

GS1 Singapore successfully wraps up the ECR Forum

15 May 2015 saw a fruitful execution of the Efficient Consumer Response (ECR) Singapore forum by GS1 Singapore. Attended by over 160 people, the forum created an opportunity for retailers and manufacturers to understand the needs of emerging new consumers and the evolving trends of the consumer market.



The ECR forum took place at the NTUC Fairprice Auditorium

With the increasing digital lifestyles of consumers, coupled with the rise of the middle class population, new markets are proliferating at a rate so swift that it is now an increasing challenge for retailers and manufacturers to capture this new wave of consumers. The ECR forum thus could not have come at a more opportune time, where the convergence of CEOs, retailers, manufacturers, practitioners and quality experts presented an excellent platform for an exchange of ideas, knowledge and success stories.



Delivering the opening address was Mr. Tng Ah Yiam, Deputy Chief Executive Officer, NTUC Fairprice

During the opening address by Mr. Tng Ah Yiam, Deputy Chief Executive Officer of NTUC Fairprice, he shared that studies have revealed a middle class consumer boom in China, India, and the Southeast Asia region, and these consumers are fast playing a pivotal role in shaping the industry.

It is therefore imperative that closer attention be paid to the needs of these consumers. Ms. Chong Nyet Chin, Director of Food Safety and Quality of NTUC Fairprice Co-Operative Limited shared this sentiment. Reminding participants of the forum that today's consumers are more informed and aware, she urged them to consider their needs so as to save time and cost.



Ms. Ms. Chong Nyet Chin, Director of Food Safety and Quality of NTUC Fairprice Co-Operative Limited, addressing the group of participants

"In a world with 5 million points of sale, how do you make sure that your product is a fingertip away? ... What is the right operating structure to get (your product) out there effectively?" These were some points of consideration Mr. Dwight Hutchins, Managing Director of Accenture Strategy, APAC, left participants to ponder over.



Mr. Dwight Hutchins, Managing Director of Accenture Strategy, APAC

Daniel Teo, speaking as the General Manager of Watson's Personal Care Stores Pte Ltd had some tips to share: "Today, consumers are more sophisticated. Their needs are different and it is important that both the brand owners and retailers constantly engage with consumers – not only through social media, but face-to-face interaction... We must be responsible for the knowledge transfer to consumers. Listen to the people, be willing to take the good with the bad, and keep improving with the new market changes."



Mr. Thomas Yeo, Strategic Planning & Business Development Manager, LHT Holdings Limited, spoke about the new generation GS1 EPC RFID ECR pallet tracks and traces

Indeed, with the new wave of consumer behaviour vastly different from the traditional one, it is essential that their needs and wants be communicated effectively. Said Mr. Tng, "Things are changing very fast, and we need to make those necessary changes. We need to understand and find out what exactly the consumers are looking for. Today's participants are made up of suppliers, manufacturers, and retailers. There are a lot of SME suppliers here today, and they don't attend large conferences that give them an idea of the future consumer trends. This conference is good in that it gives GS1 Singapore a chance to do more for FMCG (Fast-Moving Consumer Goods) suppliers".



Mr. Tan Swee Woon, addressed the current shopper and retail trends



The forum ended with an engaging sharing session between the panel of speakers and the participants

Ms. Carrie Tan, Marketing Manager of Gardenia Food (S) Pte Ltd, who was present at the forum, was of a like mind. Speaking to the editorial team, she shared: "I think the consumer trends are very important. I am from an FMCG company and we want to know how to reach out to the consumers. The speakers have mentioned the growing number of consumers and how to reach out to them in a multi-channel / multi-market segment and this is definitely a good point for our company to think of."

So how does one bridge the gap between retailers and consumers? Mr. Tan Swee Woon, Head Retailer & Merchandising Services of Nielsen, sums it up succinctly: "I hope that retailers and manufacturers will work more closely to become more consumer-centric and achieve more win-win outcomes".



Lunchtime presented a good networking opportunity between retailers, manufacturers and quality experts