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Electricity wheeling in Cape Town: 861,162 kWh traded



By Staff Writer

THE City of Cape Town's electricity wheeling initiative, launched in March 2025, has facilitated the trade of 861,162 kilowatt-hours (kWh) of energy across its grid as of September 2025, according to city data.

The programme, which allows private generators to transport electricity through the city's grid to commercial buyers, began with three pilot off-takers and now has two active participants, with additional users recently signed up.

The wheeling programme is aimed at not only making the city less dependent on the state-owned power utility Eskom but also

to provide local businesses with access to electricity at lower tariffs.

Cape Town Mayor Geordin Hill-Lewis said at the launch that the wheeling pilot the city had run had prepared it well for a democratised energy market.

"This is an exciting leap forward to diversify our electricity supplier base beyond Eskom to a future of decentralised electricity trading in South Africa. More than half a million kilowatt hours have already been wheeled across Cape Town's grid during the pilot phase between three energy companies generating power from a number of sources."

Though bringing in Independent Power Producers (IPPs) was intended to undercut Eskom, their impact on pricing is unknown,

as the city said it has no insight into the financial details of the private power purchase agreements.

"The city does not have any visibility into the Power Purchase agreements these off-takers have signed with private generators/traders and, therefore, are not in a position to answer this question," said Alderman Xanthea Limberg, the city's mayoral committee member for energy.

Even so, the initial data has shown that the energy market was evolving at a rapid pace, as the city reported significant market interest, particularly from energy traders and Large Power Users.

It also noted that many private generators were still under construction and were expected to come online in the first quarter of 2026, with a pipeline of further wheeling arrangements anticipated for the year.

To manage this, the city emphasised the importance of having a wheeling framework, a capable metering and billing engine, formal agreements, skilled resources, and political buy-in.

Regarding network capacity, the city stated that wheeling does not currently require it to scale up infrastructure for energy buyers.

"With wheeling, specifically from an off-taker perspective, the utility is not required to scale up the capacity of the network as we are just replacing utility-supplied energy with private energy," Limberg explained.

Major grid upgrades would only be triggered when new generators were connected, with the cost for those upgrades borne by the developers.

The initiative is already having a tangible impact on renewable energy investment.

"The impact has been quite significant, showcasing Cape Town's expanding green energy service offerings," the city said, adding that these developments are "a catalyst for economic development and job creation," Limberg said.

A growing number of new green generation projects have been launched to meet demand from large businesses seeking renewable power.

"We are excited about the prospect of expanding our wheeling capacity beyond the pilot to serve multiple off-takers and look forward to the moderation of wheeling tariffs to encourage greater participation in this transformative initiative," Hill-Lewis said at the launch.

Cape Winelands Airport to reshape Western Cape economy



By Adrian Ephraim

SOUTH AFRICA's largest listed real estate investment trust has made a strategic bet on the Western Cape's future - backing the Cape Winelands Airport development with an initial investment and long-term partnership rights that could reshape the region's economy for generations.

Growthpoint Properties' entry into the privately led airport project represents more than capital. It signals institutional confidence in a bold infrastructure play designed to address one of Cape Town's biggest constraints: the city's only viable expansion direction is northwards along the Cape Winelands corridor.

"The availability of industrial land in Cape Town has become very scarce, and that has driven up the price," says Werner van Antwerpen, Growthpoint's Head of Corporate Advisory. "Cape Town's only viable expansion direction is northwards along the Cape Winelands corridor. This is already starting to happen."

A R24 billion opportunity

Phase 1 alone - covering terminal buildings, a runway and a 450-hectare developable estate - requires an estimated R8 billion investment. The broader precinct, encompassing industrial, retail, office, logistics and hotel properties, is projected to cost an additional R16-20 billion over several years, bringing total development costs to as much as R28 billion.

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Electricity Wheeling in Cape Town

ELECTRICITY wheeling lets private generators sell power to customers using the City's grid — creating a mini-market for renewable energy. After a successful pilot, Cape Town officially opened its grid to wheeling in 2025.

Growthpoint and Etana Energy made history by wheeling solar power from Constantia Village to an office in the CBD. The pilot saw over 560,000 kWh of renewable energy transferred.

Wheeling is currently limited to medium- and high-voltage users on Time-of-Use tariffs. Participants sign "Use of System" agreements and pay network fees to the City.

The initiative supports Cape Town's goal to secure 350 MW from independent power producers, cutting reliance on Eskom and reducing load-shedding risks.

Major companies like Shoprite are already taking part, using solar power from nearby sites via licensed energy traders such as Enpower Trading.



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ering terminal buildings, a runway and a 450-hectare developable estate - requires an estimated R8 billion investment. The broader precinct, encompassing industrial, retail, office, logistics and hotel properties, is projected to cost an additional R16-20 billion over several years, bringing total development costs to as much as R28 billion.

It's one of the largest private infrastructure investments in South Africa's recent history. Growthpoint also holds the right of first refusal to co-invest in future property developments as they materialise.

The project's multiplier effects are substantial: around 35,000 direct and indirect jobs during construction, scaling to over 100,000 over the first 20 years. By 2050, the airport is expected to serve more than five million passengers annually.

Built on strategy, not speculation

What sets the project apart is its focus on solving genuine capacity constraints. Nicholas Ferguson, Managing Director of RSA Aero - the airport's owner and operator - says Cape Winelands Airport will add 110,000 tons of air-cargo capacity to the region, about 25% of all air cargo currently entering South Africa.

"More capacity means exporters and producers will have real choice, faster turnaround times, and lower costs to move goods to and from the Cape," Ferguson explains.

Cape Town is also projected to receive 10 million additional



passengers by 2050, and the new airport is expected to capture about a quarter of that growth. Rather than compete with Cape Town International Airport, Cape Winelands will expand the region's aviation capacity at a time when the existing airport faces operational constraints.

The two airports will work in tandem. Cape Winelands will serve as an alternate airport for fuel planning, improving operational resilience and saving airlines significant costs. "Just by existing, Cape Winelands Airport will save the industry 22 million litres of fuel a year, cutting about 60 million kilograms of carbon emissions," Ferguson notes.

Proven players, long-term vision

Growthpoint's involvement brings institutional rigour to an ambitious private sector vision. The property giant - with assets worth R155.8 billion and co-owner of Cape Town's V&A Waterfront - has a strong track record in large-scale, mixed-use precincts.

"Conversations with RSA Aero started several years ago," says

van Antwerpen. "We saw the work done to date was world-class, and that the team isn't new to developing airports. Senior management developed King Shaka airport in KZN and ran Cape Town airport for more than 10 years."

Under the partnership, Growthpoint will assume long-term property and asset management responsibilities across logistics, commercial and hospitality components, ensuring institutional standards in governance and delivery.

Designed for sustainability

Cape Winelands Airport also aims to be "the greenest airport in the world," embedding renewable energy, off-grid water recycling and a fynbos nature reserve into its design.

For Growthpoint - which targets carbon neutrality by 2050 - the alignment is strategic. "Cape Winelands Airport's environmental goals enhance its commercial viability," van Antwerpen says. "We have deep experience in green building design, renewable electricity generation and electricity wheeling from large-scale renewable generators."

A new growth corridor

Ferguson likens the long-term vision to Midrand's evolution from buffer zone to economic hub between Johannesburg and Pretoria. "Cape Winelands Airport will act as the economic and spatial connector between Cape Town and the Winelands," he says. "Like Midrand, it will attract businesses, education, housing and innovation - but with the added advantage of being designed for 21st-century sustainability from the start."

Pending environmental approvals, construction could begin in early 2026, with commissioning targeted for 2028. The phased rollout will unfold over two decades, matching the region's growth needs.

For the Western Cape's business community, the partnership is a clear signal: private capital sees opportunity in solving the region's infrastructure bottlenecks while delivering long-term returns. As Growthpoint Group CEO Norbert Sasse puts it, "We're not just building an airport. We're building a platform for investment, innovation and opportunity in the Western Cape."

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South Africa's Wholesale Electricity Market (SAWEM): A new era for power trading

THE launch of the South African Wholesale Electricity Market (SAWEM) marks a major turning point in the country's energy sector, ushering in competitive electricity trading, private sector participation, and a modernised power economy.

This landmark reform will be a central topic at the IPP & PPA Conference, hosted as a side event to the Africa Energy Indaba from 3-5 March 2026

at the Cape Town International Convention Centre.

For the first time, multiple buyers and sellers will be able to trade electricity on a transparent, market-based platform. SAWEM shifts South Africa away from a single-buyer model dominated by Eskom toward a more diversified, investor-friendly system.

According to the National Energy Crisis Committee (NECOM), SAWEM will

initially enable bilateral trading between generators and large customers, later expanding to real-time trading similar to European and North American markets.

"The implementation of SAWEM represents one of the most significant structural reforms in South Africa's electricity industry since 1994," says Dr Kgosientsho Ramokgopa, Minister of Electricity and Energy. "It will unlock investment,

enhance competition, and support the transition to a sustainable, reliable energy future."

The IPP & PPA Conference will bring together Independent Power Producers (IPPs), utilities, investors, and experts to unpack the regulatory, commercial, and contractual frameworks of this new market.

The conference takes place on 5 March 2026 as part of Africa's premier energy gathering.

BPO risks from proposed US legislation



By Staff Writer

PROPOSED legislation could make it difficult for US-based Business Process Outsourcing (BPO) firms to set up shop in developing countries like South Africa.

The Keep Call Centers in America Act, proposed by U.S. Senator Ruben Gallego earlier this year, aims to discourage companies from setting up call centres outside the U.S. and from adopting Artificial Intelligence (AI) into their business processes.

The bill comes as an increasing number of US companies like Concentrix and Amazon have set up BPO call centres in South Africa.

In recent years, this country's efforts to attract international BPO firms have paid

off, as they contribute around R24-billion annually to the Western Cape economy, matching the impact of the tourism sector, and have added around R3.6-billion in new FDI to the local economy.

It has had a marked impact on employment, with the sector now employing over 270,000 people in six cities, of which 65,000 serve international clients.

The Keep Call Centers in America bill now looms over not only South Africa's BPO sector, but also those of India and the Philippines, which have also set up call centres to cater for off-shore businesses.

The bill will require US businesses that opt to set up call centres abroad to notify the US Department of Labour at least 120 days

before doing so. It also requires that the department keep a public list of companies that have chosen to relocate call centres overseas, and retain them on the list for five years.

Those on the list will be ineligible for new government grants and government-guaranteed loans, while those not on the list will be given preference for government contracts.

The bill will also require companies to keep track of how many jobs are lost to AI.

What impact the bill will have on the South African BPO industry is hard to say, as the legislation first has to be debated and then voted on in various committees in the lower and upper houses.

Once it is passed out of the committees, it will then need to be passed by the House

of Representatives, before it gets voted on by the Senate, and then awaits the signature of the US president Donald Trump, to become law.

After that, the companies will have a year to comply before it comes into effect.

At this stage, it is unclear if there is enough votes to get the bill out of the committees, and if it could be passed by both houses.

Lawyer Blake Landis wrote in the National Law Review that it would be a while before the proposed legislation is turned into law.

"Overall, the Keep Call Centers in America Act remains in the early stages of the legislative process. Whether it advances through committee or gains broader congressional support remains to be seen at this time."

Even so, he noted that the drawing up of the legislation showed that US legislators were now starting to take how technology affects consumers and workers a lot more seriously.

"It reflects a growing focus on regulating the intersection of technology, labour, and consumer interaction. We are witnessing this as an area of increasing relevance to businesses operating in highly regulated communications spaces."

South Africa G20 Pragmatism vs Politics at the Summit

By Chris Hattingh

THE 2025 G20 Summit is set to take place on 22 and 23 November in Johannesburg. The Summit represents the culmination of South Africa's year-long G20 presidency and, if used well, should produce some level of common, shared communicate or document that advances South Africa's priorities and values.

Given that the United States (US) has largely checked out of South Africa's G20 presidency, finding common ground at the Summit may prove difficult. But even if a communicate or similar shared document can prioritise an issue such as debt repayment conditions for emerging countries, this would be a diplomatic and geopolitical win for the country's G20 presidency.

In a more uncertain global environment, it is vital for South African businesses and citizens that their government use any global platforms to advance the country's interests, and further South Africa as a key and desirable investment and trade partner and destination. South Africans should pay particular attention to how the government runs the Summit, and what communications it uses in engagements with important trading partners. Additionally, the weeks after the Summit will be important to see whether the government in Gauteng, especially, continues the infrastructure investments started before the Summit, or whether these fall by the wayside as expected.

South Africa does not have the military or economic leverage to be taken seriously in some geopolitical and geoeconomic shifts thus far in 2025, including the war in Ukraine and the conflict in Gaza. If South Africa uses the G20 Summit platform to continue engaging in flights of its perceived moral superpower status, this will deepen the



rift between and the US, especially. Should South Africa use the G20 Summit to engage in more pragmatic and transactional foreign policy and trade and investment deals with countries like the US, it will set itself up well for this new geoeconomic era of more hard-nosed and pragmatic foreign policy.

Regarding more macro geopolitical developments, multilateral institutions such as the G20, United Nations, World Trade Organisation (WTO), and others face a serious challenge in the form of US President Donald Trump's policy preferences. The WTO was already weaker coming into 2025, unable to address effectively other countries' concerns with China's manufacturing and trade practices.

Unilateralism and bilateral deals are proving more tempting – and arguably, more effective – than some multilateral platforms and avenues. The US is focusing more on exerting power and influence with countries and regions it considers more important for its interests, no longer on the whole world. It remains to be seen whether China wants to or can fill such a void, or whether it will also prefer carving out these areas of influence and closeness for its interests. In this challenging space, South Africa's G20 presidency and the country's professed preference for dialogue, compromise, and multilateralism could well be

relegated to a mere talk shop, heavy on rhetoric but ultimately ineffective in volatile global affairs.

Globalisation and multilateralism are not necessarily at an end. But if multilateralism is to survive, it needs to adapt. It will probably also be more fragmented. Countries with similar inclinations as South Africa will gravitate towards each other – if platforms are strengthened to support such, and to then have more refined agendas and address specific problems, not necessarily all of the world's issues. Proving effectiveness – more so than talking about all the problems afflicting the world – will gain more purchase and support through the rest of the decade.

While Mr Trump will not attend the Summit, US Vice President JD Vance will. He is no less forward than his principal, and he will relish any opportunity to argue and highlight what he perceives to be problems with South Africa's G20 agenda. How South Africa engages with any such disagreements – usefully, or as an excuse to argue back and get lost in tit-for-tat engagements – will determine whether it has learnt useful lessons in this new era of geopolitics and geoeconomics. South Africa needs to use every international platform to enhance its influence, and not be distracted by only 'feeling' it has enhanced its legitimacy.

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Veolia South Africa opens head office in Rosebank



VEOLIA South Africa has officially relocated its head office to a modern, state-of-the-art facility in the heart of Rosebank, Johannesburg. The new premises, situated in a WeWork office building, mark a significant milestone for the environmental services leader as it continues to expand its operations across the African continent.

On 9 October 2025, Veolia CEO Thierry Witkowicz, alongside his exceptional team, officially inaugurated the new office in a ceremony that celebrated both the company's

growth and its commitment to creating an inspiring workplace for its employees. The move represents Veolia's dedication to fostering innovation, collaboration, and sustainability in its daily operations.

The choice to establish the head office in a WeWork building reflects Veolia's forward-thinking approach to modern workspace solutions. WeWork has revolutionised the concept of office environments by offering flexible, fully serviced workspaces that cater to businesses of all sizes. The Rose-

bank location provides Veolia with access to premium amenities, meeting rooms equipped with cutting-edge technology, and wellness facilities.

WeWork buildings are designed with collaboration and productivity in mind, featuring contemporary architecture and interior design that promote creativity and employee well-being. The shared workspace model also offers networking opportunities with other innovative companies and professionals, creating a dynamic business ecosystem.

As a global leader in environmental services, Veolia has ensured that its new office embodies the company's core values of sustainability and resource optimisation. The WeWork building incorporates eco-friendly features such as energy-efficient lighting, water-saving fixtures, and waste reduction programmes.

The relocation to Rosebank positions Veolia South Africa in one of Johannesburg's most prestigious business districts, with excellent transport links and proximity to key clients and partners. Under the leadership of CEO Thierry Witkowicz and his dedicated team, the new head office serves as a launchpad for continued growth and innovation in delivering environmental solutions across South Africa and beyond.

The official inauguration on 9 October 2025 marked not just the opening of a new office, but the beginning of an exciting new chapter for Veolia in South Africa - one characterised by collaboration, sustainability, and a commitment to creating a better working environment for all employees.

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EV battery fire risks in South Africa



Photo credit: <https://apfmag.com/>

By Diane Silcock

THE arrival of more affordable electric vehicles (EVs) onto the South Africa market, is expected to accelerate adoption across both consumer and business sectors. As uptake grows, it's vital for consumers, fleet owners and businesses to understand the fire safety risks associated with lithium-ion and other EV batteries, which are prone to ignite under certain conditions.

Research shows that while EV fires occur less frequently than those involving internal combustion engine vehicles, they present unique challenges: they burn hotter and more intensely, last longer, and are significantly harder to extinguish. In high-density settings—such as fleets, parking facilities, or built-up commercial areas—these characteristics elevate the potential risk for businesses and property owners.

Car manufacturers and battery technology specialists are continuously advancing technology to reduce fire risks, while also enhancing sustainability and cost efficiency.

The CSIR, in collaboration with the UK's Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO), Imperial College London, and Coventry University, are working on a sodium-ion battery concept using South Africa's own vanadium and biomass resources

which are safer, cheaper, and more sustainable than lithium-ion.

EV Battery fire risks

Marius Atterbury, CEO of the Fire Protection Association of South Africa (FPA-SA), explains the critical fire safety issues around EV batteries. "The main causes of EV battery fires include overheating during charging, but other causes include vehicles catching fire inside an area that is on fire, arson, collisions, debris, and other mechanical damage. These fires can heat the battery up to a point where thermal runaway will set in. Even a poor job by possibly untrained mechanics could cause such a fire. In these instances, the battery chemistry makes only a little difference."

On the upside, battery management systems are being improved, which provides good protection against overcharging and overheating.

Damaged EV batteries pose serious fire risks

FPA-SA warns that at present the chances are very high that physical damage to an EV battery will lead to a fire event, therefore no risks should be taken when damage is observed.

"Other than from advertisements, a user has no indication of the type of battery chemistry their EV employs, so caution should be exercised."

Battery fires produce noxious gases, and explosions are possible

EV battery fires release hazardous gases which, when combined with air and heat, can ignite explosively. Occupants should evacuate immediately and maintain a safe distance in case of an explosion, thereby avoiding the flames as well as breathing in the toxic gases. These fires are best left to professional fire services, who are still working globally to establish the most effective and safest methods of extinguishing them.

