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By LAURA DURHAM

The store, one of Masscash's newest retail cash and carry businesses, may only be 1 200m² and with an average basket size below R50, but the long opening hours and ideal location means that Cambridge Food is already doing R2 million a week since opening in March.

Location, location, location

Location is key to a retailer's success and being the closest cash & carry to the taxi rank means that Cambridge Food has the advantage. "This is a really big deal for our customers," says Jay Currie, Masscash retail director. The need for convenience is huge and commuters often have heavy parcels to carry, making the store's proximity to the taxi rank ideal for them.

"Our research tells us as much as 82% of South Africans do not own cars and 67% of our nation's food spending comes from this portion of the market," he says. The opening hours of 6am to 7pm during weekdays allow the store to catch the early morning and evening trade of the commuters, as well as the lunchtime trade of customers that work in KwaMashu itself (30 minutes from Durban).

Store: Cambridge Food
Location: KwaMashu, KZN
Size: 1 200 m²
Staff: 100
Tills: 19
Basket size: <R50
Transactions per week: 40 000
Turnover per week: R2 million

Cambridge Food uses its location opposite a significant taxi rank in KwaMashu, KwaZulu-Natal as a major draw card for its commuter customers – who are looking for good quality and affordable prices at their quickest convenience.

The right recipe

The site was originally a failing hardware store but after a complete rebuild, Cambridge Food opened its doors in March this year. The site met all of Masscash's requirements for a Cambridge Food store: It's located at a busy commuter hub and it can achieve a turnover of at least R50 million per annum with a high sales intensity per square metre because of the frequency of visits from customers. And while their basket size is small (less than R50), the KwaMashu customers are certainly visiting the store often (40 000 transactions per week), resulting in a weekly turnover of R2 million.

Customer mix

The store caters mostly to retail customers, who fall into the LSM 2-7 income bracket, but up to 40% of the sales in a store like this are to local entrepreneurs, such as hawkers and spaza store owners, who are buying in bulk to resell. The volumes that these customers purchase allow the store to drive its retail prices down further than it could if the store focused exclusively on retail customers.

Township storewatch

"It's one of the ways we're trying to take the efficiencies of cash & carry and bring them into retail stores. At the same time, Cambridge stores are authentic retail outlets, which are bright, modern and inviting," says Currie.

Mighty meat

The butchery is the first department customers see as they enter the store and the chillers, filled with freshly cut and wrapped high quality cuts of meat, line the entire right hand wall of the store. This leads customers to the service department, where the staff has been given special training as Cambridge Food prides itself in the quality of this department. Popular items include stewing beef and other forequarter cuts, as well as 'fifth quarter' cuts, which is offal.

Always fresh

The fresh fruit and vegetable department does very well and delivers a high contribution to sales. Fresh produce is delivered throughout the week and customers have the choice of loose, pre-packaged or bulk items. The hot foods department is a customer hub throughout the day, with the Cambridge sausage (own

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recipe) and vetkoek deal for less than R5 being a hot favourite. The bakery also does well, although the bread is baked off-site due to space constraints. There are plans to install ovens upstairs to increase on-site baking.

The rest of the store is dedicated to groceries. "When people have limited funds," says Currie, "every cent they spend must return reliability and usability. Cambridge Food KwaMashu's customers are careful in selecting products they know and trust."

Quality for less

The store regularly holds promotions – both in the middle and the end of the month – where they offer bulk deals on essential groceries. There is also a weekly market day, a great opportunity to showcase the fresh departments, and offer demonstrations, taste testers and specials to customers.

Local matters

Most of the store's 100 staff members are from KwaMashu, developing employment in the area and encouraging skill building. The corporate social development policy means that the store is actively involved in the community, particularly with the education and feeding of primary school children.

Future plans

There are 10 new stores under the Cambridge Food banner planned for the next 12 months and for the KwaMashu store specifically, expansion plans are underway.



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