FSC logo, the name Forest Stewardship Council and the acronym FSC are all registered trademarks. It is the responsibility of the relevant FSC-certified entity to ensure that the trademarks are used correctly. Appropriate approval should be sought for all uses of the FSC trademarks.

An FSC-certified company will have access details for the FSC Trademark Portal where they can download labels featuring their own unique licence code, along with the FSC logo for promotional use.

As consumers and businesses seek to reduce their impact on the planet, there is growing demand for sustainable products and packaging. FSC can help you meet this demand.

Should you require assistance with the process outlined or need further details on the application of the Chain of Custody, contact FSC's Southern Africa Manager, Manushka Moodley via email on m.moodley@fsc.org. **SR**



HOW DO COMPANIES BECOME FSC CHAIN-OF-CUSTODY CERTIFIED?

- Step 1:** Contact FSC-accredited certification bodies (and/or small business group schemes if appropriate) to request quotes.
- Step 2:** Submit a certification application to the FSC certification body of your choice.
- Step 3:** Ensure that an appropriate chain of custody management system is in place, in line with the requirements of FSC-STD-40-004.
- Step 4:** Undergo an on-site audit by your chosen certification body.
- Step 5:** Gain certification approval and receive an FSC certification code (XXX-COC-000000) and an FSC trademark licence code (FSC-C000000).



Packaging: Part 3

Keep a lookout for our final article in the series where we will explore how organisations can communicate their commitment to sustainable packaging and procurement through the FSC on-product label and other communication tools.



The Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) is a global not-for-profit organisation dedicated to promoting environmentally sound, socially beneficial and economically prosperous management of the world's forests. It helps consumers and businesses identify products from well-managed forests and sets standards by which forests are certified, offering credible verification to people who are buying wood and wood products. For more information visit www.fsc.org

Covid-19:

Can employees withdraw from the workplace?

By Kenneth Coster

Partner at Webber Wentzel

Employees returning to work from the Covid-19 lockdown will need to show reasonable justification if they halt work on the basis that they are exposed to the virus.

Legal provisions allowing employees to withdraw from a hazardous working situation could, in the context of Covid-19, be open to abuse by unprincipled employees or trade unions.

This is because employers will be obliged to continue remunerating employees who have withdrawn their labour on the basis of their belief that they may contract Covid-19, unless it can be proven that employees acted in bad faith (which may be difficult or even impossible to do). Only if bad faith can be proven would there be a justification to withhold remuneration (on the basis of no work no pay).

The Mine Health and Safety Act (MHSA) and the Occupational Health and Safety Act (OHSA) grant employees the right to withdraw from a dangerous working place. Disaster Management Act (DMA) Regulations or related directives could also confer this right, when drafted.

Under the MHSA, employees may withdraw from the workplace if there is "reasonable justification" to believe that there is a serious danger to their



health and safety or if a health and safety representative directs them to withdraw.

We believe this section contemplates what may be called 'a clear and present danger'.

The act also requires employees to hold dialogue with their employers on these issues to mitigate the danger so work can be conducted safely.

The OHSA does not grant employees an express

right to withdraw from a dangerous working place, but requires them to report the situation to their employers or health and safety representatives.

The first difficulty with managing the workplace hazard of Covid-19 virus is that it is invisible, because it is a microscopic virus, and even its host may be unaware and be asymptomatic. The second difficulty is that, even though we still know relatively little about the virus, what we do know is that it is highly contagious.

Where employers have provided all relevant instruction, health and safety protocols and personal protective equipment (PPE) to safeguard employees, is it reasonable and rational for

employees to exercise the right to withdraw from the workplace because they are (subjectively)

apprehensive of contracting Covid-19 there?

Practically speaking, there can certainly be no issue with granting employees the right to withdraw from a workplace due to Covid-19, where they have reasonable

justification. However, in our view, in the absence of some objective criteria, it will be impossible for employees to show reasonable justification. Only if employees present symptoms of the virus to their co-workers or test positive for Covid-19 (and that



information becomes known to their co-workers), can other employees be said to have reasonable justification to withdraw from the workplace.

Even then, this may not constitute reasonable justification when the employer has taken appropriate steps, such as disinfecting the workplace and screening (on an ongoing basis) all employees who came into contact with the infected employees.

In our view, employers should at least:

- constructively engage with Government to set clear parameters on what will be acceptable measures to establish and maintain a safe workplace
- ensure that an adequate risk assessment is conducted prior to the commencement of work, specifically dealing with any potentially unsafe areas or conditions, and ensure that adequate control measures, including the availability and suitability of PPE, are implemented
- comply with physical distancing requirements in accordance with the risk assessment, sanitising, screening, isolation and all other requirements set out in the DMA Regulations, where applicable
- comply with all requirements of employers prescribed in the Department of Labour's Occupational Health and Safety Directive, where applicable
- regularly and frequently convene health and safety committee meetings to proactively monitor the workplace and address any concerns raised by employees about Covid-19 transmission risk.