Investigating EV fires can aid in future fire prevention

FPA-SA supports the investigation of EV fires, as the findings will contribute to the body of knowledge and assist in preventing future fires.

Atterbury notes that current reporting of vehicle fire incidents does not distinguish between different fuel sources or energy types; however, work is underway to establish a system that will provide more specific South African statistics, including for home-based battery systems.

He adds that numerous local and international platforms are actively addressing the safety challenges posed by these emerging technologies. "While the world is faced with a rapidly developing technology, which is faster than safety in some instances, we are fortunate that there is a lot of information sharing going on," concludes Atterbury.

Cape Town port deploys R4 billion infrastructure upgrade ahead of peak fruit export season

THE Port of Cape Town Container Terminal is rolling out key operational upgrades ahead of South Africa's deciduous fruit export season, which begins in November and is expected to see a 3% increase in volumes

"Last season, the terminal handled over 230,000 refrigerated containers..."

through March 2026. Transport Minister Barbara Creecy visited the terminal to assess its readiness for the

export period, which is vital to South Africa's agricultural economy.

Transnet Port Terminals (TPT) has allocated R4 billion in capital expenditure across major terminals for 2025/2026, with Cape Town receiving 28 new rubber-tyred gantry cranes (RTGs) equipped with anti-sway technology and hybrid diesel-electric engines. Nine RTGs are already operating, another nine are completing commissioning, and the final 10 are being assembled. "These newer machines are more resistant to wind, which has been a challenge for us," said Oscar Borchards, West-

ern Cape Terminals managing executive. Last season, the terminal handled over 230,000 refrigerated containers, underscoring its critical role in global fruit supply chains.

The deciduous fruit industry employs thousands and contributes significantly to export earnings, with roughly 80% of exports routed through Cape Town to Europe, Asia, and the Middle East. Industry leaders have welcomed stronger collaboration with Transnet following previous seasons disrupted by rising costs, load shedding, and port delays.

To mitigate opera-

tional risks, the terminal has introduced windbound response protocols, staggered container stack dates, increased reefer plug points, and dedicated handling teams. Smaller vessels will be diverted to the Cape Town Multipurpose Terminal during peak congestion. Additional container vessel routes and specialised reefer ships may be used to ease pressure during the busiest months.

Port performance remains central to maintaining South Africa's reputation as a reliable global supplier and supporting rural economies across the Western Cape.

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THE requirements on components for railway infrastructure are stringent. They are used in safety-relevant applications and safeguard the availability of railway operations.

At the same time, railway infrastructure is increasingly digital. Intelligent solutions are needed that enable remote monitoring and diagnostics, as well as cloud services. Products and solutions from Phoenix Contact satisfy the stringent requirements and, at the same time, provide digital interfaces in order to realise smart infrastructure for railways.

In today's world, energy shortage is one of the major concerns. As a consumer of electrical energy, the electric railway system, due to trains, stations, and commercial users, consumes an enormous amount of electricity. Increasing greenhouse gases and CO2 emissions, in addition, have drawn the attention of world leaders as one of the biggest threats at present; based on research in this field, the transportation sector contributes significantly to this pollution.

Carl Kleynhans, General Manager of Phoenix Contact in South Africa, says, "Keeping in line with our vision of Empowering the All Electric Society, the primary energy requirement must be reduced through efficiency measures, and intelligent and networked systems."

Phoenix Contact provides the ideal portfolio for the digitalisation of railway technologies: reliable installation, secure signal transmission, and real-time data communication, as well as cloud services, make it possible to digitalise railway infrastructure.

Researchers have been trying to reduce the daily operational costs of smart railway stations, mitigating power quality issues, considering the traction uncertainties and stochastic behaviour of Renewable Energy Resources and Energy Storage Systems, which have a significant impact on total operational cost.

Railway Energy Management Systems (REMS) are a modern green solution that not only tackle these problems but also enable electricity to be sold to the grid market.

Improving railway transportation energy efficiency requires that efficiency be measured first. This task is quite straightforward for diesel-fuelled vehicles, but electric vehicles draw power from the catena-

ry and unless measuring devices are mounted onboard, the only information available is via substation measurement.

Measuring or calculating energy consumption in itself does not save energy. However, a better knowledge of energy consumption will provide valuable data to identify potential for optimisation as far as

regenerative braking, energy-efficient driving or stopping patterns are concerned.

Energy meters in railway transportation are crucial for monitoring and managing energy consumption. These devices help railway operators track the energy usage of trains, which is essential for optimising efficiency and reducing costs.

In order to continue operating an entire railway and signal technology system, it is often necessary to replace individual components. With components available in series that can be seamlessly integrated into existing systems, Phoenix Contact allows you to modernise your railway infrastructure safely and cost-effectively.



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Electric forklifts transforming South Africa's ports



WHAT if the future of South Africa's logistics wasn't just faster or cheaper - but cleaner, quieter and more sustainable? As the country's ports and yards begin a steady shift toward electric heavy lift equipment, this transition signals more than just technological progress. It marks a pivotal reimagining of operational efficiency - where environmental responsibility is no

longer a side goal but a driving force in reshaping the industry's core.

With increased environmental awareness and stringent regulations around carbon emissions looming, electric-powered equipment can play a pivotal role in reshaping how goods are moved in and out of ports, warehouses and distribution centres.

Lenny Naidoo, National Product Spe-

cialist for Heavy Lift, a division of CFAO Equipment, says one of the most compelling reasons for the growing adoption of electric heavy lift equipment in logistics is its significant impact on emissions reduction.

"Ports and container yards are known for their heavy reliance on diesel-powered equipment. The shift to electric-powered equipment offers a cleaner alternative, drastically cutting down on carbon emissions and various toxic pollutants."

This reduction is vital, given the International Maritime Organisation's (IMO) goal to reduce the shipping industry's carbon emissions by at least 50% by 2050. By adopting electric heavy lift equipment, ports can help meet these targets while improving air quality and worker health conditions.

Naidoo says while

South Africa is currently in the process of developing a national roadmap and legislative framework to address carbon emission targets for the shipping industry, it is expected to align as closely as possible with the IMO's goals.

"By adopting a forward-thinking approach, ports and container yards can mitigate the risks associated with tightening emissions policies."

"Our local shipping industry is cognisant of this and since introducing the heavy-duty Konecranes E-VER Electric Forklift in 2024 and E-ACE Electric Empty Container Handler in April this year, we have noted a significant increase in

the uptake of electric equipment compared to their diesel counterparts over the past 12 months."

While the initial capital investment for electric heavy lift equipment may be higher than diesel models, the long-term savings are self-evident "The E-VER forklift, for example, costs less to operate; firstly, because it costs less to charge an electric forklift than to refuel with diesel, and secondly, because they have fewer moving parts, making them less costly to maintain and reducing overall operating costs," explains Naidoo.

Naidoo points out that the E-ACE Electric Empty Container Handlers are engineered for efficiency, using advanced high-voltage technology to operate continuously for six to twelve hours without needing a recharge. But the impact goes beyond endurance.

"Lower power consumption and the complete elimination of tailpipe emissions together represent a dramatic reduction in the carbon footprint of one of the most essential, and traditionally polluting, pieces of port and yard equipment."

With advancements in battery technology, the range and efficiency of electric equipment are also improving steadily. Many ports have begun to integrate renewable energy, including solar and hybrid plants, into their operations to reduce emissions and improve reliability, for example, South Africa's Port of Ngqura acts as a hub for wind turbine components and is developing wave energy projects.

The transition to electric heavy lift equipment is not just about meeting today's standards but also about future-proofing operations. By investing in electric-powered machinery now, port and container yard operators can avoid costly upgrades down the line, ensuring that their fleets remain compliant with future regulations.

"By adopting a forward-thinking approach, ports and container yards can mitigate the risks associated with tightening emissions policies. As the world pushes toward reducing its carbon footprint, the electric "giants" of industrial equipment will play a critical role," concludes Naidoo.

First Werner Pumps Trailer in Botswana handed over to Gaborone Municipality



WERNER Pumps has delivered an Earl 4-Cylinder Trailer Unit to the Gaborone Municipality Wastewater Department in Botswana, further strengthening its presence in Southern Africa.

The trailer, manufactured at Werner Pumps' headquarters in Springs, South Africa, will be used by the municipality for sewer line cleaning, drain maintenance and unblocking pipelines at the wastewater treatment plant.

As part of the handover, Werner Pumps auto electrician apprentice, Zander Gresse, provided the municipality's technical team with hands-on operational demonstrations and basic maintenance training, covering controls, safety procedures and best-practice operation.

"It was a great experience and a proud moment to represent Werner Pumps in another country," says Gresse. "Taking the lead on the handover gave me a sense of responsibility and confidence, and it was rewarding to see how our equipment can make a real difference in improving municipal operations."

The customer expressed satisfaction with the quality, performance and professional support provided by Werner Pumps. For Gresse, the experience offered valuable international exposure early in his career. "I learned how important clear communication and hands-on training are during a handover," he adds. "It's opportunities like this

that help me grow both technically and personally."

Managing Director Sebastian Werner says the Botswana handover forms part of the company's commitment to supporting municipalities across Southern Africa with robust, locally manufactured equipment and dedicated after-sales service.

"Our focus is on building reliable, high-performance units that empower local authorities to deliver essential services efficiently," he says. "We're proud of young team members like Zander who carry that commitment forward with professionalism and enthusiasm."

About Werner Pumps

For over 30 years, Werner South Africa Pumps & Equipment (Pty) Ltd. has been designing, manufacturing, supplying and maintaining specialist high-pressure jetting equipment.

The company has built a reputation as a local industry leader through its focus on delivering high-quality, low-maintenance, 100% South African manufactured products that last, all while considering clients' budgets.

Aside from its in-house manufacturing capabilities, Werner Pumps specialises in the supply and maintenance of high-pressure jetting equipment, German high-pressure pumps, high-pressure sewer cleaning hoses, Swiss-engineered Nozzles by ENZ, and high-pressure guns, lances and cleaning equipment.

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Move more, pay less: Short-term equipment rentals keep festive supply chains moving



“WITH warehouses, logistics centres and retailers operating at peak capacity to meet festive season demand, short-term rental solutions offer essential flexibility.

To stay competitive, equipment suppliers must be well-prepared to support their customers through seasonal spikes or risk losing a key strategic advantage,” says Refilwe Molapo, General Manager of Toyota Material Handling Johannesburg, a division of CFAO Equipment. He says Toyota Material Handling experiences a 10% to 15% higher-than-normal run rate over the festive season. “This is largely driven by the fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG), retail, logistics and warehousing sectors, which all operate at peak capacity over this period.”

For these operations, agility is key. They need to scale up their material handling capacity quickly for a short period. Short-term rentals allow them to do so, increasing their throughput and efficiency without having to take on the commitment of a long-term rental or outright purchase. Molapo says while the seasonal peak typically kicks off during October, this year’s peak started earlier than usual. “We noted an increase around the end

of August. This could be attributed to the current economic climate, compelling customers to be more price sensitive and get ahead of the December rush, taking advantage of deals, as well as the convenience of online shopping.”

Typically a four- to five-month push, the rush is expected to slow down at the end of January, which includes back-to-school. “Our customers tend to experience a festive season peak, which dies down briefly before the back-to-school peak commences,” notes Molapo. He says equipment rental makes sense for two main reasons: flexibility and cost management. “These businesses experience a seasonal surge, which does not justify a long-term lease or investing in capital equipment. Short-term rental gives them the ability to respond to these peaks without locking up their capital, freeing up their balance sheets. It really is a practical and cost-effective strategy for managing these types of peaks.”

Operationally, the Toyota Material Handling team begins to prepare for the festive season demand several months in advance. “We start by examining historical demand patterns and customer forecasts. Market trends and information are critical

to ensure we have the right types and number of units to support what the market is going to need from us. We also engage with our customers, most of whom place their orders well in advance to secure the additional equipment for their fleets,” adds Molapo.

All units in Toyota Material Handling’s 862-strong Johannesburg/Polowane/Nelspruit rental fleet undergo comprehensive mechanical inspections, servicing and safety certifications ahead of the festive season to ensure they are in good working order and reduce the risk of disruptions to productivity. Responsible for Johannesburg, Nelspruit and Polokwane, Molapo says the business also takes the logistics between branches into account. “We assess which equipment is most in demand in each region and try to balance the supply accordingly. If a particular type of equipment is expected to peak in demand in Johannesburg, we shift it from Nelspruit and relocate the necessary equipment for Nelspruit from there.”

In addition to ensuring the availability of relevant equipment, Toyota Material Handling must also assess parts avail-

ability and coordinate with suppliers, many of whom shut down during the festive season. “We need to ensure our internal capacity and capability are prepared to sustain operational efficiency during this period,” says Molapo. Additionally, aftermarket and logistics capabilities are intensified during the festive season. “Short-term rental differs significantly from long-term rental. Responsiveness is crucial and we must be flexible enough to deliver within 24 hours, ensuring quick turnaround times and the availability of technical support. We have an in-house transport department dedicated to rental operations, which helps streamline these processes,” explains Molapo.

The sharpest increase in demand for warehousing and retail distribution equipment over this period is for pallet jacks (50%), narrow aisle equipment (50%), reach trucks (41%) and electric counterbalance equipment (28%). Top of mind during this period are reliability and flexibility. Molapo says the business makes sure technicians are available in all major hubs. “We have a full short-term rental unit on standby to respond to breakdowns and swap out equipment where necessary. “It is an exciting time of the year and the impact on our business and our customers’ operations is significant: our customers’ demands really test how we are geared up to support them. The key to success is being well prepared long in advance. If we do it properly, we can sit back and be the attentive business partner our customers expect, helping them through this difficult period effectively,” he concludes.

Disruption. Chaos. Fatigue. Here’s how CAN DO leaders cross the finish line of 2025 strong



AS THE year winds down, many leaders and business owners feel flat, foggy, and running on fumes. You’re exhausted—yet still chasing year-end targets and signing off projects. In a world that’s already time-poor and stress-rich, “finishing strong” isn’t about squeezing the last drops of energy. It’s about **owning the finish** so you don’t spend the first 7–10 days of your holiday recovering from depletion.

We can all shift our approach now to “win” the **CAN DO trifecta: Mental Clarity + Emotional Agility + Physical Nexus** (energy & vitality).

1. Mental Clarity: Step back to see the whole picture

Before rushing to wrap Q4, pause for perspective. Ask yourself—and your team—three questions:

- What did we learn this year about our clients, our market, and ourselves?
- Where did we misdirect time or energy?
- What must we *let go of* in 2025 so we can start 2026 clean?

This reflective pause sharpens mental clarity—the “C” in **CAN DO**. Neuroscience shows that reflection recruits the prefrontal cortex, improving problem-solving and foresight. You can’t lead effectively from a foggy mind. **Clarity is your greatest productivity tool.**

2. Emotional Agility: Let go to grow

If 2025 proved anything, it’s that **adaptability is a competitive advantage**. AI is reshaping workflows, markets are shifting, and consumer trust is fragile. Leaders who finish strong don’t grip tighter—they **flex faster**.

Emotional agility—the “A” in **CAN DO**—can start with a simple neuroscience-backed habit: “**Name it to tame it.**” Label the emotion to lower its intensity and lift self-awareness.

There are no “bad” emotions; even frustration is useful signal data. When you feel a downward spiral starting, ask: What’s the data? What’s the opportunity here? **Agility is the art of staying centred while the world spins**—the hallmark of a future-fit leader.

3. Physical Nexus: Re-energise to stay resilient

The “N” in **CAN DO** stands for **Nexus**—your energy, vitality, and ability to harness (not ignore) stress. As the year ends, this is where many leaders fall short. You cannot inspire others from an empty tank.

Audit your **energy ecosystem**:

- **Restorative sleep:** Are you getting a minimum of seven hours so you can make smart decisions?
- **Movement:** Do you carve out 20 minutes a day? A brisk 20-minute walk counts. Motion shifts emotion.
- **Bookends:** Be intentional about how you start and end your day. Do you leave today’s stress in today—or carry it into tomorrow?
- **Gratitude:** Have you specifically thanked your team—and individuals—not just for results, but for resilience and how they handled obstacles?

One powerful ritual I run with executive teams is the **CAN DO “Reset.”** Each person shares one human capability they strengthened this year (e.g., empathy, curiosity, courage, narrative power and persuasion) and one they’ll build next year. It’s quick, meaningful, and energising—a way to close out 2025 connected, not depleted. Psychological

safety, meaningful connection, and trust are antidotes to fatigue and exhaustion.

In my book, **From CAN’T to CAN DO: The 9 Human capabilities that AI can’t replicate**, I share practical tools for leaders and teams to level up across all nine uniquely human capabilities. While AI can automate tasks, it cannot replicate **trust, intuition, or purpose**. Those are human—and they win in the long run.

Strong doesn’t mean strained

Finishing strong isn’t pushing through exhaustion. It’s finishing consciously—with clarity of mind, agility of heart, and energy in your step. As 2025 closes, choose progress over perfection. Reflect deeply. Reset intentionally. And re-enter 2026 as a **CAN DO** leader—clear, agile, and energised for the road ahead.

About the Author

Joni Peddie is a Behavioural Strategist and CEO of Resilient People (#BounceForward™). A globally recognised keynote speaker and facilitator, she helps leaders and teams build clarity, agility, and vitality to thrive in an AI-driven world. Her latest book, **From CAN’T to CAN DO: 9 Human Capabilities that AI Can’t Replicate**, was released in 2025.

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“From CAN’T to CAN DO” Book is available

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South African Climate Index set to transform insurance risk management



By Adrian Ephraim

AS climate-related losses intensify across Southern Africa, Old Mutual Insure and the Actuarial Society of South Africa (ASSA) have launched the South African Climate Index - a sophisticated tool designed to help insurers and policy-makers better understand and prepare for extreme weather events at a localised level.

The initiative addresses a critical gap in how climate data is typically presented. While global warming is often simplified to a single figure - 1.5 or 2 degrees of warming - the reality at local levels is far more complex, according to Caesar Balona, a key team member behind the index's development.

"In reality, at the local level, down to cities and even sub-regions, climate change can have varied impacts," Balona explains. "The index takes all the different climate patterns we observe, maps them on a fine grid, and allows us to see in these sub-regions what extreme patterns have historically been experienced."

Localised insights for business resilience

The Climate Index distinguishes itself from existing climate monitoring organisations by focusing specifically on South Africa while translating global data sources into actionable insights for the insurance sector. The platform incorporates data from sources like the European Space Agency, but processes it to identify extreme weather patterns most relevant to South African geography.

For short-term insurers like Old Mutual, this localised approach is essential. The company insures physical risks ranging from hail damage to flooding, and understanding the scope of extreme weather events directly impacts underwriting models,

pricing strategies, and capital requirements.

"We need to understand the impacts or the risks that our clients face," says Balona. "A large amount of insured losses arises from weather patterns like hail or flooding. We're not concerned about typical events that happen day-to-day - we're concerned about the extremes."

