

Low prices rock Pietermaritzburg

Save You Powertrade brings in the crowds

BY LINDA WILKINS

IT'S NOT often you get a divisional marketing manager standing on a promotional stage outside a store, microphone in hand and giving out prizes, surrounded by people chanting the name of the store. However, this was the spectacular scene at the relaunch of the new-look Save You Powertrade in Pietermaritzburg, where the owner Shabeer Bux, his wife Mumtaz and the Unitrade Management Services (UMS) team from the Coastal Division in KwaZulu Natal were on hand to welcome the thousands of customers that passed through the doors on Friday the 30th of May. *Supermarket & Retailer* was also part of the action for the day.

A new direction

Save You Powertrade's relaunch is part of a broader strategy from UMS to refocus the group and its members. The plan is to increase the visibility and equity of both the Powertrade and the Food Town brands to the trade and to the general public, with the aim of building the strength of the brands. Powertrade and Food Town are Unitrade's two brands, from which their 150 members benefit in terms of buying power, marketing, promotion and advertising support, merchandising and stock expertise.

Jad Pereira, managing director of UMS, says this is a new phase for the group and its members. "First and foremost, our members are independent operators, but we believe



The management team was out in full force at the relaunch of Save You Powertrade. From left to right: Peter Momogos, general manager, UMS Coastal Division, KZN; Jad Pereira, managing director, UMS; Ravi Lutchman, divisional buyer, UMS Coastal Division, KZN and (seated) Shabeer Bux, owner, Save You Powertrade, Pietermaritzburg.

that there is an opportunity to maximise the equity of the Powertrade and Food Town brands. Through this, the group can evolve into a more powerful force in the retail and wholesale sectors."

“ We believe that there is an opportunity to maximise the equity of the Powertrade and Food Town brands. ”

There are currently 65 Powertrade and 20 Food Town outlets across South Africa. Over time, all the stores will be revamped to reflect a more standardised look and feel,

although each store will still have its own individual identity, depending on the customer base. However, the store's name – like 'Save You' – will have equal status to the Powertrade or Food Town brand. One is not seen as above the other.

To back up the new brand strategy, Pereira and his team are planning a national television and print advertising campaign that will spread the word about Powertrade and Food Town, which will drive customers to these branded stores.

Stores next on the rebranding agenda include Min Cash, due in October 2008 and Aheer's Powertrade, which will relaunch on 23 July 2008.

Save You Powertrade

This store, described by Shabeer Bux as a "hybrid between wholesale and retail," has been in business for the past 15 years and was the founder members of UMS in KZN in

2002. Shabeer owns two Food Towns in addition to his Save You Powertrade supermarket.

The store has an 80:20 combination of retail and wholesale customers and employs 77 people, including management. The trading area is 2 800m² and the total store area is 4 400m². The space allocation in the revamped store is 25% for the service departments and 75% for dry groceries.

What changed?

"Pricing is very important to our customers," says Shabeer, "but we also want to give them a pleasant shopping experience. The new branding has improved the look of our store, with the revamped trading area giving shoppers more for their money." Lifestyle signage at the point of sale and in the different departments, together with bright lighting, adds extra sparkle, while the shop fittings have been redone with brushed aluminium and maple wood. The rebranding exercise includes exterior signage, interior bulkheads, interior point of sale solutions, trolleys and baskets, front door carpets, exterior and interior paint, a redesign of the plastic carry bags, leaflets and the member's store logo. The floor has been redone and all the staff is sporting new uniforms. Shabeer says they are also carrying a wider range of products than ever before, with a stock range of 16 942 SKUs.

All the service departments have had a facelift as well and the deli/hot food counter is new. The bakery has also been extended. It now has four ovens and produces more of its own bread and confectionery daily.

The trading hours have stayed the



The new lifestyle signage at the store.

same: 8am to 6pm Monday to Friday, 8am to 5pm on Saturday and 8am to 3pm on Sunday.



The store has an 80:20 combination of retail and wholesale customers.



