

An example
of one-stop
convenience
at its best



launches its first corporate store

By LAURA DURHAM

Freshstop, a member of the Fruit & Veg City Group, launched its first corporate owned forecourt store in Stellendale, Cape Town in October last year. It acts as a model example – a showcase – of what a great C-store can be, encompassing all the fresh and quality departments that have become an integral part of the Freshstop name.

A model store

"Freshstop is a franchising business and we felt it was important to show potential franchisees that the Freshstop convenience store model works," explains store manager, Warren de Klerk.

"And what better way to do it than by opening a corporate store? This shows that we believe in the Freshstop full service offering," he adds.

The first corporate owned Freshstop – in Stellendale, Cape Town – acts as a example of what the C-store model should look like. It also operates as an on-the-ground training base for new staff and franchisees

"We identified a need for a 24-hour convenience offering in Kuils River and our decision to open the first corporate owned convenience store was motivated by the fact that other stores in the area close at 8pm," says Brian Coppin, co-founder and MD of Freshstop.

"Since its opening, the store has developed into a training base for staff training for new stores and new franchisees also spend time at the store to get some on-the-ground training," de Klerk says.

Fresh offering

Launched in association with Caltex, the Stellendale store offers the full range of departments to cater for the mixed customer base. A fully stocked fruit and vegetable island, bakery, cheese and dairy section and essential groceries departments caters for customers' basic needs – with convenience being key.

Customers are able to help themselves to their morning coffee at the self-service coffee station and The Pitstop Café offers a huge selection of take-away dishes. The fast-food offering is diverse – from crispy fried chicken, pizzas to the famous 'breakfast-on-a-bun' (served all day!). "We also have a range of healthy options for customers, and all of our food is made fresh daily," says de Klerk. "This is especially unique in comparison to some of the other stores in the area," he adds.

Not defined by working hours

The Stellendale Freshstop caters for a mixed customer base and the offering needs to reflect this. During the week, the customers



As a member of the Fruit & Veg City Group, certain features of a Fruit & Veg City store are encompassed in the Freshstop model, such as the dried fruit, nuts and sweets section.

are largely the work force – “we are located across the road from a big industrial area which generates business for us during working hours,” he says. The weekend is busy with families from the surrounding residential areas popping in for top-up groceries and fresh snacks.

The store sees a morning rush – with customers coming in for their morning coffee and breakfast choice but the peak foot traffic is between 5-8pm. “This is when customers are en route home and stop off to pick up some essentials,” he says.

Investing in staff

Of the 33 staff members (including management and forecourt staff), 85% reside in the areas surrounding the store. This benefits the image of the store within the community as well as ensures that the offering is tailor-made to suit the area.

“Staff training is a big focus for us,” says de Klerk. All staff are trained by an



The range of healthy meal solutions and freshly made food is the unique difference between the Stellendale Freshstop and their competition nearby.

Store: Freshstop

Location: Stellendale, Cape Town

Trading floor: 150m²

Till points: 3

Staff members: 33

outside company, which specialises in food handling and safety. “Internally, we constantly do refresher courses across the different elements of the job. Freshstop has also produced a training DVD for staff with an emphasis on customer service and merchandising,” he explains.

In terms of keeping tabs of shrinkage in-store and security outside, the store is monitored via a CCTV system and daily stock checks are in place. “In addition, we offer metro officers free coffee – and this provides a good presence on-site and discourages negative elements,” de Klerk says.

Reaching out to the community

As a way to establish community goodwill when they first opened in October

last year, the Stellendale store made a donation of fresh packs to all the learners at a local primary school in the area. “This is something we want to get more involved in,” he says. From a corporate perspective, Freshstop contributes to Foodbank, which provides meals for the needy.

A local pig farmer collects the C-store waste for his farming.

Staying ahead of the competition

The Stellendale store is in close proximity to two other fuel stations, “so they’re our competitors on the fuel side,” he says. In terms of the C-store, the next competitor is the shops in the mall nearby. “However, we are open 24-hours a day with a fresh offering, as well as all the essential grocery items customers’ need.”

Fortnightly promotions in local and national newspapers, as well as pamphlet knock-and-drops work well to keep customers informed and interested in what’s happening in-store.

Value-added services, such as Lotto and prepaid electricity will also soon be part of the offering at the C-store.



Customers are looking for convenience and a fully stocked offering of fresh products, groceries and hot foods section – The Pitstop Café – provides all this and more for the store’s working customer base.



The C-store model allows Freshstop to fit in a good range of grocery essentials, fresh produce and healthy meal solutions in just 150m². The addition of prepaid electricity and Lotto will soon boost the store's appeal even more.



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