Old Mutual's internal modelling has already revealed strong relationships between various weather patterns and insurance losses. The Climate Index now provides a standardised, scientifically validated framework that makes this crucial analysis more accessible across the industry.

Beyond insurance: Broader applications

While designed with insurers in mind, the index's potential extends far beyond the insurance sector. Government agencies could overlay the climate risk maps with data on vulnerable communities to identify high-priority areas for infrastructure investment and disaster preparedness.

"These are where the climate risks are and how they'll look going forward," Balona notes. "Coupled with where we might know there are infrastructure challenges, this would mean these are the areas to focus on to improve infrastructure because they are the most at risk with the most vulnerable communities."

The platform currently tracks rainfall, minimum and maximum temperatures, and drought conditions. Future enhancements are planned to incorporate additional perils, including hail, wind, extreme storms, and lightning - all critical factors for the South African insurance market.

Developers also aim to enable programmatic access to the data, allowing companies to integrate climate information directly into their

systems for more seamless modelling capabilities.

Industry collaboration as a competitive advantage

Old Mutual's decision to sponsor the Climate Index alongside ASSA reflects a strategic commitment to industry-wide resilience rather than siloed competitive advantage. Similar to the company's support for the Quick Reaction Force - a consortium of insurers tackling wildfires in the Western Cape - this collaboration acknowledges that climate risk management benefits everyone.

"It benefits not only Old Mutual but the entire industry," Balona emphasises. "Making it available means it benefits other industries as well."

Initial industry feedback has been overwhelmingly positive, with colleagues across various companies expressing enthusiasm about the tool's potential applications. Balona anticipates the index will catalyse significant research and discussion at industry events, ultimately driving more sophisticated climate risk management practices.

A catalyst for innovation

Southern Africa faces particularly acute climate challenges, with warming trends more severe than global averages and potentially dramatic shifts in weather patterns. For smaller economies in the region, sophisticated modelling tools become even more critical.

"With us, it's important that we try to understand at a detailed level and model these things to be aware of what may happen, get ahead of the curve, and try to proactively manage the risk rather than reactively manage it," Balona explains.

As the index gains traction, its success will depend largely on industry adoption and the research it inspires. By providing a single, digestible touchpoint for complex climate data, the South African Climate Index has positioned itself to become a cornerstone of climate risk management - not just for insurance, but for infrastructure planning, policy development, and community protection across Southern Africa.

Standard Bank backs R1.92bn equity for Africa's largest hybrid renewable cluster

STANDARD Bank, Africa's biggest bank by assets, is proud to announce the successful close of a bespoke R1.92 billion equity financing solution for H1 Holdings (H1), a leading Black-owned infrastructure investment and development company.

The funding solution, structured and executed by Standard Bank Corporate Investment Banking, was designed to facilitate the exit of an investment provided by British International Investment (BII), Industrial Development Corporation (IDC) and Norfund. The proceeds are underpinned by H1's 49% interest in the Kenhardt hybrid battery and solar risk mitigation projects, which collectively represent Africa's largest hybrid renewable energy cluster and ranks among the world's largest.

"The transaction demonstrates our role in structuring complex equity financing solutions that aim to support infrastructure development and deliver value to stakeholders," said Calvin Alwar, Deal Lead, Structured Capital at Standard Bank. "We are proud to have partnered with H1 Holdings on this and look forward to collaborating further on this transformative project as they continue to shape the future of energy in Africa," said Alwar.

Hybrid systems integrate multiple energy sources to compensate for the variability of each presenting not only the environmental benefit of lowering carbon emissions but also reducing the risk of outages as energy is produced through more than one source. They do however require advanced con-



trol systems to manage different inputs, which are contributing factors to the cost of these projects. The transaction required a fundamental shift in how renewable energy equity finance deals are structured, particularly given the high gearing levels and the limited window of bankability.

H1 Holdings, with a purpose to improve the quality of lives by producing cleaner energy, is a 100% Black-owned infrastructure investment and development company with a strong track record in the energy sector. Among other assets, the company has built a portfolio of 24 projects to-

talling approximately 2.8 GW of generation capacity and 1.14 GWh of storage capacity.

"We are thrilled to partner with Standard Bank on this milestone transaction," said Jonathan Muller, Head of Asset Management at H1 Holdings. "Their expertise in the energy sector, innovative approach to structuring, and unwavering commitment to our objectives enabled a novel technical solution that made this deal possible. Kenhardt is a flagship project for us, and this financing solution ensures we can continue to deliver sustainable energy solutions at scale," concluded Muller.

Standard Bank pledges R750 million to Airnergize Capital to power Africa's clean energy future

STANDARD Bank, Africa's largest bank by assets, has announced a R750 million (USD43.1 million) strategic equity investment in Airnergize Capital, the clean-technology platform owned by New GX Capital.

The partnership aims to accelerate renewable energy, water, and gas infrastructure deployment across Southern Africa and the continent. Airnergize Capital is a 100% black-owned and controlled clean-tech investment platform focused on delivering measurable environmental and social impact.

The funding, facilitated through Standard Bank's Corporate and Investment Banking (CIB) division, will primarily support Sustainable Power Solutions (SPS) - a Pan-African energy utility under Airnergize Capital. SPS develops, owns, and operates commercial and

industrial solar and battery storage systems across South Africa, sub-Saharan Africa, and the Indian Ocean islands.

This capital injection will enable SPS to scale its operations, fund new projects, and expand its footprint to meet growing demand for clean, reliable power across the continent.

"We are thrilled to be partnering with a successful entrepreneur and prolific dealmaker, leading the charge in South Africa's transition to a cleaner, more connected, and sustainably electrified environment," said Arnold van Wyk, Head of Equity Investments at Standard Bank CIB.

"Our pledge to Airnergize marks a key milestone in our commitment to accelerating Africa's energy and infrastructure transition. This partnership will catalyse impactful investments in clean energy and re-

lated technologies, reinforcing our support for both utility-scale and decentralised projects," added Willem Els, Vice President, Equity Investments at Standard Bank CIB.

The investment forms part of Standard Bank's sustainable finance strategy, which includes mobilising at least R450 billion by 2028 and achieving net-zero financed emissions by 2050.

Khudusela Pitje, Founder and Group CEO of New GX Capital, welcomed the partnership:

"We are thrilled to have attracted a leading Pan-African financial institution to Standard Bank's calibre. Their investment empowers us to expand our impact and pursue opportunities across Africa."

Tebatso Modiba, Deal Executive at Airnergize Capital, added: "Our team is excited to drive utility solutions for a sustainable

tomorrow, unlocking smart and decentralised grids."

Airnergize Capital's strategy is to build scalable infrastructure platforms that address Africa's most pressing sustainability challenges - from renewable energy and clean water to efficient gas and utilities. The collaboration with Standard Bank will enhance its ability to deliver transformative infrastructure projects that create jobs, reduce carbon emissions, and stimulate local economies.

"Airnergize Capital's vision aligns perfectly with Standard Bank's commitment to sustainable financing," said Pitje.

"Together, we aim to unlock long-term value for communities, businesses, and the continent's energy and utilities ecosystem. This partnership is a step toward building a sustainable tomorrow for South Africa and beyond."

Thought Leadership: Imported carbon guidelines must acknowledge local context when adapted to SA construction

By Roelof van den Berg, CEO of the Gap Infrastructure Corporation (GIC)



CAN South Africa's construction industry benefit from best-practice frameworks developed overseas? And how well do international guidelines - such as the Hong Kong Construction Association's Best Practice Guideline for Carbon Smart Construction Site - translate into local realities?

The short answer: South Africa's industry is simply too different to apply them wholesale.

Built around the "4M1E" model - man, machinery, materials, methods, and environment - the Hong Kong guideline outlines 36 measures to make sites cleaner and more sustainable. For South Africa, where the government has already shown leadership through the Climate Change Act, carbon budgeting, and sustainable procurement, this international standard presents an opportunity to accelerate progress - if adapted carefully.

1. Aligning with local legislation

South Africa's legal framework differs sharply from Hong Kong's. While strong emissions regulations already exist, direct adoption of Hong Kong's measures would be impractical. Instead, the guideline could act as a template, mapping each measure against national and provincial legislation. A practical checklist linking global best practice with local requirements would make compliance far easier.

2. Addressing cost discrepancies

Some carbon-smart measures are far more expensive in South Africa due to import costs

and limited local supply. Smaller projects, such as informal housing upgrades or municipal roadworks, cannot easily absorb these costs. A tiered approach is needed - distinguishing between essential, affordable measures and advanced ones suited to larger builds. Cost-benefit analyses should also highlight how up-front investment reduces long-term energy and maintenance costs.

3. Accounting for local technology availability

Electric machinery, hybrid engines, and low-carbon steel are widely available in Hong Kong but not yet at scale in South Africa. Universal adoption would be unrealistic. Imported guidelines should promote phased implementation, encourage local material validation, and foster partnerships with domestic manufacturers.

4. Adapting to climate and environmental conditions

Measures that work in Hong Kong's subtropical climate may not suit South Africa's diverse conditions. In semi-arid regions, water-based dust suppression is impractical; in high-rainfall provinces, drainage takes priority. Flexibility is key - using low-water dust suppression, shaded rest areas for workers, and storm-water controls where needed.

5. Building resilience to logistics and fuel challenges

South Africa's long transport routes, variable fuel costs, and recovering supply chains pose risks unfamiliar to Hong Kong. Guidelines should include strategies to optimise deliveries, minimise idle time, and build contingencies for energy and fuel supply.

Ultimately, international frameworks like the HKCA's are valuable benchmarks, but their true worth lies in local adaptation. With government policy already paving the way, the task now is to translate these frameworks into practical, site-level action - building infrastructure that's both sustainable and suited to South Africa's unique realities.

Why compliance is so challenging for the solar industry

THE solar industry is growing at a pace, and one of the bigger challenges it faces is bringing compliance up to speed. With systems and technologies evolving rapidly, laws and regulations often lag behind. In effect, solar is a newer field that sits on top of two mature regulatory regimes: electrical and building regulations, both of which are inherently complex.

For installers, the struggle is particularly real. Many want a clear, unambiguous "right answer" to guide their work, but in practice, there isn't always a single definitive route.

Two rulebooks, one solar system

For a standard electrical installation, the rules are well established. But once you introduce solar, those additions bring new factors: integration with the grid, possible export to the network, and structural mounting on roofs.

The installer must contend with the existing building regulations and the electrical installation regulations, but must also ask: how does the solar-specific part interface with those regimes? The regulatory framework may not yet speak in perfect detail to every solar scenario.

That means while the rules exist, the guidance for solar installations isn't always as crisp as many would like. So installers often find themselves in a grey zone: "We know what the regulations say generally, but which clause applies exactly here?" This uncertainty can slow projects, cause cost overruns, trigger compliance headaches, or lead to re-work if an inspector requires changes.

As noted in our recent article, the fact that only certain categories of registered electricians can issue the official Certificate of Compliance (CoC) for solar installations underscores how regulatory integration is still catching up.

Building clarity through collaboration and learning

Even though it is a difficult phase, the evolution of regulation is part of the solar industry's growth story. As technologies mature and more systems are installed, regulators will build more clarity.

Rather than being frustrated by ambiguity, the process also offers a chance to participate in the development of the industry and help shape it actively, for example, through engagement with industry associations like SAPVIA, the South African PV Industry Association.

Installer training, deeper knowledge of standards and regulations, and active discussion in webinars and forums also become key enablers.

Need help staying ahead of the curve?

GREEN Solar Academy regularly hosts live panel discussions with experts from across the industry, where evolving compliance questions are unpacked in real time. You can catch up on previous sessions on our YouTube Channel



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The evolution of solar finance: Powering South Africa's shift to solar

WITH electricity tariffs continuing to rise and sustainability goals becoming essential, more South African businesses and property owners are turning to solar power. The business case is

clear, but upfront costs have traditionally been a major barrier.

Companies like Candi Solar are changing this with performance-based finance models that make solar accessible,

affordable, and low-risk. These models link repayments to actual system performance, remove large upfront investments, and unlock tax benefits — turning solar from a capital expense

into a predictable operating cost.

A 100 kWp system may cost between R1.5 million and R3.5 million, while a 1 MWp system can reach R16 million. Today, the challenge is less about convincing companies to adopt solar and more about helping them finance it effectively.

Traditional options Bank loans and self-financing give businesses ownership and allow tax incentives, but fixed repayments, collateral requirements, and exposure to performance risk can strain cash flow. Power Purchase Agreements (PPAs) remove upfront investment, with the developer owning and maintaining the system and selling power at a set rate per kWh. However, ownership remains with the developer, so the client loses tax and depreciation benefits.

Performance-Linked Instalment Sale (PLIS)

To bridge this gap, Candi Solar offers the Performance-Linked Instalment Sale (PLIS). It provides no upfront cost, immediate ownership, and payments tied to the system's actual generation. Clients also benefit from Section 12B, which offers a 100% first-year deduction on qualifying installations. Repayments can be tailored to seasonal cash-flow patterns, easing financial pressure.

Solar Refinancing (Solar Refi)

Solar Refi assists businesses that already own solar systems to release capital or escape restrictive finance terms. Candi either purchases the existing asset or provides a loan against it, injecting liquidity into the business. The client then buys power at a discounted rate and only pays when the system performs. Candi also assumes maintenance and performance risk.

Ongoing performance assurance

For businesses that already self-funded installations, Solar Max and Solar Protect+ ensure long-term system performance, with the latter offering compensation if generation falls short.

With over 165 installations and strong backing from international investors, Candi Solar is enabling businesses to adopt solar confidently, affordably, and sustainably.

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Canada, Australia bet South African

CONSULTING firms in Canada and Australia have placed multiple orders on a South African company to manufacture cranes, hoists and other lifting equipment for mine expansion projects in Sierra Leone, Tanzania and Namibia.

Condra, the company executing the orders at its Johannesburg factory, has revealed general details but declined to name either the customers or the mines because of non-disclosure agreements.

The cranes will work in general workshop and feeder-line maintenance applications, with capacities ranging from two to eighteen tons.

with controlled lifts as high as 150 metres.

A company spokesman said there had been close cooperation with the consultants to ensure that agreed prices could remain competitive without compromising the robust reliability required for harsh operating conditions.

Overall lifetime cost will remain lower than cranes offered by rival firms, said the spokesman, while inspection and testing will take place at defined stages during manufacture to ensure compliance with international quality control, safety, and lifting equipment standards.

Condra's customers placed their orders in late August. Manufacturing is underway at the company's Germiston factory, with delivery to be effected by road. A number of crane girders will be spliced to allow packing in standard 12-metre containers.

Shipping dates will

be staggered to meet project timetables, with delivery scheduled for late 2025 through to mid-2026.

Technicians from Condra will manage installation and commissioning in Sierra Leone, while local agents will carry out these procedures in Tanzania and Namibia.



Hoist from Condra's K-Series.

"Overall lifetime cost will remain lower than cranes offered by rival firms..."

Sierra Leone's order comprises one long-reach jib crane, three single-girder overhead cranes and a portal crane, while Tanzanian mines will receive two double-girder cranes, a single-girder machine, one portal crane and a long-reach jib crane.

Six Titan hoists, among them several fitted with articulated carriages to negotiate curved girder tracks, will go to Namibia along with two portal cranes, a long-reach jib crane, two single-girder cranes and a double-girder machine. Fifteen chain hoists and blocks will also be shipped to that country.

Condra's Titan hoist range is versatile, comprising the Compact Series with capacities to 32 tons, and the SH (Short-Headroom) Series with capacities to 18 tons. All models are variants of the veteran K-Series hoists, but refined to offer a more compact profile with markedly reduced overall dimensions.

Among the cranes included in the international orders are several equipped with high-lift K-Series hoists, in one instance to a height of 40 metres. These hoists have a proven record in high-lift applications, with Condra widely recognised as Africa's market leader in this specialised arena. The company's installed base includes hoists



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Africa Energy Indaba EV Forum: Accelerating Africa's EVs

THE 2026 Africa Energy Indaba is proud to announce the EV Forum, an official side event dedicated to exploring the fast-growing electric vehicle (EV) market across Africa. The forum will bring together policymakers,

industry leaders, investors, and innovators to discuss opportunities, challenges, and the future of electric mobility on the continent.

Despite the promise of cleaner, more sustainable transport, Africa's EV market is still

in its early stages — yet growth is accelerating at an unprecedented pace. The African EV market was valued at USD 15.94 billion in 2024 and is projected to reach USD 17.58 billion in 2025, representing an estimated 10.26% annu-

al growth rate through 2033. Sales are expected to generate USD 209.9 million in revenue in 2025, with 2,270 units sold, reflecting a 10.60% annual growth rate through 2029.

Leading the charge are countries such as

South Africa, which sold 3,042 new energy vehicles (NEVs) in Q1 2024, marking an 83% increase compared to Q1 2023. Across the continent, Africa is expected to sell 2.2 million fully electric vehicles by 2027, up from just 400 units in 2021.

"The EV Forum will provide a critical platform for stakeholders to discuss the infrastructure, investment, and policy frameworks needed to accelerate Africa's electric mobility revolution," said Liz Hart, Managing Director of the Africa Energy Indaba. "With supportive policies and growing consumer demand, the continent is poised for transformative growth in this sector."

Key topics at the EV Forum include:

- EV Infrastructure & Smart Grids – planning charging networks and integrating renewables
- Policy & Regulation – frameworks and incentives to drive EV adoption
- Investment & Financing – opportunities in manufacturing, fleets, and charging infrastructure
- Technology & Innovation – batteries, vehicle-to-grid solutions, and sustainable transport models

"...Africa is expected to sell 2.2 million fully electric vehicles by 2027..."

The EV Forum at the Africa Energy Indaba 2026 will be an essential meeting point for decision-makers, innovators, and investors committed to powering Africa's clean mobility future.

About Africa Energy Indaba

The Africa Energy Indaba is the continent's premier platform connecting governments, developers, and investors to unlock Africa's energy opportunities. Taking place from 3 – 5 March 2026 in Cape Town, the event addresses the most pressing issues in Africa's energy sector while highlighting pathways for sustainable growth and innovation.

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Green hydrogen: two SA coastal hubs power Africa's future



By Adrian Ephraim

WESTERN Cape Premier Alan Winde's message at June's Africa Green Hydrogen Summit was blunt: "We must move from PowerPoint to gigawatts."

Two industrial zones on South Africa's coast are racing to answer that call. In the Western Cape, Saldanha Bay is being reimagined as a multi-billion-dollar hydrogen export hub. Nearly 800 kilometres east, the Coega Industrial Development Zone is assembling what could become Africa's largest green ammonia plant.

Both are betting they can capture a slice of what the European Union alone estimates will be a 10-million-tonne annual hydrogen import market by 2030.

Saldanha: The master-planned hub

This year, the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) was appointed to coordinate Phase 1 of the West Coast Green Hydrogen Master Plan - comprehensive spatial planning before construction begins.

