



Press Release

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Retailers tackle strategic dilemmas CIES addresses conflicting strategies in the food business

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Retailers face a growing array of competitors selling food and must at the same time juggle with contradictory consumer demands, such as price vs. quality and health vs. indulgence. In this challenging context, what strategy or strategies can retailers adopt to draw customers back into their stores?

These dilemmas of retail marketing strategy will be explored at the CIES Marketing Forum 2004 in London, 30 Nov. - 1 Dec. 2004, which is expected to attract over 200 food retail marketers from around the world.

- **Mark Price**, Marketing and Selling Director of Waitrose in the UK, chairs a 14-strong group of retail and industry specialists who have put together the programme of the Marketing Forum 2004.

In a recent interview for CIES *Food Business News*, Mark Price explained that “In most markets, you have discount one side and quality on the other. In the UK, you have retailers that are price-led, like Asda and Morrisons, and retailers that are quality-led, like Marks & Spencer and Waitrose. What we want to do at the Marketing Forum is set out what the strategies are and how they are successful, so that delegates understand the variables.”

As Mark Price further underlines, one of the conference main goals will be to ask the question whether retailers, who are faced with contradictory demands from consumers, have to choose one strategic priority or whether they can reconcile more than one “conflicting strategy” (e.g. price and quality). Mark Price’s personal view “is that you have to have consistency in all elements of the marketing mix. It’s an interesting debate. For example, can you go for high-quality store design and low-cost employees? So the theme is what trade-offs are possible, particularly between price and quality.”

- **Key Speakers at the conference include:**

Mr. Paulo Goelzer, President IGA Institute, CKO, VP International, IGA, Inc, USA

Sir Stuart Hampson, Chairman, The John Lewis Partnership, United Kingdom

Mr. Sean Summers, CEO, Pick 'n Pay Retailers, South Africa

Mr. Willy Van Daele, Vice President Wholesale, Delhaize Benelux, Belgium

- The findings of a key retail marketing study, “Leveraging Customer Insights” will also be unveiled at the CIES Marketing Forum. Conducted in collaboration with Accenture, the study looks at how retailers use customer data in making marketing decisions for their brands/banners. More specifically, it will help retail marketers to maximise the use of customer data to:

- *Make marketing decisions for your brand/banner,*
- *Define loyalty programmes &*
- *Optimise the marketing mix.*

Retail Marketing Directors from 23 countries have accepted to participate in what will become a reference benchmarking tool.

For further details on the conference, contact **Sharon Bligh**

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