

Caltex and Fruit & Veg City grow network of Freshstop stores

BY LINDA WILKINS

Chevron South Africa and Fruit & Veg City, which have been piloting a new convenience format called Freshstop at four sites in the Western Cape since the beginning of February, have now announced a ten-year strategic alliance to roll out Freshstop convenience stores across the national network of Caltex service stations. "The next-generation, stop-shop-and-go stores offer South African commuters and consumers an unmatched selection of fresh produce and ready-made meals," says Wayne Klahs, Chevron's vice-president of marketing for Africa, Europe and Pakistan.

Results of the pilot

The results of the trial run at the four Western Cape sites indicate a strong liking for and satisfaction with the retail concept. Face-to-face interviews with over 400 customers between 14 February and 20 May show that:

- 98% of those surveyed consider Freshstop an improvement on the previous on-site convenience store.
- 96% see the Freshstop store as complementing the Caltex image.
- 82% indicated that Freshstop would be their first choice among petrol service station convenience stores.

"The alignment of the Caltex and Freshstop brands on this strategic alliance is complemented by a strong cultural fit between our two companies, which combines Chevron's global perspective with the savvy, local focus of an entrepreneurial organisation like Fruit & Veg City," says Klahs.

The signage is clear and visible, complementing the clean, uncluttered and elegant look of the store.



Brian Coppin, CEO, Fruit & Veg City, together with Wayne Klahs, Chevron's vice-president of marketing for Africa, Europe and Pakistan. Chevron South Africa and Fruit & Veg City have been piloting a new convenience format called Freshstop at four sites in the Western Cape since the beginning of February. They have announced a ten-year strategic alliance to roll out Freshstop convenience stores across the national network of Caltex service stations.

The Freshstop stores have a strong emphasis on freshness and in line with this approach, 25-30% of the floor space is devoted to fresh produce.



What's on offer?

The Freshstop stores, which are open 24/7, offer consumers freshly-baked breads and pastries, a deli and meat section and an extensive fresh produce department with seasonal fruit and local vegetables, supplied and stocked by Fruit & Veg City's distribution network. With this strong emphasis on freshness, 25-30% of the floor space is devoted to fresh produce. The stores also offer a variety of salads, smoothies and fresh dairy products and have a grocery section that stocks everyday items such as cleaning products, canned goods and more.

"Fruit & Veg City is proud to collaborate with Chevron and its extensive network of Caltex service stations," says Brian Coppin, CEO, Fruit & Veg City. "Addressing the growing demand for convenient, one-stop retail environments with fresh and healthy food alternatives is a huge opportunity for us and we plan to maintain the best offering in this competitive retail category."

For consumers in a hurry, the Pitstop Café provides crispy fried chicken, pizzas and a 'breakfast bun' that can be ordered any time of the day, while at the Freshstop coffee counter, customers can order cappuccinos, espressos and regular filter coffee, day and night.

The roll-out

The Freshstop format will be available to Caltex retailers as franchises and will be introduced in a phased approach, starting with the Western Cape, followed by Gauteng. The conversion of the existing Star Mart stores will take 10-15 working days and many of the elements of Fruit & Veg City's retail concept store, Food Lover's Market, will be incorporated into the layout, design and products on offer at the Freshstop stores.

From their beginning in 1993, Fruit & Veg City has grown to over 100 outlets countrywide.

'A strong differentiator for our service offering, Freshstop gives time-conscious customers the opportunity to fill up on wholesome foods and snacks, with motorists able to purchase premium Caltex fuels," says Klahs. "We expect the Freshstop store concept to be positively received by our network of service stations and to act as a platform that enhances their value proposition for future growth."

For more information on the Caltex/Fruit & Veg City partnership, take a look at *Wholesale Business* Issue 1: Forecourt storewatch, page 18. ■

The Freshstop logo will soon be seen by consumers at Caltex stores nationwide as the roll-out gets underway.

FRESH STOP

fill up, fresh up!



The Freshstop format features a 'Pitstop Café' for on-the-go customers.



The Pitstop Café features items like crispy fried chicken, pizzas and a 'breakfast bun' on the menu.

Freshstop's range gives the store a different and innovative look and feel. The seasonal fruit and local vegetables are supplied and stocked by Fruit & Veg City's distribution network.