"In the Saldanha context, the water would probably need to be sourced from desalination of seawater, if green hydrogen is produced at scale," explains Paul Lochner, CSIR research group leader. The methodical approach identifies constraints early and creates common-use infrastructure benefiting multiple projects.

The Western Cape's Green Hydrogen Strategy, approved in May 2024, sets ambitious targets: facilitate 15 gigawatts of renewable energy capacity by 2035, producing

between 300,000 and 420,000 tonnes of green hydrogen annually for export.

"Green hydrogen presents an opportunity for South Africa and the EU to work together towards achieving decarbonisation," said Wesgro CEO Wrenelle Stander.

The clearest vote of confidence came from Phelan Green Energy's R47 billion project to build South Africa's largest green hydrogen complex at Saldanha. At June's summit, the company announced a strategic pivot: the primary export will be eMethanol rather than ammonia.

"This is about delivering what the market wants, now, and we have secured offtake agreements in Europe," said Blair Phelan, Director of Development at Phelan Green Group. The project will export 400,000 tonnes per year of eMethanol, generating over 500 million annually and creating 2,500 construction jobs with 500 permanent positions.

Finance Minister Mireille Wenger emphasised the partnership model: "Building a green, energy resilient future will not be possible without partnerships across all levels of government as well as the private sector."

Coega: The mega-project approach

While Saldanha pursues a hub model with multiple projects, Coega has backed a single, massive development. The Coega Green Ammonia Project secured \$20 million in June 2025 from SA-H2 Fund - a defining moment for South Africa's hydrogen economy.

"This is a landmark first investment for SA-H2," said Sebastian Surie, Head of

New Ventures at Climate Fund Managers. "Hive's project brings together scale, technical ambition and global relevance."

The numbers are staggering: 1 million tonnes of green ammonia annually by 2029, powered by 3.5 gigawatts of renewable energy. In June 2025, Hive Hydrogen completed the Crossroads solar cluster - 1,430 megawatts across nine solar farms supplying 40% of the plant's power.

"Our R105-billion Coega Green Ammonia Project development remains firmly on track to achieve commercial operation in Q4 2029," said Thulani Gcabashe, Chairman of Hive Hydrogen South Africa.

In October 2025, European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen elevated Coega to flagship status within the EU's green hydrogen roadmap, opening access to innovation funds and facilitating off-take negotiations.

The project targets a final investment decision in Q3 2026, with construction beginning in early 2027. "Exportation is due to begin in 2029/2030 at a price point that leads international green ammonia pricing and will outcompete blue ammonia pricing," according to project documentation.

Beyond energy production, Coega promises more than 20,000 direct and indirect jobs, water security through oversized desalination capacity, and grid strengthening that could unlock 20,000 MW of additional capacity for other renewable projects.

Two models, one goal

Saldanha represents coordinated hub development - slower

upfront but potentially more resilient and diversified. Coega represents the mega-project approach - faster to production but with higher risk concentration.

Both face identical challenges: infrastructure gaps, financing constraints, skills shortages, and fierce international competition from Chile, Australia, North Africa, and the Middle East.

The 2025-2029 window is critical. European Union targets for 2030, combined with Japan and South Korea's decarbonization commitments, create genuine demand. Projects delivered by 2029-2030 can capture first-mover advantages. Those arriving later face stiffer competition.

Rather than competitors, Saldanha and Coega represent complementary approaches to establishing South Africa's hydrogen economy. Coega's mega-project can demonstrate technical feasibility at scale. Saldanha's hub can create a diversified ecosystem less dependent on any single project.

President Cyril Ramaphosa positioned hydrogen as "a key pillar of South Africa's energy and economic future." Whether that vision translates into gigawatts of production capacity, thousands of jobs, and billions in export revenue depends on execution over the coming years.

The strategies are in place. The projects are advancing. The international interest is genuine. Now comes the hard part: delivering production capacity on timelines that meet market windows.

As Premier Winde said, "It's time to move from PowerPoint to gigawatts. South Africa's hydrogen future rides on its success."

Vanadium batteries: global boom boosts South Africa industry

A NEW study commissioned by the Localisation Support Fund (LSF) shows that the global market for Vanadium Redox Flow Batteries (VRFBs) is set for rapid growth, driven by demand for Long Duration Energy Storage (LDES) to support renewable energy and net-zero goals.

The study, conducted by Customised Energy Solutions (CES), projects that globally installed VRFB capacity will rise tenfold from 4 GWh in 2024 to 40 GWh by 2030. While early growth will be steady, installations are expected to surge after 2027, reaching between 12 GWh and 50 GWh per year by 2030.

This expansion could unlock major opportunities for South Africa to scale up its vanadium mining, refining, and downstream processing industries.

As deployment grows, vanadium's role is expected to shift from a metallurgical input to a key enabler of the global energy transition. The share of vanadium used in VRFBs is projected to rise from 5% of total global demand in 2024 to nearly 27% by 2030, supporting a doubling in global production.

The study attributes this momentum to the convergence of global clean energy trends and the unique suitability of VRFBs for grid-scale storage. These batteries provide 10,000-20,000+ cycles, 25-30 years of operational life, and no degradation even at full capacity. They are safe, thermally stable, and use non-flammable electrolytes that can be recycled almost indefinitely — supporting circular business models and long-term cost stability. Capital costs are expected to fall from \$380/kWh in 2025 to \$230/kWh by 2030, matching lithium iron phosphate (LFP) batteries for applications requiring eight hours or more of storage.

"South Africa is strategically well-placed to benefit from this growth," says Irshaad Kathrada, CEO of the LSF. "We have some of the world's richest high-grade vanadium reserves, clear policy alignment on critical minerals, and growing demand for storage solutions that can stabilise our own energy system."

However, the study



warns that the global VRFB value chain remains highly concentrated, with 93-95% of vanadium electrolyte production currently located in China. This dominance highlights both the technological progress made there and the need for regional diversification to mitigate supply risks.

Earlier this year, South Africa's Department of Mineral and Petroleum Resources identified vanadium as a "moderate-to-high criticality" mineral in its Critical Minerals and Metals Strategy, adding urgency to beneficiation and local manufacturing efforts.

The study stresses that policy intent alone won't secure leadership in VRFB production. A targeted, multi-layered industrial policy is needed — one that combines mineral beneficiation with incentives for local manufacturing, domestic demand creation, and export growth. Recommended measures include Energy Storage Special Economic Zones (SEZs), tax incentives, grants, and preferential procurement for locally produced components. These align with the South African Renewable Energy Masterplan (SAREM).

"Storage solutions are central to the green industrial opportunity," adds Kathrada. "Countries that act early will define the next wave of clean energy manufacturing. South Africa has the policy vision — now we need to make the business case work. If we hesitate, we risk losing this value to faster-moving global players."

Deputy Minister Sa-

mantha Graham-Maré (Department of Electricity and Energy) echoed this, saying: "Vanadium beneficiation and VRFB manufacturing align squarely with our industrialisation agenda, offering a pathway to convert mineral wealth into sustainable jobs, exports, and technological capability."

Deputy Minister Zuko Godlimpi (Department of Trade, Industry and Competition) added that localisation must go beyond import substitution: "By investing in technologies like VRFBs, we can turn our resource advantage into industrial strength, supporting manufacturing growth and decent work across the energy value chain."

In 2020, the Industrial Development Corporation (IDC) and Bushveld Minerals co-invested in Bushveld Electrolyte Company (BELCO) in East London to develop local electrolyte production capacity of up to 8 million litres (200 MWh per year). However, financial challenges at Bushveld have delayed progress on this strategically important initiative.

With global demand for long-duration storage rising and vanadium recognised as a critical mineral, South Africa stands at a pivotal juncture. A coordinated push to develop beneficiation, refining, and manufacturing capacity could position the country as a key player in emerging global VRFB supply chains — capturing meaningful value from the global energy transition while strengthening its own industrial base.

WindJet cuts energy costs up to 95% in Food & Beverage



MONITOR Engineering, the Southern African representative of Spraying Systems Co. for more than 75 years, is helping the food and beverage sector improve processing efficiency, reduce operating costs, and achieve sustainable production goals with the WindJet® line of air products.

Designed to optimise drying, cooling, and blow-off operations, WindJet systems address key challenges such as high compressed air costs, noise pollution, and inconsistent airflow. These energy-efficient solutions can reduce operating expenses by up to 95% compared to traditional open pipes or drilled headers, while ensuring a clean, controlled process environment.

"In the food and beverage sector, where hygiene, consistency, and energy savings are critical, WindJet solutions offer a proven way to improve both process performance and sustainability," says Grant Orsmond, Managing Director of Monitor Engineering.

Efficient, sustainable air technology

WindJet products deliver uniform, high-velocity air streams to enhance product quality, ensure worker safety, and support sustainable production practices. They are ideal for applications such as drying packaging after washdown or removing moisture before labeling and sealing.

The WindJet range includes compressed

air nozzles that provide precise flat fan or round patterns while using up to 92% less air than open pipes, reducing noise and energy use. Air knives offer continuous, laminar sheets of air for uniform drying and can be powered by compressed air or regenerative blowers. Their quick-mount design allows easy integration into conveyor lines or air curtain systems. Air amplifiers and cannons provide powerful, controlled airflow to remove debris or moisture from hard-to-reach areas.

For large-scale operations, WindJet blower packages combine regenerative blowers with air knives and accessories to deliver clean, heated air at low noise levels, eliminating the need for compressed air and achieving a payback period in under a year.

Proven applications in Food & Beverage

WindJet systems have already delivered measurable improvements for food and beverage processors. A deli meat packager installed WindJet blower air knives to dry packages after washdown, improving hygiene, extending shelf life, and reducing energy costs by 90%. A beverage can producer replaced open pipes with low-flow air knives, cutting compressed air consumption by 92% and saving \$500,000 annually. The uniform airflow eliminated water spots, enhanced product presentation, and increased

line speeds by 15%. Bottling and dairy plants have also benefited, using WindJet technology to improve drying before labeling, ensuring stronger adhesion, reduced rework, and compliance with stringent food safety standards.

Supporting hygiene, safety and sustainability

Beyond energy savings, WindJet solutions support core priorities in the food and beverage industry. Non-contact drying enhances hygiene and clean production, while consistent airflow improves product quality and reduces waste. Lower energy use and reduced noise contribute to greener, safer operations.

Spraying Systems Co.'s SprayFinder tool allows for customised configurations, ensuring each installation meets specific production requirements. By combining precision and sustainability, WindJet technology enables manufacturers to improve performance while meeting environmental goals.

Additional sectors of supply

While the food and beverage industry is a key focus, WindJet air solutions are also widely used in automotive, pharmaceuticals, packaging, general manufacturing, mining, and pulp and paper. These sectors rely on WindJet's performance and efficiency to improve throughput, extend equipment life, and reduce operational costs. For more information on how WindJet® Air Solutions can optimise your production line, contact grant@monitorspray.co.za

https://www.spray.com/en-za/-/media/dam/industrial/usa/sales-material/product-market-bulletin/b789_windjet_727-ky_for_food.pdf

Premier Group acquires Western Cape's RFG Holdings in R28bn food sector consolidation

JSE-listed consumer goods company Premier Group has announced a strategic acquisition of fellow South African food producer RFG Holdings through a share-swap transaction valued at approximately R4.3 billion, creating a combined entity with annual revenues approaching R28 billion.

The deal, announced on October 16, offers RFG shareholders one Premier share for every seven RFG shares held, representing a significant 35.6% premium to closing prices and 37.5% premium to 30-day volume-weighted averages. Following completion, RFG shareholders will collectively own 22.5% of the enlarged Premier Group, while RFG will delist from the Johannesburg Stock Exchange.

Strategic rationale and synergies

Premier CEO Kobus Gertenbach described RFG as a "highly attractive acquisition opportunity" with complementary capabilities and limited integration risk. The companies share common custom-

ers and sales channels but operate in distinct product categories, minimising operational overlap while maximising synergy potential.

"This transaction allows both shareholders from the growth of a combined entity generating nearly R1.7 billion in after-tax profit," Gertenbach explained. The deal is expected to unlock significant operational efficiencies while expanding Premier's market presence across multiple FMCG categories.

The companies

Founded in 1824 and headquartered in Midrand, Premier operates through two divisions: Millbake, producing bread, maize and wheat products, and Groceries and International, covering sugar confectionery, home and personal care goods. The company's portfolio includes household brands such as Blue Ribbon, BB Bread, Snowflake, Iwisa, Manhattan's and Lil-Lets, with manufacturing operations spanning 30 facilities across South Africa, Mozam-

bique, Eswatini and Lesotho.

RFG Holdings, established in 1896 in Groot Drakenstein in the Western Cape, specialises in convenience meal solutions with 14 manufacturing plants across South Africa and Eswatini. The company's portfolio includes Rhodes canned vegetables and juices, Bull Brand, Pakco curry powders, and Man's Meal ready-to-eat pies, exported to the UK, Europe, US and 13 sub-Saharan African markets.

Track record and market position

Since its JSE listing in March 2023, Premier's market capitalisation has surged from R6.7 billion to R19.8 billion, delivering a 24.9% return on invested capital while investing R2.8 billion in capital improvements. Premier commands significant market shares: 28% in South African formal bread, 38% in wheat, 15% in sugar confectionery, and 22% in feminine care products.

RFG has completed

ten strategic acquisitions since its 2014 JSE listing, systematically expanding its product range and market reach. The company's senior management will remain in their current roles to ensure operational continuity and maintain customer service standards.

Approval process and market context

The transaction requires RFG shareholder approval and regulatory clearance from competition authorities. Shareholders holding 77.7% of RFG shares have already pledged support, while Premier's major investors, including Brait and Titan, have also backed the deal.

This acquisition reflects a broader trend of JSE consolidation, particularly among small and mid-cap companies. JSE CEO Leila Fourie recently noted that smaller firms struggle to achieve fair valuations due to limited investor appetite, driving delistings and consolidation activity across the exchange.

Shoprite's ChicRite capitalises on chicken demand with 80 in-store outlets

SHOPRITE Holdings has expanded its presence in South Africa's fast-food market through ChicRite, a fried chicken brand now operating in about 80 stores nationwide. The rollout has accelerated over the past 18 months, adding 50–60 outlets, marking Shoprite's strategic entry into the R354.3 billion quick-service restaurant (QSR) sector.

ChicRite operates inside existing Shoprite supermarkets with a compact menu of around 25 items centred on chicken and

chips. By leveraging in-store infrastructure and customer foot traffic, Shoprite offers a convenience-focused, value-driven meal option for shoppers.

The expansion arrives amid shifts in South Africa's fast-food landscape. KFC leads the chicken QSR market with 25% share, followed by Chicken Licken (10%) and Hungry Lion (7%). Chicken remains the country's most consumed protein, driven by relative affordability compared to beef. This has intensified com-

petition in what analysts call the "Chicken Wars," as brands battle for price-conscious consumers.

ChicRite aligns with Shoprite's broader diversification strategy. The group has expanded across multiple adjacent sectors, including pharmacies (MediRite), financial services (Money Market), clothing (UNIQ), and pet care (Petshop Science). While competitors such as Famous Brands and Pick n Pay have closed stores amid market pressures, Shoprite has continued to grow,

opening 264 new stores in South Africa during the second half of 2024.

The retailer's strong financial performance reinforces this expansion. For the year ending June 2025, Shoprite reported over R250 billion in sales, with South African supermarket turnover up 5.9% to R110.1 billion.

ChicRite's asset-light, in-store model reduces capital requirements compared to traditional fast-food franchises and captures incremental spending from existing customers.



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SCAN ME



Food-grade lubricants: keep SA export doors open



EVERY time a conveyor belt moves your favourite snack from one station to the next, a food-grade lubricant is quietly at work behind the scenes, keeping production safe, hygienic, and efficient. These specialised lubricants don't just keep machines moving; they protect consumer health and ensure compliance with global food safety standards.

On World Food Day last month, the focus was once again on building safer, more sustainable food systems. For South Africa's food and beverage manufacturers, that responsibility extends beyond farming and packaging - it also lies in the unseen details that safeguard quality. And one of those details is the choice of lubricants.

Why food-grade lubricants matter

Food-grade lubricants are specially engineered to be:

- Non-toxic and odourless, so they won't compromise product quality.
- Resistant to contamination, even in high humidity, temperature fluctuations, or during washdowns.
- Reliable under stress, ensuring bearings, chains, and gearboxes perform consistently.

In an industry where downtime means lost revenue and product recalls can devastate reputations, the right lubricant is a front-line defence. It's a silent contribution, but one that keeps the entire production line moving - literally and safely.

The global compliance imperative

For South African producers exporting to the European Union (EU) and the United States, meeting international food safety standards is non-negotiable. Regulators re-

quire full compliance with recognised certifications, including:

- NSF H1 (US) - Registration for lubricants considered safe for incidental food contact.
- ISO 21469 (International) - Hygiene standards covering formulation, production, and use of lubricants in food processing.
- EU Food Safety Regulations - Strict requirements for traceability and documentation.

Using non-compliant lubricants can result in rejected shipments, financial penalties, or even loss of export contracts. For producers, this makes lubrication a compliance issue as much as a maintenance one.

South Africa's export opportunity and risk

South Africa's food and beverage sector is deeply connected to international markets, from wine and citrus to meat and processed goods. As trading partners demand proof of safety and compliance, manufacturers must ask:

- Are our lubricants certified to international standards?
- Can we provide complete documentation for audits?
- Are staff properly trained to apply and manage food-grade lubricants?

Failing to address these questions puts not only compliance at risk but also access to lucrative global markets.

FUCHS: Supporting safety, compliance, and performance

FUCHS LUBRICANTS SOUTH AFRICA, part of the world's largest independent lubricant manufacturer, offers solutions specifically developed for the food and beverage sector. Its CASSIDA range of

food-grade lubricants is NSF H1 registered, ISO 21469 certified, and designed to perform under the challenging conditions of South African plants.

But FUCHS goes beyond supplying products. The company provides:

- Expert guidance in selecting the right lubricant for each application.
- On-site training and audits to support safe handling and compliance.
- Comprehensive documentation to ease regulatory inspections and export certification.

This combination of global standards and local expertise helps South African producers protect their consumers, strengthen their export credentials, and keep production lines running smoothly.

A timely reminder

"Let's remember that global food safety isn't only about farming and packaging - it's also about the invisible agents that keep machinery clean, hygienic and compliant," says Ashleigh Pollen, National Sales Manager - Industrial and Special-



Ashleigh Pollen,
National Sales Manager
- Industrial and
Speciality at FUCHS.

ity at FUCHS. "South African manufacturers who align with international food safety standards are achieving more than just compliance. They are helping to protect people, while strengthening trust, and securing access to global markets." Pollen concludes.

By choosing trusted partners like FUCHS, producers can ensure that every bottle, carton, or package that leaves their facility is backed by both technical excellence and international compliance.

