

From waiter to entrepreneur thanks to a unique product

Phenyo Sebaeng (28) had to borrow money from two of his close friends in order to buy a bus ticket from Rustenburg to Cape Town, where he had secured a meeting with a buyer at the Shoprite Group's home office in January 2017.

“I was so scared not knowing what will happen or what the result will be. Amazingly he saw the potential of (my) unique product and gave me a chance.” Today Sebaeng is a national supplier of disposable ice buckets to Shoprite Liquorshop.

He had always harboured dreams of owning his own business, so when Sebaeng was unable to complete his marketing studies due to a lack of funds, he went in search of entrepreneurial opportunities.

“Conventional ice buckets and cooler boxes are heavy and expensive,” he explains. And so the idea for Sebaeng’s unique product was born. In 2015, while working as a waiter, he registered his company, Sebaeng Solution Manufacturing Company, and the trademark D-C.O.O.L.E.R.

Only two years later, after convincing his friends Refentse Letlhogonolo Mdangai and Thabang Makgamathe to invest in the business, Sebaeng stopped waitering in order to concentrate solely on his business.

“I still can’t believe what the Shoprite Group has done for us. They gave us an opportunity of a lifetime and on top of that they were very patient with us...what the Shoprite Group is doing for us still feels like a dream.”

Sebaeng’s disposable ice buckets are made from recyclable material with the added benefit that any logo can be printed on it. His ultimate goal is to manufacture these ice buckets in South Africa, but for now his main objective is to grow his client base further.

His advice to aspiring entrepreneurs is to “get an education and look for opportunities. Once you have discovered your strength, your passion and what you are good at, then there’s no need to waste time. Your ‘one day...’ could very well be today.”

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