If, despite all these measures, employees withdraw from the workplace, employers should first consider whether, under the circumstances, employees have a reasonable justification for doing so. If they believe it is reasonable, employers must remedy the allegedly unsafe working conditions.

If employers do not agree that a reasonable justification exists, they may consider the following legal recourse:

- notify employees that their withdrawal from the workplace is unjustified and accordingly unlawful and call upon employees to return to work. If they do not return, it may be regarded as either unauthorised absence or unprotected industrial action. In those circumstances, the employer could, in our view, advise that it will apply the principle of no work, no pay

- initiate legal action seeking to inter alia interdict employees' withdrawal from the workplace and/or refusal to tender their services or mandate the employees to tender their services. **SR**

“ Employers should engage practically and constructively with employees and trade unions to attempt to resolve concerns when they arise. ”



Kenneth Coster specialises in employment law, with a particular focus in Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) law. He has acted for a broad range of employers in employment tribunals and courts. He has also advised and acted for a variety of leading mining, construction and engineering corporations in investigations and inquiries pertaining to OHS.

Boost engagement and collaboration



By Nicholas Bell
CEO at Decision Inc.

The current Coronavirus pandemic has caused many countries – such as UK, USA, Italy, Spain, Greece, and Germany, among others – to follow a lockdown approach. Globally, organisations are turning to virtual meeting tools in a bid to remain connected to their employees and to engage with their customers. However, virtual meetings have their own etiquette and risks. They need to be aligned to specific criteria that ensures that all attendees are engaged, and that the meetings, ultimately, get results.

One of the most common challenges that organisations encounter in virtual meetings is that people often multi-task. The results of this can be embarrassing, like the co-worker that forgot to mute the conference call and started a conversation with their spouse. It's easy for this to happen. According to the Harvard Business Review, this can be caused by some individuals dominating a discussion, resulting in others not listening or doing something else because they don't feel that their input is necessary. People can lose a sense of engagement if they're not included, if the call isn't managed properly, and if they lack the confidence to share their views in a new format.

Get the most out of your virtual meetings



Leverage virtual meeting tools and capabilities to cement customer and employee relationships

Encourage the use of video

One of the quickest ways to get engagement going is to use video for your conversations. But instead of using it to police attention, video can become a vital enabler to have more people interacting during the meeting. Those who would've ordinarily kept quiet can more easily become active participants – especially when coupled with the chat functionality that many solutions provide.

Have a team lead or facilitator

Every meeting should have at least one team lead or facilitator. This person's role goes beyond scheduling the meeting and ensuring that the technology works beforehand. They also need to be on-point when it comes to ensuring that people are involved and sharing their views. The facilitator should pause a meeting every now and again to get everyone around the virtual table to check in,



add a comment, and confirm that they're on track with the discussion.

Choose the right technology

Of course, the most crucial part of any online meeting is going to be the technology that is used. The right technology will have a low barrier to entry – which means that people can learn their way around it without too much difficulty. It should also have collaboration tools embedded so that sharing a document is easy, and that recording a meeting is seamless.

There are numerous platforms on the market today. Some of the leading ones include Microsoft Teams, Google Hangouts, Webex, and Skype. These tend to vary in price, depending on company size, meeting size, and general requirements; but they all offer robust and tested services that are easy to learn and reliable under pressure.

If you're introducing a new virtual conferencing tool to your employees or customers during the coronavirus lockdown, you need to make sure that you provide training.

People will appreciate having time to get used to the controls and learning how to avoid awkward incidents. There have been plenty of videos circulating where employees have forgotten to turn off video or mute audio, and this training gives employees and clients a sense of security and control. This can also be supported by offering people an audio-only option if they feel uncomfortable with live video.



Encourage informal chats

Another step that will make a difference is to give people a chance to chat before the meeting starts. This will ease people into the meeting, just as it does in real-life situations. Research has shown that people tend to respond better and work together more cohesively if they share stories and relax. By giving people a few minutes to chat, you're breaking the ice and alleviating the sense of isolation that can come with working from home.