Inflation pressures mount for SA's food and beverage sector

By Staff Reporter

South Africa's food and beverage industry is under mounting pressure as persistent inflation weakens consumer spending and slows sector performance. Statistics South Africa data shows the industry's total income fell 0.7% in June 2025 compared with June 2024, measured at constant 2019 prices to account for inflation. Bar sales recorded the sharpest annual decline at 4.3%, while restaurants and coffee shops saw income contract by 2.2%. Seasonally adjusted figures also signal weakening momentum: total income fell 4.1% in June 2025 from May, reversing modest gains recorded in April and May.

Inflation squeezes household budgets

Rising food and non-alcoholic beverage (NAB) prices are the primary

headwind. Food and NAB inflation rose to 5.7% in July 2025 from 5.1% in June. The trend is particularly concerning for an industry that contributes roughly 25% to South Africa's manufacturing output and generates over R800 billion in annual revenue.

Vegetable prices have climbed significantly, with inflation in the category reaching 14.6% year-on-year. Although carrots, lettuce, and tomatoes saw slight month-on-month declines, other staples such as salad dressings, vinegar, mixed spices, and soup powders recorded increases above the overall food inflation rate.

Mixed signals across product categories

Price movements vary across the basket. Hot beverage inflation moderated to 8.9% in July, with instant coffee showing slight declines. Some

core staples have also become cheaper: hot cereals fell 7.8% year-on-year, white rice dropped 7.2%, and fresh full-cream milk declined 2.9%.

However, several essentials continue to climb. Samp prices jumped 14.8% year-on-year, maize meal rose 8.2%, and beef products remain elevated despite a small monthly price easing. Beef mince increased 27.2% year-on-year, while stewing beef rose 32.3%, placing strain on low- and middle-income households.

Strategic responses and industry outlook

Industry leaders are responding by prioritising efficiency, cost management, and market expansion. According to WTW's Salary Budget Planning Report, 60% of agriculture and food companies cite inflationary pressure as their top concern, followed by labour market constraints

(40%) and cost control challenges (40%).

Businesses are adapting. PepsiCo South Africa recently invested R746 million in a new production line at its Isando facility, adding 100 jobs and improving operational efficiencies. Retailers are expanding into township and rural markets to grow volume, while digital and e-commerce channels continue to gain traction as consumer behaviour shifts.

Despite current pressures, long-term projections remain positive. The beverages market is expected to grow at a compound annual growth rate of 5.19% through 2030, while the foodservice market could reach \$20.11 billion over the same period. However, sustained recovery will depend on disciplined pricing, operational streamlining, and continued investment to remain competitive amid inflationary constraints.



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Maersk's \$100 million investment advances SA's cold-chain export capability



GLOBAL logistics leader Maersk has formally opened its latest facility in Cape Town – the Belcon Cold Store – as part of a strategic investment exceeding USD 100 million to bolster South Africa's cold-chain infrastructure.

South Africa's cold-chain logistics sector has long been under pressure: perishable exporters – notably producers of citrus and table grapes – have borne heavy costs from delays and breaks in the temperature-controlled supply chain. At times, these losses have amounted to as much as R1.5 billion annually.

With the Belcon Cold Store, Maersk is aiming to fill a key vulnerability in the region's export infrastructure, offering local exporters a more resilient platform from which to reach global markets.

Belcon joins Maersk's existing cold-chain sites in South Africa – Cato and PreCool – forming a triad of logistics hubs thoughtfully positioned to serve the nation's agricultural export sector.

Key capabilities of the network include:

- Capacity of approximately 32 000 pallet positions.
- Strategic positioning near the ports

of Cape Town and Durban, supporting multimodal transport flows via rail sidings and highways.

- On-site container depots and integrated temperature-controlled storage to preserve product quality from origin to shipment.
- Renewable energy systems built into the facilities, aligning with broader decarbonisation goals.

End-to-end logistics: beyond ocean shipping

What sets Maersk's approach apart for the B2B export community is its holistic logistics offering. Exporters shipping perishables now have access not simply to ocean freight, but to a full value chain: consolidation, container handling, customs brokerage, temperature-controlled storage, inland haulage and port access. By offering a unified logistics platform, the company positions itself as a full-service partner to South African exporters – not just a carrier.

For Cape Town-based exporters and logistics stakeholders, the implications are significant:

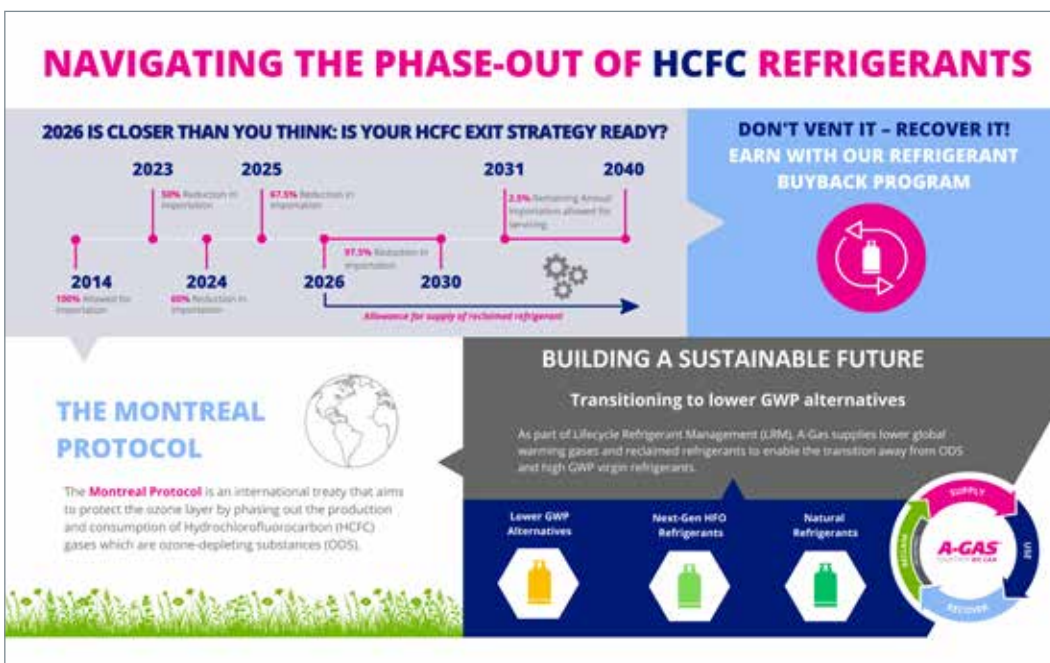
- Improved infra-

structure reduces risk of spoilage, enhances quality control and protects export margins.

- Proximity of the new facility to Cape Town's port infrastructure promises faster throughput and fewer logistics bottlenecks.
- The investment signals international confidence in South Africa's export growth potential – a strong signal for supply-chain investors, exporters and service providers alike.
- By leveraging integrated logistics solutions, local businesses can strengthen their competitive advantage in global markets.

Maersk's investment in South Africa's cold-chain infrastructure underscores the company's long-term commitment to the region. As Lubabalo Mtya, Managing Director of Maersk Southern Africa & Islands, stated: "We are committed to building and delivering logistics solutions that create tangible value for our customers and their businesses, while contributing to South Africa's economic prosperity and the livelihoods of its people."

R22 Refrigerant: South Africa's 2026 quota cut to 2.5%



Source: A-GAS

By Diane Silcock

SOUTH Africa's Heating, Ventilation, Air Conditioning, and Refrigeration (HVAC-R) sector is at a critical intersection concerning the phasing out of R22, a hydrochlorofluorocarbon (HCFC) commonly used as a refrigerant. Starting in 2026, the R22 import quota will reduce to 2.5% of the current consumption.

As part of its commitment to environmental sustainability and compliance with international agreements like the Montreal Protocol, South Africa has been accelerating the phase-out of R22.

SARACCA, the South African Refrigeration and Air Conditioning Contractors Association, is mandated by the Department of Labour to oversee the registration and safe handling of refrigerants. SARACCA Executive Director, David Botha says that the reduced import quota of R22 will have a direct impact on the market as only between 80 to 100 tons of these HCFCs will be entering the market for service and repair purposes.

"This reduction is intended to minimise the environmental impact of R22, which is known to deplete the ozone layer and contribute to global warming. The strategy includes promoting alternatives that are more environmentally friendly, such as hydrofluoroolefins (HFOs) or other low-GWP (global warming potential) refrigerants," notes Botha.

SARACCA, which represents the interests of contractors and service providers in the refrigeration and air conditioning industry, focuses on advancing the profession through education, training, and promoting best practices among its members. For SARACCA, the phasedown of HCFCs involves training and supporting technicians and businesses in transitioning to more sustainable alternatives, ensuring they are well-prepared for the changes in regulations and technology.

Botha says that progress in the phase-out of R22 is slow in some cases, "We do have a bigger problem in that we are not recovering sufficient quantities of R22, and if we break this down, we are only recovering 2%

of the total import of R22 (for every 100kg of refrigerant we are only recovering 2kg). This is not taking into account the bulk of equipment installed in the country that is running on R22 refrigerants."

SARACCA is working with the South African government which is running programmes to improve this situation. "Moving away from HCFCs is the responsibility of everyone in the industry, and having qualified, registered and having personnel working on the systems is a must and not a nice-to-have," says Botha.

Overall, this initiative is part of South Africa's broader efforts to align with global environmental standards and to protect both the environment and public health.

A-GAS, a world leader in supply and lifecycle management of refrigerants and associated products and services, says the industry now faces three viable options: maintain and retrofit; invest in flexible equipment; or adopt natural refrigerants.

A-GAS says, "The journey towards a low-GWP future is complex but essential

for environmental and regulatory compliance. Industry stakeholders must weigh their options carefully, considering both immediate costs, long-term benefits and system implications. By choosing the right pathway, South Africa's HVAC-R sector can achieve a seamless transition while contributing to global efforts to mitigate climate change."

As South Africa advances towards a low-GWP and environmentally-sustainable future, SARACCA remains steadfast in its role as an industry leader and regulator. Through continuous collaboration with government, training authorities, and industry stakeholders, the Association is intensifying efforts to strengthen refrigerant recovery, upskill technicians, and uphold compliance with international environmental standards. SARACCA's commitment to innovation, education, and responsible practice ensures that the HVAC-R sector remains equipped to meet evolving global requirements while safeguarding both the environment and public safety.

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Specialised Climate Engineering - refrigeration solutions



(Left) Megan Andersen, Operations and Marketing Director, and John Andersen, CEO of SC Engineering.

By Adrian Ephraim

IN AN economy where cost competitiveness and compliance have become non-negotiable, South African manufacturers face mounting pressure to optimise every aspect of their operations. For companies in the food and beverage sector, this challenge is particularly acute - one miscalculation in their cold chain can mean the difference between profitability and loss, compliance and costly violations.

John Andersen, CEO of Specialised Climate Engineering® (SCE®), understands this reality intimately. "Cost competitiveness is absolutely everything," he explains. "When I look at our colleagues in the industry trying to manufacture for local and export markets, their cost drivers are so much more sensitive. We want them to be the best version of themselves that they possibly can be - so they don't just compete locally, but internationally."

This philosophy has positioned SCE® as more than a refrigeration supplier. The company has evolved into a comprehensive partner that supports clients across the entire cold chain continuum, from initial food processing through to retail operations.

Compliance driving investment

While cost remains a primary concern, Andersen identifies compliance as an equally powerful driver reshaping the refrigeration landscape. "Com-

pliance comes at a cost, but it's a cost of doing business," he says. Whether addressing HACCP food safety standards, occupational health and safety requirements, or environmental benchmarks around carbon footprint and emissions, manufacturers can no longer treat these obligations as optional.

The growth of fast food outlets across South Africa has amplified these pressures. With international players and key local retailers maintaining stringent health and hygiene standards, their suppliers have little choice but to elevate their compliance game. "The international players and some of the key local retailers are very strong about their health standards concerning food safety," Andersen observes. "That is pushing manufacturing entities to drive towards better compliance standards."

The upside, he adds, is significant. "Yes, there is a capital cost upfront, but your manufacturing environment is so much more conducive to efficiency thereafter. That's the exciting aspect."

Technology as a competitive advantage

SCE®'s approach to cold storage and chiller optimisation systems integrates cutting-edge technology with practical business intelligence. The company's FREECOOL® systems, DryZONE-PLUS® systems, and DryJET® systems all operate with real-time online monitoring capabilities that transform how clients manage their operations.

"Our customers are good at what they do - they're not necessarily good at maintenance of technology which is foreign," Andersen explains. "Having the technology online and being able to give them weekly reports automatically as to ef-

ficacy and compliance evidence is invaluable."

The monitoring extends beyond simple data collection. SCE®'s teams actively monitor key account systems, alerting clients to potential issues via SMS or email before problems escalate. "We're part of their system," Andersen emphasises. "We'll even make phone calls to the client if we see that nothing's being done."

A recent project with Digistics illustrates this integrated approach. The company's new cold logistics operation in Centurion represents the seventh site Specialised Climate Engineering® has delivered for the client, modelled on a highly efficient previous installation in Meadowview. The facility showcases DryZONE-PLUS® and DryJET-THERMAL® technology - a thermal loss protection device that eliminates the need for strip curtains or high-speed doors between temperature zones while preventing air flow and energy exchange.

True end-to-end capability

SCE®'s involvement spans from food processing to final retail delivery. The company works with blast freezer systems that rapidly bring products to frozen or chilled tempera-

tures, then supports cold logistics operators like Vector Logistics, Digistics and CCS with their storage operations - under circumstances when trucks are not able to reach condition.

Energy security as mission-critical

The conversation inevitably turns to energy reliability. "Let's speak of availability," Andersen stresses when

asked about renewable energy's role. "Availability is an absolute must." Whether from load shedding or infrastructure failures, power interruptions threaten product integ-

ity and business continuity. Many clients have invested in battery packs providing up to four hours of backup, while solar installations offer daytime support. SCE® reduces the energy footprint of the plant, therefore reducing the backup demand requirement.

For manufacturers navigating South Africa's complex operating environment, SCE®'s value proposition is clear: comprehensive refrigeration optimisation expertise, deployed across the entire cold chain, supported by technology that transforms capital investment into sustained operational advantage. In an economy offering "no assistance from anywhere," as Andersen puts it, that kind of partnership isn't just valuable - it's essential for survival.

"The monitoring extends beyond simple data collection. SCE®'s teams actively monitor key account systems, alerting clients to potential issues via SMS or email before problems escalate. We're part of their system"

At the retail level, SCE® serves select retailers by optimising the efficiency of in-store freezers and chillers, ensuring minimal thermal loss at the final link in the chain.

asked about renewable energy's role. "Availability is an absolute must." Whether from load shedding or infrastructure failures, power interruptions threaten product integ-



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Sustainable retail at Food Lover's Market

By Adrian Ephraim

IN A world where "sustainability" has become a buzzword, Food Lover's Market's approach stands out for one simple reason: it's personal. For Andrew Millson, the Group Managing Executive for People and Sustainability, the company's strategy isn't a checklist of green initiatives - it's a reflection of its values.

"Before sustainability became a corporate trend, it was really a heartfelt response to the challenges we face," says Millson. "A thriving sustainability strategy is deeply embedded in an organisation's culture - it only works when the company's values are alive in every decision."

That philosophy has guided Food Lover's Market through more than a decade of growth. What began as a single store in Cape Town has

expanded into a network of more than 120 outlets across southern Africa, employing 22,000 people. Now, as the company enters a new phase of expansion, sustainability and people remain at the centre of its ambitions.

Doing the right thing, within reason

Food Lover's Market's purpose statement, Changing Lives, isn't just painted on office walls - it informs decisions at every level, from energy investments to community projects.

Millson recalls internal debates over issues like plastic waste, solar projects, and community investment. "There's always resistance," he admits. "We're human - we love familiar patterns and ease. But when we align our environmental values and keep pushing that message, we see the culture shift."

One such turning

point came when the company banned plastic straws and bags, despite initial pushback. "Brian [Coppin, CEO and co-founder] simply said, 'Let's just change it.' That leadership clarity made all the difference."

Balancing growth with green goals

Sustainability doesn't come cheap, and Millson is realistic about the trade-offs. "There's always a tension between expanding our footprint and investing in green infrastructure," he says. "But as return on investment for renewable energy keeps improving, it becomes not just a sustainability decision - but a commercial one."

The group has already generated millions of kilowatt-hours through solar projects and plans to expand installations at key sites like Epping and River Club. Importantly, many of these efficiency

projects now fall under the commercial division, underscoring how sustainability and profitability have become intertwined.

"When we build a store, it's a commitment to that community," says Millson. "So we design stores that are efficient to run for years to come - because that's how we keep offering value."

From waste to worth

Food Lover's Market has also tackled waste head-on, partnering with Y-Waste to divert tonnes of organic waste from landfill and turn it into compost sold in stores. That visible "full circle" has helped shift behaviour across its retail network.

"In retail, you just want the waste out of sight," Millson explains. "But when our teams see the compost we're selling, they see the impact of their actions. It's not

an abstract environmental goal - it's tangible."

Seeds of change - and of hope

Through its Seeds of Change social entrepreneurship programme, Food Lover's Market supports small producers who share its passion for purpose-driven business. Many - like Purefolk and African Tea Crafters - have successfully scaled their operations within the retailer's network.

What makes them succeed? "A genuine desire to grow, passion for their product, and grit," says Millson. "Working with a large business isn't easy, but when passion meets perseverance, amazing things happen."

He's also seen the initiative shift mindsets within Food Lover's Market itself. "Our buyers are seeing how their decisions can change lives. They're not just

purchasing products - they're empowering communities."

People at the heart

With more than 2,000 employees boasting over a decade of service, Food Lover's Market's Same Faces, Higher Places philosophy is paying off. Rapid expansion has created room for growth, and the company invests heavily in developing internal talent.

"We can't confuse a lack of education with a lack of talent," says Millson. "Our role as leaders is to unearth that talent and nurture it - because that's how we truly change lives."

This approach extends to empowering women in retail, a traditionally tough environment. Coaching programmes, flexible leadership training, and visible female role models have helped shift the company culture.

"We've still got a way to go," Millson says, "but every new female manager creates a ripple effect."

Looking five years ahead, Millson's hopes are ambitious yet grounded: more regenerative farming partnerships, zero waste to landfill, innovative plastic alternatives, and an entirely free-range meat supply. But he's the first to acknowledge the road ahead.

"We're not there yet," he says candidly. "There's still a lot of work to do. But we're trying - every day."

That humility, paired with a clear sense of purpose, might be Food Lover's Market's greatest competitive advantage. In a sector defined by tight margins and fierce competition, it's the company's people - and their shared commitment to doing better - that could define its next chapter.

