

Preface

The global economic crisis has strongly modified consumers' purchasing behaviour. In particular, consumers' brand preferences for National Brands (NBs) and Private Labels (PLs) have dramatically changed. Thus, the global economic slump has accelerated the growth of PLs at the same time as the underlying long-term shift in power moves from manufacturers to retailers. In the past, PL sales spiked during a recession but quickly returned to normal levels at the first sign of an upturn. However, this time PLs remain static.

PLs in the consumer packaged goods industry have experienced an intense worldwide surge in availability and market share in recent years. In this regard, PLs have been introduced to over 90 % of all consumer packaged goods categories. PLs already account for 56.9 % of the total consumer packaged goods (CPG) consumption in the UK (49.2 % value share), 49.6 % in Germany (37.7 % value share), 49.5 % in Spain (40.4 % value share), and 22.9 % in the USA (18.5 % value share).

There are many reasons for retailers to increase the presence of their brands. Three aspects can be highlighted: (1) higher retail margins on PLs, (2) leverage with national brands and (3) higher consumer store loyalty. There is significant evidence to support the first two reasons; the fact that PLs generate high margins for retailers has been acknowledged in both business and academic press. In the academic context, previous literature reports average gross retailer PL margins of up to 30 % and even higher. Also, a retailer's PL percentage margins are high on average, although such margins vary considerably across categories. Manufacturer and retailer power, along with category concentration, are category-level aspects influencing a retailer's margin in terms of both PLs and NBs.

The 'new landscape' in which NBs and PLs compete offers new exciting opportunities for researchers to discover different aspects underlying this new framework. It is with this goal in mind that this First International Symposium on Advances in National Brands & Private Labels in Retailing (IS-NB&PL 2014) has been launched and organized. Although there are some conferences including sessions related to the topic, this symposium is believed to be the first international

forum to present and discuss original, rigorous and significant contributions specifically on NB and PL issues.

Each paper submitted to NB&PL 2014 has gone through a stringent peer review process by members of the Programme Committee, which comprises 36 internationally renowned researchers from 13 countries.

A total of 18 papers have been accepted, and they address diverse areas of application such as assortment decisions, dual-brand manufacturers, positioning, branding, consumer preferences, online context, economic crisis, review of literature, PL share, PL trends and PL innovation, among others. A wide variety of theoretical and methodological approaches have been used.

We believe that this first international symposium has achieved the aim set initially: to encourage, promote and publish high-quality contributions on national brands and private labels that can aid retailers and manufacturers in dealing with a wide range of issues. Nonetheless, we hope that this is only the first of many future editions which will help to strengthen this promising research field.

Finally, we wish to acknowledge the support of our sponsors: the Ramón Areces Foundation (with backing from El Corte Inglés) and the Universitat Oberta de Catalunya. We would also like to thank IRI Worldwide (Spanish office) for helping us put together the panels of professionals to discuss several topics at the conference. Last but not least, we would like to thank all the contributing authors, members of the Programme Committee and the rest of the Organizing Committee for their highly valuable work in enabling the success of this first edition of NB&PL; it would not have been possible without you all. Thank you for your generous contribution.

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