

Game still in the pink of health

Game Stores has come a long way since it opened its first store in Durban in 1970 in cramped premises in the city's CBD, ringing up sales of R78 000 in its first month of trading. Its founders believed that shopping had become a tedious and boring pastime. They wanted to create a fun shopping environment and so conceptualised retailing as a game. The signature bright pink prevails to this day.



Game managing director, Jan Potgieter (right), celebrates 40 years of successful trading with Marlin Govender (left), sales manager of Game Gateway and happy customer, Purity Mpanza from Ndwedwe (centre).

Today, as a subsidiary of the JSE listed Massmart Holdings, its total 2010 sales will exceed R11.7 billion. The group has 90 stores in South Africa and in 10 other African countries, selling 20 000 different products to over 45 million customers per year and employment for 11 000 people.

"We offer our own private label products and, wherever possible, we stock locally manufactured products in each country in which we trade and aim to establish local supply chain networks," says Game MD, Jan Potgieter.

Some of the factors that have contributed to its success, Potgieter believes, are the retailer's longstanding policy of providing value for money and a price-beat guarantee backed by a solid warranty system.

Ongoing shopper research provides a source of valuable information on market trends, consumer acceptance levels and media penetration - data that is crucial to the formulation of the group's strategy.

Growing into the future

Supported by the financial strength of Massmart, the group is set to continue its robust expansion plans. In the next five years, it anticipates having an extended footprint of 120 stores. The group currently operates in Botswana, Ghana, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Nigeria, Tanzania, Uganda and Zambia, and is exploring four other countries.

"As a basic minimum, the group spends 1% of after-tax profit on social responsibility initiatives," adds Potgieter. "Business is dependent on society for its growth and success and we are responsive to the complex problems and needs of the communities in which we operate.

"We would like to thank all our customers and suppliers who have supported us over the past 40 years because they have played a major role in our success, as well as our staff for their valued contribution to our development," he concludes.

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