AI in retail: from efficiency tool to force multiplier

WHEN Catherine Lückhoff speaks about artificial intelligence in retail, she's quick to dispel the fairy dust expectations. "Everybody wants to know how they can have the fairy dust, but no one's really putting in the work," says the co-founder and CEO of data modernisation firm 20fifty.

Her observation cuts to the heart of a fundamental shift happening across South African retail: AI is no longer a futuristic concept but a practical tool reshaping everything from internal operations to customer engagement. The question isn't whether retailers should adopt AI, but how strategically they'll deploy it.

Two categories of impact

Lückhoff identifies two distinct categories where AI acts as a force multi-

plier. The first focuses inward: optimising store layouts, logistics, predictive modelling for stock management, and understanding cross-shopping behaviours. Dynamic pricing, already visible when retailers discount bakery goods at day's end, represents just the beginning of what's possible.

The second category is external-facing, centred on hyper-personalisation. However, this requires solving fundamental data challenges first. "You might have two different profiles for the same customer," Lückhoff explains, describing scenarios where a family shares accounts across online shopping, store credit, and cash purchases. "How do you build up a visual of who the customer is, and then how can you hyper-personalise on top of that?"

Real-world implementation

South African retailers are already pioneering innovative applications. Shoprite Checkers, according to Lückhoff, is piloting AI agents at point-of-sale systems that assist cashiers with edge cases in vernacular languages. When a customer needs to pay a DStv account - not a daily transaction for most tellers - the system provides real-time training support, speeding up checkout and improving the customer experience.

Pepkor is using predictive models for lay-by customers, factoring in variables like travel distance to stores. The insight: customers living far from physical locations are less likely to complete payments due to transport costs. "Good data analysts probably would

have spotted these patterns over time," Lückhoff notes, "but now suddenly you can see those insights much faster and you can act on them much faster."

The foundation: Data quality and strategy

Before implementing AI solutions, 20fifty conducts comprehensive assessments: customer personas, pain points, systems integration mapping, data governance frameworks, security protocols, and GDPR compliance. "The technology is just the enabler," Lückhoff emphasises. "I know I want soup, but I'm certainly not going to use a fork for it."

The firm is developing a "voice of the customer" tool that aggregates call centre transcripts, product reviews, customer

complaints, and public data sources. Rather than traditional sentiment analysis, the system identifies critical issues - whether supply chain, payment, or staff-related - allowing executives across departments to interrogate data through natural language queries.

The ROI challenge

Measuring return on investment remains complex. Old Mutual achieved a 77% efficiency gain on reporting that previously took 22 days monthly, now delivered in real time. For identity management resolution, 20fifty targets 80-90% accuracy, acknowledging the final 10% - particularly cash customers - presents unique challenges.

"It's very hard upfront to determine what your return on investment is

going to be in a space this new," Lückhoff admits. Success metrics must extend beyond immediate financial returns to consider factors like conversion rates, customer retention, and long-term strategic positioning.

The human element

Perhaps counterintuitively, successful AI implementation requires significant human input. Teams transition from task-based work to strategic thinking and creativity - what Marks & Spencer UK describes as moving from person managers to machine managers.

However, Lückhoff warns about over-reliance: "Junior developers aren't allowed to use AI at 20fifty because they haven't built up the experience to critically eval-

uate outputs." Recent research suggests developers think they're 20% faster with AI coding assistance but are actually 19% slower, spending up to 26 minutes correcting AI-generated code.

For South African retail specifically, Lückhoff anticipates AI solutions tailored to local economic realities: optimising for the 60% of customers earning under R10,000 monthly, improving accessibility, and stretching consumer spending power further.

"The genie's out of the bottle," she acknowledges. Success will depend on retailers being transparent about AI use, understanding customer pain points, and ensuring benefits flow both ways - not deploying technology for technology's sake, but solving real problems for real people.

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Checkers FreshX wins with premium, innovative store format



IMS's innovative and characterful displays in Checkers FreshX stores across the country are redefining retail excellence.

By Diane Silcock

THE strong set of results recently published by the Shoprite Group for the year ended 29 June 2025, where they reported having surpassed the R250 billion sales mark, undoubtedly suggests that Shoprite Checkers is serving their customers well. One of their top priorities mentioned by Shoprite Checkers CEO Pieter Engelbrecht, is their strategy to continue the conversion of existing stores to their winning FreshX format.

Checker's FreshX format forms part of its value focused premium offer which Engelbrecht says has gone from strength to strength. He reports that sales grew by 13.8%, contributing an additional R11.6 billion. While he notes that gains are across the board, "noteworthy this year was Checkers' growth in fresh together with improvements in ranging and promotional execution." He says they remain of the view "that Checkers' incredible success in terms of its vision to democratise premium food retail, remains underrepresented in the South African market".

IMS has helped changed the face of new-generation Checkers stores

A company that works closely with Check-

ers is IMS, which has been instrumental in bringing world-class, creative and innovative merchandising solutions to the South African retail space. IMS South Africa CEO Steyn Laubscher, relates how IMS started the evolution with Checkers 18 years ago introducing creative ideas to delight consumers, creating authenticity and a homely atmosphere to enhance the shopping experience.

"It's been incredible to have partnered with the innovative Checkers team who has been so willing to implement new ideas and take risks," Laubscher says. "Being able to assist them with the whole evolution of their new FreshX supermarkets is a privilege. It's a new concept that they are rolling out, and it places them at the forefront of innovation in the retail merchandising space."

Retail merchandising with a touch of Argentine magic

With inspiration from IMS Argentina, and catering for discerning customers, consumers walking into Checkers FreshX supermarkets are treated to a 'fresh food theatre' with an easy-to-navigate layout that takes them through a world-class selection of premium

products and specialist in-store service departments. Lauscher says it's like incorporating your corner bakery and butchery into one store that in addition to selling fresh fruit and vegetables, also offers convenience and home-style meals.

The ingenious format also includes a quality coffee bar, sit-down sushi counter, a wine cellar that has a large touchscreen (the size of a television screen), enabling consumers to find a wine in their price range, according to their mood, get the list of ingredients and even what cheese it's best paired with.

Many of these stores also offer in-store brand leaders, such as Kauai, Starbucks coffee, Krispy Kreme Doughnuts and an in-store, specialty Lindt counter.

As pioneers in South Africa, being the first to come up with and implement the characterful cabinet designs that have helped change the face of new-generation Checkers stores, IMS continues to enhance the retail landscape with new ideas and manufacturing excellence.

Added to their creative solutions that imbue the Argentine magic, what's equally important to IMS is looking for technologies and ways to lower energy consumption as the overhead cost of refrigeration in a retail store is significant.

With the retail space expected to become more competitive with Walmart retail stores opening soon, Checkers' continual innovativeness in attracting customers into their stores countrywide, may well give them the edge.



GUDGU goodness from the earth sugar-free drinks

WHEN retrenchment struck, most people would take time to recover. For GUDGU co-founder Pieter du Plessis, it became the start of a reinvention story. "It wasn't some grand plan," they recall. "I just needed to do something, anything, to feel useful again. So, I started making cordials at home."

That moment of quiet experimentation in a Pretoria apartment in 2014 marked the birth of GUDGU - a proudly South African, sugar-free beverage brand now stocked in over 800 stores nationwide. "The courage came from not wanting to just sit around and wait for things to happen," Du Plessis adds. "I didn't see that pause in my life as a chance to flip the script - from 'I lost something' to 'I'm making something new.' That mindset made all the difference."

The name GUDGU, short for Goedheid Uit Die Grond Uit - "Goodness from the Earth" - embodies that philosophy of resilience and renewal. "It's not just a tagline for us," he says. "It's how we make choices, from picking ingredients to designing packaging. Our ISO 22000-certified lab and eco-friendly packaging



reformulating until we found something that still tasted like GUDGU."

The result was Sug0, a range of diabetic-, keto-, and banting-friendly cordials that didn't compromise on taste - a rare feat in a market where "sugar-free" often means "flavour-free."

The Big Leap: Partnering with Shoprite Holdings

GUDGU's biggest turning point came in 2022, when the brand joined the Shoprite Group's SMME programme and began stocking in Checkers stores nationwide. "Getting onto Checkers shelves changed everything," says du Plessis. "Suddenly, we weren't just a small local brand anymore - people saw us

safety, labelling, or reliability. My advice to small brands: get your production, packaging, and certifications a locked down before you go after big listings. Retail-ready means more than a good product - it's about systems, reliability, and acting like a pro."

A Nationwide Footprint - and growing

From markets and small outlets, GUDGU has now expanded to over 100 Checkers stores and 700 additional retail points across South Africa. Expansion decisions are guided by data and dialogue. "We look at what people are asking for - social media feedback, online orders, distributor insights - and balance that with logistics and shelf space," says du Plessis. "We're

retail systems in place, the next chapter is about scaling and global reach. "Scaling is both an opportunity and a risk," says du Plessis. "We adopt a Steve Jobs philosophy - recruiting a team that believes in our 'why' before we worry about the 'how'."

Beyond South Africa, the team is eyeing export opportunities across Africa, the Middle East, and the U.S., where demand for sugar-free, eco-conscious products is booming. "Our focus on healthy, sustainable packaging hits the right notes globally," he says. "Across Africa, there's a growing health-conscious middle class. In the Middle East, sugar-free demand is surging. And in Europe and the U.S., we see opportunities in premium lifestyle stores."

Their expansion strategy is deliberate and measured. "We're careful - only moving into markets where our logistics, regulations, and brand story fit," they note.

Staying true to their roots

As for the next five years, du Plessis sees a brand both bigger and bolder, but still grounded in its founding philosophy. "We'll have a wider range - concentrates, ready-to-drink products, maybe even functional drinks," they say. "We'll be everywhere in South Africa and active in key export markets. But no matter how big we get, we'll keep that 'Goodness from the Earth' spirit - staying real, sustainable, and proudly South African."

The journey from a Pretoria apartment to national shelves shows that sometimes, the best businesses don't start with a business plan - they start with purpose. As du Plessis puts it: "We turned a moment of uncertainty into something that tastes like possibility."



Pieter du Plessis (left) and Viljoen de Kock GUDGU co-founders.

aren't just boxes to tick - they're proof points of how we live that philosophy every day."

That commitment to quality and sustainability also guides GUDGU's product innovation. One of its defining moments came when a diabetic customer reached out, asking for something sugar-free but still flavourful. "Creating something that's both healthy and tasty is tough," du Plessis admits. "Sugar isn't just about sweetness - it affects texture and the whole experience. Most substitutes don't taste right and have weird aftertastes. We spent ages

as real contenders. The trust factor shot up just from being there."

The partnership didn't just provide visibility; it forced the founders to professionalise rapidly. "The exposure and extra volume let us invest more in production and branding," he explains. "But the leap exposed weak spots too - supply issues, cash flow headaches, system gaps. We had to sort those out quickly."

Even so, they view those growing pains as necessary. "Compliance and certification were our biggest hurdles," they say. "You can't mess around with food

especially focused on educating the market about health and wellness, not just selling products."

Their facility, capable of producing 300,000 units a month, runs on zero-waste water purification and eco-friendly packaging. Sustainability, he insists, is no longer optional. "It's a competitive requirement," they say. "It reinforces quality, supports our brand story, and builds resilience. 'Goodness from the Earth' demands environmental responsibility."

Building for the future

With production and

Quick connect couplings: Saving time, boosting yields on agricultural applications

Easy Multiline connection — engineered for speed, safety, and performance

IMAGINE connecting multiple hydraulic lines or a combination of hydraulic, electrical and grease lines with one single, confident movement. That's the everyday convenience operators get from Faster's MultiFaster multi-coupling systems.

Designed to remove guesswork and speed up connections, the MultiFaster allows operators to attach multiple lines simultaneously with a single lever action — even when there's residual pressure in the system.

"Hydrasales offers customers direct access to factory-level expertise and close-to-source procurement - guaranteeing genuine components, leading technology, and trusted technical knowledge."

Why It Matters: Fewer Mistakes, Less Downtime, Safer Operators

On busy job sites with optimum productivity objectives and tight production targets — whether in agriculture, construction, mining, or industrial — every minute counts. Manually connecting several hydraulic hoses can be slow and error prone. Swapped lines may cause malfunctioning tools, fluid leaks, or even dangerous, inconsistent or abnormal machine functionality.

The MultiFaster prevents that failure point by arranging precisely machined couplings into a single, repeatable connection action. The fixed half of the assembly features a cam-lever locking system for smooth operation with minimal force. Once engaged, a locking button clicks securely into place, giving operators unmistakable feedback that the connection is complete.

The mobile half includes a mounting plate with locating dowels, ensuring perfect alignment every time — no guesswork, no second attempts.

The twin boosters: Safety up & productivity up

Here's where the MultiFaster truly shines:

Fewer Errors: With fixed port positions and dowel alignment, there's no chance of connecting the wrong line.

Speed: One motion replaces multiple individual couplings, saving valuable time during implement swaps or equipment setup.

Reduced Spillage & Contamination: Faster's flat-face couplers minimize fluid loss, dirt ingress into the system and helps keep the environment clean.

Operator Safety: Fixed alignment prevents crossed lines that could lead to unsafe

machine movements, pressure surges, or burst hoses — eliminating the risk of sudden oil spray and improving on-site safety.

Reliability & Uptime: Correct connections reduce wear, extend component life, and minimize downtime caused by human error — translating into significant cost savings through fewer repairs, reduced oil loss, time saving, increasing overall productivity and profitability.

Connecting under pressure — Designed for real-world conditions

In hydraulic systems, thermal expansion can cause trapped oil to increase in pressure when exposed to heat, even when the attachment is disconnected. When one side is pressurized, the coupling faces significant resistance, the trapped oil physically prevents the internal valve from opening. This makes reconnection impossible without first bleeding off the pressure manually.

Faster's MultiFaster is engineered to connect under residual pressure, safely managing this effect of fluid expansion. One coupling half will have integrated mechanisms that equalize internal pressure during connection, allowing operators to re-couple lines easily and safe-

ly without the need to bleed off fluid. This feature is particularly valuable with Africa's erratic weather and harsh environments, where temperature changes throughout the day can significantly affect system pressure.

Beyond hydraulics: Electricity and greasing in one block

The MultiFaster has evolved far beyond its hydraulic origins. Today, it serves as a modular hub capable of integrating electrical connectors and greasing (lubrication) lines within the same unit.

This means a single MultiFaster plate can carry power, control signals, and lubrication, along with hydraulic circuits, all in one compact, efficient design. It's ideal for modern machinery with built-in electronics, sensors, and automated greasing systems.

What's new — Cutting-edge Innovation

Faster continually researches and innovates the MultiFaster family to meet increasing demands for efficiency, performance, safety, and durability. The latest MultiFaster range offers a maximum working pressure of 350 bar, ensuring reliable operation across a wide temperature range with improved corrosion re-



sistance. A distinctive surface coating helps identify the new series instantly.

Complementing the lineup is the MultiSlide, designed for compact excavators and space-critical installations. Thanks to the specially designed metal plate, MultiSlide can be quickly and easily installed on existing machines — two lines (1/2") or three lines (two 1/2" and one 3/8").

Design it yourself — Faster's online configurator

One of the standout customer tools is Faster's MultiFaster Configurator — an intuitive, step-by-step MultiFaster builder and is available online. The Configurator tool is easy to use, simply enter your parameters, select the plate size, coupling type, lever mechanism, and layout. In just a few steps, the tool generates

detailed drawings and a unique part number for both the fixed and mobile halves.

For OEMs and system designers, this shortens specification cycles and ensures every assembly perfectly matches the intended application.

Hydrasales — Your African partner

As the long-standing official African distributor for Faster, Hydrasales bridges the gap between design innovation and real-world application.

We comprehensively support with:

- Product selection and technical support and guiding customers through the Configurator.
- Advising on port layouts, line sizes, pressure ratings, and connect-under-pressure requirements.

- Managing local stock, logistics, spare parts, and after-sales service.

- Offering installation advice and field support, ensuring every MultiFaster performs as intended.

- Liaising with the technical experts at Faster in arriving at an optimal solution.

With a relationship spanning more than 45 years with Faster SRL, Hydrasales offers customers direct access to factory-level expertise and close-to-source procurement — guaranteeing genuine components, leading technology, and trusted technical knowledge, call us or e-mail harpo@hydrasales.co.za

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BMG and Danfoss Drives reaffirm their long-standing partnership

BMG and Danfoss Drives are celebrating a decade of strategic collaboration since formalising their partnership in 2015. The alliance, which strengthened BMG's original 2007 distribution agreement for Danfoss variable speed drives (VSDs) and soft starters, has driven industrial efficiency and sustainability across Africa.

"BMG and Danfoss Drives share a commitment to innovation, sustainability and integrity," says Sean McCree, Business Unit Manager: Electronics at BMG.

"Through our partnership, customers have seen improved productivity, optimised process control, and reduced energy consumption."

These systems are widely used in food and beverage, HVAC, mining, marine, water and wastewater, and oil and gas sectors.

Partnership built on technical excellence and service

BMG's technical expertise is backed by an extensive branch network, flexible pricing, reliable 24-hour after-sales support and strong stockholding capabilities. In 2019, BMG became the first authorised Danfoss DrivePro® service partner in Africa, a certification renewed annually.

This appointment confirms that BMG meets Danfoss's global standards to offer customised support for Danfoss VLT®, iC7, and VACON® frequency converters. DrivePro® services cover the entire lifecycle of AC drives—improving productivity, reducing downtime and ensuring peace of mind for users.

Investment in skills and infrastructure

BMG has made significant investments in distribution, engineering facilities, and technical training. Its dedicated VSD workshops in Cape Town, Gauteng, and KwaZulu-Natal serve as approved warranty centres for Danfoss/Vacon and Synergy products.

These electromechanical workshops are staffed by globally trained experts who provide repairs, maintenance, software up-

grades, option fitment, pre-commissioning support, and small panel manufacturing.

The BMG Electronics team also specialises in energy efficiency, harmonic distortion mitigation, solar VSD applications, and condition-based monitoring using drives data.

Certified quality and safety standards

Many customers require official OEM certification for service work. With BMG's training and experience, the company meets these standards across Africa. Its field and workshop teams operate under ISO9001 (Quality), 14001 (Environmental), and 45001 (Health and Safety) systems.

"Safety isn't just compliance—it's part of our culture," McCree emphasises. BMG also runs scheduled and specialist VSD training programmes, helping customers enhance plant productivity through advanced drive technologies.

Innovation through mechatronics

BMG supplies a range of Danfoss electronic, mechanical, and mechatronic devices designed to enhance automation and reduce energy consumption. The VLT® Automation Drive, a globally awarded product, lowers project and operating costs while maintaining process efficiency.

BMG has also adopted the iC7 Series Drives, built with six sigma design standards, embedded cybersecurity, integrated fieldbus, and high motor shaft performance. These drives suit both induction and synchronous motors and support grid monitoring (THDv).

