

TOPICS

MMR

MEETINGS SHOWS

MARCH 2008

30-April 2 — FMI: 2008 Supply Chain Conference (formerly Distribution Conference), Westin Mission Hills Resort & Spa, Palm Springs, Calif.

APRIL 2008

12-15 — NARMS INTERNATIONAL: 13th Annual Meeting, Spring Conference and Exposition, Williamsburg, Va.

23-25 — SIAL MONTREAL: North American Food Marketplace, Palais des Congrès de Montréal Exhibition Center, Montreal.

26-30 — NACDS: Annual Meeting, Palm Beach, Fla.

MAY 2008

4-6 — FMI: FMI's 2008 Supermarket Pharmacy Conference, Colocated with the FMI Show, Mandalay Conference Center/Luxor Hotel, Las Vegas.

4-7 — FMI: FMI Show Plus Markettechnics, Mandalay Bay Convention Center, Las Vegas.

4-7 — ECRM: Home Health Care, Scottsdale Plaza Resort, Scottsdale, Ariz.

18-20 — FMI: 2008 Financial Executive Conference: Arizona Biltmore Resort and Spa, Phoenix.

30-June 3 — GENERAL MERCHANDISE DISTRIBUTORS COUNCIL: GM Marketing Conference, Orlando World Center Marriott Resort & Convention Center, Orlando, Fla.

JUNE 2008

8-12 — AMERICAN SOCIETY OF HEALTH-SYSTEM PHARMACISTS: Summer Meeting, Seattle.

10-12 — URBAN EXPOSITIONS: National Lawn & Garden Show, Westin Chicago North Shore, Wheeling, Ill.

23-25 — NATIONAL RETAIL FEDERATION: Loss Prevention Conference & Expo, Orange County Convention Center, Orlando, Fla.

28-July 1 — NACDS: Marketplace Conference, San Diego.

JULY 2008

19-23 — AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF COLLEGES OF PHARMACY: Annual Meeting, Chicago.



IRI Liquid Data promises to yield new insights on the CPG business

Museum Gets Help From Ulrich

PHOENIX — Ground was broken here last month for the 180,000-square-foot Musical Instrument Museum (MIM).

"This will be like no other musical instrument museum in the world," said MIM chairman Bob Ulrich, who is also outgoing chief executive officer of Target Corp. "Through its global collection MIM will celebrate the contributions each and every country has made to our musical heritage.

"This is a unique opportunity to build a world-class museum and collection from the ground up, and we are pleased to do so in one of America's fastest-growing and most-visited cities."

Scheduled to open by early 2010, the museum will exhibit instruments from across the globe. It will show some 5,000 instruments, from the heirlooms of royal courts to handcrafted pieces passed down through generations. With the use of wireless headsets and high-resolution video screens, museum guests will be able to see instruments, hear their sounds and observe them being played in their original settings.

Other areas of the museum, on 20 acres in North Phoenix, will provide opportunities for guests to play such selected instruments as Congolese slit-gong drums and see how instruments like the violin are made. A schedule of live performances will be designed to make MIM a center of world music performance.

Albertsons Touts Healthy Eating

FULLERTON, Calif. — Albertsons LLC has launched a field trip program to introduce healthy eating habits to children.

The Albertsons Healthy Eaters program is designed to reinforce the nutrition and healthy living curricula taught in schools.

"As a retail grocer committed to being a leader in the area of health and nutrition, our company understands the long-term importance of providing tools and knowledge to enable our customers to make healthier life decisions," says Pete Van Helden, who serves as president of Albertsons Retail West.

"With the launch of our Albertsons Healthy Eaters program, we are excited about the opportunity to make a significant difference in the health and wellness of the children in the communities we serve."

NACDS Analyzes Supply Chain

CHANDLER, Ariz. — The 2008 National Association of Chain Drug Stores Supply Chain and Logistics Conference, held this month at the Sheraton Wild Horse Pass Resort here, allowed retailers and their trading partners to examine the intricacies of the supply chain.

More than 420 executives participated in the event. The conference included two days of business meetings, which allowed for

IRI Steps Into Future

CHICAGO — Information Resources Inc. (IRI) has unveiled an end-to-end data management and insights platform that chairman Romesh Wadhvani calls a "game changer" for consumer packaged goods (CPG) companies. The IRI Liquid Data (ILD)

platform is the first to fully enable a real-time, integrated information universe of marketplace and enterprise data for the CPG industry, notes Wadhvani.

"These new capabilities empower the enterprise to use information as its ultimate strategic differentiator by quickly and easily revealing invaluable business insights hidden in their existing market data assets to uncover new business opportunities and, ultimately, a new competitive paradigm," he says.

In an era of multiple data sets, ILD generates "one version of the truth, one unified platform for sales and marketing that is a repository for all consumer intelligence," adds Wadhvani. From that knowledge a manufacturer or retailer can generate any report or analytics and develop insights on the fly, he says.

He emphasizes that ILD should appeal to chains as much as suppliers. IRI is committed to offering the platform to retailers as well as manufacturers because it can add revenue for both and make both more productive and efficient, he maintains.

Developed in partnership with IBM Corp., ILD shortens the time needed for generating analytics and insights from days or weeks to seconds or minutes, says Wadhvani. And the platform bolsters front-office functions in the same way that SAP software supports the back office, he adds.

Coming up with the real-time power and flexibility of ILD required IRI to become "the Google of market and consumer

intelligence," he says. Indeed, developing ILD was more difficult than establishing Google, because the latter searches all web sites in the same way, he adds. But IRI was looking to integrate many kinds of information with many different access points, says Wadhvani.

ILD's promised insights range from how to categorize consumers to in-depth analysis of frequent-shopper programs. It can provide comprehensive assessments of new product launches or the shopping behavior of different ethnic groups, Wadhvani points out.

For a 1,000-store chain it can determine the best merchandise mix for outlets based on the demographics of the surrounding communities, and even factor in the nearness of competitors. That's because if a Wal-Mart Stores Inc. outlet is a mile away from another chain's store it will have a very different effect than if it is four miles away.

An issue of mutual concern to retailers and suppliers that ILD addresses is positioning of private label products versus brands. The platform can set prices for branded and private label items so that both offer value, Wadhvani says. That can satisfy both chains and manufacturers, rather than leaving them feel like competitors, he points out.

Such insights require probing analysis of vast amounts of integrated information that only ILD is capable of, he comments.

"We're able to integrate insights for a holistic picture of brands, neighborhoods, stores and shopper segments," he remarks. "It's the first time ever in our industry that one platform allows an across-the-board marketing, consumer or product insight."

Creating ILD took two and a half years and \$100 million. IRI's first two ILD clients — General Mills Inc. and Frito-Lay Inc. — will go live with the platform by June.

HEARD AROUND

- Kmart's offer of a choice of 10 private label over-the-counter medications for \$1 with every prescription purchase made at one of its pharmacies is too little, too late.
- One of the most vexing issues to envelop mass market retailing in recent months is the problem of tainted products.

SPOTLIGHT