



November 2005 witnessed the return of one of the most popular and stimulating business seminars in grocery retailing. Teams from the supply and retail elements of the industry in the region locked heads in the confines of the Metropolitan Hotel in Dubai for a four day session, to negotiate deals in a factious marketplace.

# STOREWARS: The return

## What is Storewars?

Storewars was developed by Marcel Corstjens, Professor of Marketing at Insead, France. He has been running this program overseas for many years. ACNielsen has also run Storewars in Europe and Asia for several years.

Storewars is a business simulation that has been specially designed to capture the modern challenges of the Fast Moving Consumer Goods (FMCG) industry at both retail and consumer levels. Storewars replicates the complex interplay between manufacturers, retailers and consumers. Five teams, three representing manufacturers and two representing retailers, compete to attract heterogeneous segments of consumers and shoppers to their brands or to their stores.

Teams representing manufacturers and retailers battle for Mindspace (consumer

loyalty) and Shelfspace over the course of four days. Armed with company reports and market research information, retailers and manufacturers negotiate and make a series of "decisions" over four "periods", each period representing six months in the real world.

Decision areas include segmentation, positioning, promotions, price, discounts, new product development, terms of payment, shelf space allocation, store service levels and category management.

The programme has been designed to challenge and stimulate executives up to the highest level in the FMCG industry. This program is invaluable for manufacturers, brokers and retailers as well as market research providers and consultants.

Ideally suited for sales, category management, trade marketing and marketing, those from other departments

such as finance, production, systems and information analysis would benefit greatly by gaining an understanding of the tasks facing their colleagues.

It recreates the vital retailer supplier negotiating process within a seminar, as the teams of manufacturers and retailers negotiate with one another to influence each others' decisions. These negotiations bring home to the teams the motivations and pressures felt by their "valued partners".

Storewars can be run for a minimum of 22 and a maximum of 34 participants. The optimal number of participants is 29. This gives three manufacturer teams of five people and two retailer teams of seven people.

By telescoping the experience of operating in the real world, it gives participants a unique overview of the relationships between sales, marketing,

## Primary Learning Objectives

- Offer greater insights into the relationships between suppliers and retailers in the FMCG industry.
- Transform information into profitable decisions.
- Provide trading customers with the most appropriate information for effective decision-making.
- Use enhanced negotiation skills to arrive at win-win situations.
- Work in teams to achieve a group objective.
- Operate more effectively in a cross-functional environment.

finance, production and market research that is often obscured in the complexity of real life organizations. Participants from across functions (finance, production, etc.) get the chance to experience and understand the tasks facing their colleagues in sales and marketing.

As in the real world, there are winners and losers. This competitive aspect makes Storewars seminars involving, memorable and real while the cost of mistakes remains at zero.



1. Facilitators (left-right) Jane Rolfe and Hope Mandel enjoy five minutes relaxation in between grueling 10 hour plus, storewars sessions  
2. Rival teams begin their negotiations in what is referred to as 'breakfast rooms' these sessions can and do get quite heated as each team endeavours to obtain the best deal from their opponents  
3. Storewars participants for this session came from both grocery retailing and their supplier companies, these included teams from: Al Azira Foods, Carrefour UAE and KSA, EPPCO, Cola Cola, Master Foods, Unilever, Kraft Foods and Energizer Middle East