Bringing them in

Shabeer says he was expecting a big response to the launch, as they advertised on leaflets and in the local newspapers, but even he was caught by surprise by the numbers of people that turned up on the day. The queues for all 17 till points were winding down each aisle and customers could hardly walk around because of the

crush. Baskets were placed out of the way on heads and there were many opportunities for close encounters with fellow shoppers! In spite of this, the atmosphere inside the store was festive, with customers patiently waiting to pay or to buy. No one became stressed or impatient and the only time the crowd pushed was after lunch, when Shabeer re-opened the store after closing for Muslim prayers and everyone was very keen to get inside.

Primedia ran the launch day promotion and pitched a vinyl promotional stage outside the store's entrance, where they entertained the store's customers for the entire day with music, singing, dancing and competitions. The divisional marketing manager for UMS Coastal Division in KZN, Chico Woodhouse, who happens to be a (very young!) grandmother, and Trish Roopnarain, office support manager, at UMS Coastal Division, spent much of the day handing out prizes and running a variety of competitions, emerging every now and then for a cold drink before taking to the stage once more.

Meanwhile, Shabeer, his wife Mumtaz, Ravi Lutchman, who is the divisional buyer for UMS Coastal Division KZN, Peter Momogos, general manager of UMS Coastal Division in KZN and Jad Pereira kept a close eye on proceedings, going into the store periodically to speak to customers and to make sure that everything was under

Ravi Lutchman, divisional buyer for UMS Coastal Division, KZN (left), and Shabeer Bux, owner of Save You Powertrade, with some of the customers who came to the launch of the rebranded store on 30 May.



control. There was also stringent security at the entrance/exit.

Shabeer says Ravi Lutchman, as divisional buyer, has the member's interests at heart. He put together a unique promotion that has added value to Save You Powertrade."

The customer profile

The primary customer base for this store is general public customers in the LSM 1-4 brackets, as well as trade customers who buy for their small-format stores.

Ravi Lutchman says they have seen a shift in their customers' shopping patterns. "We have had a 40% increase in sales of frozen vegetables and IQF chicken in the last couple of years. Our customers are getting more affluent and are also being increasingly exposed to Western lifestyles. This has meant, for example, that our maize sales have decreased, while spaghetti and rice sales have increased. The shoppers here also look for convenience in meal preparation. This can be seen in the sales of pre-cut vegetables, which have doubled in the last year." Chico Woodhouse agrees. "There is more experimenting with brands and our customers want convenience and a wider range."

Bulk buying is still popular here and the busiest times are the end of the week, the 15th (when government employees are paid) and the last week of the month. Pension



As fast as customers left the store, more arrived to shop!

The shoppers here also look for convenience in meal preparation.

payouts also bring feet through the door. The store introduced an electrical appliances department in June 2007, with televisions, home stereos, DVDs, kettles, stoves and refrigerators. It has seen a 1 000% growth in sales to date.

Community projects bring the store into the lives of its customers and also increase customer loyalty.



Brushed aluminium and maple wood finishes add elegance to the gondola ends.



Chico Woodhouse, divisional marketing manager for UMS Coastal Division, KZN, with Trish Roopnarain, office support manager for UMS Coastal Division, KZN, on the Primedia promotional stage.



A selection of goods purchased by a customer at Save You Powertrade.

Partnership and growth

Shabeer is committed to his company's partnership with UMS. "This has allowed us to grow, but we can still retain our independence. We have the best of both worlds," he says. "UMS keeps us as competitive as possible, not only on the KVIs but on the secondary brands that add value to the consumer and margin to our business." ■

TOP SELLING ITEMS AT SAVE YOU POWERTRADE

- IQF chicken 2kg
- 400g Imana - chilli beef and mutton flavours
- Maize 10kg
- Rice 10kg
- Flour 10kg
- Milk sachets 1 litre fresh full cream
- Baked beans 410g
- Sunflower oil 5 litres



Rebranding the trolleys was part of the relaunch at Save You Powertrade in Pietermaritzburg.

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