

PRESS RELEASE

Hatten, 18.08.2026

From budget option to key differentiator: private label products at the IAW trade fair offer retailers decisive added value

Private-label product lines, in other words own brands, are now increasingly found in shopping baskets and at retail checkouts—and not just when budgets are tight. Depending on the product category, they currently account for between 30% and over 50% of the consumer goods which shoppers buy every day, and their growth trajectory shows no signs of slowing down. This is reason enough for the 41st IAW trade show to give this subject more visibility than ever before at Cologne's exhibition halls from 8 to 10 September 2026.

Because of their comparable quality and innovative strength, products that were once considered low-cost alternatives with inferior performance features to brand-name goods have now become a valued shopping option, and thus a key differentiator for many retailers. And this is true not just for nationwide chain stores with their large purchasing volumes but, thanks to product sourcing specialists, also for smaller retailers who source private-label products for their high-turnover product categories and can now do so without ordering thousands of units per item.

This does not, however, mean that private label products at the IAW are replacing its core business: imported goods in the low- to mid-price range, brand-name clearance items, high-quality special offers and surplus stock remain what this trade show has represented for the past four decades. In other words, an ever-changing world of value-for-money offerings that boost sales because consumers recognize the brands and are impressed by their special prices. At the same time, this is precisely where the natural limitation of such goods lies—their supply is limited and they can't be re-ordered. But what brand-name clearance items can't provide, private labels can: a predictable, consistent supply of top-selling product categories which effectively fill the gap between promotional campaigns. The result is two different ways to build a successful product range, and those who master both will in future get twice the value from their IAW purchases.

With its well-established and new exhibitors, the IAW trade show offers a wide selection of high-quality private-label purchasing opportunities—ranging from individual articles to entire product categories and differentiated private-label concepts—especially for retailers without their own sourcing or international purchasing departments. Non-food, near-food, and food: the selection at the IAW trade show is impressive. The September edition features numerous exhibitors who have announced a very specific focus on private-label offerings and, of course, these exhibitors also advise retailers for whom private labels are still uncharted territory and who wish to expand their product ranges in this area.

The IAW trade show in Cologne this September will showcase exactly what really strong private-label offerings look like. As an example of the breadth of the available product range,



**Nordwestdeutsche Messgesellschaft
Bremen-Hannover mbH**
Heidplackenweg 9
26209 Hatten, GERMANY

www.iaw-messe.de

Press Contact

Kerstin Manke (Project Manager)
+49 (0) 57 21 / 9 93 08 98
manke@iaw-messe.de

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Topbrands Deutschland GmbH markets not only A-brand clearance items but also private-label products, licensed goods and its own brands, with a focus on cosmetics, personal care and household cleaning products. An in-house design team uses these products to develop complete product lines for retailers.

Another prominent trade show exhibitor is Reinex Deutschland GmbH from Castrop-Rauxel, which has been producing body care and household cleaning products since 1964. The company has expanded its distribution of industrial brands to include the production of customised private labels—ranging from very small batches under customer brands to quantities on the scale of corporate purchasing. This makes private labels accessible even to retailers who are unable order by the container load.

Also represented at the IAW with a strong line-up of private-label products are, among others, VCA Textil GmbH with its range of stockings and underwear, accentra GmbH & Co. KG with bath and wellness products, and Quickpack Haushalt + Hygiene GmbH with household products for the kitchen and waste disposal.

The IAW's product categories overlap in online retailing, too. Branded clearance items drive search volume and clicks because customers search for specific brands, and price is then the deciding factor. Private labels provide their own product pages, brand protection and the ability to restock, which keeps a listing active throughout the entire season. How these two approaches can be combined in marketplace and online shop operations is one of the topics covered in the E-Commerce Arena, the centrepiece of the E-Commerce Quarter with its expert presentations, practical tips and panel discussions.

The 41st IAW trade fair will take place from 8 to 10 September 2026 in Halls 6 and 9 of the Cologne Exhibition Center, on Tuesday and Wednesday from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m., and on the Thursday from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. The directory of exhibitors, featuring company profiles and a selection of trade show offers, is already available online. Trade visitors can register for their free tickets via the website www.iaw-messe.de.



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