

Beware... Winter is coming!

By [Rolf Akermann](#)

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As a matter of fact, winter has been coming (as in the case of "*The Game of Thrones*") for decades. Consumers have been demanding more clarity as to what the contents/ingredients/nutritional values are of the products they buy...

They have forced companies to change the recipes of products to not include MSG, preservatives, added salt and sugar, colorants, etc. The "Healthy Eating" movement has grown and will continue to grow as consumers become more savvy. It is not only brands and companies/corporates that have to make sure that they deliver what the consumers want, but retailers as well.

The ostrich neck story - Being honest vs dubious

PicknPay vs Checkers



I love cooking ostrich neck. It is not often available, so when I spot it on the shelf, I stock up. So it was that, after three months of not finding it, Checkers had some on shelf. Needless to say, I cleared the shelf. Obviously, I put it in the freezer to have when I felt like it. The first batch I cooked (ostrich bucco, i.e. osso bucco) was tough and the taste was 50% of what it should have been.

Then I read the price tag and the light bulb lit up. It read "FRZ OSTRICH NECK". But, when I bought it, it was not frozen. It was only on the price tag and not a separate large sticker as Pick n Pay uses. To me, it is the difference of being honest versus dubious. Maybe this is legal, but is it fair to the consumer? I will continue to shop at Checkers for venison as they stock it regularly, but I will take my glasses along! Do I feel cheated? Yes!

The forgiving consumer

Checkers were also in hot water regarding their chicken, which was repackaged after it passed its sell by date. But yet consumers return. The same is likely to happen to Nestle's Maggi debacle in India. How a Swiss group (with a 70% market share in this area) could stuff up so badly, amazes me. But, how long before the consumer says, "No more!"? The more companies/brands/retailers err, the higher the chance of consumers walking away from them forever.

This opens a gap in the market

With the right strategy, it is possible to position a brand/company as the one that is fighting the hardest for the consumer and of course the environment. Doing everything in its power to deliver "healthy" products that is sustainable and 100% green. A good example of how successful this can be is The Honest Company (www.honest.com) in the USA.

From humble beginnings, they have grown into a \$1bn company in the space of just four years. Having a celebrity (Jessica Alba) as an owner obviously helps, but their offering is clearly working. They are about to launch in China, followed by the UK and Europe. It is inevitable that more "honest" companies will appear, the more "mistakes" brands and companies make. The writing is on the wall, winter is coming, so get those strategies in place, or be left out in the cold.

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ABOUT ROLF AKERMANN

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