

Foreword

The retail landscape is dynamic and the only constant in this environment is change. Without change there will be no development and growth. Retailers and marketers are locked in fierce competition today and are looking at ways and means to differentiate themselves from competitors, and to have the edge in the business world. New methods of competing are constantly being pursued and it has been said that only those businesses that can adapt and secure a sustainable competitive advantage will survive. This approach can be successful if academia and business join hands and together focus on new opportunities and jointly strive to expand the retail and business landscape.

One area of growth is that of online retailing. More and more retailers are starting to use online retailing as an additional marketing tool and, according to industry sources, the use of online retailing has increased by 20% in the past year. This is a clear indication that more and more customers are using the Internet for shopping – a fact that all retailers and marketers should consider as part of their marketing tools.

The rapid development and changes in the field of technology are changing the operational side of companies worldwide – and will continue to do so. Bricks and mortar will continue to dominate in the foreseeable future but it can be expected that e-commerce and online retail will become major channels in the years to come for most if not virtually all businesses. The time is now for businesses to ensure that they are ready for the new era dawning in the business world.

The *International Retail and Marketing Review* aims to keep its readers up to date on new developments in the retail and marketing world by publishing thought-provoking articles and research, and to present new perspectives from leading scholars and thinkers in this field.

The journal also offers a unique opportunity to explore, cultivate and develop ideas on a wide range of issues, from branding to leadership, from pricing to growth opportunities, and from issues facing small retailers to those facing large corporations.

We look forward to a stimulating and healthy debate from eminent scholars and business leaders worldwide, and we have been very fortunate to be able to publish an article by the Father of Retail, Michael Levy, in our third edition. We are indeed proud to have a number of esteemed academics from all over the world on our editorial board.

Prof M C Cant

Editor

HOD: Marketing and Retail Department

Holder of the Massmart Chair in Retail Management

UNISA



Prof. Michael C. Cant

Professor Michael Cant is the Head of the Marketing and Retail Department at the University of South Africa (Unisa). In this position, his responsibility includes: the development of staff; course design; the development of new modules/courses and degrees; and liaison with the business community to ensure that all qualifications are in line with the specific needs of the business world. He acts as promoter for both Master's and Doctoral students. He is the chairperson of the Departmental

Marketing Committee of Unisa, as well as a member of the Marketing Committee of the College of Economic and Management Sciences.

In 1999 a major retailer in Africa, *MassDiscounters*, sponsored a substantial amount of funds for the development of a BCom degree in Retail Management. This sponsorship has been utilised for research in the field of retailing, course development, and to fund the Chair in Retail Management of which Prof. Cant is the incumbent. He secured these funds largely due to the fact that he and his staff members had been able to assist *MassDiscounters*, through the academic programmes offered by the Centre for Business Management, to train their employees and to develop their own in-house programmes.

Unisa presented a merit award for research to Prof. Cant in 1998, and again in 2002. His research outputs included contract research and contributions to prescribed textbooks, either as editor or as an author. His research projects which deal with student perceptions of certain academic matters, their attitudes towards specific components of the curricula, their needs, and so on have been completed. He has also published a number of research articles in both local and international academic journals. Prof. Cant also serves on the board of the *Journal of Retail and Consumer Services*.