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Welcome >>

CONSUMER FOCUS – ISSUE 8

Welcome to the latest edition of Consumer Focus Magazine, our dedicated annual publication for the global consumer industry. >>

A combination of a declining oil price, low inflation and rising salaries has meant consumers with renewed spending power have been at the forefront of industry growth this year. Businesses have also benefited from a healthy and competitive export environment, facilitated in large part by the European Central Bank's (ECB) progressive monetary policy, which has had a positive effect on unemployment figures in many countries.

"... we catch up with senior executives from some of the sector's most dynamic brands"

A slowdown in emerging market growth, however, has impacted some businesses and the longer term uncertainty created by a vote in favour of Brexit will no doubt continue to reverberate over the coming months and years. Governments across Europe will continue to consider their negotiating positions with the UK in relation to the structural changes created by Brexit and its longer term implications for the EU model.

In this issue, we catch up with senior executives from some of the sector's most dynamic brands to find out how companies are leveraging opportunities to grow, amidst what is an increasingly complex and challenging trading environment.

A big factor at the heart of the most successful growth stories continues to be innovation. Increasingly fragmented consumer tastes and price preferences mean that brands must work doubly hard to improve products and keep consumers interested. In our featured article on page 6, Ian Kee Candlé's Mélanie Stack tells us how innovation, optimisation and authenticity are the key product attributes driving the group's transition into a global organisation.

Furthermore, the ability to build a genuine connection with consumers has led to greater investment in big data analytics, as firms attempt to turn customer data into powerful insights.

On page 48, eBay's Andrew Whitehair tells us how the ecommerce giant is developing tools to get ever closer to its users. And on page 20 we learn how sporting goods giant Amer Sports is seeking to further integrate its brands into a digital ecosystem with products that track and analyse fitness performance across a range of different metrics. Wearable technology is investigated again in greater detail on page 62, in our interview with industry influencer Pedro Diezma.

While enjoying boosted sales and high footfall, many brands and retailers are realising that the prevailing culture of discounting is stifling growth. This is particularly apparent, as we find out on page 33, in Spain, where supermarkets like Mercadona have risen to prominence over the last few years. B&W Group's Miguel Crapa, however, explains on page 35 how brands are fighting back and on page 26 former SCA Ckball Innovation Director turned consultant, Richard Nall, has some more insightful tips for building FMCG brands in the age of the discounters.

Elsewhere, the health and wellness industry is scrutinised on pages 56 and 66 when we talk to key players in Germany's burgeoning bio industry before taking a look at a Norwegian fitness enterprise success story. Iwinings-Ovo's Annkatrin Ott shares people development initiatives within the business' international and emerging markets division on page 44 and on page 14 is an in-depth analysis of opportunities in France's untapped digital economy.

As ever, throughout this edition you can find all of the latest news from our teams across Europe.

We hope you enjoy the latest edition of Consumer Focus Magazine and would welcome feedback on any of its content.

PAUL WILSON
CEO



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