Proven results across industries

Recent joint successes include a pump upgrade project that reduced system costs and improved plant security at a chemical facility, and a refurbished elevator system delivering smoother, quieter operation.

In agriculture, BMG's supply and installation of Danfoss Drives have helped farmers accelerate tobacco drying, reduce

irrigation costs, and increase crop yields.

"Reliability is our top priority," McCree notes. "Every component is precisely matched to ensure high productivity, smooth operation, and long service life."

Recognition for Digital Innovation

BMG was recently honoured with the Danfoss

Drives "Digital Innovation Champion" award at the Innovate Conference in Sønderborg, Denmark—recognising BMG's outstanding adoption of Danfoss's digital tools.

Contact: Sean McCree, Business Unit Manager: Electronics, BMG
Tel: +27 11 620 1546
Email: seanm@bmgworld.net
www.bmgworld.net



From left: Marco Airola, Head of Sales, Marketing & Service, Danfoss Drives, Sean McCree, Business Unit Manager, Electronics, BMG and Shikantha Naidoo, Senior Country Sales Manager, Danfoss Power Electronics & Drives, South Africa.



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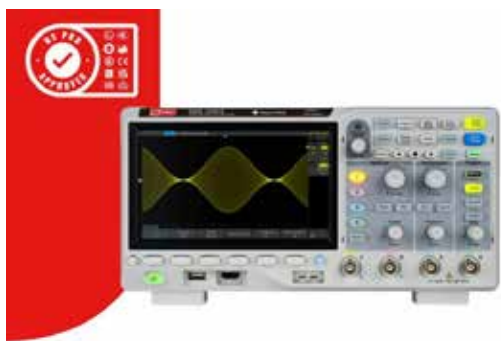
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- Environmental testing: data loggers, sound level meters, hygrometers, and thermometers.

- Laboratory equipment: ultrasonic cleaners, microscopes, pipettes, and lab bottles.

To complement this range, RS PRO also offers a variety of accessories, including test leads, oscilloscope probes, test connectors, batteries, and cable assemblies, providing customers with everything needed for a complete and efficient setup.

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RS PRO Test & Measurement products undergo rigorous testing and approval by RS PRO Test & Design Laboratories, ensuring uncompromising quality and safety. This commitment to excellence is reflected by an exceptionally low return rate of just 0.04%, highlighting the reliability and long-term durability of the range.

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Supporting South Africa's industrial growth

Erick Wessels, Sales Director at RS South Africa, said that "test and measurement is essential for maintaining accuracy, efficiency, and safety across South Africa's industrial sectors. RS PRO offers professionals reliable, high-quality solutions that meet international standards while delivering strong value and performance."

Driving accuracy, efficiency, and reliability

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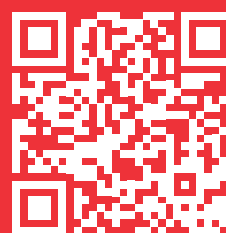
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Our motor repairs division will allow for motor assembly and rewinding, curing burnout ovens and rotor balancing



DRIVING SERVICE AND REPAIR. DRIVING AFRICA. DRIVING THE WORLD

Why local manufacturing, maintenance and support are key to the success of South Africa's energy future

By Mervyn Naidoo,
CEO of ACTOM
Group



SOUTH AFRICA is navigating an energy challenge characterised by intermittent load reduction/shedding, ageing infrastructure and limited generation capacity. The country also faces a transmission backlog that affects the seamless integration of renewable energy sources. Addressing these issues is essential for fostering economic growth and enhancing investor confidence.

Although new renewable generation capacity is being devel-

oped, the current transmission infrastructure may not fully support the connection of these sources to the national grid or adequately deliver power to areas of high demand. As such, limitations within the transmission grid present an important consideration in efforts to expand generation capacity.

This is where the Independent Transmission Projects (ITPs) become essential, unlocking private sector investment to accelerate the expansion of South Africa's transmission network and enable the integration of new generation sources.

The ITP programme aims to inject 3222MW of capacity into the grid while catalysing private sector investment. Yet, the programme's long-term success will hinge on more than just financial capital; it must actively involve and empower local manufacturers.

Steady rollout for maximum local participation

In an ideal scenario, South Africa's transmission build programme should be phased over 10-15 years, ensuring there is sufficient local market capacity to meet demand. This steady rollout would enable maximum local participation, particularly among Engineering, Procurement, and Construction (EPC) contractors as well as product manufacturers.

However, accelerating the programme risks overwhelming domestic capacity. With limited local EPC resources, fast-tracked builds could open the door to foreign contractors, undermining localisation goals and long-term sector resilience. Industrialisation should be high on Government's agenda to counter this risk in a country that is 'bleeding jobs'.

Appointing foreign EPCs to fast-track transmission infrastructure carries a significant risk, as they typically control procurement of key components. Without strong localisation mandates, this can lead to bypassing South African manufacturers and suppliers.

This would result in lost opportunities for industrial growth, job creation, and supply chain development. To safeguard local participation, procurement frameworks must be tightly aligned with national development goals, even when foreign EPCs are involved. By localising infrastructure development, we stimulate investment into domestic capacity. Local companies begin to build capability, which in turn enables the creation of a robust supply chain that can actively participate in the build programmes required for national infrastructure.

Move to strategic procurement for long-term value

The Transmission Development Plan (TDP) is a long-term opportunity spanning potentially 15 years and beyond. This visibility is crucial for anticipating demand and aligning procurement practices. By shifting to strategic procurement focused on long-term value, we can leverage infrastructure demand to build local capacity.

This approach enhances local participation across the value chain, from manufacturing to construction, and supports reindustrialisation, job creation, and increased electricity demand. Ultimately, it drives GDP growth and fosters sustained investment in capacity.

Localisation enables critical technology, and skills transfer to local companies, building long-term capacity to maintain and optimise

infrastructure. With trained local resources, response times improve and reliance on foreign expertise, with its delays and visa constraints, is reduced.

In addition, localisation and technology transfer foster the development of domestic supply chains for critical spare parts. By producing components locally, we reduce import dependency, shorten lead times, and improve turnaround efficiency, enhancing infrastructure reliability and supporting local manufacturing.

Unlocking national value through collaboration

Given the scale of investment required in South Africa's energy transition, alignment across all stakeholders (government, developers, labour, and local industry) is essential. To unlock national value, we must foster collaboration under a uni-

fied SA Inc approach.

Developers should be encouraged to create platforms that support reindustrialisation through localisation, not just in construction but across the full lifecycle, including maintenance. Original Equipment Manufacturers (OEM) must transfer technology to local service providers to ensure long-term plant support and reliability. Where local capacity is saturated, it is crucial that foreign OEMs are encouraged to invest towards capacity expansion in South Africa as opposed to importing.

South Africa's renewable energy ambitions offer a unique opportunity to address social and economic challenges while maximising plant availability and performance. With the right strategic alignment and localisation, we can turn infrastructure demand into inclusive, sustainable growth.



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Schneider Electric 800 VDC powers NVIDIA's next-gen AI

SCHNEIDER Electric, the leader in the digital transformation of energy management and automation, today reinforced its commitment to supporting the industry's transition to 800 VDC power architectures, which are a critical requirement for emerging high-density rack systems being adopted across next-generation data centres.

As the industry accelerates toward higher power densities and greater efficiency, Schneider Electric is actively innovating to meet these needs through a comprehensive, system-level approach that integrates power conversion, protection, and metering. This approach ensures that power systems are not only efficient but

safe, resilient, and ready to scale.

"The move to 800 VDC is a natural evolution as compute density increases, and Schneider Electric is committed to helping customers make that transition safely and reliably," said Jim Simonelli, CTO, Data Centres, Schneider Electric. "Our expertise lies in understanding the full power ecosystem, from grid to server, and designing solutions that integrate seamlessly, perform predictably, and operate safely."

New sidecar supported by system-level approach to power innovation

The traditional 54-volt in-rack power distribution in use in today's data

centres is designed for kilowatt-scale racks and can't support the megawatt-scale racks coming soon to modern AI factories, making scalable 800 VDC distribution systems with integrated energy storage essential.

Schneider Electric is collaborating with NVIDIA to develop an 800 VDC sidecar capable of powering racks of up to 1.2 MW to support next-generation NVIDIA GPUs and future iterations of NVIDIA accelerated computing infrastructure.

The sidecar converts AC power coming into the data centre into 800 VDC, enabling delivery of megawatt-scale rack power safely, efficiently, and with minimal material and infrastructure costs. Additionally, Sch-

neider Electric's sidecar:

- Delivers industry-leading efficiency
 - Features modular power conversion shelves
 - Is equipped with modular energy storage for short-term backup and load smoothing
 - Is Live Swap capable for enhanced safety
- The sidecar is backed by Schneider Electric's signature system-level approach to power innovation.

Rather than focusing solely on individual components, Schneider Electric takes a holistic view of power infrastructure. By designing and optimising systems as a whole — including conversion technologies, intelligent metering, and

integrated protection mechanisms — Schneider Electric helps customers achieve:

- Predictable, validated performance
- Simplified maintenance and scalability
- Higher operational efficiency

This system-level innovation is central to supporting high-density rack deployments that demand tighter control of power delivery and reliability.

Built on decades of safety and reliability expertise

With a long-standing reputation for advancing power reliability and safety, Schneider Electric integrates advanced

modelling, simulation, and real-world lab testing to validate its solutions. This includes:

- In-depth fault current and arc flash analysis
- Certified testing environments to ensure performance in real-world conditions
- Live Swap power capabilities, enabling safe maintenance without disrupting operations

These capabilities ensure that customers can confidently deploy 800 VDC systems that meet the highest standards of operational safety and resilience.

Supporting the Industry

As part of the NVIDIA

ecosystem, Schneider Electric is aligned with the broader industry shift toward next-generation architectures that demand enhanced power infrastructure.

"Scalable power architectures are the foundation for next-generation AI infrastructure that maximises both performance and efficiency," said Dion Harris, Sr. Director, HPC, Cloud, and AI Infrastructure Solutions GTM at NVIDIA. "NVIDIA and Schneider Electric are building on our longstanding partnership to design and deliver advanced power architectures for 800 VDC systems that will run AI applications that will shape the AI industrial revolution."

Data centre automation: Solving the energy paradox

AS artificial intelligence workloads push data centres toward an unprecedented energy crisis, a German automation specialist is

tackling the industry's most pressing challenge. While tech giants scramble to secure power contracts, Beckhoff Automation is taking

a different approach: treating data centres not as technology problems, but as buildings that need intelligent control.

The numbers are

sobering. Global data centre capacity is expected to grow from 59 GW in 2025 to 122 GW by 2030, with estimates suggesting data centres

could consume 8% of the world's electricity by decade's end. For operators, this means spiralling energy costs, reluctant grid operators, and intensifying regulatory scrutiny.

The hidden culprit

While processors grab headlines, cooling and power systems quietly consume nearly half of a data centre's energy budget. Computing resources account for roughly 40% of consumption, while cooling systems take another 38-40%. Yet unlike IT equipment, building systems have remained relatively unsophisticated.

This is where Beckhoff's building automation heritage becomes relevant. The company has spent decades perfecting PC-based control systems for factories. Now they're applying that expertise to data centres, using industrial PCs running their TwinCAT software to integrate HVAC, energy monitoring, and remote maintenance on a single platform.

The system tracks power quality, detects voltage fluctuations before equipment failures occur, and optimises cooling based on real-time server loads. This integration reveals correlations invisible in siloed systems - like how temperature increases in one zone ripple through cooling loads elsewhere.

Intelligence and speed

At the heart of the system is EtherCAT, a high-speed industrial communication protocol that Beckhoff developed and opened to the industry in 2003. With cycle times under one

millisecond, it enables real-time responsiveness. More than 7,000 companies worldwide have adopted the standard, creating a vast ecosystem of compatible sensors and actuators.

Beckhoff's modular I/O system can monitor individual racks or even servers, with energy measurement terminals tracking power at the circuit level. The TwinCAT Building Automation software includes pre-built function blocks for common HVAC tasks - summer night cooling, demand-based ventilation, and time scheduling - reducing implementation time dramatically. Critically, the platform is open, supporting standard protocols like BACnet, Modbus, and OPC-UA. This allows integration with existing systems from any vendor, giving operators flexibility as needs evolve.

Built for resilience

For mission-critical facilities, Beckhoff offers controller redundancy: two industrial PCs run identical programs simultaneously with automatic failover. The system continuously synchronises data between controllers, ensuring no information loss during switches. For facilities where seconds of downtime cost thousands, this provides essential insurance.

The regulatory imperative

Germany has mandated 100% renewable energy use for data centres from 2027, requiring new facilities to achieve a Power Use Effectiveness (PUE) of 1.2. Other jurisdictions are following suit. Efficiency

is shifting from optional to mandatory.

Beckhoff's continuous monitoring enables real-time optimisation for compliance. By tracking PUE, Water Usage Effectiveness, and Carbon Usage Effectiveness continuously, operators spot deviations immediately. The system automatically adjusts cooling strategies based on outside air temperature, occupancy, and workload predictions.

Why now?

As facilities adopt liquid cooling, edge computing, and distributed architectures, orchestrating these systems grows exponentially complex. Beckhoff is essentially asking: what if we managed data centres like advanced manufacturing facilities?

The modular approach allows operators to start with monitoring and add control capabilities incrementally. The same platform scales from edge micro data centres to hyperscale facilities. And because it's built on standard industrial PCs, operators avoid proprietary vendor lock-in.

For data centre operators facing pressure from regulators, utilities, and shareholders, the message is clear: the future of efficiency isn't just about better chips or advanced cooling. It's about treating facilities as the complex, integrated systems they are—and controlling them with appropriate sophistication.

Beckhoff Automation, headquartered in Germany, specialises in PC-based control systems, I/O technologies, and automation software for industrial and building applications.



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Boegoebaai port project gains traction with advisory tender



By Staff Writer

PLANS to build a R13,8-billion port at Boegoebaai in the Northern Cape are gaining traction, with the Industrial Development Corporation (IDC) announcing a tender for transaction advisory services for the project.

The Boegoebaai Port Development, which will be located 20 km from the border with Namibia, is a joint project between the IDC, Transnet, and Infrastructure South Africa (ISA). The port's goal will be to act as an additional export point for the mining sector and a possible green hydrogen hub on South Africa's west coast.

The development includes a deep-water port comprising a dry bulk export berth and a break bulk berth. A new 550 km rail line connecting the new port to existing rail infrastructure in the Northern Cape is also envisaged.

The announcement of the transaction advisory services tender follows Transnet shortlisting Boegoebaai Port & Rail Consortium, Boegoebaai Development Consortium, and Project Elephant Consort, in July 2023 to submit proposals for the design, funding and construction project.

The nine-month advisory contract will see the winner provide advice on legal, commercial, financial, and technical transaction services, so as to enable the successful procurement and commercialisation of the development of the port.

For years, the development of the project had seemingly stalled, but the announcement of this tender, coupled with its designation as one of ISA's top seven infrastructure projects requiring urgent support, has provided it with much-needed impetus.

The ISA is the central government agency responsible for coordinating and driving the national infrastructure investment programme, with the intent of im-

proving infrastructure investment and delivery.

The creation of a port is expected to have a significant impact on the economic development of the Northern Cape. During construction, which is estimated to take between three to four years, about 3,000 direct jobs will be created, along with about 14,000 indirect jobs.

Once the construction of the port is completed, 400 permanent jobs will be needed to manage the port. Over time, an estimated 13,770 jobs could be created in the region.

This will be a much-needed boost to the Northern Cape government, which has sunk deeper into poverty.

In a presentation to Parliament in July, the Northern Cape said poverty in the province worsened significantly between 2014 and 2024, with the number of individuals living below

the upper poverty line increasing by 33,84%, from 611,000 in 2014 to 817,000 in 2024.

"The percentage of the population living in poverty rose from 51,48% in 2014 to 59,23% in 2024, an increase of 7,75 percentage points. This trend indicates a growing challenge in addressing poverty, reflecting potential economic stagnation, rising costs, or insufficient social interventions," it said.

Aside from being an export hub for green hydrogen and minerals like manganese, the port is also envisioned to allow for the importing of diesel.

The proposed port is also being looked at as a base for the gas and oil efforts off the West Coast. The Northern Cape government told Parliament that studies are being undertaken by SHELL, Total and PetroSA.

Polymer Bearings heavy-lift equipment runs longer

POLYMER technology is increasingly being used in heavy-lifting equipment and other industrial machinery, where it is replacing steel bearings for strength and durability in a growing range of demanding applications.

World-leading polymer bearing manufacturer, igus, produces a wide range of polymer bearings that do not require external lubrication and are resistant to corrosion. This makes them ideal for environments where dirt, moisture or abrasive particles can quickly destroy traditional bearings. Manufactured from advanced tribologically-optimised polymers, they deliver minimal wear and a long service life even under high loads in applications like lifting.

"In South Africa we found that one of the key advantages of polymer bearings in heavy lifting equipment is their ability to operate reliably in 'dirty' conditions such as timber processing, construction and mining. Sawdust, sand or grit that might cause steel bearings to seize or wear prematurely has little effect on polymer surfaces. This ensures consistent reduced downtime and significantly lower maintenance costs," says igus product manager, Juan-Eric Davidtz.

He adds that the versatility of polymer bearings extends across industries. They combine strength with lightweight design, resist chemicals,



Polymers are increasingly being used due to the material's many advantages over steel

dampen vibration and can be tailored for specific load or temperature ranges. Importantly, they last longer than steel bearings in many real-world applications where lubrication is inconsistent or where contaminants are present.

Ten lifting applications where polymer bearings replace steel for longer life:

- Scissor lifts – pivot points and joints that handle high loads and repeated cycles.
- Forklifts – steering, mast and lift linkages especially in dusty or wet conditions.
- Boom lifts / cherry pickers – articulating joints that carry heavy platforms safely.
- Crane booms and hoists – corrosion-re-

sistant, low-maintenance pivot points.

- Dock levellers – hinges and pivots exposed to continuous movement and debris.
- Hydraulic lift tables – bushings and pins that endure high compression forces.
- Mobile platform lifts – bearings that ensure smooth motion in all positions.
- Warehouse stackers – heavy-duty pivot points in compact, high-use environments.
- Material handling trolleys – lift mechanisms that resist wear from repetitive loads.
- Telehandlers / telescopic lifts – joints and pivots with long-lasting, lubrication-free operation.

