



19 August 2015

Various shenanigans down below, from bloggers to beverage businesses. But if you'd prefer something a little more uplifting, have a look at the Woolworths story. It's a whole new, truly empowered way of looking at the empowerment of rural women. Enjoy the read.

RETAILERS AND WHOLESALERS

Shoprite

When in Rome

Shoprite Chair Oom Christo Wiese is being recognised at this year's World Retail Congress in Rome with his induction into the World Retail Hall of Fame. This year, he is joined by Kip Tindell, visionary founder of The Container Store chain in the US, Mohammed Alshaya, executive chairman of his eponymous (ahem) group in Kuwait, and Juan and Reinaldo Solari, former chairmen of the Falabella group of Chile. Wiese has been characteristically humble about the honour, mentioning (although not by name) the thousands of people to whom he feels he owes his success, and casting some illumination upon the general excellence of the SA retail sector, which, he says, "grew out of the needs of an unusually diverse society spread over a vast geographic area. Using some of the best international examples as a point of departure," he continues, "we created our own unique solutions which enable us to trade today with great success across several continents."

Comment: We couldn't have put it better ourselves. So we didn't.

[IOL 12/08/15](#)

Pick n Pay

Strike a mommy blogger, you strike a @#&*ckin rock, b*tches

Pick n Pay has fallen unfairly afoul of the mommy bloggiverse. A mommy blog is, as you know, an amateur website written by a woman who pretends hilariously to hate her own children, for the amusement of her friends. Last week, mommy blogger Celeste Barlow wished a case of Chlamydia on the entirety of Pick n Pay for introducing a type of toy you could get for free if you spent R150 at any branch. Another blogger – whom we shall call Blogger B (was she a mommy blogger? We are not certain) tweeted words to the effect that this post was a jolly good read. Then someone at Pick n Pay requested, via twitter, that her tweet be taken down as the story to which it referred was highly inappropriate. Was it inappropriate? We are not sure if calling your youngest daughter an "ungrateful little b*tch" in a public forum is inappropriate, because we are not mommy bloggers. Blogger B sees Pick n Pay's response as the worst form of corporate cluelessness – "unprofessional and rude and sucky" she professionally calls it. Citing various twitter trolls, she accuses Pick n Pay of perpetrating the worst marketing own goal since Bic's hideously patronising ad from a week earlier.

Comment: Pick n Pay responded mildly, and with dignity, to a direct attack on one of their marketing initiatives. Then the internet, famished after a week free of manufactured scandal, went predictably mad. And no one's brand, Blogger B, was irreparably damaged. Except maybe the youngest daughter's.

[BizCommunity 14/08/15](#)

Woolworths

Strike a rock, you strike gold

Women's Development Bank Investment Holdings (WDBIH) was formed to improve the lives of rural women and communities. Currently it has total assets of just north of R5billion, and has just forked over R500million for the purchase of Woolies shares, in something we savvy investors like to call a "bookbuild process", by which chunks of shares are made available for a sort time with little or no marketing. This one was initiated by Woolies to help ease the cashing out of the BEE share scheme by a large number of its staff. The WBDH is owned by the WDB Trust whose trustees include the former CEO of the Group once known as Wooltru, Colin Hall, and – a bit of trivia for you – former first lady of SA and Trust founder Zanele Mbeki.

Comment: So Woolworths finally reached rural women, eh. Only it didn't sell them aloe juice or undies, but shares.

[Business Day 17/08/15](#)

MANUFACTURERS AND SERVICE PROVIDERS

GlaxoSmithKline

The baseless speculation department

Well, not entirely baseless. Pfizer, according to the word on the street, has been after a major acquisition for some time. Last year, the pharma giant, which brings to market such household names as Lyrica, Celebrex and Viagra, attempted and failed to buy AstraZeneca for \$119billion. The thinking around a Glaxo acquisition would be the diversification (and multiplication) of Pfizer's vaccine and consumer portfolios and, as importantly, give Pfizer an offshore toehold, always handy for tax purposes (GSK is as British as strong tea). But hold your horses just a minute there: the British government might not be so keen on the departure of such a major national business, and would likely mount stiff resistance to the transaction. And there are more suitors in the wings: Swiss-based Novartis in partnership with Roche might also be keen, and so might Johnson & Johnson.

Comment: And in the meantime, GSK's stock price is enjoying a bump from all that flattering interest.

[The Motely Fool 11/08/15](#)

Coca-Cola

Merchants of Doubt

The Global Energy Balance Network is a not-for-profit organisation which promotes research into the causes of obesity. It's staffed by academics from various universities in the US, and at least one alumnus of the World Health Organisation. It focuses its message on the need for people to increase their physical activity to achieve a healthy weight, downplaying the role of fatty snacks and sugary drinks in weight gain. And it was founded with the assistance of a \$1.5million grant from Coca-Cola, which also administers its website. However, according to GEBN President James O. Hill, Coke is "not running the show." This against a backdrop of declining sales for the beverage giant and a hostile regulatory environment in some American cities, like New York, where ex-mayor Michael Bloomberg banned the Big Gulp drinking cup.

Comment: In the US, corporations are persons under the law, and the money they use to swing public and political opinion is considered speech. Which is free.

[Business Insider 12/08/15](#)

TRADE ENVIRONMENT

Things Generally

Bad news for Switzerland...

...is that President Zuma has pointed out that things are pretty grim everywhere, not just in the Beloved Country. "Who is not in crisis? The globe is in crisis," he announced at a press briefing on the economy last week, precipitating a devaluation of the Swiss Franc and a run on Zurich's banks. OK not really. But whatever our Economist-in-Chief believes, things aren't quite what they could be for the dear old rand. After last week's surprise devaluation of the Chinese Yuan, the rand weakened against the dollar, driven down to R12.82 by both external factors, and things we actually could do something about here at home. One of these things, according to the Pres, is the supply of electricity, which is just about to be all sorted out, by co-generation and stuff, adding an extra 1% to our economic growth, for a total of 3.5%.

Comment: So that's alright then.

[IOL 12/08/15](#)

IN BRIEF

Tesco

Dunnroamin'

Tesco is keen to sell its execrably-named data company Dunnhumby, but nobody is buying. This has forced the retailer to drop its asking price from an ambitious £2billion to a more modestly British £700million. There remain a few bidders interested at this price, including global communications outfit WPP.

[Financial Times 12/08/15](#)

THE WEEKLY GURU

"Franchesca and Sharkey, my French bulldogs, have their own blog. And they are brilliant at it."

Martha Stewart

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