

Retailers: Beating Multinationals at their Own Game

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Walmart, the world's largest retailer, is going ahead with its R16-billion acquisition of Massmart's operations in South Africa, over the next five years. "Its entry poses major challenges for new and existing retailers locally, but it also presents opportunities for growth in terms of new technologies, improving supply chain efficiencies, global outsourcing and lower food and consumer goods prices," says John Thomson, Managing Director of Exhibition Management Services, organisers of the Southern African International Trade Exhibition (SAITEX).

SAITEX will feature an exclusive Networking Breakfast with UK-based international retail expert Simon Mathers - a former Massmart Director and well known results-driven business leader, with a 30 year track record in the retail industry. Join former award-winning CNN correspondent Paul Tilsley as he quizzes Mathers on matters retail. This takes place on 19 July 2011 at Gallagher Convention Centre from 08h30.

"Walmart is not the only international concern looking at investment in South African based retailers," continues Thomson. "When investors ask CEOs where growth is going to come from, they only have two places to look; Africa is the next largest growth opportunity after Asia, so it's likely that other multinationals will target established South African retailers as a platform to launch operations. South African retailers need to identify innovative ways to respond to international retailing trends."

Major trends set to impact local retailers include the increased use of small formats and higher sales densities, ("one size does not fit all"); greater customer engagement, multi-channel shopping; brand innovation and market polarisation.

What is on the Agenda of the Networking Breakfast?

Mathers will explore how South African retailers can get ahead and stay there when international competition comes to town.

"Mathers will dissect the business of major international retail giants such as Walmart, Carrefour and Tesco, providing insight not only into their success stories, but also their shortcomings, lessons learned and how they overcame challenges," explains Thomson.

What are the secrets of Walmart's success?

"The highlight of the Networking Breakfast will be the disclosure of techniques used by overseas counterparts like Walmart, and how to apply them successfully to the African market", Thomson adds. "For example, the strategic use of electronic and mobile commerce techniques can wrest huge business advantages for retailers."

Walmart's control of logistics is the underlying factor of their success, enabling them to control the supply chain. Their inventory and distribution system is a world leader. Over a five year period, Wal-Mart invested \$600-million in information systems, and it also has the largest commercial satellite system in the world.

About SAITEX

SAITEX takes place alongside Africa's Big Seven (AB7) Food and Beverage Trade Show from 17 to 19 July at Gallagher Convention Centre, Midrand, Gauteng. Visitors can pre-register at www.exhibitionsafrica.com and take advantage of the free internet-based business matchmaking programme, which provides exhibitors and visitors with pre-profiled, pre-selected and pre-scheduled matchmaking meetings for all three days at AB7 and SAITEX. Visitors can also preview all

exhibitors' products on the same site.

To see what SAITEX and AB7 are all about, view the 2010 expo video on You Tube - simply go to www.youtube.com and in the top search window type 'Saitex & Africa's Big Seven'.

Contact information

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