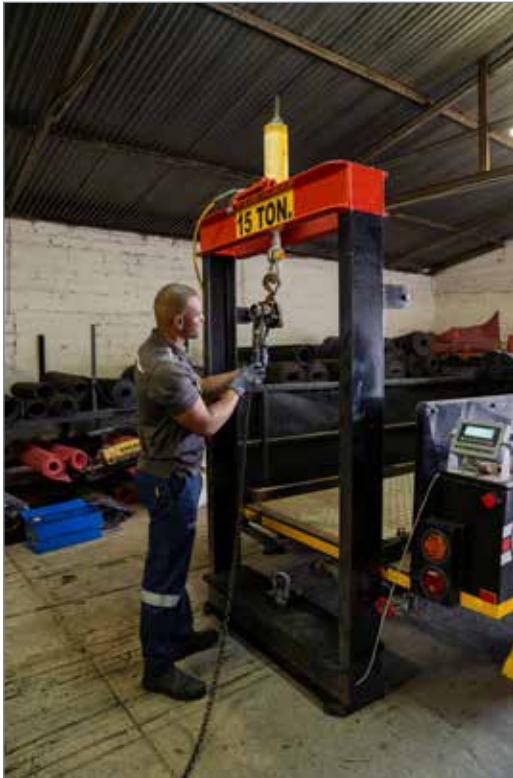
"The adoption of polymer bearings in lifting equipment is all about educating engineers and service technicians who are used to using steel bearings and lubrications and are not yet aware of the higher performance abilities of our modern-day polymers. These are often much more durable and efficient and in some cases a simple switch to polymer bearings can save companies hundreds of thousands of Rands in maintenance savings. Wherever we work with companies to find solutions for their lifting equipment challenges we have our customer's designers and operators comment that the machines operate more reliably and require less maintenance in tough industrial environments," concludes Juan Eric.

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BMG lifts safety and performance with advanced lifting and rigging solutions



BMG's dedicated Tools & Equipment Lifting and Rigging division provides solutions for lifting and rigging challenges in all industries, including automotive and tyre manufacturing, paper and pulp, sugar, forestry and agriculture, as well as marine, construction and mining.

"BMG's dedicated Lifting and Rigging team, supplies and supports a broad range of quality branded and industry-approved equipment, that is enhanced by a technical advisory and support service, designed for simplified, efficient and safe procedures in every application," explains Tanita Rousel-Brett, Tools & Equipment Lifting and Rigging, BMG. "BMG specialists consider the safe operation of lifting and rigging equipment, as one of the most critical aspects in materials handling. We recommend that our customers have their equipment independently load tested annually, or as per urgent requirements and inspected every three months. BMG has a fully equipped trailer and is able to offer an onsite load testing and inspection service for convenience and peace of mind."

BMG complies fully with the requirements of the lifting machine and lifting tackle regulations of the Occupational Health and Safety Act (OHSA) Act 85 of 1993. The company's Lifting Machinery Inspector (LMI) is certified in terms of the

Engineering Profession Act 2000 (Act no46 of 2000) and is a registered member of the Engineering Council of South Africa (ECSA).

BMG has approval from The Department of Labour in terms of the driven machinery regulations 18 (5) of the occupational and safety Act 1993, for examining and testing of lifting machines and lifting tackle.

BMG's Kito Crosby product portfolio - perfectly suited for dependable use in demanding environments, including marine and offshore projects - encompasses wide body and bolt type shackles for heavy and critical offshore lifts, cold Tuff Bolt type shackles for lifts conducted in extreme weather conditions and Crosby SP load monitoring solutions. ROV shackles

and hooks are manufactured to withstand the toughest conditions and are suitable for use with a variety of remotely operated underwater vehicles.

BMG is a sub-distributor in Southern Africa of the Kito Crosby brands and product portfolio, which includes Crosby, Gunnebo Industries, Crosby StraightPoint and Crosby IP clamps.

Included in BMG's extensive range of tools, lifting and rigging equipment are electric, chain and lever hoists, geared and plain crawls, chain, wire and webbing slings and hydraulic, pneumatic hoists and winches, as well as manual Tirfor winches and ropes. The range also comprises high-pressure hydraulic tools, mechanical ratchet jacks, jib cranes and eye bolts.

BMG offers complete process solutions to all sectors of industry, which means customers can access essential quality branded engineering components, technical services and support from one well-established, reliable supplier.

The company's specialist divisions - Bearings, Seals and Gaskets, Power Transmission, Drives and Motors, Materials Handling, Agriculture, Tools & Fasteners, Hydraulics, Filtration, Lubrication and Field Services - offers an integrated approach to engineering, that guarantees lower production costs and higher efficiencies.

<https://bmgworld.net/bmg/en/ZAR/c/B0000816/p/B0000816>



South Africa launches first harbour-based net recycling facility at the V&A Waterfront

SOUTH Africa has taken a major step in tackling marine plastic pollution with the launch of its first harbour-based net recycling facility at the V&A Waterfront in Cape Town.

On 10 October 2025, the Minister of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment, Dr Dion George, officially opened the containerised "micro-recycling pod" at Collier Jetty. The facility processes end-of-life fishing nets into reusable raw materials for the plastics manufacturing industry — a breakthrough for the country's blue economy.

"The recycling and repurposing of end-of-life fishing gear provides a glimpse of what a sustainable future can look like," said Minister George. "This is how we

build resilience in our blue economy — ensuring that economic activity supports environmental protection."

Developed by OCEAN Action Network (OCEAN) and Ocean Plastic Technologies (OPT), the recycling pod is housed in a converted shipping container and can shred, wash, dry and densify up to 100 kilograms of used nets per hour. By transforming discarded gear into clean plastic flakes, it prevents waste from reaching landfills or the ocean and creates new economic opportunities in recycling and manufacturing.

The South African Deep-Sea Trawling Industry Association (SADSTIA) secured funding for the pilot through the Marine

Stewardship Council's Ocean Stewardship Fund, while the V&A Waterfront donated space to host and operate the facility.

Minister George said the project supports South Africa's commitments under the National Environmental Management: Waste Act, advances Sustainable Development Goal 14: Life Below Water, and aligns with the ambitions of the Global Plastic Treaty.

"This is more than just a recycling project," said Estelle van der Merwe, Managing Director of OCEAN Action Network. "It's about protecting marine ecosystems, supporting fishing communities, and creating a model that can be replicated across the continent."

SADSTIA Executive Secretary Johann Augustyn added: "Mitigating the impacts of ghost gear is essential for healthy oceans. We hope this pilot inspires wider adoption of technology-based recycling solutions."

OPT plans to replicate the model in other coastal regions. "By cleaning and densifying plastic on-site, we're turning waste into a resource — and building a foundation for sustainable job creation and growth," said OPT's Oliver Nudds.

Minister George concluded: "Our oceans are the lifeblood of South Africa's future. When government, business and civil society work together, we turn waste into opportunity — and stewardship into action."

Logistics of everything - the hidden force redefining the future of work

By Maureen Phiri,
Director at Oxyon
People Solutions



THE term 'logistics' typically brings to mind the business of trucks, warehouses and transport routes. However, that narrow definition is simply no longer accurate in the current economy.

Logistics has evolved into the backbone of every sector, connecting people, processes and products or even services across industries. As technology reshapes the way goods and information move, the success of South Africa's workforce will increasingly depend on its ability to master new logistics skills: digital literacy, data handling, systems thinking and collaboration across industries.

A new definition of logistics

Every business relies on logistics. Behind every product launch, infrastructure project or service delivery is a complex network of planning, movement and coordination. Logistics is what turns production into progress, and it extends far beyond physical trans-

port. Today, logistics is about managing intelligent systems and information flows as much as trucks and cargo. Artificial intelligence, robotics, cloud computing and the Internet of Things (IoT) are transforming supply chains into smart, interconnected ecosystems. This shift demands a new generation of professionals who can interpret data, integrate digital tools and optimise operations across multiple sectors.

Building the skills for a digital logistics economy

To stay relevant, South Africa's workforce must evolve alongside these systems. Traditional operational expertise must be paired with technical fluency, which requires an understanding of how to work with data, automation and analytics. The logistics professional of tomorrow may never step inside a warehouse; instead, they may design digital platforms, monitor sustainability metrics or manage energy distribution networks.

This evolution opens opportunities for upskilling and reskilling across all levels of the economy. Continuous learning programmes that focus on technology integration, leadership, data analysis and communication will help workers and businesses stay relevant in this digital future. Companies also have a vital role to play by making these opportu-

nities accessible, breaking training down into manageable, step-by-step pathways that empower people to participate in the digital transition rather than fear it.

Rethinking roles in a connected logistics world

As logistics becomes increasingly technical and interconnected, traditional distinctions between manual and office-based work no longer apply. Today's logistics environment demands a blend of operational expertise and digital capability — people who can combine practical experience with data-driven decision-making and technological insight. This integration of hands-on knowledge and analytical skill is what will define the logistics workforce of the future.

Roles such as cloud logistics architect, sustainability compliance specialist and IoT device technician are emerging as critical to the future of logistics. These positions require different training and mindsets but share a common foundation: the ability to manage complexity and deliver efficiency through technology. Recognising and investing in these skills will elevate logistics from a support function to a strategic growth driver.

Diversity and inclusion as enablers of innovation

Developing South Africa's logistics workforce

also means widening the talent pipeline. Encouraging participation from women, youth, and diverse communities expands the skill base and stimulates innovation. Diversity is not just about representation; it is about building teams that think differently and bring fresh solutions to complex logistical challenges.

From operating AI-assisted vehicles to managing data-driven supply networks, the next generation of logistics professionals will need creativity as much as competence. Nurturing that diversity of thought is essential to ensuring South Africa remains competitive and inclusive as the world transitions to smart logistics.

The logistics of everything

Logistics is no longer a single industry; it is the operating system of modern economies. By investing in digital skills, fostering lifelong learning and championing inclusion, South Africa can turn the logistics transformation into a catalyst for employment, innovation and growth. Every sector, from mining and energy to healthcare and retail, depends on logistics. Both the challenge and the opportunity lie in preparing people with the skills to manage the logistics of everything.

THE NEXT GENERATION

Internships, Skills & Development Programmes

AECOM champions the next generation of innovators this STEM Day

IN celebration of STEM Day 2025 on 8 November, global infrastructure leader AECOM is shining a spotlight on the bright young minds shaping South Africa's engineering future and the initiatives that make their journeys possible.

Through bursaries, mentorship and university partnerships, the company continues to nurture a new generation of professionals equipped to design sustainable solutions for a rapidly evolving world.

Bursary students who became professionals

AECOM's bursary programme continues to be a cornerstone of its talent development strategy, providing access to higher education for students from diverse backgrounds. Former bursary students such as Krisha Radia, Thomas Manzie, and Belinda Herbst have each transitioned from university to professional practice



Krisha Radia.

support extended far beyond her studies. "The company encourages continuous learning through study leave, external training and AECOM University," she notes. "It is about empowering us to keep improving."

Herbst believes technology mastery, from AI and digital twins to climate resilience design, will distinguish the next generation of professionals, but she cautions that "communication and collaboration remain key to making those technologies meaningful."

Promoting STEM engagement at schools and universities

AECOM's long-term commitment to STEM development goes beyond individual bursaries. The company actively partners with schools and universities to create hands-on experiences and mentorship opportunities that demystify STEM careers.



Thomas Manzie.

see real-world applications of what they study." By engaging early and maintaining long-term relationships with participating schools, AECOM has seen measurable interest from learners pursuing STEM pathways year after year.

For Abramjee, a Professional Quantity Surveyor, AECOM's culture of lifelong learning is central to its impact. From bursaries for postgraduate studies to mentoring young graduates, she believes AECOM's greatest contribution lies in its inclusive environment. "Diverse perspectives lead to the best solutions," says Abramjee. "Whether it is through AI and sustainable technologies or mentorship and outreach, our goal is the same, which is to make a tangible difference in people's lives."

Building a resilient STEM future

Across all responses, a common theme



Belinda Herbst.

through AECOM's structured mentorship and development initiatives.

For Radia, now a Candidate Structural Engineer, the bursary opened doors to both academic and professional growth. "The bursary programme created a pathway to mentorship, industry exposure and real project experience that shaped my career direction."

Through coordinating AECOM's job shadowing initiatives, she now mentors and aims to inspire learners herself, clos-

These initiatives are driven by professionals such as Yvonne Bosch, Lizbe Henze and Qabilah Abramjee, who each help coordinate outreach and education programmes nationwide.

Bosch, an Associate Quantity Surveyor, highlights that AECOM's youth development approach combines "practical exposure, experiential learning, and mentorship."

Through job shadowing, speed networking and partnerships with organ-

emerges in that AECOM's belief that innovation, diversity and mentorship are inseparable. By supporting young South Africans through bursaries, training and exposure, the company is ensuring that the next generation of engineers, scientists and designers can meet the country's complex environmental, economic and social challenges with creativity and confidence.

As STEM Day 2025 celebrates innovation worldwide, AECOM reaffirms its



Yvonne Bosch.



Lizbe Henze.



Qabilah Abramjee.

ing the loop of opportunity.

Manzie, who joined AECOM after completing his studies, describes the company as "a learning organisation" that allows employees to test, innovate and grow. "I was surprised by the freedom to explore new tools and methods," he says. "That space to learn is where innovation thrives." His experience reflects AECOM's broader culture of curiosity and collaboration, where problem-solving and communication are as valued as technical proficiency.

For Herbst, an Engineer, AECOM's

isations like Nzalo Careers, AECOM reaches learners from township and rural communities, introducing them to engineering, digital and quantity surveying disciplines.

One standout initiative, the Middelburg District Hospital project, included on-site technical training for young people, demonstrating how infrastructure projects can also drive education and empowerment.

Henze, an Engineer, adds that AECOM's involvement with schools and universities "helps learners and students

commitment to building opportunity one learner, one project and one idea at a time.



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Why most leaders are preparing for the wrong future

By Chantelle Botha



WHILE companies invest millions in AI training and digital transformation, they're missing a critical insight: as machines get better at analysis and optimisation, the real competitive advantage is an authentic human connection. And most of the leaders jumping on the AI bandwagon are spectacularly missing the boat.

The irony is striking. We're training leaders to compete with technology instead of mastering what makes them irreplaceable. Walk into any leadership programme and you'll see modules on emotional intelligence and empathy – all being taught to executives who confuse professional competence with identity integrity.

You can't develop authentic human capabilities without first knowing who you actually are. Most leaders believe they've done this work. They point to their 360 reviews and personality assessments. But knowing your professional profile isn't the same as

understanding your authentic integrity. It's the difference between reading your resume and examining what you truly value.

Four practical shifts leaders need to make today

Start with identity

Before your next team meeting, ask yourself: What are my non-negotiable values, and when did I last compromise them to avoid conflict? Leaders who don't embody their values inevitably shape-shift to meet expectations, creating the confusion and distrust that breeds toxic cultures.

The practical action: Write down three values you claim to hold. Then audit your last week. Did your actions reflect them? If not, why not?

Connect the dots

Emotional intelligence without authenticity becomes sophisticated people-pleasing. Creativity without self-knowledge becomes performative innovation. Yet most programmes treat these as separate skills. Authentic creativity and genuine emotional intelligence both require the same foundation: identity integrity and having the courage to stay true to it, especially when it's uncomfortable.

The practical action: Before your next difficult conversation, pause for sixty seconds. Ask yourself: "Who am I in this moment, and how does that inform my response?" This simple check prevents autopilot reactions that erode trust.

In a digital world, go analogue

Your competitive advantage lies in the fundamentally human interactions your

competitors have abandoned, not your tech arsenal. While everyone else is automating every touchpoint, the leaders who stand out are the ones going radically old-school. The practical action: This week, replace three digital interactions with analog ones. Instead of Slack messages, walk to someone's desk. Instead of email updates, gather your team in a room. Instead of scheduling a Zoom, grab coffee in person. These "inefficient" moments are where trust gets built, where real problems surface, and where the breakthroughs happen that no AI can orchestrate. The basics that make us human are your only sustainable edge.

Pick up the phone

Stop hiding behind "I sent a message and I'm waiting for a response." Real connection requires real conversation. Teams perform exponentially better when people feel safe to show up as humans, not just role-players checking boxes.

The practical action: This week, have one unscheduled conversation with someone on your team where you ask, "What's really going on?" and actually listen. No agenda. No solutions. Just genuine curiosity.

The real stakes

This isn't about becoming a "better" leader - it's about survival in an AI-drenched world. The leaders who thrive in the next decade will master the integration of both knowing themselves deeply and connecting with others authentically.

AI will transform your industry, and your teams will need to leverage it. But not at the expense of developing the irreplaceable human capabilities that will matter when your identity integrity is ultimately all that will differentiate you. Are you preparing them

to compete with machines, or to lead with the humanity that machines can't replicate?

Chantelle Botha is known globally as *The Catalyst* - an Identity Architect who integrates integrity from the bedroom to the boardroom. As founder of Phoenix and author of "Phoenix Rising," she challenges conventional leadership paradigms through her signature (se)X-Factor framework. Her unconventional approach to authenticity and transformation has made her a sought-after speaker who doesn't just inspire - she ignites. Having risen from personal depths to global influence, Chantelle leads a movement of personal reinvention with her straight-shooting, transformational style.



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Workplace burnout becomes South Africa's silent productivity killer

AS businesses race to close out the year, a growing threat is quietly eroding South Africa's productivity: workplace burnout. With 36% of employees experiencing daily stress and over 71% disengaged at work, the impact on the economy is staggering - and climbing.

"Employers are starting to recognise that investing in healthcare is fundamental to good business practice"

Recent data shows that unplanned absenteeism costs South African organisations around R25 billion annually, while mental health-related productivity losses drain the economy of a further R161 billion every year. The financial and human toll has made employee wellbeing not just an HR priority, but a strategic business and health imperative as well.

"No business can thrive without a healthy workforce," says Michelle Ward, Head of Talent at Bestmed Medical Scheme. Currently, corporate groups make up 60% of Bestmed's membership base, signalling a clear shift towards integrated wellbeing solutions that go beyond traditional medical cover. "Employers are starting to rec-

ognise that investing in healthcare is fundamental to good business practice".

As one of South Africa's leading medical schemes, Bestmed has seen a marked increase in corporates prioritising employee health as a core benefit, seeking out comprehensive healthcare benefits and wellness programmes that can complement their Employee Assistance Programme (EAP).

These employee-based healthcare models combine preventative care, mental health education and chronic disease management to help curb burnout before it leads to absenteeism or presenteeism. Programmes built around a biopsychosocial model provide access to on-site and off-site professionals who diagnose and treat stress-related conditions - making professional care both accessible and normalised.

The results are tangible. When employees are supported through wellness screenings, counselling services and health education, they show higher engagement, lower turnover and improved performance. The return on investment in wellbeing strategies can be measured not only in productivity gains but in the creation of a healthier, more resilient workforce.

As Ward notes, "We've seen first-hand that companies willing to invest in the basics, from onsite nurse consultations to



mental health programmes, are the ones reaping the benefits in staff morale, retention and overall output. Wellness has become an economic lever, not an expense line."

As the year draws to a close, organisations would do well to seek a partner that

provides solutions to health challenges to make the journey a less complicated one. The cost of ignoring employee health is far higher than the cost of investing in it - and in 2026, the businesses that thrive will be those that treat health and wellbeing as a competitive advantage," concludes Ward.



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