

Foreword

The Retail industry is still experiencing pressure on a global front but there are signs that things are improving. Retail figures are up in many countries and the expectations are that the year end of 2009 will still be under pressure but better than expected.

Academics and scholars will look forward to 2010 as a year where cases on what has happened and how it should have been handled will be debated on all levels. Not only will the focus be on the trade but also on the teaching. Material will be adapted, solutions presented to prevent similar situations from arising, caused and reasons sought and new suggestions made only to be reviewed again in future. There is nothing like change and turmoil to bring out the best in the retail structures and academic world so that we can debate and discuss all relevant issues.

In academia a renewed focus is on using all types of social media including face book, twitter, and others to reach the respective markets and to generate business in these difficult times. The value and impact of these media has however not been tried and tested and there are differing opinions of the effectiveness of these media. Scientific articles debating these issues and other learning technologies will increasingly become more important in future and journals such as the International Retail and Marketing review aim to play a leading role in these debates in future. In this edition some learning technologies were tested in academia as a means of teaching marketing and retail students and the results are refreshing and opens the door for more research in this area.

As is the custom The International Retail and Marketing Review aims to keep its readers up-to-date on trends by publishing thought provoking articles and research, as well as to present new perspectives from leading scholars and thinkers within the field. We have also added a new dimension ion the journal and that is the Review/Opinion section. The focus of this section is to have new marketing and retail texts reviewed by experts in academia and/or business as well as to garner opinions on any matter related to marketing and retail. It is thought that this will stimulate debate, discussion, and shared views on topical and controversial issues in the marketing and retail field.

We look forward to a stimulating and healthy debate from eminent scholars and business leaders worldwide, and we have been very fortunate to have a number of esteemed academics from all over the world on our editorial board. A number of new members have been added to the editorial team.

We wish all our members and readers a prosperous 2010 and we look forward to the first edition for 2010 in April/May.

Prof. M.C. Cant
Editor
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Prof. Michael C. Cant

Professor Michael Cant is the Head of 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 and for 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 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 include 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 for 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.