



Pretoria service station reaches the ceiling in sales

Pick n Pay Service Station Wonderpark goes from strength to strength

Pick n Pay Service Station Wonderpark, consisting of the Caltex Garage and Star Mart convenience store in the north of Pretoria, has had a 36% increase in sales over the past year.

By LISA DEWBERRY

Pick n Pay Service Station Wonderpark is thriving with a 36% increase in sales over the past year, according to Koos Liebenberg, area manager for Pick n Pay Garages (Pty) Ltd. Some reasons for the rise in success of this service station include its unique fast food, automotive and health food sections, as well as its salad bar in the convenience store.

A station with a difference

Liebenberg says the Star Mart convenience store (C-store), which makes well over its profit quota per month, includes a lucrative fast food section with traditional foods on special such as 'pap en vleis' and chicken feet. "Management of the store decided to introduce the fast food section because they wanted to serve the black community as 95% of the customers are black and the store serves a rich, up and coming black target market," he says.

According to Liebenberg, the health food section does well because of the Virgin Active Gym close to the service station, which has gym goers coming into the store to buy health snacks, drinks and vitamin

boosters. The automotive section offering customers emergency solutions for their cars and the salad bar with freshly prepared salads daily are also winning sections in the store.

He says the station trades 24 hours a day, seven days a week with approximately 2 000 feet through the service station on a daily basis and a steady flow of customers throughout the week. The peak time of 7pm is the busiest time with weekends, especially the first two weekends of the month being busy. "The store is extremely busy after midnight on the weekends because of the evening entertainment in the area and during Christmas time it gets so packed that customers can't move!" says Liebenberg.



Store: Pick n Pay Service Station Wonderpark
Location: Pretoria, Gauteng
Size: 150m²
Till points: 3
Staff members: 60
Basket size: R35 per basket
Transactions per month: 76 000

Humble beginnings pave the way

Mike Thomas, site manager for the service station, says Pick n Pay Service Station Wonderpark, which consists of the Caltex garage and Star Mart C-store, is the biggest and busiest service station with the biggest C-store in Pretoria. According to him, the service station serves up to 1 200 cars per day with approximately 70 000 feet going through the store each month. "The service station opened its doors to the public with its Caltex garage in 1982.

Forecourt storewatch

We began revamping and expanding the service station and building a car wash in 2007. The Star Mart C-store was opened on 15 March 2008," says Thomas.

According to him, the service station started small, but has grown rapidly in the past few years. Thomas says the departments include the C-store, fast food takeaway, the fuel and the car wash with the star department being the C-store, which does really well. "The store has a small variety of everything from groceries to toiletries and includes basic necessities such as bread and ice too. The prepaid vouchers and electricity sales make up 50% of the total turnover of the shop and customers usually come into the shop to buy electricity but end up buying groceries too. There is also an FNB ATM and customer toilets attracting people into the store," says Thomas.

Keeping staff happy and station safe

Liebenberg says there is a total of 65 staff from the surrounding areas, including Soshanguve, Mabopane and Hammanskraal, with 20 staff members working in the C-store. "Management of the service station



The automotive section offers customers emergency solutions for their cars.



The fast food section includes traditional foods such as 'pap en vleis' and chicken feet.



Friendly staff members are part of the C-store's success. The site employs a total of 65 staff from surrounding areas, including Soshanguve, Mabopane and Hammanskraal.

has its own in-house staff training but also hires specialists to give training too. The staff has been trained in first aid and firefighting by Silverton Fire Station. There are four trained firefighters, four first aiders and one health and safety officer," he says.

According to Liebenberg, the store offers an incentive programme for staff and each month R500 is awarded to the employee of the month, with the runner up receiving R250. The employees are awarded for best

performance according to criteria, such as dressing neatly and being punctual. "Shrinkage and wastage is an issue in every store, however we combat this through having rolling stock takes and 24 hour security at the door. We have never had a robbery, which may be partly due to management offering coffee on the house to local police officers so that the store serves as a kind of 'base' for the police to work from," he says.

Creating awareness and rewarding community

Thomas says advertising of the store is done through Star Mart, which is linked to Fresh Stop and Star Mart sends possible advertising ideas and specials through to Pick n Pay every month.

"Other advertising includes TV advertising, in-house point-of-sale, leaflets and banners, with promotions being done all the time on a monthly basis. Some of these promotions include a Nestlé water and Cadbury Crunchie chocolate for R10.00; a Yogi Sip and Kit Kat chocolate for R12.95; a pie and Coke for R16.95; and a deal where if a customer buys a large packet of Willards Cheese Curls (150g), they will get a 14g packet free," he says.

According to Thomas, the service station tries to offer the cheapest in diesel in the area and the whole of Pretoria. When it comes to doing their bit for the community this service station works in conjunction with Pick n Pay Hypermarket. "We recently gave away 10 free car washes to customers and regularly sponsor prizes in competitions. During June, free copies of the *Daily Sun* newspaper were given to customers. The



The store has a small variety of everything from groceries to toiletries and includes basic necessities.

Pick n Pay Hypermarket in Wonderboom Shopping Centre also gave away R10 000 worth of fuel to a customer recently," he says.

Taking a look at the future

Liebenberg says one of the challenges Pick n Pay Service Station Wonderpark is facing include the fact that Pick n Pay Hypermarket at Wonderpark Shopping Centre is their main competitor and there are five or six garages in the area which pose a threat too. Another challenge is the large demand for fuel and there are currently not enough pumps available for customers.

He says they are overcoming these challenges through doing promotions all the time, offering customers convenience with ample parking and are planning to add more fuel pumps, which Caltex is budgeting for in the next financial year.

"We recently started receiving 50 ppm diesel and 95 Octane petrol to help us better serve the community by offering more options for the customer. Our immediate future plan will be to extend the service station further, however we are quite content as the service station is thriving. We've reached ceiling level and can't go any higher without expanding further," says Liebenberg.



An in store ATM attracts more customers through the door.



The store offers coffee on the house to local police officers increasing security at the store.



Approximately 70 000 feet go through the store per month.