Have a clear agenda

Finally, ensure that your meeting has a clearly defined agenda. This will keep the meeting on track and achieve results. People can meander in virtual meetings, so objectives will keep the conversation tight and relevant. The agenda should also be accompanied by a time limit. Just as in the real world, reduce the length of presentations and corporate soliloquy's because people will get bored or frustrated. They still have work to do, so make the meeting quick, efficient and to the point. This will make people more inclined to have another meeting, and less inclined to tune out in the next one. **SR**

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Lucrative opportunities for plant-based food manufacturers

Astute business owners and entrepreneurs are always on the lookout for the 'next big thing' and, according to new research, one candidate for this title is vegan cheese. To the average South African, the very idea of vegan cheese probably sounds like an oxymoron – but around the world there has been a huge increase in consumption of plant-based products that mimic the taste and texture of meat, milk, seafood and cheese.

ProVeg International, a food awareness organisation based in Berlin, recently conducted a large scale consumer survey across nine European countries in order to identify priorities for product improvement and development in the plant-based food market. This novel research, which is based on consumers' purchasing and consumption patterns, identifies several gaps in the market that South African food manufacturers could be taking advantage of.

South Africans might think that we're immune to these global trends because we're a nation of meat-lovers, but research shows that even in other meat-loving countries like Germany, the move away from meat is significant. Currently only 26% of Germans eat a meat product every single day, compared to 34% in 2015 – and it's not just Europe. Demand for plant-based products in China



Beyond Sausage_Bratwurst in bun photo provided by Infinite Foods

is growing rapidly, with companies like Whole Perfect Foods and Ompork making huge inroads into the Chinese market, and even American market-leader Beyond Meat stating, "We see Asia as a key region for strategic long-term growth."

In addition to meat alternatives, the market for milk alternatives has also exploded. You know there's something to take note of when a company like Coca-Cola enters the market, which they have done by launching a new brand of plant milk: Simply Almond.

For predictions on the general growth of plant-based products, manufacturers can look to the market for plant-based meat alternatives, which is predicted to double within the next five years. According to figures provided by Markets and Markets, this market was valued at US\$12.1 billion in 2019 and is predicted to grow at an annual rate of 15%, reaching almost US\$28 billion by 2025. Market insiders will tell you that this is a very conservative estimate, pointing to the fact that Beyond Meat currently has a market capitalisation of US\$9 billion alone.

The global meat market, by comparison, is only predicted to grow by 3% per year.

When looking for specific gaps in the market, the ProVeg research sheds some light. In Europe, plant-based cheese is the product that was highlighted as the biggest opportunity for plant-based food producers.

According to Verena Wiederkehr, Head of Food Industry and Retail at ProVeg International, who oversaw the research, “The data supports the view that good quality, affordable, plant-based cheeses have a good chance of penetrating, capturing and retaining a large part of this fast-growing and lucrative sector.”

An opportunity

The opportunity for South African manufacturers is two-fold. Firstly, gaps have been identified in the European market, and there’s good reason to think these export opportunities exist elsewhere. Additionally, there is an opportunity to be the



Photo provided by Fry's

first mover in some of these categories locally; for example, all of the plant-based cheeses that are available in our large retailers are currently imported. Infinite Foods, the local importer and distributor of world leading plant-based based products like Beyond Meat’s burger, mince and sausages, Miyoko’s plant-based butter, Nature & Moi plant-based cheese, and recently Oatly oat milk, agrees with the ProVeg findings. “Research like this is very interesting to us – it confirms a lot of what we have been seeing – and we are working hard to create partnerships with local producers to bring more home-grown products to the market in the categories mentioned in the ProVeg report”, says Infinite COO Neil Taylor.

The work ProVeg is doing has already had some impact in South Africa. In 2019, South African meat company Feinschmecker Deli Meats consulted

with ProVeg before they became the first local meat producer to market a plant-based meat replacement product when they launched Gudness – a range of plant-based deli slices. “After talking to the team at ProVeg, I had a better understanding of the benefits of moving towards more plant-based offerings”, recalls Alistair Hayward, Managing Director of Feinschmecker. He is quick to add, “Plant-based products are not just there for vegans or vegetarians – most of the growth in this category has been driven by people who still eat some meat, but are trying to cut back – or just trying new options that are more sustainable.”

Future possibilities

Along with plant-based cheese, other opportunities in the plant-based segment that were highlighted by the report include plant-based egg and plant-based convenience meals.

Donovan Will, the Director of the South African branch of ProVeg, is optimistic about the involvement of local firms in this growing segment, “The only major local manufacturer that is taking advantage of this market is Fry’s [The Fry Family Food Co.], who are exporting some of the world’s best meat alternatives – like their Chicken-Style Burgers and Nuggets – from their base in Durban. Local production costs are significantly lower than those in Europe and America, where most of these products are being made, and there is no reason that more South African firms can’t enter – and even lead – this relatively new and rapidly growing market.” **SR**

