

# Supermarket advertising... Is price everything?

By [Tony Wightman](#)

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Pack and claim has degenerated to pack and price, a sort of jumbled catalogue paid for by suppliers. The worst of it is that the endless inserts that arrive with a thump in the local paper are largely neutralised by the opposition. The two main groups Pick n Pay and Shoprite/Checkers are producing such similar glossy inserts that if you look quickly, it is hard to tell whose insert you are seeing.

Today's housewife makes her price selection **from the shelves**, muttering the while about the increases from last month. I think the inserts' overlarge images and the many pages required to contain them all are a massive waste of time and money and some sort of peace accord between the major players would save money for everyone, including customers, if savings were passed on - although this latter is probably a vain hope.

I have commissioned studies in the past to establish housewives' pricing knowledge...

As you probably know from personal experience, women have a good idea of the price range of products that they regularly purchase but these are few, not more than a dozen or so, and to bombard the marketplace with (in the case of Pick n Pay 249 items and from Checkers around 400... I lost count eventually) is asking a lot from a busy woman.

Having said that, the Checkers advertising is a little better. An effort is made to offer a couple of product benefits and some sort of structuring is attempted. This latter suffers from a visual problem as the various categories are presented in white type in red circles...exactly the same format as the pricing, and it all gets a little confused.

## Gordon... gutted

In other media Checkers has struck a good deal by using the charismatic Gordon Ramsay to promote their meats and he appears on TV endorsing the products. Unfortunately, however, he has been emasculated and simply stands and delivers the party line.

More creative thinking could have let the real Gordon Ramsay appear, without the bad language of course!! He could have offered a little advice...a real tip or two on cooking. He is a potent tool and more could have been made of him.

In the stores around the meat products, however, Ramsay is depicted but for some reason he is absent from the press ads, and this is a pity.

The third major competitor SPAR achieves the low price story in a single one page ad with a few selected products.

In my opinion this advertising barrage is a big overspend particularly as we get the same material dropped off at our gate on a regular basis.

Smaller product pictures with some **benefits** and some simple listings to cover other items would do a more efficient job and the money saved could be used for comprehension research and more consumer panels. These would be very useful for this market segment.

## ABOUT TONY WIGHTMAN

Interested in new ways to market and ways to accelerate profits. Have always been a pioneer...and like many missionaries have ended in the pot many times. Strong believer in research and am convinced that many current campaigns have never been tested for comprehension by the target audience..  
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